

What Can I Do?

A SERIES TO HELP UTAHNS ENGAGE

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What Business Leaders Can Do to Strengthen the Impact of Utah Girls and Women

UTAH WOMEN & LEADERSHIP
Project

Utah is full of engaged, passionate individuals who frequently ask the question, "What can I personally and/or professionally do to strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women?" To provide specific answers to that question, the **Utah Women & Leadership Project** team hosted a series of "think tank" gatherings to collect best practices for various stakeholders interested in supporting and empowering Utah girls and women.

This idea sheet is based on a gathering of 25 women CEOs and top executives from Utah companies to discuss ways business leaders can use their influence to strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women. Their insights focus on things leaders can do in their own companies, through engaging with educational institutions, in the community, and in the Utah corporate culture at large.

COMPANIES

For business leaders, one of the most important spheres of influence is within their own companies. They can help create a positive and inclusive organizational culture that hires, retains, develops, and promotes women. More specifically, company leaders can do the following:

- Set a positive "tone from the top" with explicit and consistent communication that diversity is a high priority.
- Ensure top leadership recognizes both the business case for a diverse workforce and leadership teams as well as the corporate social responsibility to promote inclusion and diversity.
- Encourage both men and women managers at all levels to prioritize diversity in their hiring, retention, and promotion efforts.
- Offer training in recognizing and minimizing unconscious bias.
- Create and follow an internal diversity "best practices" protocol.
- Encourage and support informal and formal mentorship, sponsorship, and peer-coaching activities; recognize the various types of developmental relationships and assist employees in getting support that will be most beneficial.
- Normalize varied expectations and diverse priorities among all employees; make sure both men and women feel free to talk about their lives outside of work.
- Create deliberate and explicit day-to-day schedules and long-term professional pathways that enable variety and flexibility for all.
- Conduct internal, data driven audits in key areas such as compensation metrics and the percentage of women in leadership and on boards.
- Ensure that there are workplace policies in place that provide a safe environment for women.
- Encourage and expect best practices in diversity among vendors, partners, and clients.
- Recognize and reward different managerial/leadership styles, especially those that may traditionally have been gendered.

EDUCATION

Utah's top business executives are powerful role models for the next generation of leaders, and this is particularly true for the influence women executives can have on girls and young women. Female executives can inspire young women to graduate from college and enter high-impact industries when they:

- Speak regularly at educational institutions (from K-12 to college campuses), engaging audiences of both genders to show what strong women leaders look like.
- Present to female students specifically highlighting the opportunities, possibilities, and realities of careers where women have traditionally been underrepresented.

All business leaders can also:

- Assist in identifying and promoting a larger pool of powerful speakers and visible role models so young people can envision a diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and pathways to success.
- Educate young women and men about the realities of the Utah labor force; data show that women work for many years, so they should make informed plans for the future.
- Sponsor educational enrichment programs, workshops, and seminars to help girls and young women recognize the myriad opportunities available in education and career choice.
- Promote STEM workshops, business competitions, and other industry-specific events to give girls the chance to "see what they can be."
- Use their influence to encourage hiring and promoting more women into top educational leadership, both among faculty and administrators, so their positive impact on students will increase.

COMMUNITY

Many business leaders have a high community profile, and they can use this megaphone to promote women's interests in a variety of ways. Leaders can:

- Spotlight individual women who are excelling in business settings.
- Work with media outlets to highlight and promote companies that are doing great things for women.
- Speak out publicly on issues of concern to professional women, such as the gender wage gap, discrimination, and the relatively low numbers of women on corporate boards and in top levels of leadership.
- Champion women making bold choices and achieving in all areas (e.g., politics, philanthropy, education, business, government, community, and family).

- Mentor and sponsor emerging women leaders in community, government, educational, and political roles.

UTAH'S CORPORATE CLIMATE

Utah's top executives are uniquely positioned to move the needle toward greater female achievement in the state's corporate climate. Business leaders can:

- Encourage the creation of new women-owned businesses.
- Serve as mentors for incubator programs and other trainings for new entrepreneurs.
- Network and advocate for female founders as they seek funding.
- Leverage relationships across industries to find and place key mentors and sponsors in areas where they are greatly needed.
- Host women-only events, trainings, or workshops where women can develop deeper relationships, explore challenges, and work toward shaping a local corporate environment where more women can thrive.
- Utilize their leadership in professional organizations to ask such questions as "What can Utah do to attract more female talent?" "How do we address gaps in diversity?" and "How can we foster a culture that creates pathways for more women leaders within Utah's distinct climate?"
- Create and distribute diversity best practices protocols that can be shared and used across industries.
- Inform management teams from global companies about cultural pressures distinct to Utah and encourage public dialogue on how to move forward in positive ways.
- Continue to emphasize the business case for diversity and inclusion publicly and encourage all businesses to do more.
- Support and sponsor research activities that uncover areas where Utah is doing well and where we need to do better as a state when it comes to women's overall success.
- Ensure your company takes a visible commitment like the ElevateHER Challenge or the ParityPledge, and encourage other businesses to do so as well.

CONCLUSION

As more top business leaders recognize and leverage the potential of women to influence and shape the professional arena within their own companies, in educational and community settings, and within Utah's overall corporate climate, they will be better able to strengthen the impact of girls and women throughout the state of Utah.

