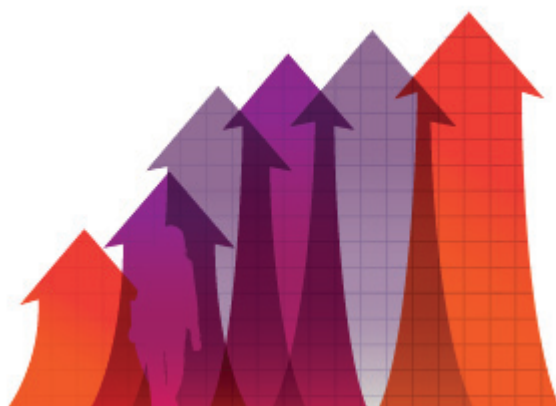




Positioning Women for Success
Windsor-Essex

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT
2016





We would like to thank everyone who contributed their time, ideas and expertise to the Positioning Women for Success – Windsor-Essex Needs Assessment Report. Through this undertaking, there is now a greater understanding on the barriers, gaps and challenges faced by local women in the workplace. The findings and recommendations presented in this report will serve as valuable tools and best practices for all employers within the community.

The research team responsible for authoring this report is as follows:

Heather Gregg, Workforce WindsorEssex

Ronna Warsh, Ronna Hope Warsh Leadership Coaching and Consulting

Thank you is extended to our Employer Partners and their employees for their participation in the research and to the Steering Committee for guiding the work of the project.

How did we do?

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This project is funded by:



**Status of Women
Canada**

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Canada**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Executive Summary

Positioning Women for Success – Windsor-Essex is a local project examining barriers faced by women in the workplace and how through responsive and relevant programming, employers can address these issues and implement best practices to position their female employees for success. Funding for this project was made possible through Status of Women Canada.

Locally, females comprise 49% of the workforce in Windsor-Essex (National Household Survey, 2011). Of those females in the local workforce, however, only 39% of females are employed in Management Occupations (National Household Survey, 2011). These figures are consistent across Ontario and Canada. A recent program of The Current on CBC stated that while women may be gaining professional equality with men in terms of occupation and status in an organization, there are still collisions with the glass ceiling. Provincial data for Ontario showed that in 2011, the female to male average earnings ratio across all age groups was 74.1% (Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 202-0104).

This project will investigate themes and trends relating to some of the issues around barriers, gaps in support and workplace practices which have been incorporated into the key research themes.

Some of the key findings from the research include:

- *Gender specific language happens frequently in the workplace*
- *Only 40% of female survey respondents agreed with the statement “I am a leader”*
- *The top leadership qualities identified as those found in exceptional leaders are characteristics external research has concluded are feminine qualities*
- *The disparity between males and females occurs at the management level*
- *93% of survey respondents indicated that they have had some form of professional development in their careers and 77% would feel comfortable asking management for a professional development opportunity*
- *Seeing a female in an executive or leadership role positively motivated females at lower levels*
- *62% of female survey respondents indicated that they will speak up confidently in meetings*
- *Networking with other women is important throughout their careers*

INTRODUCTION

Project Summary

Workforce WindsorEssex was the recipient of funding in January 2015 from Status of Women Canada under the project theme Advancing Women in Various Sectors through Mentorship/Sponsorship. This project is a research-based initiative, which will create responsive programming to the participating organizations and partners to achieve success and position women to gain momentum and reach success.

Workforce WindsorEssex has partnered with Ronna Hope Warsh, Leader Coach and Consultant, to carry out the project and together develop strong, responsive and sustainable programs with each Employer Partner to help women gain momentum in their careers and position them for success. Workforce WindsorEssex and Ronna Hope Warsh (from here, referred to as the project team) will continue their work together throughout the project duration to achieve outcomes and successes, as identified by the employers and the project participants, while remaining firmly aligned to the priorities of Status of Women Canada.

Positioning Women for Success – Windsor-Essex which examines barriers faced by women in the workplace and how through responsive and relevant programming, employers can address these issues and implement best practices to position their female employees for success. These successes and best practices will be shared, demonstrating a need for attention and serving as an opportunity to start a larger community conversation on women’s issues in the workplace.

Responsive programming has been designed and developed through a combination of investigative measures to understand existing barriers, challenges faced by women in the workplace, limitations based on organizations policy or practices, successes and organizational best practices, and opportunities for change.

Over the 30-month project duration, Workforce WindsorEssex will work intensively with each Employer Partner for a three month duration to address their needs from both an operation standpoint as well as an employee standpoint. Implementation of a mutually agreed upon program will be delivered by the project team in this three month period. The needs of each organization from a management perspective were identified through one on one interviews with key contacts from each employer partner. Employees had an opportunity to share their opinions on workplace needs through an invitation to participate in an anonymous survey and focus groups. The survey questions and focus group questions were developed using a gendered lens to understand the needs and barriers faced by females and how programming can be implemented to improve outcomes. The results of the survey and focus group will serve as the statistical basis for the purposes of this Needs Assessment.

The expected project outcome is that over the project’s duration, 100 women will be impacted through program development, policy change or implementation, change to organizational procedures, or through the recommendation of strategic actions by the project team. A count of women participants of the targeted programming, coaching, attendees of events and workshops will be collected and measured to determine whether the expected project goal was met.

