

1 Take stock.

Take a formal audit of the women within your agency creative department. Share this with us here at Creative Equals in exchange for our badge as a signal to female creatives outside and inside your company that you're committed to diversity. And, you're actively working to redress the imbalance.

2 Start from within.

Take a look at the female creatives you have in your creative department. Do you have junior talent to develop? A senior ripe for an ACD role? Make sure they know what it takes to move 'up one rung'.

3 Make it a management issue.

Take your audit to the board and set a goal to become gender equal over the next three to five years.

4 Talk up.

Learn that if you are not talking about your involvements and accomplishments they will more than likely go unnoticed. Many women wait for recognition from above rather than sharing all of the good stuff along the way. As Nina DiSesa says in her book, be the squeaky wheel. Get noticed.

5 Find a mentor.

It doesn't matter what level you are, it helps to have someone who's been there before you. Connect with women you admire in your industry and ask them to advise you on your path. If you can't find someone then check out some of our supporters or connect with the brilliant 'Who's your momma' programme from SheSays.

6 Get involved.

Find out about female groups and networks in your area – from SheSays to 3% conference there are many events and resources to connect with. Attend talks, invite speakers in or offer your agency as a location to host.

7 Use your #voice.

Be generous in praise of campaigns, articles, concepts or even other agencies that break stereotypical views of women – share online, on twitter, Facebook, Instagram – whatever floats your boat. The more positive noise in the ether the better to keep this on the global industry agenda.

PR

8 Be seen & heard.

Make sure you/your female CDs jury one award show and speak at one conference each year. To have a public profile is essential – we can't be what we can't see. Need a female speaker? You can find one here: <http://5050initiative.org/talents>

9 High visibility.

Ensure the women you have within your company are visible – be it in agency PR shots, on blogs, in the press or social media. This will show clients and prospects alike your commitment to diversity as well as attracting new talent looking for a home.

Agency good practice

10 Speak up.

In the department, make sure every creative can present with confidence and understands the value of their opinion. Host informal 'Show and tell' presentations so all creatives get used to speaking and debating without pressure.

11 Actively involve.

A study by Brigham Young University and Princeton researchers in 2012 showed that women spoke only 25% of the time in professional meetings, meaning men took up 75% of an average meeting. The study also found that when women were left out of the conversation, it inevitably became harder for them to have an effect on decisions and discussions during majority votes on issues. Make sure female creative are given their airspace. If you're running the meeting, ask directly for their (uninterrupted) opinion.

12 Recognise bias.

As Sheryl Sandberg writes in 'Lean in': Women are often undervalued by others. When women and men work together on tasks, women are given less credit for successful outcomes and blamed more for failure. This again links back to women being less likely to 'talk up' their role. Because women receive less credit—and give themselves less credit—their confidence often erodes. As a result, they are less likely to put themselves forward for promotions and stretch assignments. Ensure the women you know are ready for the next step are aware of your backing and encourage them to move up.

Mentoring

13 Boys on board.

Male leaders, mentor your junior women. It's OK. Here's why: according to a recent report, almost two-thirds of male senior leaders are hesitant to have one-on-one meetings with a more junior woman. As a result, men end up mentoring other men, and women miss out.

Reviews and appraisals

14 Here's looking at you.

When evaluating performance, make sure managers are aware of gender bias. Be specific about what constitutes excellent performance, and make sure goals are set in advance, understood, and measurable.*

One of the regular stories we hear involve women CDs being labelled 'bossy', 'arrogant' and 'opinionated'. Keep in mind gender bias at play with reviews and appraisals. Studies show when a woman asserts herself—for example, by speaking in a direct style or promoting her ideas—she is often called "aggressive," "ambitious," or "out for herself." When a man does the same, he is seen as "confident" and "strong."

15 Stay impassive.

Studies show success and likeability are positively correlated for men and negatively correlated for women. When a man is successful, his peers often like him more; when a woman is successful, both men and women often like her less. This trade-off between success and likeability creates a double-bind for women. If a woman is competent she does not seem nice enough, but if a woman seems really nice, she is considered less competent. This can have a big impact on a woman's career. Recognise these tendencies and use set goals as the judgement of competence not personality. Source: gender.stanford.edu/people/marianne-cooper

16 See the potential.

A 2011 McKinsey study showing that while men are promoted based on potential, women tend to move up the ladder based on past accomplishments alone. This could be a self-seeding issue with women to finding confidence in what they have achieved rather actively promoting themselves. Work with the women in your department to build confidence and put themselves forward for 'next step' roles.



