



VOICE

stand out from the crowd



Gender Diversity: Are we missing a trick?

The 21st Century was hailed by Daisaku Ikeda, a Buddhist leader, and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, president of Argentina, as the Century of the Woman. Here we are at the end of the 1st decade of this century and I am not certain what progress we are making. According to the Office of National Statistics UK, employment figures for 2009 tell us that we have 29 million people working, 45% of which are women. Additionally, 54% of students are women with more and more studying the once traditional male dominated subjects such as engineering, IT and manufacturing.

This steady increase in the number of women in the workforce with the desire to educate themselves to degree level and beyond, has been a trend for at least 20 years, but still, when you look at the number of women in senior management positions, women are down in the single figures. In fact, in many sectors, like those I mentioned before, the figure is below 5%. The picture doesn't change significantly for the majority of large economic countries in European or in the United States.

I am not advocating that we need a bit of 'guidance counselling' for the workforce, merely that this is a major issue we currently face and one that is not healthy for our businesses.

I am also not recommending that we embark on positive discrimination because, although this has worked well in some Scandinavian countries for short periods of time, it is often not welcomed by women because they don't feel they have 'made it' on their own merits. I do however believe that we are missing a trick in not having higher numbers of women making the decisions in business. The longer it goes on, the longer the situation will perpetuate and the gender diversity issue will remain, and this could have serious implications for the success and profitability of business. So what can we do and how can we go about balancing the genders

“...Women are willing to ask stupid questions. We won't take risks we don't understand, so we ask: what is sub-prime?...”

During the recession and subsequent collapse of a number of banks, the Icelandic economy suffered more than most, mainly due to the high risk-taking strategies of a group of Icelandic banks. One exception however was that of the investment firm Audur Capital run by two women, Halla Tomasdottir and Kristin Petursdottir. Their decision to be 'Risk Aware' instead of “risk-averse” and to take a more ethical approach to their operations, resulted in the tripling of their wealth management business when everyone else was losing business – a lesson for all of us.

Despite being female, the Icelandic pair, do not believe in encouraging women 'tokenship' when it comes to heading up big business. They believe that a woman in leadership needs to balance belonging in the boardroom with the ability to really be themselves. But how feasible is this in the work place? Halla and Kristin believe that it boils down to the power of three. One woman in the boardroom may not ask the 'stupid' but necessary questions, but three, with the right values in place, will. Ethics and corporate governance are values women tend to place high on the agenda and those values can prove very beneficial when it comes to decision making.

From a practical perspective, they argue that another reason for the importance of having women on the Board is that women make 80% of household purchasing decisions and as a result have an ever-growing influence on capital expenditure. Having

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Karen Frost reviews examples of organisations who have changed their traditional business cultures in order to incorporate the increasing number of women in the workplace.

Women in Leadership Interview - John Frost interviews Jane Gould, Information Services Sales & Distribution Director at Coca-Cola Enterprises to find out how she faces the challenges of being a female leader in a traditionally male role.

The Goddess in You! - In this article Karen Frost relates back to the Greek Goddesses in order to uncover the various archetypes that women exhibit in the workplace.

On the Couch - Values Based Leadership Associate Lynn Davidson provides answers to a US based female VP on how best to lead and manage a remote team of technical experts who are predominantly male.

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Women in leadership workshop -10th March 2010

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women present, when making vital decisions, can help a company understand the expanding female market and how to benefit from it.

I recently heard a President of a company in the UK say that the culture of his business had been built around a male culture for so many years that it often created an environment where women did not fit. I think he was making a very good point. The fact that he understood this and wanted to do something about it was 'music to my ears' because addressing the issue needs to start with all people understanding where the problem lies. Once recognised, there are a variety of ways in which men and women can work together to create a thriving culture that both genders can succeed in.

As women what can we do? We need to learn how to ask for what we require. We have a responsibility in shaping the culture of business and not being afraid to do so. As women we can learn from each other what works and what does not and step by step we can help craft and build a culture that we can thrive in. It is our responsibility.

