



# How to drive Belonging for Women in the Workplace

Insights from the  
Better to Belong Study

  
accenture

# How to Drive Belonging for Women | Executive Summary

**Creating an inclusive organization where women can thrive**  
must be at the top of the CEO's agenda or the talent gap will continue to grow.

## The pandemic hit women the hardest.

From skyrocketing unemployment to taking on more responsibilities at home, it has never been more important to ensure equitable experiences for women.

By analyzing data from our Better to Belong research with a gender lens, we uncovered how women's experiences in the workplace differ, and how to drive belonging so that women and organizations can both thrive.

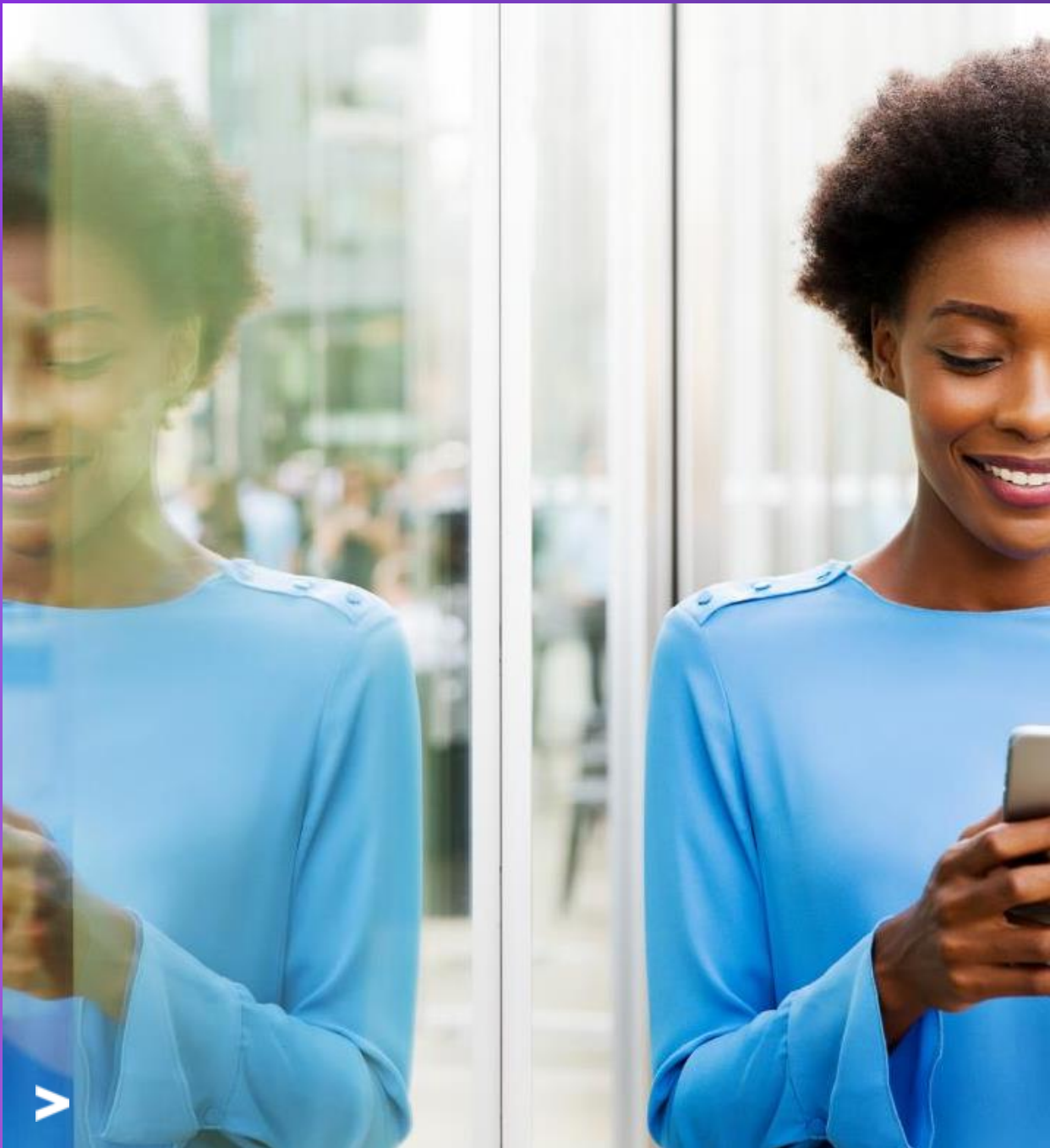
We used our Net Better Off framework to understand employee experience across 6 key dimensions: financial, emotional & mental, relational, physical, purposeful, and employable.

