



**APCO**  
worldwide®

**2019 ADVICE  
REPORT**

WORKING THE BALANCE



WE WON'T CREATE A  
**BALANCED WORLD**  
IF WE DON'T SHARE HOW WE EACH WORK TO  
**CREATE THAT BALANCE.**



## INTRODUCTION

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Throughout Women's History Month, we reflect on the past and the future we want to create for the next generation. This year, the International Women's Day theme was *Balance for Better*; a theme that challenges us to think of bold new possibilities for how we live and work that are more sustainable, equitable and profitable for all.

We believe that listening and learning from one another is an important step in improving and generating balance—especially in a world where the gender pay gap, a lack of diversity among senior leadership, work-life balance and hiring biases are still ever-present. A person's experience is influenced by social factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, economic position and ability, and each of us carries unique ideas based on our social positioning. We cannot rely on any one perspective to influence change—in order to truly understand how to create balance, we need to hear from all standpoints and perspectives and learn from the advice of others.

Our staff said they wanted to spend Women's History Month hearing and sharing advice on how to create this balanced world. So APCO formed a committee of members across the region to create more of those opportunities. One big idea we had was to curate and then share the best expertise and advice from our colleagues across North America, and we are capturing their responses and our conclusions in this report.

We hope that the advice and data in this report will inspire you to take action and bring us one step closer to balance in the workplace and the world.

—APCO's 2019 Women's History Month Committee

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# METHODOLOGY

The APCO Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Council invited employees to contribute to the report via survey in early March 2019. The survey was distributed to our North American offices, and respondents were given the option to have their answers be attributed or anonymous. The advice included within the report was intentionally curated to include respondents from different genders, experience levels, geographies, ages and identities.

The questions asked by the survey are as follows:

- *What is the best piece of professional advice you've ever received?*
- *How has a manager/mentor inspired or empowered you?*
- *How do you find your voice in meetings and on projects? How do you encourage others to do the same?*
- *What strategies do you use to mitigate biases within yourself, colleagues and clients at work?*
- *What is your work-life balance philosophy? How do you live this philosophy?*
- *How are you growing the next generation of leaders?*

In addition to user-generated responses, individuals volunteered to provide longer-form reflections on the topics within our report to contextualize the responses given. Topical research has also been added to support the advice and facilitate deeper understanding of issues.

The report has been designed in collaboration with six of APCO's Studio designers.

For more information about the methodology or to replicate a similar report at your organization, please contact [diversitycouncil@apcoworldwide.com](mailto:diversitycouncil@apcoworldwide.com).

# WHAT MENTORSHIP LOOKS LIKE

Great mentors challenge us to think bigger and aim higher. Selecting, maintaining and keeping a mentor is critical for both personal and professional success, and a good mentor makes overcoming obstacles and maintaining balance a little easier.

I was 16 when I decided to drop out of high school and go at life in my own way. I wasn't struggling in school, I was active in sports, drama and music, and had good friends. But there was nothing about high school that seemed important enough to keep me there, especially as the U.S. war in Iraq had begun and I had now awoken to the world outside suburban Southern California. I wanted to get in on the action, not just sit back and read books and play soccer. I informed my mom, who said it was my decision, as well as a particularly close literature teacher, who said it was a terrible idea. These conversations reminded me that given my circumstances, my contributions to global issues would be most impactful as an educated adult.

When I think about the most important mentors in my life, my mind immediately goes to these two fierce women: one who trusted me to do what I thought best and the other who grounded me in a

bigger context outside myself. These two lessons and the tension between them are the core of what I've learned makes for great mentorship. Throughout my life I have been lucky enough to have mentors come alongside me to remind me to trust my own instincts as well as to pick my head up and take the long-term, wide-viewed perspective.

In the end, I listened to both mentors. I stayed in school, got into a great university, which then I left after two years to pursue my dreams abroad. But I'll never forget these two lessons: trust yourself but know that there is more than just this moment; and know yourself and be grounded in the world around you.

**Alison Patch**  
*Senior Associate Director,  
Office of the Chairman*

I was a student at the University of Miami and was majoring in political science. Our university president, Donna Shalala, served as an advisor and mentor to me during those years. She gave me a lot of advice and support over the years, but one piece of advice in particular rang through. When asked what it took to succeed as a university president, Shalala said you had to know how to do two things. "Fundraise and football," she said. We laughed, but her anecdote boiled down to a truth about life that I've taken with me everywhere I've gone.

Fundraising is really about understanding the bottom line in your organization and how you can add to its value. Whether it's growing your client base, improving revenue or increasing client satisfaction with your company's product or service, success is first defined by adding to the bottom line. Football is important at colleges to be sure, but I took this to be mostly advice about understanding and building on organizational culture. Every business, government and NGO has its own culture, and in order to succeed in

them, you not only have to fit in, you have to be a purveyor of that culture — someone who truly lives and promotes it. People remember that and usually become natural allies.

