



Top LeaderMoms Talk About Priorities and Sharing the Load

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Recent press has lamented the shortage of women in executive leadership positions. A leading hypothesis is that too few women are in the executive pipeline because many women choose to take breaks, opt out, or scale back in their careers. Often, they do so because they have kids and do not see viable models in front of them for how to do well at work and as a mom. It is our opinion that not enough leaders are talking about these issues. Few women leaders want to draw attention to the fact that they are also mothers. To create a space for conversation, we sought out accomplished women – women who were handpicked as models of excellence at work and as mothers – and found they were willing to speak up about what they have learned and what they think others should know. These 120 accomplished women show high potential for the future, have wisdom on how to sustain performance, and speak to the unique situation of doing all of this while being a mom.

We coined the term “LeaderMom” because we believe it reflects a mindset and a life choice – and it gives a way to talk about a shared experience. Our LeaderMoms are strong on both the home and work fronts, engaged, and often admired. The term reflects a cultural demographic – a minority now, but hopefully a growing group.

We don’t advocate a “cookie cutter” approach to being a LeaderMom; there is not a single route to success. The women in our panel have different life experiences and home situations, and diverse cultural traditions. They have

their own stories and pressures. However, hearing collective insights from other women who have found their strides can still be powerful. We hope that by seeing these models and by hearing advice, younger women will be able to confirm their own ambitions and begin to take action to increase their chances of success, and that this search will inspire further dialogue and bring below-the-surface issues into a safe light.

It’s important to note that the advice these women offer assumes competence and contribution. These high performers work tremendously hard and get great results. Their advice is contingent on having achieved and being committed to that level of excellence.

In our previous study, many LeaderMoms emphasized the importance of knowing what is truly important to them and being intentional about putting those things first, and also the importance of delegating. These are things that all of us know we should do; but some of us do these things better than others – and making incremental improvements in these areas has big payoffs. Therefore, in this report, we take a deeper dive to better understand the specific challenges faced by LeaderMoms in these two critical areas and to gather advice for how to do these things well. Being a LeaderMom is not unlike being a tri-athlete; if you want to excel, you have to want it, and training and conditioning are essential. Accordingly, this report offers insights into where you might put your energy to further build your stamina and strength to be at your best at work and at home.

Fantastic News:

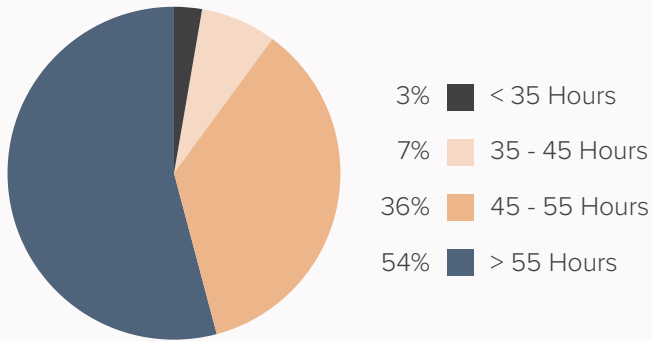
These LeaderMoms Are Not Just Surviving – They’re Really Happy with the Lives They’ve Created

- 8 in 10 LeaderMoms say their life is close to ideal in many ways, though none of them say making this happen is easy. High satisfaction with life is rooted in 2 core areas:
- Satisfaction with family. Nearly all LeaderMoms (97%) said that they are very happy with their family in general.
- Accomplishment at work. The same overwhelming majority of LeaderMoms – 97% – obtain a sense of personal accomplishment from their work. Excellence on the job is tied to this engagement: Participants rated “Outstanding” in their last performance review were significantly more likely to say their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment and that they look forward to going to work.
- The happiest women are those who have agreement with their families about their priorities.
- Two other key skills are saying “no” when needed and trusting other people enough to let go.

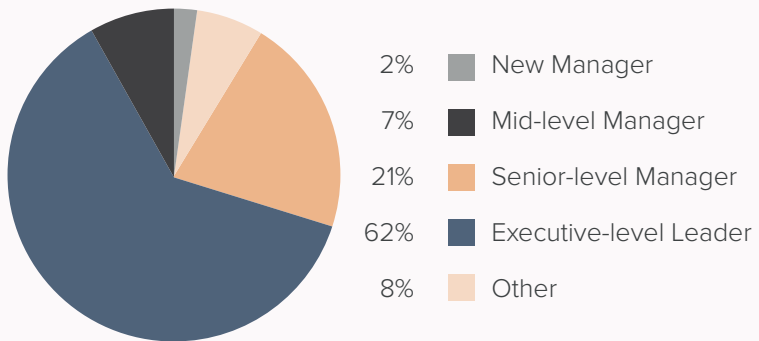
Panel Snapshot

- Our current survey includes 120 LeaderMoms across industries, including 74 Executives and 25 Senior Leaders.
- Nearly 9 in 10 LeaderMoms report being rated as “Exceeding Expectations” or “Outstanding” in their last performance review.
- Executives are more likely to describe themselves as over-achievers and to express a stronger need to strive for excellence than mid-level managers.

