TOOL 1.23

Monitor and Sustain Training Programs for Gender-Equitable Career Development[176]

» **GOAL:** Monitor and support training programs

» **TARGET UNIT:** Training

Many companies will address challenges and opportunities to increase gender diversity by instituting training opportunities for staff. To ensure that these programs are successful, companies need to monitor the training programs to ensure that they continue to fit staff needs and contribute towards gender diversity goals. Regardless of the type of training being offered (whether hard or soft skills), the training should be evaluated as to whether and how it contributes to the organization's gender diversity goals.

Monitor

To monitor the effectiveness of training programs, companies should focus monitoring efforts in three ways:

- **Corporate-wide monitoring:** Qualitative and quantitative monitoring should take place throughout the duration of training. Training deliverables should be integrated into corporate KPIs. In some cases, this may mean redesigning KPIs or adding new KPIs to existing structures. By integrating these training deliverables into formal performance indicators, the monitoring process is made easier. Such monitoring systems make it easier to measure progress on gender goals, such as the number of females promoted to senior leadership within the year.

- **Informal, case-by-case monitoring of participant development:** Managers/ supervisors of training participants should provide qualitative feedback on development, both formally and informally. At a minimum, managers should provide feedback on retention and application of training deliverables as they conduct performance reviews. This feedback will support the monitoring data captured by the human resources department. In addition, it holds managers more accountable for ensuring learning retention and application.

- **Program monitoring:** Continuous monitoring of the training programs themselves is important. This ensures that the training offered continues to meet the needs of participants— needs that can change over time. Comprehensive program feedback forms and monitoring of delivery systems enable better control over content and help identify the kinds of changes necessary to ensure continued relevance of learning modules.

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[176] The Humphrey Group developed this tool.

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Sustain

Maintaining, internalizing, and building on skills learned is an essential investment in training. The easiest way to ensure skills sustainability is to create multiple and mutually reinforcing touchpoints.

- **Managers/supervisors:** They must play a central role in reinforcing new learning. This means understanding program content so they can support participants as learned skills are applied. Inclusivity leadership training helps sustain the gains from soft skills training.

- **Reinforcement systems:** Formal mentorship/sponsorship programs help reinforce the learning and contribute to sustaining gains. They give participants the opportunity to test out and review the skills learned. Such programs also provide valuable exposure to senior decision makers who could advocate on behalf of their mentees in the future.

- **Continuing networking opportunities at local, regional, and global levels:** These opportunities allow ongoing interaction among participants long after the training has ended. They are particularly important for both hard and soft skills development because they enable the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and feedback. Summits for high-potential leaders provide similar opportunities to continue conversations around learning while acknowledging the accomplishments of successful women.

- **Community engagement:** Tension between personal and professional spheres can sometimes create barriers to women's advancement. Engaging the community through education in the types of programs being offered can reduce this tension. Emphasis here should be on hard skills training that falls outside traditional roles for women, leadership skills, and communication training. Engaging with the community on these themes can help ensure the appropriate framing, given the local context.

- **External feedback:** Engaging with the community helps create a feedback loop. In this way, community engagement is clearly linked to the bottom line, demonstrating the business case for investment. Companies can offer soft skills workshops on topics such as inclusivity, leadership, and communication training to local schools as a part of their community investment initiatives. In doing so, they empower potential employees with the skills needed to be successful if they are hired in the future.

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