As men what can we do? We can listen. Really listen. Not in the way we might when it sounds like women are moaning again, but listen to what both genders can offer to a business and join together to create a culture that works for both. There is a lovely example of listening that comes from Microsoft where they were having very few applications for positions from women because of the language that was used on the recruitment website. They changed the language because a male senior manager listened to one of his female managers. The website was changed and lo and behold the number of applications from women increased.

What will the benefits be of us working together? Much like a marriage when a couple works together! We achieve harmony and good decision making, our businesses will thrive and we will create a pleasant working environment for all. And, if the statistics are right, gender balanced businesses are more successful than male dominated ones.

John Frost interviews Jane Gould Information Services Sales & Distribution Director at Coca-Cola Enterprises



Jane Gould has been leading teams in the technical area of IT a large percentage of her working life and has focused her skills and managed her career to be successful. I had the opportunity to interview Jane recently just as she was starting her new role with Coca Cola as their Information Services Sales and Distribution Director.

John - How important is your career to you?

Jane - My career is very important to me. It's a huge part of who I am. Family considerations would always come first but when times are good **"...my career is very important to me... It defines a part of me..."** and things are going smoothly I put huge energy into my career. It defines a part of me and it's my arena of challenge in my life and I need that. I suppose its equivalent to sporting challenges that I had in my teenage years which were my arena for improving myself. My career is the challenge in my adult years and I really need that.

John - What sort of life changes have you made for your career?

Jane - I think that I have put my career first, ahead of personal relationships but I think that the most important thing that I've done for my career is location, geographical moves. So moving from Australia to Europe was a big decision but it was one that came easily as my career is important to me and that was what I felt was required for career progression.

John - You are a manager in a technical area of the business, so what, if any, challenges has this presented to you?

Jane - If I talk about me managing technical people I don't think that there are any great gender differences. I think that technical people in themselves can be different to manage than other profiles in the business, if we look at profiles as meaning approaching this from a Myers-Briggs preferred behaviours angle. The technical profile can be much more introverted, analytical and a preference for lots of structure so you are working with a slightly different profile to, for example, people in manufacturing or research and development. So, I would say this has more weight towards preparation when developing management or performance management approaches than gender.

The one thing that concerns me in a technical area is that statistically companies attract equal amounts of women into the technical division as men. The number of women decline as you go through the career ladder. Retention of women in a technical division is a challenge that companies are now starting to recognise and plan for.

John- What are the benefits of you being a manager, a leader and a woman?

Jane - It's an interesting one. There are general research papers and statements out there that companies, who have women in senior management positions, are all doing very well financially, or should we say that when we look at leading companies, they seem to have a good gender diversity. Now of course, the research is still taking place on the links between gender

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diversity and success.

My personal experience is that women can often bring a more 'feelings' side to decisions, particularly around people. That's a really general statement and like any statement there are general patterns and there are also huge exceptions. So, I've met women who are extremely analytical and data driven when it comes to decisions and I've met men who are extremely sensitive. In general and through my personal experience I seem to be able to have more personal conversations around what people want out of their career and what their concerns are than my male colleagues. I've often been asked, as one of the few women in a technical area, to have conversations with people who are stressed or upset to see if I can calm them down or see if I can get to the bottom of what it is that they are really concerned about. And I have had certain situations when I have been asked by male colleagues to do this because they feel uncomfortable doing so. That's no reflection on them, it's for lots of reasons these situations can arise and a female approach can work.

John - What sort of role models do you have in business and why would they be your role models?

Jane - Interestingly enough, probably my long term role model has been a woman. She led a new approach to recruitment about 30 years ago in England and Europe, the model the recruitment industry is based on today. Not only did she challenge current models but did it in a time when women leaders were only just starting to get traction. I think that there was definitely a part of me that held her in high esteem because she was a woman in what I considered to be a man's world, but her ability to remain true to her style and work and life commitments was what tipped the balance.

Apart from the woman I mentioned above all of my other mentors who are people that I've held in high esteem have been men; men who have progressed with a good strong sense of work / life balance and with a good strong sense of themselves. I think that, irrespective of gender, that's something to really look up to.

