



EMPOW(H)ER™

UNDERSTANDING WORKPLACE
BARRIERS FOR LATINAS

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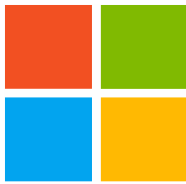
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sponsor Thank You	2
About HACR & THE HRI	3
Letter from the HACR President & CEO	4
Letter from the Director of the HRI	5
Introduction	6
What Do We Know?	7
Data & Methods.....	11
About Our Sample.....	12
Opportunities, Worth, & Visibility at Work	16
Access to Career Resources	20
Stereotypes & Authenticity	23
Discussion & Recommendations	29
Next Steps.....	32
Acknowledgments	33



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THANK YOU ¡GRACIAS!

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ABOUT HACR

Founded in 1986, the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR) is one of the most influential advocacy organizations in the nation representing 14 national Hispanic organizations in the United States and Puerto Rico. Our mission is to advance the inclusion of Hispanics in Corporate America at a level commensurate with our economic contributions.

Collectively, HACR Coalition Members reflect the voice of more than 60 million Hispanics living in the United States and Puerto Rico, serving those diverse communities through advocacy, education, representation, assistance, capacity building, public policy support, resource development, and the exertion of political influence.

HACR's work is possible thanks to the generous support of its Corporate Members, which includes some of the largest companies in the United States. Together, the Coalition Members and Corporate Members provide HACR with the resources needed to achieve its mission.

ABOUT THE HACR RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The HACR Research Institute (HRI) is the research arm of HACR and is devoted to objective research, analysis, and publication of reports on Hispanic-related issues in Corporate America. The goal of the HRI is to assess current Hispanic trends and stimulate discussion on Hispanic inclusion.

Through the HRI, HACR publishes annual studies on the state of the Hispanic community and corporate diversity and inclusion practices in Employment, Procurement, Philanthropy, and Governance along with the HACR Corporate Inclusion Index. The research institute also publishes the Corporate Governance Study, and other independent studies conducted internally and through partnerships with leading advocacy organizations.

A LETTER FROM THE HACR PRESIDENT & CEO



On behalf of the Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility (HACR) board of directors and our dedicated staff, I am pleased to present the *Empow(h)er™: Understanding Workplace Barriers for Latinas* report. Since our founding in 1986, HACR has been one of the most influential advocacy organizations in the nation. Through our executive programs, annual symposium, and research institute we are moving the needle for Hispanics in Corporate America. Through partnership with our Coalition Members and our Corporate Members we have made strides growing the number of Latinos on corporate boards, strengthening the pipeline of Hispanics rising into the corporate C-suite, as well as sharing best practices for procurement with Hispanic-owned businesses, and increasing corporate philanthropy into the Hispanic community. While much of our work focuses on the obstacles Hispanics in general face, we decided to take a closer look at the representation and experience of Latinas specifically in Corporate America. What we found was that their diverse perspective and backgrounds put Latinas in a unique position to provide innovative ideas and a competitive advantage to Corporate America, yet they continue to remain woefully underrepresented throughout all levels of business.

With this in mind, HACR launched the Latina Empow(h)er Initiative in 2019. This report is a culmination of research conducted over a five-month period and aims to provide further understanding of the obstacles that Latinas

face to career progression and to increasing the representation of Latinas throughout Corporate America. In this report, HACR takes a deep dive into the day-to-day experiences of Latinas in the workplace and makes recommendations as to what Latinas can do to advance their careers and ensure they are well represented throughout the professional pipeline. The release of this report coincides with the launch of the first annual HACR Latina Empow(h)er Summit™, a new professional development program targeting Latinas in Corporate America.

This report was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Microsoft Corporation. I commend the great work of Dr. Lisette Garcia, Alida Minkel, and our HACR Research Institute for the very detailed research and findings that came from the meticulous work they have done. We hope you find the discussions and perspectives presented throughout this report to be useful and insightful.

We welcome your feedback and thank you for your continued partnership in advancing Hispanic inclusion in Corporate America.

Sincerely,

Cid D. Wilson
President & CEO of HACR

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE HRI



The Latina Empow(h)er™ Initiative began as a result of a desire to dive deeper into the Latina experience in Corporate America. What are the barriers they face? How do they perceive these barriers? How have these barriers impacted them both directly and indirectly? We became driven to understand what was happening. After all, Hispanics are one of the largest and fastest growing minority groups in the United States and Latinas, specifically, will represent more than a third of the female U.S. population by 2060. Although their diverse backgrounds and experiences can provide Corporate America with a strong competitive advantage, they remain underrepresented and underpaid.

While extensive research has shown that Latinas remain underrepresented at every level of Corporate America, not much research has been done to understand the individual experiences of Latinas in the workplace and the unique barriers they face that hinder their career progression. How do Latinas themselves perceive their experiences and the impact of those experiences on their overall professional success? As the U.S. workforce continues to grow and diversify, companies that wish to remain competitive and retain top talent will need to understand the unique experiences

of their diverse employees in order to ensure they are well represented and supported throughout the pipeline.

Our research's purpose is twofold: to gain a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of Latinas in the workplace and to make recommendations as to what Latinas can do to overcome the numerous barriers they face and advance their careers. This report is a compilation of insights from a survey of over 500 professionals and interviews with over a dozen professional women.

HACR extends a special thank you to those individuals who participated in this project and for their honesty and willingness to share their experiences with us and to our sponsor Microsoft for their support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'L Garcia'.

Dr. Lisette Garcia
Executive Vice President,
COO & Director of the HRI

INTRODUCTION

U.S. population projections estimate that the current population is nearly 330 million people, with more than 18 percent of that population being of Hispanic descent.¹ This number is expected to increase to almost 28 percent by the year 2060, making Hispanics not only the largest, but also one of the fastest growing minority groups in the United States.² In fact, this growing population is larger than the entire population of many countries, including Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, and Chile, to name a few.³

Within this growing population, projections also indicate that Latinas will represent more than one-third of the female U.S. population by 2060, are the fastest growing sector of the entrepreneurial market, and for the majority of Hispanic households, they are the primary financial decision makers.⁴ Coupled together, these facts show the competitive advantage Hispanic females' knowledge and expertise could bring to Corporate America. These figures are clear indicators that, as the U.S. population, workforce, and consumer base continue to diversify, companies wishing to remain competitive will also need to continue diversifying their ranks at all levels.

