

GENDER BALANCE,

when men step up

Maybe you're skeptical about what men have to gain from greater gender balance. Maybe you're reticent to speak up about a sensitive subject. Perhaps you're wondering how to get more men to join the gender balance debate. Or maybe you just want to take part in one of the major managerial transformations facing companies in the 21st century.

Gender balance: when men step up. Because men too can benefit!

Today's leaders have much to gain from greater gender balance, be it in their personal lives or at work. The leaders interviewed for this book are categorical: gender balance is a tool to transform organisations and to build competitive advantage. But it is also a means to address men's – and Gen Y's – growing aspiration for flexibility and innovative ways of working.

This book clarifies the business case for gender balance, explores what men have to gain, provides the basic knowledge to engage debate and action plans – and get other men on board. Twelve leaders explain why they have personally taken a stand on gender balance and put it high on their list of strategic priorities.

The book will help men and women understand the pillars of masculine identity, and why change in organisations is so difficult. It resolutely takes the man's point of view in the hope of rebalancing a debate too often confined to women, to political correctness or to conforming reluctantly to equality laws.

As men and women's aspirations converge, we hope this book will bring new perspectives, a new language – and a more balanced view of gender balance!

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GENDER BALANCE, when men step up

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GENDER BALANCE,

when men step up

What? Why? How? A toolkit for leaders

EYROLLES

PREFACE

MICHEL LANDEL, GROUP CEO, SODEXO



Gender balance is, first and foremost, a question of performance.

Over the past few years, gender balance in business has become a strategic issue for an increasing number of organisations.

While a variety of programmes have been implemented to accelerate the number of women in leadership teams, the legislative framework has also evolved and women themselves have mobilised to take action.

Despite these efforts, the number of women in senior leadership positions falls far short of expectations, and the infamous glass ceiling isn't ready to give way.

I am firmly convinced that gender balance issues go beyond a moral obligation and are more than just a 'women's issue'. A gender balanced workforce is a powerful driver of performance, innovation and operational effectiveness in organisations. With women representing six out of ten graduates and making nearly three-quarters of all household purchasing decisions, it seems obvious that not fully using women's skills and input in business is a mistake.

Currently, women make up 43% of Sodexo's Executive Team, resulting in a multiplicity of viewpoints and better critical thinking.

This is not just my personal opinion – many international studies demonstrate a link between stronger performance and gender

balanced leadership teams. A study by Millward Brown¹ looking at the top 100 most valuable global brands shows that over the last five years, organizations with women on their executive teams grew by 66% on average compared to 6% growth in companies where the leadership team was only male.

Today, many leaders are aware of the need to increase the number of women in senior roles. However, awareness is not enough: men, who still occupy 89% of leadership positions in Europe², must firmly promote gender balance at all levels of their organisations, including the executive team level.

From experience, I know that gender balance will not happen on its own. It is essential to monitor progress by setting ambitious goals and identifying key success indicators. Above all, business leaders must be encouraged to get personally involved, because without their support, nothing will change. Is this too much to ask? No, because after reading this book, I am convinced that a dynamic shift is underway with a growing number of male senior level business leaders becoming real 'champions' of gender-balanced leadership.

¹ Study by Millward Brown (BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands, 2012).

² 20-first Global Gender Balance Scorecard, 2014.

PREFACE

GÉRALD KARSENTI, CEO, HEWLETT-PACKARD FRANCE



In April 2015, I received an invitation to a forum eloquently entitled 'Changing times – Restoring a human dimension in the digital universe'. I was taken by the theme, since I've always believed that the human spirit is a key component to success. I was asked to speak on a topic I hold dear: gender balance. But my puzzled assistant asked me why I seemed concerned? I have always been fully committed to this issue, based on a conviction: gender balance is a question of values and fairness as well as performance. But the doubt that suddenly troubled me lay elsewhere. Over the past years, I've participated in many debates covering gender balance from all angles. While the speeches are more passionate than before – for the sake of image – the statistics do not lie. Progress remains limited. According to a report published at the end of 2014¹, at the current pace, we will have to wait until 2095 to see professional equality between the sexes! So why take part in these forums? Hearing the same litanies will not advance matters. I continued reading and smiled at the proposed title for my potential 10-minute speech: 'Disrupting men to liberate women.' The wording was bold, to say the least. This was a challenge I couldn't refuse. Why not disrupt men? Disruption is trending. But I was more intrigued by the intended consequence: to liberate women. Liberation would imply that women are imprisoned. And, if this is the case, what is their prison?

¹ Report published in October 2014 by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The book you are now holding came to mind. It has a unique approach in that it tackles gender balance through men. Men who are committed. Men with multiple facets. Managers that are husbands and fathers. Men who do not – or no longer – accept that women are under-represented on management teams, on the benches of parliament or within government. Men who do not understand how women can be paid less for the same work. Men who are not just thinking about these issues but acting on them. This book is the proof. It helped me to think about the subject in a new way. I was weary of the *status quo*. Then I suddenly realised that men could really be game changers.

To liberate themselves, women must first realise that they are responsible for some of the work. They have to gain confidence. Once, during a roundtable, I mentioned that 'women must act like men who don't try to be perfect!' I think this is true more than ever. But the heaviest task falls on men. Hence, the challenge of this book. The baby-boomer and X generations have an enormous responsibility: to propel talented women towards key positions.

