



HIGH POTENTIALS IN THE PIPELINE: LEADERS PAY IT FORWARD

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WHO TOOK A CHANCE ON YOU?

— Thomas Falk,
Chairman & CEO, Kimberly-Clark Corporation

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS RECOGNIZE THAT INVESTING IN talent development is crucial to business success. They also recognize that getting ahead in one's career is often an outcome of someone staking his or her own reputation on recommending an individual for an important role. Maybe a leader took this chance on an individual even before that person had "earned it," not because the individual was a direct report, but because the leader saw the win-win of investing in a future leader.

Who are these preeminent leaders who focus on setting talent in their organizations up for success? Were they themselves sponsored, coached, or given job or career advice from others in the past, and are they now "paying it forward" by developing others? Finally, are there any differences in the extent to which women and men pay it forward?

In Catalyst's longitudinal research series *The Promise of Future Leadership: Highly Talented Employees in the Pipeline*, our findings have refuted a number of myths that suggest that the gender gap in leadership exists and persists because of women's choices or actions. In the series

At the end of the day, it's not about what women are going to do. It's about what the leadership is doing. Senior leaders need to be far more accountable for their actions.

—Kathy H. Hannan
National Managing Partner, Corporate
Social Responsibility and Diversity
KPMG LLP

of reports,¹ we have shown that despite doing all the things they have been told would lead to advancement, women's careers lag men's. In this latest installment, we build upon these findings by examining factors associated with being developed and, in turn, paying it forward. We found that:

- Critical career experiences lead talent to pay it forward.
- Paying it forward pays off in the form of greater advancement and higher compensation.
- Women pay it forward and to a greater extent than men.

These findings indicate that the gender gap can't be fully explained by women not developing future leaders. As well, this busts the myth of the Queen Bee syndrome,² which suggests that women don't help other women in the workplace. Not only did we find that women high potentials are actively developing others, we found that, compared to men, they were *more likely* to be developing women.

The key findings from the 2010 survey, illustrative quotes, and questions for consideration included throughout this report are designed to encourage reflection on how talent is identified and developed within your organization. But reflection alone is insufficient. Leaders should use the prompts in the Consider This sections in this report as a call to action to identify and remedy gaps in talent management processes within their organizations.





CAREER DEVELOPMENT: WHAT DO WE MEAN?

In gathering information on whether or not high potentials received career development from others, we asked them to consider their network—the people with whom they discuss important work matters, from bouncing ideas around to getting advice on key decisions, strategizing projects, evaluating options, or discussing career goals. We also asked participants to identify the most helpful person in their network and what this person provided them with—job or career advice, sponsorship, support, or role-modeling. The definitions of each type of career development as used in the survey and in this report are:

- **Job or Career Advice:** The person provides advice on specific tasks, offers coaching, or provides general information about navigating the organization.
- **Sponsorship:** The person open doors for you, has power and/or an influential position within the organization and uses it in

your favor to advocate for you and help you get projects and assignments that can enhance your position and visibility.

- **Support:** The person provides friendship, empathy, or caring beyond the job.
- **Role-Modeling:** The person sets an example you aspire to emulate.

We also asked high potentials, “Do you currently offer support such as coaching, mentoring, or advising to someone (a protégé) who is not a direct report with the goal of developing their career?” Unless otherwise specified, when the phrases “development,” “developing others,” or “developmental support” are used in this report, we are referring to the coaching, mentoring, or advice high potentials received themselves or provided to another.

HIGH POTENTIALS WHO HAVE RECEIVED DEVELOPMENT FROM OTHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO PAY IT FORWARD AND DEVELOP FUTURE TALENT

[Being sponsored and paying it forward] is a good model...It has a significant impact on how successful you are in your career, and then how you treat other people [who] need you to be a mentor, a counselor, a sponsor.

