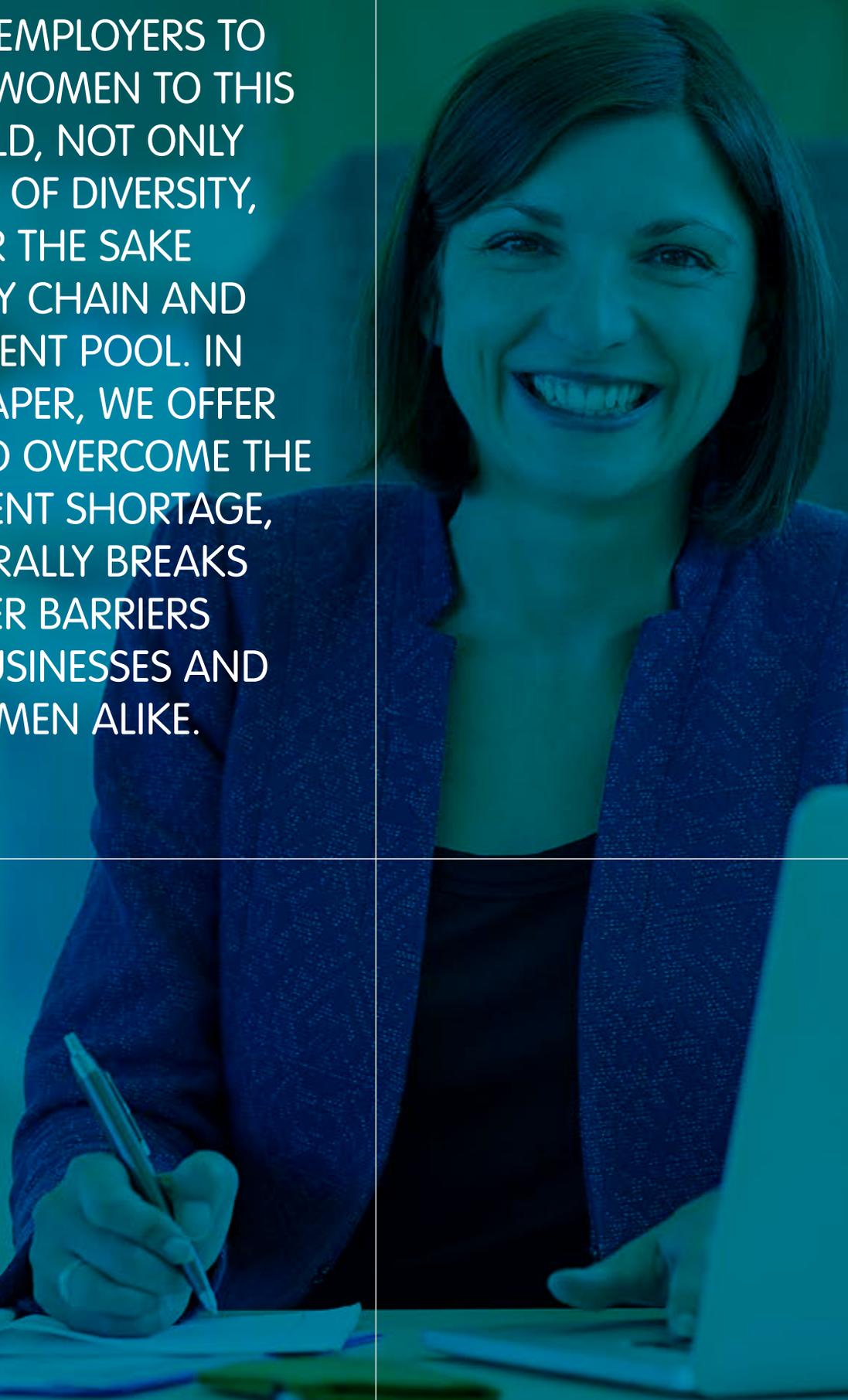


Ajilon

A VITAL LINK IN YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN: WOMEN IN LOGISTICS



IT'S TIME FOR EMPLOYERS TO DRAW MORE WOMEN TO THIS BOOMING FIELD, NOT ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF DIVERSITY, BUT ALSO FOR THE SAKE OF THE SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS TALENT POOL. IN THIS WHITE PAPER, WE OFFER STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THE CURRENT TALENT SHORTAGE, WHICH NATURALLY BREAKS DOWN GENDER BARRIERS TO BENEFIT BUSINESSES AND ASPIRING WOMEN ALIKE.