Having a lifelong mentor is work for both the mentor and the mentee. It requires thoughtfulness and respectfulness for one another's time and energy. I try to pick a big theme I want to work on — imposter syndrome is a big one for young women — and break it down into actionable buckets that I work on one at a time (e.g. client retention, leadership, professional development). Then I approach these through quarterly conversations with the mentor best-equipped to help (I have several). And a line congratulating your mentor on their recent promotion or wishing them a happy birthday goes a long way in keeping the connection alive and ensuring the relationship is a two way street.

**Jordan Valdés**  
*Senior Director, Global Solutions*

## How has a mentor inspired or empowered you?

I was encouraged to mentor someone else and told I have valuable skills to teach and pass on.

*Julianne Hyer*

My mentor told me how she started out in her career—the challenges she faced, the obstacles she overcame, the feeling she had when she realized she could “do it”—and drawing parallels to my own career.

*Anonymous*

Women leaders don't have to try to emulate men to be successful.

*Tina-Marie Adams*

Praise and words of affirmation.

*Anonymous*

Simply showing faith in me. That gave me confidence.

*Nick Ashooh*

Communicating expectations and feedback clearly. Those are two foundational pillars for individual growth, so when it happens, it shows respect and belief that you can reach new skill levels and match higher expectation. Few things are as empowering!

*Liz Tripp*

My manager empowers me by advocating for me when I am not present in discussions.

*Anonymous*

A mentor once confessed that they sometimes had me defend or sell them on a choice, recommendation or request, even if they knew they already agreed with me. They did this to have me practice standing up for what I wanted or what I felt like I earned—and I want to find a way to share that lesson with those I mentor. It helped me to be confident in my decisions and helped me to speak up when I had an idea or a request, even outside of conversations with that one person.

*Riley Billman*

# 63%

of women in DDI World's “Global Study of Businesswomen and Mentoring” report that they have **never had a formal mentor**.<sup>1</sup>

# 67%

of women view mentorship as being highly important in helping to **advance and grow** their careers.<sup>1</sup>

# 77%

out of 1,032 North American respondents report that their most impactful mentoring relationship was either **“very important”** or **“extremely important”** to their career development. Women and minorities were the **most likely** to say that the relationship was extremely important.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Neal, Jazmine Boatman, and Linda Miller, DDI World's Global Study of Businesswomen and Mentoring (DDI World, Pittsburgh, 2012), <https://www.ddiworld.com/resources/library/trend-research/women-as-mentors-does-she-or-doesnt-she>

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Emrich, Mark H. Livingston, David Pruner, Larry Oberfeld and Stephanie Page, Creating a Culture of Mentorship (Heidrick & Struggles, 2017) [https://www.heidrick.com/Knowledge-Center/Publication/Creating\\_a\\_culture\\_of\\_mentorship](https://www.heidrick.com/Knowledge-Center/Publication/Creating_a_culture_of_mentorship)

# BEST PROFESSIONAL ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED

Whether it's tough love or words of affirmation, advice can help guide and inspire our careers. Here are some of the best pieces of professional advice our APCO employees have received:

When you are the boss you can't be involved in every decision or approach. You have to let the people you hired do it their way even if it might not be your way.

*Pete Wentz*

Don't burn bridges. Delegate when you can and don't sweat the small stuff.

*Leanne High*

Your reputation is built on the details so sweat the small things and the big things will take care of themselves.

*Bill Dalbec*

Be someone that people want to work with.

*Anna Blyth*

Be patient enough to learn, but impatient enough to take risks.

*Katie Milgrom*

Don't be the person who's late. Be the person who brought donuts.

*Julianne Hyer*

Listen.

*Jeff Zelkowitz*

If you aren't working on something that challenges you and “scares” you on a regular basis, then you aren't growing.

*Anonymous*

Fight for ideas you believe in. Be bold and don't be afraid to (respectfully) disagree with your colleagues—especially those senior to you.

*Dana Schwartz*

Find the joy. Relish in the victories, no matter how small, and find moments to laugh or celebrate your accomplishments and those of your teammates.

*Anonymous*

# FINDING YOUR VOICE & DEMONSTRATING BOLDNESS



**When imbalance exists, one of the hardest actions to take is to speak up.**

From speaking up in a meeting to calling out injustice, finding your voice can be an insurmountable task, but one that is crucial to having enriching discussions and creating change.

## How do you find your voice in meetings and on projects?

Create your own opportunity; cynicism doesn't lead anywhere; never give up in the middle of a storm.