John - How do you promote yourself and raise your profile in business?

Jane - Sticking to the basics is how you do this the best in my opinion. The basics I focus on are work hard, deliver and creating relationships through networks. But the basics take some energy and passion. Hard work and delivery give you a solid credible story and the networks are the profile raising events where you tell your story. People often have a negative connotation about people who are good at building relationships and people who build **"...have a sense of who you are and be continually absolutely necessary to raise your building that ..."** profile and that's certainly my preferred mechanism of doing it. I am very lucky in that I find I am quite

comfortable meeting people and so building my networks comes quite naturally. This is despite the challenges, one of which comes to mind, a recent technology leadership event in London, of the 20 people there, I was the only woman. These types of events can either be very daunting or be seen as opportunities for profile raising by putting your thoughts on the table along with all attendees. I suggest the latter!

Keep it practical. Use on-line networking, attend business functions both in and outside your business, have a sense of who you are and be continually building that sense of who you are and what you believe in through this attendance as well as reading. Bring this sense of who you are to networking using a calm balanced approach of listening and solid discussions that share with people your story and what you stand for.

John - What advice would you have for other women to manage their careers in a successful way?

Jane - I don't believe that there are career approaches for women and different career approaches for men. I think that 90% of the time (I'll talk about the other 10% in a moment) it's the basic approach of working hard, understanding your values set **"...Don't leave your development purely and finding a company that supports that value set. If this to your manager, own is all in place then relationships that and deploy that are going to be strong with the company. yourself..."** After that, then you have to put your energy into your career through: understanding the business, delivering your objectives, building on your self awareness and constantly assessing your performance whilst having open communication with your manager around all of that. Don't leave your development purely to your manager, own that and deploy that yourself as much as anything, with their support.

The 10%! – women (and more men too) and family commitments. They need very good mentors within a business and a business can do themselves a great favour by having mentors assigned to these people before they go off on leave. A mentor who's got a persons career at heart and is actually there helping them to keep their profile within the company, before and during their leave, is important. You and your mentor need to have a plan in the same way you would if you or anyone went away on any form of sabbatical. You need to actively manage the transition before leave and when you come back off leave. This is often the part that is missing in my experience.



Jane Gould

*Business Information Systems
Sales and Distribution Director*

Coca-Cola Enterprises

The Goddess in You!

By Karen
Frost

From my own experience of being a woman in various leadership roles and from coaching women in leadership roles, I often feel we have to be everything to everyone; particularly if we are married and have a family as we navigate our careers. So I have been thinking about how it is that we fulfil the many roles we have in our lives and what each of these roles gives us. To understand this I ventured back to ancient Greek times (as you do!) and started to look at the Greek Goddesses as metaphors for our modern life. To help me understand and to get a good feeling about myself and the 'plates that I spin' I quite like the idea of imagining myself as a Goddess! For me it feels feminine and practical in today's complex world of business.

Through work done by Jean Shinoda Bolen in her book "Goddesses in Everywoman," Jean describes seven Goddesses which between them span the range of archetypes we can and often need to be. These are:

Aphrodite – Goddess of love and beauty with the unique power of transformation.

Artemis – Goddess of the moon and of hunting. She embodies the independent, active feminine spirit.

Athena – Goddess of wisdom, war strategy and crafts. She is dedicated to chastity and celibacy.

Demeter – Goddess of grain, who presides over the harvest. She is the provider.

Hera – Goddess of marriage with a queenly aspect who stands out from the crowd.

Hestia – Oldest of the Goddesses who is a homemaker and keeper of the hearth. Her fire provides light, warmth and heat for food.

Persephone – Queen of the underworld, who is able to move between the 'real' world and the unconscious world of images, instincts and feelings.

Intuitively we can recognise ourselves and other women in these Goddesses through behaviours, whether they are behaviours that are inherent in each of us or have been adapted to meet the needs of our environment. The Goddesses personify the typical ways in which women act and feel and are the archetypes of patterns of thinking, feeling, instinct and behaviour.

In a business context the Goddesses can be clearly seen.

