Career Progression in Supply Chain

The Employee Experience

Survey Results 2020

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Foreword

The impact of the global coronavirus pandemic has put pressure on supply chains as never before. Supply chain leaders and their teams have been forced to respond quickly and urgently to unanticipated spikes in demand coupled with major supply disruptions and distribution challenges, and at the same time addressing the safety and well-being of their teams, both for those who remained in the workplace and for those working exclusively from home.

Supply chain management is in large part about resilience, anticipating and solving problems and seeking to create innovative solutions for the future. So it comes as little surprise then that, even as the pandemic continues, we have already learned much about how to navigate the present as well as reflecting on what we can carry forward and build on in the future.

In this report we share the results of a recent survey of the supply chain profession which reveal current sentiment about the impact of the pandemic on the professional and personal lives of supply chain professionals. What the results clearly show is that, while the current situation is far from ideal, it has presented us with an unanticipated opportunity to think differently about what works and what doesn't when it comes to remote working.

What the results also show is that even short-term career plans haven't been put on hold. Supply chain professionals remain optimistic about their futures, are ambitious and have a strong desire to progress in their careers. They are also clear about what's getting in their way and what they'd like to see change in terms of enablers to progression. And there is quite a lot of work to do, it seems.

All of the topics covered in this report clearly deserve more in-depth attention. I look forward to further conversation with you on them and also hope that the insights shared here will go some way towards fuelling discussions and driving strategy in your own organisations as we head into 2021.

My thanks to everyone who took part in the survey and to those who volunteered to be interviewed and whose thoughts are highlighted as quotes throughout this report.

Beth Morgan
Founder, boom!

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Introduction

This report presents the results of a survey on supply chain career progression opportunity. We invited men and women across the sector to give us their grass roots perspectives on a range of topics, including:

- Career plans and aspirations
- Career progression obstacles and enablers
- Mentoring, sponsorship and leadership development
- Work-life balance
- Equity and inclusion

Over the following pages we dive into the insights generated from this inaugural global survey and share a selection of anecdotal comments in highlighted quotes. Where relevant we highlight key differences in opinion and experience between male and female respondents. Let's begin with the key headlines.

The headlines

Supply chain professionals are optimistic and aspirational

- Supply chain professionals are largely optimistic about their career of choice with 84% of respondents saying they were 'likely' (36%) or 'very likely' (48%) to recommend supply chain to someone starting out in their career.

- 69% of respondents would like to make a job move within the next one to two years. Although the majority would like to do this with their current employer, 20% are considering a move to a new employer. Although the pandemic has delayed a move for some, for others it promises to open up wider options with employers ready to offer more flexibility in work locations.

- The most popular reason to move is to achieve career goals at a greater speed than offered through a current position, with the 25-34 age group category most motivated to seek promotion. Purpose and values are also motivating moves, along with the opportunity to develop new skills. Although not at the bottom of the list, gaining access to better compensation and benefits comes fourth.

The impact of the pandemic on work-life balance presents both challenges and opportunities

- In the short term, the impact of changes in working practices due to the pandemic (e.g. working exclusively from home) has been positive for 47% of respondents. However, 53% still report challenges in achieving a healthy work-life balance, primarily due to 'always on' pressures and a subsequent blurring of boundaries between work and home life.

- Opinions are mixed on what the future workplace might look like in a post-pandemic world. Home would be the primary workplace of choice for 32% of respondents, while a further 21% would prefer a hybrid set-up, mixing work in the office with the occasional day working from home. A further 24% said that the ability to change or flex their working hours (regardless of location) would have the biggest impact on their ability to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

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Visibility, transparency and support are key when it comes to career progression

- The biggest perceived obstacles to career progression include lack of transparency in hiring/promotion decision criteria, lack of visibility into overall career progression paths as well as specific opportunities such as rotations, stretch assignments and open positions, and bias in the hiring/promotion decision-making process.

- Almost half of respondents (47%) have the support of a formal mentor or coach. A much smaller number, 24%, have the support of an individual sponsor or development champion, while a further 21% participate in a leadership development programme.

- Participation in a leadership development programme was selected by 58% of respondents as the most impactful professional development initiative their employer could offer, followed closely by better visibility into career development paths, access to career development support and increased transparency of hiring/promotion criteria and the decision-making process.

Men have a more positive perception of gender equity at work than women

- 75% of men think their employer acts 'well' or 'very well' in pursuit of gender diversity, inclusion and equity, compared to 61% of women. Notably however, 16% of women are negative about their employer's performance or rate them negatively, as are 4% of men. What's more, this has a clear impact on engagement levels. Those who are postive about their company's performance in regard to diversity, inclusion and equity rate their subsequent level of engagement as a strong 8 out of 10; for those who rate performance negatively the score drops significantly to just 3.6 out of 10.

- The biggest gaps in perception relate to progression opportunities and compensation. Only 44% of women believe they have equal opportunity when it comes to career progression, compared to 71% of men. Likewise, only 39% of women believe that their employer offers equal opportunity when it comes to compensation, compared to 67% of men.

- Crucially, neither gender believes that a level playing field exists today.

- The most impactful working environment-related initiatives that would enable career progression include a change in cultural values and leadership behaviours, greater access to flexible working and investment in unconscious bias training for all employees.

Note to readers

Throughout this report you will see quotes in sidebars like the one you see to the right here.

These quotes come from a series of interviews with respondents who agreed to speak with us in more detail about the topics raised in the survey. We thank them for their permission to share their words which we do anonymously.

"In the last 10 years supply chain has matured to the point that making a lateral move is more possible than ever before. I would be interested in a lateral move because we're developing so many tools in so many areas and becoming new experts in something that hasn't fully been there for a long time. I feel like we're still evolving and learning how to get there."
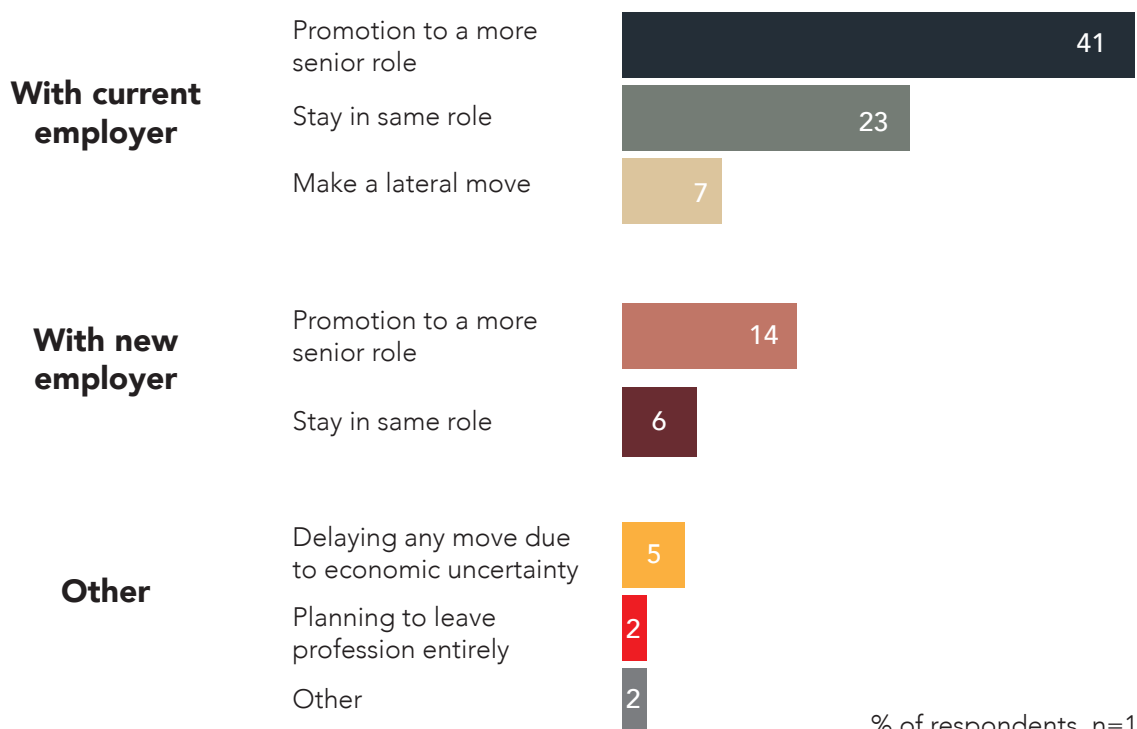
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Career plans and aspirations

Although events of 2020 have created countless distractions and piled on the pressure for many supply chain professionals, the general mood remains positive and optimistic. When asked whether they would recommend supply chain as a career to someone currently working outside the profession or just starting out, 36% of respondents said they would be 'likely' to do so, with a further 48% saying they would be 'very likely' to do so. Add those together and that's not a bad overall Net Promoter Score (NPS) if we look at it in pure marketing terms.

