

Competitive Analysis (Catalyst, Chief, and Lean In)

Executive Summary

This analysis evaluates Catalyst's position within the DEI landscape compared to Chief and Lean In, highlighting strategic opportunities for strengthening its impact on promoting gender diversity and inclusion in corporate environments.

Catalyst stands out for its influential corporate relationships and robust, data-driven approach. With a presence in 14 countries across multiple industries, Catalyst has empowered 500+ organizations to create workplaces that work for women. Its focus on equity for frontline workers provides holistic end-to-end solutions for organizations to drive changes fostering DEI. Additionally, Catalyst's MARC (Men Advocating Real Change) programs are helping catalyze the changes at all levels within the organizations.

While Catalyst is driving systemic change in organizations to promote gender diversity, its limited support for individual growth and cross-organizational networking restricts its broader accessibility and personal engagement.

By expanding individual-focused initiatives, enhancing digital accessibility, and fostering strategic partnerships, Catalyst can amplify its impact and continue to lead in creating more inclusive workplaces globally.

SWOT Analysis

The table below indicates the strengths of these organizations based on a high, medium, and low scale across different focus areas. Detailed research is outlined in appendices A, B, and C.

Evaluation Parameters	Individual Audience	Organization Focus	Global Reach	Community Access	DEI Focus	Exclusivity	Research-based Content	Website User Experience
Catalyst	Low	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium
Chief	High	Low	Low	Medium	Low	High	Low	High
Lean In	High	Low	High	High	High	Low	Medium	Medium

Catalyst

Strengths

1. Strong reputation among corporates and influence on corporate leadership for gender diversity and inclusion
2. Extensive research and data-driven approach.

3. Customized resources catering to individual organization's needs (supporter-only resources)
4. Global reach with 500+ organizations across 14 countries and 42 industries.
5. Emphasis on creating equitable workplaces for women, especially from racially and ethnically marginalized groups.
6. Focus on equity for frontline workers.
7. Fostering changes by empowering men to advocate for change (MARC)
8. Community building within the organization and global communities of CEOs pledging DEI acceleration.

Weaknesses

1. Focuses on organizational initiatives, less focus on individual growth.
2. Limited peer-to-peer support and community building.
3. Less accessible to women from non-supporter organizations.
4. The website doesn't have a strong emphasis on its market positioning and looks a bit cluttered.
5. Lack of brand awareness in grassroots level employees.

Opportunities

1. Develop programs that empower early and mid-career women professionals for leadership.
2. Community building for women across different organizations and industries to make it more accessible.
3. Build a stronger online presence.

Threats

1. Competition from organizations with a wider audience and more accessible offerings.
2. Changing priorities within organizations regarding diversity initiatives and women losing access to resources when they change jobs.
3. Bias in DEI offerings and resources may occur when organizations are not aware of the ground reality of their workplaces.

Chief

Strengths

1. Access to high-profile mentors and influential networks.
2. Access to exclusive communities, events, and luxurious clubhouses.
3. Simple, minimalistic website design with the least amount of clutter. Easier to navigate and find resources.
4. Peer-to-peer coaching and on-demand content library.

Weaknesses

1. High membership fees can prevent economically disadvantaged individuals from accessing the network, creating a barrier to entry.
2. Poor focus on DEI as the network is less accessible.

3. Less reach as compared to the competition.
4. Companies choosing to sponsor their employees may have an implicit bias during selection.

Opportunities

1. Offer tiered membership to make the network more accessible.
2. Offer opportunities for networking through open conferences, summits, etc. for non-members.
3. Provide access to racially and ethnically marginalized aspiring women leaders through existing grants.

Threats

1. The membership selection criteria may be used to mask biased selections, and the club may come across as an “old boy’s club” for the ladies^[4].
2. Economic downturn impacting disposable income for memberships.
3. Loss of key mentors or influential members.
4. Competition from organizations with a more comprehensive approach towards women empowerment.

Lean In

Strengths

1. Large, global network of local circles fostering community that encompasses different groups and enhances a sense of belonging among women from diverse groups.
2. Openly available online resources and support materials for everyone - women, companies, and allies.
3. Accessible and free to join.
4. Easy to start a circle or join an existing one.
5. Strong research and advocacy to promote DEI.
6. Promoting allyship at the workplace as well as at home.
7. Empowering and increasing DEI awareness among girls (age 11- 15)

Weaknesses

1. Large online community may feel impersonal.
2. Resources are generic in nature and hence might not help cater to individual needs.
3. Limited access to personalized mentorship.
4. Lack of dedicated resources to fulfill individual and organization-specific needs.
5. Limited control over the circles can depreciate the quality of leaders and mentorship provided in local circles.

Opportunities

1. Targeted development programs and resources for women at different career stages.
2. Develop dedicated mentorship programs to provide personalized guidance and support.
3. Enforce control over circles to ensure the structure is in place to help individual growth.

Threats

1. Competition from organizations with data-driven research or personalized programs.
2. Decreasing engagement as the community grows.

