

GETTING STARTED ON A COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

A strong communication strategy will build awareness of your gender inclusion objectives, dispel myths and misconceptions, and promote buy-in to change.

Define objectives

Define what you want to achieve with the communication and engagement plan – core objectives typically include:

- Build awareness of the gender inclusion initiative and its rationale – “what it is and why does it matter?”
- Help people understand more clearly how employees, the work unit, the company and/or the mining industry will benefit from increased gender inclusion – “what’s in it for me?”
- Engage key influencers in implementation – “who needs to be on board?”
- Clarify what will change and what is expected – “what do I need to do differently?”
- Provide an opportunity for open dialogue to address myths and misconceptions – “what about ...?”

Develop your business case¹

A business case for gender inclusion helps to build commitment to a gender strategy and its implementation. Best practices in developing a business case include:

- Develop a very specific business case, with goals and a rationale that are relevant to the site/company/industry. (See the customizable business presentation tool.)
- Gather relevant information that will connect it to your audience’s day-to-day interests or experiences – such as data on gender imbalances in particular occupational roles, or interview data from women or stakeholders.
- Cascade and adapt it for different departments, sites or work groups within the organization – for example, supervisors will want to know the specific impact on their work team and how to respond to some common concerns.
- Involve key stakeholders in the data-gathering (see above) to gain valuable insights and promote engagement.
- Consistently communicate and promote the business case – within broader business messaging, in a format accessible to employees at all levels.

¹ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2014). *Gender strategy toolkit: A direction for achieving gender equality in your organisation*. Australian Government.; T.W. Fitzsimmons & V.J. Callan (2015). *Filling the Pool: A landmark report to achieve gender equality in Western Australia*. Perth: The Committee for Perth.

- Measure the impact of the gender inclusion initiative(s) in ways that relate directly to the business case (and use this to build future support).

Identify your audience

Identify stakeholders to inform – groups and individuals that will be most affected by the initiative or will care about its outcome.

Identify influencers to engage – groups and individuals to engage in effecting the change.

	POSSIBLE AUDIENCES	INFORM? ✓	ENGAGE? ✓
Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees • Union representatives • Direct supervisors and opinion leaders – women and men • Other sites and company senior leaders • Suppliers • Local training institutions and community stakeholders 		
Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees and opinion leaders • Union representatives and leadership • Supervisors, managers • CEO, executive team, Board members • Communities and educational institutions • Suppliers • Industry associations • Shareholders 		
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women role models • Industry associations • Gender inclusion organizations (e.g. WIM Canada) and programs (e.g. MiHR GEM Champions) • Relevant universities, colleges and training institutions • Industry-specific and general media 		

Plan the communication activities

Develop actions to inform stakeholders about your gender inclusion initiative.

	ACTIONS ²
Create key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the business case, develop a clear and concise set of statements about what your initiative is and what it can achieve. Focus on specific challenges, opportunities, and achievements that will resonate with your various stakeholders. • Define clearly what will be changing and what actions or new behaviours are expected from your audience(s). • Start by demonstrating CEO and top team commitment and involvement. • Check the messaging with various target audiences – including women, in particular, as well as other under-utilized groups.³
Engage key influencers and change agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a few well-respected and influential people in the work location, the company or in the industry; develop a plan for engaging each of them. Talk with them about how they can be helpful. • Give key influencers/change agents a voice in influencing the direction being set by senior leadership, as well as the implementation plans. • Involve both women and men in the planning phase – analyzing results of the baseline assessment, identifying priorities and leading initiatives. • When recruiting influencers, customize the business case to their areas of concern and proactively address any myths and misconceptions relating to the gender inclusion initiative - e.g. effort involved, impact on their role and activities. • Provide education and ongoing support to equip them for their role — continue to engage with them regularly. Create an ongoing two-way dialogue with them to gather their insights and feedback during implementation. • Encourage the Champion to act as a coach or mentor for key influencers – this helps to demonstrate the Champion's commitment, creates a two-way communication channel, and offers the influencers an added value that might encourage participation.
Select communication channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose communication channels that are appropriate for the initiative. For example, an unconscious bias workshop for hiring managers requires different visibility than a new policy to have women-friendly Personal Protective Equipment. • Do as much face-to-face communicating as possible. • Be open to feedback and offer several communication channels for questions and comments. • Since gender inclusion is important for the business, look for opportunities to embed messaging into day-to-day business communications. Distribute bits of information on your initiative linked to the business case and to what matters to stakeholders and influencers.