I then decided to reverse the title of my speech: 'Liberate women to disrupt men.' To move men to address the issue differently. With a different perspective. This book serves as a valuable tool in achieving this goal. It urges us to act. And today, actions speak louder than words!

FOREWORD

Why read this book?

In recent years, many organisations, companies, networks and think-tanks around the world have identified gender-balanced leadership as a strategic priority. But statistics show that very little progress has been made. Why is there such inertia? While there are many reasons, it is clear that one significant obstacle remains: a lack of implication by men, who still control the positions of power in the majority of organisations (89 % of executive committees in Europe, 83% in the United States).¹

So the following pages are specifically written for men. By bringing together expert authors on gender balance, this book is a practical guide to understand the key issues and to initiate effective strategies leading to greater gender balance in leadership teams.

The first section explores why gender balance is more than a question of fairness. It highlights how gender balance is an opportunity for innovative management practices and corporate performance in a world of profound change and increased competition.

The second section addresses what men have to gain from better gender balance, both professionally and personally, and why gender balance should not be seen only as a 'women's issue'.

The third section provides, in a few key concepts, the basics needed to understand what is preventing gender balance.

¹ *Op. cit.*

The fourth section proposes concrete ideas for men to take action.

The last section showcases progressive leaders who are actively engaged in advancing gender balance in their companies.

Over the past fifteen years, women's networks and 'diversity programmes' have focused on women managers, equipping them to progress to top management. Now it's time for men to get involved, to move forward together to invent new, more effective and more balanced organisations.

This book is a collective work written by an equal number of men and women, including experts, scientists and managers. Our aim is simply to improve business effectiveness, to decode the many misunderstandings around gender balance and enable everyone – men and women – to achieve their desired professional and personal goals.

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INTRODUCTION

GENDER-BALANCED

LEADERSHIP:

THE NEW **NORMAL**

MARIE-CHRISTINE MAHÉAS

Media pressure, employee pressure, government and legal pressure, personal pressure; today's business leaders face increasing demands to support gender balance.

Given the huge societal changes underway, many agree that leaders in the 21st century will need to learn to manage mixed teams and promote gender balance for greater effectiveness and well-being. They must also inspire their teams to do the same.

The opportunity is clear...

The topic of gender balance is evolving from a period of public policy (Equal Opportunity) to a time when workplace gender balance is recognised as a factor of business innovation and performance. The opportunity is clear:

- > Talent: managing, retaining and motivating the entire workforce more effectively – with a positive impact on overall business performance.

- > Customers: providing better service with leadership teams that are a true reflection of society.
- > Results: achieving better performance with gender-balanced leadership.

Everyone has a role to play: CEOs define a corporate gender balance policy and monitor progress, managers launch concrete initiatives, and junior managers imagine their ideal work environment.

...but what a headache!

Faced with so much pressure, even the best-intentioned CEOs may hesitate:

What do gender balance statistics really say? Are things really so difficult for women? What is expected of me in my position? Where should I start? Is it really up to me to take the first step? And above all, I'm not even sure if I am using the right words. Equality? Gender balance? Diversity? How will women react if I use the wrong term? I feel a headache coming on even before I take the first step!

So let's start by setting the wording straight. We use the term 'gender balance', which is more specific than 'diversity' and less political or radical than 'equality'. Gender balance implies a weaving or richness of genders, rather than a two-sided battle.

Taking action requires commitment

Committing to a gender-balanced workplace can take several forms. At the senior or executive management level, the commitment must be visible. This can be done by adding gender balance to corporate objectives, speaking publicly, putting the subject on the agenda for Executive Committee and succession planning meetings,

establishing gender balance objectives for key managers, speaking about the subject in the media or at industry conferences, participating in government advisory bodies, etc.

For managers, support can involve committing to equal opportunity hiring policies, ensuring equal salaries for men and women, initiating training programmes to increase awareness of stereotypes and unconscious bias, etc. In short, making a commitment requires nothing more than actually doing something.

Our message is for men in CEO and senior management roles, where they still overwhelmingly out-number women, with the firm belief that gender balance in business concerns them directly.

A topic for men?

The majority of top management positions are held by men. Within the 100 largest European companies, 89% of executive committees are men (US: 83%).¹

But so far, gender balance issues have essentially been treated by and for women.

Implementing gender balance initiatives in business and society in this one-sided way leads to tension, miscommunication and other misunderstandings. To avoid an environment of mutual distrust, we now need an inclusive approach. While much still remains to be done, a proactive gender balance movement is under way, with men getting on board. Now is the time to move to more inclusive programmes involving both men and women.

Finally, discussing evolving gender roles and the benefits of gender balance in business are beneficial for men as well. For proof, simply look at the sacrifices our fathers made. Doesn't the price many men

¹ *Op. cit.*

paid to conform to male norms established centuries ago make us want to build a different working culture, together? We firmly believe it does.

But progress is slow

In order to get started, leaders must first understand why their commitment is important and urgent. There are two main reasons:

- > Gender balance in business has proven direct economic benefits.
- > Contrary to public opinion, things are changing extremely slowly at leadership levels.