Although Latinas represent a large and valuable talent pool for Corporate America, they account for less than two percent of executives and hold less than three percent of all corporate board seats.⁵ What's more, when

compared to white men, Latinas experience a pay gap of 46 percent, earning just 54 cents for every dollar that white men earned in 2018.⁶ Higher education does appear to have a positive impact on the pay gap between white men and Latinas, but the inequality still persists with Latinas who have bachelor's degrees earning 64 cents for every dollar that white men make and those with advanced degrees earning 63 cents.⁷ Not only are Latinas woefully underrepresented at the decision-making tables, they are also placed at a significant economic disadvantage compared to their peers. This not only negatively impacts these individuals, but also has detrimental consequences on the long-term economic growth of Corporate America.

While much of the inequities Latinas currently face are well-documented, little research has been conducted on the individual experiences of Latinas in the workplace, the day-to-day obstacles they face, and what might be impacting these experiences. With this in mind, the HACR Research Institute (HRI) launched the Latina Empow(h)er Initiative. In this first report, we sought to understand the barriers that Latinas face to career progression and to increasing their representation within Corporate America. The HRI ultimately strives to understand the experiences of Latinas in the workplace in order to make informed recommendations to empower others to advance their careers.

¹ United States Census Bureau. 2017. 2017 National Population Projections Tables. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau.

² United States Census Bureau. 2018. Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau.

³ The World Bank "Population, total." Washington, DC: The World Bank, Retrieved January 27, 2020 (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>).

⁴ White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics. 2015. FULFILLING AMERICA'S FUTURE: LATINAS IN THE U.S., 2015. Washington, DC: White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

⁵ Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility. 2019. 2019 HACR Corporate Inclusion Index. Washington, DC: Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility

⁶ Institute for Women's Policy Research. 2019. "The Gender Wage Gap: 2018." Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research, Retrieved January 6, 2020 (<https://iwpr.org/publications/annual-gender-wage-gap-2018/>).

⁷ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Weekly and hourly earnings data from the Current Population Survey." Washington, DC: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Retrieved January 6, 2020 (<https://data.bls.gov/PDQWeb/Ie>).

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

There is a large body of research showing Latinas are unrepresented throughout Corporate America, but few studies seek to unpack those results to better understand the mechanisms at play that might be causing this underrepresentation to occur in the first place. The theories covered in the academic literature range from those focusing on environmental factors, to those that examine organizational culture, to those that explore

individual attributes as the cause for this underrepresentation. For this report however, we will be focusing on a specific subset of theories that explore the relationship between the actions of individuals on the outcomes for others. Specifically, we will focus on the concepts of homophily and social closure as mechanisms that contribute to the underrepresentation of Latinas in Corporate America.



Homophily: Affinity Engenders Affiliation

What it is:

Homophily is the principle that individuals tend to associate with those who are characteristically similar to them. You've heard the saying "birds of a feather, flock together" – that is homophily. In other words, the more similar two individuals are, the more likely they are to form a social connection. Think of the connection you almost instantly form with someone who is from your hometown, attended the same university, or shares a

mutual affinity for the same sports team. In most cases you may know very little about that person but that common bond connects you in a way that you might not connect with someone else or which might require more effort to develop otherwise. Homophily, therefore, is ultimately a theory that focuses on the relationship between similarity and association.

How it works:

Homophily implies that your connection to those that are different from you is often weaker than your connection with those who are more similar to you.⁸ Think of what this might mean in terms of the workplace; when individuals encounter others that share similar observable characteristics to them, such as race and gender, they assume they will also share similar values, beliefs, and perspectives. Thus, it can have a powerful influence over who is considered to be a “trusted insider” and who might be considered an “other” within an organization. Homophily influences who people compare themselves to, whose opinions they value, and who they see as important.⁹ As a result, it can negatively impact Latinas and other minority groups in the workplace by hindering their access to important social networks – a resource which, especially in Corporate America, is critical to career progression and success.

Another way in which homophily can be highly detrimental to Latinas is its relationship to a group’s ability to receive and access information. The more dissimilar the groups, the greater the time it takes for communication to be shared.¹⁰ That is, the ability and speed at which a minority group receives information is greatly impeded when the majority group has a higher degree of similarity. In the workplace, this can hinder their ability to collaborate, access innovative ideas and tools, as well as limit their awareness of new career opportunities. Indeed, research suggests

that, numerically, minorities experience lower status and less influence than members of the majority group, which in turn makes them more likely to be denied access to the necessary resources needed to exercise influence.¹¹

Therefore, Latinas in Corporate America face not one, but two major divides as a result of homophily in the workplace: race/ethnicity and gender.

Who it effects:

In the workplace, men and women are often segregated by occupation and industry, leading to more gender homophilous networks for men than women. This is especially true in organizations where men are the majority. As a result, women are more likely to feel like outsiders as they are excluded from critical networks — further reinforcing the status quo. Women who fail to conform to the opinions of leaders and who challenge dominant views are at an increased risk for negative performance evaluations, blocked career progression, and devaluation of their work and contributions. This risk is amplified when the woman is also a racial or ethnic minority.

Moreover, racial and ethnic homophily is the most prevalent divide in U.S. social networks today, with individuals being significantly more likely to report that their confidants, whether personal or work related, are of the same race or ethnicity as themselves.¹⁵ Let’s think about what this might mean in Corporate America: if the research supports the fact that there are few people of color in the C-Suite, as CEO, or

⁸ McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook. 2001. “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(1):415–44.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Karimi, Fariba, Mathieu G nois, Claudia Wagner, Philipp Singer, and Markus Strohmaier. 2018. “Homophily Influences Ranking of Minorities in Social Networks.” *Scientific Reports* 8(1):1–12.

¹¹ Acker, Joan. 2006. “Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations.” *Gender & Society* 20(4):441–64.

¹² McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook. 2001. “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(1):415–44.

¹³ Heckman, David R., et al. 2017. “Does Diversity-Valuing Behavior Result in Diminished Performance Ratings for Non-White and Female Leaders?” *Academy of Management Journal* 60(2):771.

¹⁴ Glass, Christy and Alison Cook. 2018. “Do Women Leaders Promote Positive Change? Analyzing the Effect of Gender on Business Practices and Diversity Initiatives: Women Leaders.” *Human Resource Management* 57(4):823–37.

