



## A LEADERSHIP RESEARCH INITIATIVE

*The Challenges and Facilitators of Women as Change Agents and Innovators:  
The first research to focus on making visible the capacity of women as change agents  
in partnership with the Ascend Foundation*

Authored by Springboard – Partners in Cross Cultural Leadership led by Pamela Carlton, JD, MBA;  
Lily Tang, PhD, MBA; and an academic research team



# A LEADERSHIP RESEARCH INITIATIVE

## The Challenges and Facilitators of Women as Change Agents and Innovators

Recent headline grabbing news underscores the fact that gender issues in the workplace have not gone away, or even changed all that much. Additionally, women are multidimensional and our workplaces are multicultural. Gender, ethnicity/culture and sexual orientation are complexities that increasingly compound leadership dynamics at the highest levels of our largest and most influential organizations.

### OVERVIEW

Are executive women seeking to be effective leaders in times of change and turbulence caught between being too “this” or too “that?” Are women in need of fixing? What are the similarities and differences for women who identify as members of ethnic or cultural groups –Black, Hispanic, LGBT, Pan Asian, White? How do the factors of gender and race influence and impact women at the most senior ranks of our corporations?

The Everest Project is the first significant theoretical and practical research initiative to pursue these difficult questions and break new ground for women and for businesses that understand that managing the status quo is not enough. Managing change is the new normal. Specifically, the research project will:

- Identify the chutes and ladders women face in their critical role as leaders;
- Uncover what successful women leaders are doing, and how other leaders can incorporate these approaches in their own development; and
- Translate the research findings into practical and actionable steps that companies can take for sustainable change.

Leading affinity organizations – Ascend, Executive Leadership Council (ELC) and Hispanic Association of Corporate Responsibility (HACR) – are research partners in The Everest Project and will provide access to executive women within each community as research subjects.

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND GOALS

The Everest Project brings together an experienced and diverse team of researchers with corporate and/or scholarly backgrounds. Data will be gathered from one-on-one interviews with Black, Hispanic, LGBT, Pan Asian and White women senior executives. In addition, the subject executive’s supervisor and her direct report will be interviewed. A broader survey of senior and mid-level managers will expand the scope to include aspiring leaders. The study protocol will intentionally draw from a generational mix across industries and geographies.

### RESULTS

When completed, The Everest Project could enable organizations to:

- Maximize the influence and effectiveness of their women executives;
- Identify the positive factors within corporations that can advance the retention and promotion of women with greater success; and
- Increase the impact that women leaders have on the bottom line.

### AUTHORS

The Everest Project is a non-profit research initiative authored by Springboard – Partners in Cross Cultural Leadership led by Pamela Carlton, JD, MBA; Lily Tang, PhD, MBA; and an academic research team.