We found that women are **significantly less Net Better Off** and report **less belonging** than employees overall, like not feeling respected by peers and not having a senior leader help advance their careers. Moreover, 29% of women report **lower support across the talent lifecycle**.

Leaders have a huge opportunity to increase women's human potential. When they get the traditional moments that matter right, they can drive up **NBO by 3.6x** (compared to 3.2x overall).

Even more exciting, when leaders focus on the everyday moments that matter, they can drive human potential up almost **5x** for women, the most of any group.





## The pandemic hit women the hardest

From skyrocketing unemployment to taking on more responsibilities at home, it has never been more important to ensure equitable experiences for women.

**Creating an inclusive organization where women can thrive** must be at the top of the CEO's agenda. If not, the talent gap will only continue to grow.

## Leaders can unlock up to **5x** more

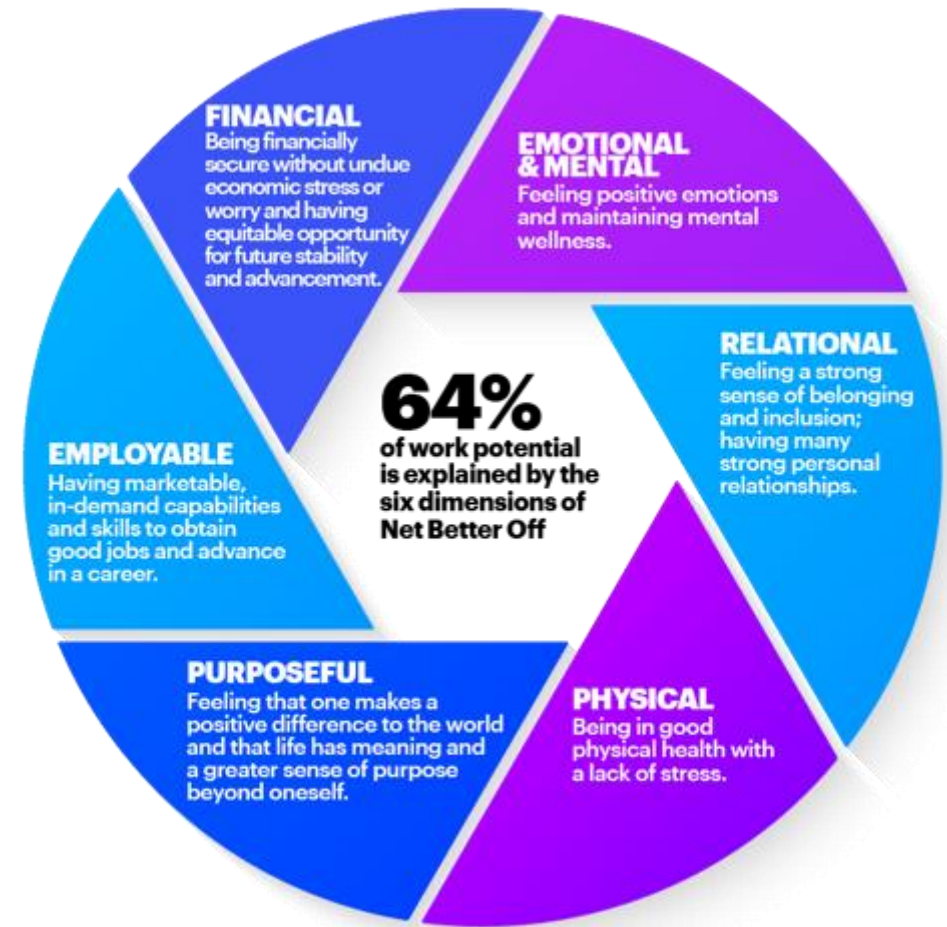
human potential by better  
managing peoples' everyday  
work experiences.

