**#HearHerVoice in the Workplace**

In our annual WISH survey women have told us that their voices are less likely to be heard/responded to than those of their male colleagues.

Our tips for those who are responsible for chairing/leading meetings and group discussions are:

1. **Articulate expectations**: At the start of the meeting/group discussion set clear expectations that everyone's input is valued and that the meeting is a safe space for open discussion. At the beginning of the meeting, establish clear ground rules for participation that encourage all voices to be heard and ensure that everyone is treated with respect. Make it clear that interrupting or talking over others will not be tolerated.
2. **Encourage participation**: Encourage women to participate in the meeting by specifically calling on them to share their thoughts and ideas. Ask open-ended questions that allow for multiple perspectives and avoid asking questions that assume a certain gender has more expertise or knowledge.
3. **Monitor participation:** Keep track of who is speaking and how much time each person is taking. If you notice that one gender is dominating the conversation, try to actively encourage others to speak up. You can do this by asking specific individuals for their input, or by posing open-ended questions that encourage group participation.
4. **Use inclusive language:** As a chair/lead your language is important, ensure that you use language that is inclusive of all genders and avoid using gender stereotypes or assumptions in your language. This will create a more welcoming environment for all participants. You should also be prepared to gently and respectively challenge any language that is not inclusive.
5. **Be aware of biases:** Be conscious of your own biases and those of others in the group. For example, be aware of the tendency to interrupt or talk over women, or to assume that men are more authoritative or knowledgeable on certain topics. When you notice biases in action, call attention to them and encourage the group to examine them together.
6. **Provide opportunities for reflection:** Allow time for participants to reflect on their thoughts before being asked to speak. This can be done by providing prompts or questions ahead of time, or by allowing for a few minutes of silent reflection before asking for input.
7. **Create smaller discussion groups**: Break larger groups into smaller discussion groups, where participants may feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. Encourage participation in these smaller groups, and make sure that all voices are heard.
8. **Address barriers:** Address any barriers that may be preventing women from participating, such as language barriers, cultural differences, or technological issues. Provide resources or support as needed to help overcome these barriers.
9. **Consider diversity:** Be conscious of the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the group, including differences in gender, race, ethnicity, and other factors. Seek out and value diverse perspectives and be aware of how different individuals may experience the meeting environment differently.
10. **Follow up**: After the meeting, follow up with participants to ensure that everyone's perspectives and ideas have been heard and considered. Encourage ongoing dialogue and feedback, and work to build relationships that will facilitate future collaboration and engagement.

If you read through this list and you think that you just don’t have time in your meetings to ensure everyone’s voice is heard, think about your agenda.

Have you structured it to ensure each person has a say? If you have put too much on the agenda, then chances are you will just rush through it, everyone will know it is a rush and quieter voices won’t speak.

Some considerations when you plan your meeting. Does everything need to be on the agenda? Have you designated items for approval, items for discussion, items for creative thinking? Does everyone need to be at the meeting for the whole meeting? If you don’t have time to hear everyone’s voice, then you may be prioritising what you see as efficiency over effectiveness, which in the long run is inefficient because you may not be getting the best outcomes from your meetings.