

ALL-IN-ONE MEETING GUIDE

# WHAT WORKS FOR WOMEN AT WORK PART 1: PROVE IT AGAIN BIAS

# Overview

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We tend to overestimate men's performance and underestimate women's. Therefore men are often given the benefit of the doubt—and judged on their potential—while women are judged on their past performance. Women often have to provide more evidence of competence than men just to be perceived as equally competent. This meeting will help you identify Prove It Again bias and practice strategies for handling it.

## Meeting Goals

- Learn to spot Prove It Again bias in your workplace
- Practice strategies for successfully navigating this form of bias

## Pre-Meeting Prep

- Watch “What Works for Women at Work Part 1: Prove It Again” individually or as a group at [leanin.org/proveitagain](http://leanin.org/proveitagain)
- Remind everyone to bring a copy of this PDF
- Remind everyone to bring her One Action Update (if you're doing this)



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# Meeting Agenda

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🕒 Approx. 100 minutes for total meeting (based on a group size of ten members)

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**1** **Check-In** 🕒 Approx. 20 minutes  
Warm up, catch up, and get going **p.4**

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**2** **Educational Activities** 🕒 Approx. 60 minutes  
Learn from experts and one another **p.5**

- **Activity 1: Key Takeaways** 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes  
Take a few minutes to review the core concepts of the “Prove It Again” video **p.5**
  - **Activity 2: Navigating Prove It Again Bias** 🕒 Approx. 50 minutes  
Practice strategies for navigating Prove It Again bias and discuss how to use additional resources for support **p.7**
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**3** **One Action** 🕒 Approx. 15 minutes  
The little push you need to go for it **p.9**

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**4** **Wrap-Up** 🕒 Approx. 10 minutes  
What’s next and a few final words **p.11**

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## Optional Member Materials

One Action Update **p.13**

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# Meeting Guide

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## Check-In

Warm up, catch up, and get going

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

### Step 1: Icebreaker

👥 Group activity

🕒 5 minutes

Use this icebreaker to see how many of your Circle members have experienced different aspects of Prove It Again bias. Go through the following statements one by one and have members raise their hand if they relate to the experience. Avoid the urge to slip into conversation.

- Raise your hand if you've ever felt your accomplishments weren't recognized
- Raise your hand if you've ever been in a situation where you felt a man received credit for an idea that you shared earlier
- Raise your hand if you've noticed female job candidates being evaluated more harshly than men

### Step 2: Member updates

👥 Group activity

🕒 2 minutes or less per member

Once you're warmed up, go around your Circle and share personal updates. As a general rule, personal updates should be brief and focus on big changes and important decisions in your life. (It's OK not to have one every month!)

If you have a One Action Update, share that with your Circle at the same time. (A One Action is one concrete action you committed to take at your last meeting; the goal of a One Action is to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.)

**For example, a member update might go like this:** "Since our last meeting, I asked my boss for a big assignment and got it. I'm thrilled but a little nervous [personal update]. For my One Action, I asked that coworker I've been struggling with out for lunch. She immediately said yes, and I was surprised by how easily we got along. I can see it helping in the office, and we're going out for lunch again next week—her invite! [One Action Update]."

## Education Activities

Learn from experts and one another

🕒 Approx. 60 minutes for both activities

### Activity 1: Key Takeaways

👤 Individual activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you jump into today's meeting, review the primer on gender bias below and the key takeaways of our "Prove It Again" video individually or as a group.

#### Understanding gender bias

We rely on mental shortcuts to simplify the world around us. Gender stereotypes are one of these mental shortcuts, and they often lead us to make biased assumptions that disadvantage women at work. For example, we assume that men are strong, driven, ambitious leaders. We assume that women are warm, supportive, nurturing caretakers. When women act in ways that don't match our assumptions, we're often less accepting of them and may even penalize them. All of us hold these biased assumptions in some way, but they are hard to acknowledge, which makes it difficult to take steps to counteract them. The more we understand about these biases and how they work, the better we're able to address them.

#### Identifying Prove It Again bias

As a result of stereotypes, we often assume that men should be in leadership roles. Because men seem to "fit" our mental models for leadership, we often overestimate men's performance. On the other hand, we underestimate women's performance and women have to do more to prove themselves.

Here are common ways Prove It Again bias shows up:

- Women's mistakes tend to be noticed more and remembered longer.
- Women's successes tend to be attributed to getting lucky, working hard, or help from others, while men's successes are attributed to skill.
- Objective requirements are often applied rigorously to women but leniently to men
- Women tend to be evaluated more harshly than men
- When a woman states an idea, it may be overlooked, but when a man repeats it, everyone notices. This is called the "stolen idea."

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## Activity 1: Key Takeaways (cont.)