Partnerships

In order to effectively carry out this project in an impactful and meaningful way, it was critical to establish partnerships with innovative, open-minded and dedicated organizations that saw the long-term value in implementing a program like Positioning Women for Success – Windsor-Essex. Additionally, partners would need to be willing to have frank discussions about where organizational gaps may exist and through this recognition, demonstrate their enthusiasm to participating in this project in entirety and make changes within their organizational structures to address key issues.

Additionally, it was important to represent women through this project across both male and female dominated industries (where a combination of historically male and female dominated occupations existed) and across organizations which operated in both the City of Windsor and throughout Essex County. The final list of Employer Partners dedicated to the project are:

- County of Essex/Essex-Windsor EMS (Emergency Medical Services)
- Enwin Utilities
- Green Shield Canada
- KPMG
- VON (Victorian Order of Nurses)
- Windsor Regional Hospital

Relationships with key contacts at each organization were developed. Key contacts represent individuals, both male and female, whose jobs range across various functions and levels of management within their organizations. These key contacts additionally make up a portion of the project’s steering committee, which drives the course of the project.

Additional community stakeholders are also members of the steering committee, and provide insight, knowledge and expertise around women’s issues, barriers and strategies for overcoming these barriers.

Program Design

Discussions with key contacts from each Employer Partner allowed the project team a chance to gain an understanding of where real gaps existed and what led to challenges within the organizations. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to learn about organizational successes and how those best practices could be shared and championed. In all efforts to avoid an overly prescriptive leadership program, the project team felt it was necessary to learn directly from employer partners and their employees where they felt gaps for women in the workplace existed, what barriers existed and where there may have been organizational roadblocks that limit women from advancing in their workplaces. Key contacts from each Employer Partner met with the project team and through a very honest conversation, learned about how the objectives of the project could fit into each organization in a unique and meaningful way. Suggestions for workplace programming included a mentorship, leadership coaching, job shadowing, workshops, ideas for improvements to existing policies and processes, and the creation of new policies and processes.

Objectives of Needs Assessment

The Positioning Women for Success – Windsor-Essex Needs Assessment has two key objectives:

1. Address workplace issues faced by women
2. Encourage employers to recognize the limitations/barriers that exist within their own organizations

Measures of Success

As the specific leadership program will vary between each Employer Partner based on their identified needs and the needs of their employees, it is difficult to specifically define what success will look like. Being that each Employer Partner has a different set of outcomes they hope to achieve based on where gaps exist, the success measures for the project as a whole are very broad. Measures are also very individual to the participants who will be working through the programs; therefore, it is important to not limit what success looks like at the participant level as well.

The project team has developed, but are not limited to, the following examples of measures of success for both the Employer Partners and the female program participants.

Table 1 – Measures of Success

Employer Partner	Program Participants
Recognizes barriers and create solutions (internal processes, procedures or through policy change) Learns best practices Shares success stories Recognizes and promotes male champions and their supportive practices Implements a customized leadership program Creates ways to support women to stretch in their careers	Have access to more leadership development opportunities Take on a stretch assignment Speak up more in meetings Be more involved in community (local clubs or boards of directors) Promotion More professional development opportunities Increased confidence to: Speak up in meetings, apply for new jobs, take on new tasks Develop strong networks

Methodology

The project team examined both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis for the purposes of the Needs Assessment report. Research questions were created to gain insight and information in five key research areas. The research themes are:

1. Visibility of women in an organization
2. Availability of professional development opportunities
3. Policy or internal process limitation
4. Confidence
5. Qualities of exceptional leaders

Through the distribution of a survey, as well as holding formal focus group sessions, the project team understood the value of a mixed method approach for data collection.

To adhere to confidentiality measures put in place, identifying information with respect to the Employer Partners, participants in the survey or focus group sessions will not be divulged in this Needs Assessment report. All names have been changed to maintain confidentiality. Survey questions and questions posed in the focus group sessions can be found as an appendix.

Survey

A 15 question electronic survey was created and distributed to employees from all six participating Employer Partners. The invitation to complete the survey was not limited to female respondents and the project team saw the importance of examining the results from both men and women to achieve a gender based analysis. Paper copies of the survey were also made available and distributed to attendees of the focus group sessions if they had not had an opportunity to complete the questions online. Paper survey responses were entered into the survey software to ensure that all completed responses were included. Each question asked in the survey captured an element of at least one research theme. The survey also allowed an opportunity for respondents to enter their contact information should they be interested in staying connected with the project team and apprised of upcoming communications or events. Willing respondents were also made aware that all responses will remain confidential and data will only be used and reported on in the aggregate. A total of 214 responses were submitted, with 183 complete responses. For the purposes of the Needs Assessment Report, figures indicated will be representative of the 183 complete responses.

Focus Group Sessions

Focus group sessions were held with willing participants from each Employer Partner totalling eight sessions. The breakdown of participation can be found below. The information in Table 2 does not match the chronological schedule of the focus group sessions to keep participant figures confidential. The participants of the Focus Group Sessions were

96% female. In two cases, males attended the Focus Group Sessions and provided input as to what they perceived were barriers and challenges faced by women in the workplace. In four of the sessions, the key Employer Partner contact attended the session.

