

'Lack of ambition' deters women

Peter Whitehead asks an IT boss for her explanation of why there is a shortage of female business leaders

Kate Craig-Wood is uniquely qualified to offer an explanation for the shortage of women in senior management roles – and it is a typically out-spoken one.

"It's perhaps not very politically correct to say this, but I think it's partly down to a lack of ambition. From my own personal experience of having lived with testosterone and then without it, it definitely changes you," she says.

Controversial, yes – but her insight into the most fundamental gender difference carries weight, because Kate was once Robert.

Ms Craig-Wood is managing director of Memset, a web and IT hosting solutions provider based in Guildford, Surrey, a company she founded in 2002 with her brother Nick, its technical director.

At that time, Ms Craig-Wood was Mr Craig-Wood, a woman in a man's body, brought up to be a boy – and for two years a husband – but mentally and emotionally, always feminine.

Following a gruelling process of gender transition, completed in 2006, she is able to see business leadership and the workplace very differently.

She now believes the gender imbalance at the top of the business world can partly be explained by natural differences between the sexes: "It's a gross over-generalisation, but women care about being collective, whereas men tend to care for themselves.

"So if women believe they're doing the right thing by keeping their head down and supporting a group, then they're perhaps less motivated to push themselves forward. Women also tend to undervalue themselves and that is a very big barrier."

Her experience, along with her MSc in biomedical science, lead her to attribute these characteristics – at least in part – to nature, rather than nurture: "I say look at the hormones."

She backs this up by revealing how she has changed since her operation: "It sounds terribly clichéd, but my perspective on the company and the people has changed. I used not really to be a people person, whereas now one of my most satisfying moments is being the last person in the office on Friday night and just wandering around and looking at all those desks and thinking about the people. It's almost a maternal pride.



Kate Craig-Wood: 'Society tends to over-protect women. It's an instinct, but it has unfortunate effects' Daniel Jones

"Dad was the archetypal parent, believing there was a murderer and rapist round every corner and so my sister was a frightened little girl, whereas I was taught to look at the world through analytical eyes and understand it. So when I was frightened by thunder, dad would explain to me what was going on, whereas that didn't seem to happen with my sister and she was allowed to be afraid.

"So I would say it was more about overprotecting. I'm sure Dad came at it from a caring place, but you still see it – society tends to over-protect women. I don't think there's any malign intent on the part of the male half of the species. I think it's an instinct, but it has unfortunate ramifications."

Is it possible to overcome this protectiveness?

"I think it's absolutely possible," Ms Craig-Wood says. "I would advocate teaching parents. Boys and girls are being socialised differently – it's nobody's fault – but there is something you can do about it."

I first interviewed Ms Craig-Wood in 2008, when her company employed 12 people. It is now 30-strong and growing, but faces the same problem today as it did then – a lack of girls interested in working in IT.

"A few years ago we started seeing girls coming out of programming courses and there were some excellent candidates, but we're seeing that die off," she says. She advises girls who want to earn £30,000 within two years of leaving university to learn Python programming, as the demand for women in IT is huge.

They are put off partly by the typically male IT environment, which applies to Memset, too. Ms Craig-Wood explains: "Although we have an environment on the technical team which would suit women, at the moment it is entirely guys and I morally struggle with that first girl joining. It could be difficult."

They are all talking about football and swearing a lot?

"Yes. And I've seen it at leadership level, which is even more damaging. I've even seen myself doing it. In the early days when I was the only female in the office, I became a lot more crude and had to develop interests in things that didn't interest me just so I could talk to them.

"I've spoken to many other women in technology who have basically

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'As the only female in the office, I became more crude and had to develop interests in things that didn't interest me'

"In the past, I would be much more focused on how I was going to make this all work for me. Now, it's about how am I going to make this work for all of us together."

Her focus on the natural does not exclude consideration of societal explanations, however, and Ms Craig-Wood has clear views on how upbringing shapes the sexes' relationship with leadership.

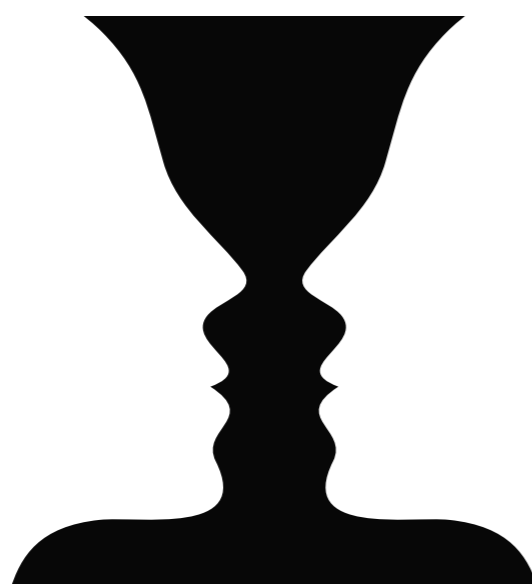
"Compared to most women, I was brought up to have a lot of confidence. Running and growing my own business, that's been important, because when I make a decision, I instil confidence in my team so they feel ready to follow me. But a lot of that is now down to track record as well.

"I surprise myself at how rapidly I climbed to modest celebrity within the IT sphere – but I think it came not from me being aggressive, but me being outspoken and having faith that I have something to contribute.

"I think having an opinion and sticking to it and believing it and sharing it is something that doesn't necessarily come naturally to women. But we should encourage it. I like to think that organisations would value that trait and I think that's where things like coaching come in."

As we shift to discussing the "nurture" side of the equation, I ask why girls do not develop the same sort of confidence as boys.

"I can't speak for everyone, but looking at my childhood, compared to my sister's childhood, I don't think it was so much a matter of confidence being instilled in me – although there was an element of that – but of fear being instilled in her.