For decades, hundreds of studies have clearly demonstrated the enormous value in having women in top leadership positions within organizations. The "business case" for women in leadership isn't limited to businesses only. These advantages extend across all sectors, including religious, nonprofit, political, government, K-12 and higher education, and community. For our state to truly thrive, we must work to increase the number of top women leaders in all our organizations.



ENHANCING INNOVATION & COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

- Increased innovation
- Improved creativity
- Better team decision making
- Greater team problem solving
- Better team performance on highly complex tasks
- Increased knowledge formation and patents
- Higher collective intelligence
- Higher social sensitivity



INCREASING CSR & ORGANIZATIONAL REPUTATION

- Increased CSR
- Higher-quality CSR initiatives
- Greater social responsiveness
- Better engagement with society
- Greater philanthropic responses
- Improved corporate reputation
- Better corporate social performance
- Increased social performance indicators



LEVERAGING TALENT

- Think more holistically
- Seek win-win solutions
- More process-oriented
- Ask different questions
- Bring different experiences
- Sensitive to nonverbal cues
- Comfortable with ambiguity
- Use different leadership styles
- Focus on inclusiveness
- Focus on teams and cooperation
- More nurturing
- Focus on developing others
- Make more ethical decisions
- Have higher integrity/honesty
- Focus on self-development



STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE

- Decreased turnover intentions
- Higher employee satisfaction
- More women hired for pipeline
- Smaller gender pay gap
- Increased employee engagement
- Increased productivity
- Higher customer satisfaction
- Lower corporate fraud
- Reduced groupthink
- Higher team performance
- More considerate team members
- More ethical decisions
- Improved monitoring
- Increased board independence



IMPROVING FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

- Better financial results
- Increased profitability
- Higher operating result
- Better economic growth
- Faster debt reduction
- Lower risk of insolvency
- Better business deals
- Less risky bids
- Better stock growth
- Higher market-to-book value
- Better corporate governance
- Better corporate oversight
- Improved organizational sustainability

The mission of the Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) is to strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women. We serve Utah and its residents by 1) producing relevant, trustworthy, and applicable research; 2) creating and gathering valuable resources; and 3) convening trainings and events that inform, inspire, and ignite growth and change for all Utahns. The following resources align with our mission and purpose (www.utwomen.org).

RESEARCH



Research & Policy Briefs

This series offers reports that emerge from primary research studies (original data we collect) on a host of timely and relevant topics. Most compare Utah with national statistics so Utahns can see progress and determine what changes need to be made.



Research Snapshots

This series offers reports that are based on a comprehensive review of data/research that others have conducted on a variety of topics. Our reports offer national comparisons, provide recommendations, and are linked to associated infographics and podcasts. They are also reviewed by Utah subject-matter experts.



Partnered Reports

The UWLP has partnered with individuals and organizations to produce reports that address strengthening women's impact in Utah on a variety of topics. These include community conversation summaries, impact recommendations, and other types of reports.



"What Can I Do?" Reports

Utah is full of engaged, passionate individuals who frequently ask the question, "What can I [personally and/or professionally] do to strengthen the impact of Utah girls and women?". To answer this question, the UWLP team hosts "think tank" gatherings (focus groups) to collect best practices for groups that support and/or empower Utah girls and women. These groups encompass relationships (e.g., fathers, mothers), roles (e.g., coaches, mayors), and geographical areas. Two-page idea sheets are then created from these discussions that Utahns can use to inform their efforts.



White Papers

The UWLP White Paper Series offers research-based reports on specific issues that impact Utah girls and women, along with related policy recommendations. The purpose of this series is to help inform Utah decision makers and the general public about various issues, and then propose evidence-based policy solutions for change.

EVENTS



Upcoming Events

The UWLP hosts, partners, and offers various types of events and gatherings that align with our mission.



Community Calendar

A collection of events hosted or sponsored by women's groups, networks, and associations across the state.



Past Events

This webpage links to descriptions and recordings of past forums, workshops, lectures, and think tank gatherings.

RESOURCES



Toolkits

This collection of toolkits — from UWLP and other credible and publicly available resources — is designed to help you find what you need by topic and audience.



Utah Women's Groups, Networks, & Organizations (UWON)

There are over 170 women's networks, groups, and organizations across the state in the areas of business, politics, higher education (faculty/staff and student divisions), task forces, commissions, communities (online and in-person groups), professional organizations, and initiatives.



Interactive Dashboards

This resource provides data in a visual and exploratory format that allows users to make their own discoveries, and search for statewide entities and services that support Utah women.



Videos

Our collection of videos include recordings of live events, forums, and workshops; videos produced specifically about the importance of a college education for Utah women and women's entrepreneurship; and videos others have produced focused on girls and women.



Podcasts

Our UWLP Podcast Series highlights research report findings and other current topics through engaging discussions. Episodes spotlight many of the challenges and opportunities that women in Utah face and provide resources and tips on moving forward. Additionally, there is a list of other related podcasts in Utah and beyond.



Infographics

Each UWLP infographic provides a visual representation of the data and information that are found in reports.



Handouts

This section provides links to summaries of relevant and timely research in a form that is easy to understand and quick to read. Many find it useful to print and share them with employers, friends, family, and others for whom this information is important.



Lifelong Learning Program

This new resource invites girls and women to become—or continue to be—lifelong learners by annually recognizing those who complete at least one level of the program's requirements.



Curriculum

Our website lists UWLP curriculum/courses and those developed by other organizations, all of which address specific needs of Utah girls and women.

