

Managers

Let's encourage women
to rise to the top!

Being in a position of management, you can easily encourage your staff to aspire to more demanding posts, even to the very top of the organisational structure. Remember to aid both men and women to succeed.





Many senior staff posts in government administration will need a successor in the near future. This provides a good opportunity to recruit more women into positions of senior management. It has been observed that women often need to be encouraged and urged to advance in their careers. Supervisors play a key role in providing support and encouragement to female employees. The Ministry of Finance drew up a list of practical advice to supervisors and managers on how to assess whether their female employees are interested in senior management positions and how to encourage female staff to apply for senior posts. The recommendations are based on three focal points: recruitment, education and training, and career paths.

Recruitment

To be able to single out future managers, organisations need long-term human resources planning. Both men and women should be included in the process. When recruiting senior staff, it is worth remembering that the various qualities required of managers differ depending on the position being filled. For instance, management skills can be gained as a leader in a demanding project, and where this type of expertise is being sought, it should be specified in the job posting.

The selection process should consist of a comprehensive assessment of the applicant's achievements and competencies. Instead of considering the number of years in management, the emphasis should be on how successfully and effectively each applicant has pursued his or her managerial tasks. The managerial skills, characteristics and potential of each applicant should also be recorded in the documents on appointments.

Training

Senior managers should encourage managers to use performance appraisals, competence surveys and similar management tools to better detect and identify management potential and interest in their subordinates. Managers are responsible for encouraging both men and women to participate in training, mentoring and job coaching programmes. Performance appraisal interviews offer an ideal opportunity to evaluate employees' interest in such schemes.

Since some women prefer to attend management programmes designed for women only, it is worth examining these options too.

- Consider carefully what kind of managerial competence is needed in the post in question.
- In the job posting, specify what type of managerial position is being filled.
- Bear both men and women in mind when seeking managers, whether they are employed in the public or private sector.
- In the interview, evaluate the range of competencies of each applicant and take into account different types of work experience.
- Carefully compare applicants and analyse their managerial potential; do not rely solely on years in positions of management.



- Seek training yourself and encourage supervisors to spot managerial potential in female employees in different stages of their careers.
- Urge and help women to participate in management training.
- Enable women to take part in training designed for women only.
- Encourage women to join mentoring and job coaching programmes.



”Women often become specialists even though they might have excellent potential to become leaders. It is important to support and encourage women to seek careers in management at an earlier stage than before”, points out Director General Jussi Nuorteva from the National Archives.



”Skilled human resources policy generally and solid recruitment procedures in particular make it easier for women to become managers”, believes Permanent Secretary Tiina Astola from the Ministry of Justice.

Photo: Ministry of Justice/
Studio Sami Kulju



”This is a great way of gaining experience in management and it makes a change from my job as an expert” says Assistant Director Mari Näätsaari from the State Treasury Office, who is on leave from her position as a specialist at the Ministry of Finance.

Career paths

It is important for all organisations to promote continuous and consistent career planning for their female employees. One way of enabling women to demonstrate their skills and to gain experience in management is to offer them versatile and challenging tasks. Working as a leader in projects or as a deputy are excellent ways of accumulating experience in management. In some cases it is a good idea to allow

women to alternate between positions of expertise and management to accommodate to different stages in their life cycle.

It is also important to participate in various job-related networks and to be involved in different social networks. Supervisors and more experienced colleagues can facilitate newcomers by inviting them to participate in their own networks and work-related events.

- Use performance appraisals and competence surveys to assess how interested your female employees are to take on a managerial position.
- Promote consistent career planning for your female employees.
- Offer more demanding and versatile tasks.
- Encourage alternating between positions of management and expertise.
- Help your female staff to network.





The Office for the Government as Employer is responsible for enhancing government-wide collaboration in leadership and management development. The working group report on how to promote women's careers in central government (in Finnish) is accessible on the Ministry of Finance web-pages at www.vm.fi/julkaisut.

If you have any questions relating to the promotion of women's careers in central government, please contact Ms Kirsi Äijälä, Senior Adviser, Legal Affairs (Kirsi.Aijala@vm.fi) or Mr Asko Lindqvist, Senior Adviser (Asko.Lindqvist@vm.fi)



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