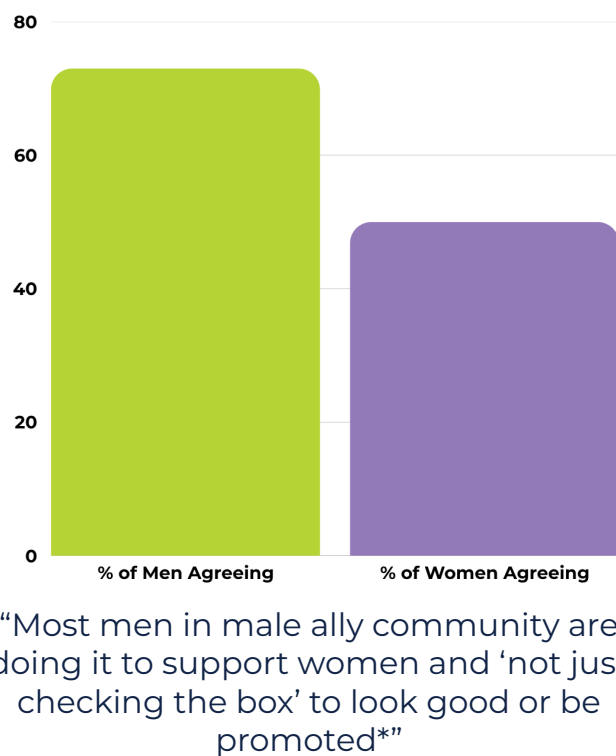
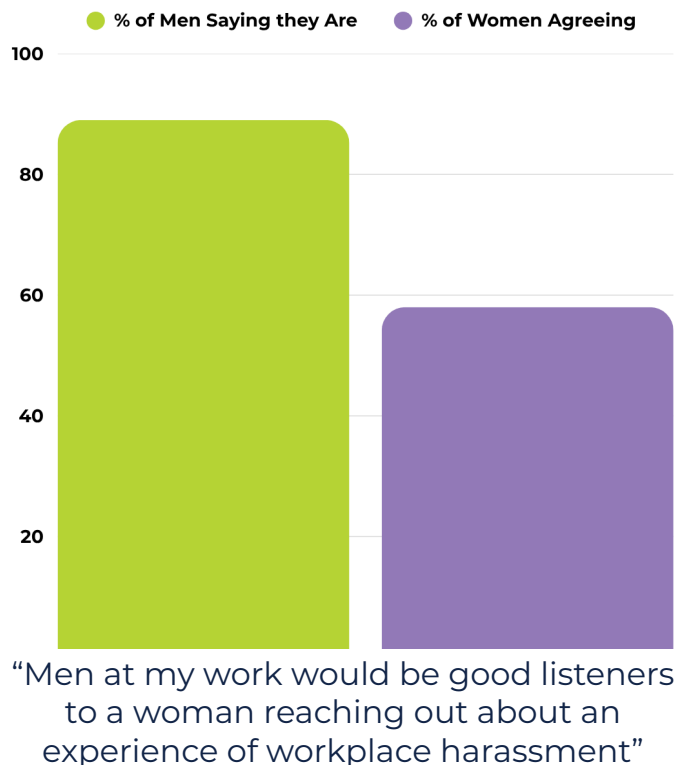
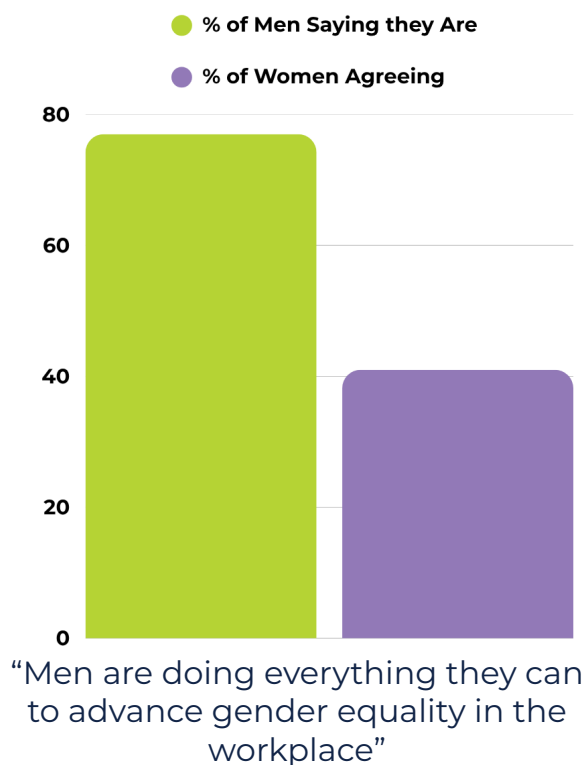




Male Allies and the Push for Gender Equality

An action guide on engaging male allies supporting gender equality in IP tech, law, and policy

Views on Inequality in the Workplace Part I



* Based on those reporting a male ally community in their organization.

Source: [So, You Want to be a Male Ally for Gender Equality? \(And You Should\): Results from a National Survey, and a Few Things You Should Know](#), Equimundo

“It is by standing up for the rights of girls and women that we truly measure up as men.”

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu, anti-apartheid and human rights activist.

