



Men continue to pull back from interacting with women in the wake of #MeToo

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New data from LeanIn.Org and SurveyMonkey shows a big increase in managers who are men saying they are uncomfortable spending time with junior-level women

SAN MATEO, Calif., May 17, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Today, LeanIn.Org and SurveyMonkey released [new research](#) showing that 60 percent of managers who are men say they are uncomfortable participating in a common workplace activity with a woman, such as mentoring, working one-on-one, and socializing together. That is a 32 percent increase from [last year](#). In light of these findings, LeanIn.Org is calling on men to do more to support women's careers.

[This year's study](#) finds that men appear to be pulling back from actively supporting women at work. Senior-level men are far more hesitant to spend time with junior-level women compared with junior-level men across a range of basic work activities. They are:

- 12 times more likely to hesitate to have one-on-one meetings
- 9 times more likely to hesitate to travel with a junior woman for work
- 6 times more likely to hesitate to have a work dinner with a junior woman

Thirty-six percent of men also say they've avoided mentoring or socializing with a woman because they were nervous about how it would look.

"The vast majority of managers and senior leaders are men. If they are reluctant even to meet one-on-one with women, there's no way women can get an equal shot at proving themselves," said Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook COO, SurveyMonkey board member, and founder of LeanIn.Org. "There's not a company in the world that can afford to leave talent on the sidelines because it's female. But that's what will keep happening unless all of us—especially men—commit to doing better."

The survey also reveals that sexual harassment remains pervasive in the workplace—and that women and men perceive what is happening differently:

- 57 percent of women report that they've experienced some form of sexual harassment in the workplace, from hearing sexist jokes to being touched in an inappropriate way.
- 24 percent of women say harassment at work is on the rise. 19 percent of men agree. On the other hand, 27 percent of men say harassment is decreasing. 15 percent of women agree.
- 50 percent of men say that the consequences of sexual harassment claims are more damaging to the careers of harassers, not victims. 64 percent of women say the victims end up paying a higher price.

Furthermore, employees say that companies are addressing sexual harassment, though there is room for improvement:

- 70 percent of employees say that their company has taken action to address sexual harassment—a significant increase from 46 percent in 2018.
- More than three-quarters of employees believe their company would thoroughly investigate harassment claims.
- But half of employees say punishments are not harsh enough. And 3 in 10 employees think that high performers are rarely or never held accountable when they harass someone.

"We're heartened to see that companies are making an effort to address sexual harassment claims head on, but we hope this research helps shine a light on some of the less overt, more insidious challenges many face," says Jillea Gebhardt, survey scientist at SurveyMonkey and lead researcher on the study. "Even if we completely eliminate sexual harassment, we still won't reach gender equality at work if senior-level men are avoiding or excluding the women on their teams."

In response to these findings, LeanIn.Org is encouraging men to do more to actively support women at work, including mentoring and sponsoring them. Numerous studies show that mentorship and sponsorship help employees advance more quickly, and right now women receive less of both kinds of support. By ensuring that women get equal access, managers can help make the workplace fairer and safer for everyone.

"Ultimately, this is about closing the gender gap at work, from the entry-level all the way to the top," said Rachel Thomas, president of LeanIn.Org. "When companies employ more women, sexual harassment is less prevalent. And when women hold more leadership roles, company profits are higher and workplace policies are more generous. Supporting women makes companies stronger and safer. To get there, we need men to be part of the solution."

To read more about the study, please visit surveymonkey.com/curiosity/mentor-her-2019. Additional resources, including tips for how to be an effective mentor to women, can be found at leanin.org/mentorher.

About SurveyMonkey

SurveyMonkey is a leading global survey software company on a mission to power the curious. The company's People Powered Data platform empowers over 17 million active users to measure and understand feedback from employees, customers, website and app users, and the market. SurveyMonkey's products, enterprise solutions and integrations enable 350,000+ organizations to solve daily challenges, from delivering better customer experiences to increasing employee retention. With SurveyMonkey, organizations around the world can transform feedback into business intelligence that drives growth and innovation.

About LeanIn.Org

An initiative of the Sheryl Sandberg & Dave Goldberg Family Foundation, LeanIn.Org works to help women achieve their ambitions and create a more equal world. LeanIn.Org offers inspiration and support through an online community, free education materials, and Lean In Circles, small groups of peers who meet regularly to learn and grow together. The Lean In community includes over two million women and men and 40,000 Lean In Circles in 169 countries. The Sheryl Sandberg & Dave Goldberg Family Foundation, which also runs OptionB.Org, is a private operating nonprofit organization under IRS section 501(c)(3).

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