

# Jennifer McCollum

**CEO | Author | International Speaker | Gender Equity Advocate | Leadership Expert**

Please contact a GDA agent for information.

## Topics

- Activism/Philanthropy/Civic Engagement
- CEO
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Leadership
- Navigating Change & Uncertainty
- Women's Empowerment
- Workplace Culture

## About Jennifer McCollum

Jennifer McCollum is on a mission to create better leaders and workplaces, by advancing women and promoting inclusivity.

She's an accomplished CEO, speaker and consultant, and the author of the new book "In Her Own Voice: A Woman's Rise to CEO." This book uses data and personal stories to shed light on the unique challenges women face on their journey to leadership, providing actionable insights for aspiring leaders and organizations. Jennifer has presented on hundreds of stages, podcasts, and webcasts across the globe and been featured in The Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, Forbes, and Psychology Today.

Jennifer was the first female CEO at Linkage, a global leadership development firm dedicated to "Changing the Face of Leadership." With over 25 years of experience building teams and organizations, she has a unique talent for crafting powerful visions and inspiring teams to turn them into reality. Her expertise includes how to close the gap to gender equity; why the most effective leaders are inclusive leaders; and how to demystify inclusion for leaders and organizations.

Prior to Linkage, Jennifer spent a decade growing businesses within Korn Ferry and Corporate Executive Board (CEB) - now Gartner. At CEB, she led product management within the leadership division, driving innovative solutions that helped organizations select, develop and place leaders at all levels. She also ran CEB's Leadership Academies business, which developed more than 30,000 professionals in 2,100 companies throughout 50 countries and grew revenue at a 97% combined annual growth rate across five years.

Previously, Jennifer served as CEO of IntraVision, a leadership consultancy she founded and grew over the course of eight years. She worked with public companies, start-ups, associations, and nonprofits. Her passion is creating vision, executing strategy, and managing cohesive teams toward aspirational goals, with a special focus on supporting women in leadership roles.

Jennifer holds an MS in Management and Communications from the University of Stirling in Scotland and a BA in Communications and Psychology from Wake Forest University. She is an avid tennis player and skier, the mother of three and lives in the Washington, DC, area with her husband.

## Select Keynotes

- **Women Leaders Rising: Actionable Strategies to Create Gender Equity in Leadership Faster**

Fewer than a third of senior leadership roles across industries are held by women, and while those numbers are improving, progress toward gender parity has been slow. What does it take for women to ascend to the highest levels of leadership, and how can executives empower them on their journeys?

Join Jennifer McCollum, former CEO of Linkage (a SHRM company) and author of Amazon bestselling book IN HER OWN VOICE: A WOMAN'S RISE TO CEO, who will guide us through the hurdles women commonly face on their road to advancement and identify actionable strategies to scale them.



In this overview of the book, you will gain access to the latest data on women in the workplace and hear real-life insights and stories from a premier expert on women's leadership.

This session is designed for women leaders looking to ascend, organizational champions of leaders, and those invested in the future of gender parity.

Learning Objectives:

- Get a sneak peek of the book *IN HER OWN VOICE: A WOMAN'S RISE TO CEO*, from Jennifer McCollum, premier leadership expert.
- Discover the seven hurdles to advancement in the workplace and learn actionable strategies women can use to scale them.
- Learn how to choose an organization with leaders who support a culture of women's advancement and empower women on their leadership journeys.

- **Why NOW is the time for women to shine.**

Jennifer can discuss a variety of factors set to propel more women into leadership, from post-COVID talent shortages to shifting employee expectations to evidence that companies with women at the helm outperform others.

- **The undeniable advantages of women-led companies.**

Research shows that companies with women at the top create better client retention, organic growth, and profit. Plus, women inherently possess the leadership qualities today's generation of talent expects and demands.

- **What companies that excel at advancing women do differently..**

Learn the four key areas of focus that empower women to lead better, stay at their companies longer, and advance in their careers. (Jennifer has lots of stories to illustrate these four critical dimensions from her collaborative work with Linkage clients.)

- **Data-driven strategies for attracting and retaining women in your company leadership.**

With burnout rising and talented women downshifting (or leaving the workforce altogether), leadership benches are being decimated. Jennifer will share evidence-based methods for reversing this trend.

- **The 7 (research-based) hurdles that hold women back.**

Jennifer will explain how these leadership roadblocks manifest, and she will share doable tactics to help women at all levels and all ages and stages in their career start leaping over them. (Hint: Proving Your Value, Finding Clarity, and Making the Ask are three of the worst.)

- **How external bias perpetuates the gender equity gap—and what we (as women and organizations)**

As part of this topic, Jennifer can talk about the "double bind" faced by professional women—and the "triple bind" faced by women of color. She can also share stories about her own encounters with external bias.

- **The role of men in advancing women leaders.**

Jennifer can pinpoint steps companies can take to enlist men as allies, mentors, and sponsors. She can share strategies and tactics from Linkage clients. (Incidentally...ask Jennifer about her own experience in enlisting Alan Mullaly, former CEO of Ford Motor Company, as her personal mentor. The way they met is a great story!)

- **2023 Trend Watch: Why it's so urgent for companies to accelerate their development of women.**

Jennifer can talk about a variety of hot trends that underscore the need for more women in leadership—the push for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Gen Z's desire for development, the need to personalize learning, the drive to offer more contemporized benefits, etc.

## Select Book Titles

- **2023:** *In Her Own Voice: A Woman's Rise to CEO: Overcoming Hurdles to Change the Face of Leadership*

## Select Articles

- [Why the Leader Gender Gap Matters -- and What Organizations Can Do to Close It](#)

Leader to Leader Magazine: Spring 2024 Women really want to advance in their career. A company's willingness to make this a priority and really deliver on it sets it up to compete differentially.

- [How to Accelerate Gender Equity in Leadership](#)

Key Points: 1. The shifting landscape for advancing women in leadership requires more proactive measurement and planning. 2. Success requires culture, people, systems, and processes, leadership development, and executive action. 3. Early success indicators of engagement, values fit, commitment, and net promoter scores should be measured.

- [The Double Bind for Women -- Being a Razor Blade and a Cupcake](#)

One of the most difficult manifestations of externalized bias is the double bind for women. It's a constant tightrope we walk. We must balance the irreconcilable demands of meeting societal expectations for women—demonstrating female characteristics, like being compassionate, warm, communicative and collaborative—with the expectations for leaders, which are dominated by male characteristics of being forceful, assertive and dominant.

- [External Bias and Its Impact on the Advancement of Women](#)

Gender bias occurs when people show favoritism toward one gender over another. Whether this behavior is conscious or unconscious, the result is that men and women are treated differently. Today, gender bias generally refers to the preferential treatment men— specifically white heterosexual men—receive. This does not make men the bad guys. It's a reality resulting from a long history of certain societal expectations and experiences that we have all internalized.

- [How I Engaged With a Critical Mentor Who Helped Me Succeed](#)

When I started my role as Linkage CEO, I spent several months engaging our board of directors, executive team, clients, partners and vendors. Slowly, I developed an expanded set of trusted advisors, whom I informally call my "CEO Success Circle." They play specific roles in my circle of trust because I know I can't do it alone. I have learned that actively managing this group of partners is a significant investment of time and energy, but it is a critical part of my job, and it is exceptionally rewarding work.

- [Women in the Workforce: Making Things More Equal for Women Could Help Solve the Talent Gap](#)

Economists may be celebrating the recent Bureau of Labor and Statistics data that indicates women's participation in the workforce has reached pre-pandemic levels. But organizations aimed at promoting equality for women in the workforce say there's still work to do.