Even when leaders are aware of this, it is still difficult for them to figure out what really works, how serious the situation really is, etc. This makes it difficult to know where to start, or if urgent action is needed.

Where to begin?

Even if the reasons for committing to greater gender balance are quite clear, leaders often find it hard to identify where to begin within their organisations.

The main difficulty lies in acquiring a full understanding of the issues in order to engage and support management teams. Business leaders cannot simply rely on public opinion, superficial discussions, rumours, conflicting studies or intuition. In short, they need a toolkit with a roadmap for building their own gender-balanced workplace. This is what this book proposes.

We will address the issues affecting men, and for once, leave aside what women need to do.

FACTS NOT RUMOURS

What exactly is the current balance of men and women in the workplace? Is the situation really that critical for women?

The balance in senior leadership and management roles is indeed extremely skewed:

- > In Europe, only 29% of businesses have two or more women on their executive committees. Among a total of 972 executive committee members of the 100 largest European companies, only 110 (11%) are women and only 46 hold operational roles (5%).¹
- > In European companies with 10,000 + employees or \$1M+ turnover: only two women are CEOs (2%), just 9% of executive committee members are women and only 14% of senior management or vice president positions are held by women.²
- > At the current rate of progress, women will represent only 20% of managers at executive committee level in 2022.³
- > The Catalyst Study 'Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives' further underscores how men benefit from being men, often without realising it.

Diversity programmes (networks, mentoring, etc.) have been in place for years. What else is needed?

Many diversity programmes have had limited impact and the promotion of women to leadership roles has been very slow. One of the main reasons is that they mainly focus only on female managers, neglecting to educate and inform men as well.

¹ *Op. cit.*

² Women Matter 2012: Making the Breakthrough, McKinsey & Company, 2012.

³ *Ibid.*

What message should we give to men? What do they have to gain? Achieving gender balance is not easy: if more women are promoted to senior positions, how do we manage resulting levels of frustration among men?

The point of this book, especially parts I and II, is to answer this question. What do men have to gain from workplace gender balance?

Men obtain professional satisfaction by climbing the corporate ladder. How can we reassure them that this is still possible? How will their career prospects be impacted?

The traditional career path of rapid promotions and ever-increasing responsibilities within the same organisation does not appeal to everyone, even if stereotypes keep it firmly anchored in the minds of men and women. Today's careers involve more lateral moves and frequent changes. Corporate structures are flattening with more project-based assignments. Men too will need to adjust.

Many studies on the topic of diversity have been published. Is another book really necessary?

It has been fascinating to see first-hand how little most men know about the business case for gender balance and the obstacles involved, despite their willingness to promote the subject! When we started our interviews with organisations, we imagined that they would all have the same level of awareness and have similar programmes. We were wrong. Levels of awareness and engagement remain very low.

FOR MEN: A POP QUIZ ON GENDER BALANCE

ALEXANDRE JOST

Take a few minutes to answer the following questions. They provide a fascinating opportunity for you to assess your gender role attitudes and behaviours in relation to your partner, family, and workplace.

I. YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN

■ YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH YOUR CHILDREN

- > What is the name of your children's teachers/head teachers?
- > Are you a member of the Parent's Association?
- > When was the last time you helped your children with their homework?

■ EDUCATION

- > What would you say to your son/daughter if he/she wanted to be a flight attendant? An engineer? A nurse? A football player? A politician?
- > What famous person would you choose to be your wife? ...to be your daughter?

- > What famous person would you select as a female role model for your daughter?
- > Are you raising your sons and daughters the same way?
- > Are there any differences in the way your sons and daughters search for employment?

II. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR COMPANY

■ CAREER

- > How many women are hired into your company? How many are on the executive committee? Would you participate in a race where 30 people start, but only three finish?
- > When have you advised a woman on her career options for the last time?
- > How many men on your team have requested salary increases? How many women? Are these requests correlated to merit?
- > Have you ever been influenced by the physical appearance of a male or a female candidate during a job interview?
- > Is there a pay gap within your team and does it correlate to gender (male or female)? If so, why?

■ PARENTING AND WORK

- > Have you ever thought about how having a child would affect your career?
- > If one of your children is sick, could you take a day off without negatively affecting your career? Could your wife? Could a fellow female colleague?

- > Do you find it normal that women feel pressure to schedule pregnancies in line with career advancement opportunities?
- > After six years of University education and three years of professional experience, would you accept giving up your career to be a full time 'stay-at-home dad'?
- > Have you ever discussed her future career plans with a woman on maternity leave?
- > What are your personal views on promotion opportunities for women of childbearing age?
- > Did you take a paternity leave?

■ PERFORMANCE

- > How would growth rates be impacted if women had the same careers as men?
- > What is the financial cost associated with the turnover of women managers in your company?

III. YOUR DAILY WORK LIFE

■ MEETINGS

- > Do men and women speak in equal amounts during meetings?
- > In your opinion, do the most competent employees speak the most?
- > Have you ever scheduled a meeting to start at 8am or 7pm?

■ CORPORATE CULTURE

- > Have you ever made a comment about the physical appearance of a male employee? ... of a female employee?

- > Would your company be a more pleasant place to work if it was more gender-balanced?