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Singers take the opposite paths



One followed his passion from finance to music; economics forced the other back to the office
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Your questions

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Executive Appointments

Senior staff make the case for portfolio careers

Your Questions Answered

GILL PLIMMER

My HR department is receiving a growing number of requests from quite senior staff to cut down on their hours so they can devote more time to other interests outside work – and in some cases, fledgling businesses. They argue that pursuing their “portfolio” careers will help improve their skills and benefit the business, and I’m of the mind that it’s important to take their requests seriously for retention purposes. But what are the legal and practical implications and how does it work in practice?

Simon Harper, co-founder of Lawyers On Demand, a legal resourcing business that offers portfolio careers for lawyers, says:

First, congratulations on your foresight. While at first it might seem counter-intuitive to allow employees to explore other businesses and interests, you are right in recognising the long-term benefits to your own business.

Studies show that autonomy consistently tops the list of traits most valued by employees, and is a main driver for initiating and sustaining portfolio careers. It has

also been found that workers who believe they are free to make choices in the workplace – and be accountable for their decisions – are happier and more productive. These same workers also seem willing to make a financial sacrifice in the process.

You rightly state that staff retention is a consideration, but think, too, about staff loyalty. Senior managers who are given more autonomy are much more likely to become staunch evangelists for your brand (and might also be more likely to attract other talent because of their enthusiasm for your business). In addition, when budgets are tight for salaries, the offer of flexibility can be an equally effective lure for new and existing employees.

On a practical level, it is vital that expectations on both sides are set up front – agree on the time your managers will dedicate to your business and clearly state that they must not be diluted with other projects. Agree a trial period so that both sides can review progress, and address any problems as soon as they arise – there are bound to be bumps in the road.

Finally, try to monitor output where possible. You might well find that your managers are as productive despite their reduced

hours, because of their increased motivation and energy. This will help you establish a business case for any further requests.

Rob Eldridge, employment partner at Berwin Leighton Paisner, says:

There are a few issues that might arise as a result of these arrangements, none of which is necessarily prohibitive, but you should bear them in mind when considering requests.

There are two ways in which legal obligations might be introduced to this situation. First, there are implied duties in every contract of employment, one of which is the duty of fidelity.

This includes employees’ duties not to put themselves in positions where their interests conflict with those of their employer, duties not to act for their own benefit or those of third parties without their employer’s informed consent, and a duty not to compete with their employer.

Second, as senior employees, it may well be that there are express duties in their contracts covering these and similar areas.

Obtain more information about these staff members’ other business interests – if it is a completely separate area from your organisation then that won’t raise a conflict of



More time for extracurricular work

interest but if senior staff members pursue portfolio careers in similar sectors to their main jobs, that could have the potential to become competition for your business further down the line.

It would be sensible to obtain information from the individuals about the nature and extent of these other businesses before giving consent for their involvement. In any event, this would be a useful opportunity to remind them of their duties.

Unlike requests made under the Flexible Working Regulations, in this situation you do not have a duty to consider these requests reasonably or even at all. However, as you mention, there may be commercial reasons that make it sensible for you to do so.

Email your career management questions to: recruitment@ft.com

‘Lack of ambition’

Continued from Page 1

made themselves more ‘masculine’. But I took a stand against this. I woke up one morning and thought, I’ve spent all this effort on becoming my dream, becoming feminine and here I am trying to tone it down. What on earth am I doing?

“We’ve finally got to a point where we do have a decent number of women in the office – it’s just a shame it’s so polarised between administration and sales versus development and operations.”

Are you seeing any signs of change and progress?

“Unfortunately I have to say no. Our sales team is predominantly female, young and pretty. We’ve been doing more conferences lately and I have had some horrific reports back of gross sexism.”

“Even the career trajectories of my female contacts in the IT world who I’ve known for years don’t seem to be doing terribly well – and time and again I find myself in a tiny minority being it at a board meeting or a conference.”

Ms Craig-Wood is the only woman on Memset’s board. She and her brother each own a 45 per cent shareholding, with the remaining 10 per cent divided between four family backers. But she hopes a female company secretary, who originally joined as a personal assistant, will join the board.

Where does Ms Craig-Wood stand on gender quotas for the boardroom?

“It’s a tricky one. On one hand, I

think it would end up with women being thrust into positions who weren’t ready.

“But then that’s how I learned. And take the lady at my business. She would be terrified if I said, ‘right, you’re going to be a director’. But I think she could do it. We’re held back by fear more than anything.”

“So in the absence of a better plan that will work quickly enough, I think a bit of a kick up the backside might be what’s needed. There are plenty of ways to do it so that people didn’t immediately come in making rash decisions – such as starting the quota quite small and gradually increasing it.”

“And you could have a board apprenticeship, so someone is a silent member for the first two or three board meetings and then starts getting involved in the decision-making a bit more.”

“When you take the idea of women not being taught to be as extrovert and confident and outspoken as male counterparts and then factor in that they will be in a minority, the prospect of joining an established senior board as perhaps the sole woman would be absolutely terrifying. Which is why I think we need that little helping hand of a quota system.”

Any career advice to others?

“Don’t be afraid, have a go. Have faith in yourself that even if it goes wrong, you can probably fix it. I think too many people are held back by the what-if?”

“But I’d adapt it for men – don’t be afraid of being yourself.”

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'Attractive employers don't leave diversity to chance'

Head to head

CLAUDIA TATTANELLI

Claudia Tattanelli chairs the Strategic Board at Unversum, an employer branding consultant.

Do male and female students seek the same employers?

Our research with students shows some employers and sectors attract one gender more than the other, but attributes such as innovation and international opportunities are important for both genders. There are also regional differences.

What are the main differences?

Female students more often choose

companies in the fast-moving consumer goods sector. What is even more interesting is that female engineers, although not strongly attracted to the FMCG industry itself, still choose companies in the sector as their ideal employers as they find them to be inclusive and diverse. In our latest European ranking, based on the preferences of more than 85,000 career seekers, L'Oreal was ranked top by female business students and at 27 by males. Female engineering students ranked Nestlé second while male engineers rated it 28th. Investment banking, on the other hand, attracts many more males: Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan were ranked six and seven by male business students and

21 and 19 respectively by females.

What does each gender value?