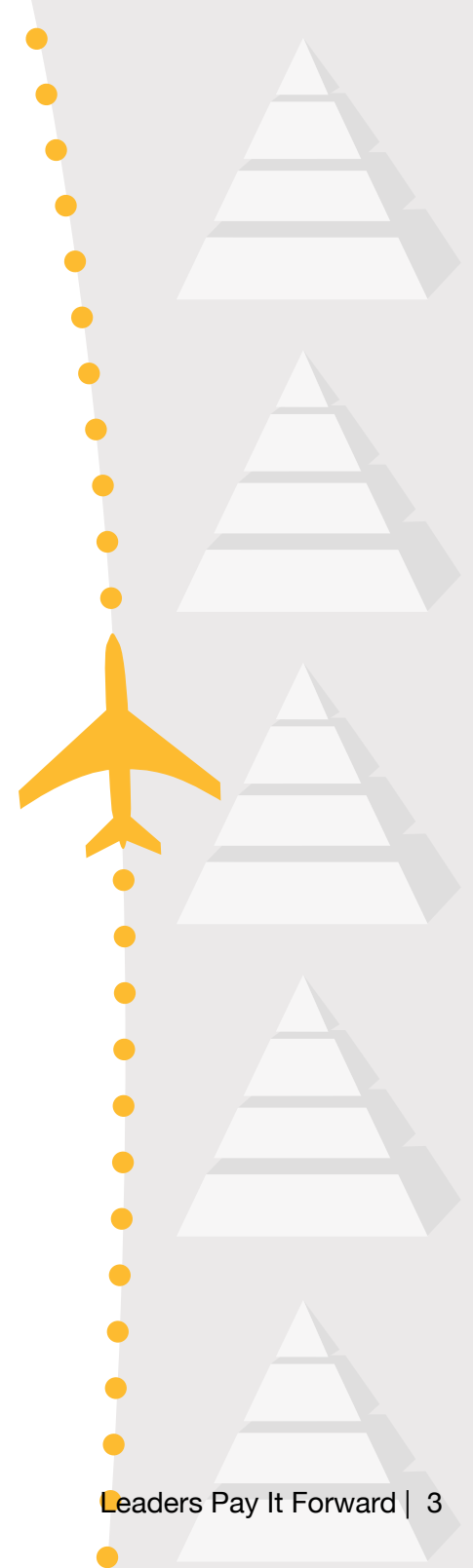
— Man Protégé

We found that, when asked about the trusted people with whom they discussed important career matters, high potentials who received developmental support from others are more likely to now be developing the next generation of leaders. They are “paying it forward” and providing others with the same help that they themselves received along the way.

What Matters When it Comes to Paying it Forward

When it comes to paying it forward:

- **Being developed matters: a higher percentage of high potentials who had received developmental support in the past two years were more likely to be offering similar support to a protégé.**
 - **59%** of those who received developmental support were now, in turn, developing others compared to 47% of those who hadn't received this type of support.³
- **Numbers matter: the more people high potentials received developmental advice from, the more likely they were to pay it forward to others.**
 - Controlling for other factors, the greater the number of people who have developed these high potentials, the greater their likelihood of, in turn, developing others.⁴
- **The type of development received matters: if high potentials had received sponsorship, they were more likely to be paying it forward.**
 - If any of the top three people with whom high potentials frequently discussed career matters provided them with sponsorship, high potentials, in turn, were more likely to pay it forward to others.⁵
 - **66%** of high potentials who were sponsored were developing others vs. 42% who hadn't been sponsored.⁶
 - Other types of development high potentials received, including role modeling, job or career advice, and support, did not directly predict their likelihood of paying it forward.⁷



- **Level matters: high potentials who hold higher-level positions were more likely to be developing others.**⁸

- For example, **64%** of high potentials at the senior executive/CEO level were developing others compared to only 30% of high potentials at the individual contributor level.⁹

- **Being proactive about career advancement matters: high potentials who have most proactively used career advancement strategies¹⁰ in recent years to get ahead were more likely to develop others than those who had been less proactive.**¹¹