90% of Panel Members Work 45 Hours A Week Or More, With The Average Being 53 Hours Per Week.

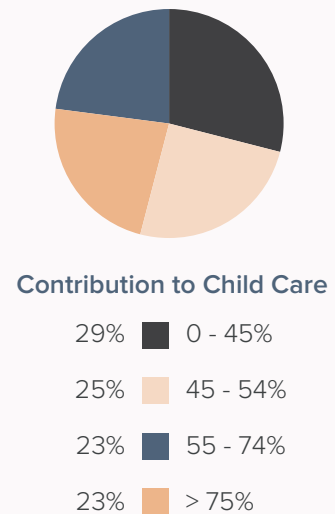
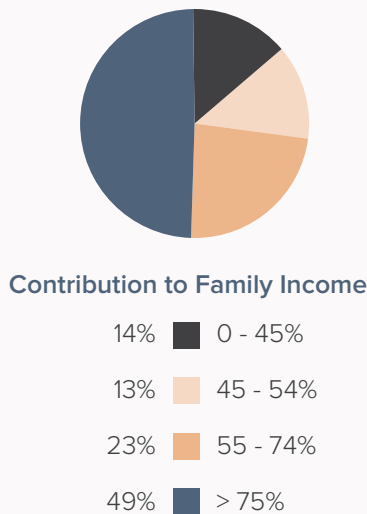


Most of Panel Members Are in Leadership Positions.



72% of Panel Members Earn Majority of Family Income and Half Cover the Majority of Child Care

Percent Contribution to Total Family Income (Mean = 70%) and Percent Contribution to Child Care Responsibilities (Mean = 54%)



3 Things that the Happiest LeaderMoms Do Differently than Other LeaderMoms

1

The happiest LeaderMoms get agreement from their families about their priorities. Women who did this very well were **MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY** to say their lives are close to ideal (100% vs. 40% favorable). Alignment with family on priorities is also a critical factor in women's engagement at work. The more a women has agreement with her family about her personal priorities, the greater personal accomplishment she feels at work. This alignment involves open, two-way communication, negotiating priorities with your partner/spouse and/or with children; it's about getting on the same page, sharing joys and workload, and making room for others to help and support you.

2

They assertively "say no" when they need to. Women who excelled at this skill were **NEARLY TWICE AS LIKELY** to say their lives are close to ideal (100% vs. 55% favorable).

3

They trust people enough at work to let go. The women with the greatest trust at work were **40% more satisfied** with their lives in general (88% vs. 50% favorable).

SECTION 1

Two Keys to Being Happy as a LeaderMom

1 Know Your Values and Know Your Value

We asked LeaderMoms about how they personally have learned to clarify what is really important and to put those things first. This makes sense, as they are called upon by more people to do more things; LeaderMoms have had to learn what they want to do, where they add the highest value, and what is fulfilling to them. A handful of themes emerged from the hard-won advice that LeaderMoms would pass along to other women about how to effectively prioritize at home and at work. In this section, we are including a sample of verbatim comments so you can hear directly from these accomplished LeaderMoms.

“There will always be another important meeting or conference call. There will never be another dance recital for a 5 year old dressed as a bluebird. Years from now, colleagues will not remember that you missed the meeting/call. You and your family will remember the bluebird.”



Do what has impact.

- “I basically go through my daily life always asking, ‘Will this make a difference?’ If the answer is no, it goes to the back burner. I have too many balls in the air to sweat the details.”
- “I make sure I am in tune with the overarching business priorities of my group and the company as a whole so that I can align my decision-making regarding what to focus on with those.”
- “I often ask the question, ‘How much will this matter 3 months, 1 year, 3 years from now?’ as a filter for decision-making/prioritizing.”
- “When I’m faced with a decision, I ask myself what I would regret more—doing or not doing the task. The “task” will often include work-related dinner, business trip, staying overtime to finish something, etc. Sometimes I make good decisions; sometimes bad ones. When the latter happens, I’ve learned to let it go and try to remember the experience the next time a similar situation happens.”
- “When prioritizing at home, I focus on life-long impact (i.e., ‘Will it affect my child’s or my own life-long learning or health?’). If no, it goes on the ‘later’ list. Eventually cleaning the house gets completed...when it seems a threat to someone’s health!”

Make a real-time priority list that acknowledges you do have limits.