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— JACKIE STURM, VP GLOBAL SUPPLY MANAGEMENT, INTEL CORPORATION
(SPEAKING AT THE FOURTH ANNUAL AWESOME SYMPOSIUM APRIL 2016)²

In today's corporate world, it's common to see women in roles like chief financial officer, human resources director and corporate controller. However, it's unusual to see women in leadership roles in the supply chain and logistics field. In fact, just 5% of top-level supply

chain positions at Fortune 500 companies are filled by women, compared to 15% of executive officer positions at the same organizations. This number is particularly worrisome considering that women account for 37% of students enrolled in university supply chain courses.¹

LOW REPRESENTATION HIGH OPPORTUNITY

In their recent "[Women in Supply Chain Survey](#)," Gartner and executive women's leadership group AWESOME analyzed the representation of women in supply chain leadership roles. They also identified practices that are increasing the engagement with, and success of, women in supply chain organizations. In particular, the researchers say that the percentage of women in leadership positions decreases as the corporate ladder rises, and:

- Supply chain-specific initiatives are nascent, with just 47% of respondents having the stated goal of increasing the number of female leaders in supply chain. (Only 16% have formal goals.)
- Within that 47% of advanced AWESOME member respondents, only 42% have a planned initiative that is led by supply chain.
- The 40% of organizations that rely on enterprise-wide initiatives to meet their gender-diversity goals are likely to be disappointed. These respondents, nearly all of which are \$10 billion+ companies, have significantly fewer women at every level and have much further to go.²



Taking it a step further, in his article "[It's Time to Put More Women at the Top of the Supply Chain](#)," Kevin O'Marah states, "A similar gender imbalance exists among those roles that serve as a stepping stone to the top, with 56% of businesses having fewer than one in five supply chain supervisor positions filled by females."

He goes on to point out how much of the onus to create a shift falls on leaders. "Ultimately, for companies to build more equality, there needs to be a bigger commitment from those in leadership positions to find and develop a strong and diverse talent pipeline."³

MORE EDUCATION, HIGHER PAY

From a salary standpoint, the timing has never been better for women—and men for that matter—to enter the logistics world. Calling supply chain management the "Hot New MBA," a [Wall Street Journal article](#) reported that more schools are ramping up their programs and adding majors and concentrations to meet employer demand for supply chain professionals. And because program graduates are in high demand, salaries for these jobs range from the mid-50s and up to the six-figure range, depending on education and experience.⁸

More recently, *Logistics Management's* "[31st Annual Salary Survey](#)" found education to be a recurrent theme, with respondents agreeing that continuing to learn—whether online or in the classroom—is a must for salary upgrades. "Those managers tenacious enough to grab an MBA lead the pack with triple-figure salaries approaching \$144,000 in the median range, followed by grads with other advanced degrees earning \$133,375," Patrick Burnson writes. It appears that taking a break from work to pursue an advanced degree in logistics is the smart play.⁹

PERCEPTION VS. REALITY

Abe Eshkenazi, CEO at Chicago-based supply chain management association [APICS](#), says a primary reason women don't gravitate to supply chain careers is simple perception. High school students, for instance, relate manufacturing to the shop floor. And that equates to heavy, dirty, manual work—work that's traditionally completed by men. In reality, Eshkenazi says today's manufacturing and distribution environments are highly automated and reliant on technology, not necessarily manual labor. The supply chain industry is having trouble shaking those perceptions.

"As an industry, we definitely have a perception problem to work through," says Eshkenazi. Compounding that challenge is the fact that most students don't discover supply chain education and the related career potential until they're already in college. That limits the labor pool and keeps many students from pursuing (e.g., by changing majors) logistics careers.



HELPING WOMEN CLIMB THE LOGISTICS LADDER: A JOINT EFFORT



As he looks around at the logistics industry, Eshkenazi sees a sector that's ripe for change on the human resources front. Companies aim to attract female applicants for entry-level logistics positions, he says, but the climb to the top of the corporate ladder remains challenging for women. So while recent college grads are making their way into the industry, the real dearth occurs in higher-level positions.

"Not only do we not see a lot of women leaders, but we also don't see many women looking for opportunities in leadership," Eshkenazi says. "That's a huge issue." On a positive note, he says some companies are offering higher pay rates and other incentives to get women into supply chain positions. But those pay disparities disappear as individuals make their way up the corporate ladder. In fact, Eshkenazi says that in some cases that financial advantage virtually goes away the longer a women stays with a specific company.

