

New Studies Making the Business Case for Women in Leadership

Women Rated as Overall Better Leaders

According to a recent survey conducted by leadership consultants Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman, (*Harvard Business Review*, March 15, 2012), women were consistently rated as better overall leaders than their male counterparts. The survey evaluated 7,280 leaders using data obtained from a leader's peers, bosses and direct reports. The survey further tested men and women against 16 proven competencies that were considered most important to overall leadership effectiveness, such as "initiative", "drive", "integrity and honesty", and "collaboration and teamwork", to name a few. While women leaders were rated higher in 12 of the 16 competencies, the real surprise was that women outscored men in areas long considered to be male strengths – "taking initiative" and "driving for results". Women explained these results as arising from their tenuous position in the workplace and their continuing need to prove their value to their organization. Survey authors Zenger and Folkman believe this mind-set, that one cannot afford to make a mistake, drives the success of every leader, regardless of gender. For a more detailed look at the survey results, please click on this link.

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/03/a_study_in_leadership_women_do.html?referral=00563&cm_mmc=email- -newsletter- -daily_alert- -alert_date&utm_source=newsletter_daily_alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alert_date#.T2M90vk6vAc.email

Recommendations to the U.S. Department of State Based on Report Finding Women Boost Bottom Line

The Advisory Committee on International Economic Policy (ACIEP) recently submitted recommendations to the State Department's Economic and Business Affairs Bureau with a report entitled, "Women at the Top: How Women at the Top Elevate the Bottom Line." The SubCommittee on Women conducted a survey of the available studies on the economic value of women at the top of corporations and organizations. The report provides a set of insights and recommendations gleaned from numerous studies on the topic, a compendium of exemplary current programs and projects to move woman to the top, and suggested next steps for moving forward. These findings highlight the programs and policies that have worked in numerous organizations to move women ahead and to support the United States' global economic agenda. Some interesting insights were:

- Companies with women on boards were found to outperform their rivals with a 42% higher return in sales, 66% higher return on invested capital and 53% higher return on equity
- Significant barriers to women being appointed to boards include: informal networks which are influential, lack of transparency in selection criteria, and manner in which executive search firms operate presents a barrier to female board candidates.
- Four Barriers which hold back women are: Structural obstacles (lack of networking and female role models), Lifestyle Issues (desire for work life balance), Imbedded Institutional Mindsets (promoting women is too risky), and Imbedded Individual Mindsets (all things considered, less desire to advance to the next level).

Some recommendations included:

- Increased transparency and accountability through establishing percentage goals and measurable objectives for implementing boardroom diversity policy, along with annual disclosure of the policy and progress made.
- Focus on developing and advancing middle management women to reshape talent pipelines by retaining more senior management role models.
- Support unique networking and communication styles and programs, focus on the development of role models to assist younger women and offer alternative work schedules.

The report identifies best practices of some companies and provides next steps to elevate women to positions of leadership. The Report is now available at :

<http://www.state.gov/e/eb/adcom/aciep/index.htm>