Aphrodite is independent and does as she pleases. She is visionary and adapts to change very well. She can evolve to meet the needs and demands of modern life. **Artemis** is an independent thinker and can set her own goals and take care of herself. She is competent and likes to be fulfilled in her work. She does not need the approval of others and achieves the goals she sets out for herself. She has a strong set of values.

Athena is known for her winning strategies and practical solutions. She is logical, ruled by her head rather than her heart. She is pragmatic with a realistic attitude and a good colleague. **Demeter** has maternal instincts and is fulfilled by nurturing others. She is generous and finds satisfaction in being a caretaker. She enjoys being involved in the helping professions such as teaching, nursing and coaching.

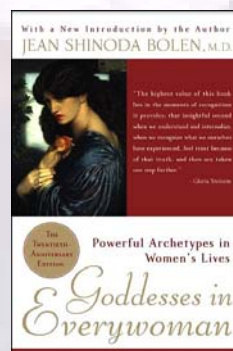
Hera is confident and in command of herself and often others. She recognises other facets in herself besides marriage to enrich her life, so will channel her energies into work. She has a strong set of values, has high energy and a strong will. **Hestia** provides a sense of intactness and wholeness. She has an inner centeredness and is a wise woman. She doesn't get involved with the internal politics of business but is highly receptive to others who can mediate. She is a spiritual, intuitive person.

And finally, **Persephone** is intuitive, compliant and often passive. She also has youthfulness and vitality. She is receptive to change, with high levels of openness and flexibility. She is able to guide others.

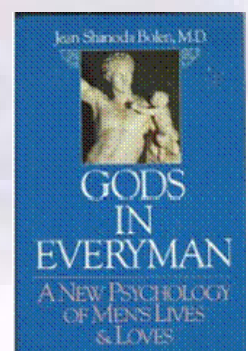
What I recognise is which of the Goddesses is in me; where I share the most common archetypes and how I use these in the many aspects of my life. I can also associate with the other Goddesses and can use these archetypes to navigate my way through my career and my life. It makes me feel better to understand the Goddess in me and when I need to draw on my other Goddesses for wisdom, strength, femininity, caring, insight and so on.

So who is the Goddess in you?

Jean Shinoda Bolen has also written about the "Gods in Everyman" and draws on the innate patterns, the archetypes of 8 Greek Gods to help men understand themselves through the metaphor of ancient Greece.



Published by Harper
Perennial (August
1985)



Published by
Harper Paperbacks
(March 1990)

On the Couch

With Lynn Davidson



"I am the Vice President of a division of a Multinational organisation. I am based in the US and a large proportion of my team are based in the UK. Because of the nature of our business, the people I line manage in the UK are all technical experts in their field and they are all men. I need to manage and lead this remote team with very little face to face input, because of the geographical restrictions. Email, telephone and video conference are my day to day forms of communication."

Like many organisations, over the past few years we have gone through several re-structures and a number of people have been made redundant. Although this has meant a 20% reduction in my staff, I have also acquired direct reports as departments have been consolidated within the division. I now have a number of key people who I hardly know and who I can hear are struggling to manage and lead their direct reports."

This is a common issue that seems to come up with the coaching work I do in organisations and there is much that you can do over the coming months. Your approach and style do need to be consistent and you do need to get to know your people and quickly. You may well have a wealth of information sat in front of you and not realise it, so just taking some time over the next few weeks to see what you already know about your people will be time well spent. For example, all people use their senses in a specific way to take in information and to communicate. In general most people use their visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses (VAK) to a greater or lesser extent. By listening to peoples language patterns when they speak and reading the words they use on email, it will give you a strong indication of whether a person is more visual or perhaps more kinaesthetic or, indeed, a combination of senses. Understanding people's preferences will give you a real idea of how best to communicate with them as well as gain rapport and build trust. So a person who is very visual will love video conference and may not enjoy the telephone as a main form of communication. Using the communication form most preferred will result in better outcomes for all involved. I have added some website references at the end if you would like to understand more on this subject.