- “The biggest piece of advice I could give about prioritizing is to constantly re-examine the list. I do not consider my priorities to be static; they evolve with the ebb and flow at work and at home. Be flexible.”
- “Every day must be started with a high-level view and re-prioritization. What is important changes every day. Every morning, I reset and clear my mind. I look at my calendar coming into work. I look at my to-do list and rewrite it manually—everyday.”
- “I like to keep a list of immediate must-do’s short-term and longer-term priorities, both at home and in the office. I spend some time each week tweaking the list, and looking for opportunities to delegate as much as possible.”
- “I am constantly evaluating deadlines and re-sorting my priorities to meet those deadlines.”

Protect your time without apology—and enjoy it. (Many women in our panel have a blackout period, after school or daycare, through dinner and the kids’ bedtimes, and then they re-engage with work when needed.)

- “When you are at work, focus on that and when you are at home, focus on home. Put your ringer on off, don’t pick up your blackberry...Kids watch everything you do and my daughter has asked me to not play on my blackberry when I’m suppose to watch her play violin/sing/dance.”
- “The trick is to keep the balance overall and not try to find balance each and every day. A sick child means you miss out at work. A deadline at work means you miss out on a child’s activity. Find the balance over time. Make the time you spend both at work and at home matter.”
- “I make a conscious decision to go ‘radio-silent’ after I pick up my daughter from school until she goes to bed. I then get back online to deal with whatever email/emergency surfaced in that 2.5 hour time frame. I find that if I actively disengage from work for that time period, I am not resentful to re-engage later in the evening. I realize that I can do nothing well when I am juggling a preschooler and Blackberry.”

Attend to self care – or you will risk burnout and potentially resent others, which is not fair to anyone.

- “Making time for yourself is an investment in your family and your work. If you sacrifice too much of what you enjoy doing, tension and resentment builds, which impacts all areas of life. I’m a better mom and executive because I’ve learned to make time for myself.”
- “Make sure to exercise even if it is just 20 minutes a day.”
- “I exercise every work day. My cardio time is quiet, allows me to quiet my body and as I think through my day I often come up with unique or streamlined solutions.”

2 Actively Lower Your Expectations about Less Important Matters and Worry Less about What Others Think

An important point needs to be made about implicit and explicit expectations. Repeatedly, LeaderMoms advised women to get rid of excessively high expectations they’re setting for themselves and of unspoken expectations that come from others. The home front is a common example of “picking and choosing your battles” – and of the importance of getting comfortable with not meeting everyone else’s expectations. There’s always opportunity cost; get comfortable with that reality.

“The only advantage in not being too good a housekeeper is that your guests are so pleased to feel how very much better they are.”
– Eleanor Roosevelt



- “Get to a place where you can let less important things go and not let your concern over what others will think (the ‘others’ generally being those who have different priorities and therefore find your ‘less important’ things to be highly important in their world) drive you to change your priorities or beat you down.”
- “Decide what you will let go and then LET IT GO. You are the only one losing sleep over a sink filled with dirty dishes.”
- “Don’t sweat the small stuff. I have a sign over my washing machine that says ‘What if success is defined simply as getting the wash in the dryer before it mildews?’ The laundry will always be there, so will that email from work.”
- “The best thing about being a real grown-up is that I no longer take seriously what the nameless, faceless ‘they’ think of me. Of course, my house should be spotless at all times, my children well-mannered, my front yard weeded, and my career should be outstanding. But seriously! There’s no way I could do all those things and be a sane human. So I decide what’s important (for me, that’s eating a healthful dinner as a family) and let go of the expectations that aren’t mine (if the health department doesn’t shut us down, the house is plenty clean).”
- “Letting go of tasks less important was something I really had to learn when starting my surgical residency, then subsequent career. There just was not time enough to do everything I felt I needed or wanted to do, so you learn to choose. I had to learn that it was acceptable to let the less important and less pressing issues wait.”

SECTION 2

Most Challenging Delegation Headaches at Work and How to Overcome Them

We know that delegation is a critical skill for executives and the current survey confirms that executive-level leaders are more likely to trust people enough at work to let go compared to mid-level managers. But we also know that delegation is hard, particularly for people who have made their way up the ladder by executing well themselves. We asked LeaderMoms about the single most important challenge they have faced in learning to delegate at work and how they are overcoming it.



1

Challenge 1: Making sure your direct reports are up to the task is hard work that needs attention.

Only 6 in 10 LeaderMoms rated the average performance of their direct reports as “Exceeding Expectations” or “Outstanding.” LeaderMoms whose direct reports were just “Meeting Expectations” were less likely to trust people at work enough to let go more than those who managed those “Exceeding Expectations.” LeaderMoms offered their advice for getting people to perform at a higher level – and these involve being a good manager, who hires well, who develops people intentionally through direct and candid feedback, and who holds people accountable.

