

Shattering the glass ceiling and career success factors for women to advance into leadership in the engineering profession

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CBE Women Empowerment and Gender
Equality Transformation Collaborative
Committee (WEGE).

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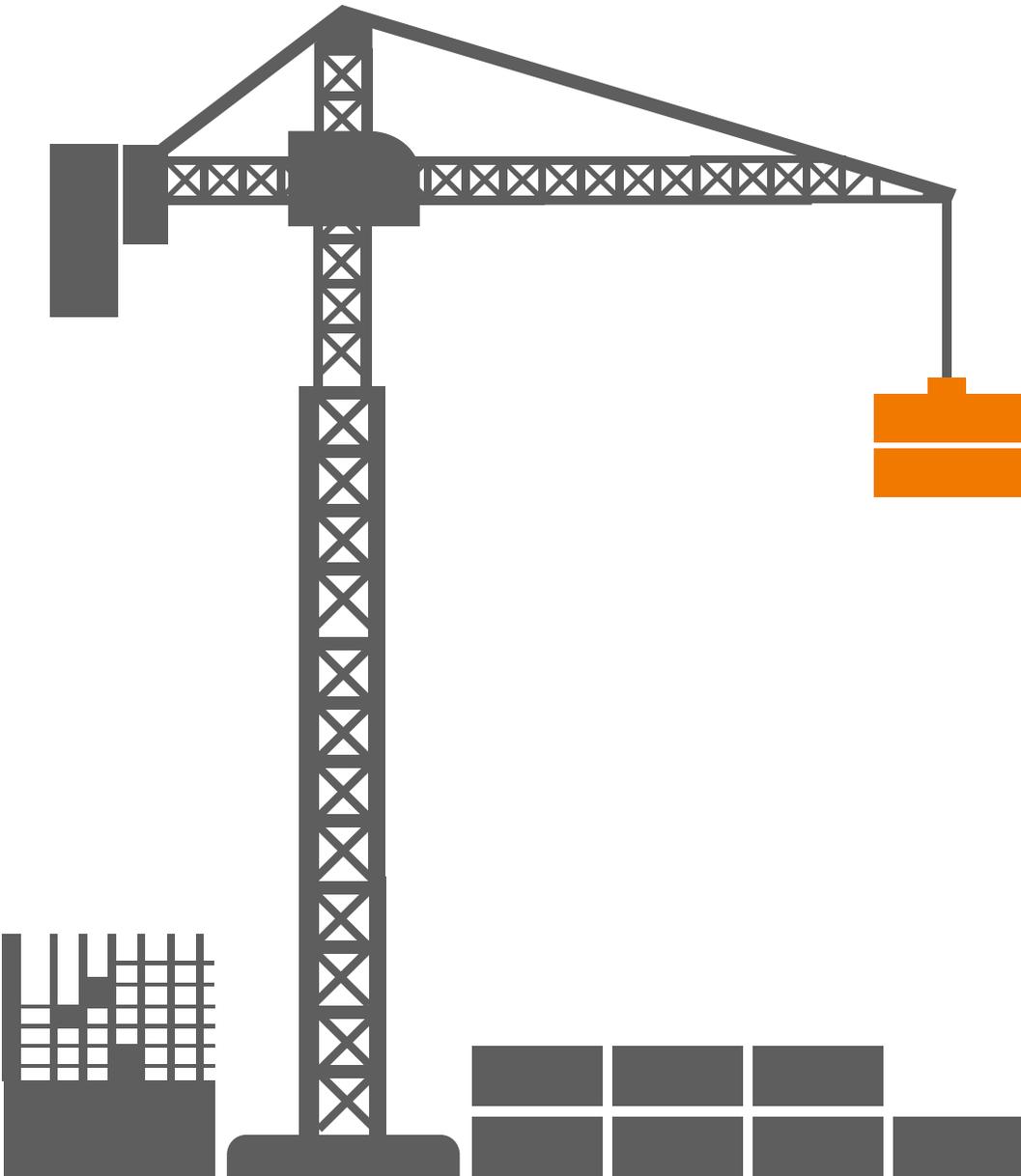
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“...the built environment sector is facing serious challenges: Slow pace of transformation, ageing personnel, shortage of critical skills and high unemployment rates, especially amongst our youth. It is therefore important for the sector to take strides and develops strategies on how best to address crucial issues identified in the skills pipeline strategy for the built environment, especially gender representation, participation, and retention”, .