Of those, the participation rate of immigrants (those actively engaged in the labour force) was 51.3%, indicating that just under half of all immigrants to the region were not active in the workforce. Those immigrants who were actively participating in the labour force experienced a higher unemployment rate than non-immigrants (12% compared to 9.7%).

The top three occupational categories in which immigrants were predominately employed were sales and service occupations, trades, transport and equipment operator and related occupations, and occupations in manufacturing and utilities.

Table 2 – Focus Group Sessions

Focus Group Session	Total Number of Participants
1	12
2	12
3	14
4	4
5	10
6	8
7	6
8	6
Total	72

Five questions were developed to guide the discussion between the facilitators (the project team) and the participants. Each question captured an element of at least one research theme. Participants were asked to sign a Research Ethics Policy, created by Workforce WindsorEssex, explaining the purpose of the focus group session, procedure and process of the session, recording of ideas and thoughts, how results will be used, and that responses will remain confidential and only reported on in the aggregate. All attendees signed the Research Ethics Policy.

The Focus Group Sessions were an opportunity to hold very honest and open discussions and hear directly from employees what they felt may be limits within their workplace and share their journeys, successes and failures, and recommendations based on experience.

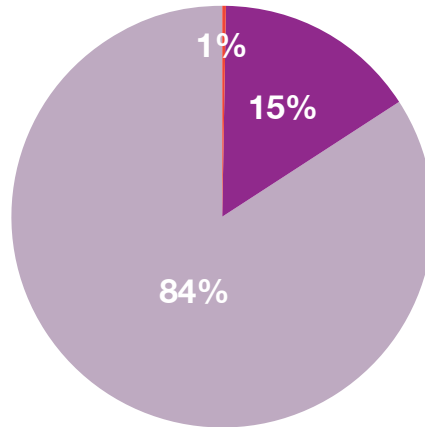
The responses from the Focus Group Sessions and the Survey will be combined and reported on in this Needs Assessment to provide a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative data analysis to identify key findings.

Survey Responses by Demographics

The survey began by asking preliminary questions based on gender, age range, number of years employed with current employer, and education. A breakdown of survey respondents based on these indicators can be found below.

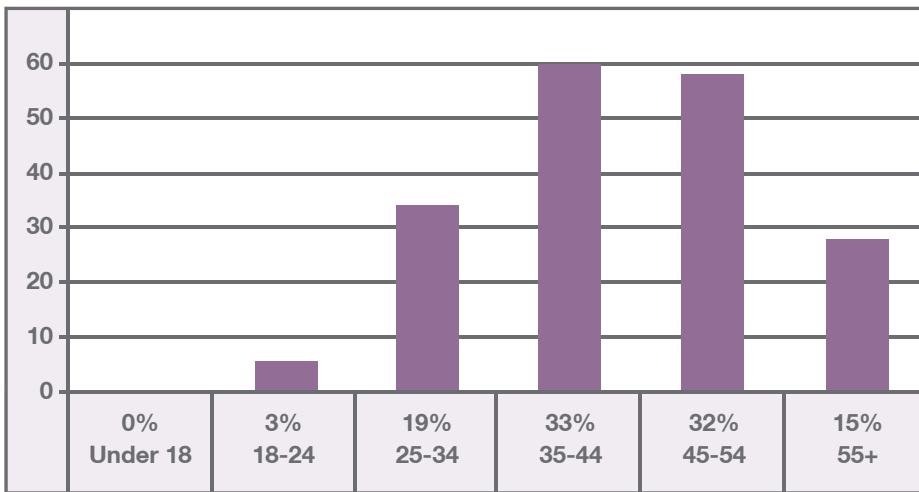
Chart 1 – Respondents by Gender

Male 15% ■
Female 84% ■
Other 1% ■



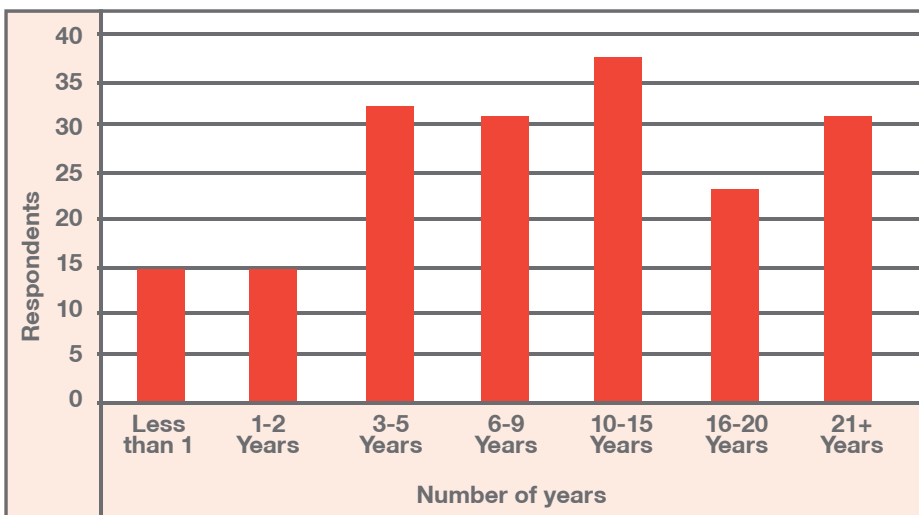
Females accounted for the largest representation of respondents, with 84% (n=154) of the total 183 being female males accounted for 15% (n=28) & less than 1% (n=1) identified as other.