- “I have learned to be more candid with people who I don’t feel confident enough to delegate to. Once they understand my expectations, they step up to meet them and appreciate me trusting them enough to be honest with them.”
- “You need to hire strong, talented people, train them, give them the tools and resources they need, and let them run. I specifically look to hire people who may be better than I and who help manage the weaknesses that either I or the team have.”
- “I trust my employees and do so by making sure I train them properly.”
- “I have delegated carelessly before, giving tasks/projects to team members who weren’t ready for the level of work and needed more direction to accomplish it properly. You must know the people you are delegating to and know what their strengths are. You have to take the time to invest in and build a strong support team in order to have trustworthy employees who can carry the torch and execute projects that will be consistent to your standards. Be an encourager of those you delegate to; a little praise goes a long way!”
- “Hire the right people, fire mistakes.”

2

Challenge 2: Fear that delegation “will make me look bad” is a mental block.

As you move up the ladder, being known as the person who gets things done is a source of pride; so becoming a person who can assemble and manage a team to get a job done takes a mind shift. The good news is that how you think about delegation is very much in your control.

- “Get out of the mode of thinking about your own success and accomplishments and rather focus on the talents of those around you and find the right opportunities to let those individuals shine. Promoting others and supporting them is key. If you lead a team that truly trusts and believes in you, you can do almost anything.”
- “Remember that delegating less important responsibilities at work is NOT a sign that you are overwhelmed or unable to keep up. Instead, it shows leadership and time management ability. It also is a benefit to others as it allows them opportunity to learn, grow, and showcase their ability.”
- “The most challenging aspect of delegating, believe it or not, is overcoming the perception that you are dumping work on others and then taking credit for it. It seems to be a common theme amongst women in leadership positions, and something that is very hard to balance. The balance here seems to be delegating, yet staying engaged enough to still own the responsibility and also identifying development opportunities for those being delegated to, within the responsibility being delegated.”
- “The single most important challenge for me in delegating is not being able to answer a detailed question on the project on the fly by a senior executive. You have to get comfortable saying ‘I don’t know the answer, but I do know where to get it.’”

3

Challenge 3: Fear that someone else will not do a task well enough (i.e., risk of failure) runs headlong into your own confidence that you would get the job done right.

How many times have you heard yourself say, 'It's easier or safer if I do it myself'? Not wanting to fail is a noble pursuit, as is the impulse to do all you can to personally prevent failure. However, this mindset can be career limiting (i.e., you are limited by what you can personally accomplish), and it needs to be faced head-on. Creating space for others requires you to increase your tolerance of failure and your openness to other ways of doing things besides your own.

- “I am overcoming this by realizing that maybe my way is not perfect and that sometimes just getting it done is enough.”
- “Very early in my career, I tended to fall into two different traps: (i) ‘It will just be easier and faster if I do it’, and (ii) ‘I can do it better.’ I realized pretty quickly that both are usually wrong. While delegating takes time and effort, it pays dividends because you develop people around you who can do the work and support you (not to mention that you enrich their experiences and careers). Also, it’s not true that you can always do it better, and sometimes it’s not a good use of your time to handle a matter better suited for someone else. So, I have become a habitual delegator and it has paid off enormously.”
- “Acknowledging that there are sometimes many paths to get to the same outcome. Just because someone may not choose the same path doesn’t mean they won’t arrive at the same destination.”
- “What I learned is that you need to let go and let others make some mistakes, and trust that they will come to you with the right questions to ensure the mistakes are minimal.”

4

Challenge 4: Not spending enough time clarifying expectations on the front end that could guide the person tasked with doing the work is a missed opportunity.

The good news is that spending more time on the front-end – setting expectations, articulating what you want and why – increases the likelihood that people will get the work done well. Some leaders are shy about this, but clarity on the front-end helps everyone – and it far surpasses cleanup on the backend of a project.

- “I learned to delegate, first with small items and then with larger projects. Setting clear expectations to all about timelines and end product is a major necessity to being able to delegate and being successful at it.”
- “I’ve let my team know up front that this is a development area of mine and to work with me to clarify the ‘end state’ so we avoid rework or misunderstandings.”
- “Helping those with whom I work understand my timelines and why they are important.”

SECTION 3

Most Challenging Delegation Headaches at HOME and How to Overcome Them

When we talk about delegating at home, we are not assuming you are handing off work to your partner or spouse. Delegation basically means that there is work to be done, you know you cannot do it all, and others have the ability and responsibility to help. LeaderMoms have indicated that they have called on extended family members, neighbors, friends, other parents, and even their children in varying degrees as needed. For example, children, especially older ones, can perform chores and help the household function – and they benefit from being asked to contribute. Here is what we heard from LeaderMoms when we asked them about the single most important challenge they have faced in learning to delegate at home and how they are overcoming it.

1

Challenge 1: The martyr and superwoman traps may feed your ego, but they are not sustainable and are often destructive.

Our LeaderMoms sends a resounding message that you really don't have to be the one to do everything. They suggest that you leave your ego and your guilt at the door.

