

Media title: Women are more actively pursuing career goals than ever before

Author: Anh Duc

Source: Vietnam Investment Review on 8 March 2018

Online link: <http://www.vir.com.vn/women-are-more-actively-pursuing-career-goals-than-ever-before-56923.html>

Women are more actively pursuing career goals than ever before

To mark the International Women's Day (March 8), global professional services firm PwC surveyed over 3,600 professional women aged 28-40 to learn of their career development experiences and aspirations.

3 strategies to help women progress their career

- 1 Transparency & trust
- 2 Strategic support
- 3 Life, family care, and work

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The survey included respondents from 27 industry sectors and over 60 countries.

The report, entitled "Time to talk: what has to change for women at work," reveals that women are confident, ambitious, and ready for what's next, but many do not trust what their employers are telling them about career development and promotion or what helps or hurts their career.

Although CEOs recognise the importance of being transparent about their diversity and inclusion programmes to build trust, the message is not universal and strong enough.

45 per cent of women believe an employee's diversity status (gender, ethnicity, age, sexual preference) can be a barrier to career progression in their organisation, and only 51 per cent of women agree that employers are doing enough to progress gender diversity.

This means offering staff a clear understanding of the expectations on both sides of the employment equation, including information about career progression and success, and open conversations with employees on where they stand and what is expected of them to advance.

"Women are confident, ambitious, and actively pursuing their career goals. Leaders should focus on creating an environment where women—and men—can have open conversations where there is clarity on what it takes to progress," said Bob Moritz, global chairman of PwC.

To improve career development opportunities, 58 per cent of surveyed women identified greater transparency as the critical step employers can take.

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“This will benefit everyone and will lead to better overall results. It must go hand-in-hand with efforts to mitigate any unconscious biases and gender stereotypes that have traditionally impacted career success and progression in workplaces around the world.”

The survey shows that more women are recognising the need for and the power of advocating for themselves, with over half actively pursuing and negotiating for promotions, pay raises, and the career enhancing experiences so critical for advancement.

Of the 41 per cent of women who have been promoted in the past two years, 63 per cent negotiated for the promotion.

Sharmila Karve, PwC's global diversity leader, said, “It is really encouraging to see that more and more women are speaking up and proactively going after their career goals. Organisations can do a lot to help women progress and reach leadership positions.”

Almost all surveyed women said working in a job they enjoy (97 per cent) and having flexibility to balance the demands of their career and personal/family life (95 per cent) was important to them.

Getting to the top of their career is important to 75 per cent of women, while 82 per cent are confident in their ability to fulfill their career aspirations.

However, women feel nervous about the impact starting a family might have on their career (42 per cent) and 48 per cent of new mothers felt overlooked for promotions and special projects upon their return to work.

Meanwhile, 38 per cent of all women in the survey feel that taking advantage of work-life balance and flexibility programmes has negative career consequences at their workplace. There is a clear concern over what women see as a motherhood and flexibility penalty.

The report puts forward three essential elements that leaders must focus on to help women advance in their career: transparency and trust, strategic support and life, family care and work.

“Creating gender diversity throughout the workplace is one of the biggest challenges for business leaders. Yet it is vital to helping organisations drive innovation and gain competitive advantages,” Brittany Chong, partner and Diversity and Inclusion leader at PwC Vietnam, commented.

“Vietnam has made impressive progress on gender equality, with high participation of women in the labour force. However, since traditional gender roles still pose a big barrier to many women when balancing their personal and career priorities, there is a need for continuous progress.”

By Anh Duc