² Adapted from Elisabeth Kelan (2015). *Linchpin - Men, Middle Managers and Gender Inclusive Leadership*. Cranfield International Centre For Women Leaders. Cranfield University; and Diversity Officer Magazine. *Implementing a High Impact Diversity Initiative Communication Strategy*. <http://diversityofficermagazine.com/diversity-inclusion/implementing-a-high-impact-diversity-initiative-communication-strategy>

³ Recent research suggests that when a group has very low representation in a workforce, they prefer messages about equity and fairness; as numbers start to increase, messages about valuing differences resonate more. See Apfelbaum, E.P., Stephens, N.M. & Reagans, R.E. (2016). *Beyond one-size-fits-all: Tailoring diversity approaches to representation of social groups*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000071>

Monitor and communicate successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure progress and inform the organization of progress. • Publicize and celebrate wins along the way - from within your organization or others in the sector at the early stages. Communicate successes externally too, to help you start reaping the benefits. • Use successful people and units as models when communicating progress. Provide recognition to risk takers and early starters. • Loop back to employees and influencers involved in gathering baseline data – check in with them to see how changes are being received.
Implement parallel approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a program of targeted support activities (such as training and development) that can strengthen a context and rationale for overcoming gender barriers.

Hold Honest Conversations

Avoid relying on a series of one-way communications. Initiate meaningful dialogues with employees, supervisors, executives and industry stakeholders. Work to surface concerns and differences in perspective, and then uncover new insights and possibilities. Champions and change agents can raise, or be prepared to respond to, topics such as the following:

- *Gender inclusion initiatives:* How can we benefit (in our work unit, company, industry) from having a workplace that is more inclusive of women? What might be the costs, disadvantages or risks and how can we avoid them? What might happen if we do nothing?
- *Culture:* What values do we hold? What aspects of our current culture are helpful to our business and what gets in the way? What parts of our culture make it more difficult for women to thrive at work?
- *Work performance:* How do we think about an “ideal worker”? What characteristics do we associate with “leaders” in our site, our company or our industry? How might people get results differently? How can we expand our definition of high performance or leadership potential?
- *Work/life balance:* What messages do we send to women and men about reconciling their work lives with their personal responsibilities? What creates barriers and what new options could we consider?
- *Workplace interactions:* How do people behave toward each other? Is our workplace characterized as respectful and welcoming?
- *Career opportunities:* How do assumptions about men and about women affect our decision-making? How can a focus on gender inclusion help us to hire and promote the best and ensure that everyone has fair access to opportunities?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Name	About
Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) – <i>Gender Equity in Mining (GEM) Works eLearning Suite</i> http://www.mihr.ca	<i>The Gender Equity in Mining (GEM) Works – Learn to Make a Difference</i> e-learning program supports change agents in applying the GEM Works Toolbox to update policies and practices to identify and remove unintended barriers. In particular, see: Module 1: The Importance of Gender Equity in Mining – to customize your business case Module 4: Building Organizational Support & Momentum – for additional ideas for engaging stakeholders
Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR) workshops – <i>Being a Gender Champion and Building Momentum on your Journey towards Gender Equity</i> http://www.mihr.ca	The GEM Works Executive Development Sessions are two half-day, interactive programs that enable mining leaders to succeed as a “Gender Champion” driving change towards a more gender-inclusive workplace. The workshops include topics such as mythbusters around gender inclusion, and storytelling, which can be invaluable elements of a communications and engagement plan.



- Learning about Gender Inclusion
- Capturing and Sharing Stories for Change
- Setting "Targets with Teeth"
- A Change for the Better: Gender Diversity in Mining (customizable business presentation)