¹⁵ McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook. 2001. “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 27(1):415–44.

on the boards of *Fortune* 500 companies – and recall that individuals feel more connected to those like them – then who are we going to find moving through the ranks to the top of

Corporate America? The effects of homophily along race/ethnicity and gender lines will be felt at all level throughout Corporate America.



Social Closure: Opportunity Hoarding

What it is:

Though its effects run deep, homophily isn't the only mechanism that can lead to some groups becoming socially isolated and deprived of resources in the workplace. Social closure, the process through which individuals limit access to organizational resources, positions, or opportunities for those who are dissimilar to themselves, negatively impacts Latinas and other minority groups.¹⁶ Social closure may occur at the industry level but is more likely to occur at the job or occupational level, and can come about through the context of every day interactions. These interactions, whether through language or symbolic acts, aim to preserve the status hierarchy and the advantages or disadvantages that the current hierarchy affords.¹⁷ Thus, as a construct, social

closure does more than delineate the extent of inequality, but also helps highlight how hierarchies are defined and perpetuated.

How it works:

In its purest form, social closure involves the emergence of gatekeepers that determine who has access to jobs, workplaces, positions, and other resources. These determinations are often based on criteria that are seen as essential for success, such as degrees, certifications, training, and years of work experience. On the surface, these appear to be neutral requirements. These criteria, however, often function more to artificially restrict talent than to ensure that the best talent receives the position, often at the cost of innovation.

¹⁶ Tomaskovic-Devey, Donald and Dustin Avent-Holt. 2019. *Relational Inequalities: An Organizational Approach*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

¹⁷ Roscigno, Vincent J., Lisette M. Garcia, and Donna Bobbitt-Zeher. 2007. "Social Closure and Processes of Race/Sex Employment Discrimination." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 609(1):16–48.

Social closure often operates in conjunction with homophily in the workplace. For instance, in the absence of perfect information regarding someone's skills, work experience, and potential, many individuals will rely on personal characteristics to make decisions, citing something much more arbitrary and subjective as ultimately why a decision was made (i.e. "this candidate was the best fit"). What researchers have argued, however, is that this is social closure in action – a closing of the ranks based on a common characteristic that made one feel as if they had shared experiences or values that might impact their relationship in the workplace. So while these two sociological constructs can operate independently, they often work together to limit access to training, jobs, and higher-status social networks, thereby further hindering the ability of lower-status individuals to gain access to jobs they have traditionally been excluded from. It's important to note that at times these actors are making intentional decisions, while at other times these decisions are influenced by an unconscious preference that we now call unconscious bias.

Who it effects:

Like homophily, social closure is ultimately based on the identification of "difference" and the assumptions and biases that accompany perceived categorical difference. There are commonly held conceptions about characteristics like gender, such as what is "men's work" and what is "women's work." Similarly, there are conceptions around race/ethnicity including what types of work certain racial and ethnic minorities should occupy or perceptions around intelligence for those who speak accented English. Women are often seen as less dependable than men, due to their potential for pregnancy and maternity leave¹⁸ and foreign-born Hispanics are seen as less intelligent due to language differences. When

such perceived categorical status differences are institutionalized, social closure mechanisms become especially pervasive and difficult to challenge.

Effect of Homophily and Social Closure on the Experiences of Latinas

It is largely understood that organizations benefit greatly from the diverse perspectives and backgrounds that Latinas offer to organizational growth, innovation, and decision making. Not much, however, is understood about their unique day-to-day work experiences and how mechanisms like homophily and social closure may be affecting them as individuals.

This report focuses on the experiences of Latinas struggling to progress in their careers as well as the experience of those who are already leaders in their organizations and the career challenges they continue to face. How do Latinas perceive their experiences? What is the impact of discrimination on their career and overall success? What are some common areas of concern amongst Latinas in Corporate America today?

Given what is known regarding homophily and social closure, we expect these two concepts to have a significant impact on the experiences of Latinas in the workplace. We expect that opportunities will be limited and that they will not have access to the resources necessary to advance their careers to the same degree that their white male colleagues might. What we are less sure of is the ways in which social closure or homophily will manifest in their everyday work experiences. Will their experiences show the outright manifestations of these two phenomena or will we see unconscious bias playing a role here? Or will it be situationally dependent?

¹⁸ Roscigno, Vincent J., Lisette M. Garcia, and Donna Bobbitt-Zeher. 2007. "Social Closure and Processes of Race/Sex Employment Discrimination." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 609(1):16–48.

DATA & METHODS

The data for this report is drawn from a survey administered by the HACR Research Institute. The survey was conducted between May 2019 and August 2019. The survey was originally administered in person during the 2019 HACR Executive Programs and Symposium and the 2019 HACR Leadership Pipeline Program. Following these programs, invitations to take the survey were sent out via electronic mail to a database of 4,663 contacts between June 3, 2019 and August 30, 2019.

Of the 4,663 contacts invited to take the survey, 580 contacts submitted a survey.

A follow-up interview written and administered by the HACR Research Institute was also sent to a subset of participants from the original survey sample. Participants of the original survey sample were able to express an interest in participating in this additional interview. Invitations for an electronic follow-up interview were emailed to 79 of the 580 original survey participants. Of the 79 participants that were invited to participate in the follow-up interview, 18 completed the interview.

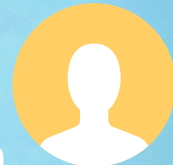
4,663
CONTACTS
INVITED



580
SURVEYS
SUBMITTED



18
PARTICIPANTS
INTERVIEWED



ABOUT OUR SAMPLE

In this report, we decided to focus on the experiences and perceptions of the women who participated in the study in an effort to better understand how these women view their opportunities within the companies in which they work. While all Latinas have not had the same experiences and all companies have a different culture, this data is a good starting point for helping us to understand why some have been able to achieve success, broadly defined, while others feel their opportunities have been limited.

The topics that emerged as central to our understanding of the success of Latinas in the workplace are 1) Opportunities, worth, and visibility at work; 2) Access to resources perceived to be helpful for career advancement; and 3) Stereotypes and authenticity. We'll delve into each of these areas more thoroughly below but first, some remarks regarding our sample.

