

A FRESH LOOK AT AN OLD DILEMMA

GENDER INTEGRATION IS ABOUT COMPLEMENTARITY

I might sound like a broken record, so bear with me and hear me out. If you have been reading current trends as they relate to the new world economic order, workforce issues continue to come up as one of the top three main topics keeping you “awake”. Finding, retaining and promoting talent that will help your company grow and commit to win more market share is an essential part of your day to day reality.

What I continue to observe, through the work I am doing, is the amount of efforts in time and money applied to gender issue and the lack of real bottom line traction and results these efforts yield. Yet companies are hesitant to take a look at why their efforts are not working and continue to entrench their activities and resources to models and strategies that will not work because they do not address the root cause of the problem.

What is most interesting and most significant is the gap of understanding at a strategic level, what is gender integration, and the impact gender balance (complementarity) has on business performance. This blind spot is keeping us busy!

One of the reasons I wrote my book, **Can You Afford to Ignore Me**, *how to manage gender and culture at work*, is precisely to give you the tools and insights that will help you invest your time, money

and efforts in programs and initiatives that will yield the result you need. Many companies still require both Millennials and women to adapt to cultural and social norms that are quite defined as male oriented cultures with traits such as a high degree of competitiveness, hierarchical tendencies and emphasis on maximizing individual performance—*I tell you – you follow*. Coexistence of female AND male attributes is not the norm.

May I suggest a path towards solving, yes, solving this gender dilemma?

First seek for and engage experts who can explain and offer you strategic ideas on how to promote gender integration.

Next offer targeted programs to your directors and managers on this topic they will thank you for making their lives easier.

Let me share just two pieces of data with you:

Qualities affecting team performance peak when there is a 50–50 gender balance, including “psychological safety” “experimentation” and “efficiency”. Self-confidence peaked when females had a slight 60–40 advantage. (London Business School 2007)

The IQ of individuals in a group is not as important as how gender-diverse it is. Bringing women into the group causes the collective intelligence to rise. (The Female Factor-HBR)

What my work shows is that when we reframe your strategy and create a dialogue around how women and men can complement each other and exploit their complementarity, both men and women behave and perform better and companies win in revenues, innovation and overall performance.

Can you afford to ignore that?

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