Challenging stereotypes and bias. Creating a workplace that offers equitable career opportunities. Promoting equal pay. Advocating for work/life policies that allow everyone to thrive.

Men play a defining role as allies in furthering equity in the workplace. In a society where women face conscious, unconscious and systemic bias in recruiting, hiring, development and advancement, men's words and actions can either foster or prevent merit-based opportunities, performance measures, advancement and pay. While men's awareness and acknowledgment of bias has grown, active allyship and actions to advance gender parity haven't followed at the same pace.

“My big-picture point of view is, yes, the gender equity gap is as bad as advertised,” says Bruce Byrd, executive vice president and general counsel, Palo Alto Networks. “We're seeing too many women drop out of technology and IP law. They're not seeing the career advancement they should or they're deciding to move out of the tech and IP profession. The numbers suggest the gap may not be quite as bad as it was in the past, but, day to day, we all have a lot to do.”

What can men and women do to cultivate more equitable and successful organizations? This Male Allies and Gender Equity Action Guide is meant to start conversations and educate and enlist more men in efforts that produce better results for women, companies and law firms in technology and IP law and policy.

Inside

Page 4	He Sees, She Sees
Page 13	From Apathy to Advocacy: Men as Change-Drivers
Page 16	Enlisting Men in Drive to Gender Equity

He Sees, She Sees

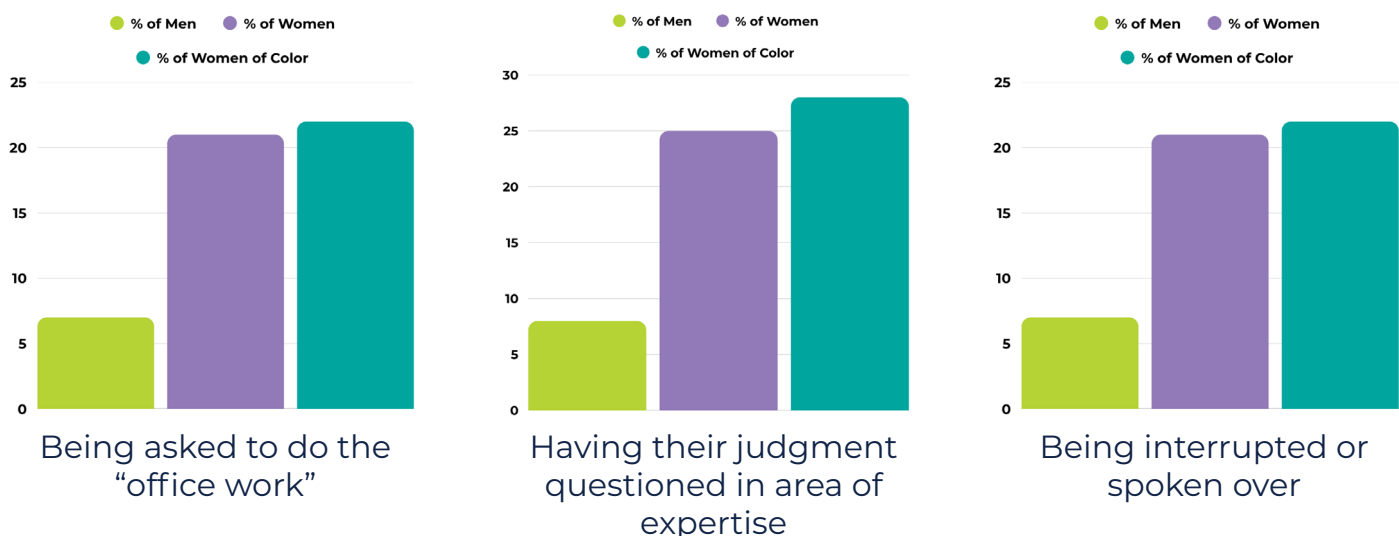
The benefits of gender equity to organizations in technology and IP are well-established. But gender bias remains deeply embedded in workplace culture in a way that significantly impacts women's career potential and compensation.

For instance, women face significant headwinds when growing their portfolio of business, critical for advancement. A [Harvard study](#) found women lawyers are bequeathed a smaller share of business from departing lawyers. What's more, a landmark [study by Sky Analytics](#) revealed women attorneys are being billed out at lower rates than men, even though there's no difference between the number of hours billed to complete a task.

Other factors that impact advancement, such as performance reviews, are also subject to gender bias. A [Textio study](#) found that compared to men, women receive 22% more feedback about their personality and 30% more exaggerated feedback than men do. They are seven times as likely to be described as "opinionated" and 11 times more likely to be described as "abrasive." Compared to younger white men, women over 50 receive more than four times the amount of feedback that's not actionable. Black women receive nearly nine times as much feedback that's not actionable compared to white men under 40.

While men and women face workplace microaggressions, women experience the most frequently occurring two to three times more than men, according to "[State of Allyship-in-Action](#)" by the Integrating Women Leaders Foundation. Women of color are even more likely to be subject to microaggressions. Compared to men, three times as many women and nearly four times as many women of color say they're frequently being interrupted or spoken over.

How Men and Women Experience Workplace Microaggressions



“We’re dealing with the same biases against women that my mom dealt with in 1981.”

