



1000 WOMEN LEADERS - PROGRAM CONSTRUCT

Research Methodology

Research on women in leadership has seen plenty of focus, particularly in the last two decades. Jombay's research team followed a systematic approach to analyzing the data obtained from our proprietary research, review of existing literature, and critically examining the available offerings in the market.

- primary research where data is derived directly from the target population
- secondary research where books, academic literature, and indirect sources of information are analyzed
- tertiary research which does not involve additional data but serves to validate and solidify the evidence presented

Jombay's "Lead like a Woman" construct was developed using this systematic three-pronged approach:

Step 1

Jombay's Organizational Psychologists leveraged their experience of 12 years in the talent management industry, having compiled the assessment data of over 100,000 managers and leaders across 2000 organizations, encompassing nearly 25,000 women leaders and managers in various functions.

Jombay used this extensive data to analyze the common patterns in the mindsets and practices of successful women leaders and the common trends that have emerged in the last decade, where the world of work has seen dynamic transformations.

Step 2

Jombay's Organizational Psychologists also conducted an in-depth analysis of existing women leadership frameworks including those used by leading global organizations such as McKinsey & Co.'s Centered Woman Leader framework, Deloitte's Authentic Women in Leadership Framework, Harvard's Women Leaders Advancing Together Program, and academic literature such as the 'integrated women leadership framework' by O'Neil et. al. (2015, published in Semantic Scholar).

We also explored in detail and analyzed expert opinions and TedX talks by more than 100 women and men leaders on DEI, and what the future woman leader should look like.

Jombay conducted a thorough review of the existing academic literature, business citations, books, and organizational research on the challenges faced by women leaders as well as aspiring women leaders at different levels of management within the organization.



The compiled data from these studies were then analyzed to delineate recurring themes and constructs coming out clearly as relevant needs of women leaders, resulting in a list of 20 dimensions.

Step 3

A deep-dive into these different programs revealed that no single established program on Women's Leadership covered all three prongs of a woman's journey: Breaking internal barriers and letting their executive presence shine through, navigating organizational politics and finding support systems to break through the proverbial glass ceiling, and lastly, conquering the intrapreneurial spirit to evolve into a visionary leader in the present-day workplace.

Such an integrated and holistic program would strike a unique balance between the changing landscape of organizational needs and the gendered lens through which a woman leader's journey to the top unfolds. Our goal for Jombay's 1000 Women Leaders Certification Program was for it to capture the new-age development needs of modern women leaders who were also contending with age-old barriers.

Jombay's team pursued this integrated lens and distilled the 20 themes obtained from our primary and secondary research into 10 essential constructs that make up the Women's Leadership Playbook - to ensure sustainable success that women can wear as a badge of honor.

Construct

Conquering Barriers Within

- *KPMG Women's Leadership Study - Two-thirds of the women (out of 57 women CEOs) said they never realized they could become CEO until a boss or mentor encouraged them, and instead focused on hitting business targets and seeking new challenges rather than on their personal career advancement.*

Apart from the leaky pipeline and some corporate structures that could unknowingly set aspiring women up to fail, internal barriers that can hinder women's ambitions to succeed in leadership roles include self-limiting beliefs, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and internalized stereotypes. For women leaders, conquering the barriers within entails the fundamental identity shift involved in coming to see oneself as a leader.

Honing Executive Presence

- *Susan Krauss Whitbourne, University of Massachusetts psychology professor and the author of The Search for Fulfillment (Ballantine, 2010) - "Because of its association with power, and the fact that men are typically seen as having greater dominance than women, gravitas is a notion we think of as a male quality. Anyone can have gravitas. But displaying it tends to be easier for men than it is for women."*

Executive presence is the capacity to connect with others in a way that inspires. For women leaders, honing an executive presence involves developing the perception of being a capable and credible



leader among peers and senior stakeholders, and the ability to inspire confidence among team members.

Winning with Grit

- *Harvard Business Research - According to studies, women CEOs are slightly older than their male counterparts, in part because it takes them 30% longer than men to reach the corner office.*
- *Korn Ferry Research - Grit is one of the most critical traits needed for success in today's world. Grit also includes building resilience and confidence — two critical attributes for all successful leaders. Yet some research shows that many women under 40 may have a confidence gap compared to men.*

Grit is the perseverance and passion to achieve the goals one has set out to accomplish. For women leaders, winning with grit involves the determination towards the goal they have set their sights on, and the resilience that enables them to stay the course in the face of adversity.

