

Women in the Workplace

2019 Great Place to Work® Study on
the Best Workplaces for Women™





Holly N. Petroff
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It's time to start having tough conversations.

I long for a day when a Best Workplaces for Women™ list is unnecessary; a day when the term “gender gap” seems antiquated because all people feel treated fairly at work; a day when all leaders see the power of different perspectives, experiences and contributions. Until that day, we have work to do. Together.

With females representing close to 50% of the U.S. workforce, it's time that our workplaces are truly equal and inclusive: what we call a For All workplace. Creating great workplaces for women isn't political or trendy, and it's absolutely not a women's issue. It's a business issue. Regardless of gender, people at Best Workplaces for Women are 40% more ready to innovate than at other organizations. When women have a great experience at work, their male colleagues are more likely to have a great experience, too.

Our research shows that women aren't asking their employers for anything unreasonable. They want to feel valued for their hard work and understand how to grow professionally. We are asking for a level playing field, not handouts. Women are asking for opportunities for exposure and growth, not diversity quotas.

We won't say that our Best Workplaces for Women have it all figured out. The people at these companies aren't perfect, but they are committed to the conversation about gender issues, even when it's hard or uncomfortable. They are willing to listen to their people about what they need to do their best work, even when the path forward isn't clear. Most importantly, they are willing to evolve their own behaviors and mindsets to create a great place to work for all.

We've all got work to do. The Best Workplaces show us what's possible. I salute them and I thank them for their pioneering work. Because of them, I know that a day will come when we won't need this list anymore. Let's get to work!

Executive Vice President, Global Strategic Advisors, Great Place to Work®

Let's close the gender gap.

We're not only talking about **pay**, but also how women and men experience work **every day**.

While there are bright spots, there is still work to be done around gender inequity and the data suggests that the root of the problem lies in the executive ranks.



Great Place to Work's 5th Annual Study of the Best Workplaces for Women™

Survey Methodology

As the global authority on workplace culture, we have been gathering employee experience data for more than 30 years.

Employees responded to more than 60 survey questions on our Trust Index® survey.

Great Place to Work's data science team used machine learning algorithms to uncover the most significant set of written phrases, Trust Index® survey statements and demographics that collectively explained why some women experience more positive workplaces than others.

We also analyzed womens' experiences compared to men, capturing trends unique to women and experiences that are common regardless of gender.

We recognized the winners as the [2019 Best Workplaces for Women](#).



1,058
U.S. Companies

WITH

4,597,938
Employees

699,761
Survey Responses

OF WHICH

57%
Were Women

Snapshot of employees analyzed

Women

399,328

OF WHICH

25%
Are Managers

59%
Paid Hourly

Men

279,867

OF WHICH

36%
Are Managers

33%
Paid Hourly



Key takeaways

Both women and men are talking about **work life balance**. It's important to all of us.

Women lag behind men in pay and **fairness**.

Both men and women feel more empowered to **innovate** at Best Workplaces for Women than at other companies.

Gender gaps exist in workplace experience, but they **affect** groups of **women differently**.

Men are roughly twice as likely than women to think people are treated fairly at their workplace regardless of their gender – and this **perception gap** gets larger with increasing managerial level.



What matters at work for all of us

From over half a million employee comments, these were the top phrases both women and men used to describe what makes their company a great place to work.

