

Equity-Focused Leadership for the Oil and Gas Sector

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Summary

Next Gen Men's (NGM) new initiative, Equity-Focused Leadership, aims to improve gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace, by engaging men in leadership positions, men entering the workforce, and male-dominated workplaces, industries, and professions.

Introduction

In many sectors, fields, and workplaces (including oil and gas), the majority of leadership positions are held by men, while women, among other minority groups, are underrepresented in decision-making roles and may face discrimination, harassment, and violence.

Although women make up 47% of the Canadian workforce, they represent only 4.9% as CEO's, 6.9% of top earners and 15.9% of board of directors. In Alberta, women hold only 11% of corporate board positions. The Canadian Labour Congress has estimated that the cost of domestic violence to Canadian employers is close to \$77 million. In Calgary, there has been a noticeable increase in domestic violence calls associated with the economic downturn.

Research studies from all over the world have confirmed that gender equality is good for business. McKinsey's *Women Matter* report on more than 900 organizations globally found that companies with three or more women in senior management functions scored higher on all dimensions of organizational effectiveness. Catalyst's research series *The Bottom Line* found that companies with more women on boards had better financial results than companies with less women on their boards. And, MSCI found that companies with more women on boards had fewer governance-related controversies and companies with stronger female leadership had higher Return on Equity and superior price-to-book ratio.

In spite of a strong focus on women's leadership and calls to 'Lean In,' there is a gap in efforts that engage men in leadership positions, men entering the workforce, and male-dominated workplaces, industries, and professions to recognize the importance of gender equality, diversity and inclusion and provide support for men to actively contribute to positive changes in their workplaces.

Theory and/or Method

NGM has developed several presentations and workshops that can be used as "spearhead" engagements with organizations interested in transforming their workplace culture to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

These initial engagements are designed to open up the discussion and introduce the value of gender equality and the rationale for engaging men, and are followed by an intensive training program for a small cohort of male leaders and staff, designed to impact their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours.

Our theory of change and methodology is based on leading research from social and organizational psychology, as well as studies of successful interventions from around the world that have changed and sustained the attitudes and behaviours of boys, men, and communities towards gender inequalities.

In practice, our programs ask men to recognize that everyone has bias, but some forms of bias lead to subtle, unintentional forms of discrimination that disadvantage women and other minority groups and work against the shared goals of an organization or team, as well as the values of equity and inclusion. Our training program spans multiple weeks and the sessions are spaced apart to provide time for participants to reflect on what they have learned, and apply their learning to real-life situations in the workplace. Within a given organization, we aim to reach at least 15% of the target population (i.e. 15 participants for an organization with 100 male staff), in order to change and sustain the culture of diversity and inclusion with a critical mass of influencers and leaders. Finally, our programs include comprehensive, integrated evaluation so that participating organizations are able to track individual-level and organizational-level changes over time and key learnings and insights are identified to inform ongoing and future initiatives.

Examples

This is a new initiative built upon our expertise running gender transformative programs for youth, as well as engaging adult men in discussions that they may not normally have through our Wolf Pack series.

Conclusions

When men have the resources and support to think about how our society, culture, and institutions have shaped our current understanding of gender, masculinity, and leadership, there is a critical opportunity to cultivate empathy and inspire action towards more equitable, diverse, and inclusive communities.

By focusing on men in leadership positions, men entering the workforce, and male-dominated workplaces, industries, and professions, Next Gen Men's Equity-Focused Leadership initiative is poised to significantly accelerate progress in the area of workplace culture and diversity.

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