- “Delegating at home sets a good example for kids on what real life is all about. I constantly battle the ‘perfect mom’ image in my head, but I have gotten much better at accepting that there is no universal standard of what that means and my way seems to work for me and my family.”
- “Lose the martyr complex! I used to feel guilty about being a working mom, and so I would try to do everything for the kids. Have the kids take ownership in household chores... It’s a valuable life lesson and their future spouses will thank you.”
- “Don’t be a martyr. No one is watching.”
- “I used to struggle with guilt for leaving my family and household to the care of another person. Over the years, my family and I have come to realize that my career is part of who I am and that my love and dedication to my family isn’t tied to the amount of hours I spend physically with my kids or doing the housework. Quality of our time together is paramount and allowing other people to help is the only way to achieve that balance.”
- “The most important challenge has been letting go of the fear that I would lose my supermom title by asking for help. Many times, I feel like it would be faster to do things myself rather than explain to someone else who, when, how to handle priorities at home. What I have learned is that most of the time, it’s more a matter of accepting that things may not get done my way, but they will get done, and that just having them checked off the list will make life easier for all of us.”
- “No matter what, you need to be in full communication with your loved ones at home. They need to know about your work, frustrations, needs, wants, etc. If they don’t know this, how on earth are they going to be able to help you?”

2

Challenge 2: Fear that someone will not do it as well as you would makes you hold on to stuff you don't need to do and that will eat the little bit of free time you have.

Just like at work, your confidence that you would do it “right” might get in the way of others taking on something. Indeed, delegating at home is good practice at seeing how different people can get something done adequately in different ways, leaving you time for higher-order pursuits.

- “Similar to the challenge at work, I have to remember that people aren’t going to do things the way I would. I have to remind myself that as long as I’m not doing it (unloading the dishwasher, food shopping, cleaning, etc.), it doesn’t matter how it gets done.”
- “Delegation at home can be a challenge when it can be done faster on my own... To help me get over this, I have to have patience with having things done slower and not perhaps exactly the way I want them to.”
- “You have to learn to accept differences. Because someone doesn’t do something the way you would doesn’t make them wrong. When you accept this, you’re less likely to micromanage.”
- “To overcome: plan ahead, giving enough lead time so that they have some control over when they get it done.”
- “Communicating my expectations. Don’t feel guilty.”

Debunking a Myth: Why Are Executive Women Happier?

It's not just because they have more resources or more power, or because they outsource their domestic life. They are happier because they are **better at aligning their priorities, both at home and at work.**

When we reported the results from our last study, many people were pleasantly surprised to see the very high overall satisfaction levels that LeaderMoms reported in their lives. One assumption we heard from people again and again was that as LeaderMoms climbed the corporate ladder, they were able to earn more money and power and were in a better position to hand-off work (i.e., "they can better afford nannies and people to clean the house"). We worried that the assumption was dismissive and an over-simplification, so we went back to the data to check.

To test this hypothesis in the current study, we compared our LeaderMom Executives to other levels of LeaderMoms. Here's what we learned:

- Yes, Executive LeaderMoms reported significantly higher levels of life satisfaction than senior-level LeaderMoms.
- Executives also reported more personal accomplishment in their work than mid-level managers.
- However, the percentage of household income contributed by LeaderMoms was NOT related with the percentage of childcare responsibilities that these women personally handled.
- In fact, Executive LeaderMoms worked the same hours, had the same number of kids, and handled the same percentage of childcare responsibilities as non-executives!
- What differentiated Executive LeaderMoms and what contributed to their high satisfaction with life was their ability to align priorities. And agreement with their families about their priorities had the strongest relationship with executives' overall satisfaction with life.

LeaderMoms are indeed happier in the most senior ranks. The reason why is not as simple as "they have more resources." Assuming that these women are happier because they've reached a certain echelon sends a misleading message to junior women – it tells junior women that if only they hold on until they reach the executive level, things will be easier. That's not entirely true. If women don't strengthen their ability to prioritize and delegate, they will not have the skills needed to be an effective executive. Alignment around priorities is critical to executives - communicating priorities and acting against them that really help executives to be successful and satisfied.

Executives might outsource household tasks, but this outsourcing is often a single piece of a much larger strategy for managing work and childcare responsibilities. Moreover, the data tell us that executive LeaderMoms are not outsourcing their roles as mothers.

Supplemental Section

Attention Bosses of LeaderMoms



1

Part 1: 5 Ways Strong Bosses Help LeaderMoms Prioritize at Work

Prioritization and delegation are tough skills to master and a manager's coaching and guidance can make a real difference. We asked LeaderMoms for their advice to managers of women like themselves who are learning how to prioritize. Here's what we heard – and this is our way of making this research useful not just to LeaderMoms but to the leaders who are managing and guiding these accomplished women.

Help me gain perspective and point out what is really a priority.