IV. CAREER POSSIBILITIES

- > If you were a woman, what would your ideal job be? Could you do this job? Why or why not?
- > Would you hire a male assistant? ... a woman driver?
- > Is your wife's job more interesting than yours? Is she happier in her work?
- > Would you feel more confident having a man or a woman as an IT Director?
- > Is it normal for your son to have mainly women teachers?

V. YOUR LIFE

■ MY RESPONSIBILITIES

- > If you were divorced and had custody of your children, could you keep your same job without making any changes? Could your wife?
- > A mortgage to pay, a restructuring to manage at work, three mouths to feed: I am responsible for everything, while my wife is less involved/doesn't work. Isn't this tiring? Is it normal? Is it necessary?
- > Is it normal to give up everything for work because you are male?
- > If you had a serious problem (health or professional), could your wife support your family's needs?
- > Have you ever taken a day off work when your child was sick?

■ MY LIFE OVERALL

- > If you were to die tomorrow, what would your biggest regret be?
- > On a scale of 1 to 10, rank your overall satisfaction regarding: your career / your relationship with your partner / your role as a father / your social life? Would your wife's rankings be the same?



Part I

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER BALANCE

Gender balance will advance only when companies, organisations and political leaders are convinced of its benefits. We need to move beyond coercive measures (laws, societal pressure) to identify how gender balance can enable organisations to develop, innovate and change.

Chapter 1

FACTS AND FIGURES

McKINSEY & COMPANY :
SANDRINE DEVILLARD AND CÉCILE KOSSOFF

Gender inequality in the workplace has been a widely debated issue since many years. Yet, in 2013, when we conducted our last global study on gender diversity¹ at the top of corporations, women were still broadly under-represented in leadership roles: a situation that prevailed everywhere in the world. In the best-in-class country, Sweden, 27% of corporate board members were women, and 21% of executive committee members. In France, women have made progress in the boardroom (21%), probably as a result of legislation passed in 2014, but their participation in executive committees is still very low, at 9%. The same trend is found in the USA, with 16% and 14% respectively. Japan, meanwhile, has just 2% female representation on its boards and 1% on its executive committees.

Diversity in leadership: three reasons to accelerate

Do we need to develop gender balance in companies' governing bodies? Beyond the social and ethical issues, is it important for company performance? That was the question McKinsey asked

¹ Women Matter 2013: 'Moving the Corporate Culture, Moving the Needle', McKinsey & Company, 2013.

in 2006, and which led us to conduct our 'Women Matter' research program. The answer to that question is 'YES'.

The research not only demonstrated that companies with more women in senior leadership roles perform better, it also identified the reasons for this positive contribution, as well as levers for developing gender balance at the top.

Enhanced performance

Today, the case for greater gender balance at the top of corporations no longer needs to be demonstrated. McKinsey was a precursor in this area in 2007¹, identifying a marked correlation between the presence of women in top management teams and the performance of the company. This correlation surfaced systematically in several different dimensions of analysis, and recurrently from one year to the next.

For that analysis, we used an organisational performance diagnostic tool based on nine performance criteria: the leadership of the management team, the ability to communicate a vision and set the direction, the work environment and values, accountability, capabilities, coordination and control of actions, motivation, capacity for innovation, and external orientation.

During our initial research, our analyses suggested that companies with several women in leadership roles outperformed those with no women at the top in every one of these dimensions.

¹ Women Matter 1: 'Gender Diversity, a Corporate Performance Driver', McKinsey & Company, 2007.

The difference became strongly significant when at least three out of ten top management members were women.

We reached these conclusions after analysing the responses of some 60,000 employees in 100 companies to questions around these 9 criteria, and comparing the results with the number of women on each company's executive committee. It emerged that the companies with several women in their top management were also those that obtained the best average scores in each dimension.

We identified a performance differential of between one and seven points in each dimension for companies with at least three women on their executive committee (Exhibit 1).

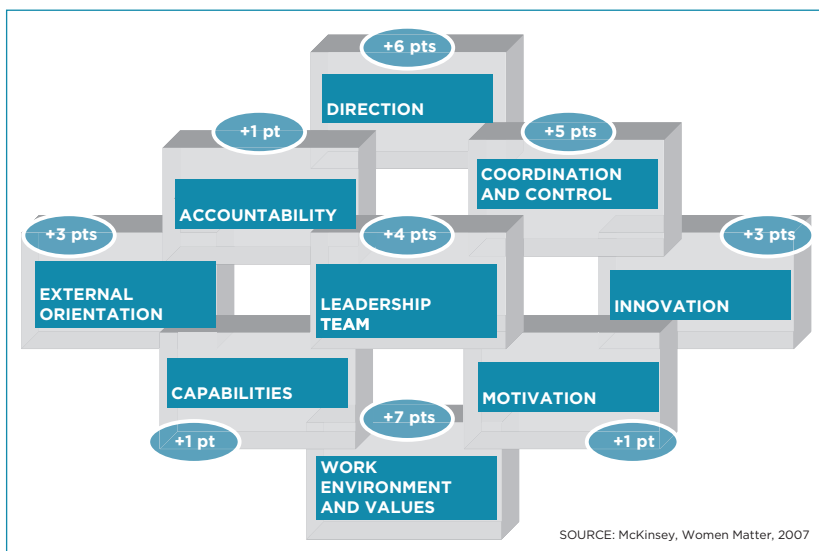


Exhibit 1: Organisational performance

Companies with 3 or more women on their executive committees score higher in all 9 dimensions of organisational performance than those with none.

