

Synthesis of Discussion Topic 5: Women's Impact on Organizational Performance

Topic discussed from Monday October 26, 2009 to Friday February 12, 2010

Introduction to topic:

An increasing number of women are being employed in senior management positions in organizations. For the following weeks, we would appreciate to get your impressions on if this will or will not affect the way organizations perform.

Topic Question:

Increasing numbers of women are being employed in senior management positions in organizations. Will this affect the way organizations perform and if so, how?

Synthesis of Comments:

This discussion has brought up more questions than conclusions (*see all comments received on next page*). Yet, two facts can be stated from the comments received. First, it appears obvious that participants are very welcoming to having women occupying management positions. Second, there seem to be agreement on the fact that performance cannot be attributed to gender. While women might manage an organization differently than men and pay attention to some other aspects of performance, participants agree to say that results can end up being the same whatever if the organization is managed by a man or a woman.

For all the passions that this topic has raised, we are pushing the gender topic further in our next Discussion 6, in which we do ask you some questions about your experience in evaluating gender equality. We are looking forward to get your comments at:

<http://www.reflectlearn.org/discussion/discussion-6-your-experience-in-evaluating-gender-equality>

Do not hesitate to invite your friends and colleagues to participate to R&L discussions!

All Comments Received:

Submitted by Judy (not verified) on Sun, 01/10/2010 - 17:11:

What are the goals? Does it matter if a female or male runs the corporate world? If profit, cost effective, criminal acts are the agenda - what does it matter if it's done by a male or female?

What are the defined problems? How can you solve anything if you can't identify the actual problems. I see the perceived problems/solutions and let me just say insanity is the act of doing the same thing over and over expecting a different outcome. Putting a skirt of the problem doesn't mean you are doing anything different. Females have learned how to put pants on.

Submitted by Charles (not verified) on Tue, 02/09/2010 - 09:53:

Dear Judy,

Your comment does correctly point out at the fact that organizations can perform well whether managed by men or women. Yet, I personally believe that, there are important differences between the management styles of women and those of men. My own experience indicates that women in management positions approach organizational performance in a more integrated or holistic way. They care more for the human side and try to influence the cultural dimensions of an organization. They often see these cultural dimensions as important as financial performance.

With men dominating senior management positions it seems that results and production often come before people.

As you can see I believe that the present performance culture might change with more women occupying leadership positions. I believe that, in business like in elsewhere, we cannot deny the differences between women and men. And although one approach may not be better than the other, (skirts and pants can/do lead to same issues/results/performance), the way of achieving these results can be more pleasant when women run the show!

Reflect & Learn

Submitted by Elisabetta (not verified) on Thu, 02/11/2010 - 17:26:

There is also the issue of whether or not having women in leadership positions makes a difference in the identification of the objectives to reach. Does the fact of having women in leadership position make only a difference internally, in the way they manage the firm? Do they also have a different vision of the objectives to be achieved (externally)? And what about if the external environment is dominated by firms / organizations / institutions run by men?