-Patrick Fuller, chief strategist, legal, ALM Intelligence.

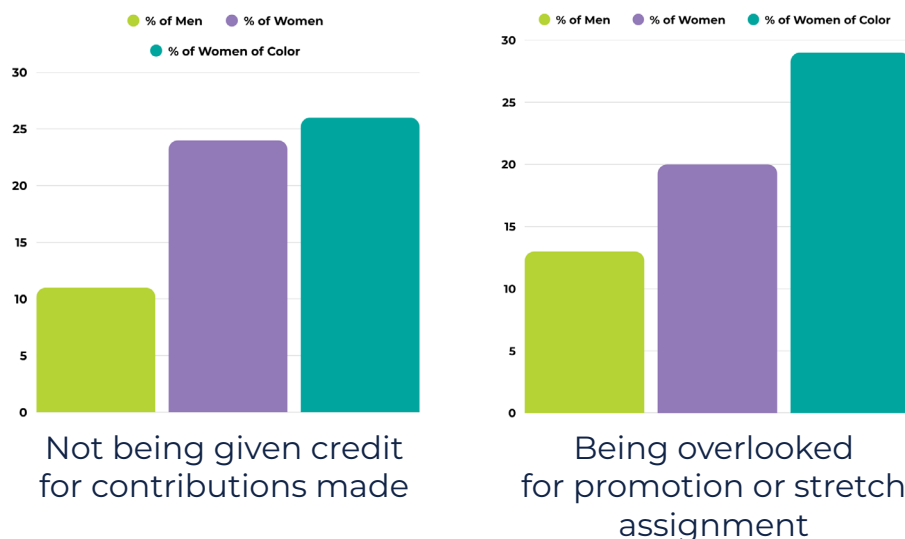
“Even as awareness of the inequity has spread, progress hasn’t. In some sectors, the situation is getting worse,” Fuller continued.

Still, studies show men don’t fully recognize or perceive how deeply gender bias is embedded in their workplace culture and how it hinders women’s career trajectories. [Research by the ABA and ALM Intelligence](#) reveals male and female lawyers have similar levels of job satisfaction regarding the intellectual challenge of their practice areas and the work they perform. But they perceive their workplaces very differently when it comes to recognition for their work, how compensation is determined, opportunities for advancement and commitment to gender diversity.

Surveying men and women who have practiced law for at least 15 years, the researchers found the following:

- Nine out of 10 men, but just two-thirds of women, believe their firms are “active advocates of gender diversity.”
- Almost two-thirds of men, but fewer than half of women, report their firms have successfully retained experienced women.
- Three-fourths of men, but just 55% of women, report their firms have succeeded in promoting women into leadership.

“We know we will not be successful without men playing a large role in helping to create equal opportunities for women in the workplace,” says Rob Mobassaly, senior vice president and general counsel, Juniper Networks. “As men move up to senior roles, it’s more and more incumbent on us to not just say, ‘Our eyes are open,’ but to actually make improvements. Our allyship programs focus on education, conversation and better understanding of the issues and we’ve put in place processes that root out bias in recruiting, hiring and promotions.”



* % who identified these microaggressions happening to them personally “always” or “frequently” in the past year.

Source: [State of Allyship-in-Action. Integrating Women Leaders Foundation](#)

In less action-oriented organizations, though, gender bias and past experience often discourage women from proactively cultivating male allyship, mentorship and sponsorship that lead to career advancement and more equitable workplaces. To capture a snapshot of how men and women in innovation and IP law view potential career barriers for women in IP law, we asked ChIPs members—men and women—to share their experiences and insights. Names have been redacted so respondents could speak candidly.

Barrier: Too few women are pursuing careers in tech IP law and policy

HER VIEW

“To increase the number of women in IP law, there could be more outreach to women without STEM backgrounds who are in law schools with strong IP and patent law programs. On patent cases, you need an attorney with a tech background, but there are parts of IP law that don’t require that, such as damages. Trial attorneys with litigation experience, especially those in DA offices who don’t want to spend their entire career in criminal law, could also add women to the pipeline.”

— *Former Senior Counsel, Fortune 500 tech company*

HIS VIEW

“A STEM background gives an attorney the ticket to get on board, but your undergraduate degree is not a direct correlation to how successful a man or a woman will be in IP law. Even so, as IP boutique firms hire, they want a core technical background.”

— *Partner, IP law firm*

“Women are rigorously recruited and are fairly represented coming into roles in the technology ecosphere, but the issue is advancing women to leadership roles. That’s where the disparity is.”

— *General Counsel, Multinational Technology Company*

“To do the work we do well, lawyers generally need a STEM degree. We want lawyers who like science, want to know how a product works and understand the legal issues stemming from that knowledge. There are proxies to a STEM degree, perhaps someone went to a great law school and likes science, but those hires are rare.”

— *Founding Partner, IP Law Firm*

Barrier: Bias in performance reviews and criteria for advancement

HER VIEW

“If there’s an open role and a man and woman have the same credentials, a bias may kick in. It’s human. There are times when the carrot moves for women. Perhaps to be considered for a partner role, you need seven years at a firm, but when you get to Year 6, the requirements change. I see that happening more to women than men and twice as often to women of color.”