What is also clear is that supply chain professionals are an aspirational bunch. While just under a quarter are planning to stay in the same role over the next one to two years, and 5% are delaying making any type of move due to current economic uncertainties, 68% would like to move either laterally or to a more senior position. 48% of respondents would like to stay with their current employer to do that, with 41% seeking a more senior role and a smaller 7% wanting to make a lateral move. But 20% see their future with a new employer, either in the same or a more senior position.

Perhaps not too surprisingly the group most likely to want to make a move are those aged between 25 and 34, but they're by no means the only group with itchy feet with a third of respondents in the 45 to 65 age group planning on making some kind of move.

What type of job move are you planning to make in the next one to two years?

With current employer

Promotion to a more senior role	41
Stay in same role	23
Make a lateral move	7

With new employer

| Promotion to a more senior role | 14 |
| Stay in same role | 6 |

Other

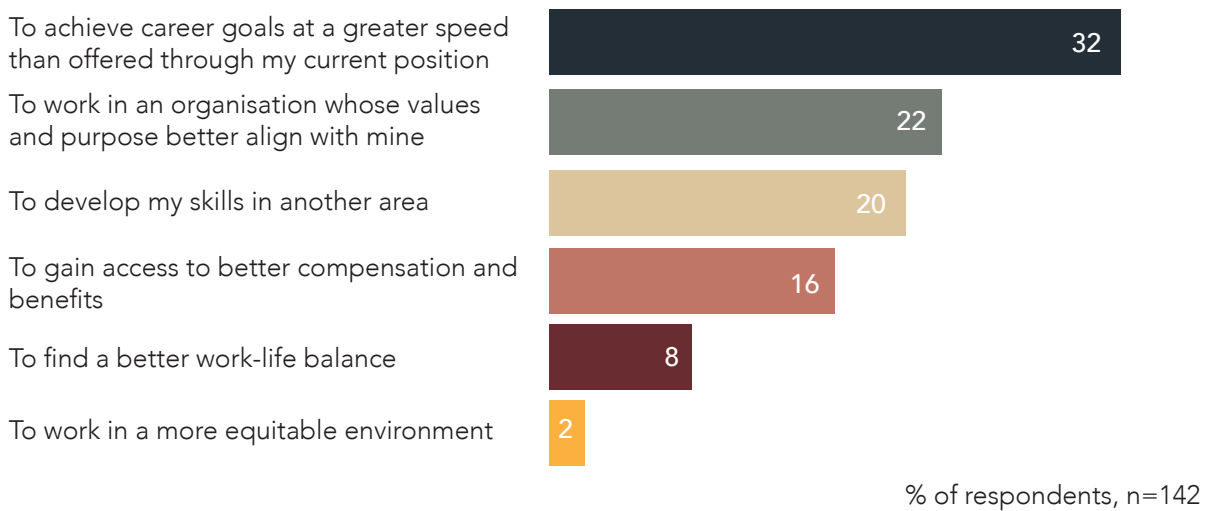| Delaying any move due to economic uncertainty | 5 |
| Planning to leave profession entirely | 2 |
| Other | 2 |

% of respondents, n=143

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So what's motivating people to make a move? The first chart below is fairly self-explanatory, with the top reason clearly reflecting the trend in recent years towards a desire to accelerate at a much faster rate in our careers than has more traditionally been the case.

Access to better compensation and benefits is far less important than working in an organisation where personal and corporate values and purpose are aligned. When we look at this from a gender perspective, women seemingly place relatively more importance on this than their male counterparts.
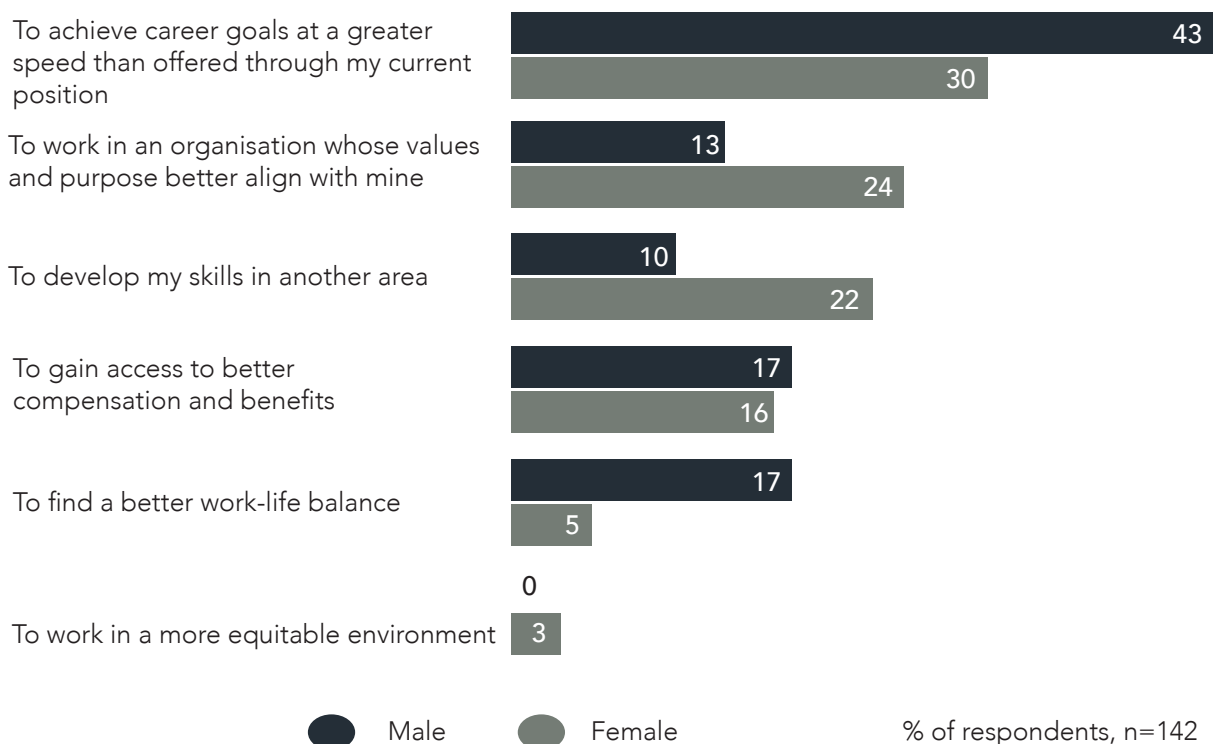
What would be your primary reason for making a job move?
All responses

Reason	%
To achieve career goals at a greater speed than offered through my current position	32
To work in an organisation whose values and purpose better align with mine	22
To develop my skills in another area	20
To gain access to better compensation and benefits	16
To find a better work-life balance	8
To work in a more equitable environment	2

% of respondents, n=142

What would be your primary reason for making a job move?
Responses by gender

Reason	Male	Female
To achieve career goals at a greater speed than offered through my current position	43	30
To work in an organisation whose values and purpose better align with mine	13	24
To develop my skills in another area	10	22
To gain access to better compensation and benefits	17	16
To find a better work-life balance	17	5
To work in a more equitable environment	0	3

