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THE POWER OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP

Addressing Challenges and Driving Change in the C-Suite



France Dequilbec
*CEO of the Executive Coaching
Consultancy*



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Although the evidence is clear that greater gender equality at the top leads to better business results, the reality is that women remain vastly underrepresented in the C-suite. However, attitudes are shifting, and companies are hiring more women into senior roles, recognizing their immense capabilities and value.

Gender Insights

The Shifting Attitudes Toward Female Leadership

Improving executive gender balance requires a multifaceted approach that addresses the underlying causes of gender inequality in the workplace. At Female Executive Search, we have placed women in C-level and board positions globally. There have also been strides made in regulations around the world, with quotas being brought in for Board and Management level positions. Of course, there's still work to be done.



Challenges Facing Women in Leadership Roles

Although impostor syndrome isn't exclusively experienced by women, it is known to be more prevalent amongst women. Emily Hu says "We're more likely to experience impostor syndrome if we don't see many examples of people who look like us or share our background who are clearly succeeding in our field". This is why the work at Female Executive Search is so important - to boost diversity and inclusion in companies, specifically at C-level, to alleviate these feelings in female leaders.

We have also observed that some of them have adapted themselves to the dominant model in order to be accepted by their male colleagues in terms of leadership even if the soft skills and emotional intelligence are now recognized criteria and added value to businesses.

According to Forbes, queen bees are women in positions of authority who are more critical of female subordinates. This phenomenon was something that, as more women entered the workplace over the past few decades, was expected to peter out. It hasn't. But why? Evidence suggests that it's how women cope with the gender discrimination they've faced in their own career. So, the only way we can effectively eliminate this phenomenon is to remove gender bias in our organisations.

Dangerous gender stereotypes can kill a woman's self confidence. Women can hold themselves back from pursuing prestigious roles because they believe they won't excel, despite being a suitable and worthwhile candidate. Female Executive Search works hard to use language and phrasing, running their ads through anti-bias reviews, so as to avoid stereotypes and ensure inclusivity in their promotions."





The Myth of the Non-Existent Female Candidate

One of the most common "excuses" for not having a female executive is that there is no female candidate !

With a dedicated platform, it's not possible to say "there is no female candidate. They are not qualified."

As of today:

- =>20% of our international vetted candidates across 40 countries are female
- =>+4000 vetted female execs (in huge progress since we have started in 2018)
- =>Super qualified, C level
- =>38% have been founder
- =>55% have more than 15 years' experience
- =>80% have dual education, 40% hold an MBA/PHD
- =>70% have international experience and speak at least 2 languages

Where competencies fit, we systematically present 1 female and 1 male for every position. 20% of their placements are female, a figure that has grown by 50% in the past 6 months. We have placed women in CEO positions globally. There have also been strides made in regulations around the world, with quotas being brought in for Board and Management level positions.

Testimonial: Insights from France Dequilbec, MD

"The majority of the women I have interviewed over the past 4 years (more than 400 across the globe) testify how difficult it is for them to access to top level management/boards. There is no room for error and they have to continuously outperform their male colleagues. They feel they have to constantly justify their position, their responsibilities and their salary!

Still, the ambition alone is not enough. It's not even enough if they have the better grades, work harder and perform better than their male colleagues. At the end of the month their pay cheque proves the inequality of perception by a staggering gender pay gap of above 20%.

Worse when it comes to the next career step – if they are young, the fact alone that they could get pregnant puts them in a back row seat, then if they do have children, back row becomes their middle name - and when their kids are grown and they are 50+... well, do I need to continue?"

Success Factors for Improving Gender Balance

A real will to recruit the best candidate based on competencies and professional skills. A real commitment to recruit a female. Our FES platform gives women the confidence to showcase their professional skills, and helps our female candidates to boost their personal brands and increase their digital exposure through multiple tools - including videos, an initiative we continue to build upon. We will continue to work tirelessly to boost the number of women in leadership positions around the globe, and cannot wait to see what the next years will bring for us! We're excited to see the regulations and initiatives that develop that will lead us into a future that is equal, diverse and inclusive!



The Future of Female Leadership

Female execs will leave when they think they have no impact on the society, when they feel a gap between their values and the strategy of their enterprise, ethics is core for most of the female execs.

“Human” in the center of the business, emotional intelligence is very important; they challenge more their peers and even their management if they think they should. They are less interested in internal politics.

They choose enterprises that allow them to take into account their private life (children, hobbies,...). Diversity/ Impact/CSR/Ethics are part of their vision.

There is power in female leadership!

France Dequilbec

CEO OF THE EXECUTIVE COACHING
CONSULTANCY

France Dequilbec is the Managing Director of Female Executive Search, where she leverages over 15 years of expertise in executive recruitment, strategy, and management consulting. Her passion lies in advancing gender diversity and inclusion at the senior leadership level, empowering women to break the glass ceiling and enabling organizations to benefit from balanced leadership teams. In partnership with CEO Worldwide, she helps source and certify top executive talent globally, with a focus on providing vetted female executives across various industries.

Previously, France founded and led the communication agency Les 100 ciels for 11 years, serving high-tech clients like HP and Motorola. She has also held leadership roles in communications at Siemens and Motorola, contributing to the launch of mobile phones in France.



Gender Insights

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