— *Principal, IP Law Firm*

HIS VIEW

“While we work hard in my department to keep gender bias out of reviews, the data shows that this is part of the pernicious cycle of women not advancing as you’d expect them to. Are women getting credit for their work and how new business is coming in?”

— *General Counsel, Multinational Technology Company*

Barrier: Bias in career opportunities

HER VIEW

“Male allyship is crucial here, because in general, men are given the responsibility for putting teams together.”

— *Principal, IP Law Firm*

“I like to think I was provided career opportunities because of what I could bring to the table, not because I’m part of an underrepresented group. But I’m acutely aware that too many women continue to face systemic obstacles and this is really where male allies can step in and consciously ensure equal access to professional opportunities.”

— *Associate, Global Law Firm*

“It all comes down to relationships — who you connect with and trust. The men go to lunch together, take vacations together and build strong bonds. So when opportunities arise, they are much more likely to go to those male colleagues and friends.”

— *Partner, Global Law Firm*

HIS VIEW

“To the extent your performance for your clients carries the day, career opportunities are merit-based; at least I like to think so.”

— *Partner, IP Law Firm*

“I make a point of visiting with our female attorneys and asking them if they want a leadership role. If they do, I guide them along the way, checking in regularly and mentoring them. I’ll pop into an office and say, ‘Hey, how’s it going? You’re doing great. Your work is excellent.’ I literally say, ‘Please stay here. Don’t leave because you believe you won’t succeed here. You will. If you have any issues, please reach out to me and let’s talk about them.’ I encourage male leaders to make opportunities for women who are not proactively asking for them, to raise their hand for them. Getting the opportunity is the hard part, then it’s a matter of doing a good job.”

— *Founding Partner, IP Law Firm*

Barrier: Unequal pay for the same responsibilities or role

HER VIEW

“Unequal pay may stem from not being given the large assignments that come with higher-fee billable hours. You could be working twice as hard on a small case and billing thousands of dollars less [than a male colleague].”

— *Principal, IP Law Firm*

HIS VIEW

“A lawyer’s compensation is driven by client generation. I’d be curious to see a breakdown of the percentage of women who are rainmakers for their firms. The challenge is how social dynamics play into this. As a man, it’s easy for me to engage with a male client over a sporting event, round of golf or a drink after work, which may be uncomfortable situations for women. Our organization has changed dramatically in the past five years, where social events with clients and potential clients don’t revolve around alcohol. Younger attorneys are opening our eyes to other ways to engage and this will benefit women attorneys.”

— *Partner, IP law firm*

“In our firm, we pay based on how many years an associate is out of law school, so there’s no opportunity for unequal pay. When you’re made a partner, then pay is based on merit and soft factors.”

— *Founding Partner, IP Law Firm*

Barrier: The “motherhood” bias and lack of flexible work arrangements

HER VIEW

“There’s not just a motherhood bias, there’s a bias against women being married that I don’t see against married men. Assumptions are often made about which women want assignments that require travel and more often they go to a woman who is single. Also, more career opportunities go to people who are most in the office. If you have to leave at 5 p.m. to pick up your child, it is often assumed you are doing nothing work-related when you’re out of the office.”

— *Principal, IP Law Firm*

“If you want a career as a litigator in a law firm, when it’s time for trial, you have to meet your client’s expectation that you’re available. Travel has to be a consideration. As an attorney, the cost of childcare isn’t usually a problem; being the person with primary responsibility for it is. It’s very difficult to find childcare at the last minute when you will be away for an extended period of time. In a fantasy world, the perfect law firm or company would have a service to tap into reliable childcare when it’s needed.

— *Former Senior Counsel, Fortune 500 Tech Company*

“This bias is coupled with ageism. For women who step away for longer periods for maternity leave or to raise young children and come back, there’s an assumption when they return they’re too old to be partners. Firms are looking at people in their late 20s and early 30s to be partners. After raising children, many women would be excellent leaders. They’d still have to earn it, but they’re not even being considered.”

— *Former Senior Counsel, Fortune 500 Tech Company*

“Women have been practicing law long enough that conversations about having a child while advancing in one’s career should be a standard practice. Most importantly, these conversations should be initiated by the organization, rather than leaving it to new mothers to navigate alone. Firms should proactively address essential questions around travel, work hours and career trajectory, rather than expecting women to figure it out. Yet, many firms fail to provide even the most basic guidance about maternity leave, returning to work, childcare and other *critical* information every mother needs when returning to work, forcing new mothers to piece it together themselves.”

— *Partner, Global Law Firm*

HIS VIEW

“There’s real work to do in this area. There is a feeling in law firm life that you’re usually considered for partnership eight to 10 years out of law school, which is the prime time for many women to start families. I don’t want our women lawyers to assume they have to delay starting a family to succeed here. Our firm is very flexible on leave. But it’s very difficult for women with children to advance in a career that includes travel all over the country if she doesn’t have a supportive partner. It’s a challenge for IP law firms, because talented women leave for other opportunities, such as in-house roles, or they leave the profession completely to start families because they assume they won’t be able to balance their work life and home life.”