Chart 2 – Respondents by Age Range



The majority of respondents fell within the age range of 35-44 and 45-54, accounting for 64% (n=117) of respondents. This breakdown is not a surprise as responses reflect those employees who are categorized as being in their prime working years. Statistics Canada defines prime working years as workers falling between the ages of 24-54.

Chart 3 – Respondents by Years of Service with Current Employer



Of all respondents, 37 indicated that they had been employed by their current employer for 10-15 years. Using the 10 year marks as a dividing point, the respondents were split nearly evenly between those who had been employed at their current employer from 0-9 years and those who had 10 plus years of service.

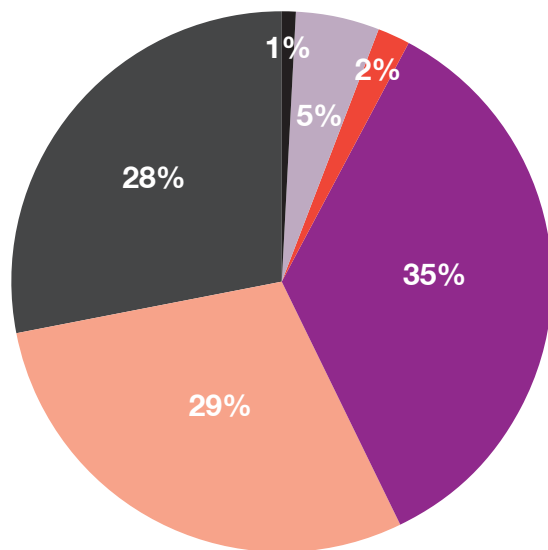
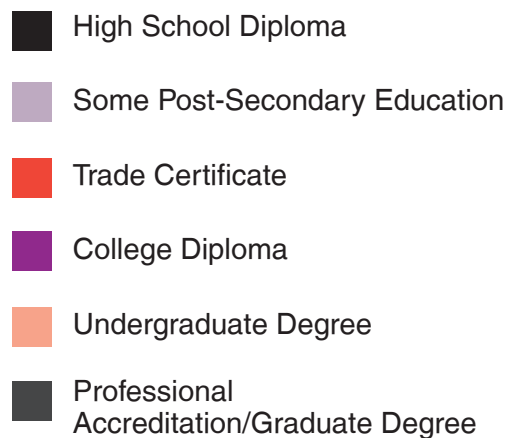


Chart 4 – Respondents by Highest Level of Education



Over 91% of respondents who completed the survey had attained some form of post-secondary education. The majority of respondents indicated that they had achieved a college degree as their highest level of education at 34% (n=63). These figures were to be expected as many of the Employer Partners operate in the Professional Services sector and require post-secondary education.

Key Findings

As previously mentioned, key findings for the purposes of the Needs Assessment were drawn from a combination of data collected through the survey (both paper and online versions) and amalgamated Focus Group Session responses. Data has been analyzed and categorized to represent the five key research themes. These themes are:

1. Visibility of women in an organization
2. Availability of professional development opportunities
3. Policy or internal process limitation
4. Confidence
5. Qualities of exceptional leaders

Based on the formulation of both the survey questions and the Focus Group Session questions to include and incorporate each theme, it allows for an opportunity to substantiate the qualitative data set with the quantitative data.

Theme 1 – Visibility of Women in an Organization

This theme was investigated to determine whether women in the Employer Partner organizations were in supervisory, managerial or decision making roles. Additionally, the purpose of including this theme was to explore whether seeing women in supervisory, managerial or decision making roles affected other women in the organization and served as a motivational factor.

Respondents of the survey were asked to indicate whether they oversaw others in a managerial or supervisory capacity.

44.8% of all survey respondents indicated that they oversaw others and the majority of respondents specified that they oversaw 20+ individuals as part of their jobs.

In terms of female survey respondents, 41.6% indicated that they oversaw others.

Participants in the focus group sessions indicated that they saw few women in executive teams, leadership positions or management level positions. Participants validated their responses by commenting on the historically male dominated nature of particular industries or organizations and that little change had happened over time. Women spoke of instances where they were the only female in a meeting. Others referred to their organization as an “old boys club” where decision making was highly male dominated.

Anne¹ posed the question to the group, “Does equal representation mean equal say and equal value of work?” Many focus group participants across the six Employer Partners indicated that the disparity between men and women began at the manager level. Operational and non-management positions were, in many cases, split nearly 50/50 between males and females.

Female survey participants expressed similar sentiments, with 30% indicating that they disagreed with the statement “I feel that there is a balanced representation of men and women in leadership and executive roles”, with another 29% expressing that they only somewhat agreed with the statement.