- “My mentor once asked me ‘What have you done that’s big?’ It made me question how much work was becoming my one and only hobby...in addition to being work. It forced me to rethink how I spend my time and led me to opportunities outside my work to lead and make a difference.”
- “The most effective thing a leader has taught me is how to completely let go of those things that are not important - i.e., not only do not prioritize them, but completely let go of them. In other words, quit worrying about (stressing over) things that can't be controlled or don't really matter anyway.”
- “One of my managers helped me remember that everything doesn't have to be perfect. That helped me focus more effort on the details of important things and allowed me to not worry as much about the crossed t's and dotted i's if it wasn't as critical. At least, I was moving something forward”.
- “I have had leaders that remind me to focus on the things I can control...at home and at work!”
- “Asked questions like “What will happen if this doesn't get done?” and probed as to who else on my team could pick up some activities.”
- “They've taught me to accept that not everything will be done perfectly or as I would specifically want it when I delegate, but that the value of delegating - both professionally and personally - far outweighs any lost quality or lack of perfect outcome.”

- “During a heightened time of competing priorities, a manager recognized that I was attempting to deliver against too many important goals. Rather than allowing me to fail or put myself at risk personally, she intervened and taught me a vital lesson...I can be successful by leverages resources and tapping into the capabilities of others on the team. That year, I delivered against an important priority and a few colleagues pitched in to cover another. Ultimately, the entire team was recognized for driving value and making a significant impact on the business.”
- “Remind me that in a fast-paced environment, you don’t have the time to work and rework deliverables until they meet your highest standard...you have to get it out the door. So basically, you refine the time it needs to produce a quality document and trust your judgment and work product.”
- “A leader once pointed out to me that being stressed and looking stressed did not convey a good message. I’m guessing that deep down, I thought I would impress people with how much I had on my plate, but all I did was scare people because I looked like I was out of control. Learning your limits and sticking to them is difficult but it is the key to survive and thrive. If that means not pulling an all-nighter during a merger so you don’t melt down the next day in negotiations, then learn to go home and let someone else do the work”.
- “I had a female boss a few years back who taught me to work with what I had, rather than getting hung up on perfection. Sometimes good enough is, well, good enough.”

Share what works for you.

- “Taught me to lay out a schedule of items that need to be done and prioritize them.”
- “A leader has shown me through mentoring and coaching how to prioritize based on business needs and responsiveness to the executive team.”
- “Told me that the secret to making a difference is having 2-3 priorities that will make a meaningful impact on the organization vs. 20 things that will be hard to notice impact.
- “Told me what HIS (my boss’) priorities were each week, even if they did not pertain to me or my team directly.”
- “Single most effective thing was that that person accompanied me in a process and thereby coached me through the smaller steps.”

Sit down with me and talk with me about priorities, especially at key moments.

- “A former boss taught me to clarify the question. I continue to ask ‘What’s the question?’ so I know what’s being asked of me (often the person asking the question doesn’t know). Clarifying the question helps me understand if someone wants to know the solution or how to get the solution.”
- “I typically ask if I am unclear on priorities. I am pretty vocal though, so I don’t spend much time waiting around for someone to give me hints. If I have 30 things in the hopper and 5 of them are urgent, I will ask my boss what I can deliver and if that meets his expectations.”
- “Just spending the time to discuss what the priorities are is the most important thing. Many leaders don’t take the time to do this with their teams. I spend a staff meeting periodically going through the larger list of priorities with my teams to make sure we are all on the same page.”
- “The single most effective thing that a leader has done is to assist me in prioritization or in allowing me to ask questions regarding priorities. Being open to that conversation has been an incredible assist.”

Provide flexibility and trust I will accomplish the goals.

- “They put the focus on the results, not in how the results were achieved. I was reminded that good employees will get the job done no matter what it takes so if they leave early to go to a child’s baseball game, you can count on the fact that they will work in the evening, come in early, or whatever they need to do to get the job done. Employees are typically more loyal and will work harder for leaders that understand and work with family priorities.”
- “Giving me the flexibility to get the work done in perhaps less than conventional ways. To clarify the leader has not been pedantic about how the work gets done, but is willing to let me get things accomplished while I do the juggling of home vs. work priorities.”
- “By trusting me with more and more responsibility while knowing how committed I am as a professional and as a mother, our CEO has forced me to prioritize personally and professionally. The more I’m asked to lead, the more I learn what I need to do be a great mom and productive businessperson.”
- “Provide me the flexibility I need. Trusting me to make the decisions. Delegating and never questioning my work ethic. Providing me with information and removing barriers to my success all along the way.”

Act as a good example without expecting me to replicate how you do things.