*Joon Kang*

In all things, no one is going to do it for you. Whether it's changing or expanding your role, negotiating your compensation or benefits, or communicating your boundaries and preferences, you have to be your own advocate first. So speak up!

*Liz Tripp*

It's simple, but always remember, when you have an idea the worst you can hear is "no." Be creative, suggest new things.

*Emilie Williams-Sinn*

Earlier in my career, I was often in meetings where I was the only woman. Some were welcoming of my point of view, some were not. I decided no matter what people may see when I walked into the room, I would speak my mind and let my thoughts and ideas speak for themselves. And be fearless in continuing to offer those ideas.

*Tina-Marie Adams*

It took practice! I told myself that I had to say something in every meeting and then I worked up from there. I tell my team the same thing now and encourage them to find ways to participate that feel comfortable for them. Sometimes that means sending a long email or following up one-on-one with a client lead after a meeting to give additional thoughts after you have had time to think about it. All forms of participation are okay as long as you feel heard.

*Rachael Siefert*

It is often challenging because I am both an introvert and someone who relies on facts to make decisions. Many times I feel like I am "run over" in meetings because I am more methodical and don't want to share "half-baked" ideas or solutions. I am much better in meetings where I have a background and experience in what we are discussing rather than a new situation I have not seen previously.

*Bill Dalbec*

**3X** Men are **three times more likely to interrupt women as they are to interrupt other men.**<sup>3</sup>

**70 percent of interruptions by men** (149 out of 212 total interruptions) **occurred when a woman had been previously speaking.**<sup>3</sup>



**Only 13 out of 314 total interruptions were instances of women interrupting men.**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Kieran Snyder, How to Get Ahead as a Woman in Tech: Interrupt Men (Slate, 2014). <https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/07/study-men-interrupt-women-more-in-tech-workplaces-but-high-ranking-women-learn-to-interrupt.html>

It's all about confidence. You don't always have to have the right answers or be the smartest person in the room. You just have to have a point of view and an opinion. We all have them. We just have to find the confidence to say it out loud.

*Leanne High*

I ask myself: when this is over, is there anything I might wish I would have said or done? And then I do it.

*Caroline Starke*

I try to be authentic to who I am when I try to find my "voice" in meetings and projects. That way, I come across more confidently and am more comfortable speaking up.

*Melissa Petito*

Don't use weak language. Eliminating phrases like "I would just..." or "I may not be an expert in this, but..." takes real effort in the beginning. And always learn new things not only in your professional area, but in other fields that you have never stepped in.

*Anonymous*

Find women who are where you want to be in the future and take advice from them on how to get to there.

*Michelle "Mischa" Sindyukov*

As an introvert, and someone who was shy in the early days of my career, I would recite in my head what I wanted to say in a meeting over and over. But by the time I felt practiced enough, the conversation had moved on. Since then, I've been more forgiving with myself—not everything that comes out of my mouth has to be poetic or profound and timeliness can be just as important.

*Grace Boyle*

 **Men are four times more likely than women to ask for a raise.<sup>4</sup>**

**When women do ask, they typically request 30 percent less than men do.<sup>4</sup>**



It's easy to make assumptions about how age affects your credibility as a young leader, but don't make choices or decisions in how you present yourself based on these assumptions. You can't control which assumptions do exist, but you can control how you present yourself and how you put yourself out there. You don't overcome it by changing how you show up for them, but you can develop yourself if you focus on how you can lean into your full potential. You'll get where you're going.

*Anonymous*

For me, it's not so much about finding my voice as it is about using it in the most productive way possible—and being taken seriously. I have found that being direct while explaining my rationale clearly and concisely works best. I also invite people to disagree with me, so there's an opportunity for everyone's point of view to be heard.

*Dana Schwartz*

<sup>4</sup> Linda Babcock, Sara Laschever, *Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide* (Princeton University Press, 2004). <https://slate.com/human-interest/2014/07/study-men-interrupt-women-more-in-tech-workplaces-but-high-ranking-women-learn-to-interrupt.html>

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME IS A SIGN YOU'RE ON THE RIGHT PATH.

Approximately 70 percent of people experience imposter syndrome at some point in their lives.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Jaruwan Sakulku, *The Impostor Phenomenon* (The Journal of Behavioral Science, 2011). <https://doi.org/10.14456/ijbs.2011.6>

An important part of diversity and inclusion is making sure you are not only inviting diverse perspectives and experiences, but also truly listening to all voices. It helps others feel valued and allows us to overcome confirmation bias and echo chambers, which results in better ideas, more balanced institutions, profitability and mitigation of risk.

# INCLUSIVITY AND RAISING UP OTHERS

In 2017, Asian-American, Latina and White women's labor force participation rate was roughly 56 percent while Black women's participation rate was 60.3 percent.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Bureau Labor Statistics, "Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, age, and race," 2017, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat05.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2019).