Women are looking for employers that support gender equality, have flexible working conditions and high ethical standards. Men focus on companies offering high levels of responsibility, leadership opportunities and only recruit the best talent. When we ask the students how they perceive banks the gender gap is obvious: females choose words such as competitive and aggressive, while males tend to associate banks with prestige and money. We also see a big gap in salary expectations, with female students almost always predicting a lower starting salary.

Why are there differences?

There are several reasons. A company such as L'Oreal, for example, invests in products and marketing targeted at women and is perceived as having a diverse and inclusive workforce. The company also has several women in top management position and retains them – and it takes this message to campuses. On the other hand, investment banks are associated with traditionally male characteristics: long hours and testosterone. The students pick employers that are well-known to them and make products they like. They want to work in companies where they would be welcomed and that are recommended by their friends.

Is advancement an attraction?

Men do more often get "hot jobs" than women – these are jobs with the most impact and might include large and visible projects, mission-critical roles and international assignments. Women are more often nominated for mentoring programmes and spend more time in development programmes without seeing an impact on their careers. Women need experience in hot jobs because most career development happens on the job. There is also a gap in global experience. Even among the women and men most willing to relocate, more men were given international assignments and more women were never asked. In the long run this provides fewer top

management positions and lower salaries for women.

Should differences be overcome? And if so, how?

Differentiation is a big concern for employers because organisations need a diverse workforce to be innovative and dynamic. Many technology companies, for example, have problems attracting women and are working hard on this – although Google, the world's most attractive employer in our ranking, is a good example of a company that has been good at attracting a diverse range. In driving change, smart companies allocate hot jobs in deliberate and strategic ways to advance women. They do not leave it to chance.



David John Pike: 'I suddenly felt it would be stupid to let it all pass by'

Love of money gives way to passion for music and singing

Interview 1

David John Pike

Dina Medland meets a former Deloitte partner who eventually found the courage to fulfil a dream

It took 40 years for David John Pike to recognise that what he really wanted to do was sing for a living. But it has taken the Canadian-born baritone less than six years to establish a reputation as an operatic and concert soloist, release a CD, and be picked by British Airways to reach an audience of millions via its in-flight entertainment.

Whither Must I Wander, a compilation of English songs on CD brought out by independent classical record label Signum Classics in early December, includes Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Songs of Travel", potentially a fitting theme tune to Mr Pike's career odyssey.

Since he walked away from his full-time life as a Deloitte partner in 2007, after having worked in three of the "big four" accountancy firms, he has spent a lot of time travelling and building a network of contacts, coaches and "big names" in the musical sphere.

In December, Mr Pike was in London en route from his Luxembourg home to Florida to work with Sherrill Milne, the American baritone, in preparation for a debut performance with Pacific Opera Victoria in Canada as Scarpia in Puccini's *Tosca*.

From there, it was on to his childhood home in Kingston, Ontario, where he once sang in school and church choirs, inspired by a mother who was a singer, a choir director and a teacher. No journey has a sole purpose: the Canada trip included a

chance for further auditions, interviews and a showcase performance for a publicist.

His itinerary is filling up, with performances at Guildford cathedral in the UK in February, Germany in March, back to Canada in April/May and Luxembourg in June, as his "singing CV" grows.

It is a far cry from his other CV, which describes him as "a finance, IT and risk management professional with a combination of in-depth business and technology knowledge, arising from over 20 years experience..."

As Mr Pike puts it: "The nice thing about being a bean counter is that you can always come back to it if you want to."

While working for Deloitte as partner in enterprise risk services in Switzerland – commuting for four years from Luxembourg where his partner lives – he also started working with "a wonderful singer, a basso profundo who was the latest in a long line of teachers who kept asking me 'but why aren't you singing?'"

This time, he asked himself the same question: "I love making money, both the pursuit of it and the technical challenge – but you start to realise that today's profit is just what it is,

and loyalty to a company isn't all that there is either."

His finance world CV also describes him as an "entrepreneurial, results-driven, team developer, and proven deliverer" – all traits he displayed by quitting Deloitte for a singing career while also setting up his own consultancy business, The Professionals Network, based in Luxembourg.

He continues to prove that he is comfortable in "multi-cultural, multi-lingual and international environments". From early days as an amateur singer at the University of Toronto, encouraged by composer Wil-

liam Perry at the Royal Conservatory of Music, he found his way to London and "a bunch of folk who were also doing it as a hobby on the side".

Today he is keen to embrace the "Englishness" he claims from his grandparents, and now his patriality. It was through his exposure to music in London, with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the London Philharmonic, the ENO Opera Works programme and a chorus role at Glyndebourne in 2009, that it all came together for him.

"In the English situation you could have City lawyers singing alongside competent professional musicians – there is a real choral tradition – whereas in Swiss groups there were mostly professionals," he says.

Having worked under the direction of leading musicians, including Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Neville Marriner, he says: "I had been encouraged repeatedly but I had never had the guts – and then suddenly it felt as if it would be stupid to let it all pass by."

In June 2011, when he received rave reviews for his debut as Marcello in Puccini's *La Bohème* in Bamberg, Germany, it became clear he was not going to let that happen.

Secret CV

Any mentors?

In Toronto, Yezdi Pavri, the Deloitte partner who I could always trust for the right advice.

Your first big break

Working with American bass Daniel Lewis Williams of the Bayerische Staatsoper – he told me if I didn't sing it would be a sin.

Best career advice to others

Don't sell yourself short.

Stress and poor pay sends singer back to the office

Interview 2

Ian Stockley

Dina Medland asks a marketing entrepreneur about 'the realities' that made him switch careers

Ian Stockley has no doubts about the role performing arts can play in building a child's confidence. He recalls being 10 years old, singing on stage in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial By Jury* and losing his wig – but having the aplomb to flick it back on without pausing in the middle of an aria.

Music has been a defining factor in his life from early music scholarships to the independent school, Charterhouse. The French horn vied later with keyboard and the school choir for his attention, but it was in his last year of an economics degree at the London School of Economics that he faced stark choices.