- For example, **63%** of those who actively used career advancement strategies that focus both within and outside their organizations are now developing future leaders compared to 42% of high potentials who are relatively inactive with regard to their own career advancement strategies.¹²

- Paralleling the findings in *The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing All the Right Things Really Get Women Ahead?*, we found no difference between women and men regarding the extent to which they used proactive career advancement strategies in recent years.¹³



CONSIDER THIS

High Potentials Are More Likely to Develop Future Talent if Others Have Similarly Invested in Their Advancement

[Having been sponsored] made me want to do the same. I recognized the value it provided me, and I certainly wanted to have the opportunity to provide that value to other people.

—Man Sponsor

- How are you and others throughout your organization creating a culture of talent development while curbing actions that work against an inclusive process?
- Are you increasing awareness about the importance of developing others, highlighting role models who do it well, creating touch points between talent and influential leaders, or perhaps developing formal programs?
- What would take talent development to the next level for your organization?



HIGH POTENTIALS WHO DEVELOP OTHERS EXPERIENCE GREATER CAREER GROWTH

The project [my sponsor helped me secure] was so successful that by the time we were done and I had advanced, I was able to promote a number of other people in the department because they had gotten visibility that they otherwise wouldn't have gotten.

—Woman Sponsor

- Developing a protégé predicted high potentials' compensation growth¹⁴ as well as their advancement.¹⁵
- High potentials who were developing a protégé had **\$25,075**¹⁶ greater compensation growth from 2008 to 2010:
 - Women and men benefitted equally from developing others. There was no difference in compensation growth or career advancement between women and men who were developing others.¹⁷



CONSIDER THIS

Developing Others Pays Off in Greater Career Advancement and Compensation Growth

- How does your organization recognize and reward the efforts of employees who are proactively developing others, particularly senior leaders?
- Are rewards linked to achieving goals for developing others? If not, should more direct links between developing others and incentives be offered in your organization?
- Does your organization position talent development as a necessary leadership skill and competency for advancement?

WOMEN ARE PAYING IT FORWARD MORE THAN MEN, AND THEY'RE LARGELY DEVELOPING OTHER WOMEN

She's taken such a vested interest in my career that I want to pay that back to others.

—Woman Protégé

- Women are more likely to develop others when compared to men. Among high potentials who reported they had someone developing them over the course of their careers, women were more likely than men to now be paying it forward and offering similar support to someone else.
 - **65%** of women who had been developed were paying it forward, compared to 56% of men.¹⁸
- Women and men are providing the same types of support to their protégés. When we asked high potentials how they have been most helpful to their protégés, we found that there were no significant differences in what women and men provided their protégés.
 - 67% of both women and men gave their protégés career or job advice.



- An equivalent proportion of women and men offered sponsorship to their protégés (9% of women, 13% of men).
 - Additionally, there were no differences between men and women when it came to stereotypically “feminine” support¹⁹ such as social support (7% of women, 8% of men) and role-modeling (15% of women, 11% of men).²⁰
- **Women were more likely than men to be developing women.**

- Consistent with research that people gravitate toward others like themselves²¹—the “like likes like” phenomenon—we found that women are more likely than men to be developing women.
- **73%** of women who were developing others were developing female talent compared to only 30% of men who were developing female talent.²²

WOMEN PAY IT FORWARD: TAKING THE STING OUT OF THE QUEEN BEE MYTH


Women’s actions stand out more because there isn’t a critical mass of them at the top.

—Shahla Aly, Vice President,
Solutions Delivery, Microsoft IT
Microsoft Corporation

The Queen Bee syndrome²³ suggests that women do not help other women get ahead, and that they may even actively keep other women down, which some say contributes to the gender gap. Though assumptions of a Queen Bee syndrome persist, our findings on high-potential leaders in the pipeline support a growing body of research²⁴ that unravels this myth. We found that women who have received development themselves are developing others even more than men who have been developed. And not only are women offering career development support to others, they are, again, more than men, helping other women climb the corporate ladder.