— *Founding Partner, IP Law Firm*

“In a post-pandemic world, there’s more flexibility to work remotely, but with the trend to get people back into the office, the challenge to offer flexibility is likely to resurface. At our company, women who are nursing may work from home or come to the office for shorter periods. But at the end of the day, if you’re the primary caregiver, it’s hard. Hours billed are a big driver of pay and advancement. A working mom may have many fewer hours billed than a man without similar home responsibilities. It’s up to firms to reconsider their compensation policies and flexibility of work.”

— *Partner, IP Law Firm*

Barrier: “Double jeopardy” bias against women of color

HER VIEW

“On a scale of 1 to 10 for its impact on gender equity, this is a 10. At one point, I worked at a firm where there were a few other women of color, although not Black like me. I had a white male mentor. One year, everyone in my section except me received a bonus. The reason I was given

didn't make sense to me. I asked for a salary review, but it was scheduled for a day I was at a conference, so I had no opportunity to speak on my own behalf. My mentor spoke on my behalf and I received the bonus everyone else received."

— *Principal, IP Law Firm*

"Biases intersect, especially for women of color. Women are getting hired but not put into positions of power or influence. I've seen Asian women who are professional engineers in high tech be the last promoted, even after other women of color have been, because they weren't perceived as 'strong' or 'forceful' enough to be leaders. They're perceived as too polite or possessing traits that aren't associated with 'leadership.' Women of color may be perceived as great problem solvers, but there are still questions about their ability to be leaders based on criteria that are biased against women and, especially, women of color."

— *Former Senior Counsel, Fortune 500 tech company*

HIS VIEW

"We look high and low for lawyers who are members of underrepresented groups. As a percentage, there aren't as many women of color who have a STEM degree and a law degree and who have chosen to stay in the IP field. We're searching for women who want to make a lateral move to join us. But this doesn't solve the industry's problem."

— *Founding Partner, IP Law Firm*

Barrier: Lack of leadership development

HER VIEW

"There is often no dedicated, concerted effort to develop female leaders — it's not institutionalized. Leadership development requires time, and time is money. If a firm's leaders don't prioritize and insist that investing in women's leadership is worthwhile, it simply won't happen."

— *Partner, Global Law Firm*

HIS VIEW

"It's incumbent on the individual to seek out professional development. I encourage women at my organization to look for internal development programs and other external opportunities designed specifically for women. Some people don't want to be leaders; they just want to do their work and go home. Leadership opportunities should go to those who really want those roles. In my experience, they go to the squeaky wheels, even if those people are not as talented as others. That dynamic needs to change and leaders should be encouraging women to speak up."

— *Founding Partner, IP Law Firm*

Barrier: Lack of mentoring and sponsorship

HER VIEW

“I’ve been in the room as partners have discussed candidates. If there was a male and female candidate for a role with the same background, education and experience, men, in general, have better things to say about the male candidate.”

— *Principal, IP Law Firm*

“Much of my success is rooted in the unwavering support of my biggest mentor and ally, my father, who instilled in me the attitude that effort, not gender, determines success. So far, I’m grateful that my professional male mentors have also reinforced this mindset throughout my legal career.”

— *Associate, Global Law Firm*

“A sponsor is willing to put himself on the line when it’s not convenient. Some male allies may give you opportunities when it benefits them and their clients, but not go out on a limb to fight for you when it doesn’t directly benefit them.”