This discovery is particularly striking given that, a few years earlier, our firm had established a clear correlation between companies' performance in these nine dimensions and their financial results.

But that isn't all. In 2007, and again in 2009, we probed the question of whether the presence of women on executive committees was also correlated with better financial performance.

And the answer, on both occasions, was positive. Companies with more women on their executive committees also perform better financially.

In 2007, following a meticulous analysis of 300 companies around the world, we found a difference in return on equity of over 40% between the companies with the most women on their executive committees and those with none. Likewise, we observed a 56% difference in operating results (Exhibit 2).

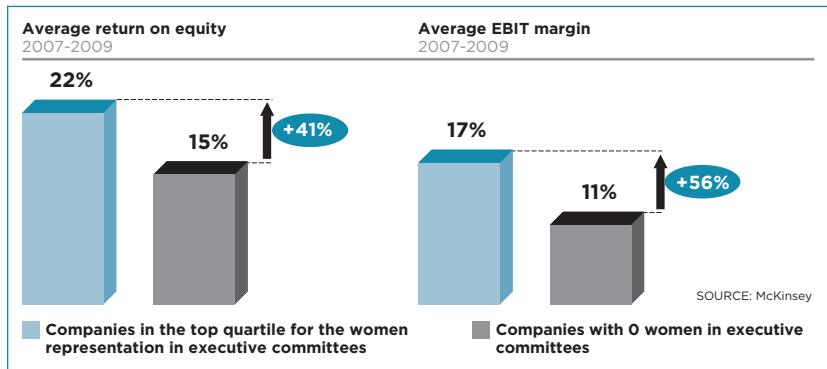


Exhibit 2: Financial performance

Companies with more women on their executive committee perform better financially.

The link between gender balance and economic performance is, moreover, corroborated in almost every economic sector.

Diversified leadership

Admittedly, correlation does not prove causality. Do these companies perform better because they are more diverse, or are they more able to embrace broader diversity because of their greater openness, stronger vision, or more effective management; in other words, due to their better performance across a whole range of criteria?

We therefore sought to understand what could explain the enhanced performance of companies with more women in leadership roles. We found some answers in leadership behaviors.¹ Drawing on well-known research in behavioral psychology,² we identified that female leaders make greater use of the five following leadership styles than their male counterparts: people development, expressing expectations and rewarding success, role-modeling, inspiration, and participative decision-making.

Men, meanwhile, apply two particular behaviors more often than women: individual decision-making, and the control and correction of actions.

Two behaviors – intellectual stimulation and effective communication – present no significant difference between men and women.

¹ 'Women Matter 2008: Female Leadership, a Competitive Edge for the Future'.

² 'Transformational, Transactional and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles', Alice H. Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt and Van Engen, 2003; 'The Leadership Styles of Women and Men', Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001.

By analysing the impact of each leadership behavior on the nine dimensions of organisational performance, and comparing this with the frequency of the behaviour observed in each gender, McKinsey identified the contributions that men and women are likely to make to organisational performance.

The analysis shows that women, through their leadership behaviours, help to improve companies' organisational performance by reinforcing five of the dimensions (vision, motivation, accountability, leadership, values and environment), and particularly the last three (Exhibit 3).

This analysis helps understand the established correlation between the presence of women in leadership roles and company performance. Naturally, the full explanation for the higher performance score may involve other organisational performance levers (processes, systems, etc.). What our analysis reveals, above all, is that organisational performance requires a diversity of leadership styles. In addition to greater gender diversity in top management, companies therefore have every interest in welcoming, nurturing and recognising a wide range of leadership behaviours, in order to reinforce all the dimensions of organisational performance.

An answer to the talent shortage

Beyond the immediate concerns of economic performance, companies face the challenge of managing talent. The development and retention of female talent lies at the heart of this issue, one that will prove crucial over the coming decades.