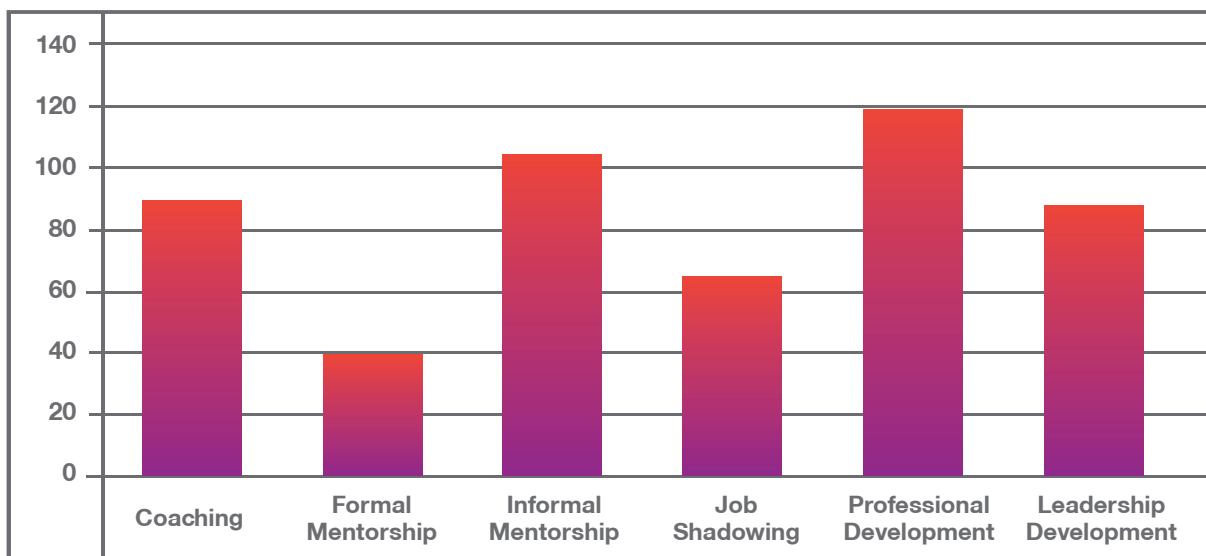
Theme 2 – Availability of Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development is a method that employers can use to demonstrate their commitment to employees, through promoting growth, skill building and ways to stay current in changing economic conditions and environments. This commitment may lead to greater employee loyalty and employee retention.

Professional development can be defined as increasing capabilities through access to formal or informal facilitated learning opportunities.

Survey respondents were asked to identify development activities that they had participated in throughout their careers. Chart 5 displays the results.

Chart 5 – Respondents by Development Activities



¹Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality

93% (n=171) of respondents indicated that they had participated in some type of development activity, with 12 not having completed any development activities in their careers (non responses are not captured in Chart 5). The most prevalent activity that respondents had an opportunity to be involved in was professional development, with informal mentorship being the activity participated in the second most.

With respect to respondents' current organizations, 35.5% (n=65) answered that they agreed to the statement, "I am aware of professional development opportunities within my organization", with 21.3% (n=39) who indicated that they disagreed with the statement. However, nearly 50% of respondents indicated that they pursued learning and professional development opportunities.

The focus group conversation led participants to share their concerns that many opportunities for professional development were limited to those in managerial positions and stated that those in non-management roles who were interested in further development had to seek out information on their own. It was up to the interested employee to advocate for themselves by finding the right course/program and present the information to management for approval. In some cases, as discussed, it was also the financial responsibility of the interested employee, and only upon the completion and passing of a course would financial reimbursement be granted. Some felt that this was a barrier, as depending on the course, it was challenging to dedicate a large financial sum up front. In other instances, there was not a financial reimbursement offered at all to any employees who were non-management. The full costs of the chosen courses were incurred by the employee.

Some courses or training desired by employees was not approved, as some organizations required that the development or training be relevant and related to the employee's current role, not training attached to a goal or role that they aspire for in the future.

Theme 3 – Policy or Internal Process Limitation

An element of this Needs Assessment Report is to review the policies and operating procedures of the participating Employer Partners. The purpose of this examination was to identify if there were any inherent limitations or gaps with respect to female employees and to share best practices or innovative processes that Employer Partners had established within their organizations.

All Employer Partners willingly provided copies of their organizational policies as they related to items such as, but not limited to:

- Respectful Workplace Policies
- Harassment Policies
- Violence Policies
- Bullying Policies
- Recruitment Policies
- Leave of Absence Policies
- Flexible Work Arrangement Policies

Through the careful examination of the policies, it was not evident that policies were written in a language that would inherently or deliberately limit women. Each Employer Partner provided a copy of their harassment/violence/safe workplace policy, which indicated that actions, discrimination, harassment or violence (verbal and physical) based on an employee's gender would not be tolerated. Most indicated that complaints which were lodged with the appropriate authority would be subject to further investigation, if deemed necessary. Some Employer Partners referenced this policy as a Respectful Workplace Policy, and it was the responsibility of managers to disseminate information pertaining to the policy. This would help to ensure that direct reports understood their responsibilities, understood related formalized complaint processes and, if deemed necessary, instructed them on providing training to staff on this important topic.

During consultations held directly with Employer Partner key contacts, the topic of flexible work options (ie. working from home, flexible scheduling) were discussed. There was not a consensus across all participating organizations on flexible work options based on the composition and nature of employee occupations. This was further corroborated when considerations were made to Employer Partners who operated with a number of unionized positions and active collective agreements. In one case where flexible work options or arrangements were made available to employees, a formal proposal process was required to be submitted to management indicating reasons for the work arrangement. In another, flexible arrangements were only an option for a particular employee demographic.