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Msizi Myeza, CEO at the Council for the Built Environment

“The invisible, yet real, cultural barriers faced by women and minorities looking to build their careers by advancing to managerial or executive-level roles.”

Where does the term come from

Google search

The term gets mass exposure when it appears in a book by Gay Bryant called *The Working Woman Report: Succeeding in Business in the 1980s*, where she says, "A lot of women executives are hitting a glass ceiling and find they can go no further."

1978

1980's

2000's

Marilyn Loden, a management consultant for the New York Telephone Co. used the phrase "glass ceiling" while speaking on a panel Women's Exposition in New York. The term was based on her research where she was asked to find out why there weren't a lot of women entering executive positions.

Commonly used phrase in corporate lexicon

My Journey



Where I come from and education background

Post graduation

Mentors

Industry Participation
SAICE, CESA, ECSA, PROTEC



Status Quo

The background of the slide features a silhouette of several construction cranes against a warm, orange-hued sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The cranes are positioned at various heights and angles, creating a sense of depth and activity in a construction site.

- Male dominated industry : attracting and retaining women
- Girls and STEM
- Graduates and the working environment - a female graduate's perspective
- Road to professional registration
- Environment hostile for career/business development for woman
- Pervasive gender gap
- Conscious and unconscious biases and stereotyping
- C Suite positions
- Women relegated to soft vs hard technical positions
- Women sitting on boards
- Women led firms

What Perpetuates the discrimination

- Organisational cultures not committed to diversity, equity and inclusion
- Human resource practices (e.g. hiring and promotions) that marginalize women
- Employment conditions that do not cater for the diverse needs of women
- Lack of access to mentorship and sponsorship opportunities
- Workplace harassment



Changing the Narrative

- Regulations and policies – Employment Equity, Procurement
- Gender, and procurement policies
- Women-owned businesses – creating opportunities
- Providing incentives
- Women centric initiatives – Women in (fill in the gaps),

CBE - Database of Private Practices in the Built Environment
objective to create a database of built environment professional private practices for the purposes of creating information baseline to equip the CBE when engaging with relevant stakeholders such as government and private sector on matters impacting the built environment professions.