And it doesn’t end when women reach the top. Our findings also showed that senior women are developing others—just as senior men are—and that senior men and women are more likely than those in more junior roles to be paying it forward and developing others.²⁵

These findings show that the majority of women are not vying to be the Queen Bee while holding others back. Instead they are paying development forward to other women. And while our results show that not all women are developing other women, it’s also true that not all men help other men. The main difference is that the failure by some men to pay it forward is not attributed to their gender group as a whole and, thus, is not used to negatively characterize all men’s behavior. The failure of some women to pay it forward, however, is used to negatively characterize women’s behavior as a group.

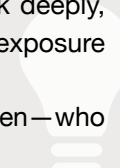
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- **Senior women—just as with senior men—were more likely than those in more junior roles to be developing others.**²⁶
 - Additionally, women don't let long hours get in the way of developing talent. Among high potentials working more than 60 hours a week, women were more likely than men to be developing others (**76%** of women vs. 57% of men).²⁷



CONSIDER THIS

Men Are More Likely To Develop Other Men, and Women Are More Likely to Develop Other Women

Given that men still overwhelmingly hold the most senior positions,²⁸ and that getting men involved in women's development creates men who become champions of women's advancement,²⁹ more men should view developing female talent as part of their role as a leader.

- Is there a compelling, well-communicated business case for diversity of thought and development in your organization?
 - Are you encouraging your leaders to “look broadly, look deeply, and look often”³⁰ to find talent that may not be getting exposure and support?
 - How well do you showcase senior women—and men—who develop female talent?
- 

DEVELOPING HIGH POTENTIALS IS AN ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY

I remember one of my bosses telling me a long time ago, “As you grow in an organization and you become a leader, part of your job essentially is to make time for people who want to get insights from you or want to bounce career ideas off you...” I took that very much to heart, I [have] used it for myself, and I also have always been very supportive of other people coming to me for things like that.

—Woman Protégé

Through this research on the careers of high potentials, we found that those who received development themselves were more likely to develop the next generation of leaders at the organization. In particular, sponsorship stands out as the type of development that predicts most directly whether or not someone will pay it forward after having received such support. It may be that protégés who have received this type of career development feel strongly indebted to the leader who took a chance on them and, thus, feel they have more of an obligation to do the same for others.

In addition, those who are more proactive in strategically advancing their careers are more likely to develop others. Thus, high potentials may see helping others, particularly those other than their direct reports, as part of their own advancement strategy within the organization. It can increase their visibility and create a followership that can serve the high potential well when focusing on rising within the organization.

We also found that paying it forward pays off, literally, in terms of further career progression and greater compensation growth. Not only does

developing others help build a strong talent pipeline with a pay-it-forward mentality, those who engage in this type of development receive tangible and direct rewards for investing time in others.

Finally, we found that women are paying it forward to other women, adding to the existing research that busts the Queen Bee myth. We did find, however, that not all women are developing others just as not all men are developing others. If women are developing others—and to an even greater extent than men are—why does the Queen Bee myth persist? Perhaps it is because there are so many more men in the senior ranks that any one man’s actions aren’t taken as reflective of men as a group the way women’s actions seem to reflect on their entire gender.

Organizations—and individual leaders—should consider what they should start doing, keep doing, or stop doing with regard to paying talent development forward. Because paying it forward pays back.





APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

Findings for this report derive from responses to an online survey fielded in 2010, which provided additional information on career progression initially collected in 2008. Data in this report are based on responses from the 742 respondents who had attended full-time MBA programs and had worked full-time at a company or firm as of the 2008 survey.³¹

Analyses focus on these high potentials' experiences between the 2008 and 2010 surveys with respect to how they themselves have been

developed by others and what effect, if any, this development has had on whether or not they were paying it forward. This strategy allowed us to identify the spillover effects of development of high-potential talent from 2008–2010. We also investigated the benefits high potentials receive as a result of investing in others' careers.