● Male   ● Female   % of respondents, n=142

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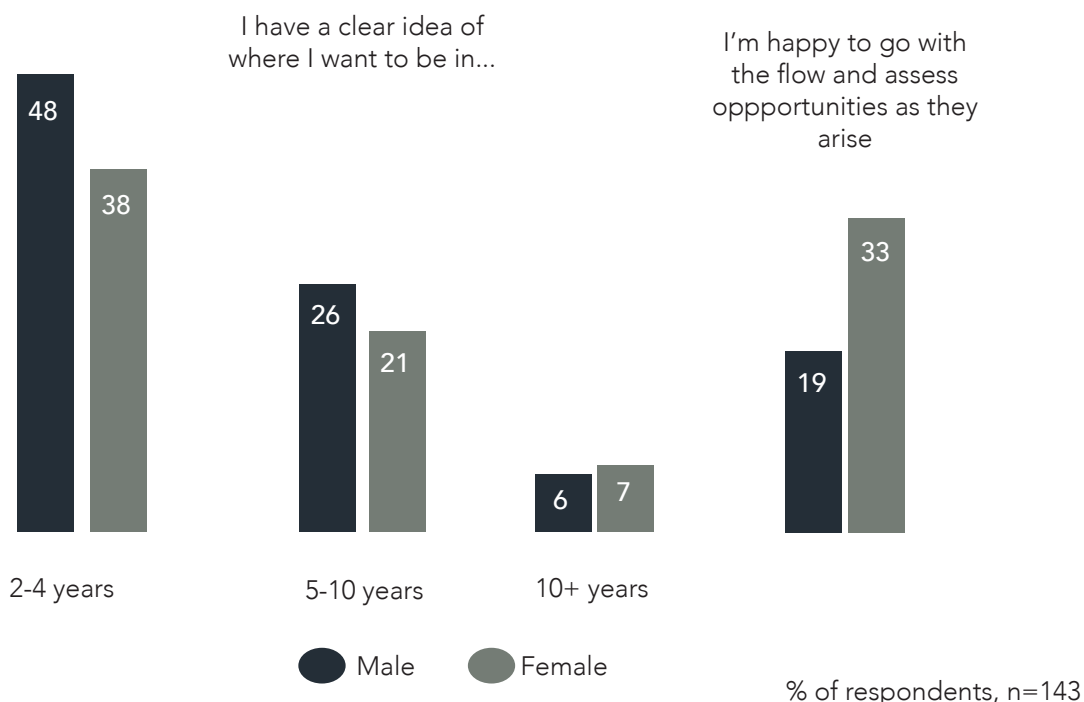
The survey results also revealed differences in approaches to career planning, with women relatively more comfortable with 'going with the flow' and assessing opportunities as they arise. The data does not give any additional insight into why this might be and what conclusions we could draw from it, although, as we shall see in the next section on career obstacles, a clearer idea of the available options as well the bigger career path picture might be one response to this more laid-back approach.

Which of the following statements best describes your approach to career planning?

I have a clear idea of where I want to be in...

I'm happy to go with the flow and assess opportunities as they arise

48 38 26 21 6 7 19 33

2-4 years   5-10 years   10+ years

● Male   ● Female

% of respondents, n=143

The COVID effect

That supply chain is seen as a positive career of choice right now may well be an unexpected by-product of the pandemic situation. For all the pressures this has created, the opportunity to create solutions to resolve the most fundamental problems in terms of access to food, shelter and healthcare - not to mention answers to combatting the virus itself! - has put supply chain on the map more than ever before. This, coupled with the ongoing acceleration of innovation thanks to automation and other digital technologies, has made supply chain a pretty exciting and fast-paced place to be.

From a career mobility perspective, the changes in working practices necessitated by the virus to a more virtual, flexible world are opening up new doors of possibility. As we learn to collaborate more effectively through virtual environments, we expect to see even higher levels of competition for supply chain talent as the question of location and constraints due to personal circumstances become an increasingly moot point. Is the war on talent about to get even hotter?

"COVID has pushed a lot of companies to start thinking about how employees can work remotely and be very successful with it. This potentially opens up the door for me to be able to stay in the area that I live and still work for a larger more traditional company."

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Career obstacles and enablers

There was some good news from this year's Gartner *Women in Supply Chain* research study, which showed that the percentage of women in C-level roles has increased this year to 17%, growing from just 9% when the survey first started in 2016[i]. But – and unfortunately there is a but – the overall pipeline remains flat, with the percentage of women in the workforce starting to tail off from senior manager level onwards.

This decrease in female representation at more senior levels certainly is by no means an issue exclusive to the supply chain sector. Last year's McKinsey *Women in the Workplace* study told a similar story, identifying a potential 'broken rung' in the career ladder as a likely cause for this drop in numbers[ii]. Their research suggested that for every 100 men promoted and hired to manager, only 72 women are promoted and hired. What's creating this 'broken rung' and how can we fix it?

With these questions in mind we wanted to find out what employees, in this case within the supply chain sector specifically, perceived to be the major obstacles to career progression. The results point loudly and clearly to two key challenges:

- Lack of visibility into overall career paths and specific opportunities such as job rotations, stretch assigments, open roles etc.

- Lack of transparency in hiring/promotion decison criteria and, arguably relatedly, bias in the hiring/promotion decision-making process.

We asked this question of both genders and the results did not highlight any notable differences. Indeed when it comes to bias, although a higher percentage of women reported being treated differently due to their gender, other areas of bias were also indicated. Most notably these included age, ethnicity, disability and differences in cultural and leadership styles.
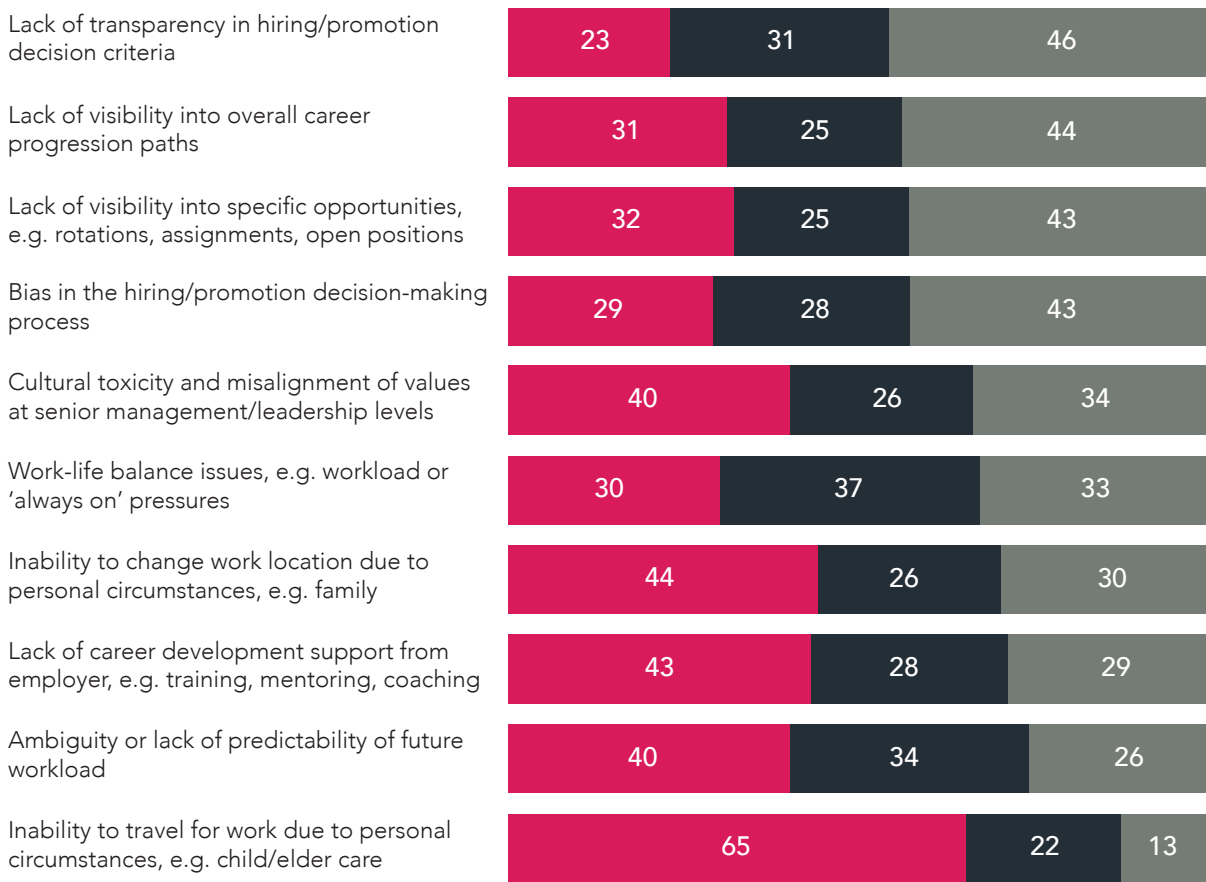
"Career paths are particularly important for our young people coming up through the organisation. They work in a bubble, so they need to see what the different career path possibilities are and where they could be heading in the future."

i *2020 Women in Supply Chain Survey Highlights Consumer Value Chain Progress*, Gartner, 1 July 2020

ii Women in the Workplace 2019, McKinsey & Company (see https://womenintheworkplace.com/2019)

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How would you rate the following as obstacles to career progression in your current position?