- “Set a good example, by prioritizing their family and getting HOME (not lingering in the office, not being in the office 24/7, although always available).”
 - “I have been fortunate to report to CEOs and other executives who lead by example in effectively prioritizing work and home. Their actions reinforce that we share common values.”
 - “The former President of my company told her team that she expected that we would power down and spend time with our loved ones - so that we would be better on the job. She walked the walk and empowered the rest of us to do the same.”
 - “Act as a role model...behavior is much more important than words!!”
 - “Sharing personal stories of how they’ve prioritized their work and life, especially stories that have passed the test of time. And, also noting that this is THEIR story, and everyone has to find their own way.”
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2 Part 2: **3 Ways Strong Bosses Help LeaderMoms Delegate at Work.**

Once a LeaderMom knows her priorities, the next step is to find ways to execute against those priorities. We asked LeaderMoms for their advice to managers of women like themselves who are learning how to delegate. Here’s what they advised.

Help me identify where and when to delegate.

- “Help them to identify opportunities to delegate. Help them to prioritize and assess their resources.”
- “Have them lay out the tasks, divide them into stages and then set up a plan to do them in stages. Present this to the employee and set target dates and reviews for when items are to be reviewed and determine when the next stage can start.”
- “Until it becomes habit to think about delegating rather than owning every responsibility, give reminders and suggestions that this could be a development opportunity for someone else. As long as she begins delegating more, be willing to discuss/respect her decision not to delegate certain responsibilities.”

Reinforce that delegation is hard, but that it is worth it; it will make me more effective and I will accomplish more!

- “Women who get promoted tend to be the ‘doers’ who take on more and more tasks. Think of it this way: If you’re still doing your own expenses and writing your own decks, you are wasting the company’s resources. Your compensation level is probably too high to be spending the company’s time on these tasks.”

Remind me to let go of some control and help me get comfortable with mistakes.

- “Communicate with their people and be flexible in accepting and honoring differences in values and how people get their work done.”
- “Help them with accountability. Ensure they are delegating effectively by giving ownership to the person, not taking it upon themselves to constantly follow-up, but set the expectations at the beginning as to what they will deliver and when.”
- “You can only get better at effective delegation when you do it and learn from your experiences, both good and bad. Give new managers room to learn.”
- “Be a good role model and don’t micro-manage.”
- “For ‘type A, control freaks’ perhaps reminding them that their role as a manager learning to delegate is that they do have let go and mistakes are a normal learning process their subordinates must go through.”
- “I would tell them they need to know that it’s ok to fail or let people on your team fail, as a learning opportunity. I would never want or allow anyone to fail in such a way that it harms the business but, in order to grow, sometimes people need to make mistakes or fall on their face a bit. Sometimes you just have to trust and have faith that someone will pleasantly surprise you.”
- “Coach women on focusing on the outcome more than the particular steps taken to achieve the outcome.”

Supplemental Section

Attention Families of LeaderMoms



3

Things You Do to Help Your LeaderMom Prioritize and Delegate

Take time to clearly communicate with your LeaderMom, to tell her what is important to you, and to remember she is in your corner.

- “We are all in this together and none of us are mind readers -- open communication among family members is essential. But remember, not all communication is equal -- always be nonjudgmental and consider the perspectives of others, be open and supportive, be loving and kind. Mom really is doing her best and she can only do that when she knows you're behind her 100%. And PS: Mom loves you.”
- “Make sure to tell your LeaderMom if you are missing her or need more attention. We appreciate it a lot when someone we love tells us what they are feeling and thinking. Be vocal if there is something important to you coming up. When making choices, it is hard to know whether a family member really cares about a particular event or not unless you are told.”
- “Mom's will do what's important to their children and their families. To the degree that children and spouses articulate, ‘THIS and not that’ is important. My son will tell me, ‘I don't need you to go to the award ceremony where everyone gets an award; I really need you to come to my game... I'm pitching.’”
- “Communicate with your spouse/partner/family about what is important and work to help each other stay true to those priorities.”
- “I would tell families to identify what is important to them and communicate those things to your LeaderMom. That way mom is really clear about what is important at home and you can work together to make those things priorities. Also, ask your LeaderMom questions about work... why you work, what you get out of it, personal goals, etc. so there is greater understanding about job focus and priorities.”
- “Let the LeaderMoms know what you need – more time, etc. Offer help when you can. Most of all, let them know that you are okay. Now that my children are older, they have told me directly how proud they are of my accomplishments and believe that I am a good role model for achievement. They are independent and capable which they directly attribute to having a working mom.”

Be proactive. Help. Know you are needed.

