

STEPHANIE GOULD RABIN

SVP & HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY, HOLBORN

I am often the only female in the room for senior level meetings. With 85% of insurance companies with no women in top positions, it's clear we're not there yet; but how do we get there? Looking back on my career there are a combination of *common themes* that have been critical to my success.

Drive and the ability to put myself "out there" – has been critical in opening up new opportunities beyond my designated role. Additionally, *on the job training* to learn and deliver has also been crucial in dissolving diversity barriers.

A few years ago I performed a study of over 300 senior people in the insurance sector. I noted that both men and women sought challenging assignments

to similar degrees. Interestingly, there was a statistical difference in the assignment of men to visible



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projects. The divide still exists, but the key for women is to firmly seek out those opportunities and then deliver!

The regimented structure of the actuarial profession has been really useful in helping me succeed as a woman leader. It offers *role clarity* as well as *pay transparency and equity*; the credentials required by the profession reduce uncertainty over whether or not compensation will be commensurate with peers. In addition, the prestige associated with being a credentialed actuary gave me an edge in the room.

Sponsors have also been crucial. At the cusp of each of my upward transitions, I had a sponsor, who often had a different job from my own. Their support helped confirm my credibility.