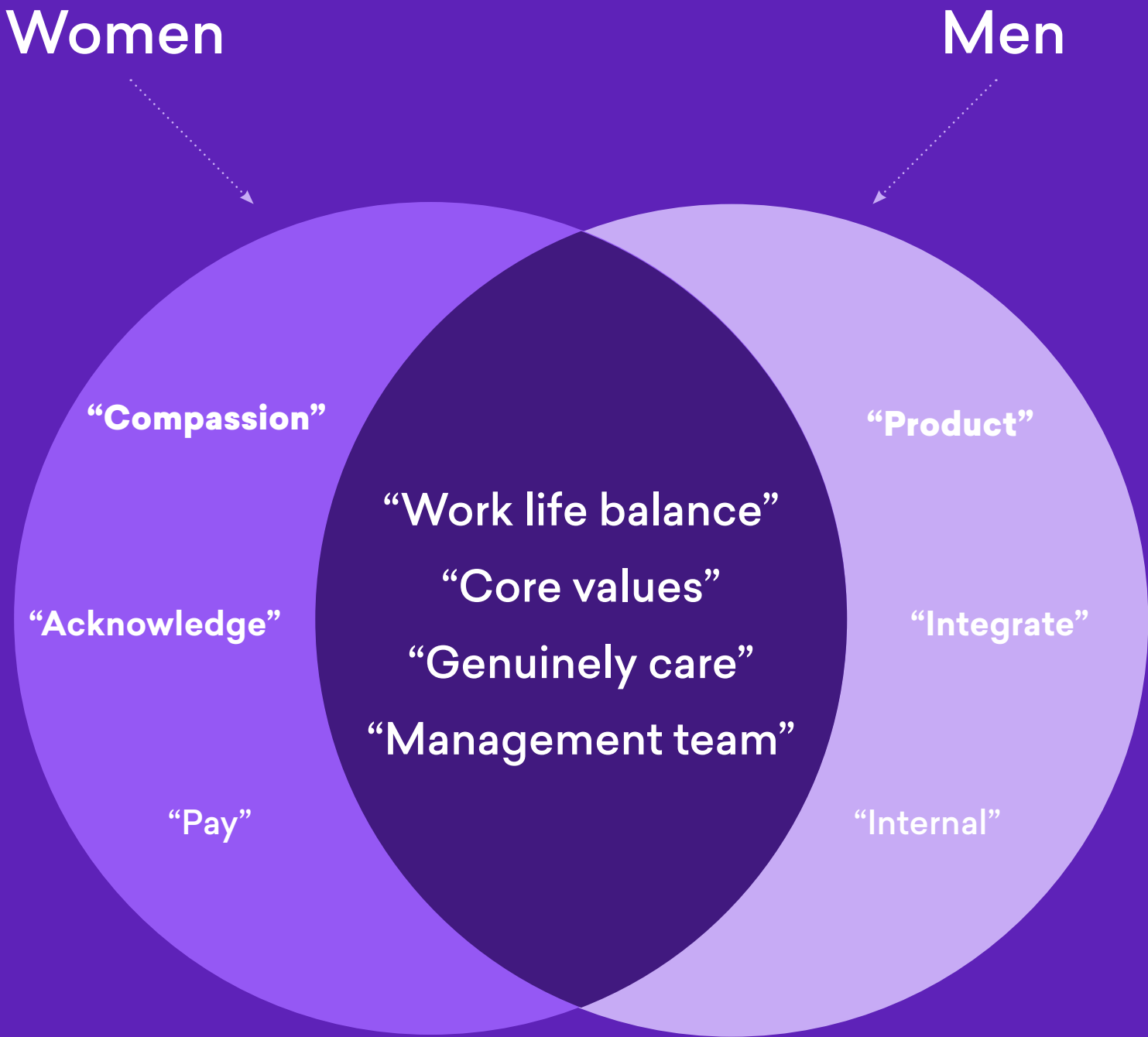
What women want to improve about their workplace is very different to men.

When we looked at the words most uniquely used to describe what would make their workplace better, women used a variation of the word -

- “Compassion”
2.5 times more than men.
- “Acknowledge”
2 times more than men.
- “Pay”
1.5 times more than men.

Men on the other hand used a variation of the word -

- “Product”
2.6 times more than women.
- “Integrate”
2 times more than women.
- “Internal”
1.5 times more than women.



Overall, our research shows that men have a better experience at work than women.

While the gender gap at Best Workplaces for Women is **quarter the size** of other organizations, there is still work to be done.

The gender gap in workplace experience is 4 times larger at other organizations compared to the Best Workplaces for Women.

Best Workplaces
for Women



Women



Men

Other Organizations*



Women



Men

*All organizations who surveyed their employees using the Trust Index Survey within the past year excluding those on the Best Workplaces for Women List.