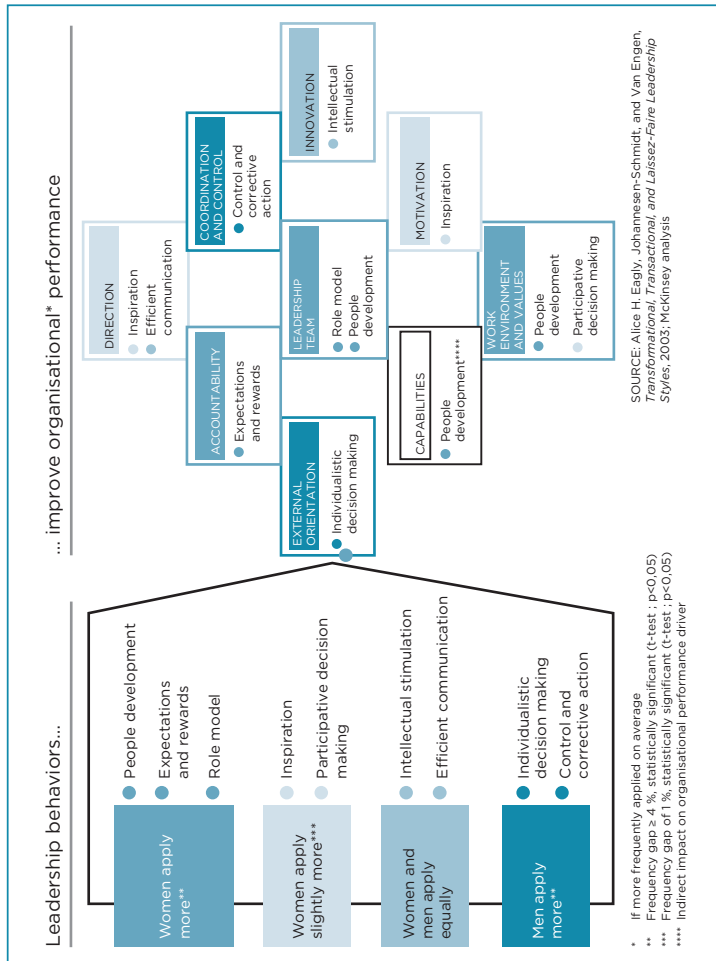


Exhibit 3: Positive leadership styles

The leadership behaviours most frequently observed in women help to improve organisational performance by reinforcing 5 dimensions.

Our analyses of trends in demographics, employment and education¹ suggest that the global economy can anticipate a worrying talent shortage by 2020. The talent gap will amount to 38 to 40 million higher education graduates, representing 13% of global demand for skills at that level. In the mature economies, the shortfall could be in the order of 16 to 18 million graduates. In a world where qualified talent is becoming scarce, the premium will go to the companies that have been able to recruit, develop and retain the best employees. And with this scarcity of talent, especially for the most highly-qualified positions, tapping the reservoir of under-used skills among women (and among older people) will become a key priority in the talent war.

¹ "The World at Work: Jobs, Pay, and Skills for 3.5 Billion People", McKinsey Global Institute, 2012.

Chapter 2

WHAT CEOs ARE SAYING

MARGARET MILAN

With a traditionally male work culture, and unconscious stereotypes held by both men and women, gender balance is hard to achieve. Without clear objectives and a long-term commitment from top leaders, little will change. That is why men have a key role to play.

The CEOs interviewed for this book agree: gender balance is not just a question of fairness or legal compliance, although these can serve as starting points for some organisations. Gender balance is also a driver of performance and a necessity for companies to remain competitive going forward. *'We promote diversity as a sign of respect for all employees, and I am convinced that this has a positive impact on our company's performance, culture and recruitment processes.'* (Henri de Castries, CEO, AXA). This chapter summarises their key reasons for supporting gender balance, as identified in our interviews with 12 leaders of global organisations. The full interviews appear at the end of this book.

Gender balance and organisational change

Digital disruption, globalisation, generation Y: organisations are facing unprecedented change, forcing them to transform how they

operate. By including gender balance among strategic objectives, companies encourage positive organisational change that will enable them to address outdated working habits and challenge the usual ways of doing business. *'Improving gender balance directly equates to improving the company as a whole.'* (Stéphane Richard, CEO, Orange). For example, at France's national railway company SNCF, the development of women's networks led to a streamlining of work processes, resulting in innovative cross-sector project collaboration. *'The SNCF women's network is critical to future development. The network enables women to invent, develop ideas and innovate in a very concrete way.'* (Guillaume Pepy, CEO, SNCF). Disruptions in today's business environment require organisations to innovate and move out of their comfort zone. *'We cannot move forward with a monochrome workforce.'* (François Pérol, CEO, BPCE)

Gender balance and decision making

By taking into account multiple viewpoints, assessing risks more thoroughly and identifying new opportunities, gender balance is seen as a way to improve decision making. *'The correlation between gender balance and performance is clear. Decisions made within a gender diverse team are better because they are more mature.'* (Carlos Ghosn, CEO, Renault Nissan). *'Teams with multiple viewpoints are by far the most relevant.'* (F. Pérol). *'The complementarity between men and women creates performance.'* (Gérald Karsenti, CEO, Hewlett-Packard France)

Gender balance and understanding customer needs

Eighty percent of B2C purchasing decisions are now made by women. *'While our workforce is predominantly male, 50% of our customers*

are women. This highlighted that we needed to implement company-wide measures to be more in the image of our customers.' (Guillaume Pepy, CEO SNCF) Renault Nissan's CEO Ghosn said, *'When we know that 60% of cars are bought by women, there is an obvious benefit to having women in our corporate decision making team.'* Improved customer relationships are also a motivation in B2B situations. For Michel Landel, CEO of Sodexo, *'Our company must resemble our market.'* *'Our customers are ready.'* said Gianmarco Monsellato, CEO of TAJ. *'A company closed to diversity runs the risk of not looking like its clients. You can't claim to be customer-centric and at the same time cut yourself off from half the population you serve.'* (Henri de Castries, CEO, AXA)