We measure human potential  
using the Net Better Off (NBO)  
framework. When the right levers  
are pulled, NBO is maximized and  
belonging increases.



# Leaders leave people Net Better Off (NBO) by being curious

about their unique situations and the external forces (such as economic inequality, racism and environmental disasters) that shape their work lives.



# Net better off can help businesses support their workers during today's turbulent times

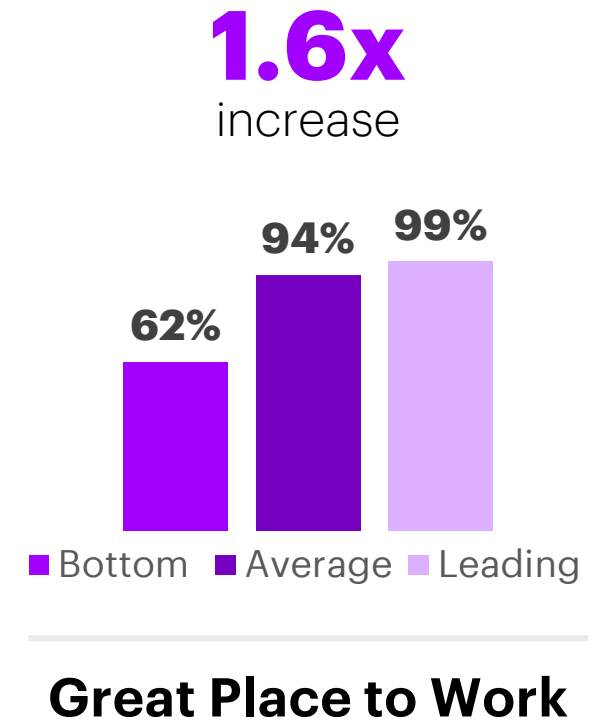
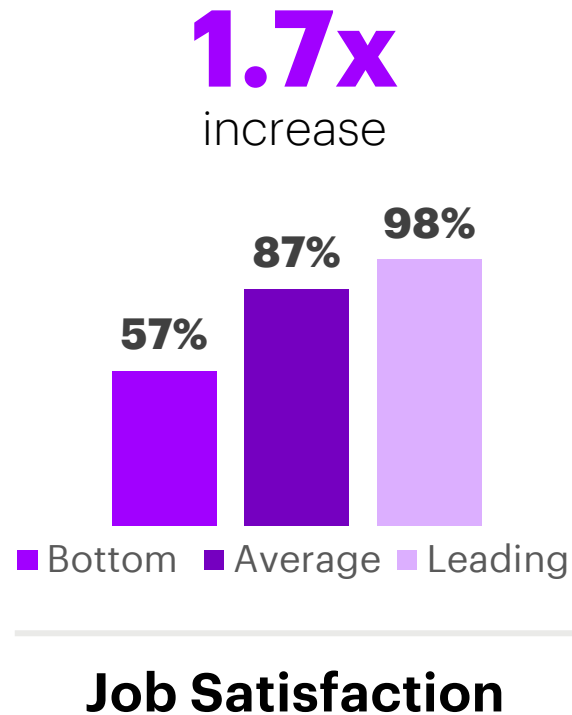
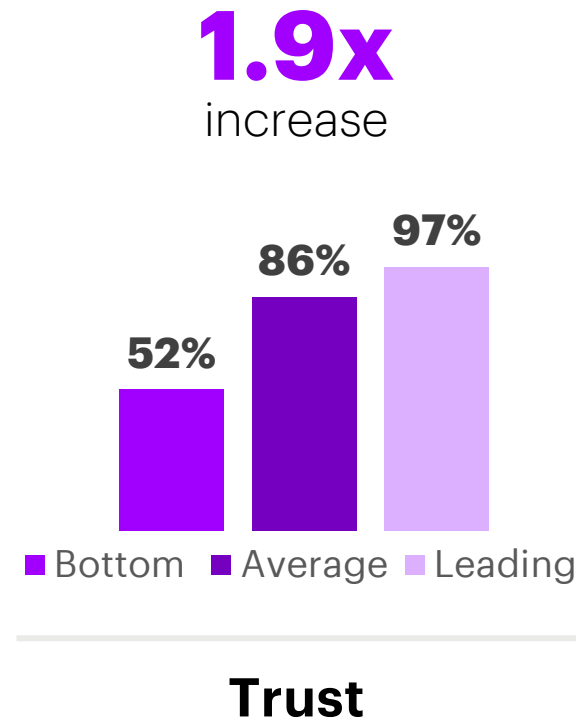
It all starts with knowing what questions to ask:

NET BETTEROFF DIMENSIONS	KEY QUESTIONS
<b>Employable</b>	Are we equipping people with the right adjacent skillsets to transition into higher paying jobs and explore new roles and industries?
<b>Financial</b>	Do our reward and benefit packages meet the evolving needs of our people in times of crisis and in times of abundance?
<b>Relational</b>	How do we create a sense of belonging in virtual teams? How do we ensure every voice is being heard throughout the organization?
<b>Physical</b>	What have we learned about our peoples' physical well-being that should be adopted as best practices moving into the future?
<b>Purposeful</b>	How does our purpose evolve to meet an enlightened workforce and customer? How does our purpose come to life in our communities?
<b>Emotional &amp; Mental</b>	How can we support the ongoing mental resilience of our people when the potential trauma from the crisis may have lasting effects?



# Why do we care about NBO?

When companies leave people net better off, they double the impact on work outcomes



Based on global data. Categories are based on performance on net better off dimensions: Leading/Bottom represent the top & bottom 25% and the average represents those in the middle.



# We found 10 everyday experience levers (4 are essential) that leaders must get right.

## Essential People Skills

Empowerment  
Communication  
Diversity  
Customer-Centric

## Organizational Factors

Skilling  
Dependence  
Governance  
Technology

## Individual Factors

Self-Efficacy  
Growth Mindset





**Leaders can leave their people Net Better Off (NBO) by being curious** about their unique situations and the external forces that shape their work lives.

**Leaders should care because their employees do.** A majority (57%) of employees believe their employer should leave them Net Better Off (NBO).

Unfortunately, women are **significantly less likely**<sup>1</sup> to be Net Better Off. Yet they are less likely to feel that their employers are responsible (55% vs 57% overall).