For the purposes of this study, we over-sampled Latinas and the race/ethnicity and gender figures support this. More than 70 percent of our sample is comprised of Hispanics and more than 80 percent of our sample identified as female. Our sample is also highly educated, with more than 80 percent having a bachelor's degree or higher. Our participants have also had significant work experience, with over one-third having more than 10 years of work experience and with 40 percent having been in their current role for more than 3 years. Given the topics we were interested in exploring, it was important for us to target women with higher job tenure and roles. With only five (5) percent indicating they were in entry level positions, we successfully sampled more experienced executives (managers, directors, vice presidents, and higher) across various industries. The sample group profiles are illustrated in the following graphics.

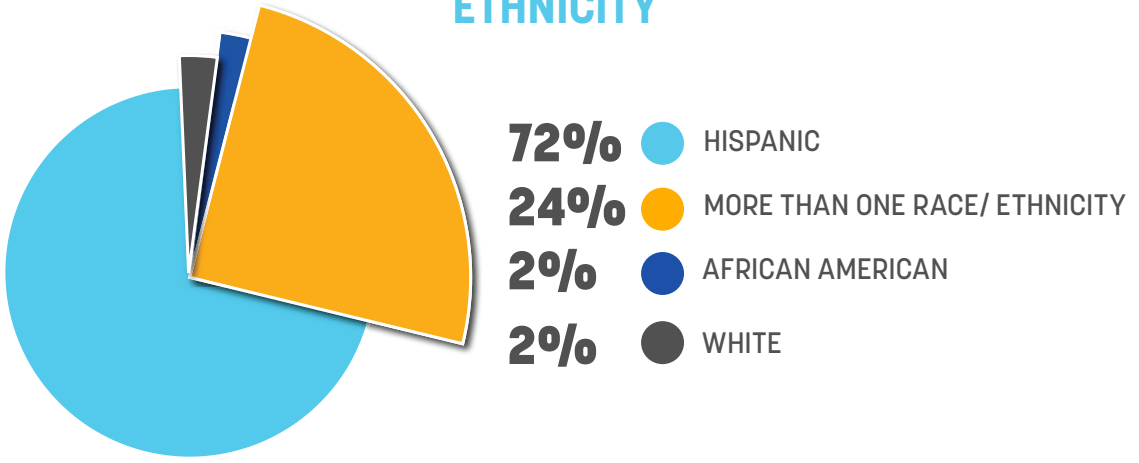
TOPICS CENTRAL TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF LATINA SUCCESS IN THE WORKPLACE

1. OPPORTUNITIES, WORTH, & VISIBILITY AT WORK

2. ACCESS TO CAREER RESOURCES

3. STEREOTYPES & AUTHENTICITY

RACE/ ETHNICITY



GENERATION BREAKDOWN

GREATEST GENERATION
(1910-1924)



BABY BOOMER
(1946-1964)



GENERATION X
(1965-1980)



GENERATION Y/ MILLENNIAL
(1980-2000)



GENDER

FEMALE
81%



MALE
19%

CURRENT JOB TENURE

LESS THAN
A YEAR



1-3 YEARS



3-5 YEARS



MORE THAN
5 YEARS



OVERALL JOB EXPERIENCE

LESS THAN
A YEAR



1-10 YEARS



MORE THAN
10 YEARS



EDUCATION



8%

HIGH
SCHOOL /
GED

8%

ASSOCIATE
DEGREE

34%

BACHELOR'S
DEGREE

42%

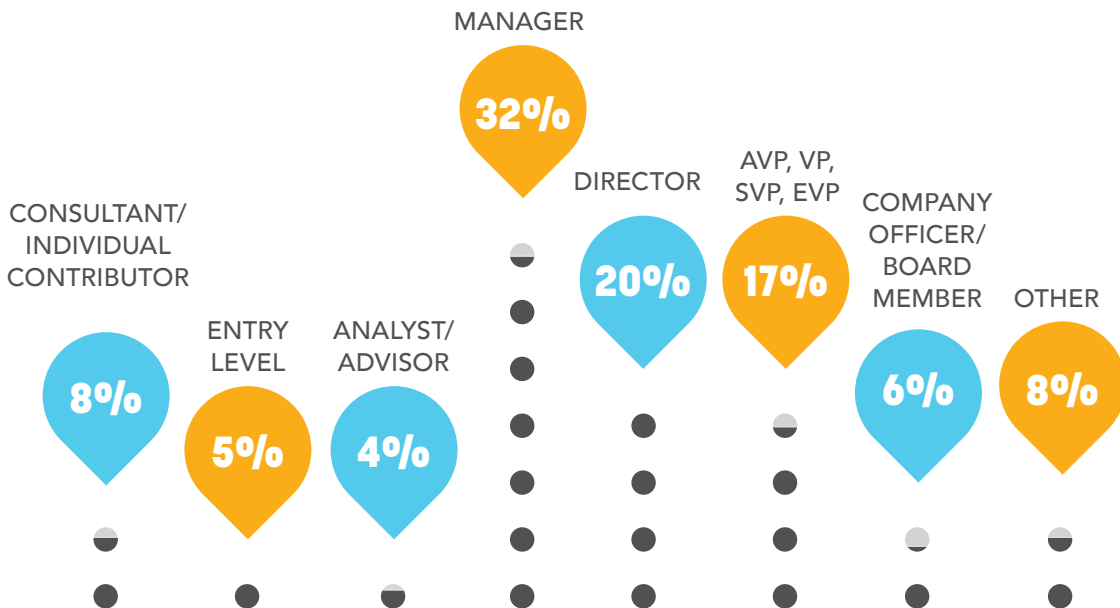
MASTER'S
DEGREE

3%

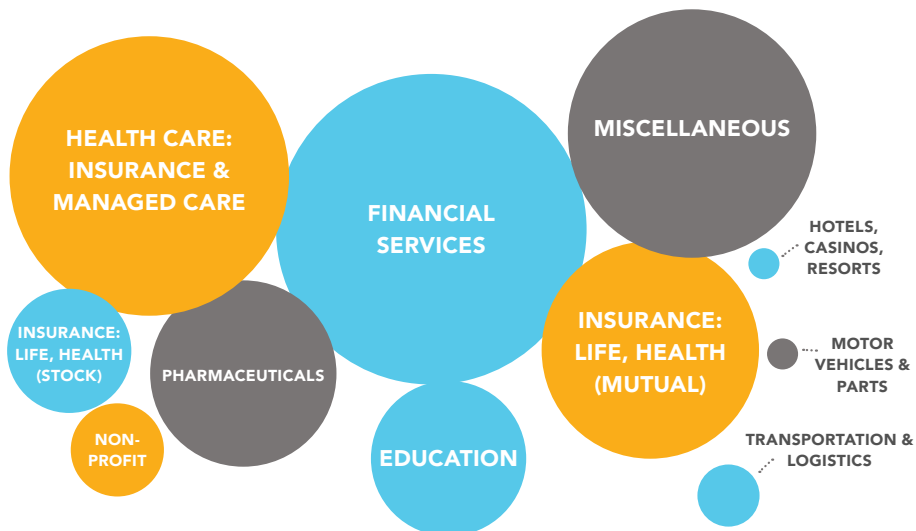
J.D.