ENDNOTES

1. Nancy M. Carter and Christine Silva, *Opportunity or Setback? High Potential Women and Men During Economic Crisis* (Catalyst, 2009); Nancy M. Carter and Christine Silva, *Pipeline's Broken Promise* (Catalyst, 2010); Nancy M. Carter and Christine Silva, *Mentoring: Necessary But Insufficient for Advancement* (Catalyst, 2010); Nancy M. Carter and Christine Silva, *The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing All the Right Things Really Get Women Ahead?* (Catalyst, 2011).
2. Graham Staines, Carol Tarvis, and Toby Epstein Jayarante, "The Queen Bee Syndrome." *Psychology Today*, January 1974, p. 55-60.
3. Comparison is significant at $p < .05$.
4. We conducted a logistic regression to predict the likelihood that high potentials are (versus are not) developing others. Controlling for gender, age (as a proxy for prior work experience), level in 2010, and time since MBA, we found that the number of people high potentials discussed career matters with significantly predicted their likelihood of developing others; those with more advisors were more likely to develop others at $p < .05$. The regression excludes high potentials who reported that they had zero advisors.
5. We conducted a logistic regression to predict the likelihood that high potentials are (versus are not) developing others. Controlling for gender, age, level in 2010, time since MBA, and number of people in their network (excluding those respondents who reported not discussing career matters with anyone), we found that when any of their top three network connections provided them with sponsorship, high potentials were more likely to develop others at $p < .05$.
6. Comparison is significant at $p < .05$.
7. In the logistic regression predicting the likelihood that high potentials are (versus are not) developing others, controlling for gender, age, level in 2010, time since MBA, and number of people in their network (excluding those who reported not discussing career matters with anyone), we found that receiving role modeling, job or career advice, or social support were not significant predictors of likelihood to develop others, $p > .1$.
8. We conducted a logistic regression to predict the likelihood that high potentials are (versus are not) developing others. Controlling for gender, age, and time since MBA, we found that the high potentials' level in 2010 significantly predicted their likelihood of developing others, with those in higher levels being more likely to develop others at $p < .05$.
9. Comparison is significant at $p < .05$.
10. For information on career advancement strategies, please see Nancy M. Carter and Christine Silva, *The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing All the Right Things Really Get Women Ahead?* (Catalyst, 2011).
11. We created a scale measuring recent proactiveness based on the mean of responses to 20 items assessing the extent to which high potentials had used various career advancement strategies between the 2008 and 2010 surveys. We conducted a logistic regression controlling for gender, age, level in 2010, time since MBA, and number of people in their network (excluding those respondents who reported not discussing career matters with anyone). Recent proactiveness predicted the development of others at $p < .05$.
12. Comparison is significant at $p < .05$. See Nancy Carter and Christine Silva, *The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing All the Right Things Get Women Ahead?* (Catalyst, 2011).
13. This finding builds on previous findings, here showing that women and men continue to use career advancement strategies equally as careers have progressed over this time period. There was no significant difference on mean scores for recent proactiveness for men (3.14) and women (3.09), $p > .1$. For more on high potentials' use of career advancement strategies, please see Nancy Carter and Christine Silva, *The Myth of the Ideal Worker: Does Doing All the Right Things Get Women Ahead?* (Catalyst, 2011).
14. In a linear regression predicting the logarithm of current compensation as of 2010, controlling for gender, age, logarithm of compensation in 2008, level in 2008, level in 2010, time since MBA, industry, and global region, developing others was a significant predictor of compensation growth at $p < .05$. As salaries varied so greatly, a log-transformed salary variable was used in analyses to minimize variance. In addition, outliers more than four standard deviations above the mean were excluded. As respondents reported salaries in the currency in which they were earned, purchasing power parity (PPP) conversions were used to account for differences in global cost of living. See: Alan Heston, Robert Summers, and Bettina Aten, "Penn World Table Version 6.3." Center for International Comparisons of Production, *Income and Prices at the University of Pennsylvania* (August 2009).