### Strategies for addressing Prove It Again bias

#### 1. Ask others to take a second look

If you see double standards being applied—such as men getting more access to stretch assignments or being promoted faster than women—help your team create specific standards for performance evaluation. Ask managers to explain the reasons for their evaluations. When people are accountable for their decisions they are more motivated to think through them carefully.

#### 2. Keep real-time records of your success

Maintain a regular log of the objective metrics you've met and the compliments you've received on your work. You can use these records to highlight your accomplishments and trigger people's memory when it's time for your own performance review.

#### 3. Call out stolen ideas

When a male coworker runs away with a woman's idea remind everyone it originated with her by saying something like, "Great idea! I loved it when Katie originally brought it up, and I'm glad you reiterated it." If someone takes your idea, you can speak up for yourself by saying, "Thanks for picking up on that idea. Here's my thought. . ." (then add something new).

## Activity 2: Navigating Prove It Again Bias

⌚ Approx. 60 minutes

### Step 1: Select a common scenario to role-play

 Group activity

⌚ 10 minutes

Break into small groups of two or three members. Each group should select a scenario to role-play from the options below (or create their own), then take a few minutes to decide how they plan to act it out before coming back together as a large group. Try to limit your group's role-play to five minutes or less.

#### Scenario 1: Mastering the difficult promotion conversation

You and a male colleague are hitting the same goals (sales targets, customer satisfaction metrics, etc.), but you just found out that he got promoted—and you didn't. You've asked for a meeting with your manager to ask why, with the goal of making sure you get promoted the next time around. Role-play this meeting with your manager.

#### Scenario 2: Gracefully interrupting the “stolen idea”

You're in a meeting when a woman makes a suggestion, but it gets lost in the discussion. Ten minutes later, a male coworker says the exact same thing, and the rest of the group applauds it. First, role-play the response as if this happened to you. Next, role-play as if you witnessed this happen to a colleague.

### Step 2: Perform your scenarios

 Group activity

⌚ 20 minutes


Go around your Circle and have each group role-play its scenario.

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## Activity 2: Navigating Prove It Again Bias (cont.)

### Step 3: Discuss successful strategies for navigating Prove It Again bias

 Group activity

 20 minutes

In the larger Circle, use the role-playing activity and your own experiences to discuss ways to navigate Prove It Again bias. Consider the following questions to get your discussion going (you don't have to answer all of them):

- What strategies worked well in the role-plays? Why?
- What strategies have you used in related situations? *For this discussion, share experiences but do not give advice (i.e., use “I” statements, such as, “What I personally found helpful in my situation was . . .”).*
- How can you involve other colleagues and mentors to help you navigate these situations?

## One Action

The little push you need to go for it

🕒 Approx. 15 minutes

We recommend you close every meeting by committing to a “One Action”—one concrete thing you’re going to do before your next Circle meeting to step outside your comfort zone or practice a new skill.

### Step 1: Create your achievement log

👤 Individual activity

🕒 5 minutes

What are the recent projects you’ve worked on? How did they turn out? Have you hit your goals and metrics? Have you received positive feedback on your work?

Project	What Went Well/Metrics Met	Positive Feedback I Received

After the meeting, make it a point to keep a log regularly. If you need help jogging your memory, ask a coworker for informal feedback on something you did well over the past month.

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## One Action (cont.)

### Step 2: Share your One Action with your Circle

 Group activity

 1 minute or less per member

One by one, go around your Circle and complete the following statements:

- Over the next month, I will fill out my achievement log. . . [daily/weekly] .
- If I get stuck, I'll ask \_\_\_\_\_ [insert coworker's name] for feedback.

Move quickly from member to member, and consider cheering one another on as you go.

**Housekeeping Note:** We recommend you give an update on your One Action during your next meeting. On page 13 of this PDF, you'll find an optional worksheet to help you prepare your update.

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## Wrap-Up

What's next and a few final words

🕒 Approx. 10 minutes

### Step 1: Finalize logistics of your next meeting

👥 Group activity

🕒 10 minutes

Before you break, make sure you have the basics covered for your next meeting, including day and time, location, and food and drink responsibilities. Decide what you're going to do when you get together or who is going to send out ideas. You may also want to talk through what worked—and what didn't—in today's meeting so you can brainstorm improvements going forward.

### Step 2: Close on an energetic and inspirational note

👥 Group activity

🕒 1 minute or less

Go around the Circle, with each person sharing one key takeaway or reflection from this meeting.

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# Congratulations on a great meeting.

See the following page for a One Action Update Worksheet.

# One Action Update

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Use the following prompts to prepare your One Action Update before your next meeting, to maximize your time with your Circle.

- I found it [easy/difficult/exciting/frustrating] to consistently add to my achievement log because . . .

- If relevant: When I asked a coworker for feedback I learned I did the following tasks well . . .

- If relevant: I've already found my log helpful because . . .