

## SYSTEMS ANALYSIS CASE STUDY

Systems analysis is the work of investigating an employer's policies, procedures, and/or practices to determine where barriers to fair and inclusive employment opportunities may exist and impact members of a particular group based on their sex, race, ethnicity, disability status, etc.



### At A Glance

#### Challenges

- Systemic biases (attitudinal, institutional/structural);
- Resistance to change / fear of change;
- Lack of a road map - first one ever done.

#### Benefits

- Data-driven decision making;
- Slow, methodical processes that brought senior leaders along at each step, to lower resistance; and
- Ultimately, increased equitable opportunities for women.

### Objectives

The Transportation Security Administration sought to address the steady decline in the participation rate of women of all races, as one moved up the career level within the agency. It sought to identify the root causes of this and address them, to ensure employment opportunities were fair and inclusive, and to ensure its workforce was reflective of the public it serves at all levels.

### Steps and Solutions

As the senior leader of the civil rights division, I initiated a barrier analysis to investigate this concern :

- We reviewed all workforce data, to understand at what pay grade the decline in the participation rate of women began;
- We reviewed all policies related to hiring and promotion;
- We conducted multiple focus groups and individual interviews;
- We uncovered multiple barriers impacting women across multiple disciplines that answered the "why" of the decline;
- Recommendations to address the *attitudinal* barriers of the workforce and decision makers were made and enacted; and
- Recommendations to address the *institutional* barriers present in policy and procedure were also made and adopted.

### Outcomes

#### One

Senior leaders who were previously unaware that there was an issue facing women in the workplace were provided concrete evidence of said issues and solutions - both short-term and long.

#### Two

The agency's barrier analysis was, at the time, the first complete barrier analysis completed in the Federal government. It became a model that is still used today.

#### Three

Policies and practices - including language used in job descriptions - that were at the root of the decline were addressed and changed/improved.

#### Four

Applicant flow data showed an increase in new and current women applicants for leadership positions, reflecting that one of the issues (women not applying) was appropriately addressed.



"It's not enough to hope for more equitable outcomes. Employers must take strategic, evidence based steps to identify the root cause of issues and address them. That is what leads to long-term change that lasts."

Jo Linda Johnson  
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