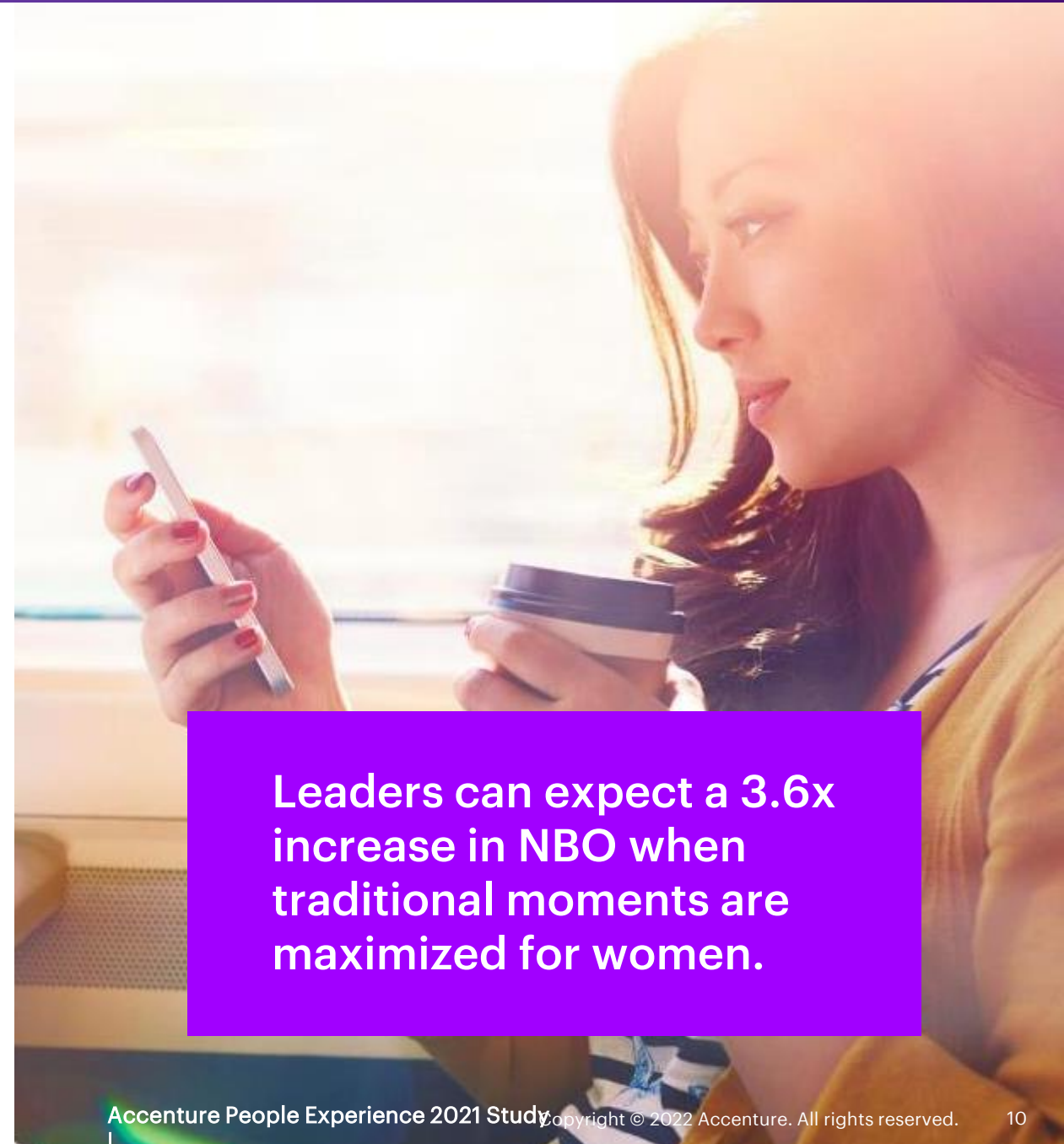
<sup>1</sup>Mean NBO for women = 5.44, Difference significant at .05 level.

## Why are women less Net Better Off than men?

Women report feeling **significantly less support** from their employers than workers overall in the traditional moments that matter like onboarding, compensation, and life events.