## How do you encourage others to find their voices?

I believe that positive reinforcement works wonders! If colleagues are getting talked over or dismissed, they'll likely not want to speak up again in the future. I think that it's important to listen (really listen, not just think about what you're going to say next) when people speak up and build on their ideas or opinions constructively.

*Melissa Petito*

I try to let others who may not always speak up have a chance to speak. I tend to second guess myself a lot in meetings and worry about saying something dumb, so I'm trying to work on my own feelings of self-doubt.

*Anonymous*

Setting a welcoming, open environment so all feel comfortable to contribute.

*Anonymous*

To allow others to feel the same kind of confidence, I try to ask questions and bring them into conversations naturally so that it helps them feel more empowered to express themselves in the future without being asked to do so.

*Anonymous*

When I see that a junior staffer isn't feeling confident in a meeting, I ping them and ask them what they think. After they tell me what they think, I encourage them to say it to the room. Reaffirming that their ideas and opinions matter usually helps them speak up.

*Michelle "Mischa" Sindjukov*

To close the gender imbalance in our industry, we need everyone — male and female — to come together. Change begins with one person and it builds from there. I was lucky to grow up in a home where my parents taught me to be kind, regardless of our differences; to celebrate both the big and small moments; and to push for better. As a child I didn't fully understand it, but I now think often about these learnings and how critical they are to making our industry, our communities and our daily interactions better.

For me, these learnings have translated into the importance of intentional leadership, something I admittedly continue to practice every day. It means finding compassion for each other, even when we don't see eye-to-eye. It means listening more before we cast our opinion. It means encouraging everyone to spend time with someone different than themselves. And, most importantly, that one's gender should never be considered a detriment.

Leadership is not only for the most senior person in the room. Leaders can be any age, any gender and any background. I wish for a world where we all do some soul-searching, so we find out what intentional leadership means to each of us, and we can create an environment where we can all thrive.

**Kelly Williamson**

*President, North America*

# Growing

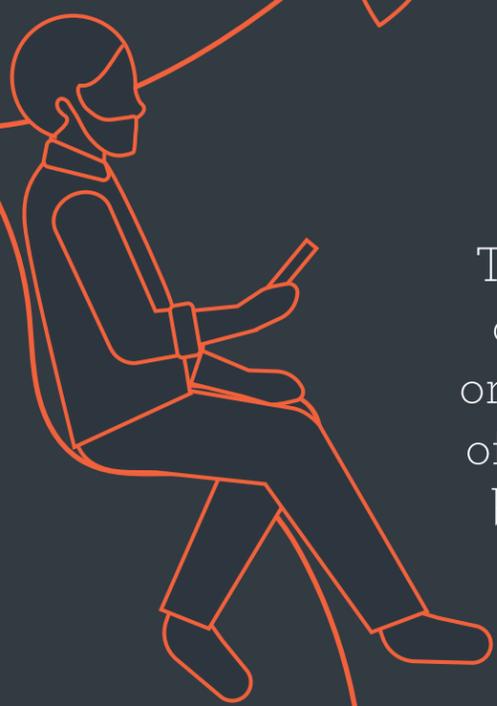
THE NEXT

# Generation

OF LEADERS



The next generation is more diverse and more connected than ever before. They are holding organizations and companies to new standards of equity. Their input, voice and leadership will be crucial in leading us to worldwide balance.



**Emotional intelligence/awareness is essential towards inspiring the workforce.**

Every employee has different drivers and goals. It's my responsibility as a manager to have an understanding of each of their respective drivers, and proactively engage in helping them achieve their goals. Doing so highlights our commitment and a level of mutuality that is motivating and inspiring. In addition, as a team lead I'm consistently looking to teach and help employees not only be successful in their current roles but more importantly, ensuring that they are prepared for the next role. Doing so is a proactive approach to succession planning and a very empowering approach to our people.

**Edwin Feliciano**

*Chief Operating Officer & Financial Director*

Millennials will **comprise more than 50 percent of the workforce over the next four years**—and, as a generation, they are rejecting the notion of being identified by any one dimension, especially race, gender and sexual orientation.

Furthermore, according to the Pew Research Center, Millennials are more diverse than previous generations, with nearly 40 percent of Millennials belonging to a non-white race or ethnicity. Given these demographic trends, diversity among Millennials and their children will only increase over time.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Paul Taylor, Scott Keeter, Millennials: A portrait of generation next: Confident. Connected. Open to change (Pew Research Center, 2010). <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>

# How

are you growing the next generation of leaders?

