

Media release

[Gender Intelligence Report 2022 – for the first time with an industry focus](#)

## Who Will Break Through the Glass Ceiling First?

**Everyone is talking about the shortage of skilled labor. But is there really such a shortage of talent, or rather a shortage of talent management in Switzerland? This is the question the latest Gender Intelligence Report explores. The annual report is now in its sixth year and is published jointly by Advance, the leading business association for gender equality in Switzerland, and the Competence Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) at the University of St.Gallen. A look at the different industries reveals that some make much better use of the existing female potential than others. Another discovery: the glass ceiling has a lot to do with Swiss culture.**

There is a key question companies should ask themselves, especially in times of a shortage of skilled labor: Do we really have too little talent, or are we making too little use of the existing potential – especially that of well-educated women? For the first time, this year's report includes an industry comparison that brings to light substantial differences in how various sectors retain, develop, and promote women to senior management levels.

The report uses the Glass Ceiling Index (GCI) as a metric for this. This index shows whether men and women are equally represented at management levels -- or whether one gender is under- or over-represented. In addition, the raw HR data is analyzed for differences in the level of education and the distribution of so-called "power positions" (positions with influence and decision-making responsibility). The report explores patterns around these factors, identifies reasons for the leaks in the female leadership pipeline and derives actionable measures for improvement.

### **+3 percentage points increase in the share of women in management positions since 2020**

Overall, the share of women in management positions has increased by only 3 percentage points (2020-2022). Notable fact: Companies that have been making a conscious effort to improve gender diversity for years show significantly better results. For example, Advance member companies have 24% women in middle management, while non-member companies only achieve 18%; in top management it is 19% vs. only 14%. In other words: Advance members commit to actively promote the issue, and it shows.

### **A question of corporate culture**

It is the companies that have anchored diversity and, above all, inclusion both in the corporate strategy and in the individual goals of managers that achieve the best results, i.e. the thinnest glass ceiling. These kinds of measures seem to create a corporate culture where women can develop their potential.

### **MEM and Pharma/Med-tech industries among the best-in-class**

No industry has yet shattered the glass ceiling, that is, achieved a Glass Ceiling Index of 1, i.e. equal representation the hierarchy levels. However, the Machinery, Electrical and Metal industry (MEM) and the Pharmaceutical/Medical technology sector stand out together with a respective index of 1.9. Insurance and Banking, on the other hand, fare the worst with an index of 3.3 and 3.1.

Surprisingly, the industry that traditionally attracts the fewest women is making the most of its female potential (MEM). This may be due to the fact that there is hardly any discrepancy in the level of education between women and men in the MEM and Pharma/Med-tech sectors. The situation is different in the insurance industry: here there is a difference of 9 percentage points in the tertiary

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qualifications of women and men in non-management in the age group up to 30, while there is already equality of education across the entire sample of industries in this age group. For management positions, a tertiary degree is the norm. In the Media industry, women in the talent pipeline are slightly better educated than their male counterparts: in non-management, 65% of women have a tertiary degree, compared to 63% of men. One of the reasons for the low share of women (21%) in top management (vs. 53% women in non-management) may be the high rate of women working part-time (51%). Part-time seems to be feasible up to the lower management levels, whereas full-time work is the norm in the upper management levels. The media sector has a glass ceiling index of 2.7, which is slightly worse than the average of 2.5.

### **Power imbalance remains virtually unchanged**

The power imbalance between the genders still looms large: positions with influence (personnel and budget responsibility) are largely in male hands – even within the respective management levels. 75% of all positions with personnel responsibility in top management are held by men.

### **Swiss culture as a stumbling block: 3.5 times greater leakage among Swiss women**

The analysis shows that the more Swiss an industry is (measured by the share of Swiss employees), the less gender diverse it is or the thicker the glass ceiling. This suggests that Swiss culture still has a hard time taking women's careers for granted. One result stands out: the leakage in the female leadership pipeline is 3.5 times greater for Swiss women than for non-Swiss women. Specifically, the representation of Swiss women from non-management to top management shrinks by 21 percentage points (from 31% to 10%) compared to 6 percentage points for non-Swiss women (from 13% to 7%). What is behind this? On the one hand, the widespread part-time culture among Swiss women, but then also the still gender-separated career paths and finally the costly and difficult reconciliation of career and other life aspects.

### **Employment and financial equality as a prerequisite**

As long as the majority of women still work part-time and the man takes on the role of the primary earner, little will change in the existing power imbalance. This continues through all phases of life all the way to retirement, when women face significant pension gaps. Employment and financial equality are therefore just as relevant as partnership models in the family to realize actual gender equality.

### **20 or 100 years until parity?**

Apart from sobering findings, this year's Gender Intelligence Report shows one thing above all: It can be done! If all industries recruited and promoted as many women to management positions as the MEM industry does, we could achieve gender parity in Switzerland in as little as 20 (!) years, and thus confront the (female) shortage of skilled workers. If we carry on as before, however, it will take another 100 years. In other words: Gender equality is in our hands. By the way, if you want to find out what the best sectors are doing differently from the others, you will find a practical list of proven success factors in the report. This means that myths like "women don't actually want to take on leadership positions" are firmly a thing of the past.

### About the Gender Intelligence Report

This is the sixth edition of the annual report, a collaboration between Advance, the leading business association for gender equality in Switzerland, and the Competence Centre for Diversity & Inclusion at the University of St. Gallen under the co-leadership of Prof. Dr. Gudrun Sander and Dr. Ines Hartmann. The analysis is based on anonymized raw HR data from over 385,000 employees from 104 companies and organizations in Switzerland (equivalent to over 7% of the working Swiss population).

The full report can be found here: <https://advance-hsg-report.ch/>

### Media contact for further information

Alexandra Rhiner, Communication Manager Advance, [alexandra.rhiner@weadvance.ch](mailto:alexandra.rhiner@weadvance.ch),  
Tel. 076 332 85 83

### About Advance

Advance is the leading business association for gender equality in Switzerland with 137 corporate members. Advance actively campaigns for more women in management. It is proven that mixed teams make better decisions, are more innovative and usually more profitable. With a concrete program, Advance supports companies in translating diversity into competitive advantages. Because a gender-equal workplace is a win-win for men, women, companies and society as a whole.

Advance has set itself the goal of achieving a sustainable minimum of 30% female representation at all management levels across all member companies by 2030.

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### Members

You can find an up-to-date overview of all Advance members here:

[weadvance.ch/membership/#members](http://weadvance.ch/membership/#members)

### About the Competence Centre for Diversity & Inclusion at the University of St.Gallen

The Competence Centre for Diversity & Inclusion (CCDI) is one of the leading research institutes in the field of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) in Switzerland. It offers organizations benchmarking, targeted support, advice and training to strengthen and manage D&I internally. The team has more than twenty years of experience in this field.

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