— *Partner, Global Law Firm*

HIS VIEW

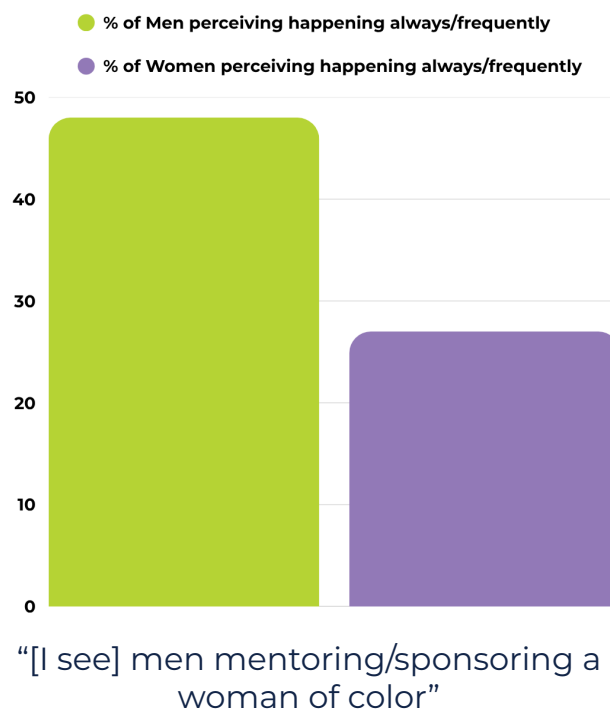
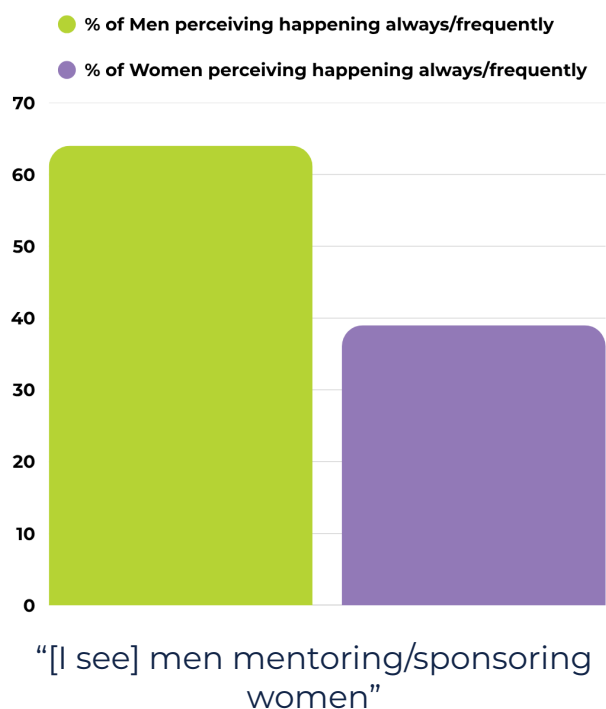
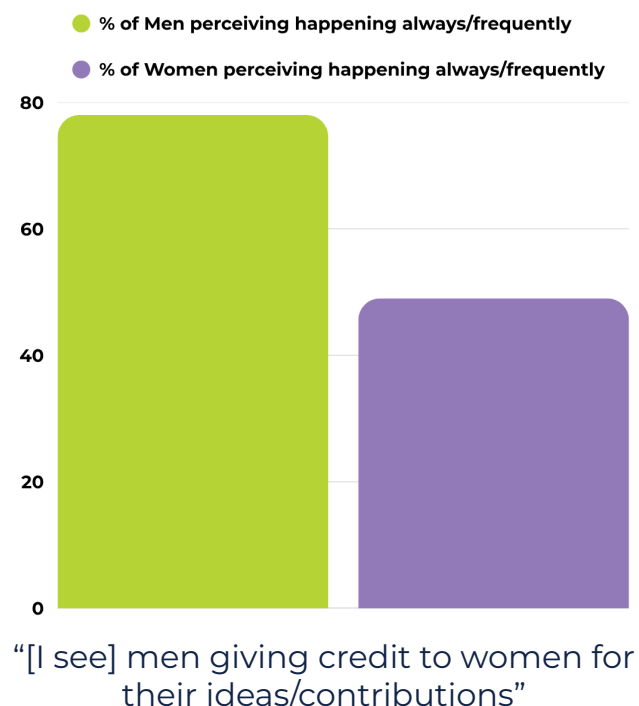
“Men aren’t trained to be mentors to women. Are men equipped to answer questions like, ‘Everyone from this group is going to the bar and I’m the only woman, should I go?’ or ‘I’m thinking about starting a family, what does that mean to my career?’”

— *Partner, IP Law Firm*

“In my firm, there are male attorneys whose words and opinions carry weight. Advocating for a woman when she’s not in the room is not a heavy lift for these men. They wouldn’t have to spend much political capital to do that.

— *Partner, IP Law Firm*

Views on Inequality in the Workplace Part II



Source: [So, You Want to be a Male Ally for Gender Equality? \(And You Should\): Results from a National Survey, and a Few Things You Should Know](#), Equimundo



From Apathy to Advocacy: Men as Changemakers

The journey to allyship is one of learning and growth. An ally may start at a place of knowing gender bias is holding women back, but aren't able to articulate the problem to starting difficult conversations about gender equity in IP law and working to remove barriers to women's career advancement. Growing from bystander to changemaker, men who are in positions to make real, lasting change will tackle systemic and structural challenges keeping women from reaching their full potential for themselves and their organizations.

For many male allies, Maya Angelou's words ring true: "When you know better, you do better."

"Many men want to help, but lack awareness of the full scope of the challenges," Patrick Fuller says. "When addressing these issues, using data, sharing personal experiences and providing fact-based examples are effective. Most people, including men, often buy in emotionally and justify their reasoning with logic. An effective approach is to ask men for their input and provide clear coaching on how they can support women without inadvertently worsening the problem.

"[They] don't always know how [to help]. Educate them on specific actions they can take to be impactful allies. The more men are empowered with the right tools, the more effectively they can drive meaningful change."

"Most men still need to be educated on the issues," Fuller says. "When speaking to the challenges, it's effective to use data, share stories and personal experiences, and provide examples grounded in fact. Men often buy in emotionally and justify their reasoning with logic. Not to advise women on how best to nurture male allies, but I'd recommend asking men for their input and suggestions. Don't be afraid to coach them on how to best help in each situation. Many men want to help but don't understand how to help without worsening the problem. Educate them on what specific actions they can take to be successful as allies."

Earlier in his career, Rob Mobassaly's allyship started with a focus on being open-minded and learning as much as possible and grew as his influence grew. "As I moved up to senior roles, I found it more and more incumbent on me to not just keep my eyes open, but actually make improvements to narrow any gender gap in hiring and leadership development.

"If you're in a privileged position, you can put systems and processes in place that make a

real difference in rooting out as much systemic and unconscious bias as possible in recruiting and hiring and performance reviews.”

Bruce Byrd agrees, adding, “To me an ally is someone who actually moves along a woman’s career by helping her assess their skills and what she may need to work on to advance and then actually promoting her.”

“Men have more work to do. We’re not transitioning enough from being a mentor to being an ally.”