To address the gender imbalance in supply chain, companies should sponsor and support the following:

- Addressing unconscious bias in the workplace
- Fostering or formalizing sponsorship for women
- Making sure the candidate pool for positions is diverse
- Putting talent development higher on the list of priorities
- Recognizing results (For example, pointing out that a strategic decision or plan might not have happened without the diverse team that felt empowered to bring new ideas to the table.)
- Providing different ways of working (e.g., better work-life balance opportunities)
- Creating a culture where people aren't afraid of "failing"²

As companies more aggressively pursue female talent—and, just as importantly, the field rapidly grows—more opportunities will undoubtedly arise for women in supply chain and logistics. According to *Fortune's* "[Wanted: 1.4 million new supply chain workers by 2018](#)," the U.S. logistics sector delivers 48 million tons of freight worth about \$48 billion every day. The sector employs roughly six million people and will increase to 7.4 million jobs (or, an increase of roughly 270,000 per year) by 2018, according to the [Material Handling Institute \(MHI\)](#).⁴

"As with many industries, the supply chain industry has made a significant effort to close the talent gap and bring more women into leadership roles," Ajilon's Tisha Danehl points out in *Supply Chain Management Review's* "[More Supply Chain Management Jobs for Women in Forecast](#)." Overall, Danehl expects salaries for such positions to increase by 2.9% in 2017, up from the projected 2% for 2016. Supply chain managers (at an average base salary of \$111,994), logistics managers (\$104,705), demand planners (\$50,649-\$86,160) and procurement clerks (\$32,051-\$54,397), rank as some of the fastest-growing positions right now.

The [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) also projects a positive outlook for job candidates seeking supply chain management positions. Employment for professionals who analyze and coordinate an organization's supply chain—referred to as "logisticians"—was projected to grow in the single digits between 2014 and 2024. Much of that growth is being driven by the need for logistics in the transportation of goods in a global economy.⁵

Drilling down specifically to the supply chain portion, Eshkenazi calls it one of the top five growth industries within the logistics-operations management sector. "By all indicators, companies are going to be dealing with a 2-million+ job shortfall in supply chain over the next 5-10 years," says Eshkenazi, "so the opportunities are plentiful."



2.9%

Expected salary
increase in Supply
Chain Management
positions

2+ MILLION

Projected gap in
supply chain jobs
over next 5-10 years

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

While not always consciously aware of their prejudices, decision-makers can unknowingly categorize employees based on things like gender. In the workplace, there might exist subconscious stereotypes of groups of people that may hurt their chances of getting a job or progressing their careers. For example, a panel of men interviewing one woman and five men for a supply chain management role might perceive the female candidate as “too soft for management.” Is this really a characteristic she exhibited in the interview? Or was she a victim of unconscious bias?

One way to strengthen women in the workforce, and in the supply chain, is to put more women in hiring roles. Per a recent Ajilon survey of 1,500 professionals, of the 163 that were supply chain and logistics professionals, 46 were involved in the hiring process. Sadly, only 9 of them were women. Diversity among hiring decision-makers creates a better environment for assessment.

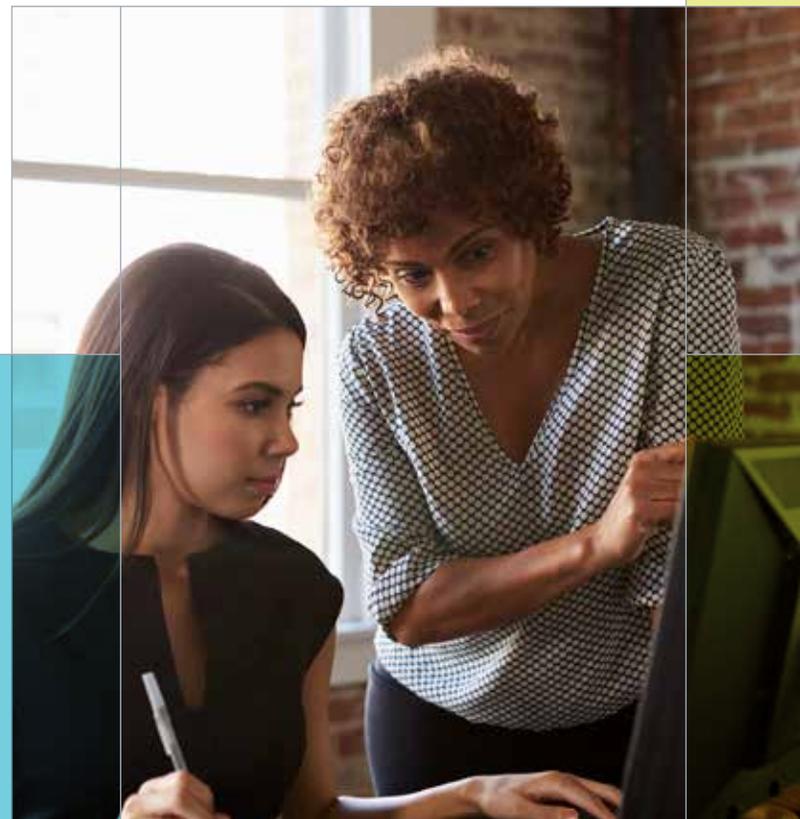
Ensuring a diverse candidate pool during the application process is also essential. In another form of unconscious bias, when there’s only one woman interviewing among male candidates, her chances of being hired is statistically zero⁶. In order to change the status quo, a new one must be created—by adding more women to the candidate pool. By adding just one more woman (For example, two instead of one in the above scenario), female candidates become less of an anomaly and the statistical chance that the original woman is hired soars to 50%.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A DIVERSE TALENT POOL

