

How Business Can Build a Future of Work That Works for Women

Trends and Implications For Women



Transformation of Sectors and Roles

Disruptive technologies affect both the quantity and quality of women's jobs while existing systemic constraints impact the ability of women to transition into new sectors and the roles of tomorrow.



Demand for Digital Skills

The workplaces of the future will require new skills. The lack of women in STEM fields and gaps in technical skills could hold women back from important roles as developers of our future digital systems and tools.



The Rise of New Work Models

Contingent work and new gig economy opportunities are disrupting traditional work models. While providing some flexibility for women workers, these work models also present new challenges with violence and harassment, unpredictable hours, and unequal wages and benefits.

What Companies Can Do

Act

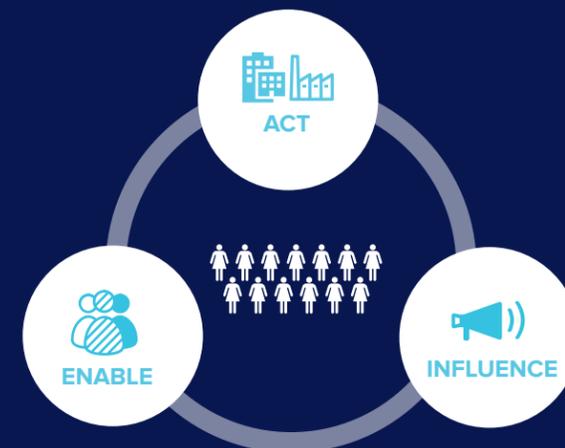
Adjust employment plans, policies, benefits, trainings, and products within a company's operations and supply chain to be inclusive, free of bias, and responsive to the changing nature of work.

Enable

Partner to address areas critical for women's future economic success including: STEM education, digital access, entrepreneurship support, and online safety.

Influence

Demonstrate leadership through advocacy and communications efforts to build an environment that promotes gender equality and removes systemic constraints for women to fully participate in the new world of work.



Call to Action

Commit to workplaces that are free from bias and harassment, where women are encouraged to enter technical and high-paying roles essential to future business success.

Integrate gender-disaggregated data into decision making, and share evidence on how the future of work trends are impacting women and how companies are taking action.

Build AI tools and systems that are free from bias, are developed by diverse teams, and are used in non-discriminatory ways.

Launch partnerships that address gender gaps in education and digital access to prepare girls and women for the roles of tomorrow.

Promote public policies that provide protections for women workers and a reworking of the social contract to deliver advances in quality employment for women across industries.

Executive Summary



The World Economic Forum suggests that it will take 200 years to achieve workplace gender equality.¹



Up to 160 million women will need to transition across occupations and sectors or fundamentally change how they work.²

Around the world, the nature of work—where we work, how we work, and what we do—is changing. Global forces, including a rise in automation and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, a boom in connectivity, the emergence of new work models such as the gig economy, and profound demographic and social shifts, are bringing about this change. These shifts will alter employee-employer relationships, economic mobility, and wages. They will also demand that businesses seek specialized skills and ward off competitors with new business models that could threaten their own success.

While the world of work is changing rapidly, advancements in workplace gender equality have progressed at a glacial pace. Women continue to face biases in hiring and promotion rates; discriminatory laws and a lack of legal protections; a significant and growing unpaid care burden; and a persistent gap in access to financial, digital, and property assets. These barriers have contributed to ongoing gaps in women's leadership and wages globally and in employment in many of tomorrow's high-paying industries.

These existing systemic constraints to gender equality need to be considered alongside efforts to address expected shifts in employment. Women will need to make a series of successful transitions not only to maintain the status quo for working women, but also to spur action to achieve greater gender equality. If employers and women are unable to manage these shifts, women are at risk of falling even further behind in workforce participation, leadership roles, and equal pay.

Beyond a business's responsibility to help workers prepare and transition, creating future of work strategies that work for women also engenders innovation, retention, and risk mitigation benefits. As companies undertake efforts to build inclusive future of work strategies, they will be rewarded with workforces that are rich in talent and innovation, preparedness for a shifting legal landscape, and an ability to

Inclusive future of work strategies should be designed to attract and retain the best talent and to build a highly skilled and innovative workforce for the future.



Gender-diverse companies outperform their competitors by 21 percent.³



If 600 million more women had access to the internet, annual GDP could increase by \$18 billion across 144 developing countries.⁴

respond to increased interest and scrutiny from stakeholders. In addition to business advances, addressing the changing nature of work through a gender lens can also lead to more prosperous societies and wider economic gains. The gains that women make in employment translate to broader societal well-being and are recognized as a prerequisite to achieving our collective sustainable development priorities, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

This paper calls for business action to ensure that women of all backgrounds are valued and supported to fully participate in and lead the workplaces of the future. Companies should act, enable, and influence to mitigate risks and implement future of work strategies that create positive change for women as well as economic advances. This means adjusting employment plans and policies to be inclusive, partnering with civil society and other stakeholders to remove crucial gender gaps in technology and education, and engaging in research, advocacy and communication campaigns to influence the surrounding environment. These new strategies need to recognize that the challenges and realities women face in the workplace differ greatly across age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other factors by taking an intersectional approach.

Given the urgency and complexity of the challenges ahead, we need collective action that starts today. While greater evidence will help us to understand the potential effects of these shifts, it is certain the changing world of work will influence employees, employers, markets, local and national economies, and communities. It is also certain that work-related disruptions will have unique implications for women. With business, government, and civil society intentionally building gender-aware strategies, there is an opportunity to overcome existing systemic constraints to women's economic empowerment. By starting today and working together, we can shape a future of work that works for women.