- “The home is the family’s responsibility, not the mom’s. Kids of any age can do work to keep the household running, from setting the table to taking out the garbage to cooking and laundry. These are things everyone should know how to do (age appropriately) and it isn’t taking things off your plate, it is them contributing to the family in the right way. Go for it!”
- “Ask often if there is something you can do to help.”
- “Something as simple as someone else helping with dinner or laundry goes a long way in giving me 15 minutes to take a breather.”
- “Help your LeaderMom stay focused by taking the initiative to tend to necessary tasks at home so she doesn’t have to be ‘in charge’ all the time.”
- “Everyone needs to contribute to the household tasks. Determine what is most important and focus on those items/activities.”
- “Ask them how you can help them.”
- “I don’t want to be superwoman! I want help. I tell my family all the time I want to be part of a team. Teamwork is how we roll.”
- “Have a deep bench of support- babysitters, nannies, people to turn to- as you travel for work or just need additional support.”
- “Ask, ask, ask. Don’t wait to be told what to do. Instead, support your working mom by asking what you can do to help. Offer assistance.“
- “Try to pitch in and help. The more help you give to your already overburdened mom, the more quality time you will have with her!”
- “If asked...help! And try to identify areas of need without being asked!”
- “Remember that it’s a team effort at home and everyone needs to contribute.”

Leaning Forward: Continuing to Share Promising Practices and Inspire Achievement

This survey was intended to provide a forum for LeaderMoms to share their challenges and learnings with women who face similar issues and offer tangible, useful recommendations for LeaderMoms and their managers. This research helps satisfy the “How do you do it?” question that LeaderMoms often are asked by other women coming up the ranks.

The response to this research has been tremendous and we are planning future studies to tackle other areas (e.g., sustaining success during pregnancy and after maternity leave, developing executive presence, and dealing with business trips). If you would like to recommend another topic that would interest you, please email us at cflavin@wholeleader.com.

Participant Demographic Profile

Participant Age Profile

Age (Mean = 44 Years)	Race/Ethnicity
30 - 34 / 6%	White / 85%
35 - 39 / 20%	Hispanic / 5%
40 - 44 / 32%	African-American / 4%
45 - 49 / 21%	Asian or Pacific Islander / 4%
50+ / 21%	Hispanic / 3%
	Other / 3%

Participant Family Profile

Number of Children	Marital Status
One / 27%	Married/Partnered / 92%
Two / 51%	Divorced/Separated / 7%
Three / 16%	Single / 1%
Four / 3%	Widowed / 1%
Five + / 3%	

Participant Professional Profile

Industry	Size of Employer
Advertising/Marketing/Sales / 9%	Fewer than 100 Employees/ 13%
Consulting Services / 8%	100 – 999 Employees/ 14%
Education / 6%	1,000 – 4,999 Employees/ 21%
Entertainment / 10%	5,000 – 9,999 Employees/ 28%
Financial Services / 20%	10,000 + Employees/ 23%
Health Care / 10%	
Human Resources / 10%	
Information Technology / 5%	
Pharmaceuticals / 3%	
Other / 18%	

Sample and Methodology

A confidential online survey was used to collect the data for this study. This survey covered the following content areas:

- Engagement
- Balancing Work and Family Responsibilities
- Knowing What's Really Important
- Delegation Skills
- Current Work Situation and Demographic Background

About the Study Authors

Cathleen Swody

Is a LeaderMom researcher and advocate who specializes in analytics. Cathleen was an Associate at LRI when this study was conducted. In all her work, she takes a data-driven approach to link leader behaviors to business performance and success. To help clients engage and retain their best people, Cathleen applies her expertise in analyzing employee surveys, 360-degree performance assessments, coaching, designing training, and pre-employment tests.

Earlier in her career, Cathleen worked as a selection expert and research consultant for a Fortune 50 company. She earned her Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Connecticut. As a member of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology and the Academy of Management, and now adjunct faculty at the University of CT School of Business and Director of Assessment at Thrive Leadership, Cathleen often presents at professional conferences on topics such as leader credibility, the transition of leaders into new roles, and workplace stress. She lives in Glastonbury, Connecticut with her husband, Steve, and sons.



Catherine Flavin

Is the LeaderMom founder. For the whole of her career, she has focused on engagement and leadership, first in politics and then in organizations. By culling practical insights from research, she enables leaders to understand their own and others values and perceptions to work together more effectively and get better results faster. By strengthening authentic bonds between leaders and followers, sharing wisdom and learnable skills, she enables leaders to deepen engagement and craft sustainable, competitive cultures where talented people want to be. A commitment to diversity and inclusion (identity, ideas, ways of thinking) underscores her work, and is coupled with an unrelenting focus on excellence and positive impact.

Catherine received her M.A. in Political Science with distinction from the University of Connecticut, where worked at the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. Her B.A. is in Government from Franklin & Marshall College. She also pursues and works to bring insights offered by research on emotional intelligence and positive psychology (CIPP) to her work and life. She and her husband, Steve, have three children and are living the dual-career dream in West Hartford, Connecticut.



Acknowledgments

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Thanks, too, to our families for being aligned with us on this particular priority! Thanks, too, to our families for being aligned with us on this particular priority!



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