Gender balance and talent

To succeed, companies need to attract and retain the best talent. *'We are completely aligned with the aspirations in society for more gender equality and I think it makes our company more attractive.'* (G. Monsellato). Workplace gender diversity results in better engagement among team members. *'This is something that can be measured, and is increasing at Sodexo.'* (M. Landel). The corporate brand is also at stake. *'With more gender diversity statistics being published, it will become difficult for organisations which fail to promote women to senior positions.'* (F. Oudéa). *'How can you expect women to commit to an organisation when they are convinced there is a glass ceiling in place?'* (C. Ghosn)

Gender balance and modernity

Many of the leaders interviewed spoke of the visual shock they experienced when attending their initial executive committee meeting. They found themselves in a room full of grey suits, white

skin, and people holding identical university degrees. *'When I joined Sodexo, I was struck by the overwhelming masculinity of the company.'* (M. Landel). *'Throughout the world, we still use business practices inherited from the twentieth century.'* (G. Monsellato)

This has sometimes been the catalyst for them to put gender balance high on the list of their strategic priorities. The CEOs interviewed understand that gender imbalance generates a dysfunctional environment and outdated habits which need to be identified and addressed. *'I think organisations generally lag behind societal changes. Businesses still cling to old habits including vertical structures, hierarchies, and an omnipotent boss. If we want to appeal to new generations of employees while being more efficient and having more fun, we need to make profound changes.'* (S. Richard)

Chapter 9

THE PILLARS OF MASCULINE IDENTITY

FRANÇOIS FATOUX

What if men unconsciously resist women's advancement out of fear of their manhood being called into question? To understand men's reactions, we need to consider what researchers call 'masculine norms'. These form the basis of male behaviour and have been passed down through generations.

The pillars of manhood

The 2011 study 'Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives: What Change Agents Need to Know' by the American Institute, Catalyst, 4 pillars of manhood were identified:

1 *'Avoid all things feminine.'*

No doubt this is the cardinal rule of masculinity: never be seen conforming to feminine norms. Any man judged as acting in this way would be exposed to criticism, ridicule or rejection. In short, his status as a man could seriously be called into question.

2 *'Be a winner.'*

This principle concerns achieving status. Any behaviour likely to increase wealth, social prestige or power over others, becomes a typically masculine behaviour.

3 *'Show no chinks in the armour.'*

Men must be tough in both body and in spirit (termed 'Atlas Syndrome', after the titan of Greek mythology who was forced by Zeus to support the heavens on his shoulders).

4 *'Be a man's man.'*

Men must participate in typically masculine activities, which, depending on the culture, may include watching sports, drinking beer, or attending men's clubs.

Be 'one of the boys' as the American saying goes. This unwritten rule calls for all self-respecting men to win the respect and admiration of their male peers and to feel a special sense of camaraderie with them. Does this bring to mind stereotypical images of a pint of beer in the pub before a football game? There is certainly some of that, and more. Ultimately, being a 'man's man' requires visibly complying with all masculine norms.

Internalised or externalised, disputed or accepted, for many people these norms perpetuate gender inequalities. Indeed, in a business environment, everyone is, in part, defined by what others expect from them.

Men send out messages to others about how 'real men' should act, particularly in leadership positions. If a man doesn't agree with these, he often 'gives in' and goes along anyhow, to prevent being criticised.

This combative and aggressive identity ends up costing men a lot, as the Catalyst Institute research shows:

Costs: What Men Lose as a Result of Gender Inequality	Benefits: What Men Gain From Gender Equality
Pressure to bear the primary financial responsibility for one's household (i.e. 'Atlas Syndrome')	Freedom to share financial responsibilities with one's spouse or partner
More distant relationship with spouse or partner	More rewarding and intimate relationship with spouse or partner
More distant relationships with children	Freedom to parent more substantively; more rewarding relationship with children
Pressure to acquire status and compete with other men	Freedom to define oneself according to one's own values rather than traditional gender norms
Poor psychological and physical well-being	Better psychological and physical health

Table 1: Costs of Gender inequality and Benefits of Gender Equality to Men

In the 1970s, American sociologist Michael Kimmel¹ defined masculine norms through the following rules:

- 'Don't be a sissy!' Being a man means, above all, never behaving like a woman.
- 'Be a big wheel!' Masculinity is measured by the size of a man's ... salary. Wealth, power and status are all signs of masculinity.
- 'Be a sturdy oak in a storm!' In other words, a man can be recognised by the fact that it is possible to count on him in times of crisis. As a rock, a pillar or a century-old tree, he will never waver.

¹ *The Guy's Guide to Feminism*, Michael Kaufman & Michael Kimmel, Avallion Publishing Group, 2011.

- 'Give 'em Hell!' Exude an aura of daring and aggression. Take risks, live life on the edge as 'real men' do.

■ Men held captive by their norms

'Nonsense, I'm not like this!' reply most men, convinced that they exercise their own free will at all times. It isn't uncommon for men to challenge one or more of these norms. However, even if these norms play out in different ways, depending on education or social and cultural environment, they are a reality. Society is structured so that no man escapes them completely.

The Catalyst study insists on the exacerbated nature of masculine norms in organisations characterized by power struggles: political parties, unions, professional associations and of course, business.

Whether they are internalised or externalised, challenged or accepted, these norms play an important role in the persistence of gender inequalities. As long as each gender is defined partly in relation to the expectations of his/her peers, making unbiased decisions remains difficult. And what exactly are these expectations? That the top jobs be occupied by men, 'real men', of course!