Recommendations

Based on the competitive analysis between Catalyst, Chief, and Lean In, here are some areas where Catalyst can enhance its offerings or strategies:

Enhanced Networking Opportunities for Individuals

1. While Catalyst provides networking opportunities for employees within an organization through ERGs, it can also create more structured networking platforms or forums that facilitate direct connections among professionals independent of the organizations they belong to. This could enhance the practical application of Catalyst's strong research-based content and thought leadership by fostering peer-to-peer support and collaboration.
2. Catalyst could collaborate with Lean In to provide tailored DEI strategies to regional, racial, and ethnic circles and ensure equitable access to aspiring women leaders regardless of organizational support.

Access to Exclusive Mentorship

1. Catalyst can facilitate a platform where high-profile women leaders can inspire and mentor aspiring women leaders.
2. Chief's membership fees could be a barrier to accessing mentorship and exclusive resources, but Catalyst can help by leveraging Chief's grant program to provide exclusive access to women from racially and ethnically marginalized groups.

Improved Branding

1. Increase online presence by enhancing digital offerings and creating a user-friendly platform enabling guest access to some resources.
2. Simplify the website's design and structure to improve its intuitiveness, increase brand awareness, and facilitate resource discovery.

Appendix A [Research | Catalyst]

Positioning

Thought Leader & Systemic Change Catalyst.

Value Proposition

Offers data-driven research and advocacy to drive systemic change within organizations for gender diversity in leadership. Provide holistic end-to-end solutions for each supporter organization to make workplaces equitable for women. Focuses on influencing CEOs and boards to create cultures that support women.

User Experience (Website)

Catalyst has the most common look of a website. It highlights the latest insights on the homepage. The website ends with a participation form for easier access. However, it needs strong emphasis on the website about its positioning and who it is for. The user has to jump through a few pages to understand the target audience and how one can access the resources.

Target Audience

Organizations as a whole – could be a company, firm, association, academic institution, etc. Once an organization is a supporter, any individual from the company can access resources.

Reach

1. 500+ supporter organizations.
2. 14 countries.
3. 42 industries.

Areas of Focus

1. Increasing Women's representation in corporate leadership.
2. MARC (Men Advocating Real Change).
3. Equity to Women Frontline Workers.
4. Equip business leaders to harness DEI strategy.
5. Develop & Provide resources for women and the future of work.

Resource/Content Availability

Resources are designed exclusively for each supporter based on their needs. Exclusive access to supporter-only content and tools. Some content is public.

Offerings

1. Online events, Workshops, Courses, Webinars.
2. Dedicated supporter-only resources.
3. Conference (Catalyst Awards Conference and Dinner).
4. Awards (Catalyst Honours).

Profitability

Non-Profit.

Community Aspect

1. Employee resource groups within the organization.
2. Catalyst CEO Champions for Change (community of CEOs pledging for DEI acceleration).
3. Community of Experts (community of select organizations).
4. MARC alumni community.

Recent Development

Inclusion of Frontline workers in the strategy.

Appendix B [Research | Chief]

Positioning

Exclusive Women's Leadership Network & Club

Value Proposition

Provides a curated network of successful women leaders through exclusive communities, events, and luxurious clubhouses. This fosters peer-to-peer learning, access to executive coaching, and a supportive environment to help women accelerate their careers.

User Experience (Website)

Simple, minimalistic design. Catches the reader's attention in the first 3-5 seconds by focusing on the most important content on the entire page. Things that stand out:

1. A strong tagline with concise and crisp detail in a sentence.
2. Logo visuals of the member company names help gain confidence.
3. Least amount of clutter and fewer nav tabs make it less overwhelming for the user and easier to navigate.

Target Audience

Women in leadership roles (VP-level and higher).

Reach

20,000+ Women representing more than 10,000 companies. 80+ partner companies.

Areas of Focus

1. Executive Coaching and Development.
2. Peer Learning and Community.
3. Exclusive Clubhouses.

Resource/Content Availability

Resources are available to all the network members.

Offerings

1. Networking: Events, international clubhouses, annual summits, monthly roundtables.
2. Workshops.
3. 1:1 coaching.
4. Peer-to-peer coaching (groups of 8-12).
5. On-demand content library.

Profitability

For-profit (Charges a membership fee per member of up to \$7900).

Community Aspect

1. A private network of women executives.
2. Core groups for peer coaching.

Appendix C [Research | Lean In]

Positioning

Accessible Community & Peer Support Engine

Value Proposition

Offers a readily available global network of local circles for community building and peer support. Provides online resources and workshops to empower professional women at all stages of their careers.

User Experience (Website)

Similar website as that of Catalyst with a slightly better UX.

Target Audience

Women at all stages of their careers.

Reach

80,000+ women across 183 countries.

Areas of Focus

1. Community building through local circles and online platforms.
2. Peer support and networking.
3. Skill development and empowerment of women.
4. Advocacy and research to promote gender diversity and inclusion.
5. Encourage circles in companies and allyship at work and home.

Resource/Content Availability

Public content, easy to join a circle to access circle resources.

Offerings

1. Network (circles) for women to join.
2. Online content for Women, Companies, and Allies- Trainings, webinars, videos and articles.

Profitability

Non-profit

Community Aspect

1. Local community circles – anyone can start a circle or join an existing circle.
2. Open Circle (Lean In Network).

Recent Development

Inclusion of girls (ages 11-15) in circle programs.

Appendix D [Resources]

1. <https://www.catalyst.org/>
2. <https://chief.com/>
3. <https://leanin.org/>
4. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/28/business/chief-corporate-women-networking-club.html>