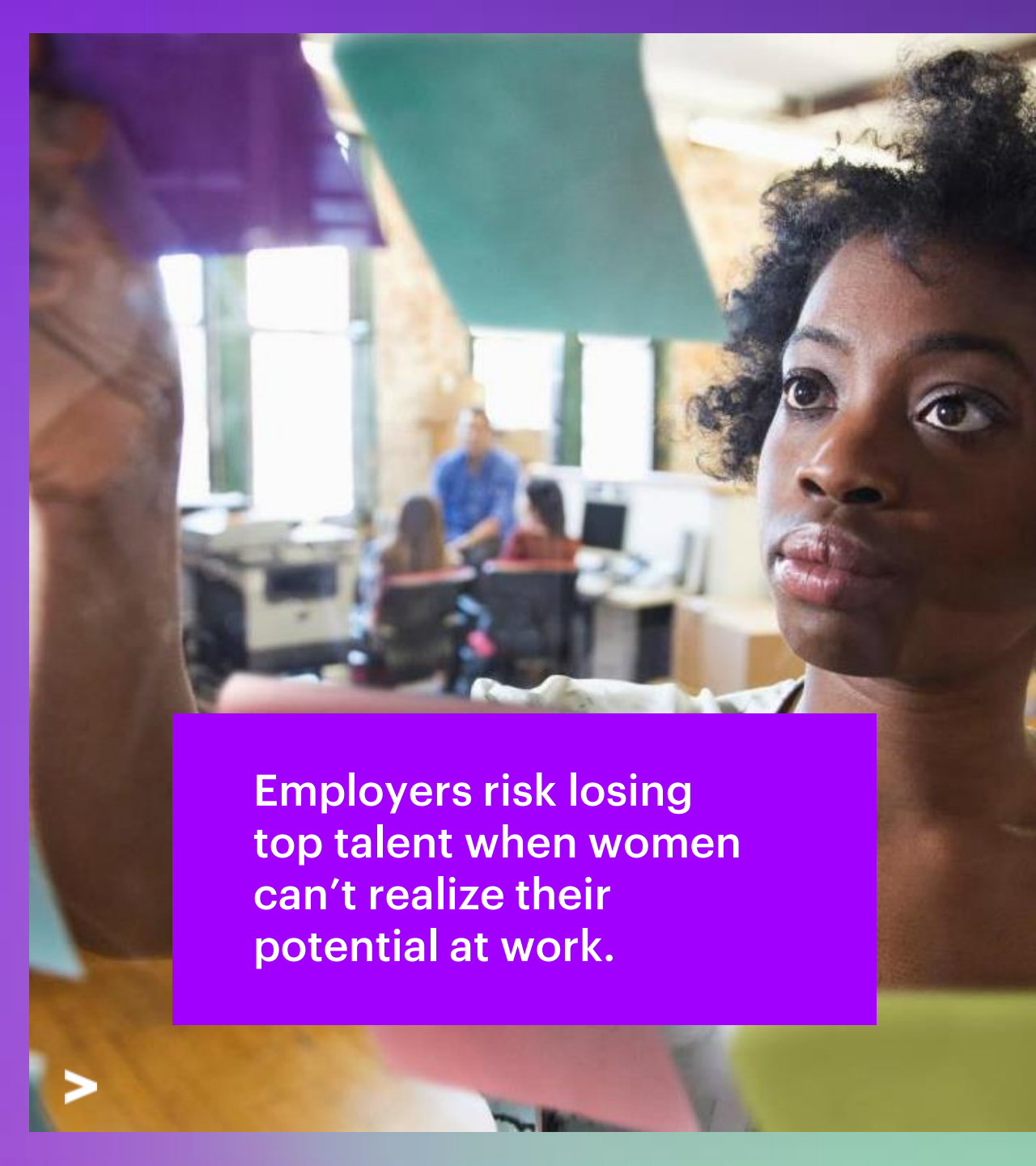
Twenty-nine percent (29%) of women report low support compared to 26% overall.

With the proper support, leaders can increase NBO for women over and above the average increase of 3.2x when the traditional moments are maximized.



Leaders can expect a 3.6x increase in NBO when traditional moments are maximized for women.



A close-up photograph of a Black woman with curly hair, looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. In the background, an office environment is visible with other people working at desks.

Employers risk losing top talent when women can't realize their potential at work.

## Why are women less Net Better Off than men?

Twenty percent (20%) of women report **dissatisfaction with their job** compared to 17% overall.

Women are significantly more likely to **distrust their employer.**

6.2% of women are **unlikely to stay** with their current employer, compared to 5.4% overall\*.