4%

M.D.,DDS
PH.D, ED.D



TOP INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION



***The industries are based on the 2018 Fortune 500 industrial classifications*

OPPORTUNITIES, WORTH, & VISIBILITY AT WORK

Every individual, regardless of their race or gender, will spend the majority of their adult life at work. Work is how people provide for themselves, how they spend the majority of their day, and perhaps most importantly, how they choose to identify. It is a very rare occasion to meet someone for the first time and not ask them what they do or to have them offer it up as an essential component of who they are. It is one of the most salient

aspects of American identity. As such, having a fulfilling and prosperous career, where one is rewarded and where one feels valued, is what most people desire. Our data revealed that less than half of the participants in our sample felt their career prospects were very or extremely promising within their current place of employment and more than 10 percent felt their career prospects were not promising at all.

HOW PROMISING DO YOU FEEL YOUR CAREER PROSPECTS ARE WITHIN YOUR CORPORATION?

46%

**FELT THEIR CAREER
PROSPECTS WERE VERY OR
EXTREMELY PROMISING**

11%

**FELT THEIR CAREER
PROSPECTS WERE
NOT PROMISING**

Can you imagine what it must be like to show up for work every day at a place where you feel your prospects are limited? Perhaps you can. Opportunities for growth are some of the greatest motivators for employees. Without those prospects, employees will likely leave,

instead opting for a place where their desire for growth can be fulfilled.

In addition to opportunities for growth, feeling valued is another important motivator and key to retaining top talent. When asked,

slightly more than half of our sample indicated they felt very or extremely valued with only six (6) percent reporting feeling not valued. Being appreciated for the work you're doing for an organization boosts your productivity and can be the catalyst needed to receive that promotion or new opportunity within your workplace. What is critically important, however, is that key decision makers see your

potential for promotion. Unfortunately, there frequently is a disconnect between who is recognizing your accomplishments and who is making those promotional decisions. Although sizable proportions of our sample felt their opinions were valued by their managers and their individual team members, we also learned that they often felt as if they didn't have access to the gatekeepers of promotion.

HOW VALUED DO YOU FEEL IN YOUR CORPORATION?

56%

**FELT THEY ARE VERY OR
EXTREMELY VALUED WITHIN
THEIR CORPORATION**

6%

**DID NOT FEEL VALUED
WITHIN THEIR CORPORATION**

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR OPINION IS VALUED BY YOUR MANAGER?

67%

**FELT THEIR OPINION IS VERY
OR EXTREMELY VALUED
BY THEIR MANAGER**

5%

**FELT THEIR OPINION
WAS NOT VALUED
BY THEIR MANAGER**



TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT YOUR OPINION IS VALUED BY MEMBERS OF YOUR TEAM?

73% FELT THEIR OPINION IS VERY OR EXTREMELY VALUED BY MEMBERS OF THEIR TEAM

These results are clear indicators of something much larger happening in terms of processes in the workplace – social closure and homophily in action. When asked their thoughts on what might be happening, respondents were clear in what they were describing. Although the theoretical terms of homophily or social closure were never specifically mentioned, the descriptions were clear.

Latinas often fall outside of the boundaries of the groups who are making promotional decisions and, as a result, are less likely to progress through the ranks of Corporate

America. Despite this acknowledgment of something larger happening around them, these women offered up suggestions for how to lessen the impact of homophily or social closure.

One theme seemed central to what our study participants were saying – getting to know Latinas is central to moving beyond homophily and social closure, processes that both stem from the fear of the unknown. To the extent that companies can work to create spaces where Latinas have access to key decision makers, the possibilities are endless.

"...[W]hite leaders should attempt to diversify the team leads to give opportunities to Latinos and other minorities when such opportunities arise."

-GENERATION X, COMPUTER SOFTWARE



"[Our] White counterparts have more sponsorship and representation at the higher management levels."

-MILLENNIAL, COMPUTER SOFTWARE



"[We need to] emphasize mentorship programs to encourage diversity but at the same time balance the rest of the team in order to eliminate bias among all employees."

-BABY BOOMER, INSURANCE & MANAGED CARE



"Involve [us] in work groups, decision making groups."

-GENERATION X, INSURANCE & MANAGED CARE



"Intentionally include Latinos in meetings. Invite Latinos to share work and highlight contributions with senior executives. Don't just invite one Latino to the table, invite 2 or 3...Help us [to] think bigger and educate [us] on the pathways of senior leadership."

-GENERATION X, TOBACCO



"One of the most empowering things companies can do is to make the most senior Latinas visible and vital to their business. Seeing a Latina in leadership makes it possible for those in the pipeline to know they have a chance for advancement."

-GENERATION X, SEMI-CONDUCTORS & OTHER ELECTRONICS



"Get to know us!!!"

-GENERATION X, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS



ACCESS TO CAREER RESOURCES

What complicates the situation even more is that if Latinas feel as though key decision makers don't know who they are, then how can one expect that they will be able to gain access to the resources perceived to be helpful for career advancement? These resources include access to mentors and sponsors, which extensive research indicates are crucial for helping people to advance through the ranks within any company and are especially critical for women and people of color.

Nearly half of our sample indicated that they did not participate in the structured mentoring program offered at their company. When asked why, one quarter of respondents indicated that they weren't aware such a program existed, and another 22 percent said it was not offered at their level. Additionally, more than 70 percent indicated that they didn't participate in their company's sponsorship program either and, similarly, when asked why, 45 percent said they didn't know about it and 37 percent indicated it wasn't available at their level.

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN YOUR COMPANY'S STRUCTURED MENTORING PROGRAM?

