

Women in Leadership Initiative

Managing It All: Career, Family, and Community

Virtual roundtable results | July 27, 2020

CONVENING TECH LEADERS ACROSS MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts has one of the highest concentrations of high-technology employment in the country, as well as a diverse base of established and emerging technology clusters. Improving opportunities for women to thrive and advance into leadership roles in these organizations is a priority for the Massachusetts High Technology Council's Women in Leadership initiative, as is ensuring that advancement and equity survive through COVID-19 crisis in a new normal. The Women in Leadership initiative organizes efforts to promote recruiting, retaining, and promoting women into leadership roles across the industry.

On July 27, 2020, MilliporeSigma co-hosted a program with the Council and knowledge partner McKinsey & Company on the particular challenges that leaders face as they try to manage it all — career, family, and community.

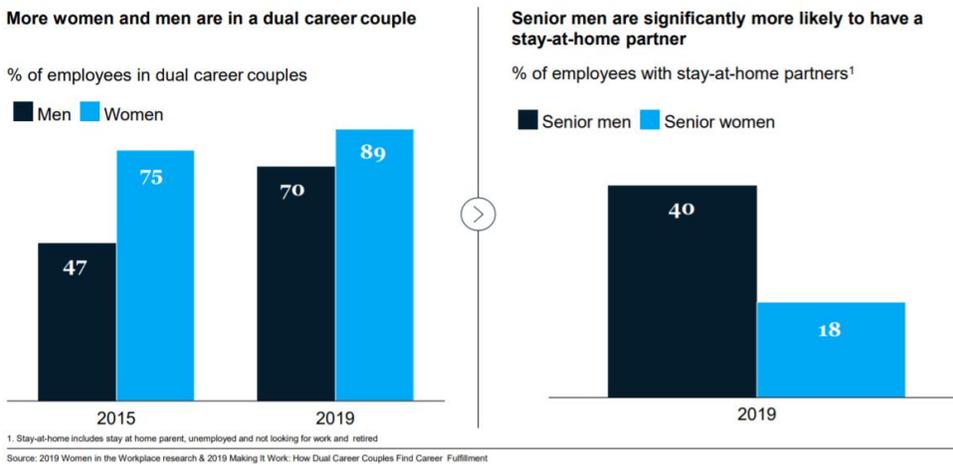
This whitepaper includes research on the challenges that dual-career couples have faced in recent years and the impact of the pandemic on gender equality and outlines some insights from facilitated breakout groups on managing constraints across five dimensions: technology, process and organization, taking care of others, taking care of self, and structure and culture.

For further information on this whitepaper or the event, please contact McKinsey partner Megan Greenfield at Megan.Greenfield@mckinsey.com. For more research on women in the workplace, visit including the latest Women in the workplace 2020 report, please visit: womenintheworkplace.com. Many thanks to Sherry Heffner, Bettina Olshausen, Datra Oliver, Andrew Shearer, Bernie Prusaczyk, and Kristen LaVerghetta who contributed to the research for the program and the whitepaper.

WHAT WE KNOW: THE CHALLENGES FACING DUAL-CAREER COUPLES

According to Women in the Workplace, a multi-year research partnership between McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org, the number of dual-career couples has increased over the last several years, and women are more likely than men to be part of dual-career couples. Senior men remain more likely to have stay-at-home partners so senior women face different challenges than their male counterparts.

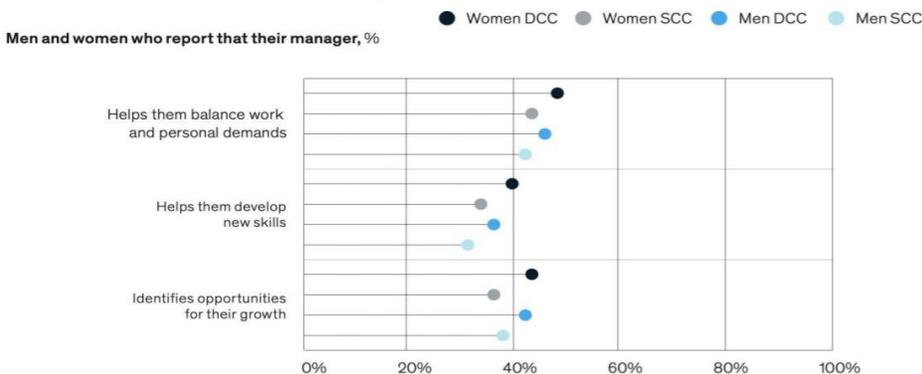
Exhibit 1: Dual Career Couples have increased over time



The gap in gender representation at senior levels persists, even though some women report more managerial support for gender diversity at senior levels. A study of more than 35,000 workers with spouses or live-in partners found women in dual-career couples slightly more likely than other groups to benefit from managerial support.

Exhibit 2: Dual career and single career couples and manager support

Our recent study of more than **35,000 workers with spouses or live-in partners** showed dual career couples are increasingly the norm and require support to ensure gender diversity at senior levels



WHAT WE ARE LEARNING: THE EMERGING EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON DUAL-CAREER COUPLES, ESPECIALLY WOMEN

Through the pandemic and the need for workplace flexibility around the world, women are leaving the workforce disproportionately. At home, women also do three times more unpaid care work than men.