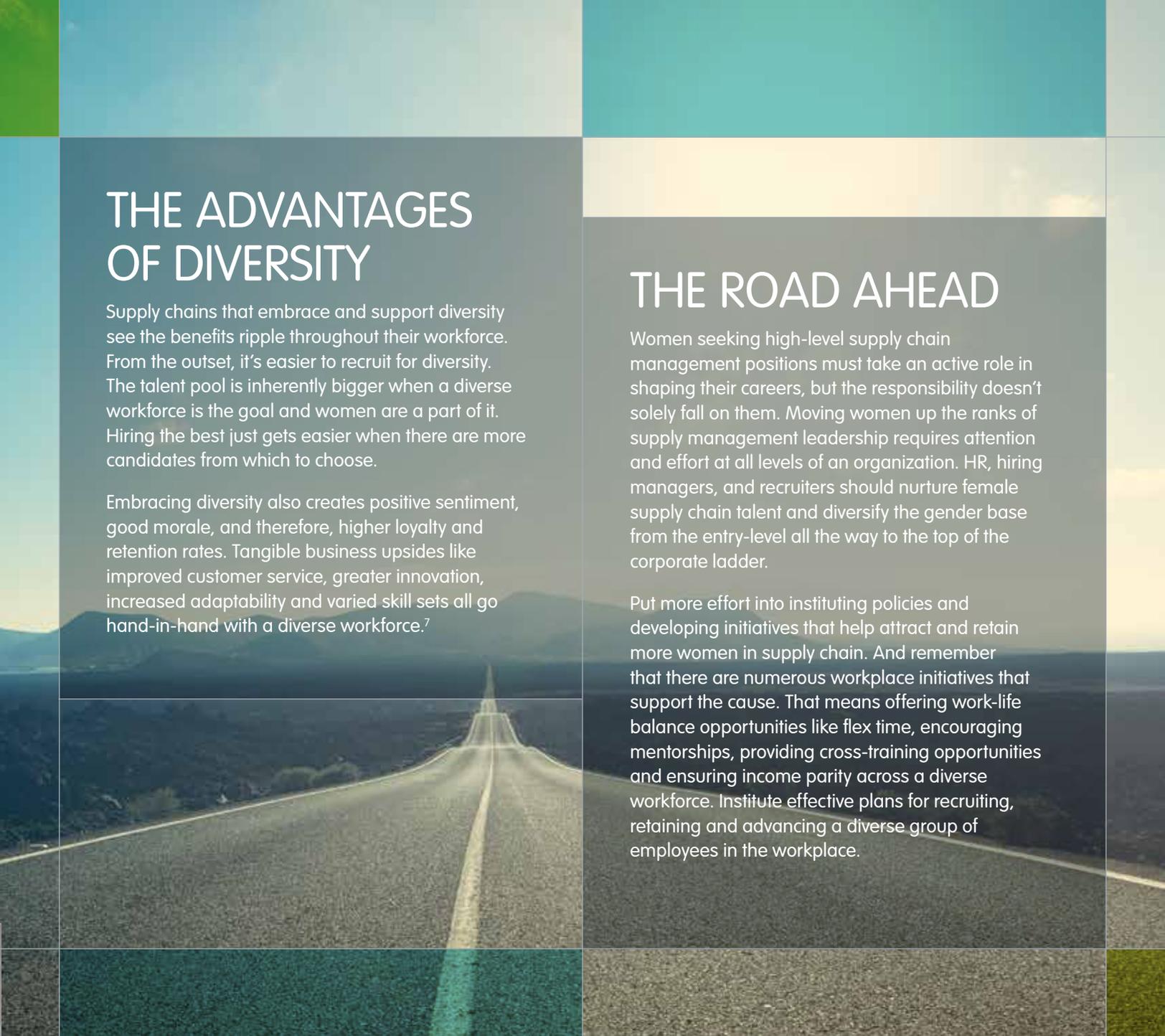
Reducing unconscious bias—and, in turn, increasing the amount of women in the field—isn’t the only reason to build a diverse talent pool. Gartner and AWESOME suggest pulling more women in at the entry level and beefing up the mid-level onramp into senior leadership.