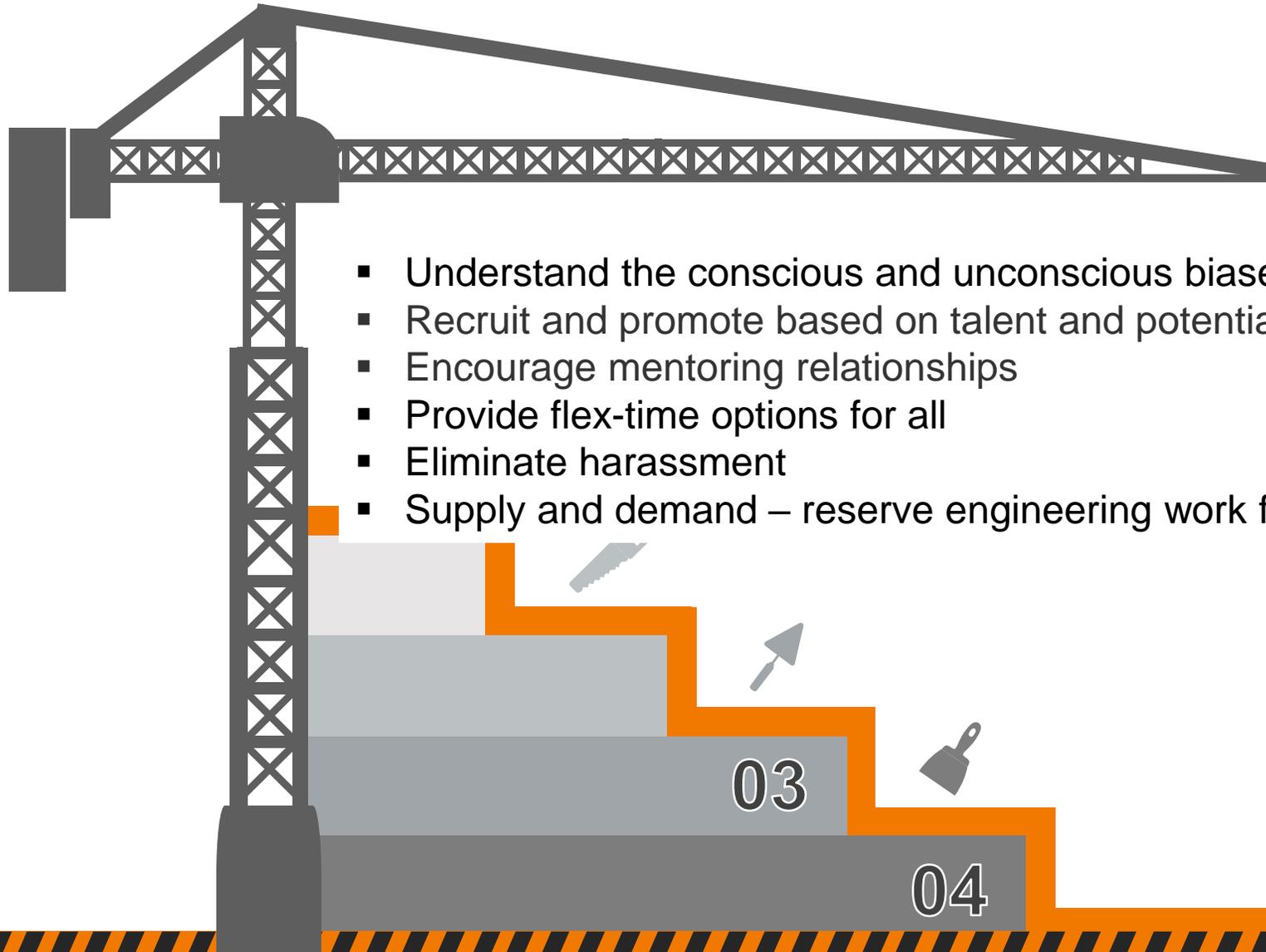
How does the above translate into breaking the ceiling?

CBE must influence infrastructure-related clients (DWS, DPWI, SANRAL, etc,) to develop and use databases with transformation credentials or National Treasury's Central Supplier Database (CSD) Database to be reconfigured for easy identification of built environment professional private practices and with their ownership credentials as it relates to transformation (women-owned, youth-owned, black-owned, etc.)



What can Companies do?

- Understand the conscious and unconscious biases
- Recruit and promote based on talent and potential
- Encourage mentoring relationships
- Provide flex-time options for all
- Eliminate harassment
- Supply and demand – reserve engineering work for engineering professionals

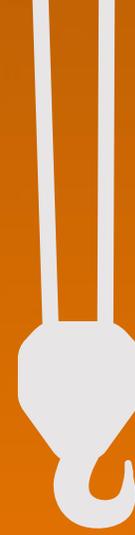




If the needle won't
move

- Find a competitive edge
- Bring your uniqueness to the table
- Be visible
- Network
- Access to information - join platforms
- Collaborate
- Find a mentor/sponsor
- Become a mentor/sponsor
- Innovation and technology
- Draw boundaries

When will this picture
change”



Conclusion

- CBE - Interventions that bolster women's feelings of belonging in the built environment are critical at post-secondary and early career levels, long term career development, career re-entry programmes which encourage women to resume their careers after taking a break to start a family, mentoring professional coaching and professional development and flexible work practices are also critical for the development and retention of women
- Initiatives in recent years have significantly cracked the glass ceiling, the Covid-19 pandemic puts many of these gains at risk as women and minorities were often required to juggle career and family needs.
- Strategies and solutions for dismantling monopoly in the built environment