

# TED Talk Debates: How Diversity Makes Teams More Innovative

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## Group Discussion task

Imagine you are the leader of a large company in a developed country. You currently have 80 senior managers and leaders but they are all men. You want to have more gender diversity in the firm.

Consider the following questions;

1. People view quotas as being negative as some people would feel women being promoted is just to increase diversity. How would you change the image of quotas?
2. If there is a single woman in a group of other leaders, there is a tendency for her to be isolated and opinions ignored. What method would you use to avoid this?
3. How would you define an ideal candidate for promotion or hiring for leadership positions?
4. There may be a negative reaction from male members of the organisation, how would you reduce this discomfort?

Potential answers but there are a number of solutions

1. Change the narrative. Framing the idea as increasing diversity, or increasing intellectual diversity, or allowing for different points of view in the leadership can help. Just saying we have a quota will create negative reactions.
2. Critical mass. Studies have shown that once there are roughly 20% of positions are women then the culture of the department changes and their isolation ends. At 40% then the department will see the benefits of female leadership, and the previous culture has reversed.
3. Research has shown that people have prototypes about the ideal worker, or the ideal leader, which is typically male. Recruiters need to expand their idea of an ideal candidate beyond the male prototype and create a large pool of qualified female candidates.
4. Discomfort is to be expected. Moving to quotas may not be a smooth process. Even in Norway, where there is general satisfaction with quotas now, there was a period of transition. Organizational change is never easy, but it is the price to pay for the benefits