Through one focus group session discussion, it was mentioned that one organization has a program that keeps women who are off on maternity leave connected to the workplace through a buddy system. The purpose of the program is to inform participating employees of major changes occurring in regards to their work during their leave so that the transition return to work will be smoother.

The survey presented two statements to respondents where they were asked to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement to workplace policies and procedures.

80.2% of overall respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “I feel like workplace policies at my workplace limit women”. Of female respondents, 79% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

As previously mentioned, based on the nature of certain occupation or agreements which bind bargaining units, policies may vary across departments making it challenging to investigate overall organizational policies. The survey results however, indicate that the majority of respondents who completed the survey did not feel that the formal policies at their organizations were limiting towards women.

59.3% of overall respondents indicated that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “I feel like workplace practices (not a formal policy) limit women”.

The majority of the discussions held in the focus group sessions around workplace practices mentioned the specific workplace culture as being a determining factor on the treatment of women. This was especially the case in male dominated work environments or male dominated occupations. Female participants in the focus group sessions spoke about times where they were referred to as “the girl” or where gender-specific language (“the ladies who work in...”) was used when referring to employees in certain organizational functions.

Additionally, women who worked in more male dominated environments reflected on instances where they would be included in communications that often used greetings such as “dear gentlemen” or “good morning boys”. The use of this language created an atmosphere of exclusion for females.

This exclusion, or cultural imbalance of gender, was also reported to exist for some women when working directly with clients or customers.

Seema² shared, “There are times when I feel that I am not taken seriously at a client’s place of business because I am young and female. They have little female representation in their workplaces and that culture negatively impacts me.”

Some participants in the focus group sessions discussed how having knowledge of other departments, or having the opportunity to be involved in a cross function team, would allow for greater organizational cohesiveness and capacity and would foster a better corporate understanding. Making cross training opportunities available could also dispel myths about particular business functions as being gender specific and “easier” as well as serve as a mechanism for culture shift and increased respect between peers. In participating organizations where cross functional teams did exist, focus group participants shared that the knowledge and learnings gained through their experiences with other departments enriched their own work. It also gave some women, who had recently shifted positions, the confidence to lead, having at least some prior knowledge of a different area of their organizations.

²Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality

Implementing cross function teams or training would also allow for an opportunity to develop relationships and grow professional networks with others in one’s own organization. 62% of survey respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Networking will help my career”, and in that same vein, nearly 40% of survey respondents indicated that they were involved in the community (whether that be on boards of directors, clubs or associations). Exposure to other functions that were not well known or had not been clearly mapped may also have created paths to opportunities through job shadowing or mentoring within the organization.

In all focus group sessions, the topic of professional or leadership development and the linkages to performance appraisals or career planning was discussed among participants. In most organizations, performance appraisals were carried out for all staff across the participating organizations. Focus group participants shared that although the appraisals were completed at a minimum of once per year, there was no long-term goal planning or strategy involved in the process. These limiting instances did not allow for discussions of future goals between employees and managers, and thus, potential supports or developments to enhance skills, knowledge, abilities and success factors for employees were never identified.

Theme 4: Confidence

An internal study conducted at Hewlett Packard showed that women applied for promotions when they have 100% of the skills required, where men apply when they have 60% of the skills. A further study found that men initiate wage negotiations four times as often as women, and when women do negotiate, they ask for 30% less wages than men do. Both of these instances made mention that the quality of the candidate’s performance did not differ; it was the self-estimation of abilities and one’s own internal confidence which led to their actions (Shipman, 2014).

Ronna Warsh of Ronna Hope Warsh Leadership Coaching and Consulting serves as the Strategic Action Director for the project. Ronna has coached many women who aspire to or have moved into leadership roles. She has found that most women lack confidence and they benefit from both coaching and a strong network of support. With these supports many do attain goals that they thought they would never reach.

Looking to the survey results around confidence, respondents were asked whether they agreed/disagreed with the statement, “I will confidently speak up in meetings”. 72% of male respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, but only 62% of female respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed. When asked, only 40% of female survey respondents indicated that they agreed with the statement, “I am a leader”.

Denise³ mentioned, “I feel like I have to know every detail of my job and that in order to be successful, I would need to build from the bottom up to feel totally confident and accomplished”.

Survey respondents were asked to select from a list of 10 items the things that they would feel comfortable asking of their employers. Table 3 identifies the top five items that female respondents indicated that they would feel comfortable asking for.

Table 3 – Female Responses in Asking Employers for Supports

Rank	Item	Percentage
1	Professional Development Opportunity	77.4%
2	Special Project	50.3%
3 (tied)	Stretch Assignment (<i>project or assignment beyond current knowledge or skills</i>)	49.7%
3 (tied)	Flexible Work Schedule	49.7%
5	Mentorship Opportunity	41.9%

³Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality

The item that female respondents indicated that they would feel least comfortable in asking their current employer for was a pay raise, followed by those who mentioned they would not feel comfortable asking for any of the listed items.

When considering applying for a new role or looking to grow more professionally, many of the female participants indicated that it takes courage to just go ahead and do it.

Rita⁴ asked those in her focus group session, “Will my voice be heard if I get into a management role? Would applying be a waste of time?”