Exhibit 3: The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality

The McKinsey Global Institute recently released new research updating our landmark 2015 [The Power of Parity](#) report on how the **COVID-19 pandemic is proving regressive to gender equality**. It found that delaying action on gender equality to counter effects of Covid-19 on women **could cost global economy \$5 trillion in 2030**

COVID-19 impact on gender equality: As a result of gender inequality, COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on job losses for women



Source: 2015 The power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth

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WHAT WE CAN DO: MANAGING IT ALL: CAREER, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY

Technology: Choosing tools and managing space and resources

Challenge: Spending so much time at home, families must share professional and personal space and resources and may have to cope with technology limitations and the need to function in close quarters.

Ideas: Plan ahead, be flexible, be willing to try and experiment, and learn from others continuously

- Recreate the office ecosystem at home as much as possible (e.g., dedicated workspaces, dressing for success, scheduling breaks)
- Create signals for others that it is your dedicated work time (e.g., closing doors, listening through earbuds, setting expectations with family members on work time and social time)
- Optimize technology use — agree with other team members on platform preferences and work styles; stay up to speed on technology and training, where possible
- Share critical needs for internet bandwidth and have contingency plans for peak times
- Increase the use of interactive tools and gamification to keep team members engaged remotely — for example, use polling, annotation, and meeting feedback tools
- Stay connected with the community (e.g., other parents) and share best practices for managing technology
- Establish family communication channels and expectations for real-time adjustments (e.g., texting for care-givers, home support)

“We’re all in this together. We’ve never been in this boat. We need to work together, and that means open communication.” – Roundtable participant

Process and organization

Challenge: Working from home and observing social distance protocols complicate managing schedules and navigating cooperation at home and in extended community networks (e.g., care-giving).

Ideas: Use virtual resources to build and maintain social relationships and community support

- Use virtual resources to re-establish routines (e.g., scheduled video conferences with friends and family, experiment with virtual entertainment to reduce isolation)
- Make it clear to your family in advance which meetings are formal and require dedicated focus and which are informal and can accommodate short interruptions or multitasking
- Set a schedule for your day, set alarms/times to switch tasks (e.g., help with school work), and communicate schedules at home and at work; track your ability to meet your non-work commitments and adjust your plan, if needed
- Shorten meetings to allow time for breaks and transitions (e.g., start one-hour meetings 10 minutes after the hour to give everyone a break; shorten meetings to 15 minutes if the work does not need more time)
- Experiment with setting regular, consistent time each week to community, e.g., use Fridays for team events and personal/professional development

“Productivity is in the eye of the beholder. Talk with your managers about your personal need for flexibility. Have a clear plan. Conversation is key. Set expectations for what you need.” – Roundtable participant

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“Let it go and empower more! Lean on your colleagues and your support system.” – Roundtable participant

Taking care of others

Challenge: The joining of personal and professional spaces has eroded rituals and guidelines for taking care of others and making space for quality time.

Ideas: Dedicate time to connecting and rethinking working norms

- Keep lines of communication open and communicate often with colleagues and family
 - Set formal team check-ins to scope work and informal check-ins to take the pulse of team morale
 - Have weekly conversations at home to sync schedules and priorities for the coming week
 - Guard personal time and use paid time off to devote time to family and self
- Find moments in your routine to discuss learnings on how to manage it all, including maintaining mental health, regularly with peers and colleagues
- Dedicate time to build and nourish personal relationships, connect with family and friends, and recharge by yourself
- Make time to connect with teams on a personal level — take advantage of company-sponsored events or virtual team-building events
- Look for flexible working arrangements at work, including less typical schedules (alternatives to 9 am-5 pm) to meet your needs
- Seek out likeminded colleagues and friends through affinity groups (e.g., parents of teens, parents of toddlers, single-family households, senior care)

“Mental health is paramount. Find like-minded colleagues and friends. Set up affinity groups for folks to connect with one another, e.g., first responder group, those with young children, those with teens, those with elders. Listen and acknowledge; you don’t always need solutions.” – Roundtable participant

Taking care of self: Managing energy and physical and mental health

Challenge: Constantly juggling work, care, and day-to-day responsibilities has upended routines, increased fatigue, and left less time for self-care.

Ideas: Set boundaries and routines to create more time for renewal

- Set aside time to disconnect and take time off, and let your teams know so they can plan accordingly
- Communicate clearly boundaries and expectations for sharing responsibilities with partner and family members at home and team members at work
- Set a routine for self-care, including repurposing pre-COVID-19 commitments — for example, replace commute time with time for wellness
- Reintroduce energizing hobbies, interests, and passions to your routine (e.g., cooking, exercise, music, gardening, dance, hiking)
- Be gentle with yourself and give yourself grace

“I’m telling my team I want the best of you, not the rest of you.” – Roundtable participant

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Structure and culture: Implementing a work culture of flexibility and support

Challenge: All employees need additional support and flexibility; leaders should promote a supportive culture.

Ideas: Communicate regularly and seek support proactively

- Communicate professional needs regularly and confidently to your teams, management, and peers — for example, be open about family care transitions or pilots of new working arrangements and their potential impact
- Have open dialogue — set clear expectations, but be flexible on making changes (for yourself, your teams, and your organization)
- Seek out support networks at home (partner and family support) and at work with peers and co-workers (employee resource groups)
- Use paid time off to refuel and recharge — individual needs are important
- Create safe places by expanding where people can get peer and professional mental health support; remember that employee needs and preferences vary — for example, some may prefer informal community spaces like weekly meet ups without an agenda, while others may prefer one-on-one meetings
- Use this opportunity to embed flexibility in your company's permanent culture

“Women have 3x more unpaid work at home. My advice for women: stay in it. Just keep swimming. Keep treading water. Do everything you can to stay in the workforce, even if it has to be at a reduced pace. This is an unprecedented time.” – Roundtable participant