Creative

17 Share the briefs.

Ensure you have a spread of teams on the briefs rather than gender stereotyping. Consider the value of diversity to your creative product in an era of real-time media, The opinion you didn't get from a diverse creative team in the conception phase can cost you public embarrassment – and millions*.

18 Instill change.

Make sure your brand guidelines include a section about diversity. Express your aim to feature diversity in your imagery that reflects the marketplace*.

19 Get real.

Make sure your briefs portray a respectful, contemporary depiction of women; that the planning isn't based on outdated stereotypes and real insights and behaviour of powerful, contemporary female audiences*. Getty recently updated its portfolio of images of women saw revenue growth of 65 percent year over year, said Getty co-founder and CEO Jonathan Klein. "I can assure you the rest of our business is not growing that fast. So (creating contemporary images of modern, powerful women) is resonating both culturally and commercially," he said.

20 Shatter stereotypes.

Commit to change the way female consumers feel about advertising by portraying women respectfully on all advertising. Aim to win a GLASS Lion: canneslions.com/cannes_lions/news/1015/cannes_lions_new_award_for_work_that_shatters_gender_stereotypes/

Hiring or looking?

21 Create demand.

One MD we spoke to had just two female CVs out of 60 for an ECD role. Make sure you ask HR or your recruiters for an equal number of female CVs to male CVs for consideration. By asking, you create demand.

22 Blur the boundaries.

Studies show men will apply for jobs when they meet 60% of hiring criteria, while women wait until they meet 100%. Keep this in mind and ask recruiters or internal HR leaders to put forward portfolios and CVs who fit 'most' of the criteria.

23 Be open.

Write your ads in a way that appeal to women, setting out the vision of the company, a sense of team satisfaction and recognition*

24 Recognise behaviours.

Women are four times less likely to negotiate than men. So use the term 'salary negotiable' in job posting. Why? Women tend to negotiate in equal numbers to men when they see this phrase. Otherwise, women are far less likely to negotiate a salary, which snowballs over the years to a vast income gap. Currently, in London, this is about 25%*

25 Aim high & know your numbers.

When women do negotiate, they typically ask for 30 per cent less money. Female creatives, keep this in mind and remember you can always negotiate down, but it's hard to negotiate up.

26 Seek others.

As a female creative looking for a role, ask if there are women on the management board of the agency and holding company. Show having female leadership is important to you.

Family

The single biggest reason why women leave the industry is because their ambition to become a CD dovetails with their reproductive years. This is a big one – and one that needs agency commitment to tackle. Don't make her leave because your agency isn't respectful of family life – or your Dads in the office, either.

27 Plan ahead.

With pregnant employees, make a 'job plan' before they leave to make sure you plan out the coming months – and the return to work for the employee.* Consider extending return dates for new mums. Many babies don't sleep through the night until four months of age. Demanding women come back to work by eight weeks can set them up for a sleep-deprived nightmare, possibly leading to an exodus of valuable employees.*

28 Be flexible.

Implement flexible working options. Work doesn't always have to be done in an office, particularly for creative conceiving, which can be done from anywhere.

29

Does your agency often pull all-nighters? Work closely with production to make sure schedules are respectful of creatives with family commitments wherever possible.*

& Some meanies...

30 Affirmative action.

Refuse to speak at conferences without at least 30% female speakers and consider not entering awards with judging panels that aren't in equal numbers. Let the organisers know of your displeasure. One award-winning ECD told us she was just one of 10 judges and felt she was there are a token gesture.* This year is the first year women will make up 31.5% of the Cannes Lions Jury.

31 #Speakout.

Be vocal about it when you attend conferences that fall short: tweeting and posting your observations. Conferences need to know attendees value women on the power panels, not just on the 'women's panels'. *

& of course...

32 Support Creative Equals!

Sign up, follow and share to create the change.

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