The lack in confidence, Rita followed up with, was attributed to her desire for perfection and to have her work seen with value. The focus group sessions all echoed the female participants’ experiences in wanting to be perfect in all aspects of both their professional and personal lives. It was discussed how this desire led to self-limitations or focus on imperfections or mistakes. This tough criticism was reported to outweigh what accomplishments had been achieved throughout the year or related to a particular project.

Female participants in the focus group sessions also indicated that many of the caregiving responsibilities at home rest on women. Many indicated that the work demanded of them at work plus the work demanded at home would not allow for taking on more work responsibilities. Reasons for this also include not feeling that there would be additional support for caregiving responsibilities from a partner at home or flexibility from their employer to accommodate additional workplace responsibilities.

Theme 5 – Qualities of Good Leaders

This theme was an important element to examine for the purposes of the Needs Assessment report for a number of reasons. It allowed a chance to investigate what employees at each Employer Partner saw as true characteristics of good leaders and as well, serve as an opportunity for respondents to reflect on those characteristics which they felt that they possessed.

Focus group session attendees reflected on the importance of a leaders’ strong and transparent value system. These values could be transformational and could dictate the behaviours of all direct reports of a particular manager or leader. Two way respect as an element of a leader’s value system also was deemed impactful and could create an open environment with peers. A supportive style where managers gave their time and put in the effort to work with and support their subordinates was touted as being incredibly important to the attendees of the focus group sessions.

“Good managers spend time with their directs.” – Felicia⁵

It was mentioned previously that many women felt that their goals and career aspirations were not captured as part of their performance appraisal, making it challenging to create a plan or path. Managers dedicated to interactions with their direct reports would be valuable for recognizing their employees’ skills and abilities and recognizing where upskilling or further development may be needed or beneficial.

It was also mentioned that strong leadership does not need to be solely provided from someone in a supervisory or managerial position, rather it can come from peers and co-workers.

“Leadership helps us to navigate when there is an absence of managers.” – Shelby⁶

When presented with 21 characteristics, survey respondents were asked to choose the top seven that they saw in a leader, male or female. Responses are organized in the tables below by female responses and male responses.

⁴Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality

⁵Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality

⁶Names have been changed to maintain confidentiality

Table 4 – Exceptional Leadership Characteristics

Ranking By Female Respondents	Characteristic
1	Good Communicator
2	Honest
3	Inspires Others
4	Responsible
5	Positive Thinker
6	Flexible
7	Dedicated

Ranking By Male Respondents	Characteristic
1	Good Communicator
2	Inspires Others
3	Honest
4	Responsible
5 (tied)	Decisive
5 (tied)	Visionary
6 (tied)	Authentic
6 (tied)	Flexible

There were similarities among responses from both males and females. Based on the research conducted by (Gerzema) John Gerzema and Michael D’Antonio, characteristics have an inherent masculine or feminine association, with some being neutral.

The characteristics presented and selected by survey respondents in Table 4 were overwhelmingly those which Gerzema and D’Antonio identified as being feminine.

The authors of the Athena Doctrine dedicated research to identifying what leadership characteristics were traditionally masculine and feminine and whether adopting traits normally associated with women would lead to better leaders. Their research found that characteristics like cooperation, long-term thinking and flexibility are traditionally feminine leadership traits, yet many men are adopting this style of leadership.

Anne Cummings, professor of business administration at the University of Minnesota at Duluth stated that men and women can exhibit the same results and accomplishments and the perception of their effectiveness is different based on role congruity (the expected actions of a person based on his or her gender). It is from a combination of traits and styles paired with the awareness of culture in a department, division or organization that make for good leaders (Knowledge@Wharton, 2005).

Traits like collaboration, caring, openness and respect are also those which from external research has defined as feminine characteristics, yet they recently have become foundational for all leaders as they make good business sense (Bailey, 2013).

Recommendations

Addressing barriers faced by women in the workplace and creating environments rich for fostering success can only be done with the cooperation and dedication of a host of stakeholders. It is not only the responsibility of employers, but also of the employees themselves to recognize and speak up when disparities and unfavourable conditions in their workplaces occur. These recommendations reflect the information presented in this report and will serve to as valuable research and as a resource for other employers who are not participating in the project.

As recently demonstrated by Canada’s Prime Minister with the appointment of a gender balanced cabinet, women possess important skills and attributes that make for good leaders. Understanding how to identify, foster and develop high performing females will have a positive impact and help to prepare and plan for the future.

With an aging population, it is not too soon to begin preparing for the future and aligning candidates with suitable roles to allow for a seamless transition.

The following recommendations presented in this Needs Assessment Report are based on a combination of focus group session participant feedback and Employer Partner feedback reinforced by additional data collected. These recommendations will serve as additional discussion points as the tailored development programs with Employer Partners are developed to reach high levels of effectiveness, rolled out and implemented.