Obstacle	Not an obstacle	A minor obstacle	A major or somewhat of an obstacle
Lack of transparency in hiring/promotion decision criteria	23	31	46
Lack of visibility into overall career progression paths	31	25	44
Lack of visibility into specific opportunities, e.g. rotations, assignments, open positions	32	25	43
Bias in the hiring/promotion decision-making process	29	28	43
Cultural toxicity and misalignment of values at senior management/leadership levels	40	26	34
Work-life balance issues, e.g. workload or 'always on' pressures	30	37	33
Inability to change work location due to personal circumstances, e.g. family	44	26	30
Lack of career development support from employer, e.g. training, mentoring, coaching	43	28	29
Ambiguity or lack of predictability of future workload	40	34	26
Inability to travel for work due to personal circumstances, e.g. child/elder care	65	22	13

● Not an obstacle ● A minor obstacle ● A major or somewhat of an obstacle

% of respondents, n=139

No room to grow

Another issue which surfaced through the post-survey interviews was lack of room to grow. In part this is a result of the current climate, with many companies putting hiring freezes in place or with downsizing programmes underway. Longer term, however, are challenges related to stagnant pockets within organisations where there are long-tenured employees not yet ready for retirement but unlikely to change roles. Equally, this is an enduring challenge in the case of the most senior roles, where there is much less opportunity to be promoted up as the organisational hierarchy narrows towards its peak.

Additionally from a female perspective, the lack of potential female colleagues at executive levels can be seen as off-putting, creating somewhat of an ironic vicious circle. With no female leaders in place, the more challenging it can be to add them. One interviewee confirmed this conundrum: "The next role up from mine is chief supply chain officer. With the leadership in our company made up of all male, white, North American leaders, it's not a role I want to play in."

"We have lots of talented people, but not enough roles for all the talented people we've got."

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In terms of what would be most impactful for career progression, we asked respondents to select options from two categories: professional development initiatives and working environment related initiatives.

The most impactful professional development initiatives

When it comes to professional development initiatives, although having the opportunity to participate in a company leadership development programme marginally took the lead, it's clear that there's no one silver bullet here. Not surprisingly, where obstacles were highlighted in the previous chart, the desired state is for these obstacles to be eliminated or at least improved on.

Also clear from this fairly lengthy wish list is the desire to see more success stories or, in other words, inspirational role models and an indication of potential routes forward. Here, visibility of success stories from people of the same gender is preferred, perhaps not surprising given the weighting of female to male survey respondents.

Last but not least, although having access to affinity groups sits at the bottom of the list in terms of their level of impact on career progression, the value of such groups should not be underestimated. One survey interviewee shared her view on this in the context of building networks: "I wish that I had had access to support groups like this earlier in my career, that there were people out there willing to help and that there was a better way to network besides going to golf tournaments or going drinking with the guys. It's networking in a much different way and I find it's a lot more effective."

Which of the following professional development initiatives would be most impactful for your career progression?

Initiative	%
Opportunity to participate in a company leadership development programme	58
Better visibility into potential career development paths	54
Access to career development support by employer, e.g. training, mentoring, coaching	53
Increased transparency of hiring/promotion decision criteria and decision-making process	50
Better visibility into specific opportunities, e.g. rotations, assignments, open positions	48
Better visibility of leadership success stories (same gender)	40
Better visibility of leadership success stories (either gender)	32
Access to relevant employee affinity groups, e.g. gender, LGBTQ, veteran, ethnic, cultural	16

% of respondents, n=136

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The most impactful working environment related initiatives
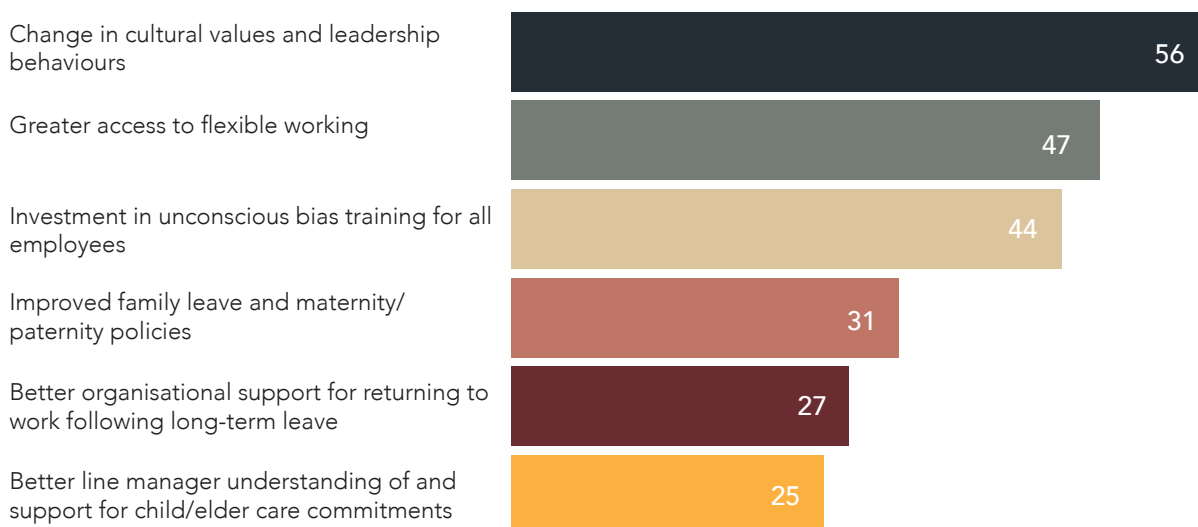
When we put together the questions for the survey, we intentionally chose to use language and options similar to those used in the *2020 Gartner Women in Supply Chain* survey – with the study owners' permission, of course. We did this because we wanted to see how much similarity there might be between the responses from both sets of survey respondents. What we found in this case is that there is a strong match between what both parties consider to be the most impactful change to working environments, namely a change in cultural values and leadership behaviours.

Although the specifics of what this means is open to interpretation, what we shall conclude from this for now is that over half of respondents are looking for companies to take action *from the top down* with that action carried through consistently, transparently and authentically, with senior leaders opening up the conversation and then modelling desired behaviours. Simply ticking the box on these issues is not enough; strategic intent must be followed through with meaningful action.

As we look further down the list below, these actions become increasingly specific and actionable. We will talk more about greater access to flexible working in a later section. But these, along with an investment in unconscious bias training for all employees – not just senior leaders and those in management positions – stand out clearly as positive actions that must be considered by all companies looking to create productive and progressive working environments.

"We love to talk about agility in supply chain, but when you work for an organisation that's stagnant, watching people change where they work and adapting to it... it was motivating and refreshing. I saw more accountability, I saw more siloes coming down. In a virtual world there are no walls. There's no fifth floor versus sixth floor. Mentally this has changed the way we work and how we collaborate."

Which of the following working environment related initiatives would be most impactful for your career progression?

Change in cultural values and leadership behaviours	56
Greater access to flexible working	47
Investment in unconscious bias training for all employees	44
Improved family leave and maternity/paternity policies	31
Better organisational support for returning to work following long-term leave	27
Better line manager understanding of and support for child/elder care commitments	25

% of respondents, n=136

boom!

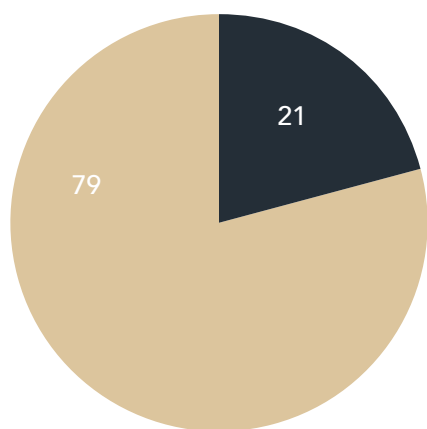# Mentoring, sponsorship and leadership development

The role of the trusted advisor passing on wise counsel to one less experienced is an age-old concept. Often informal and unstructured arrangements, an increasing number of employers are now providing structured mentoring programmes for their teams, although our survey also reveals that many employees continue to act on their own initiative and seek out formal mentors for themselves.

From a female perspective, access to other female role models is seen as having particular value. One interviewee talked about participating in a mentoring programme focused exclusively on enabling exposure to more senior female leaders: "We have a programme where a woman agrees to mentor other women to bring their careers along. It gives them exposure to women leaders across the organisation." Another lamented that in their organisation there weren't enough female leaders to help pull other women along.

Although mentoring is the most commonly used mechanism for development support today, the idea of a personal sponsor or development champion is becoming increasingly popular. Here, a more senior leader who is closely connected to the business takes a more proactive role in helping their charge navigate specific career progression opportunities, in many cases acting as an advocate for them and opening doors. For a select few, participation in a leadership development programme would seemingly provide the most highly structured and supported route to the top. Although a more exclusive option, 21% of our survey respondents say that they participate in such a programme today. However, the more personal touch of an individual development champion or sponsor is seen by a bigger group as having the most impact on career progression.