Where the workplace is letting women down

Employees told us how they felt about 60 different aspects of their workplace culture, including credibility, respect, pride and camaraderie. Among these, measurements of **fairness** and **equity** revealed the biggest gaps between womens' and mens' workplace experience.

Even at Best Workplaces for Women, there are fewer women than men who believe that people are paid fairly for the work they do. Women, more often than men, experience management **playing favorites** and handing out **promotions** and **work projects unfairly**.

This perception gap makes sense. In the United States, **womens' earnings are on average 15% less than men.**²



Some men have their blinders on

Perceptions of equal treatment

When it comes to fair treatment, men were almost **twice** as likely to believe people are treated fairly regardless of gender compared to women. This blind spot is still significant – albeit smaller – among the Best Workplaces for Women.

This gender difference in perception of fair treatment is after adjusting for differences across LGBT groups, race/ethnicities, caregiving responsibilities, tenure, work status, generations, living with disability, and pay type.

The gender gap in perception of fair treatment across genders gets larger among men and women with increasing managerial level.

Men executives, were **2.6 times** more likely to perceive fair treatment regardless of gender compared to **women executives**.



Inclusion grows with career growth

In order to feel included at work, all employees need the ability to share what makes them **unique**, have a sense of **belonging** among co-workers, and believe that all people are treated **equitably**.

At all workplaces, men feel more included at work than women.

With each step in management, there's an equal increase in the feeling of inclusion for both women and men. In this way, the gap between women and men persists at each stage.

Percent of Employees That Feel Included at Work
For gender by managerial level



But feeling included at work is not the same for all women

Zoom in. When we take a closer look at how women of different races/ethnicities experience workplace inclusion, it's a different picture.

We found that feeling included at work still improves with an increase in managerial ranks – yet, not at equal rates.

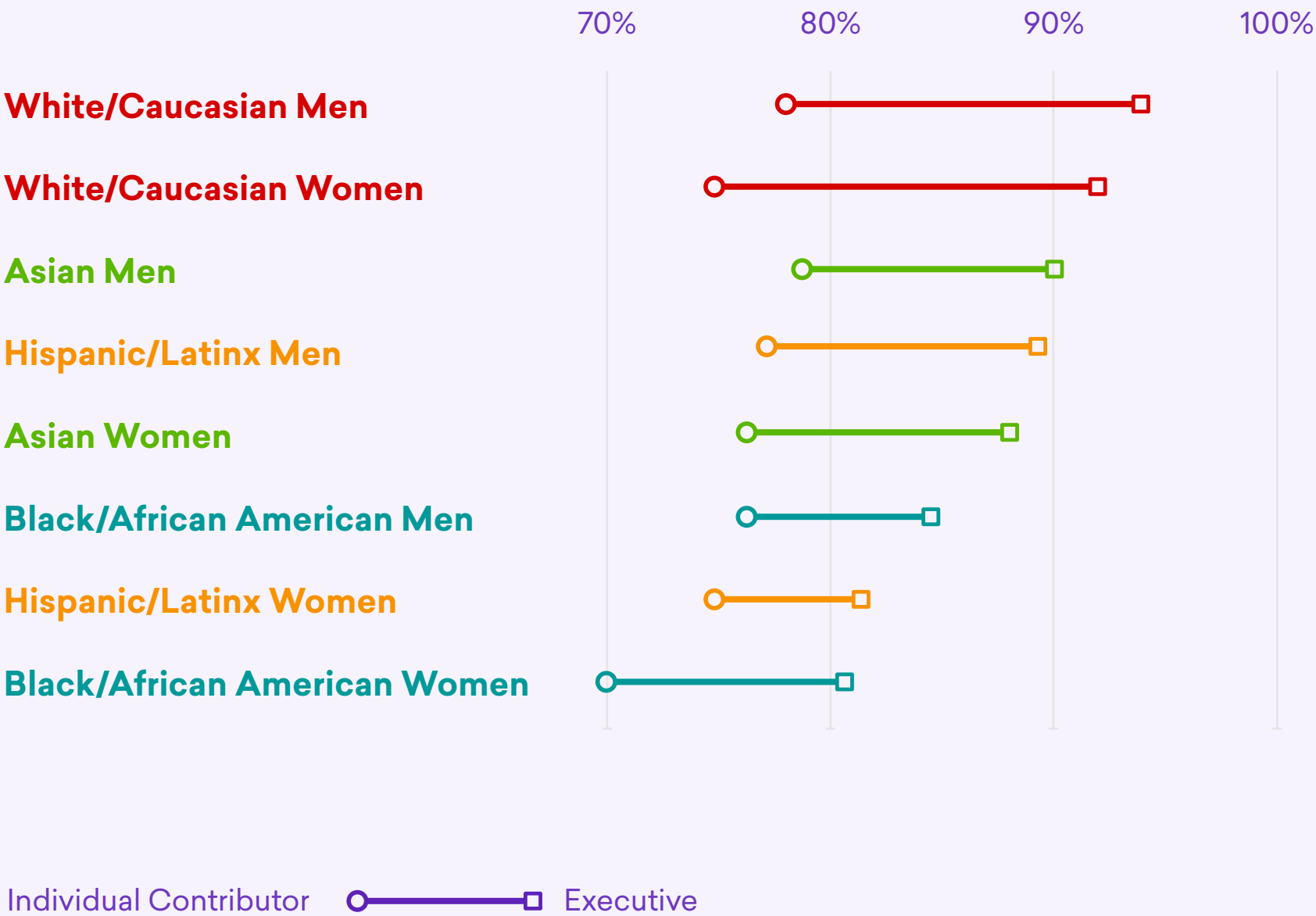
White/Caucasian women feel the largest gain in inclusion as they move up the ranks.

