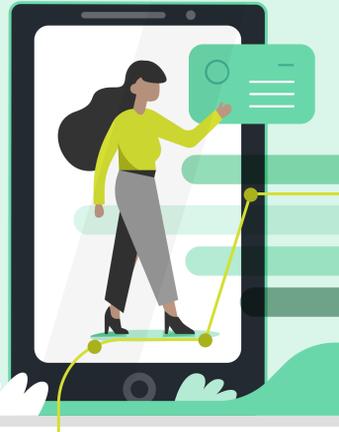


Reinventing the Leadership Journey for Women in Tech

COVID-19 brought new challenges for women leaders in tech—especially minority women—according to a BCG survey of nearly 1,200 tech executives. But there were also some unexpected benefits, particularly for midlevel women. Tech players need to understand how to build on the wins—and mitigate the downsides—associated with the new work model.



THE COVID-19 SHAKEUP

The upheaval of the past few years has tech talent on the move.

40% of employees working in digital fields are actively job hunting

73% expect to leave their current role in two to three years



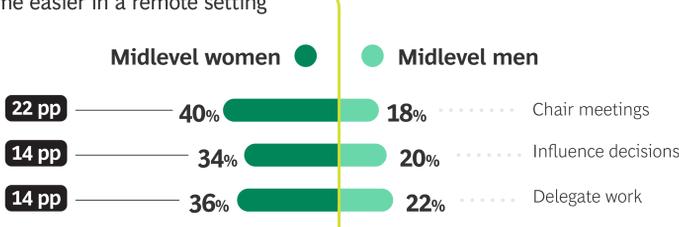
Companies that put the right work models, structures, and career avenues in place will be better able to attract, retain, and advance diverse talent. **That talent, in turn, can provide a spark.**

Companies with above-average diversity on their management teams had innovation revenue (revenue from products launched over the past three years) that was **19 percentage points higher** than that of companies with below-average leadership diversity.

THE UPSIDE AND DOWNSIDE OF THE NEW WORK MODEL

Women were more likely than men to thrive in the new reality: a greater share reported that some critical managerial tasks got easier. The difference was pronounced for midlevel women. And midlevel men were more likely than midlevel women to say these tasks became more difficult.

Share who reported the task became easier in a remote setting



Minority women, however, reported challenges in the new work reality.

47% of minority women vs. **35%** of white women said it became more difficult to connect with mentors and sponsors

29% of minority women vs. **18%** of white women said interactions with their manager became less valuable

A WINDOW ON THE WORK-LIFE ECOSYSTEM

While work-from-home arrangements created opportunities for some women, the new work model created a fresh set of challenges for women caregivers.

The responsibilities of minority caregivers looked a bit different. While they and white women spent a similar number of hours per week on caregiving duties, **15% of minority respondents** were caring for both children and other relatives versus **8% of white respondents**.

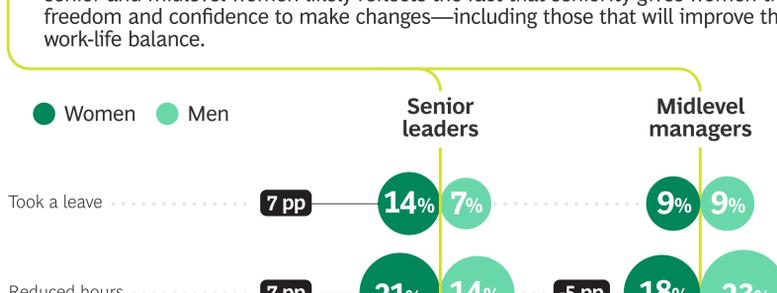
In addition, a greater percentage of minority women (**41%**) reported that the pandemic negatively impacted their work-life balance than did white women (**28%**).

44% of women caregivers vs. **33%** of men caregivers spent more than 20 hours per week on these duties

Caregiving duties were likely a factor in whether women and men downshifted in their careers, with a higher share of women than men taking a leave of absence or reducing their hours.



But there was a significant difference between senior and midlevel women. Senior women took a leave and reduced their hours **more** than senior men did, while midlevel women made such moves as or less frequently as midlevel men. The disparity between senior and midlevel women likely reflects the fact that seniority gives women the freedom and confidence to make changes—including those that will improve their work-life balance.



