



Reduce Gender Bias in the Workplace

How Digital Credentials Can Surface Competency & Level the Playing Field

Men and women across the United States spent the better part of the early 20th-century campaigning, marching, and vocalizing the need for women's equality. And today, in almost every area of American life—education, employment, a higher representation of women in Congress—strong women leaders have been rising to the top.

The exception? The C-Suite, where women hold a mere **five percent** of senior titles in Fortune 500 companies. Even more alarming: when women do break through to the top and earn a chief title (such as CEO, CFO, or CIO), they still earn less than their male counterparts with the same titles. Approximately forty-six percent of women in the top five positions of the C-Suite rank either fourth or fifth in pay, compared to **thirty-three percent** of male top five executives in these pay rankings. As it stands today, **women earn eighty cents to every one dollar a man makes**.

Currently, in the United States, women are more educated than men (**fifty-six percent of college graduates are women**), and school-aged girls (kindergarten through high school) consistently **outperform boys in academics** and get **better grades**. Where's the disconnect between education and workforce outcomes for women? There are several theories. Among them: women lack the **confidence** to apply for higher level jobs, women step out of the workforce to **raise children**, and men are more likely than women to **exaggerate their skills** and experience on their resumes.

Is it possible to overcome gender bias in the workforce and hire and promote employees based on competency? The glaring divide between the sexes in education and on-the-job should be evident to most, but there are tangible steps both men and women can take to ensure everyone's success by implementing a culture of learning and recognition, by way of a digital credentialing strategy, in their organization.



**Women only hold 5% of
C-Level roles in the
United States**

Harvard Law School



**56% of U.S.
college graduates
are women**

National Center for Education Statistics



**Women earn 80 cents
for every dollar
a man makes**

United States Census Bureau

Address Existing Bias

A digital credential is a *portable, verified, and secure* representation of acquired knowledge, specific skills, or an earned achievement. Instituting a digital credentialing strategy reduces systemic bias because there is little room for personalized interpretation with a verified achievement. An employee, regardless of seniority or gender, either has the skill set to do the job they are hired to do, or they don't. Digital credentials are accompanied by extensive metadata detailing the requirements for anyone to earn the credential, along with verified evidence that a given individual has satisfied the criteria. They act as an equalizer, ensuring that different people who have the same skills or achievements describe them in exactly the same way.

Diversity amongst corporate leaders makes a business more profitable, engaging, and productive. Enabling both men and women to pursue leadership positions—and support that through recognized, verified achievements—diminishes the “boys club” and sets the stage for organizations to maximize the value of their human capital. Addressing the historic bias against women in the workplace must be a priority for forward-thinking organizations.

Encourage A Culture Of Learning Through Digital Credentials

Radical changes in the workforce, the workplace, and technology are causing business leaders to make a profound shift, according to the [2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends report](#).

"In a 21st-century career, the individual and his or her experiences take center stage. Instead of a steady progression along a job-based pathway, leading organizations are shifting toward a model that empowers individuals to acquire valuable experiences, explore new roles, and continually reinvent themselves."

2018 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends Report

The idea of recognizing and empowering employees is not a new concept, but recent evidence quantifying the value of these programs is demonstrating that they are more important than ever given the trends in today's labor market. According to Deloitte, nearly sixty percent of respondents in their 2018 survey rated their organizations as only somewhat effective or not effective in empowering people to manage their own careers. Developing a relevant and impactful learning and development strategy in the workplace can move the needle in improving employee [engagement and retention](#). When on-the-job training becomes part of an overall [benefit package](#), employees report higher satisfaction rates, become actively engaged with their work, and are less likely to leave their current role.

Redefine the Path to Leadership

Employees stay in their roles when they're appreciated and encouraged to learn new skills. By implementing a digital credentialing strategy that recognizes the incumbent workforce for learning new abilities while on the job, an organization can redefine how experienced employees make their way to the C-Suite. Proof of competency is critical when determining whether or not an employee is capable of taking on the responsibilities of upper management, including expertise in soft-skills, like leadership, communication, and presentation skills. Employees feel empowered to learn as much as they can in their current roles, especially when they know that the recognition and credentials for their professional development are the concrete and verified building blocks and a clear and direct pathway to progressive responsibilities and promotions.

Provide Flexibility

Women often remove themselves from consideration for a promotion because of factors outside of the workplace, like raising a family and maintaining a household. “Having it all” is often perceived as impossible. When an organization focuses on the skills and competency of the workforce, it removes the arbitrary barriers to gender equity, intrinsically providing women with a broader opportunity to fill the roles of upper management and beyond. Strategies to create a pathway for women to get to the C-Suite not only include flexible time off, allowing for remote work, and a reasonable maternity leave policy—it also includes implementing a digital credentialing strategy that encourages equal access to workplace learning and development opportunities and recognizes and rewards individuals equally for the same skills.

Now What?

The gender bias in corporate America is systemic and will not be solved overnight. However, taking steps to create a culture of learning and inclusivity is paramount to seeing equity and diversity in leadership roles, and ultimately to the success and sustainability of every organization. If you’re interested in learning more about how your organization can benefit from digital credentials, please reach out to learn@credly.com.



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