"I think there's enormous value in having a sponsor outside your immediate circle, but who is senior enough in another part of the business to help guide you. They know the organisation, they know how it works and they know the levers."
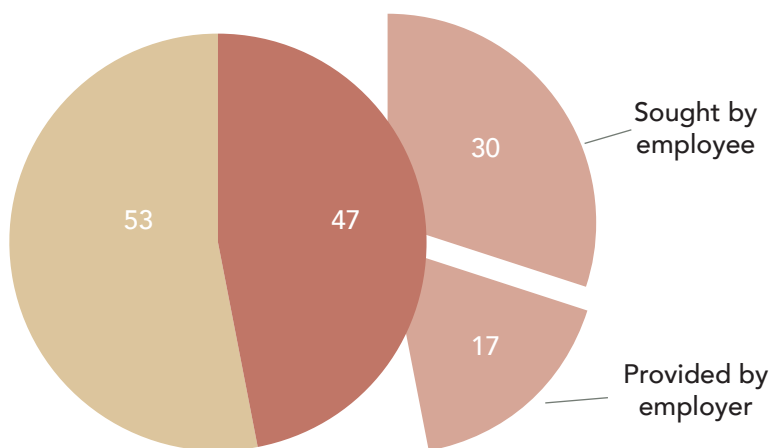
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Which of the following support mechanisms do you currently make use of?
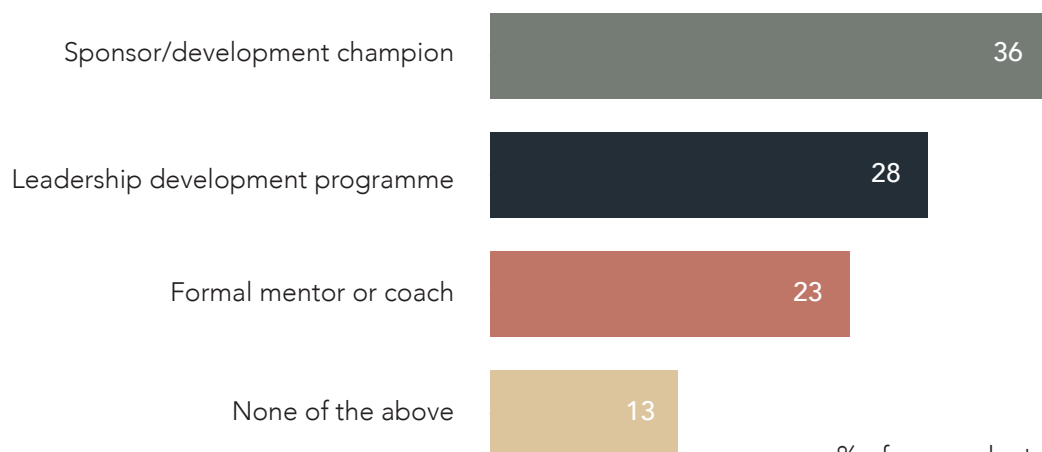

21
79

Participation in a leadership
development programme

24
76

Sponsor/development
champion

30 — Sought by employee

53 47

17 — Provided by employer

Yes
No

Formal mentor or coach

Which type of support mechanism would be of most help to you at your current stage of career progression?

Sponsor/development champion — 36

Leadership development programme — 28

Formal mentor or coach — 23

None of the above — 13

% of respondents, n=137

Work-life balance and the impact of COVID-19

Whether you call it work-life balance, work-life integration or something else entirely, the blurring of boundaries between our personal and professional lives has been brought into particularly stark relief for many of us during 2020. In line with many other surveys and articles already out there on this topic, the view from the supply chain profession in terms of what this has meant for them is mixed.

While 47% of respondents said that the changes in working practices necessitated by the pandemic have had a positive impact on their work-life balance, 20% have found the situation more challenging, while the remaining 32% were on the fence or already had an option to work from home and were therefore more used to it. This mixed response was also reflected in some of the comments by survey participants, with positve and negative aspects balancing each other out. In one case, however, the impact was truly life-changing: with no paid leave option available, the employee was forced to quit to look after children home from school.

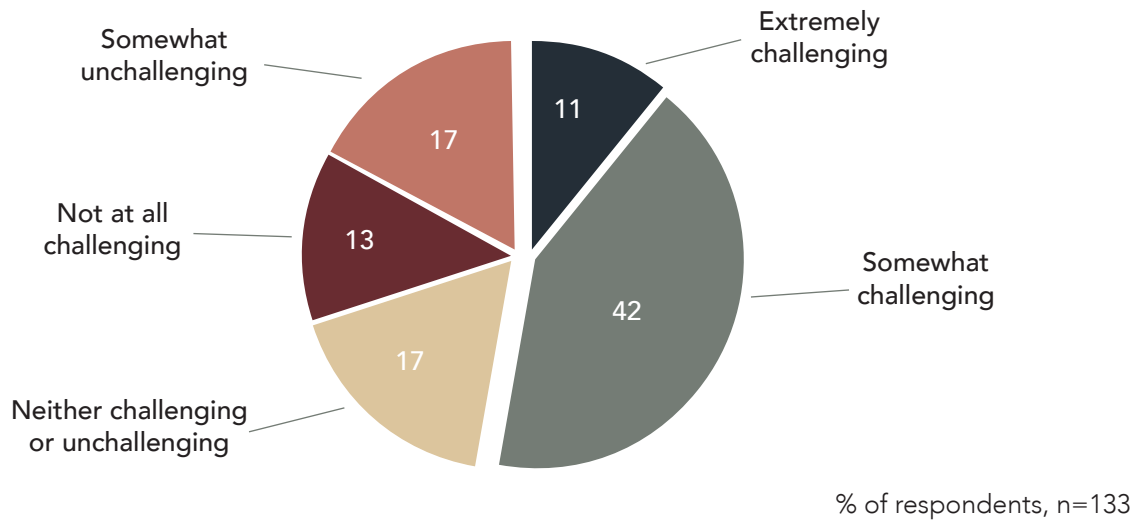Here are just a few examples of the pros and the cons selected from a very long list of comments.

On the upside...

- Less time spent commuting
- No unnecessary travel
- More productive
- More focused and prepared for meetings
- Good home office environment
- More flexibility around working hours
- More time with family and pets
- More time to exercise
- The ability to fit in laundry chores during the day
- Puts everyone on the same playing field
- Less stigma about working from home
- Distanced from a toxic boss!
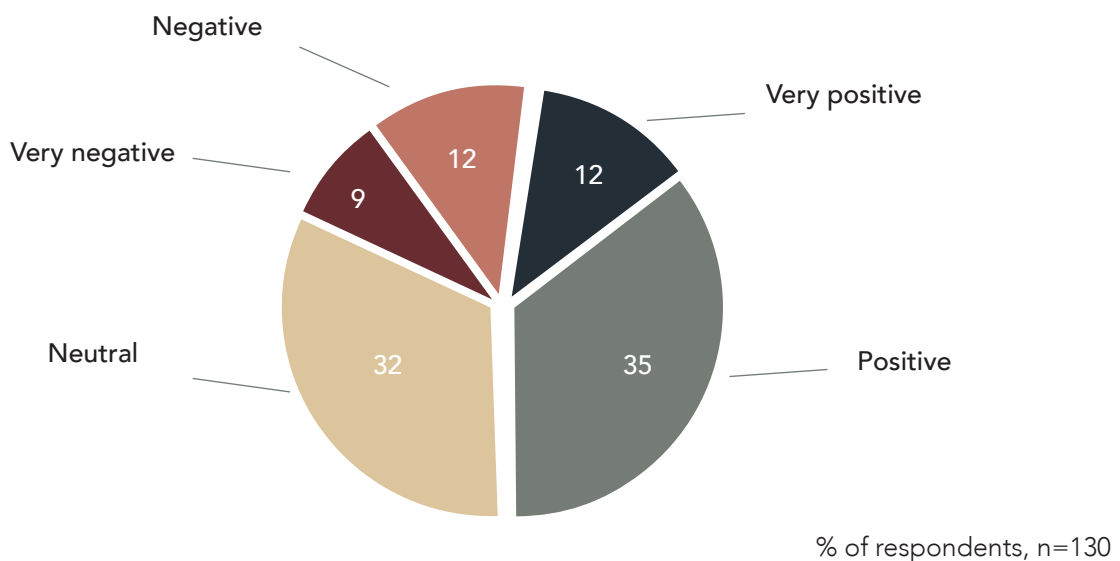- The office now closes earlier due to cleaning protocols

On the downside...