He applied for graduate jobs in marketing with fast-moving consumer goods companies, and also successfully to the Royal Academy of Music for a scholarship. "I got to the last three interviews with companies on the 'milk round' and was asked what other irons I had in the fire. When I mentioned the scholarship they said 'there must be something wrong with us if you've got this far and want to become a singer'."

So he did just that. He says his "bread and butter" work came from oratorio with choral societies, and by 27, he was married and confronted "the idealism of a classical singer's life with the realities".

"I was quite a home bird and didn't want to be in a hotel every week. My wife was a lawyer, and the goalposts changed. I wasn't willing to pay the price, or deal with the stress. So I went back to my economics."

At 30 he secured a job in marketing with Reader's Digest/EMI. At that



Ian Stockley: spent a decade singing

time, it was called "below the line" marketing – which for Mr Stockley "combined creativity with the fact that I am analytical". Joining what was known at the time as "the university of direct marketing", he stayed for six years, becoming director of its UK music and video division.

They parted company when Reader's Digest wanted him to move to the US. Instead, he joined Colleagues, a marketing agency, and

Secret CV

Any mentors?

Andrew Lynam-Smith, the marketing director at Reader's Digest, was amazing at allowing his teams to create opportunity – he allowed me to fast track and influenced my management style going forward.

Your first big break?

A big piece of luck – starting my own company when I did, in 2000.

Best career advice to others?

Listen acutely and be prepared for ongoing challenges to your thinking.

after four years was ready to set up his own marketing business. Called Entire, he says it was "all about communicating with customers and brands through understanding them more, and using data to communicate with the customer". The "statistical regression" analysis he studied at LSE was to stand him in good stead.

Starting Entire was, he says "a big piece of luck" as a change in the law around the electoral roll in 2002 meant companies could no longer buy the full electoral roll for marketing purposes. "We pulled together customer databases as 'data co-operatives' and it allowed me to launch my way of marketing," says Mr Stockley.

In March 2008 he sold Entire to Indicia Group, which was backed by venture capital, and he co-founded Linnaeus Consulting, which offered services aimed at helping clients understand how consumers engage with mobile media as a channel. Linnaeus also became part of Indicia Group in 2010 and Entire merged with Marketing Databases, with Mr Stockley becoming managing director of a company with a turnover now approaching £10m.

The company's clients – who he says would have been dismissive of its work in the early days – include Nissan, Heineken UK, Asos, Yorkshire Building Society, Scottish Power and new clients ITV and TalkTalk.

Having spent a decade singing, and then almost 25 years in marketing, Mr Stockley says: "It was the right thing to do, and I am lucky to have changed career path at 30. But in the next 10 years I would love to start to do more with music – it's a big part of my life. It just does not pay very well."

His two daughters and son are all musically inclined and encouraged to enjoy it. He holds a non-executive post on the board of Bath Festivals, an annual arts festival, and he remains interested in exploring the funding of UK music festivals along the US model of private investors – "combining my love of music with managing a business" as he puts it.

FINANCIAL TIMES
CAREER MANAGEMENT

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Fundamental change could take 'at least a generation'

Dina Medland reviews the progress made over the two years since Lord Davies's report on gender diversity in the boardroom

Two years ago, Lord Davies of Abersoch published a report on the lack of women in UK boardrooms – and it looked ambitious. Just 12.5 per cent of non-executive directors in FTSE 100 companies were female; in the FTSE 250 it was worse – 7.8 per cent. Lord Davies set a target of 25 per cent by 2015.

Has there been progress? Figures from November 2012 show 17.3 per cent of FTSE 100 non-executives are female, and 12 per cent in FTSE 250 companies. They also show that 38 per cent of board appointments made since March 1 last year were women in the FTSE 100; 36 per cent in the FTSE 250.

BoardWatch, a professional boards forum, is about to update its figures on gender balance and notes there have been some female appointments on what were staunchly all-male boards.

Each such appointment is publicised on Twitter by BoardWatch and dutifully "re-tweeted" by Helena Morrissey, founder of the 30% Club, a gender campaigning group.

The most recent appointment publicised in this way is that of Mary Waldner, who will join the previously all-male board of FTSE 250 company Ultra Electronics Holdings as a non-executive director. The list of "appointment tweets" since November 2012 suggests there will be further

room for cheer when the latest figures come out.

But, as Ms Morrissey says: "Two years after the Davies Report, it isn't so much about the numbers, it is about spotlighting the issues. Whether or not the whole thing has been a charade, at least it is 'in our faces' in a way it has never been before, and the lack of women cannot be ignored."

"You couldn't have had much faster progress than we have had if you believe in merit – but somewhere along the way it became apparent that the problem was on the executive side."

Many agree. Lord Davies's report has successfully made diversity an issue to be discussed every day. But this focus has also pushed up the levels of frustration: some women who used to abhor the notion of gender quotas have moved to sit on the fence, or even come out in favour of quotas for want of action.

The UK's business secretary Vince Cable recently sent a letter to seven FTSE 100 companies with resolutely all-male boards to give them a prod. But he maintains a broadly arms-length stance: "This is about long-lasting cultural change and creating a fairer society for all. It is not something that the government is dictating to business and we have always said it should be business-led."

"The onus is on companies to recognise the importance of this challenge and tackle the issue head on."

Fiona Hotston Moore, a senior partner at Reeves, a City accountant, responds: "Vince Cable is saying the right things, but words are not enough. To think he will get a huge increase in the number of women on



In the spotlight: Lord Davies's report raised the issue of gender diversity to a point where the lack of women cannot be ignored

Rosie Hallam

FTSE 100 boards by 2015 without action is ludicrous and naïve."

Ms Hotston Moore says: "All we have is tokenism at the moment – companies want to be seen to comply so they are appointing non-executives. The only way we are going to see progress is quotas – everywhere – public sector and private companies as well."

