

20 Ways to Promote Women Business Leaders

Promoting women business leaders benefits everybody. Companies need the best leaders and this is not fulfilled if the recruitment pool excludes women. Statistics show that women have not yet reached their full potential in the corporate leadership positions. Gender segregation in the labour market means that women end up in lower paid, lower status sectors.

Changing the status quo requires new attitudes among employers and women and the whole society.

Society – 4 Ways to reduce the gender segregation of labour market

1. Promoting women's participation in the labour market

- providing affordable and flexible day care for children
- ensuring that the costs of family leave are laid not solely on women's employers

2. Bringing new attitudes and role models into primary and secondary education

3. Motivating girls to study mathematics and sciences at school

4. Motivating women to choose engineering and economics in their vocational and professional studies

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Employers – 5 Ways to Promote Women Business Leaders

1. Making a strategic and targeted decision to promote women's leadership in the company.

- The company should make a high-level decision to promote women's advancement in the career pipeline and follow the progress of the situation. The results could be used as criteria in the executive remuneration schemes. A chief level (C-suite) representative should be assigned responsibility of the issue.

2. Using equality planning as a tool to promote women's careers.

- Employers should issue meaningful equality plans. An analysis of the company's equality status should be used as a basis for equality planning. The analysis should include statistics of men's and women's positions and pay in the company, as well as an assessment of the existence of any possible internal glass ceilings. It should also identify the point where women start to drop out of the path to the top executive roles. Employee surveys should be used to detect inequalities. Equality planning should involve setting concrete goals and measures as well as the follow-up on their success. A C-suite representative should be assigned responsibility of equality in the workplace.

3. Building recruitment processes that promote both genders to seek all kinds of jobs.

- When using recruitment consultants, they should be required to propose both women and men on long and short lists.

4. Recognizing the talent potential among the employees and ensuring that women are fully considered in the talent management process.

- Employers should be aware of women's often cautious reaction to taking up new challenges and encourage women to advance in their career.

5. Diversifying women's skills.

In order to advance in their career, women need experience of business operations leadership and line management. Also, training opportunities should be offered to women and men equally.

6. Taking diverse private life circumstances into account by allowing flexibility in working time and methods, as well as giving up the 24/7 working culture.

Even executives do not need to be available 24/7. It should be enough that they are reached when needed. Employers should also provide appropriate induction for employees returning to work from parental leave.

7. Providing mentoring for women in their career path.

Women – 9 Ways to Promote Your Own Career

- 1. When making educational choices consider mathematics and sciences at school and engineering and economics in your studies.**
- 2. Bridge the confidence gap and be merciful to yourself!** Self-doubt can be a major barrier to women's advancement. Being perfect should not be the goal – better done than perfect!
- 3. Delegate – a leader cannot do everything herself.**
- 4. Take up on opportunities and go beyond your comfort zone.**
 - give a positive answer to inquiries from recruitment consultants
 - update your CV in order to identify which skills need further development
 - accept promotions offered by your employer
- 5. Diversify your skills and seek new tasks.**
 - use your development discussions with your superior as a tool to diversify your skills and promote your career
 - be curious and seek new tasks to widen your skills, even though it would not mean a promotion
 - seek line management positions
- 6. Make such choices in your private life that support a balanced private and working life.**
 - be ambitious but accept that you cannot get it all
 - agree with your spouse on the division between household and childcare duties and use outside help
- 7. Organize your work so that it supports both your career and private life.**
 - make sure that you can be reached when needed but don't be available 24/7
 - utilize remote working methods, but remember the importance of leisure time
 - keep yourself up-to-date on working life even during parental leaves.
- 8. Find yourself a mentor.**
 - sparring with a mentor helps you develop your skills
 - in discussions with a mentor you will find new views to your work, career and personal development
 - look for a mentor who can also act as a sponsor to promote your career
- 9. Invest in your future by finding time for networking, also beyond your current business sector.**

WOMEN EXECUTIVES STEPPING UP FOR MORE BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY

**Finland Chamber of Commerce
Women Executives Report 2014**



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**WOMEN
LEADERS
PROGRAM**

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