- Periodic technology/connectivity issues
- The drain and stress of constant meetings
- Lack of mobility and feeling of being 'chained' to desk
- Previously ad hoc, unstructured conversations now have to be scheduled
- Difficulty in disconnecting mentally and the expectation to be 'always on'
- Childcare challenges
- Tension with employer not understanding the various additional challenges faced
- Lack of involvement from manager and being overlooked for development and progression
- Missing team interaction
- More challenging to work creatively and collaboratively
- Difficult to connect on a personal level
- Missing social contact with colleagues
- I'm not sure if I work from home or live at work...

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How challenging is it for you to achieve a healthy work-life balance?

Extremely challenging
11

Somewhat unchallenging
17

Not at all challenging
13

Neither challenging or unchallenging
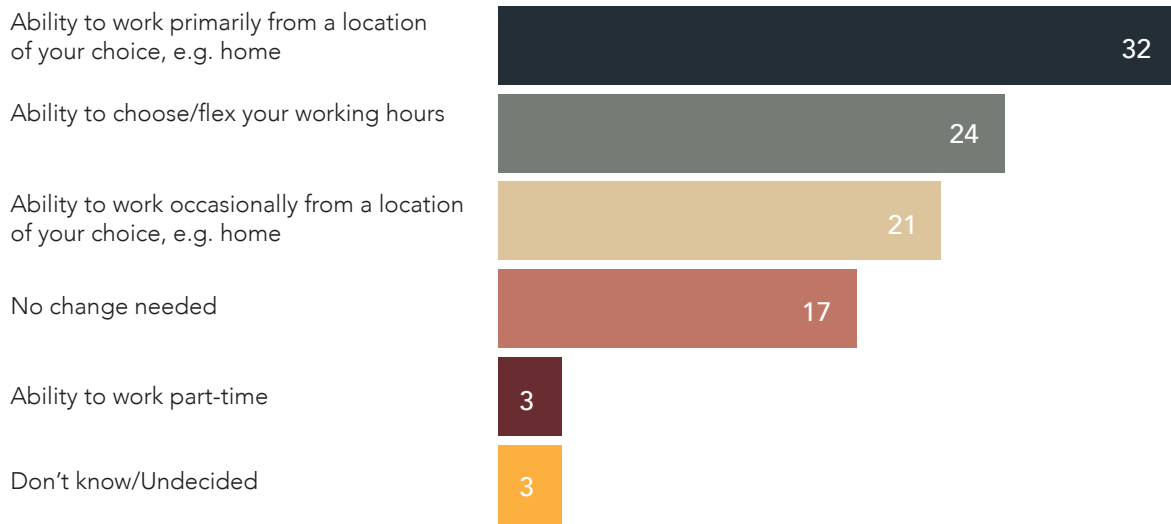17

Somewhat challenging
42

% of respondents, n=133

Many of us have had to learn to adapt and cope with the extra pressures that life during a pandemic has presented, with varying degrees of success. But for some the pressure has been both enormous and relentless and continues on several months in. The consequent risk of burnout is a very real and present danger. One interviewee shared her personal struggle to cope: "We can't work seven days a week for nine weeks straight and not expect to lose some people's sanity in that span of time. As a leader I've really struggled with how to best support my team. My answer has been to take the work on after hours and at weekends. But now I need to figure out what to do with that burden. And it's been a real struggle. I feel like I can't let go right now because there's too much to lose."

How would you describe the impact of changes in working practices necessitated by COVID-19 on your ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance?

Negative
12

Very positive
12

Very negative
9

Neutral
32

Positive
35

% of respondents, n=130

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In a post-COVID world, and where possible for your job, which of the following would have the biggest positive impact on your work-life balance?

Ability to work primarily from a location of your choice, e.g. home	32
Ability to choose/flex your working hours	24
Ability to work occasionally from a location of your choice, e.g. home	21
No change needed	17
Ability to work part-time	3
Don't know/Undecided	3

% of respondents, n=127

As the chart above clearly shows, opinion is divided on what the future workplace might look like in a post-pandemic world. What the events of this year have afforded us all, however, is the opportunity to work in ways that were previously thought at best undesirable and at worst impossible. Consequently, we have been able to get feedback on what works well and what doesn't. This is a unique opportunity to consider a more flexible set of scenarios regarding working hours and location. Given what we know so far this will likely involve a hybrid scenario of time spent in the office and at home, and less time, money and energy spent on unnecessary travel for meetings that have been proven to work well virtually instead. Beyond this we have much yet to learn about what makes for productive teams with balanced professional and home lives.
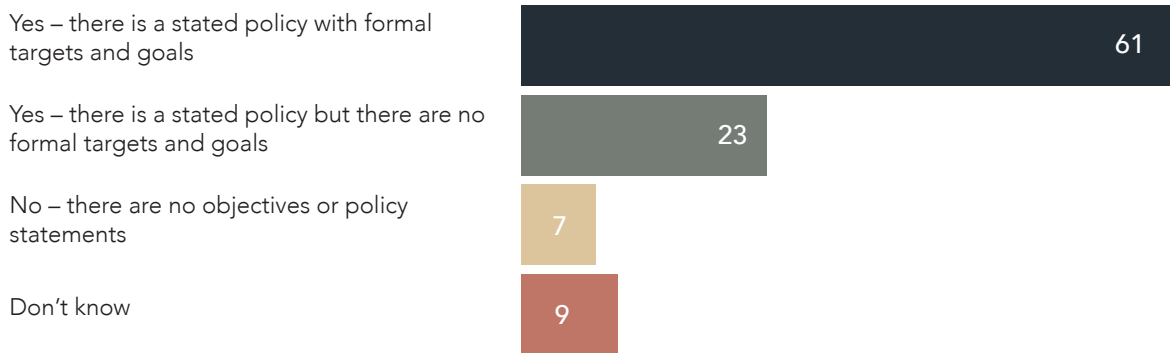
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Gender diversity, inclusion & equity

The slow growth in the representation of females in supply chain overall, along with widespread ancedotal evidence of a 'leak' in the profession, demanded that we also ask some specific questions about both perceptions and realities when it comes to gender diversity, inclusion and equity.

Firstly, we wanted to assess the current state of play regarding employers' approaches to this topic – how many companies have policies and targets in place, how many have made a statement but have not yet set (or shared) goals and how many companies have yet to take a stand?

The good news is that 61% of survey respondents told us that not only does their company have stated policies around gender diversity, inclusion and equity but that they also have openly shared targets and goals. A further 23% have policies but do not have explicit targets or goals.

Does your employer have a stated policy and/or objectives in relation to gender diversity, inclusion and equity?

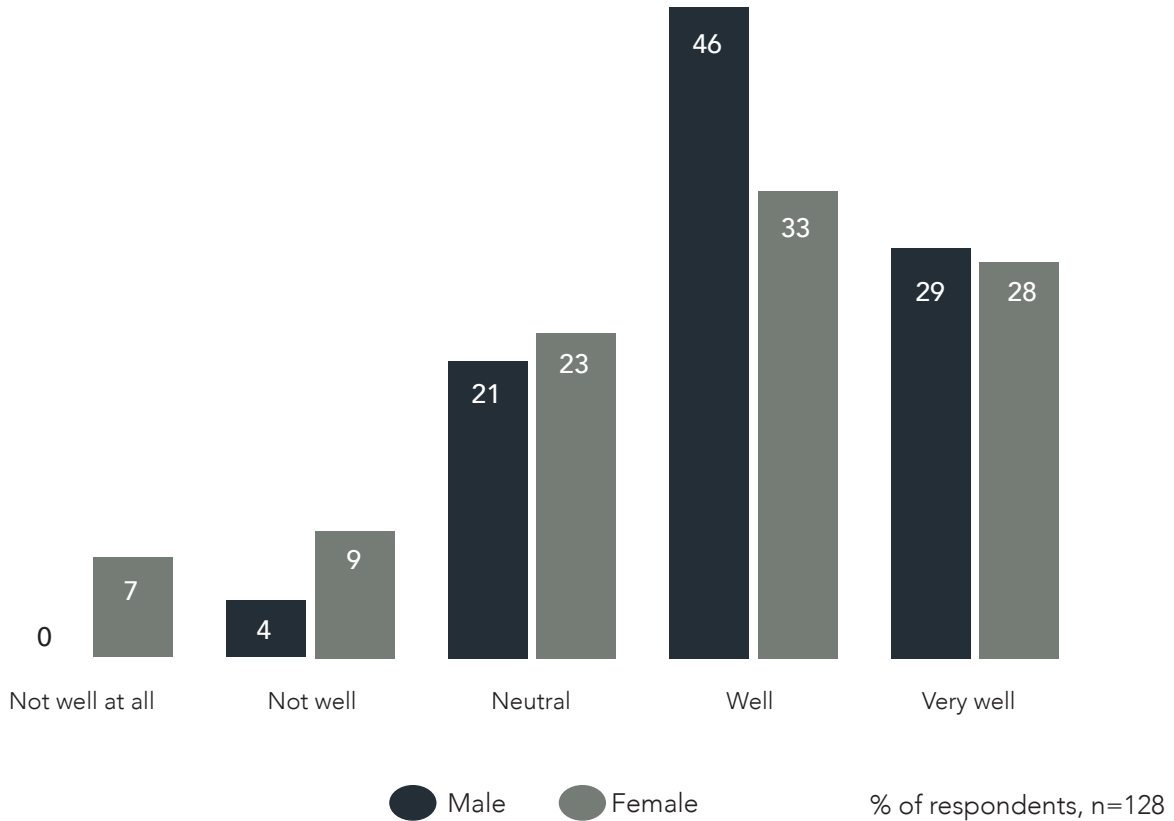|	
Yes – there is a stated policy with formal targets and goals	61
Yes – there is a stated policy but there are no formal targets and goals	23
No – there are no objectives or policy statements	7
Don't know	9