On other pages

Culture Women are told they need to learn to say 'I' more often

Body language 'We don't puff out our chests for obvious reasons. Men are more likely to be military looking'

Interview Fleur Bothwick of Ernst & Young on tackling gender imbalances

Networking A smart strategy is needed to make the right contacts

But it has also become apparent that the real ambition for better diversity lies well beyond the boardroom – it lies in building an executive pipeline of capable and willing women, which needs action on many levels.

Helen Pitcher, chief executive and chairman of board consultancy Iddas, says: "It will probably take until 2050 before we see 50 per cent women on boards."

"We have made a fair bit of progress on the non-executive front, but it's very slow on the executive side because there just aren't enough women in the pipeline. If we want more female executives coming through we will have to start a lot earlier."

It is a global problem. Sheryl Sandberg, Facebook's chief operating officer, writes in her book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, which is due to be published next month: "Women rarely make one big decision to leave the workforce. Instead, they make a lot of small decisions along the way, making accom-

modations and sacrifices that they believe are required to have a family some day. Of all the ways women hold themselves back, perhaps the most pervasive is that they leave before they leave."

The focus on "numbers" that began with the Davies Report carries on being debated in countless women's groups, as would-be candidates for the boardroom hope to network with the "right people" who might get them there.

But that trend has been overtaken by another, as women and men in business themselves become more involved in instigating the cultural change required from both sexes to achieve the larger ambition of "better business".

Ruby McGregor-Smith, chief executive of Mitie, the outsourcing company, says: "The remit of Lord Davies's report was very small, and it has been fantastic at highlighting the challenge of the pipeline (of women in business). But the ongoing discussion of the level of non-executives misses

the point – it involves a very limited number of jobs and should be decided on talent not gender."

Improving the pipeline of talent she says, is "about going all the way back to school, to aspirations, to the choices young girls make and the support they get making them. We need to start early, and also help the young talented women who have children."

"Women find it very hard – and I include myself in this – when they have young children. The prohibitive cost of childcare is part of the problem. If you're serious about addressing issues of pipeline, you need tax breaks for childcare to get women back quickly to allow their confidence to develop," says Ms McGregor-Smith.

The verdict on the Davies Report after two years might be: it was great as far as it went, but it revealed a need to instigate serious change. Ms Pitcher says: "Huge societal change is required and attitudinal changes among women as well because they opt out – and yes, some of it is generational, and that change will come."



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Interview
Fleur Bothwick

Sharmila Devi asks Ernst & Young's director of diversity how she is tackling gender imbalances

Fleur Bothwick was "thrilled and totally surprised" to be awarded an OBE for her contribution to diversity and inclusion in the workplace in the last New Year honours list. But she does not see it as an excuse to relax. Her ambitious to-do list is as long as ever.

Ms Bothwick, director of diversity and inclusive leadership at Ernst & Young, has charge of what the firm calls its EMEIA region – Europe, Middle East, India and Africa. She now has her sights set on E&Y reaching its EMEIA target of 17 per cent female partners, up from a current 15 per cent among a total of 3,500 partners, when new partners are announced in July.

In the UK, the firm has 19 per cent female partners, up from 13 per cent when Ms Bothwick joined in 2007.

"I'm a big believer in targets, they work for everything else and they put the focus on what we need to do to achieve them," she says. "We haven't met all of our targets but they have started a meaningful conversation."

Working for change across a company with global reach – Ms Bothwick has her eye on 93 countries and 69,000 people – is no easy task, not least because of the different legislative frameworks and cultures around the world.

Different programmes and networks are tailored to geographical areas but they all share the same ultimate goal: to ensure the reputation and revenues of the firm and the retention of high-flying staff. Retaining and promoting

women is not just the right thing to do but makes hard commercial sense, she says.

"Our studies have shown a very powerful link between engagement and brand reputation with higher revenues and retention rates," she says.

Research by the firm in 2011 found its best-in-class performers on engagement yielded \$110,000 more in revenues compared with below-norm performers. Best-in-class performers on engagement also retained more than 10 per cent of their team than those who were below the norm.

This means that ideas such as preparing women for leadership, flexible working, sponsorship of potential senior leaders and networking are no longer regarded as fluffy add-ons but vital to the success of the firm.

It has estimated that an additional 1bn women will participate in the global economy by 2025 and this, coupled with the European Union's target of 40 per cent representation of women on boards by 2020, means new commercial opportunities.

The firm defines diversity as the "demographic mix in a given environment which includes both seen and unseen differences". Inclusiveness "is how we make the mix work by creating an environment where all people feel valued and are able to achieve their potential".

Three years ago, the firm started to focus on its leadership pipeline by rating women on their potential for promotion in three categories: "highly likely", "might" or "don't know". Those women rated highly likely to succeed, now numbering about 300, are managed closely, often with a partner sponsor and are encouraged to attend the EMEIA-wide women's leadership programme.

They may also be included in the firm's global talent management programme, called Global Next Gen.

"We track and see how they do and there's no guarantee they will make it," says Ms Bothwick. "We refresh



Fleur Bothwick: optimistic that attitudes are changing, although some sectors are still seen as tough – for example, where hours are less predictable

the process each year and revisit and reset our targets."

In EMEIA, the firm has also piloted programmes, including one called Navigator, "which enables female managers to spend time looking at

'Women are just as ambitious as men. But being called ambitious as a woman can have negative connotations'

what they want to achieve with their career and putting a plan in place to get there".

There are a variety of approaches tailored to different countries. In South Africa, for example, the firm has introduced an internal diversity score card providing a detailed profile of African, Coloured and Indian

employees – such data had been a long-time requirement of the government anyway but there had been no score card for internal use.

In Belgium and the Netherlands, meanwhile, the region was an early adopter of Career Watch, a sponsorship programme targeting high-potential women, with a focus on making sure everyone understood the differences between sponsorship and mentoring. A key difference is that sponsors tend to be influential partners carefully selected to intervene.

"There are considerable challenges but even though our women come from very different cultures, they often have similar concerns and challenges," says Ms Bothwick. "Women are just as ambitious as men. But being called ambitious as a woman can have negative connotations. People make the distinction between aggressiveness and assertiveness."