One example would be to focus on internships and entry-level recruiting by leveraging relationships with university programs that have at least 40% female participation for undergraduates. This will help diversify—and grow—talent pools for entry-level positions. From there, ensure you have formal career paths and development plans in place.

“The ability to offer attractive career paths beyond the two- to five- year mark must underpin this,” Gartner and AWESOME point out in their report. “The second focus area is leadership development programs, [focused on] ensuring that women are being considered and advanced, and also that they are not only mentored, but actively sponsored and progressed.”



IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE STATUS QUO, A NEW ONE MUST BE CREATED—BY ADDING MORE WOMEN TO THE CANDIDATE POOL.



THE ADVANTAGES OF DIVERSITY

Supply chains that embrace and support diversity see the benefits ripple throughout their workforce. From the outset, it's easier to recruit for diversity. The talent pool is inherently bigger when a diverse workforce is the goal and women are a part of it. Hiring the best just gets easier when there are more candidates from which to choose.

Embracing diversity also creates positive sentiment, good morale, and therefore, higher loyalty and retention rates. Tangible business upsides like improved customer service, greater innovation, increased adaptability and varied skill sets all go hand-in-hand with a diverse workforce.⁷

THE ROAD AHEAD

Women seeking high-level supply chain management positions must take an active role in shaping their careers, but the responsibility doesn't solely fall on them. Moving women up the ranks of supply management leadership requires attention and effort at all levels of an organization. HR, hiring managers, and recruiters should nurture female supply chain talent and diversify the gender base from the entry-level all the way to the top of the corporate ladder.

Put more effort into instituting policies and developing initiatives that help attract and retain more women in supply chain. And remember that there are numerous workplace initiatives that support the cause. That means offering work-life balance opportunities like flex time, encouraging mentorships, providing cross-training opportunities and ensuring income parity across a diverse workforce. Institute effective plans for recruiting, retaining and advancing a diverse group of employees in the workplace.

Ajilon works to encourage diversity in the workplace by acting as an agent between companies and candidates to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. By presenting rich, diverse talent pools and encouraging candidates to take their careers to the next level, Ajilon stands behind the upward mobility of all workers. By standing beside our candidates to guide their career growth, we encourage industries and paths that are marked by success. It's undeniable that the supply chain and logistics industry is one of those successful niches. We support women in supply chain and are doing our part to contribute to a more balanced workforce.

In Summary

- 1 The talent shortage in the supply chain industry demands a change in hiring and retention strategies.
- 2 The supply chain will benefit from a deeper, more diverse talent pool.
- 3 Women are an untapped resource in supply chain recruitment, retention, and succession planning efforts.
- 4 The supply chain industry's "image problem" can be solved by hiring more women.
- 5 Involving more women on every wrung of the corporate ladder creates an environment of inclusion that boosts loyalty, morale, and corporate reputation.

RESOURCES FOR WOMEN IN SUPPLY CHAIN

Achieving Women's Excellence in Supply Chain Operations, Management and Education (AWESOME)
<https://www.awesomeleaders.org/>

Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)
Women in Supply Chain
http://www.rila.org/supply/women_in_supplychain/Pages/default.aspx

Women in Supply Chain (WSC)
Van Horne Institute
<http://www.womeninsupplychain.org/>

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ABOUT AJILON

We are a leader in temporary and permanent recruitment and the placement of top talent. Our areas of specialty include organizational leadership and support positions in Supply Chain & Logistics, HR, non-clinical healthcare, office administration and more. With over 70 offices in the U.S, we have the resources and technology to offer job seekers and employers greater flexibility, making it possible for us to work with them in the way that works best for them.

We seek to completely understand the short and long-term goals of our clients and candidates – which enables us to consistently act in their best interests. Through our job market insight and niche industry expertise, we help job seekers and employers find their best fit.