Advice, support and (sometimes) tough love!  
*Melissa Petito*

I try to bring junior staff into discussions as much as possible and always give the background of a project before asking them to help me with a task. It helps them have more buy-in and more fully understand the ask.  
*Anonymous*

I try to always be accessible and open. I also try not to take myself or the work we do too seriously. It's important work, but at the end of the day your individual happiness is most important. I want to be a mentor to the next generation of leaders just like my mentors have been for me.  
*Leanne High*

Women who were **encouraged to be leaders growing up** are **more likely to aspire to be a senior leader of a company or organization (74 percent vs. 48 percent)** and to aspire to be on a board of a company in the future (66 percent vs. 39 percent) than those who did not receive that encouragement growing up.<sup>8</sup>

The **most important factor of whether a boy will thrive or struggle** during his teenage years is **determined by the quality of the male role models in his life**. The most at-risk boys have the most dysfunctional male role models.<sup>9</sup>

67 percent of **women say they need more support building confidence** to feel like they can be leaders.<sup>8</sup>

I consider myself part of that next generation and it's my job to empower those around me, especially women. We need to embolden ourselves to reach further and stretch ourselves to take up space, be heard and make significant impacts in all aspects of our lives and our shared world. I am trying to do this by listening, learning and finding my own path amidst others who are creating their stories and not being afraid to question the status quo by working to redefine what it means to be a citizen of the world across sectors and industries. *Helen Klass-Warch*

Women accounted for **38.3 percent of all new board appointments in 2017** (up 10 percent from 2016).<sup>10</sup>

Out of 2018 Fortune 500 lists, **only 24 CEOs are women – 4.8 percent** (down 25 percent from 2017).<sup>11</sup>

Making time to help people who are younger than me or who are at a lower experience level feel valued, heard and important. I try to be the mentor or friend I didn't have at other places of employment. *Anonymous*

## I challenge the next generation of leaders to believe in the courage of their own convictions.

Have ideas, have passion, fight for what is right and think big. For example, APCO was one of the original signatories for Paradigm for Parity. We've always been committed to equal pay, and have played a key role in encouraging other companies to do the same.

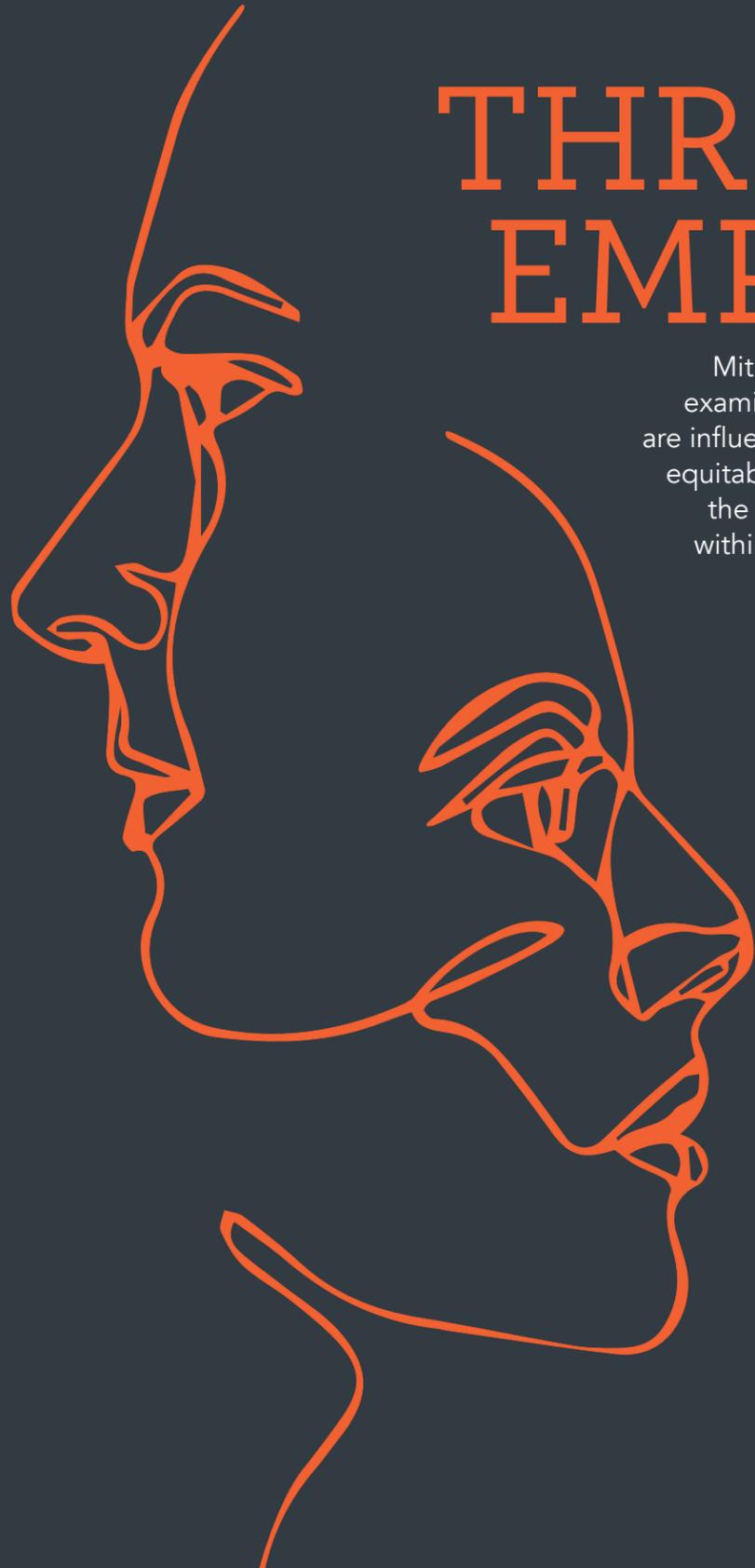
**Margery Kraus**  
Founder and Executive Chairman

