

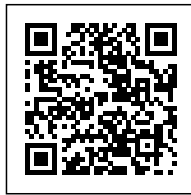
# GRANT THORNTON: THE STATE OF WOMEN IN BUSINESS

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Nine in ten companies have at least one woman on their leadership team, according to 2021 [Women in Business Report by Grant Thornton](#). The proportion of senior leadership roles held by women is 33% in North America and 36% within Canada. This surpasses the 30% threshold, which is predicted to be a catalyst for greater gender diversity in senior management and to engender transformational change.

While senior women traditionally occupied more people-focused roles like HR director, today we're seeing more and more women in more operational/strategic leadership roles. The percentage of women CEOs, for example, is up from 15% in 2019 to 26% in 2021 (while the percentage of women HR Directors is down to 38% in 2021 from 43% in 2019). In the last 12 months, unprecedented events have had an unforeseen and unparalleled impact on that progress. This report outlines the position of women in senior management around the world as we witness the emergence of a more diverse and inclusive leadership model, and highlights the actions leaders need to take in order to create a step change in the proportion of high-level roles held by women.

Top actions being taken are ensuring equal access to developmental work opportunities (39%, up from 34% in 2020), creating an inclusive culture (36%, up from 34% in 2020), and providing mentoring and coaching (32%, up from 26% in 2020). Interestingly, the percentage of companies that are formalizing and/or enabling flexible working has held steady since last year at 31%, perhaps because coronavirus lockdowns enforced widespread remote work for everyone so respondents didn't see it as a specifically gender-influenced practice. The percentage of companies taking *no* action to improve gender balance has fallen from 25% in 2019 to 18% in 2021.