Inspiring Action in Leadership: The Power of Grassroots Initiatives

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Introduction
The Quest Diagnostics Women in Leadership (WIL) organization’s mission is: “Expanding the leadership pool of tomorrow by developing leadership competencies in women today.” WIL achieves this primarily through its grassroots initiatives and has successfully established itself as a sustainable employee business network within Quest Diagnostics.

Objective
WIL’s main goal is to create a sustainable and competitive advantage for Quest Diagnostics. It delivers this business advantage in three major ways:
1. Increasing gender diversity in leadership positions
2. Providing women with enhanced opportunities to be considered for new leadership roles
3. Facilitating cross-functional relationships with senior team leaders

To achieve these outcomes, WIL developed and put into place multiple strategies around — organizational structure — membership engagement → multiple strategies around → organizational structure → membership engagement.

Methodology
To deliver on WIL’s objectives of gender diversity in leadership by providing women with enhanced opportunities to be considered for new leadership roles and facilitating relationships with senior team members across the company, it designed a grassroots initiative to empower all Quest Diagnostics WIL chapters to execute on the new streamlined business regions and divisions to align with the new streamlined business regions and divisions to align with the new streamlined business regions and divisions to spur on, support, and sustain its 16 local chapters.

Results
Senior leadership investment in WIL and its grassroots restructure led to 220% membership growth in 2 years. Member survey data indicated 60% joined for professional development opportunities.

Discussion
60% of our members join WIL because they desire “continual development of skills and competencies.”

Mentoring circles, panel discussions with senior leadership, professional development webinars, and webinars on building business acumen are in alignment with professional development and corporate growth initiatives.

Examples of WIL-sponsored events include:
• “Build Your Brand as an Emerging Leader” webinar
• “Harnessing LinkedIn” webinar
• “Selling a Big Idea” presentation by our Commercial Marketing VP
• Live events with speakers on government affairs

Grassroots webinars and live events offer WIL members opportunities to network with senior leaders. The knowledge and confidence gained through this exposure and visibility drives greater employee engagement: “87% of WIL members indicate they have challenging and interesting jobs”

Senior leadership commitment & WIL partnership
Our senior management recognizes the value of corporate and civic engagement. Through WIL, Quest Diagnostics forged a partnership with the Getty House Foundation, a civic education and outreach organization in Los Angeles. One of the major goals of this partnership is sponsoring prominent women speakers to increase educational and networking opportunities for women at Quest Diagnostics—our future leaders.

WIL members drive growth & discovery
Senior Quest Diagnostics WIL members and leaders are responsible for significant advances and growth for Quest Diagnostics:
• WIL co-founder established the most rapidly growing division at Quest Diagnostics, sustaining double-digit growth year over year.
• WIL member developed a strategic alliance partnership that resulted in $40M in cost-reduction savings and $10M of new growth.
• WIL business leaders and scientists collaborate with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on hepatitis trends and Zika testing.

Conclusions
The momentum is growing within WIL, and the most recent results from the Quest Diagnostics Employee Survey indicate that WIL members have higher satisfaction scores than the general employee population in several key areas.

References / Recommended Reading
• Quest Diagnostics, Women in Leadership brochure

Financial Support
Similar to the grassroots strategy of driving local events and participation, WIL chapters receive financial support from their regional budgets, ensuring local leadership remains engaged and supportive of the program and its members.

Acknowledgements
We offer special thanks to the WIL grassroots committee chairs and WIL chapter leaders. This poster demonstrates the impact being made by WIL’s grassroots initiatives throughout the company, as well as senior leadership’s support of the WIL employee business network.

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