-Bruce Byrd, executive vice president and general counsel, Palo Alto Networks

What makes an effective ally? We asked a few ChIPs members.

“It’s one thing for a company to say, ‘We have male allies, why aren’t women stepping up?’ and quite another for men to take action that would make a difference in the workplace or someone’s career,” says Christa Zado, an administrative patent judge at the Patent Trial and Appeal Board and former senior counsel at Cisco. “Male allies should not just be willing to give a woman an opportunity, but to actively create an environment that ensures women feel those opportunities are accessible to them and are taking them.”

Kirsten Donaldson, vice president, public policy for the National Association of Broadcasters, has had several male allies during her law career. “They’ve been supportive, giving me assignments and greater responsibility when I’ve asked for it and providing substantive assistance if and when needed. In other words, they allow me to reach higher and have taken an active role in my success. They also have backed me up, both to my face and when I’m not in the room—and at times when it really matters. They’ve given me space and trust to do my work, better myself and grow my network, recognizing that doing this will ultimately help our work.”

For Pamela Councill, a former IP litigation partner at Alston & Bird, true male allyship means actively advocating for gender equity even when it’s neither convenient nor self-serving. “It goes beyond simply hiring female attorneys and staffing them on cases,” says Councill, now a professor of law at Georgia State University. “It’s about amplifying women’s voices, not just your own. It’s about leveraging your political capital and resources to drive meaningful policy changes, even when it’s uncomfortable. True allyship requires someone who is open-minded and deeply invested in fostering change and has the institutional influence to effect that change, particularly when gender equity isn’t already a priority within the organization.”

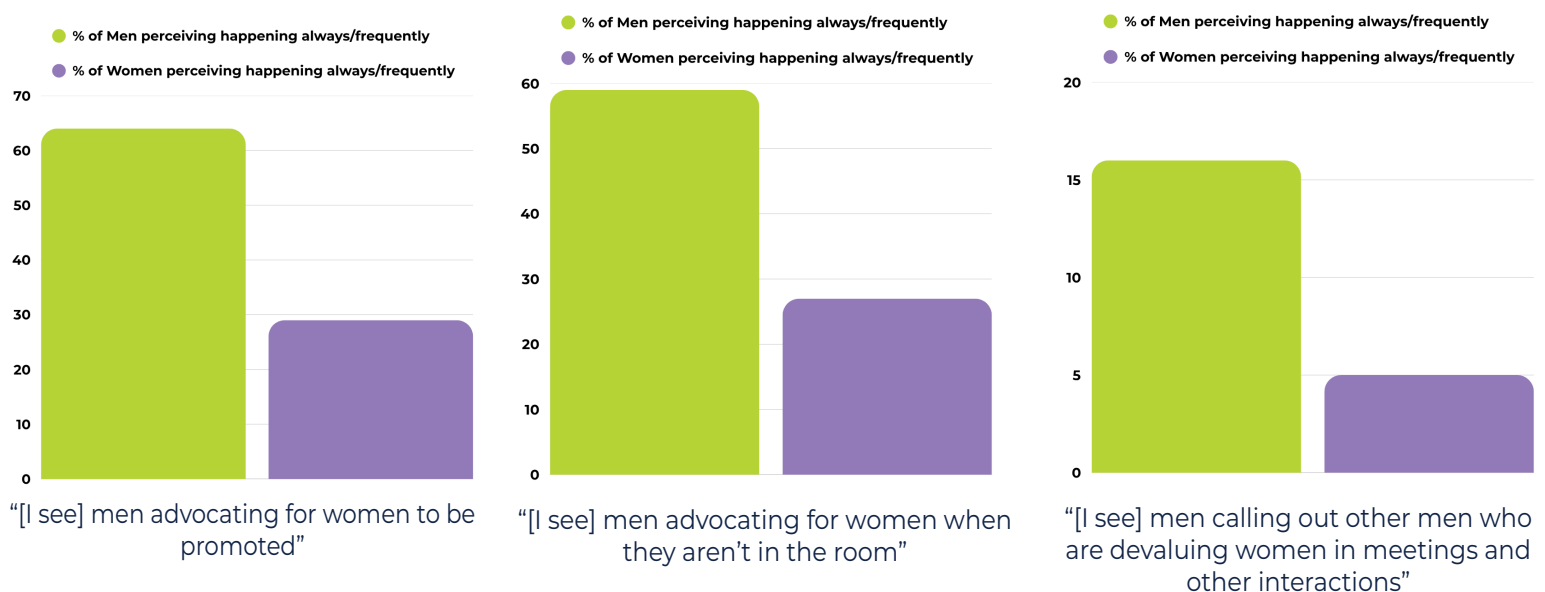
Views on Inequality in the Workplace Part III

In the view of Robin Sannes, a partner at Dicke, Billig & Czaja, an effective male ally is no different than any other ally: “It’s someone with whom I have mutual respect and trust; someone who has my back and will advocate for me, as I will for him.”

Woodie Dixon, general counsel for Chegg, takes a practical approach to creating positive change. “An effective male ally knows there is unconscious bias in the workplace and is hyper-intentional about attacking it and giving women opportunities they may not otherwise receive. It’s not just about hiring women, but having a gameplan for giving them exposure, access and opportunity.”

