



## **LEADForward<sup>sm</sup> Roundtables FAQ**

*LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* is a call to action for experienced female leaders who have achieved success, to “put their leader on shout” and accelerate closing the leadership gender gap. Based on findings in the Women in the Workplace study by LeanIn.org and McKinsey & Co., at the current pace of progress gender parity will be reached by 2095. *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* is focused on harnessing the power of proven leaders to ignite equal opportunity for the next generation of leaders.

### **What are *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtables?**

*LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtables are year-long peer support groups led by Accendo partners who are accomplished C-suite female leaders and certified executive coaches. Each roundtable has nine group meetings and three one-on-one coaching sessions over the course of one year. The goal is to learn, share and challenge each other. Accendo partners provide group and individual leadership coaching, the benefits of which are well proven to accelerate leadership success. Research shows that a small, committed peer group can achieve powerful results for both individual and collective goals, and that people are more confident in groups. By delivering a winning combination of leadership coaching and peer-to-peer support, *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtables help women achieve breakthrough on their ascent to leadership at the top.

### **Who participates in a *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtable?**

*LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtables are comprised of 12-15 female leaders at a similar stage of professional growth, whether it be high potential leaders who have been successful to date and aspire to grow their careers at least another one-to-two levels, or business owners ready to take their company to the next level. Members can be from the same company, network or industry, own their own business or simply opt in individually for their own professional growth. A goal of *LEADForward*'s program is to accelerate the participants' succession readiness within the organization.

### **How are *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtable participants selected?**

Individuals interested in joining a *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtable must submit their resume or CV and complete the *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtables application. Groups are formed as a cohort based on background, industry, level of professional experience and management proficiency, and career goals.

### **What happens at *LEADForward<sup>sm</sup>* Roundtable meetings?**

The meetings are facilitated by Accendo partners and follow a formal methodology to maximize the value and development of the members. Structure is critical to the groups' individual and collective success, along with an open, honest environment. FeedForward, rather than feedback, is an integral part of the program. FeedForward helps members envision a positive future, rather than a failed past.

Meetings are themed around coachable topics specific to women and generally believed to fuel their leadership development. Themed topics include:

- ✓ Leading with self-discovery and personal vision
- ✓ Leadership with emotional intelligence
- ✓ Achieving balance and renewal
- ✓ Developing confidence and executive presence
- ✓ Negotiating to get what you want

- ✓ Communicating with power and authority
- ✓ Career progressing development plans
- ✓ Leadership that ignites and engages people

Meetings are half-day sessions, except for the first meeting, which is six hours. In months three, six and 10 each participant receives a one-on-one coaching session with an Accendo partner.

In advance of the first meeting, members will:

- Complete the StrengthsFinders assessment.
- Complete the personal vision pre-work exercises.
- Identify a leadership behavioral goal to work on for the year.

At the first meeting, members will:

- Share their StrengthsFinders results.
- Create and share their personal vision statement.
- Participate in a round robin FeedForward exercise focused on their leadership behavioral goal.
- Commit to one leadership behavioral goal and begin development of their action plan for the year.
- Consider a few select stakeholders who can support them and serve as accountability partners.

The next 8 meetings follow a structured format:

- Each person shares their wins of the month.
- Facilitated discussion of the designated theme. There may be advanced reading, guest leaders, subject matter experts, videos and case studies.
- FeedForward "Opportunity Seat" discussion:
  - Designated participants sit in the Opportunity Seat.
  - Member presents an actionable and specific problem, issue, idea or something they're working on to get thoughts and suggestions from the rest of the group. Opportunity Seat can be framed as:
    - Here's what I've accomplished recently.
    - Here's an opportunity I need help with.
    - Here's what I will commit to.
  - Requires honest, respectful FeedForward input. Goal is to help person break through.
  - At the end of discussion, member commits to action plan with next steps.
- Round robin discussion of goals or accomplishments each person wants to achieve before the next meeting.

In preparation for the final meeting, members will:

- Create a leadership after action plan using the *LEADForward*<sup>sm</sup> tools.

At the final meeting, in addition to the opportunity seat, members:

- Share progress and accomplishments related to their development plan, and professional and behavioral goals.
- Share and commit to their after action plan.
- *Celebrate!*

### **What is FeedForward?**

Unlike feedback, which is often negative and looks backward, FeedForward envisions a positive future and provides supportive input that is constructive and affirming.

### **What does it mean to be in the FeedForward Opportunity Seat?**

Each member gets 30-45 minutes in the FeedForward Opportunity Seat. Unlike a hot seat, which can often be pressure-filled and stressful, the Opportunity Seat is a positive way for each member to

maximize and leverage the collective wisdom of the group. Members should be thoughtful and prepare ahead of time for their turn in the Opportunity Seat:

- Choose the one challenge or issue that will get you the biggest bang for your buck.
- Practice your talking points or how you will frame the issue.
- Ask specific questions at the end, not simply “what do you think?”
- Get everyone’s opinion; don’t let one person dominate feedback.
- Record your time in the Seat.
- At the end, commit to an action plan.
- Be prepared to come to the next meeting to report out on progress.

**What must I commit to as a member of a LEADForward<sup>sm</sup> Roundtable?**

Each member of a LEADForward<sup>sm</sup> Roundtable must commit to:

- Attend meetings, making attendance a priority in their schedule.
- Fully participate in meetings, be mentally present and engage.
- Prepare and be thoughtful for their time on the FeedForward Opportunity Seat.
- Be completely honest.
- Be positive and non-judgmental.
- Maintain confidentiality.

**What are past participants saying about LEADForward<sup>sm</sup> Roundtables?**

*“This experience is so powerful because of the diverse opinions and feedback from members of the group as well as from Accendo coaches Karen and Cari.” ...Jacqui (a non-profit professional)*

*“LEADForward gave me the confidence to explore my own gifts and work on my areas of development so I can continue to grow in my career.” ...Chelsea (a digital marketing executive)*

*“I would never have been able to perform to the fullest in my role without the LEADForward experience.” ...Suneera (an entrepreneur and business owner)*

*“The pre-work, development plan and other tools, coupled with the one on one coaching, helped me take my leadership to the next level.” ...Helen (an attorney and entrepreneur)*