\* Statistically significant at the .05 level

People in need of skilling, LGBTQ+, race and ethnic minorities and women have the longest runway to an equitable work experience.

When everyday experiences are managed better, various levels of human potential can be unlocked.

Women have the most to gain with the opportunity to maximize their potential by 4.7x.



Workers with less education  
**3.6x**




Racial & Ethnic Minorities  
**4x**



Women  
**4.7x**



LGBTQI+  
**3.7x**



When workers are  
NBO, they are **2x**  
**more** likely to feel  
like they belong...

unfortunately, **1/3**  
of employees feel  
they don't belong.

## Belonging means:

- having **influence** over decisions
- being **respected** by peers and managers
- feeling comfortable **speaking up**
- having a senior leader who can help **advance and grow**



**38%**

of women feel they don't belong at work, compared to only **34%** overall\*



only **67%**

of women say they feel comfortable speaking up at their work, compared to **71%** overall\*

**55%**

of women say they have influence over decisions, compared to **60%** overall\*

**65%**

of women feel respected by their peers, compared to **68%** overall\*



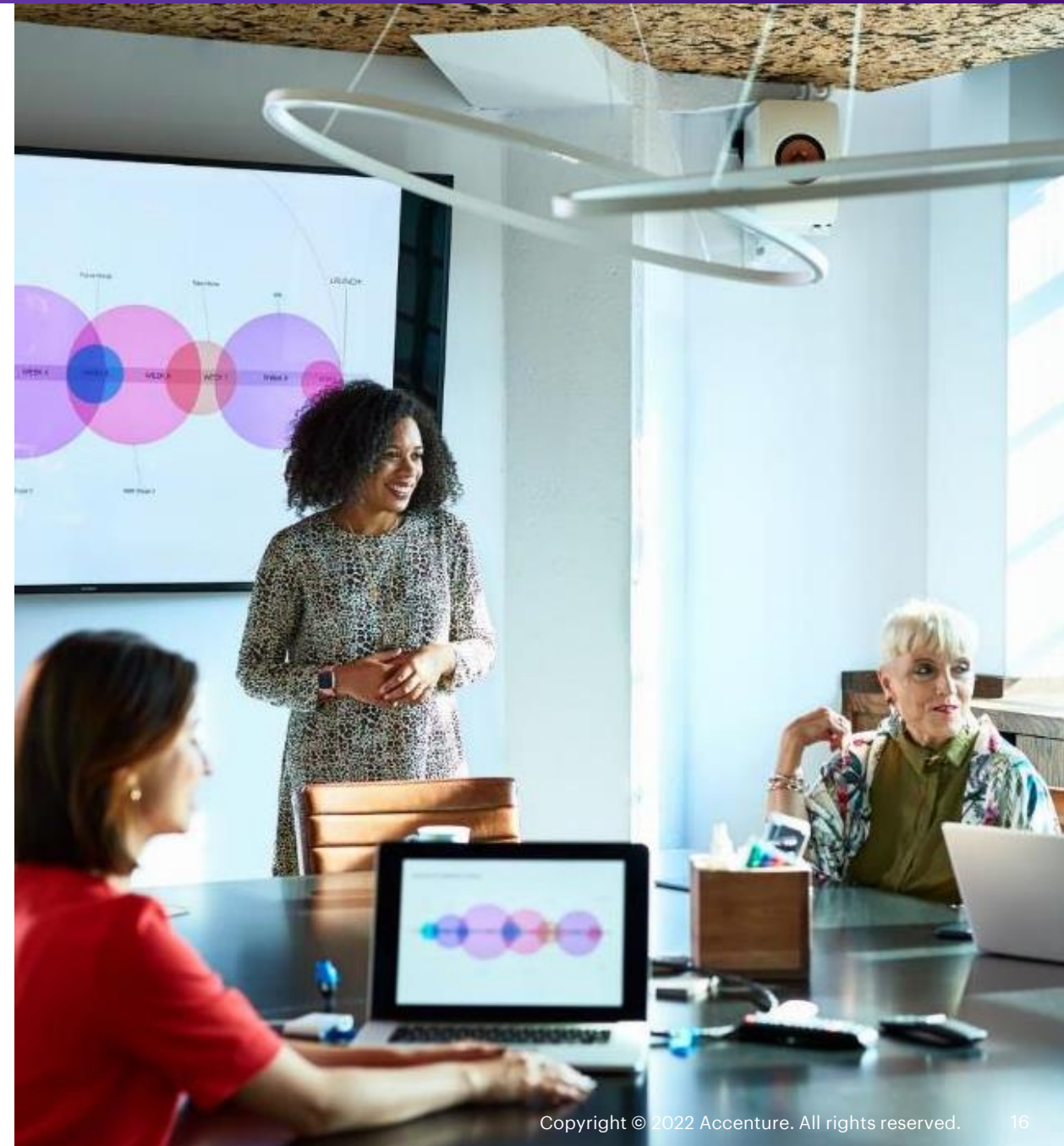


Women are having different experiences in the workplace that **prevents them from thriving.**

Just over half (55%) of women report having a senior leader that is actively helping them grow, compared to 62% overall.

Despite the fact that 70% of women aspire to be in senior leadership, they are significantly **less likely to be satisfied with the pace of advancement** (81% of women compared to 84% overall)

Women are also less likely to agree they will be able to **advance at the pace they want** (81% of women vs. 85% overall).







# What is the path forward?

# Maximize what drives human potential for women, and help the entire workforce thrive

While the essential levers are important for all people, skilling is prioritized as a key driver of human potential for women as well.

	<b>Overall</b> (N=6,998)	<b>Women</b> (N=2,437)
<b>1</b>	<b>Empowerment</b>	<b>Empowerment</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Diversity</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Customer Centric</b>	<b>Customer Centric</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Skilling</b>	<b>Skilling</b>
6	Dependence	Not significant drivers for women
7	Self-Efficacy	
8	Governance	
9	Growth Mindset	