Challenges include overcoming the "imposter syndrome" – the self-doubt

some women might feel as to whether they are qualified for promotion when they clearly are ready – or the impact of unconscious bias that all people have and need to be aware of to combat it.

In Paris, Patrick Scharmitzky, a social psychologist and author, told staff in a workshop that stereotyping could not be avoided but people might become conscious of their own assumptions in order to reduce them and avoid unfair decisions.

Ms Bothwick, who was previously director of diversity at Lehman Brothers, developed one of the UK's first black and minority ethnic leadership programmes at E&Y, introduced a Sponsors for Educational Opportunities programme to the professional services sector, and a pilot summer graduate scheme for disabled interns.

She is passionate about inclusiveness in all its subtleties: "If someone is gay, that is only part of their profile. They could have a disability too.

And be a woman," she says. "It's more complex than just putting people into boxes."

While her focus at E&Y has been on creating a leadership pipeline from the layer of staff just below partner, the next task is to look at the layer below – senior managers.

"At the manager level, male and females are equally technically able. So when we talk about potential, it is important that managers have their elevator pitch, for example," she says.

She is optimistic that attitudes are changing across business, although some sectors are still seen as more tough, for example, within E&Y's Transaction Advisory Services division, that has an emphasis on deal-making, which makes the hours less predictable.

"Companies have become focused on inclusive behaviours across the board and while attitudes vary enormously, they have changed dramatically," she says.

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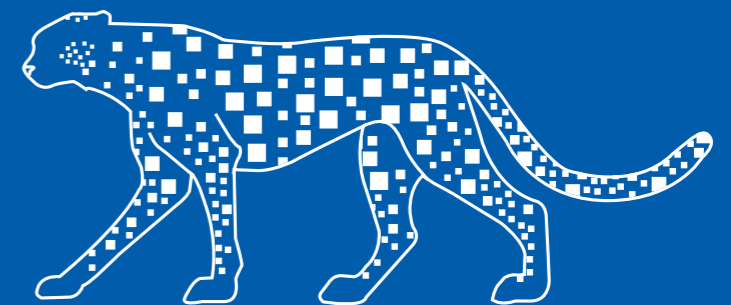


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Women told they need to learn to say 'I' more

C-suite culture

Sharmila Devi looks at how females can become candidates for promotion – without acting like men

The commercial argument for promoting more women to senior positions might have been won, says Andi Keeling. But does this mean women need to act like men to get noticed by their organisations?

Ms Keeling is director of women's markets at the Royal Bank of Scotland and she notes that more and more senior executives of all genders are coming to realise that accessing a diverse talent pool makes business sense for companies, clients and customers.

She also has views on the question over whether there are specific gender differences that women must overcome, such as a lack of confidence and less inclination to shout "me me me".

"A lot of women don't naturally push themselves forward. They tend to keep their heads down, work hard and expect to be recognised," Ms Keeling says. "But should we try to change women to behave like men or should they be authentic?"

"My opinion is that there is a lot more women can do – but we should never act or behave in a way that isn't authentic."

Women have indeed shown themselves well able to take on more assertive roles in sectors such as management consultancy.

Liann Eden, founding partner of Eden McCallum management consultants, where about 40 per cent of the consultants are female, says: "Our women are confident, they get their point of view across and are happy to go in as advisers, so it's not an issue. If surveyed, none of our women would say they get nervous about going before the board of a FTSE 100 company. We've moved beyond that."

All the consultants at the firm are independent, meaning they get to pick and choose which jobs they take on and when and how long to work.

"Some women are more assertive, some are quiet. But we find that's true of men, too," says Dena McCallum, another founding partner. "We spend time thinking about the best match. If it's a client who spends a lot of time listening, then you want someone with a big voice and that might be a man or a woman. If the client runs a consensus boardroom, you want someone different."

While there is little difference between gender and leadership potential, research by SHL, the global recruitment and talent assessment

company, suggests men in leadership positions are motivated by power and fear of failure, whereas women are motivated by a constructive working atmosphere and receiving recognition. SHL found a persistent gender imbalance in the corporate world, with only 20 per cent of women in the UK represented in leadership roles, compared with 42 per cent in Norway and 39 per cent in Thailand, based on the analysis or more than 1m people in its database.

"With three men to every woman in leadership positions on average globally, and with men being motivated by power and a fear of failure, UK boardrooms are self-perpetuating an unbalanced culture which is likely to disengage women from aspiring to reach a senior position," says Eugene Burke, chief science and talent analytics officer at SHL.

"The C-suite culture will have to change if it is to attract aspiring female leaders. UK plc needs proactively to adapt boardroom culture so more women are keen to continue their career path to the top. Moving away from an organisation culture framed by fear of failure to one founded on recognition for contribution and performance will be a stronger attraction for potential female leaders."

Fiona Czerniawska left a large firm to co-found the Source for Consulting research company after she had chil-



Fiona Czerniawska: left a large firm

dren. "When I started out and did my MBA, we looked at what happened to women and found companies took us to the door of motherhood and left us there. I've found working as a research consultant allows me to say no. I'm not travelling all the time or working from 7am to midnight," she says.

"Women are often more thoughtful

and listen more. Women talk more about content and there's less of a desire to impress. Meanwhile, consulting is changing and clients are less trusting and want less arrogance, so that's helpful from a woman's point of view."

The three main areas critical to promotion are sharing success, seeking opportunities and getting the right jobs, says Ines Wichert, senior psychologist at the Kenexa High Performance Institute.

"Women still seem to hold back. Senior women go to great lengths to explain their own success in terms of their team. They need to say 'I' from time to time," she says. "Women feel they have to be careful because they're supposed to be more nurturing and are scared of people saying, 'what's wrong with her?'"

A Kenexa report, entitled "Women leaders' career advancement: a three-level framework", outlines the factors to be addressed when trying to improve the progression of women in the workplace, including access to critical job assignments, flexible working hours and sponsors and mentors.