48%

**DIDN'T PARTICIPATE IN
THE STRUCTURED
MENTORING PROGRAM**

53%

**PARTICIPATED IN
THE STRUCTURED
MENTORING PROGRAM**

OF THOSE WHO SAID NO, THEY DIDN'T PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMPANY'S STRUCTURED MENTORING PROGRAM:

25%

**DIDN'T PARTICIPATE
BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T
KNOW ABOUT IT**

22%

**DIDN'T PARTICIPATE
BECAUSE IT'S NOT OFFERED
AT THEIR LEVEL**

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN YOUR COMPANY'S STRUCTURED SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM?

71%

**DIDN'T PARTICIPATE IN THE
STRUCTURED SPONSORSHIP
PROGRAM**

30%

**PARTICIPATED IN THE
STRUCTURED SPONSORSHIP
PROGRAM**

OF THOSE WHO SAID NO, THEY DIDN'T PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMPANY'S STRUCTURED SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM:

45%

**DIDN'T PARTICIPATE
BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T
KNOW ABOUT IT**

37%

**DIDN'T PARTICIPATE
BECAUSE IT'S NOT OFFERED
AT THEIR LEVEL**

Both mentors and sponsors are crucial for making sure that individuals have access to opportunities for advancement. Without having a champion in your corner, it's often difficult to ensure that you are even considered for those new positions. Moreover, most of our study participants noted that key senior leaders needed to make an effort to work with Latinas, otherwise the status quo would not change.

Again, the effects of social closure and homophily were evident in the comments made. Only through exposure to the right people will a positive change in the representation of Latinas at the highest levels of Corporate America happen. But how can we ensure those with decision-making power in Corporate America understand that diversity

brings power of its own and is not always a zero-sum game? Opening the doors and providing access to those who are outside their limited circle of individuals does not necessarily mean they will experience a loss. Our sample shared their thoughts on how we could impact such a change.

Not only is access to the resources that are perceived to be helpful to career advancement limited, but without access to the key decision makers our study participants felt their mobility was stunted. Key to ensuring equal access to these resources is working to end bias in the workplace, whether conscious or unconscious. Only through awareness of what our own pre-judgements are will we be able to impact meaningful change within our workplaces.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

[E]ncourage 'sponsorship' type of relationships between corporate leadership and Latino employees who demonstrate leadership skills and a willingness to learn.

**-BABY BOOMER,
INSURANCE & MANAGED CARE**

I would also recommend a training class on Micro Inequities or Micro Messages.

**-MILLENNIAL,
SPECIALTY RETAILER**

Train everyone about unconscious bias and how to eliminate blind spots.

**-MILLENNIAL,
COMPUTER SOFTWARE**

Awareness training of company leadership especially middle management.

**-GENERATION X,
SPECIALTY
RETAILER**

Dual mentorship programs where a non-Latino is paired with a Latino (regardless of department). It's an opportunity to learn from each other and opens the door to building a good relationship.

-MILLENNIAL, REAL ESTATE

Executive leadership should actively mentor Latina's, leading to special projects that could gain them visibility. It's a WIN-WIN!

-GENERATION X, SPECIALTY RETAILER

[A]ssigning sponsors to high potential individuals and making sure the most senior level has an opportunity to hear/see Latino employees in a more informal manner, in the field, outside of BRG's, at small locations, etc.

-GENERATION X, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

First of all, the more organizations train managers on awareness of biases, such as working with individuals with accents, and equip them with tools to mitigate the bias, then you can address this at the institutional level.

**-BABY BOOMER, SEMI-CONDUCTORS
& OTHER ELECTRONICS**

Engaging externally to bring expert voice[s] into the organization. Coaching of non-Latino (non-diverse managers) on how to manage diverse talent is critical.

**-GENERATION X,
PHARMACEUTICALS**

If companies are not open to do a Latino/a training, a multicultural or diverse executive training would be appropriate. It would also be important to include non-Latino and non-minority executives in that type of training to help overcome biases they may not know they have.

-GENERATION X, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

STEREOTYPES & AUTHENTICITY

Stereotypes are often the basis on which homophily and social closure thrive. Without an understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, we tend to fear those that are different. That fear, whether conscious or unconscious, creates challenges in the workplace for those that are different and can result in the erection of barriers to movement within organizations. Our study participants clearly indicated that they and other Hispanics at their companies faced

challenges in moving within their respective companies. In fact, more than two-thirds (64 percent) of our participants felt Latinos faced challenges in being promoted, with some of those challenges including dealing with stereotypes, lack of representation, and lack of exposure. Study participants also felt that there were similar challenges for Latinas in particular, adding that work-life balance was an additional concern for women seeking to advance their careers.

DO YOU THINK LATINOS FACE ANY CHALLENGES IN BEING PROMOTED AT YOUR COMPANY?

64%

SAID LATINOS FACE
CHALLENGES IN BEING
PROMOTED

36%

SAID LATINOS DIDN'T FACE
ANY CHALLENGES IN BEING
PROMOTED

WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE CHALLENGES?

35% STEREOTYPES/BIAS

28% LACK OF REPRESENTATION

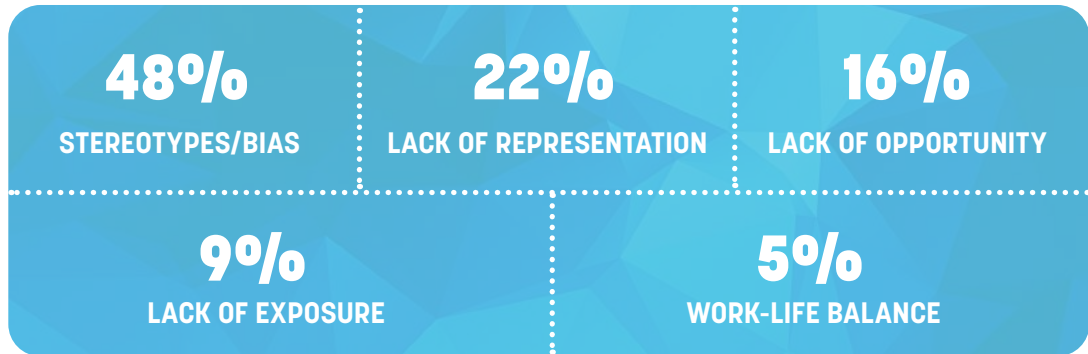
21% LACK OF
OPPORTUNITY

15% LACK OF EXPOSURE

ARE THERE CHALLENGES THAT YOU THINK LATINAS IN PARTICULAR FACE AT YOUR CORPORATION?