Combating the Superwoman Syndrome

- *The term "Superwoman Syndrome" was coined by Marjorie Hansen to describe the experience of stress in a multiple-role woman. "Most women in the superwoman role will feel an obligation to manifest strength, to suppress emotions, resistant to being vulnerable or dependent, and they have a strong determination to succeed, despite limited resources.*
- *Rutgers University Research - Dr. Cheryl Woods-Giscombé delineated the five domains of the Superwoman Syndrome, which include perceived obligations to 1) present an image of strength, 2) suppress emotions, 3) avoid dependence on others, 4) be successful even with limited resources, and 5) prioritize helping others over self-care (Woods-Giscombé et al., 2010, 2016, 2018).*

When women put themselves under the pressure of striving for perfection in every role they are fulfilling, they come to see themselves in the role of a superwoman. For women leaders, combating the Superwoman Syndrome entails letting go of the chase for perfection in every single role, making space for their own well-being, and combating burnout from taking on too much on their shoulders.

Steering Courageous Conversations

- *Sheryl Sandberg, Lean In - "Men are expected to be assertive and confident, so coworkers welcome their leadership. In contrast, women are expected to be nurturing and collaborative, so when we lead, we go against expectations—and often face pushback from men and women. The problem is that women need to assert themselves to be effective."*

Authentic yet assertive communication is essential at the leadership level. For women leaders, steering courageous conversations involves developing the assertiveness to advocate for themselves, providing candid feedback to others, and being vocal about their needs.

Acing Negotiations



- *Forbes Research - Research on competitive business negotiation has found that women are generally less assertive and less successful at it than men. A prior study found that women negotiating another person's salary fared better than women negotiating for themselves—suggesting that women actively adjust their behavior according to conversational context.*

Women who are assertive when negotiating are perceived as competent but pushy and not well-liked. Women who exhibit consideration and a collaborative approach, are well-liked but seen as incompetent. For women leaders, acing negotiations involves adopting a diplomatic approach to negotiations while deriving the outcome that they want.

Navigating Organizational Politics

- *Women graduates in male-dominated organizations claim not to be limited by explicit discrimination, but they construct organizational politics as being masculine in character and as a barrier to their careers. Their accounts undermine the stereotypical dichotomy of masculine rationality and feminine emotion by claiming that women behave reasonably and by focusing on emotion in men's political game-playing. However, claiming to be rational and rejecting politics, while acknowledging its role in career success, is uncomfortable for ambitious women. They risk sabotaging their own position by appearing too sensitive to engage in the less savory aspects of organizational life. (Mackenzie Davey, Kate. (2008). Women's Accounts of Organizational Politics as a Gendering Process. Gender, Work & Organization. 15. 650 - 671.)*
- *McKinsey & Co. Research - The reasons women leaders are stepping away from their companies are telling. Women leaders are just as ambitious as men, but at many companies they face headwinds that make it harder to advance. They're more likely to face belittling microaggressions, such as having their judgment questioned or being mistaken for someone more junior.*

Organizational politics are the unwritten rules that form essential cogs in the workplace machinery, but many of them may be set up against women. For women leaders, navigating organizational politics entails embracing it as a part of the leadership ladder and tactfully leveraging those unwritten rules to get things done.

Forging Alliances and Networks

KPMG Women Leadership Study

- *Receiving encouragement from role models and having a strong professional network can help women bridge the confidence gap.*
- *9 in 10 working women believe that their own perseverance will accelerate their journey to leadership, but they also overwhelmingly agree that female colleagues, role models and professional networks play a critical role in advancing women's leadership.*
- *67% of women reported they'd learned the most important lessons about leadership from other women.*
- *82% percent of professional working women believe access to and networking with female leaders will help them advance in their career.*

Korn Ferry Research - According to a Korn Ferry survey of global executives:

- Women also tend to lack mentors and sponsors to help them navigate their career paths in white male-dominated firms. In general, a lack of executive sponsorship is the biggest barrier to successful leadership development.
- Implementing leadership programs that develop and connect high-potential women with senior leaders may be key to helping more women advance. With more women in senior leadership positions today, 9 in 10 respondents reported they are excited about what is possible.

Creating a fabric of personal contacts and relationships to provide support, feedback, insight, and resources is beneficial for a leader. For women leaders, forging alliances and networks involves developing and leveraging support systems to sustain themselves in the organization.

Kindling the Intrapreneurial Spirit

- *Forbes research - "Women Innovators: Intrapreneur Or Entrepreneur?" Research shows that women are uniquely qualified to succeed as organizational intrapreneurs. Traditional and perceived characteristics of women in the workplace such as the ability to multitask, develop, and motivate others, as well as focus on relationship building, collaboration, and teamwork all defining qualities of a transformative leader can be leveraged upon to promote Intrapreneurship.*

Intrapreneurship involves acting like an entrepreneur in terms of risk-taking and innovation while working within the organization. For women leaders, kindling the intrapreneurial spirit means looking beyond their managerial responsibilities and identifying opportunities to innovate, taking informed risks, and pioneering change within the organization.