% of respondents, n=128

More importantly, though, we wanted to know how well companies are performing in pursuit of these goals. The responses to this question reveal two things. Firstly, only roughly 30% of respondents think their employer is doing a really good job here. Secondly, women are slightly more divided on how well their employers perform. Not only is there a distinct disparity between those who would rate their employers as doing 'well', but women are definitely more likely to give a negative score – 16% of women say their employers are performing 'not well' or 'not at all well', compared to just 4% of men.

"A young female intern in our company asked the CEO, now that you don't have any women leaders on your staff, what are doing to change that? He said, you don't want to hear from the old white guy. She said, no, that's exactly who I want to hear from."

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From your own experience and perspective, how well would you say your employer generally acts in pursuit of gender diversity, equity and inclusion?
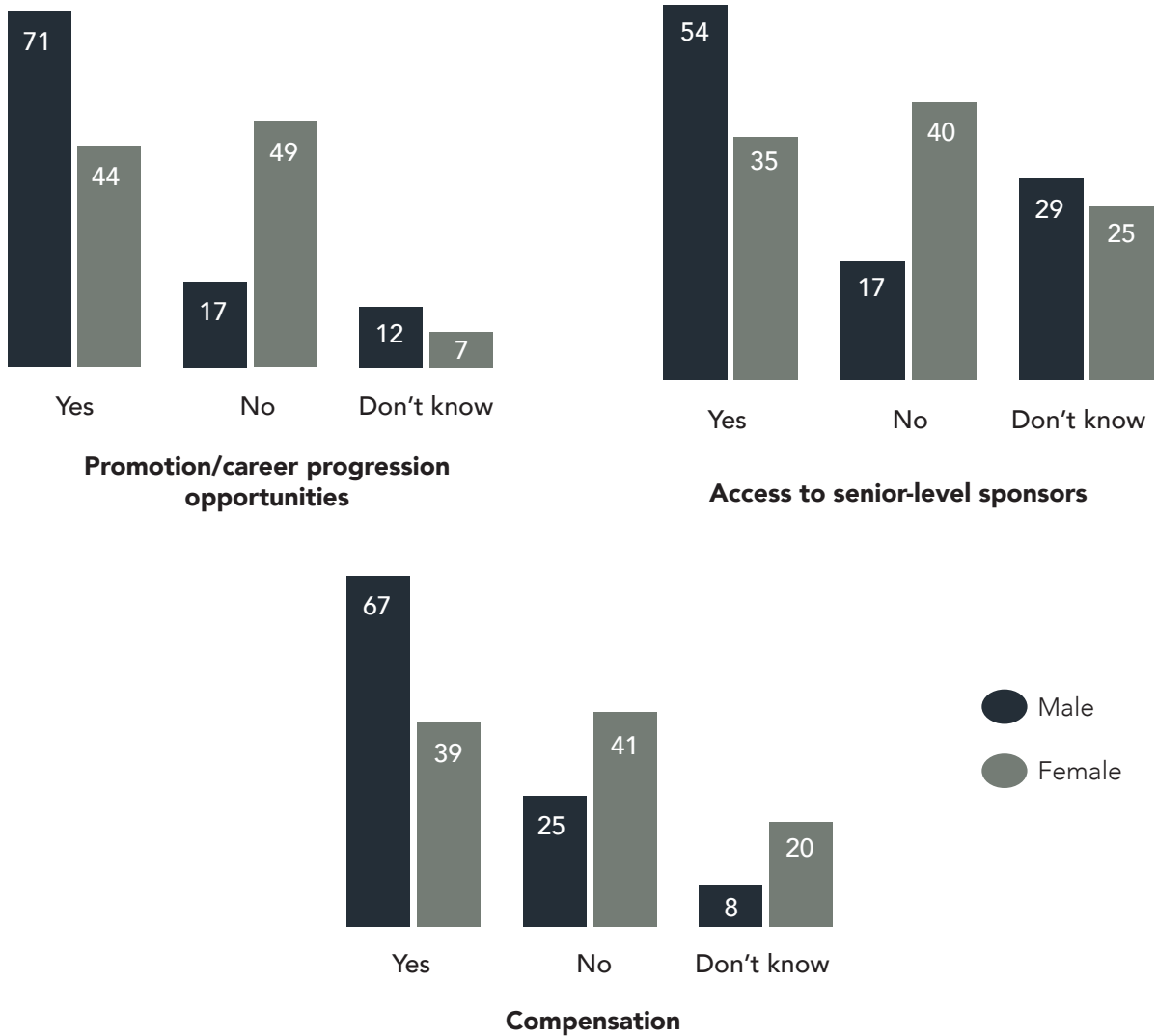
	Not well at all	Not well	Neutral	Well	Very well
Male	0	4	21	46	29
Female	7	9	23	33	28

⬤ Male   ⬤ Female   % of respondents, n=128

Fixing this disconnect between how companies want to perform and the policies and goals put in place versus how they are perceived to perform is absolutely critical because it has a direct impact on how engaged employees feel. At best, this will likely be manifested in how motivated employees are and how much they bring to the table in terms of performance and productivity. At worst, although the survey showed that only 3% of female respondents said their primary motivation to make a job move would be to find a more equitable working environment, it would be inadvisable not to address this in the context of both employee retention rates and the ability to attract new employees. Don't forget that the alignment of personal and corporate values and purpose is the second most popular reason to make a career move.

"Our company has policies and stated targets around diversity. They say they're working on things from a pipeline point of view. But then for some reason or another, women just don't make it past the next step."

Before we reveal what this impact on engagement levels looks like empirically, let's dive into where some of those disconnects really show up – and how differently men and women perceive these areas of inequity. We asked survey respondents to say whether or not their employer offered full and equal opportunity to men and women in relation to a number of aspects. On the next page you'll see the results as they apply to three key areas: compensation, promotion/career progression opportunities and access to senior-level sponsors. The bottom line: men have a far rosier view when it comes to equity of opportunity, although it's also of note that neither gender believes that we've reached parity.

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In your experience, do you believe your company offers full and equal opportunity to men and women in relation to the following aspects?

Promotion/career progression opportunities

	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	71	17	12
Female	44	49	7

Access to senior-level sponsors

	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	54	17	29
Female	35	40	25

Compensation

	Yes	No	Don't know
Male	67	25	8
Female	39	41	20

■ Male
■ Female

% of respondents, n=128

Offering equity around compensation is arguably one of the knottier problems to address. Although banding can go a long way towards this, the opaque nature of this issue means that in some cases – unless forced by legal requirement – it is an area that can easily remain unaddressed at all. After all, rectifying years of imbalance might have a significant impact on the payroll bill. Even if it is addressed and corrections are made, without full transparency into the compensation of individuals there is a lot of 'PR work' to be done to ensure that perceptions meet reality. In other words, 'I know you've said we all earn the same for doing the same job, but do we really?'

"I have had experience in the past where I knew that my salary was lower than some of my peers. I did have a couple of jumps in salary to bring me up but I still don't know how I benchmark. My unconscious bias is telling me that there is still a gap between men and women overall that needs to be addressed."

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Perceptions around family leave and parental roles

When it comes to maternity and paternity leave, there is clearly a lack of equity between men and women when it comes to the options and choices available. For both sexes, this depends largely on where you live geographically from a legislative and statutory rights perspective. However, although in many places the archetypes of what makes for a 'traditional family' have been exploded, enduring cultural perceptions and stigmas ingrained in our psyches should also not be underestimated.

