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WHY ARE THE STATS FOR WOMEN OF COLOR IN LEADERSHIP SO LOW

April 20, 2017 by [Amy Whitfield](#)



Have you been in this circle? Several women of color sitting around a table discussing their careers. Many of them at the top of the org chart in their businesses, some of them aspiring to get there. They talk about the things that all women talk about: work-life balance, difficulties at the job, sharing secrets and advice for success. Then one of the older women says, “Sometimes I wish people would interact with me and not with the stereotypes of Black women.” And, the whole table sighs in agreement.

They know, the lack of women of color in leadership isn’t a lack of skills or desire to take on the C-Suite. It is because who they are as a professional is clouded by the expectations of others, expectations set by stereotypes. The person who hires you must take a moment to counter any assumptions she/he might have when considering you. The person who evaluates you must be completely aware of her/his bias and consistently check in on them if she/he is to give a true evaluation of your work performance. The people who are supervised by you must ask themselves regularly if they are hearing what you’re saying and open to your instruction or if the communication is complicated by their preconceptions or preferences.

All these people don’t have to just do this once, but each and every work day as they interact with you, just so you can be seen as the whole, unique person you are. Opportunities to grow in your career don’t just come from you being mentored and “developed”. They come from the whole business around you learning to check their biases and create an inclusive environment.