<sup>8</sup> John Veihmeyer, Lynne Doughtie, Sharon G. Dayoan, KPMG Women's Leadership Study (KPMG, 2015). <https://home.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/ph/pdf/ThoughtLeadershipPublications/KPMGWomensLeadershipStudy.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> The Problem, (Boys to Men Mentoring, 2019). <http://boystomen.org/the-problem/>

<sup>10</sup> Saadia Zahidi, Thierry Geiger, Robert Crotti, The Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2018). [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2019).

<sup>11</sup> Paul Taylor, Scott Keeter, Millennials: A portrait of generation next: Confident. Connected. Open to change (Pew Research Center, 2010). <https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>



# MITIGATING BIAS THROUGH EMPATHY

Mitigating bias requires us to constantly examine which privileges and experiences are influencing our choices. In order to create equitable environments, we must challenge the inherent biases in our processes and within our institutions, but also the biases within ourselves.

## HOW ALGORITHMS IMPACT THE LIVES OF MILLIONS ACROSS THE WORLD

The omnipresence of algorithms that impact billions of lives cannot be underestimated. With their mathematical efficiency, they are built into our mobile phones, appliances, online services and products we interface with in our quotidian routines. Today, algorithmically-powered applications analyze, make decisions and act autonomously. The incursion of machines in our lives has led to coupled behaviors we often can no longer distinguish. We voluntarily and passively use these tools to influence sleep behavior, media consumption, commuter paths, transportation systems, financial systems, housing choices and even national defense.

Algorithms are purpose-built and designed by software engineers who could embed their biases towards a preferred mathematical and statistical consequence. Innately, an algorithm is unprincipled and exists within a broad moral domain. In my view, a human mind created these tools, therefore, it is the creator's responsibility to imbue ethical and moral considerations into their creations. However, the expertise and frameworks to ensure that the mathematical foundation of AI and machine learning algorithms are ethical and fair has not kept up with the rapid development of the field.

Our role at APCO is to counsel our technology-creating clients to produce ethical and fair data processes, algorithms, machine learning and AI frameworks and counsel our user-side clients on how to equitably use these tools. Biases are naturally latent within data sets and massively impact machine learning and AI modeling. Algorithmic biases are ironically a very human problem that can raise inherited negatives that affect the human experience of millions and

The algorithms on which many apps are based have an implicit male bias. For instance, in one test, when HR apps were given names and backgrounds of candidates, 5 percent of women were selected. When those details were hidden, the number of women selected for interview rose to 54 percent.<sup>12</sup>

damage trust in a business or organization. They can unintentionally negatively impact people of different races, genders, incomes or education levels.

Data and systems models should reflect the population they will serve, and at APCO, we often help identify stakeholders a team of developers may not expect. Helping our clients assess their algorithmic process and convert inherit negatives into positive contributions to stakeholder experiences lowers overall risk. By acknowledging, seeking and resolving these human biases, we can help ensure that the data processes that are so fully-integrated into our lives more closely represent the diversity of the world and reflect the inclusive intentions of the businesses that create and use them.

**David Sánchez**  
*Art Director, Studio*

<sup>12</sup> Saadia Zahidi, Thierry Geiger, Robert Crotti, The Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2018). [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2019).

# WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO MITIGATE BIASES

WITHIN YOURSELF, COLLEAGUES AND CLIENTS AT WORK?

**Empathy**—I try to look at everything from the point of view of my colleagues or clients to get a sense of where they're coming from.

*Emilie Williams-Sinn*

I do my best to **evaluate ideas, and not people**. I try to understand my colleagues' backgrounds and situations to better inform where they're coming from and what they might have to contribute.