10	Technology	





## The path forward

To maximize the human potential of all employees, especially women, leaders should focus on getting the day-to-day experiences right -- particularly the essential levers.

**Empower women** to make decisions about work that works for their unique situations and provide skilling and advancement opportunities that support women's career goals.

Be intentional about matching employees, particularly women, with leaders that can actively **help them grow**.

Utilize tech-enabled platforms to build community and inclusive environments that protects **psychological safety** and **boosts trust** and empathy.

# 10 everyday experience levers:

- Empowerment** Making people feel that they have the autonomy to support advancement.
- Communication** Sharing relevant information when people need it and delivering with empathy and transparency.
- Diversity** Holding leaders accountable for welcoming, progressing and valuing the contributions all people at all levels.
- Customer-Centric** Valuing and rewarding behaviors that drive positive customer experience.
- Skilling** Providing opportunities for skill building to meet business objectives.
- Dependence** Rules and processes that limit people's contribution to achieving desired outcomes.
- Governance** Practices and processes that impede people's agility.
- Technology** Providing the appropriate infrastructure and real-time digital support which keeps people connected.
- Self-Efficacy** Believing in one's own ability to meet work demands.
- Growth Mindset** Enabling people with greater ownership and influence over business outcomes.



# Thank you!

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**Global Talent Research Lead**  
**Accenture**



## About the Research

Accenture Research interviewed 33 workers in May of 2020 and surveyed 6,998 workers and 3,520 customers between September and November 2020. Data was collected in 14 countries within four regions: North America, EMEA, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. The study includes responses from frontline and enablement workers and customers within seven industries which include: banking, insurance, healthcare, government, retail, telecommunications, and utilities. Factor analyses were used to determine the People Experience levers, while Linear Regression was used to determine their relationship worker outcomes.

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