WHAT ARE SOME OF THOSE CHALLENGES?



In our attempt to understand these challenges more thoroughly, we asked study participants if they felt their colleagues had perceptions about Hispanics that might impact their day-to-day work experiences. Nearly half (46 percent) of our sample indicated that yes,

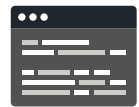
others did have perceptions about Hispanics that impacted their experiences. Those perceptions included Hispanics being viewed as low skilled, unintelligent, non-strategic, not leadership material, and as non-English speaking.

It's not surprising that some individuals in the workplace still have these negative perceptions of Hispanics, but the prevalence of these instances was indeed surprising. Women reported examples regarding language, looks, and being sexualized in the workplace.

Ultimately, many came to the conclusion that if they wanted to be successful in their workplaces, they needed to just ignore the biased behavior or play along, as fighting it or speaking up about it would lead to negative repercussions.

"I've had to listen to men call me darling, honey, or listen to jokes that would be considered crass. However, in order to 'play' along I would keep my mouth shut. That is when I became familiar with the term 'good ole boys club' mentality."

-GENERATION X, COMPUTER SOFTWARE



"I find that when someone has an accent...[i]t is perceived that the individual's message is less impactful, sadly."

-GENERATION X, ADVERTISING & MARKETING



"Because of the way that I look, people have made assumptions that I didn't speak English."

-MILLENNIAL, MISCELLANEOUS



"I have found that the more vocal I am at being marginalized, or when I disagree with the group (which is most of the time) it negatively impacts how I am perceived. I was recently told by my Latino VP, that I have great ideas... I just need to learn how to communicate and prioritize and plan how to make those ideas happen."

-GENERATION X, TOBACCO



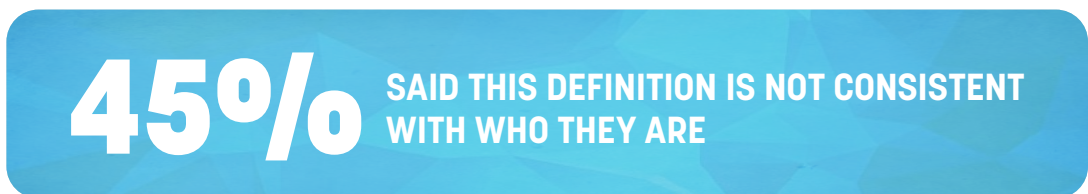
Another challenge that our study participants spoke about was staying true to themselves while trying to fit into their corporate culture. Authenticity is something that is especially important for women and people of color, understandably so as no one wants to

sacrifice pieces of themselves simply to have a successful career. We specifically asked our participants to help us understand whether there were incongruencies between their authentic selves and the embodiment of executive presence as it was defined at their companies. For most respondents, executive

HOW IS EXECUTIVE PRESENCE DEFINED AT YOUR CORPORATION?



IS THIS DEFINITION OF EXECUTIVE PRESENCE CONGRUENT WITH WHO YOU ARE?



presence included norms and values of white men in addition to the ability to network and command the room. Nearly half (45 percent) of our sample indicated that this definition was not congruent with who they were. In fact,

43 percent of participants said they often felt they had to compromise their authenticity in order to adhere to the definition of executive presence at their company.

DO YOU EVER FEEL YOU HAVE TO COMPROMISE YOUR AUTHENTICITY TO ADHERE TO EXECUTIVE PRESENCE STANDARDS AT YOUR CORPORATION?

43% SAID THEY FELT THEY HAD TO COMPROMISE THEIR AUTHENTICITY

"Yes, I have been in a male dominated field since I graduated working in computer engineering fields. Mainly working with white males which most times didn't ask about my background or where I was from. So it wasn't that I couldn't be myself but I wasn't encouraged to be myself."

-GENERATION X, COMPUTER SOFTWARE



"I have felt that I had to hold myself back because my passionate discussion may come off too aggressive and not very team player like."

-MILLENNIAL, REAL ESTATE



"Yes, as a female engineer I felt I had to dress and interact with my fellow employees in a way to fit in. It wasn't until many years later that I felt comfortable to express myself as my true self. I needed to build credibility and confidence before I could do this."

-BABY BOOMER, SEMI-CONDUCTOR & OTHER ELECTRONICS



"Yes, being that I am very passionate. That has been attributed with me being Latina and have had to tone it down"

-GENERATION X, INSURANCE & MANAGED CARE



"[Initially], I felt I had to change my hair (I cut it), the way I dressed (I switched to essentially black and white) and demeanor to 'fit in'. This after getting comments on how different and 'exotic' I looked. It took years (and a few promotions) for me to walk in as I really was...with appropriate feedback, bias training and specific development for my needs, my experience...would have been more pleasant and I would have also advanced further."

-GENERATION X, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS



Participants reported having to sacrifice aspects of themselves in order to fit in – from changing their appearance, to toning down their “emotions,” and recognizing that until they had gained some power within their workplaces, they couldn’t truly express themselves openly. Conforming to workplace norms based on the norms of white males

seemed to work for many, but consistently these women expressed a concern with needing to do this to get ahead. Many shared that they wished that there was more awareness brought to the value of diversity and understanding that it could be an asset to the company instead of requiring people to conform to a set corporate culture.

Continue to be inclusive and expose all kinds of diversity at the top of the house. Promote diverse thinking at the lower level and explain how the cultural differences can have an impact on the outcome.

-MILLENNIAL, SPECIALTY RETAILER

I would like to see more awareness on the diversity of Latina women be given to senior executives who control senior positions.

-GENERATION X, INSURANCE & MANAGED

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Separately we would need to work on strategies to address differences between what is expected by an organization and how a Latinx person shows up in that organization.