"In our culture, if a man wants to take extended leave they have to justify it a lot even though the legal system makes it possible. On the other hand, as a woman, if you come back to work after less than a year you will always be asked, what about your child? Being a good mother means staying at home. There is a perceived link between how much time you give to your newborn and how well it will develop."
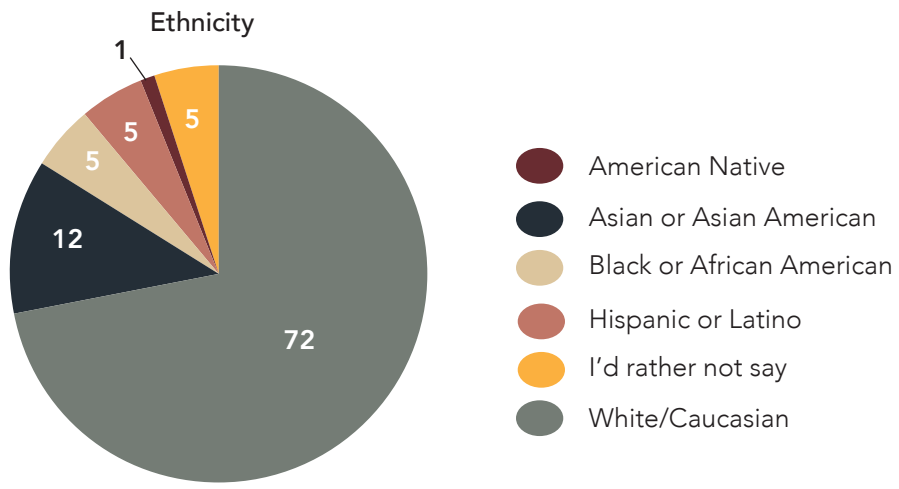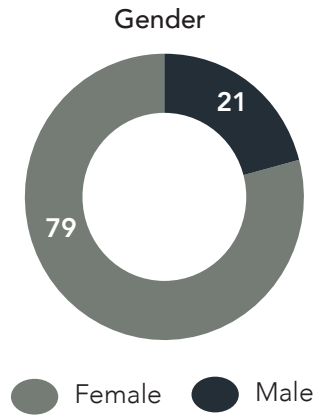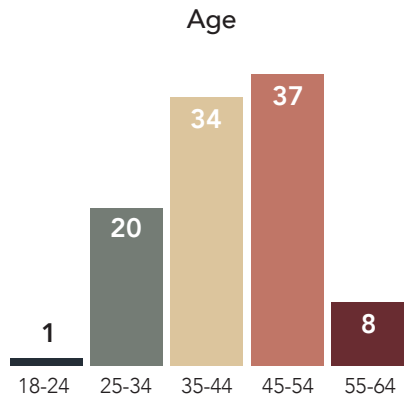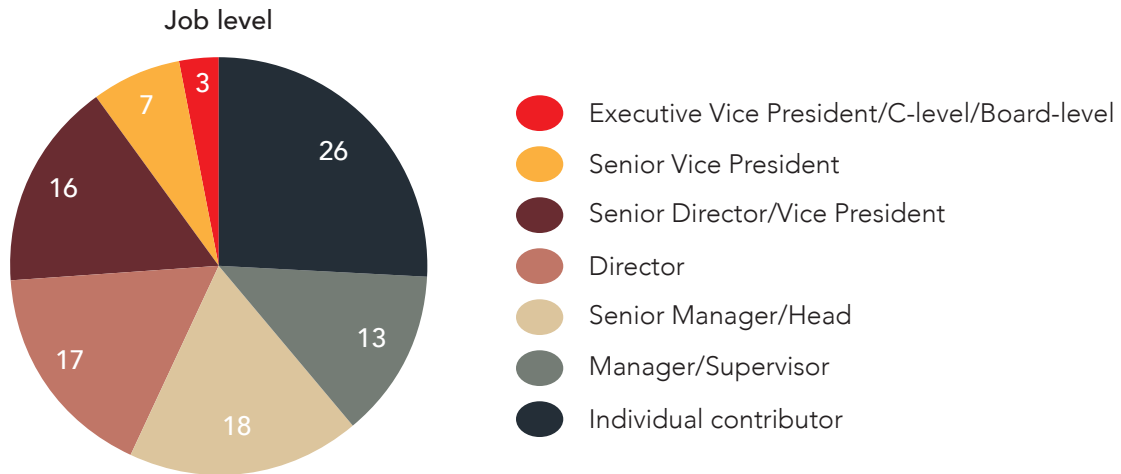
The impact on levels of engagement

Given how employees rate their employers when it comes to 'action' versus 'words' in relation to overall gender diversity, inclusion and equity performance, as well as some of the more specific variables such as compensation and career progression opportunities, it should come as no surprise that there's a clear correlation between opinion and engagement.
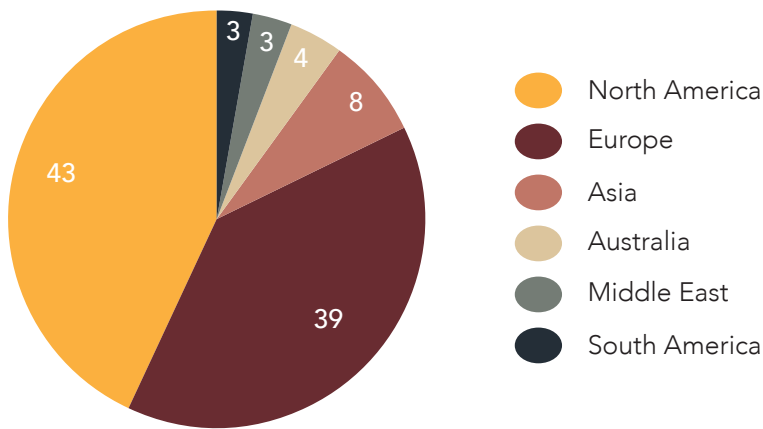
In fact the correlation is quite marked. On the plus side, for those who rated their employers positively, the subsequent engagement score is on average 8 out of 10. The less encouraging news is that where the walk doesn't match the talk, the level of engagement drops drastically to 3.6 out of 10. There is little noticeable difference here between how men and women responded.

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About the survey

In mid-August 2020, an invitation to complete an online survey was sent out to members of the boom! community and to the wider supply chain profession via LinkedIn and selected supply chain media titles. The survey was closed in mid-October 2020. In total 146 completed responses were received. The following graphics highlight the key demographics from survey respondents. Figures represent percentage of respondents.

Job level

- Executive Vice President/C-level/Board-level
- Senior Vice President
- Senior Director/Vice President
- Director
- Senior Manager/Head
- Manager/Supervisor
- Individual contributor

Age

Gender

Female   Male

Ethnicity

- American Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- I'd rather not say
- White/Caucasian

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Location of respondent

- North America
- Europe
- Asia
- Australia
- Middle East
- South America

(pie chart values: 43, 39, 8, 4, 3, 3)

Industry sector

2 Aerospace & defence	10 Food & beverage	1 Paper & packaging
2 Agriculture & mining	8 Healthcare & pharma	3 Professional services
3 Automotive	11 Hi-tech	9 Retail
3 Chemicals	9 Industrial	3 Utilities & Energy
1 Construction & engineering	15 Logistics & distribution	
19 Consumer packaged goods	1 Medical equipment & devices	

Company size by revenue (USD)

4 Less than $10 million	3 $500 million to less than $1 billion
4 $10 million to less than $50 million	11 $1 billion to less than $5 billion
4 $50 million to less than $100 million	12 $5 billion to less than $10 billion
3 $100 million to less than $250 million	18 $10 billion to $25 billion
1 $250 million to less than $500 million	27 $25 billion USD or above

13 Don't know/undisclosed

About boom!

The boom! community was launched in September 2019 with a vision to empower women in supply chain for the benefit of all. Our members represent all supply chain and procurement functions and span multiple industries across 41 countries, bringing a rich diversity of experience, thinking and ambition.

Our ultimate goal is a world where there is a level playing field for both men and women who want to flourish in their careers. In that world there will be no need for boom! to exist. Until then it is our mission to help enable women grasp with both arms the opportunities available to them and to help provide a voice to supply chain leaders and their teams as they work to nurture female talent and create equal prospects for all their employees.

The boom! community is guided by an Executive Advisory Board of influential supply chain and business operations leaders from Burberry, GE Appliances (a Haier company), The Hershey Company, Merck & Co, Inc., Microsoft, Mondelēz International, New Balance, Schneider Electric and Unilever. A complementary Community Advisory Board of active boom! members represents and advocates for the boom! community. This includes professionals from companies including Amazon, Canadian Tire, Colgate-Palmolive, Cummins and Henkel.

For more information visit http://www.boomglobalnetwork.com

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