ENDNOTES

15. In a linear regression predicting level in 2010, controlling for gender, age, level in 2008, time since MBA, industry, and global region, developing others was a significant predictor of advancement at $p < .05$.
16. In a linear regression predicting compensation in 2010 (in PPP-adjusted dollars), controlling for gender, age, compensation in 2008, level in 2008, level in 2010, time since MBA, industry, and global region, developing others was a significant predictor of compensation growth at $p < .05$. The dollar value associated with the predictor variable “developing others” in the regression is \$25,075, which takes into account compensation differences associated with the control variables. This statistically significant figure is shown for illustrative purposes, as tests of compensation growth rely on logarithm-transformed PPP-adjusted variables to minimize the impact of variance across salaries and geographic regions.
17. In a linear regression predicting the logarithm of current compensation as of 2010, controlling for gender, age, logarithm of compensation in 2008, level in 2008, level in 2010, time since MBA, industry, global region, and whether high potentials are developing others, an interaction term of gender and developing others was not a significant predictor of compensation growth, $p > .1$. In a linear regression predicting level in 2010, controlling for gender, age, level in 2008, time since MBA, industry, global region, and whether high potentials are developing others, an interaction term of gender and developing others was not a significant predictor of career advancement, $p > .1$.
18. Comparison is significant at $p < .1$.
19. Catalyst, *Women “Take Care,” Men “Take Charge:” Stereotyping of U.S. Business Leaders Exposed* (2005).
20. Comparisons are not statistically significant, $p > .1$.
21. Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963).
22. Comparison significant at $p < .05$.
23. Staines et al.
24. Jennifer Rindfleisch, “Senior Management Women in Australia: Diverse Perspectives,” *Women In Management Review*, vol. 15, no. 4 (2000): p. 172-183; Belle Rose Ragins and Terri A. Scandura, “Gender Differences in Expected Outcomes of Mentoring Relationships,” *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 37, no. 4 (1994): p. 957-971; Sharon Mavin, “Queen Bees, Wannabees, and Afraid to Bees: No More ‘Best Enemies’ for Women in Management?,” *British Journal of Management*, vol. 19 (2008): p. S75-S84.
25. We asked high potentials to identify whether their protégé is lower or higher than they are in the organization hierarchy. We did not capture protégé level within the survey and thus could not do comparisons to determine if senior men or women are more likely to develop junior women vs. men.
26. First, we ran the above logistic regression to predict the likelihood that high potentials are (versus are not) developing others separately for women and men. Controlling for age and time since MBA, we found that the high potentials’ level in 2010 significantly predicted their likelihood of developing others, true for both women ($p < .1$) and men ($p < .05$). Similarly, in a logistic regression on the entire sample—women and men combined—to predict the likelihood of developing others, with controls for gender, age, time since MBA, and level in 2010, an interaction term of gender and level in 2010 was not a significant predictor at $p > .1$.
27. Comparison is significant at $p < .05$.
28. Rachel Soares, Baye Cobb, Ellen Lebow, Allyson Regis, Hannah Winsten, and Veronica Wojnas, *2011 Catalyst Census: Fortune 500 Women Executive Officers and Top Earners* (Catalyst, 2011).
29. Jeanine Prime and Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know* (Catalyst, 2009).
30. Catalyst, *Fostering Sponsorship Success Among High Performers and Leaders* (2011).
31. In total, 1,479 people responded to the 2010 survey, representing a response rate of 54 percent. The 742 respondents reported on here were thus part of the 4,143 respondents whose responses served as the basis for previous reports. For more information, please see *The Promise of Future Leadership: Highly Talented Employees in the Pipeline Methodology*.

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