*Melissa Petito*

**Listening** is my secret to **mitigating biases** and making a place to discuss, **not just talk**.

*Joon Kang*

**Working on equality in the workplace is an imperative task that would result in a reduction of the pay gap. A 2014 Pew survey found that 77 percent of women and 63 percent of men say that "the U.S. needs to continue making changes to give men and women equality in the workplace."**<sup>13</sup>

**One in five C-suite leaders is a woman, and fewer than one in 30 is a woman of color.**<sup>14</sup>

I thought taking this job on would be just like taking on the other roles I have had at APCO. It really isn't. The real challenge does not come from board pressure or from achieving our financial goals, it **comes from creating an organization where everyone feels equally welcome, included and able to succeed**. That's a difficult goal to achieve but striving to get there is, for me, the most stimulating part of what we're doing.

*Brad Staples*

I try to **only look for each person's strengths and what I could learn from them**. That keeps you **open to ideas** instead of looking for ways to criticize.

*Jeff Zelkowitz*

(I try) to **lose the bias of hierarchy and recognize the value of what is being said vs who is saying it** by asking questions and helping to ensure that **the quieter voices are also invited to participate**.

*Howard Pulchin*

**Listen with an open mind and open heart.**

When people offer ideas, think about how to build on and grow them, and suspend reflexive evaluation.

*Tina-Marie Adams*

Leadership should **always be cognizant of some inherent biases and work to not pre-judge, and the most important thing is to check in with yourself and those working around you**.

If talented women and people of color think they won't get a fair hearing at one firm, they'll be quick to go to another PR shop where more opportunity and diversity is part of the firm's DNA.

*Margery Kraus*

**Companies that are gender-diverse are 15 percent more likely to outperform others and ethnically diverse companies are 35 percent more likely to outperform other companies.**<sup>15</sup>

I try to **bring in others for gut checks as much as possible** when I question my thinking on something. Also, tone can get so easily misinterpreted over email and instant messaging. If I'm ever unclear about someone's intentions or meaning, I try to assume the best but also try to take the conversation off the computer. A **face-to-face or over-the-phone interaction** will almost always be more productive and to-the-point than an email or instant message.

*Anonymous*

<sup>13</sup> Saadia Zahidi, Thierry Geiger, Robert Crotti, The Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2018). [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2018.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/-/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Gender%20Equality/Women%20in%20the%20Workplace%202017/Women-in-the-Workplace-2017-v2.ashx>

<sup>15</sup> Kayla Patrick, Racial Bias in Hiring Practices Leave Women of Color Behind (National Women's Law Center, 2017) <https://nwlcc.org/blog/racial-bias-in-hiring-practices-leave-women-of-color-behind/>

# WorkLife Balance Philosophies

Work-life balance is critical to mental, physical and emotional health. Although its definition may differ for each individual, learning strategies for stabilizing the balance between work and life can help better inform decisions on how we spend our time and what we ask for from our employers and organizations.

What is your work-life balance philosophy?  
How do you live this philosophy?

I make sure that I am as productive at home taking care of me as I am at work. I also believe we are given vacation time for a purpose. I use that time to regroup so that I can bring my best self to work.  
*Tonita Majors*

My philosophy is that family comes first, always. I make a point of protecting family time, even during the week, by literally scheduling certain parts of my day that are important to me and my family. I make it a point to be home for dinner and to put my son to bed (most nights), but this means I may be logging hours later at night. I have also come to accept that I am not going to be the classroom parent or at every drop-off or pick-up—and that is okay with me.  
*Katie Milgrom*

**A five-year study found the risk of developing depression in healthy individuals is 1.66 times higher in employees working more than 55 hours a week. The risk of anxiety was 1.74 times higher.<sup>16</sup>**

I give 100 percent to what I am doing. When I am at work, that is my sole focus but when I am back at home with my family, that is my focus.  
*Anonymous*

My work-life balance philosophy is that there is really no true balance between both entities. I think of it more as an ebb-and-flow process where sometimes you work hard, and sometimes you play hard. When work calls you need to double-down and focus, but if deadlines aren't looming enjoy the calm while you can and get some rest.  
*Dominique Scott*

There are many times when you have to work weekends or late nights, so when I'm on vacation, I actually turn off and don't check my work email. You also have to turn around and have that philosophy with your colleagues. I don't contact them when they are on PTO.  
*Anonymous*

**34 percent of men say they feel constantly stressed or under pressure. Men are less likely to ask for help with their mental health issues (particularly at work) because they may feel embarrassed or ashamed (28 percent of men, compared to 19 percent of women, did not seek help for their last mental health problem).<sup>16</sup>**