"Women are less likely to take risks and they may feel the need to meet a much higher percentage of job requirements than their male colleagues before they apply for a new role. Women also seem to need more encouragement from mentors in order

to take on new challenges," the report says.

"The reason for this, as shown in negotiation literature, may be that women are less likely to ask for things, such as more money, and that they have learned that contravening female stereotypes (being passive and communal rather than driven and competitive) can lead to negative feedback and being sidelined."

Anna-Marie Detert, talent proposition lead director at KPMG, says there is a fine balance between being viewed as "manipulative" and just wanting to get ahead: "The person who succeeds manages the politics in a way that's almost invisible. They don't stop giving credit to others and always make others look good," she says.

"You have to be very self-aware. Being charming or being direct means knowing and gauging your audience. Confidence is where you have control, not on whether your company needs you."

As an American, she also has an interesting view on the differences in business practice on each side of the Atlantic that applies to men and women: "When talking with executives here, there's a great need for intellectual content, paying attention to what you actually say and how to debate logically," she says. "Passion and emotion are bigger in the US but can be a disaster in the UK."

'I didn't wear a dress – I was terrified of seeming too female'

Body language

Sharmila Devi finds women are developing their own coping strategies

Many women executives might wish that dress code, body language and the ability to banter with the boys no longer matter – but they know from experience that they often do.

"It's less of an issue than it used to be," says Fiona O'Hara, Accenture's managing director for human capital and diversity in the UK and Ireland. "As more women progress through to the executive level, there's safety in numbers and the culture changes when there's a diverse team."

"But bias is still there. People have to stay true to themselves and if

they're comfortable with the banter, great. If not, call time and walk away or call someone out. And while dress code isn't a problem at our company, on the Tube I'm amazed what women wear in terms of revealing clothing – but maybe I'm conservative."

A great deal of research has been conducted on the role of unconscious bias in terms of promotion and more companies are aware of the need to combat it. But culture takes time to change and many women have had to create their own coping strategies.

"Men use humour and put-downs while women look for similarities and empathy and are more likely to draw people up, not put them down," says Karen Gill, co-founder of Everywoman, the organisation for women in business.

"The differences can be very subtle and make us feel less resilient and gung ho. Look at body language. We

don't puff out our chests for obvious reasons, are often round-shouldered and introverted. Men are more likely to be upright and military looking and that's what many people are looking for in leadership."

Wendy Alexander, former Scottish Labour leader and now the London Business School's associate dean of degree programmes and career services, says that although "we're past the stage where we need to learn to play golf", too often women are not on top of their own agenda.

During her political career, she was often described as "outspoken" – often code for unfeminine behaviour: "The challenges are surmountable and there are more similarities than differences between men and women."

"Yes, women are less likely to negotiate but there are ways women can equip themselves and there are immeasurably more opportunities

than in the past because companies, post-financial crisis, value diversity."

Heather Jackson, chief executive of An Inspirational Journey, an organisation that aims to increase the number of women in senior positions, is passionate in urging women to go forward: "Take away your shyness. No one can go forward by being shy, it's not a leadership word. You don't have to be gung ho and you can do things sensibly and intelligently," she says. "Visibility and responsibility are the key words."

It can take time to find a style and approach that works. Anna-Marie Detert, talent proposition lead director at KPMG, says: "I remember when I wouldn't wear a dress because I was terrified of seeming too female. But I've found my way now and that means being a little softer, connecting personally and being 'others-focused' but not subservient."

Fiona Czerniawska, co-founder of the Source for Consulting research company, says she never pretended to be one of the boys: "I've never been into football and it made me feel excluded. I can do weather but sport is divisive," she says. "I've found myself thinking, 'I'm an expert so I'll blast them with my expertise'."

"As for dress, I would defend someone's right to wear what they want and we should have moved beyond that but I don't feel comfortable in a low-cut top or short dress."

While many women want to move away from clichés about being more caring and emotionally intelligent than men, it might be some time before there are enough female executives on boards and in positions to hire more women like them.

"It might take quotas as a temporary measure to help get women into positions where they can recruit oth-

ers after them," says Ines Wichert, senior psychologist at the Kenexa High Performance Institute. "It's about creating real opportunities."

Some companies offer help. Accenture, for example, has a Skills Academy and a course, called "Move Beyond the Boys Club (Shameless Self-Promotion)", that says career progression, especially in male-dominated fields, is a blend of aptitude and attitude, manoeuvrability, understanding office politics, allied to self-awareness and confidence.

It says: "Women who get ahead are those who make key decision-makers aware of their wins. When you work with men, you have to learn to play the game and get comfortable raising your profile the way they do – we should take the best of what they can teach us while maintaining a sense of our own integrity, individuality and independence."

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The AUS Business Forum and Career Fair convenes to campus a cast of high-powered leaders with diverse experiences from the "University of Life" along with leading educators and innovators actively seeking new solutions for our current societal and economic needs.

Keynote panels feature leading CEOs and corporate leaders from top UAE industries ready to discuss and analyze Business & Investment, Energy & Environment, Media & Technology, and Women in Leadership & Entrepreneurship under the larger question: **Where are we heading?**

The AUS Business Forum and Career Fair is an annual event, and prominent women leaders from business, industry, and academia, including AUS's very own Vice Chancellor for

Development and Alumni Affairs, Dr. Nada Mourada-Sabbah, as well as AUS's Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, will lead the way at this year's event. The Forum functions as a laboratory for both academic excellence and practical applications while showcasing how industry leaders identify current trends in the region's growing but complicated economies.

AUS's commitment to the economic leadership and professional development of women and youth has been a long-standing core value of the institution. The AUS Business Forum has hosted in previous editions highly-acclaimed women business leaders such as Raja Easa Al Gurg, Managing Director of Easa Saleh Al Gurg Group; Fatima Obaid Al Jaber, COO of Al Jaber Group; and

Badria Al Mulla, President of International Emirates Management for Quality.