Hispanic/Latinx women feel the smallest gain in inclusion with more management responsibilities.

And although **Black/African American** women see a sizable gain in inclusion at work, it's not enough – they feel the least included at work at every level of management.

Inclusion Increases with Management Responsibilities-But Not at Equal Rates

Percent of People Feeling Included at Work



Better for women, better for innovation

Across genders, all people at Best Workplaces for Women are more ready to innovate than at other organizations.

The Best Workplaces for Women have 50% more women ready to innovate compared to other organizations. That translates to an additional person ready to innovate for every person experiencing friction among the other organizations.

Even at Best Workplaces for Women, men said they have opportunities to develop new and better ways of doing things more often than women did.

8:2 Best Workplaces for Women



5:2 Great Place to Work Certified Companies



2:6 Average U.S. Workplaces



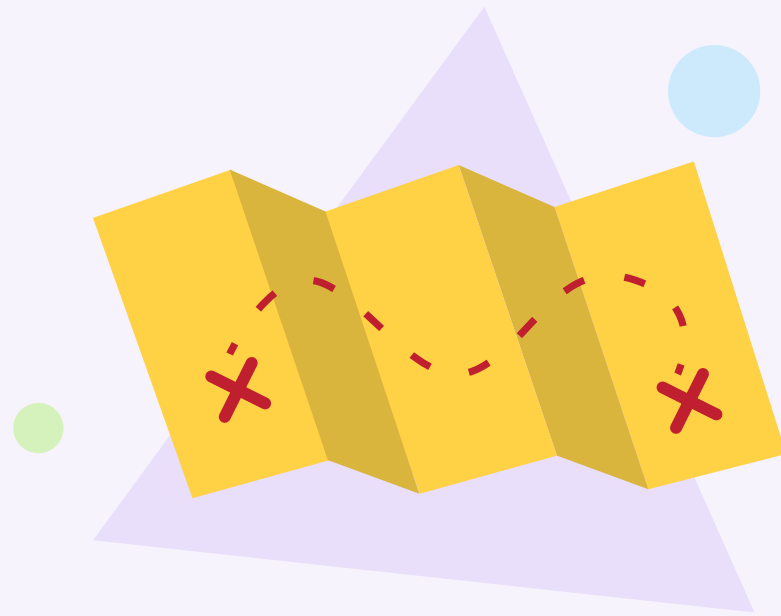
■ Ready to Innovate ■ Experience Friction

READY TO TAKE ACTION?