I believe your family is your greatest gift and speaks to the legacy you will leave and how you will be remembered. Most major decisions I have made have been made with my family in mind. It is important to strengthen your bonds with your family. Growing up, no matter how many directions in which we were heading or commitments we had, the seven of us (parents + five children) would have dinner together and share about our days. When my children were young and living at home, I would put an emphasis on leaving work in time to eat dinner together even if it meant spending another two to three hours working after they had gone to bed. I believe this is also one of the reasons why we are also so close-knit and generally get along.  
*Bill Dalbec*

<sup>16</sup> Men's Health Forum, Key Data: Mental Health (September 2017) <https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/key-data-mental-health>  
<sup>17</sup> Financial Tribune, Lack of Work-Life Balance Leads to Poor Health (Financial Tribune, 2016) <https://financialtribune.com/articles/people/52646/lack-of-work-life-balance-leads-to-poor-health>

# Ten Things You Can Do Today

The advice in this report was collected from a wide range of people, each with a variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We recognize that there's no one simple answer to achieving balance and that progress will be different for every person and industry. It will take many actions from many people to move the needle, but there are some simple things you can do to start making a difference today:

**1 Pause.**  
Before reacting (either positively or negatively), take a moment to try and understand the context of your situation and others' points of view.

**2 Invest in yourself.**  
Do what you have to do in order to bring your full and best self to work each day. Know what your strengths are and what you bring to the table, don't be afraid to advocate for yourself.

**3 Invest in others.**  
Just like others have helped you along the way, learn to see the strengths in others and help them grow. No matter the scale of your actions, whether it's taking someone out for coffee or submitting them for an award, every bit helps.

**4 Be intentionally inclusive.**  
Whether it's staffing a team, inviting colleagues to a brainstorm or making a hire, deliberately go out of your way to include a range of perspectives. Remember, diversity goes beyond physical traits (age, gender identity, race) and can be found in other characteristics like beliefs, morals, communication styles, education levels and languages to name a few.

**5 Listen.**  
Understand the difference between truly listening and waiting for your turn to speak (especially in meetings). If you find yourself getting caught up in your own biases, focus on what is being said, rather than who is saying it.

**6 Do your research.**  
Education is a crucial piece to overcoming our own biases (both conscious and unconscious). Check out the sidebar for some resources to start with.

**7 Have uncomfortable conversations.**  
The more candid, authentic and open-minded we can be, the better we can empathize with others and create change.

**8 Host an improv session to bolster the confidence of your colleagues**  
Improv can be an effective and fun tool to utilize the same parts of our minds that we use at work every day. Overall, it can help teams collaborate and see new strengths in their colleagues and it gets people thinking more creatively than usual. It can help with brainstorming, by learning to build on others' ideas instead of rejecting them (by saying "yes, and...") and build soft skills like listening. It can help with thinking on your feet (similar to a pitch room environment).

**9 Respect PTO/Leave.**  
As you can read from the work-life balance philosophies, it's clear that everyone has a unique philosophy that works for them. Beforehand, work with your supervisor to delegate any urgent items that may come up and just as you would prefer fewer interruptions during your time off, return the gesture and respect colleagues' time off.

**10 Keep the conversation going.**  
For APCO employees, share your thoughts and links on the Diversity & Inclusion Workplace group. For those interested in learning more about APCO's initiatives, email [diversitycouncil@apcoworldwide.com](mailto:diversitycouncil@apcoworldwide.com).

## Additional Resources

**[Women, Business and the Law 2019](#)**  
WBL measures gender inequality in the law. The dataset identifies barriers to women's economic participation and encourages the reform of discriminatory laws.

**[What the Elle Newsletter](#)**  
The latest news and views from a financial feminist leader: What The Elle is devoted to helping you slay at work, be the boss of your money and own your future.

**[100 Things You Can do right now to help Drive the 3% Number Upward](#)**  
Until The 3% Movement came along, only 3% of all U.S. Creative Directors were women. In a world where women influence upwards of 80% of consumer spending and 60% of social media sharing, this is business suicide. Through a mix of content, community and professional development, we've helped raise the number of female CDs to 11% while giving agencies a clear road map of ways to champion female creative talent and leadership.

**[NPR's Code Switch Podcast](#)**  
Ever find yourself in a conversation about race and identity where you just get...stuck? Code Switch can help. We're all journalists of color, and this isn't just the work we do. It's the lives we lead.

**[Young PR Pros Podcast](#)**  
Young PR Pros, a podcast for the young and young at heart PR pros looking for tips and advice on how to advance their careers. Hosted by Kristine D'Arbelles, Julia Kent and Ross Simmonds.

**[Feminist Fight Club](#)**  
Acclaimed journalist Jessica Bennett blends the personal story of her real-life fight club with a studied assessment of the gender gap that continues to plague the American workplace. Bennett provides the tactical strategies—and the camaraderie—every woman needs to fight back, as well as tools for the men who support the cause.

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