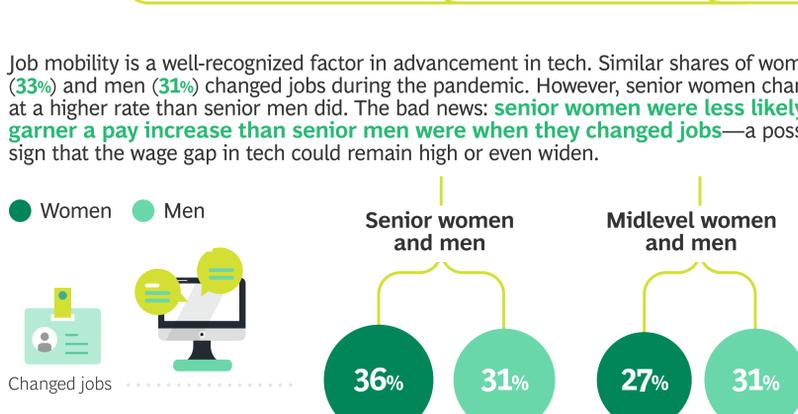
INSIGHTS ON ADVANCEMENT

So how did the new work reality shape the trajectory of women? Overall, women sought out and landed promotions at roughly the same rate as men.

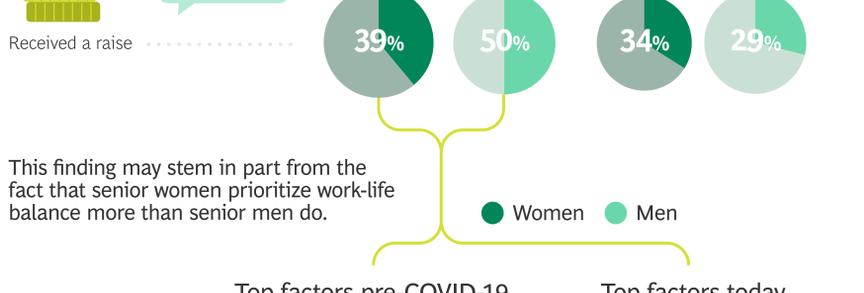
But midlevel women had higher rates of promotion than did midlevel men—potentially reflecting the improved ease of performing critical managerial tasks in the new work model.



Job mobility is a well-recognized factor in advancement in tech. Similar shares of women (**33%**) and men (**31%**) changed jobs during the pandemic. However, senior women were less likely to garner a pay increase than senior men were: **senior women were less likely to garner a pay increase than senior men were when they changed jobs**—a possible sign that the wage gap in tech could remain high or even widen.



This finding may stem in part from the fact that senior women prioritize work-life balance more than senior men do.



SUPPORTING WOMEN IN TECH

To ensure that women can advance and thrive in the new work reality, companies should intensify their focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition, they should take five steps.

- Provide a variety of pathways to leadership, particularly for those who have not followed the traditional trajectory; different experiences round out diversity of thought within the company workforce.
- Structure interactions and meetings so that everyone has an equal voice and opportunity to participate, whether they are using a remote, hybrid, or in-person work model.
- Identify what adds value to manager-employee relationships in terms of frequency and type of interactions, and then communicate and incentivize such activities. Support mentorship and sponsorship opportunities in a hybrid world.
- Assess whether benefits and work models align with the new reality, including the growing demand for a better work-life balance—and ensure that those issues are given as much consideration as financial compensation when recruiting talent.
- Normalize temporary leave and reduced hours for both caregivers and noncaregivers. Ensure support for caregivers is comprehensive and includes those who are caring for family members other than children.

Sources: BCG and The Network conducted a web survey and analyzed the responses of 9,864 workers in digital fields in 2020; BCG's Assessing COVID-19's Impact on Diversity in Tech Leadership survey, 2021; internal and external interviews.

Note: The infographic is based on a survey of nearly 1,200 US-based senior leaders and midlevel managers (women and men), who were within four levels of the CEO and working either in a high-tech industry or in a tech function in other industries.



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