How to build a better workplace for women



How can leaders make sure they hand out promotions and projects fairly?



Establish clear expectations and criteria for advancement

Ensure that it is universally understood how promotion criteria apply to employees across the company. When leadership does promote someone, they should be able to point to the criteria they had previously set as the foundations of their rationale.



Provide opportunities for exposure to leadership and people across the organization

This way, employees can showcase their unique talents to everyone, not just their boss. They can contribute from a big picture perspective and get exec-facing time outside of the confines of their direct team.



Incentivize employee growth

Leaders should give projects not only to people who will “get the job done” but to team members who need to take on these projects as a means for growth. For those employees who miss out, they need to be shown a clear path to getting that project in the future.

How can leaders become more aware of how opportunities are distributed?



Ask your team members

Ask your team members what types of opportunities they would like to be a part of. Over time, you will know which opportunities would be appropriate to help them move onto the next phase of their career.



Keep track of them

Actively track which team members you give opportunities to. Check in periodically to evaluate your process and ensure you're providing equal access and projects to everyone on your team.



Be an ally

Actively participate in an employee resource group as an ally (as permitted), broach topics of the gender experience with other leaders, and participate (as acceptable) in events that empower women.

How can leaders get a better understanding of how women are feeling at all levels in their organization?



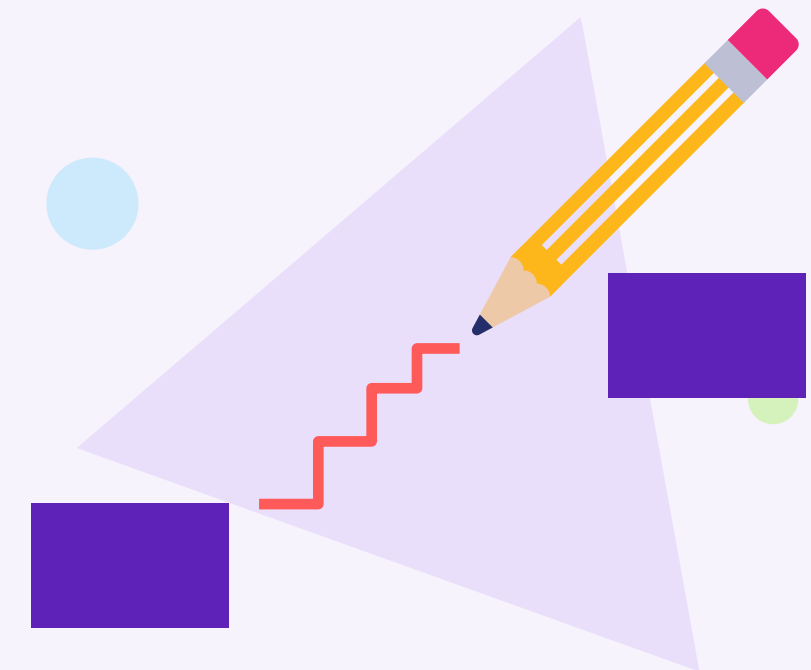
Make time to listen to women

Start a track record of taking time to genuinely listen to your employees and seek them out. If your only practice to gain awareness of how your people are feeling relies on them coming to you, there might be entire groups of people you never hear from.



Be accessible

The best leaders interact with their people at company events, do road shows, have skip-level meetings and eat in the staff kitchen. They are humble. It's just a matter of truly believing that you are not the smartest person in the room.



Learn and know the gaps

Get acquainted with research on women's experience in the workplace. Survey your employees with our [Trust Index Survey](#). Research reputable external sources, periodicals, publications and events. Work out a path of action to integrate these findings over time.

How can leaders make sure women feel inclusion, belonging and equity regardless of their race or ethnicity?