Recommendations for Employers

1. Look for opportunities to stretch female employees so that there will be more balanced representation at managerial levels
2. Implement a forward thinking performance appraisal process which identifies the goals and aspirations of employees and their self-identified training needs. Be forward thinking and consider professional development activities which will stretch learnings and prepared for future endeavors
3. Being mindful of operational requirements, get creative and find flexible work arrangements, which will allow female employees to excel at work and at home. Consider a policy which will keep women connected during maternity leave if they choose this option
4. Ensure all staff and managers are aware of workplace policies which support women. Ensure that all staff use gender neutral terminology and solicit women's ideas.
5. Provide opportunities for cross training between work units so that there is more appreciation for gender dominated jobs as well as a richer understanding of the organization as a whole
6. Use managers to support and mentor women who are in new roles or aspire to be in new roles
7. Learn from the male champions that exist in many workplaces

Recommendations for Employees

1. Improve levels of confidence by reflecting on daily successes and change thoughts to promote a "can do" attitude
2. Take performance appraisals seriously and indicate specific goals and paths for personal growth
3. Grow a strong network of professional internally and externally
4. Become visible in the community through joining a local board of directors, becoming involved in local clubs, or stay connected through volunteering
5. Lodge formal complaints when offensive gender biased language is used
6. Read and utilize workplace policies
7. Use self-reflection as a method to understand one's own aspirations and goals.
8. Join committees to gain cross-functional and varied experience.
9. Offer suggestions and opinions freely and without fear
10. Ask for additional help at home and work to gain greater work life balance

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Appendix

Survey Questions:

Positioning Women for Success - Windsor-Essex

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your responses will be used to support the Positioning Women for Success - Windsor-Essex project, a local project examining barriers and challenges experienced by women in their workplace. The aims of the project are to better understand where these barriers exist and how workplaces can make changes to increase women's opportunities in their workplace and in the community. All responses will be kept confidential and figures and data collected will only be used in the aggregate. The survey should take 5-7 minutes to complete.

Should you have any questions related to completed the survey, please contact Heather Gregg at hgregg@workforcewindsoressex.com or at 519-255-6545 x6946

Please identify your gender

- Male
- Female
- Other

Please select your age range.

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55+

Please indicate the number of years you have been employed by your current employer

- Less than 1
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10-15 years
- 15-20 years
- 20+ years

Please indicate your highest level of education.

- High School Diploma
- Some Post-Secondary Education
- Trade Certificate
- College Diploma
- Undergraduate Degree
- Professional Accreditation/Graduate Degree
- Other, please specify... _____

Please indicate the development activities that you have participated in throughout your career.

- Coaching
- Job Shadowing
- Formal Mentorship
- Professional Development
- Informal Mentorship
- Leadership Development

Do you oversee others in a supervisory or managerial capacity?

- Yes
- No

If so, how many individuals do you supervise or manage?

- 1-5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- 20+

Multiple Choice Questions

Please respond to the statements by indicating whether you strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree or if the statement does not apply to you

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I feel that there is a balanced representation of men and women in leadership/executive roles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I see women actively involved in decision making processes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The workplace culture at my organization supports the development of women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive recognition for my work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pursue learning and professional development opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a professional development plan that supports my career goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of professional development opportunities within my organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like workplace policies at my workplace limit women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel like workplace practices (not a formal, written policy) limit women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I maintain a healthy work-life balance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My employer offers flexible work arrangements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable exercising my own authority	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I will confidently speak up in meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have taken on additional assignments to gain additional experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would take on new tasks or duties outside of my normal job responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have read books on women's leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others look up to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Networking with other women will help my career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
I am involved in the community (boards, clubs, associations etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I work for/have worked for an exceptional leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am a leader	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I would feel comfortable asking my current employer for a:

Select all that apply

- Professional development opportunities
- Flexible work schedule
- Stretch assignment
- Special project
- Raise
- Promotion
- Career plan
- Mentorship opportunity
- New role
- None of the above

Select the top seven characteristics that you see in an exceptional leader, male or female

- Flexible
- Healthy
- Curious
- Honest
- Creative
- Action Oriented
- Authentic
- Visionary
- Authoritative
- Inspires Other
- Very intelligent
- Courageous
- Energetic
- Fun
- Positive Thinker
- Good Communicator
- Responsible
- Decisive
- Collaborator
- Passionate
- Dedicated

My Employer Is

- Enwin
- Green Shield Canada
- KPMG
- County of Essex/Essex Windsor EMS
- Windsor Regional Hospital
- VON
- Other _____

If you would like to join the project's communication list, please provide your email below. Your responses will remain confidential and will not be correlated to your name or employer. All responses will only be reported on in the aggregate.

Focus Group Session Questions:

Positioning Women for Success - Windsor-Essex

- 1.** Describe what it means to you personally to be “positioned for success” in your work environment. Are there things you could do to enhance your professional advancement?
- 2.** How does [Employer Partner Name] support the ability of women to develop leadership skills that position them for success? Please give specific examples of policies, support provided, stretch assignments, male champions in the workplace etc. Are there internal processes or practices at [Employer Partner Name] which you feel limit women?
- 3.** How are women involved in the decision making process at [Employer Partner Name]? Do you feel like there is a balanced representation of men and women at the decision making level?
- 4.** How could [Employer Partner Name] better support your ability to grow, develop and advance in the workplace? This could include new policies, more supportive attitudes or new opportunities such as leadership coaching.
- 5.** Have you ever participated in a mentorship program – either as a mentor or as a protégé? If so, what were the benefits of this experience with respect to your professional development? If not, is this something that you want to do, and what would you hope to gain from the experience?

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