It doesn't matter if senior leaders consciously adhere to these norms or not. They will usually integrate, or even reinforce, masculine norms without even being aware of it.

■ Moving away from the 'aggressive dominant male'

So how can we move away from norms that perpetuate gender inequality? According to the gender specialist Michael Kaufman, the best solution is to turn the problem around. Rather than focusing on the glass ceiling faced by women, attention should also be given to the

norms which force men to be both aggressive and defensive. Many men disapprove of domineering behaviours, but risk being ridiculed by their peers for not going along. Kaufman calls this uncomfortable situation 'Men's contradictory experiences of power'¹. To improve this situation, which satisfies no one, Kaufman suggests to:

- > Pay attention to the processes through which boys develop a feeling of belonging to the dominant gender (gender polarisation).
- > Recognise the fact that male dominance is exercised not only over women, but also over other men.
- > Remember that privileges related to the dominant position also imply suffering (blocking so-called female emotions, pressure to attain an unachievable masculine ideal, etc.).
- > Approach the issue of gender equality in terms of men's identity crisis.

¹ 'The 7 P's of Men's Violence', Michael Kaufman, 1999.

Chapter 12

HOW **GENDER BIAS** CAN AFFECT DECISION-MAKING

PATRICK SCHARNITZKY

Reality is so complex and multifaceted that our brain simply can't observe everything and understand it completely. We're forced to simplify what happens around us through perceptual (or cognitive) bias. This results in a 'pseudo-reality', most often in line with our expectations, and since we perceive the world in this way, we act according to our unconscious biases. These include stereotypes of how we perceive social groups, but also go on to include many other common workplace biases.

What are decision-making biases?

Unconscious biases can lead to multiple decision-making biases which negatively impact our opinions and actions. One example is the 'overconfidence bias'. Having too much self-confidence may cause us to ignore alternative ideas or valid criticism, leading to poor decisions with serious outcomes.

Another example is the halo effect. 'She's talkative, so she must be sociable' makes no sense. In a job interview, a woman may be very talkative because she's trying not to appear shy, or because she's

pretentious, or even simply because she doesn't want a gap in the conversation.

Decision-making biases also result from generalisations about groups. Doesn't everyone know that, in general, women are 'less available, better-organised, more empathic, less resistant to stress, etc.'?

Where do they come from?

This distortion of reality is far from random. It is related to our own emotional and mental needs. We are not looking to make perfect decisions, just to feel good about them. This requires satisfying three basic needs:

- > having a satisfactory image of ourselves
- > understanding the context in which we act
- > working in a reassuring environment

This third element is essential. Corporate workplaces can be sources of misunderstandings or threats. Some executives view the promotion of women as a direct threat to their identity. They find the emergence of a new work balance difficult to accept, as it disrupts a currently male-dominated work culture.

What impact does this have on gender balance?

How can anyone be 'fine' in such an environment? People reinterpret reality in accordance with their own beliefs, leading to all sorts of decision-making biases and to behaviours and attitudes that are both unfair to women and counter-productive to everyone. Here are three typical examples:

- *'Women are too emotional to handle difficult situations', explained a recruiter.*
- *'I can't send her on a business trip; she won't want to be away from her family', said a senior manager.*
- *'She can't play office politics; she'd get eaten alive', said a project team member to squash any suggestions of appointing a woman to the team.*

The men making those comments maintain a positive self image, a well-known and predictable business culture and remain in control of a situation which might otherwise be destabilizing. What impact does this have? Decision-making biases like these, derived from stereotypes, prevent women from getting ahead. Competent women executives are likely to be excluded from recruitment, management and leadership teams.

So, gentlemen (and you too, ladies), accept the idea that your perception of reality is biased, then learn how to overcome your decision-making biases: women are neither difficult to understand nor threatening.

Some examples of unconscious gender biases which could lead to poor decisions:

	John	Laura	Opinion/Decision
Participating in an overseas assignment	He'll improve his French.	She won't be able to leave her family for an extended period.	There is no need even to consider Laura for the mission.
Turning down a promotion	He's not very brave.	She knows her limitations.	We need to recruit more 'real men'.
Speaking out strongly during a meeting	He has real backbone and can stand up for his ideas.	She's hysterical and thinks by shouting, everyone will listen.	We're not ready for women on the executive team.
Handling a difficult client	He's going to immediately confront the client.	She'll know what to say to appease the situation.	Men are too brutal.
Getting married	He'll be more stable.	She'll soon be pregnant.	Now is not the time to give a leadership role to Laura.
Resigning/ leaving the company	We weren't able to keep him motivated.	We should never have hired her.	What if we offer John a salary increase to stay?
Filling a human resource position	His outlook is too direct.	She's a good listener.	Let's offer Laura the position.
Sick leave	He must really be ill.	She's putting it on.	Laura is unreliable.
Asking for a skills review	He wants to leave.	She wants to increase her skills.	Men only want to climb the corporate ladder.
Having lunch with the boss	He's networking.	She's trying to seduce him.	Beware of beautiful women!
Losing an important project pitch	He'll bounce back and win next time.	She'll never get over it.	We can't trust Laura any more with high profile clients.

Table 3: Impact of gender bias on managerial decisions