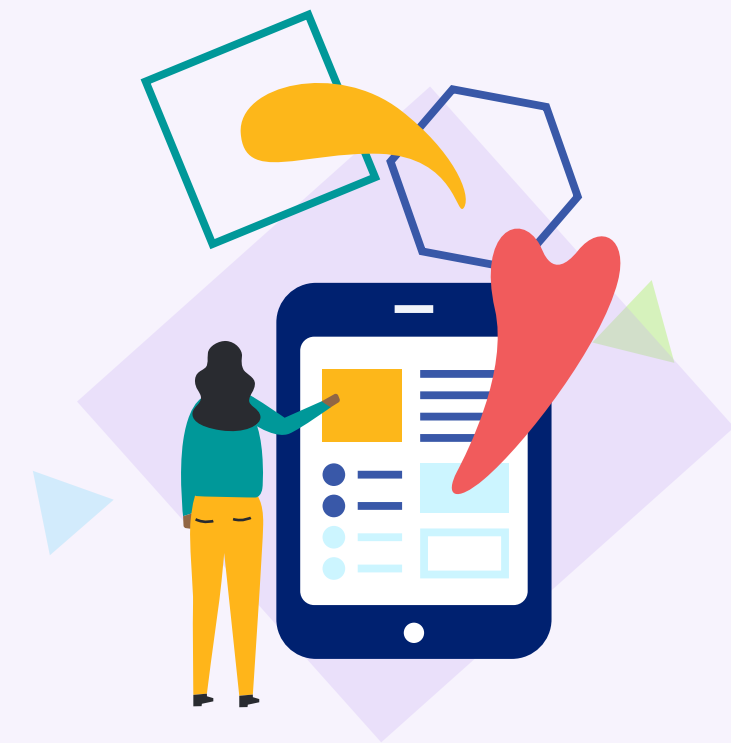
Find things in common from a personal perspective

We all can make an effort to reach out of our comfort zones to get to know people better. Asking about hobbies, interests, people's families in a work-appropriate and friendly way can break down barriers and increase inclusion.



Ensure that employees experience representation at the senior leadership level

Ensure that employees experience representation at the senior leadership and executive levels. Everyone wants to see and hear people who are “like them”. You can't be what you can't see.



Use data

Commit to collecting better data to enable change. Improve the quality of your data with our [Trust Index Survey](#). Set aspirational targets to measure the company's progress. Be accountable for the results. And listen to employee views on how to tackle barriers. Publicly reporting on key diversity indicators is a major lever of accountability and change.



About Great Place to Work®

Great Place to Work® is the global authority on workplace culture. Since 1992, we have surveyed more than 100 million employees around the world and used those deep insights to define what makes a great workplace: trust. We help organizations quantify their culture and produce better business results by creating a high-trust work experience for all employees.

Emprising®, our culture management platform, empowers leaders with the surveys, real-time reporting, and insights they need to make data-driven people decisions.

We use our unparalleled benchmark data to recognize Great Place to Work-Certified™ companies and the Best Workplaces™ in the U.S. and more than 60 countries, including the 100 Best Companies to Work For® list published annually in Fortune.

Everything we do is driven by our mission: to build a better world by helping every organization become a Great Place to Work For All™.