The 11th Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF), held at the American University of Sharjah in 2012, brought together a network of top-performing women entrepreneurs from all over the world dedicated to empowering the talent pool of women and young professionals via gainful employment. The Forum explored how women were turning entrepreneurial dreams and innovations into successful businesses that generated income for themselves and their communities. AUS has emerged as a true incubator of ideas for increasing job competencies and competitiveness of women through job creation,

education, leadership training, and capacity building.

More recently, the MENA Economic Forum 2013 (MEF), which was held at the American University of Sharjah on February 3 – 4, 2013, brought to campus about 500 high-ranking government and industry leaders, economists and educators from over 25 countries. MEF 2013 was a landmark event as it demonstrated the leading role that the Emirate of Sharjah and UAE play in promoting dialogue and discussion between the Middle East and other regions of the world. It is noteworthy that distinguished women leaders of the caliber of H.E. Bariza Khiari, Vice President of the French Senate, and Anne Lauvergeon, Former CEO, Areva, chose to participate.

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Women and the Workplace

Smart strategy key to making the right connections

Networking

Sharmila Devi talks to successful women about 'organisational politics' and the need to 'elbow their way into a man's world'

The message that women must network and seek sponsors is not new but the obstacles they face trying to get into the right clubs can be seen every year at the World Economic Forum's gathering at Davos in Switzerland.

So few delegates are women – typically around 17 per cent – that the organisers now insist that the forum's top 100 strategic partners, who are entitled to send five delegates, must include at least one woman.

Viviane Reding, European commissioner for justice, fundamental rights and citizenship, said this year that the forum had not always put gender issues high on its agenda. "This is the first year that the issue has been presented at a plenary session," she says. "It's a breakthrough for Davos, too."

Although a raft of legislation is in place to ensure fairness in recruitment, it is widely acknowledged that many senior jobs can only be secured at least partly through networking. This means women need a powerful network of contacts and sponsors to support their career ambitions.

"Davos made it clear that women need to put their hands up. Networking has to be seen by both men and women as an essential part of their business development," says Heather Jackson, founder of An Inspirational Journey, an organisation that aims to increase the number of women in senior positions.

"If women are feeling neglected, they need to think about why and where they need to be seen," she says.

"It depends on which sector and industry they work in so they need to do some investigation – just like they would check out a gym. Speak to colleagues, see what business events are coming up and try to get invited. Don't fear it, because it's not as bad as it seems and the thought of it can be worse than it is."

An Inspirational Journey is one of many programmes initiated in the private sector to tackle gender diversity. While some critics might argue that they exist to forestall any legislation to introduce gender quotas, the combination of networking, sponsorship and mentorship can provide practical help.

Led by the Royal Bank of Scotland, An Inspirational Journey asks companies to commit to at least 25 women to the programme. Events and online forums aim to "help women build their confidence, learn to recognise and deploy their capabilities and develop their network of contacts across all sectors".

Ms Jackson divides networking into two: that which is done internally and that conducted externally, outside the company. "It isn't a quick means to an end and you have to invest a lot of time. Do your homework, think about who you want to meet. It's about finding out what people are interested in and helping one another."

She is also clear about the difference between a sponsor and a mentor: "A sponsor promotes, protects and prepares you. They'll get their little black book out in front of you and give you contacts. They'll push you up because their reputations are on the line."

Experts say women need to be aware that they might network differently compared with male colleagues and have to develop extra skills and confidence.

A report by Kenexa's High Performance Institute says: "While men use networks for career-building, women frequently use them for affiliation and



Christine Lagarde: growing up with brothers helped her develop assertiveness early on

emotional support. It is the career-focused networking that brings significant advantages to progression.

The report, "Women leaders' career advancement: a three-level framework," acknowledges that childcare constraints can make out-of-hours networking difficult but emphasises that women must still ensure they have

'Most senior people are very good at it and make it look easy. But you can't just turn up and then think 'what am I doing here?'

the right political skills. It says that if women's mentors are not senior enough or fail to provide insights into organisational politics, it reduces their networking effectiveness.

"Having access to senior, politically savvy mentors who can help a woman decode the political landscape of an

organisation and help her improve the effectiveness of her networking activities is very important," the report says.

Assertiveness is also important and Christine Lagarde, former French finance minister and head of the International Monetary Fund, said at Davos this year that she developed it early on. "I grew up with brothers; I grew up in a man's world and you had to elbow your way in."

Younger women perhaps have an advantage over older colleagues because the importance of networking is now instilled early on. Wendy Alexander, the London Business School's associate dean of degree programmes and career services, says: "The importance of diversity has been acknowledged and now we need to think about the practical takeaways for women to advance these issues."

"We try to ensure early on in our business school the importance of how to leverage networks."

Karen Gill co-founded Everywoman in 1999, an organisation that works

with companies to help and retain women leaders through training, workshops and networking: "What's interesting is that there were thousands of networks across industry, cultures, ethnic minorities but no specific men's groups because they had hobbies and sports through which they were connected," she says.

"Women should be in as diverse a mixture of networks as possible including mixed networks with men. Women need to be strategic when networking. Most senior people are very good at it and make it look easy but are actually very strategic and think about what they want to achieve. You can't get an invite, turn up and then think 'what am I doing here?'"

Dena McCallum, founding partner of Eden McCallum management consultants, says it is important to be aware of "superficial" networking: "Sometimes women are better than men and have more of an ability to stay in touch with people and have more of a personal connection," she says.

"But if your career network is LinkedIn then that's not very meaningful. You need to have an interest in the other person otherwise it's just very superficial."

While some effort has to be made, it is also important to stay true to your own style and play to your own strengths, says Fiona O'Hara, Accenture's managing director for human capital and diversity in the UK and Ireland.

"It's very tricky because there are some schools of thought that say networking is valueless and you should just focus on doing a good job," she says. "But the fact of doing a good job is often not enough and you do need support outside of your day job. You need visibility and access to senior leadership and sponsorship."

"But at junior levels, people do tend to stay within their own peer group, so don't be too hard on yourself if you know no one, as that will come later. Networking needs to come naturally and not involve doing things you're not comfortable with."

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