Nurturing High-Impact Teams

- *SHRM research - Attributes typically assigned to women can be significant differentiators in building high-impact teams. Facilitating the right environment that fosters high performing teams involves nurturing open communication, a sense of purpose, a climate of mutuality, trust and collaboration.*

High-impact teams are formed by members who collaborate effectively, set ambitious targets for themselves, and ensure seamless execution. For women leaders, nurturing high-impact teams entails leveraging their natural strength to create an environment of psychological safety, collaborative spirit, participative decision-making, and a deep sense of purpose.

Step 4

As a last step, our team validated the final list of 10 constructs with subject matter experts and women leaders. Focus group discussions were conducted with women leaders across industries and functions. The purpose of these FGDs was to understand the extent to which women leaders are able to relate to the constructs that are a part of Jombay's framework. Toward the end of the FGDs, all the



participants rated the constructs in terms of their relevance and importance. All the constructs from Jombay's Framework were found to be important in the journey of leadership development for women. The FGDs also elaborated on the aspects within each construct that are important to incorporate into a development program for women leaders. Jombay's construct was thus validated against the lived experiences of women leaders across different industries and functions.

Some of the major themes that emerged in the FGDs include:

- The need to develop a mindset that conquers both self-imposed and culturally imposed barriers.
- The importance of cultivating a resilient mindset and balancing it with realistic expectations from oneself.
- The significance of nurturing a mindset that balances being assertive with being diplomatic.
- The emphasis on leveraging networks, alliances, and informal power to grow in one's role and within the organization.
- The merits of developing an intrapreneurial mindset to advance one's career within their organizations.

Analysis of the FGD discussions further enabled our team to identify 5 pivotal mindsets by virtue of which the women leaders can develop in these 10 essential constructs. Each of these mindsets and their underlying constructs has been elaborated before.

Clustering into Mindsets

Protagonist Mindset

While "Conquering Barriers Within" allows women to break out of their self-limiting beliefs and stoke their hunger for success, "Honing an Executive Presence" enables them to cultivate their impression and inspire confidence in others. Both of these dimensions need the women leader to play a central, almost pivotal role in reframing their ambitions. Hence, we clustered these under the "Protagonist Mindset".

Cultivating a Protagonist Mindset enables women to overcome self-imposed barriers and be the star of their show!

Warrior Mindset

While "Winning with Grit" develops their fighting spirit, "Combating the Superwoman Syndrome" enables women to step back from fighting the fight all on their own. Both of these need the women leader to fight against external or internal forces. Hence, we clustered these under the "Warrior mindset".

Nurturing a Warrior Mindset enables women to propel through the challenges that come on their way to the top, while at the same time, helping them recognize the need to take some space from carrying the world on their shoulders.

Maverick Mindset



While "Steering Courageous Conversations" helps women cultivate their assertiveness, candor, and a fearless transparency in communication, "Acing Negotiations" enables them to navigate aspects of diplomacy, tactfulness, and impact when negotiating for what they want. Both of these need women to be unconventional and break away from traditional stereotypes. Hence, we clustered it under the "Maverick Mindset".

Honing a Maverick Mindset enables women to rise above the fray, balance their assertiveness with empathy and tact, communicate fearlessly, and solidify their place in their organizations.

Campaigner Mindset

While "Navigating Organizational Politics" enables women to contend with microaggressions, "Forging Alliances and Networks" nurtures their skill for forging bonds and earning sponsorship. Both of these need women leaders to advocate for themselves and build connections that would do the same. Hence, we clustered them under the "Campaigner Mindset".

Nurturing a Campaigner Mindset enables women to deploy a support system and build connections that can sustain them, help them grow, and rise above the fray.

Enterprising Mindset

While "Kindling the Intrapreneurial Spirit" defines women leaders pioneering a cultural shift in the organization in terms of risk-taking, creativity, and innovation, "Nurturing High-Impact Teams" drills down on fostering a collaborative mindset, execution focus, and psychological safety within the interpersonal dynamics of teams. Both of these need the woman leaders to be bold, recognize opportunities, and think of new ways of doing things. Hence we clustered them under "Enterprising Mindset".

Cultivating an Enterprising Mindset enables women to look beyond their roles and personal growth, to build a sustainable, high-impact, and inclusive ecosystem.