To learn more, visit greatplacetowork.com, listen to the podcast [Better by Great Place to Work](#), and read [“A Great Place to Work for All.”](#) Join the community on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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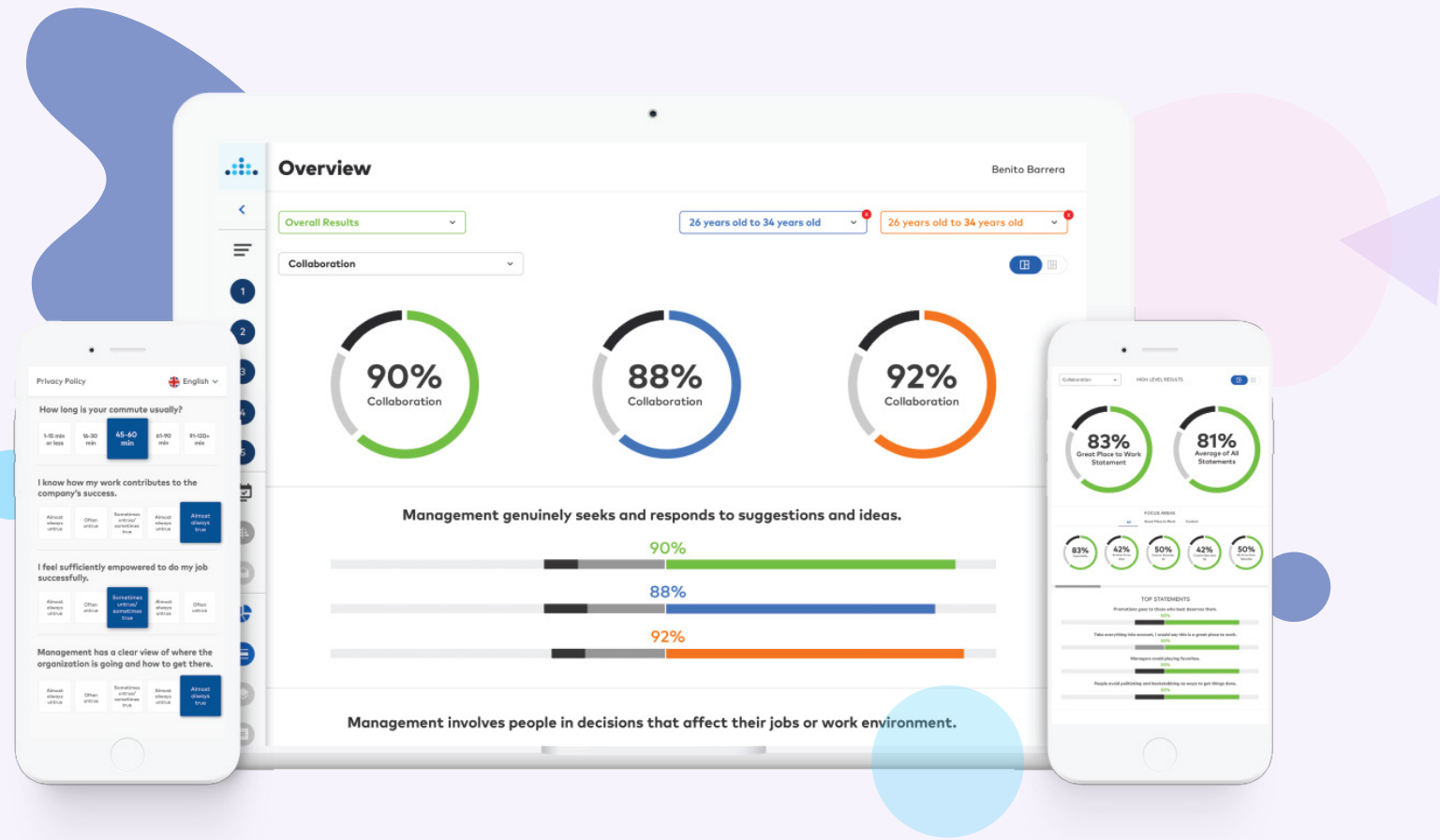
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Build a better workplace for women with our culture management platform, Emprising™

We empower leaders like you with the surveys, real-time reporting, and insights you need to make data-driven people decisions.

You can easily find the untapped pockets of employee talent waiting to get involved. Get diverse input on your leadership promise blind spots. Read employee comments to get a better understanding of how women are feeling. Assess how women of different races/ethnicities experience barriers at your organization. You can even compare your survey results against the 2019 Best Workplaces for Women list benchmark.

[Contact us](#) to learn more about how you can quantify your culture and uncover actionable insights that will help you build a high-trust workplace for all.



Get Recognized

If you've built a great culture, get Great Place to Work-Certified™ and use your badge to recruit great talent.

We'd also love to be able to recognize your organization on the next [Best Workplaces for Women](#) list.

[Contact us](#) today to get started. The application deadline for the next list is June 2020.

Resources

To learn more about the Innovation Velocity Ratio (IVR), read our [Innovation Insights Series](#).

Check out our [Content Library](#) for daily culture insights, new episodes of our podcast [Better](#), and cutting-edge research and insights.

References

Unless otherwise indicated, all survey data is from the Great Place to Work 2019 Study on Best Workplaces for Women.

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