My second thought is around how you can develop your networking skills with your team. What I mean by this is how you communicate on a regular basis with each of them to give out or find out information. This could be in the form of a regular email or a regular telephone call where you are imparting information which they may find valuable and which will provide an opportunity for you to receive information. The other very useful tool,

to develop more networking within your team, is to use LinkedIn®. This external social networking facility is an excellent way of communicating with members of your team because it offers an additional way to communicate, shows you are interested in them as people and provides a profile of the people you are connected with. You can send invites for others to link with you and you can create closed groups to share knowledge and experience.

Following on from these ideas, I would recommend that you consider support for those key people who have specific development needs. Technical experts are often brilliant in their technical area and not so brilliant with management and leadership skills. This is much more difficult to line manage from a distance, so my suggestion is to get some help! I can recommend help in three forms.

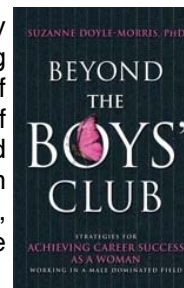
Firstly, if you have them, use the mentors in your organisation, who are local to your key people, to provide advice and support. If your key people are short of skills or have confidence issues, for example, then it may be more beneficial to ask a local internal coach, your organisation has, to work with individuals on a regular basis. This will allow you to have input into the objectives set for coaching. If internal coaches are not available, or indeed relevant, then I would recommend a short set of coaching sessions with a fully qualified external business coach. The coach can act on your behalf and do in a short period of time what it might take you much longer to do from a distance.

<http://www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstylestest.htm>

Thought Leaders

Beyond the Boys Club by Suzanne Doyle-Morris
Reviewed by Karen Frost

I selected to read this book recently because of the current work I am doing with developing the leadership skills of women in the more technical sectors of our economy. I am really pleased I did take the time to read this book from cover to cover. It is full of examples, experience and tips on how to be successful in your career as a woman.



This book addresses one of the major challenges faced by most areas of business. It should be read by women who wish to be part of the solution and men who wish to understand the problem. Suzanne has segmented the book into the most important issues that women face and men need to understand. These include; how to play the game, raising your profile, taking risks and connecting with the right people. I would recommend it to women at any stage in their careers as there is something for everyone. I would also like to recommended it to men in senior leadership roles who are eager to learn how best to tap into the rich source of leadership that exists in their women employees.

Published by Wit and Wisdom Press May 2009

Women in Leadership Workshop

Are you a woman leader or do you aspire to a senior leadership role? Are you looking to expand your leadership development?

Karen Frost, Director at Values Based Leadership, presents a one day workshop for Women in Leadership set in the beautiful surroundings of The Lincoln Centre.

The Workshop will cover:

- An introduction to leadership for women
- Developing leadership skills from a female perspective
- Developing networking skills
- Gaining the most out of a mentoring relationship
- The opportunity to meet and network with like-minded women in leadership roles

The workshop costs £250 + VAT and includes:

- All workshop materials
- Refreshments throughout the day
- A substantial lunch

Date: Wednesday 10th March

Time: 9.30am – 4.30pm

Venue: The Hogarth Room The Lincoln Centre, 18 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A

For further information or to book a place on the workshop, please contact

emma@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk or

steph@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk or call 01989 76 22 33

For those women unable to get to Holborn London on 10th March, because of time and/or geography, then VBL will be running a 2 hour webinar in April to provide the essentials from the workshop. Please register your interest for a place on the webinar and further details by emailing emma@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk or steph@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk.

Final Thoughts

"Whoever is providing leadership needs to be fresh and thoughtful and reflective as possible to make the very best fight." **Faye Wattleton**

"Once power was considered a masculine attribute, in fact, power has no sex." **Katherine Graham**

"Because of their age-long training in human relations - for that is what feminine intuition really is – women have a special contribution to make to any group enterprise." **Margaret Mead**

"In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility." **Eleanor Roosevelt**

Comments and/or contributions are welcome. Please address them to the Editor at the address to the left, or email: emma@valuesbasedleadership.co.uk.
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Voice is published four times a year by Values Based Leadership Ltd, Sterling House, 17 Church Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5HN
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