“True allyship requires someone who is open-minded and deeply invested in fostering change and has the institutional influence to effect that change, particularly when gender equity isn’t already a priority within the organization.”

-Pamela Councill, former IP litigation partner at Alston & Bird



Enlisting Men in Drive to Gender Equity

While many men are proactive in their efforts to confront gender bias in their companies and firms, there are still many more potential male allies than active male allies. Here are a few ways women (and men) can educate and effectively enlist men in their work to change the status quo:



Educate men in your organization.

For Byrd, a conversation he had with a female colleague while discussing candidates for a promotion to fill a role was eye-opening. “I wasn’t as enthusiastic about one candidate as I was about the others. My colleague asked, ‘What’s your problem?’ I said something about this candidate’s lack of executive presence and about how she spoke. I got an earful, and a real education, about how ‘executive presence’ has been weaponized and defined very narrowly with bias toward men. She told me about this candidate’s history and how she was the first person in her family to go to college. She pointed out this candidate was exactly the kind of person we needed in the role. From that day, I asked myself if I was reacting to people based on how they looked, their background or how they spoke.

“If you show you are open to criticism, it opens the door for women to point out if you didn’t handle a situation well. It’s not women’s job to make men get their stuff together, but I hope women are willing to educate us.”



Invite men to employee resource group meetings, networking opportunities and outside events focused on gender equity.

“Before I took on a very time-consuming, volunteer chauffeur gig—driving my children to their activities—I organized a co-ed golf league for our local IP law association and assigned tee times so that people played with different people each week,” Sannes says. “I also organized happy hours to network with local practitioners. Networking bridges many types of gaps.”

Mobassaly invites other men to attend discussions and events around fairness and equality in the workplace. “Most men want to support women, but often may not know how to be an ally or know what would be the best type of assistance to provide,” he says. “It requires people to have open conversations.”



Actively seek male allies.

“Studying electrical engineering as an undergraduate in a male-dominated field, a professor and a peer offered their allyship,” Zado says. “I was presented speaking opportunities and career opportunities. But it was the luck of the draw. In graduate school, I didn’t actively seek a male ally and none presented themselves.”

Byrd shares that his decision to actively support gender equity came after several women who were passionate about improving professional opportunity for women “got in my face and said, ‘Maybe everyone’s experience isn’t your experience,’ knowing my ego wouldn’t be so fragile that I’d be defensive. I thought I was doing a pretty good job supporting workplace initiatives that women care about. But I needed to take it to the next level, to take action and advance the careers of those who didn’t look like me.”



Don’t assume your manager is an ally or advocate.

“Earlier in my career, I had a male manager who wasn’t an ally,” says Madelle Kangha, contracts manager, Amazon. “When I struggled with work/life integration, he didn’t understand my struggle. But there are men who want to be allies and be that coach and support you. A few months ago, I reached out to a man I work with asking him to be a mentor. There was a situation at work where I felt like a fish out of water. He guided me through it without judgment.”



Choose your allies carefully.

“Two major behavioral traits to avoid are performative allyship and the savior complex,” Fuller advises. “Performative allies talk a great game but never rise to the occasion or take meaningful action. Jodi Picoult wrote in *The Pact* that principles only mean something if you stand by them when inconvenient. Performative allies rarely, if ever, stand by their talking points when it’s inconvenient for them. Likewise, beware of the savior complex—men who attempt to save women instead of working with them as equals.”

Four traits to look for in potential allies are open-mindedness, curiosity, empathy and humility, she adds. “Great allies are curious and willing to learn about perspectives and experiences that are different from their own. They can also admit what they don’t know while learning about others’ experiences.”



Enlist men to call out bias and nurture inclusive workplaces where everyone is respected and can succeed.

Dixon says he challenges bias in the moment. “If I’m in a meeting where something is said that is not acceptable, I’ll ask, ‘What are you getting at? What does that mean? How do you see that as truthful or accurate?’ I like to be on the front foot in addressing issues in the moment because I don’t want 20 people to leave a room thinking a biased statement was acceptable or an insensitive joke was hilarious. It’s important to model to everyone the right behavior.”

Mobassaly encourages other men to be intentional about calling out bias or prejudicial behavior, either with a private conversation or publicly. “If there is blatant bias, I call it out, say the language isn’t acceptable and refocus the conversation. There is an opportunity for individuals without influence to call out those who have more influence to model the appropriate behavior. And there is an opportunity for leaders to empower people on their teams to do that—and have their backs if they do.”

Consistency is key, Fuller notes. “If you’re going to be an advocate and ally, you need to call out bias regardless of who is or isn’t in the room. Male allies need to set an example for other men through their actions and words. The bottom line is to lead by example and exude inclusion daily. Ensure that your women colleagues’ contributions and successes are recognized and lauded. Be an advocate, not an obstacle.”



Build bridges

When building allyship, it’s important to include men at every level, Zado advises. “It’s so important to include the younger generation of male lawyers in activities promoting gender equality. Unfortunately, more young men feel they are competing with women who are being given career advantages related to DEI initiatives as if opportunities are being handed out to unqualified people. The worst thing we could do is make them feel excluded from the conversation. If they feel left out, it will be bad for women and women of color. We’ll see regression, rather than progress. We need to work together to build bridges.”

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