**-BABY BOOMER,
SEMI-CONDUCTORS &
OTHER ELECTRONICS**

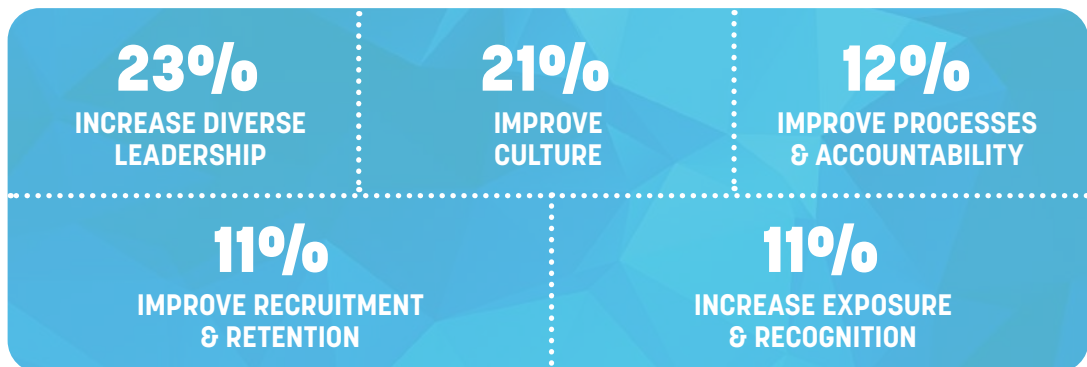
DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Most companies understand the value diversity brings to the table; including Latinas in the C-Suite and executive levels will only positively impact their long-term success and growth. Individual actors engaging in homophily or social closure, however, don't realize the impact of their actions on the corporation as a whole. It is well-known that there is unconscious bias in the workplace and that some workplaces are plagued by conscious actions. The real question then is how do we handle such biases to ensure that all people have a fair shot at progressing through the corporate ladder?

One important first step is to take an assessment of where your workplace is on

the diversity continuum. We asked our study participants to tell us how their companies were doing on diversity and inclusion relative to their competitors, and while most felt their companies were doing about the same as their competitors, they also felt more could be done to make their workplaces feel more inclusive. Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) indicated that increasing diverse leadership would improve feelings of inclusiveness and more than 20 percent added that their corporate culture needed to be improved for feelings of inclusiveness to improve. Not surprisingly, only seven (7) percent of respondents felt their companies were doing enough. Something needs to be done if we are ever going to see a positive shift in the corporate landscape.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE FEELINGS OF INCLUSIVENESS AT YOUR CORPORATION?



For individuals looking to advance their careers, we would make several recommendations. First, mobilize your identity. Many respondents reported the need for those Latinas who have been successful to make themselves visible. Let others see you for the dual effect visibility could have – letting the next generation know Latinas are there and showing those who doubt our skills that we can succeed.

Be vocal, create a platform where your voice can be heard and where attention to the situation can be seen.

Companies should also consider creating a space for Latinas within the company to come together, connect, and offer training and development with their unique needs in mind. By creating spaces where Latinas can learn from one another, companies are intentionally fostering a sense of community within their organization.

There are things that can be done, but some of it requires companies to take a long hard look at what they are doing, where they are going, and where they'd like to be; and some of it requires us to take risks and get comfortable being uncomfortable.

“It is a two-way street: encourage more Latinos to be leaders, and more leaders to identify themselves as Latinos when appropriate, to normalize Latinos in the corporate world and Latinos as executives and leaders. Showcasing our identity as Latinos will help others see themselves as Latino Leaders. In my Fortune 30 company, I was very happily surprised to learn that some leaders were Latinos; it felt inspiring. We need more of that.”

-GENERATION X, INSURANCE & MANAGED CARE

“Awareness and education - engaging the highest ranked Latinos as advocates, ensure Latinx ERGs are truly empowered and heard across the organization.”

-GENERATION X, PHARMACEUTICALS

*“We can begin to eliminate these biases by providing the platform for Latinx professionals to showcase their...skills through the following:
- Project management
- Leading internal committees
- Facilitating meetings.”*

-MILLENNIAL, MISCELLANEOUS

“Companies must be intentional about developing Latino/as, it goes beyond BRG's. If companies do not have specific development programs to help Latino/as prepare to compete with others, [the] BRG alone will not address the issue of inclusion.”

-GENERATION X, TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

“Companies can create Circle of Latina Leaders so that we can learn from each other how to become better leaders. Help support local non-profits that their Latina workers support to help them build up their leadership in their community.”

-GENERATION X, COMPUTER SOFTWARE

Lastly, equality is achieved with purposeful intent. At times, individuals must be willing to step up to guide their organizations in the right direction. Pushing our respective organizations to implement behavioral processes that

challenge biased thinking on the individual level and promote more inclusive behavior will go a long way. This includes implementing a number of strategies like:



NEXT STEPS

The gap between the labor force and executive representation is wider for Hispanics than any other group.¹⁹ This report has focused on how the unique experiences of Latinas in Corporate America impacts that gap and has offered two theoretical explanations to help understand those experiences. On an individual level, we can start enacting change by accepting that we bring bias to the table, regardless of our intentions, and accepting that such biases may impact others and our organizations in ways we may not have considered. Knowledge is power and using such knowledge is the first step in designing

organizations that make it easier for us to overcome our individual biases.

This report is only the beginning and there remains so much for us to explore. The next report will look at the role of organizational culture in perpetuating inequality in the workplace for Latinas in an effort to understand what companies can do to move Latinas through the pipeline. Future research should also explore the relationship between the gender of the manager and success and movement for Latinas, as well as the persistent pay gap for Latinas.



¹⁹ Swerzenski, J. D., Donald Tomaskovic-Devey, and Eric Hoyt. 2020. "Where Are the Hispanic Executives?" *The Conversation*. Retrieved January 22, 2020 (<http://theconversation.com/where-are-the-hispanic-executives-128981>).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



DR. LISETTE GARCIA
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On behalf of the HACR Board of Directors, we would like to acknowledge and extend a special thank you to the following for their support of the *Empow(h)er™: Understanding Workplace Barriers for Latinas* report.

Dr. Lisette Garcia, Executive Vice President, COO, and Director of the HRI, who served as the project director for the Latina Empow(h)er Initiative, and Alida Minkel, Data Analytics Manager at HACR. Together, they co-led the data collection, compilation, analysis, and result findings for this report.

Briana Carroll, HACR's Senior Graphic Designer, who provided all the creative services for the *Empow(h)er™: Understanding Workplace Barriers for Latinas* report.

Lastly, we would like to thank the individuals who shared their experiences and insights with us, our sponsor, the Microsoft Corporation, and the HACR staff for their thoughtful review of the report.



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HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT:

Garcia, Ph.D., Lisette, and Alida Minkel. 2020. *Empow(h)er: Understanding Workplace Barriers for Latinas*. Washington, DC: Hispanic Association on Corporate Responsibility.



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