



Strategy Alignment

Talent Management

Gender Diversity

Reaping the benefits of Gender Diversity



Do your current Gender Diversity efforts pay dividends?

- Does your Board or Executive team 'get' Gender Diversity?
- Do you have enough senior women at the top across business units and functions?
- Do you maintain a proportion of at least 30% women throughout your talent pipeline?
- Are you matching your clients and customers' expectations in terms of your Gender Diversity?
- Do you know how many highly professional women you lose each year and the cost to the business?
- Do you have a well-articulated plan to increase women participation in senior teams and hard deadlines to deliver it?



Do your current Gender Diversity efforts pay dividends?

- Does your Board or Executive team 'get' Gender Diversity?
- Do you have enough senior women at the top across business units and functions?
- Do you maintain a proportion of at least 30% women throughout your talent pipeline?
- Are you matching your clients and customers' expectations in terms of your Gender Diversity?
- Do you know how many highly professional women you lose each year and the cost to the business?
- Do you have a well-articulated plan to increase women participation in senior teams and hard deadlines to deliver it?

How did you score?

If it wasn't too great, your organisation is no different to most in the UK: companies typically lose over 80% of their female Talent between entry levels and the top job. In which other area of business would such wastefulness be tolerated?



From intentions to results: What do successful companies actually DO?

White Water Strategies has researched and worked with leading companies in Gender Diversity.

Most organisations have very interesting initiatives that yield localised results. Unfortunately, they tend to be isolated. In contrast, successful ones do 4 things really well:

1

They really understand their own **business case** and move away from the generalist debate on the benefits of Gender Diversity

2

They handle the **quotas** issue with confidence and put in place deliberate policies at executive and non executive levels

3

They articulate a strategy supported by **metrics** with a clear time frame for delivery

4

They rapidly launch specific **interventions** at critical career stages for women, in order to deliver the strategy



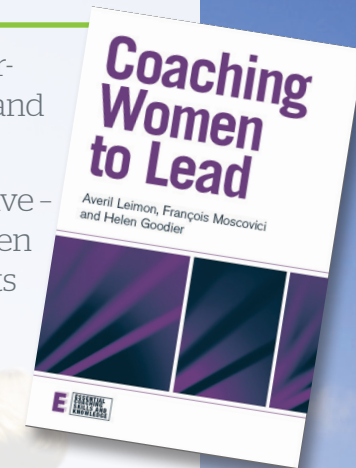
Your own Business Case

There is now an incontrovertible body of evidence to demonstrate that gender-rich management teams do better both internally and externally. We collated and refined the best research in the field for our book *Coaching Women to Lead*.

Our perspective is that the general debate has now become somewhat repetitive – it is time for action. However we also know that most businesses work best when they can articulate the benefits of an investment. We therefore invite our clients to develop their own business case along dimensions such as:

- Understanding current state metrics e.g. modelling the costs of a 'leaking' talent pipeline
- Translating the best general research on company performance for your own company
- Developing specific performance enhancement models based on a better mix of talent

Companies cannot create durable change without co-opting the incumbents, i.e. men. In order to do this they need a specific business case that demonstrates a benefit for all – not just women.



◀ [back to "What do successful companies do?"](#)

Dealing with Quotas

This is probably the most fraught topic in Gender Diversity: women don't like them, men don't like them, yet legislators seem keen on them. What is going on?

To summarise a lot of research: it's all about lack of speed. At the current pace it will take decades before the benefits of Gender Diversity are enjoyed by most businesses, so many conclude that quotas are imperfect, yet necessary to get things really moving.

Our perspective is that Quotas are a smokescreen: the number of women on the Board has a high signalling value but real change is only relevant at the executive team level and probably one or two levels below.

Successful companies take a pragmatic view of quotas depending on the legislation being enacted in countries in which they operate - they use targets such as 25% in the UK to accelerate the development of women executives in order to balance executive and non executive women on their boards. They also create specific targets for women in top management posts and invest in making it happen.


 [back to "What do successful companies do?"](#)



A gender diversity strategy supported by Metrics

Many companies we speak with have multiple initiatives; yet don't seem to be making progress. When we dig a bit deeper, they invariably have either soft targets or no time-frame. We find that successful companies are very specific in what they want to achieve by when. Here is how we work with them:

- Set a baseline derived from the business case
- Map existing initiatives and their impact - both quantitative and qualitative
- Benchmark against competitors and best practice
- Define desired interventions to support the business case and outline implementation plan
- Prepare a communication strategy to prepare for change at relevant levels
- Launch pilots, if needed - but many companies simply get started

 [back to "What do successful companies do?"](#)

Interventions at key career stages

Based on our research with the London School of Economics as well as our practice as leadership specialists, we have defined three types of programmes that maximise the performance and retention of women at key career stages. These can be further customised for your own talent pipeline and industry specificity.

Level 1: Potential Leaders


For young women facing their first ambiguous role, typically young managers. This is the first big leak in the talent pipeline for most organisations

Level 2: Emerging Leaders

For women with an established career in the middle of the child-bearing years. Pressures include juggling multiple agendas and delivering the 'stretch role' that will demonstrate long term leadership potential

Level 3: Senior Women Coaching

For established leaders making a push for top executive roles and often in a position of loneliness as most of their peers have gone

 [back to "What do successful companies do?"](#)



Potential Leaders

This programme can be run for individuals or, preferably, for selected cohorts of up to 20. We can also handle the selection process for you.

Level:

high-level graduate intake; individuals
1-3 years into their career

Timing:

6 months

Programme:

Management skills specifically for younger, more junior women, at a time when many find the corporate environment disconcerting and hard to read. The programme is made up of themed modules:

- Manage your career
- Find your leadership voice
- Build your confidence
- Become strategic
- Network like a natural

Benefits individuals gain:

- A clear understanding of the challenges facing women in business
- A deliberate approach to career management and awareness of the skills required at each level
- Base skills to build confidence and develop an authentic personal style
- A strategic perspective and vocabulary - which will be increasingly useful as career progresses
- Learning how to use networks effectively from the start
- Being part of a cohesive group, helping each other through the organisational maze

Organisations gain:

- Better retention and focus on careers offered within their organisations - filling the talent pipeline
- More confident, career-focused women
- Better business skills - e.g. strategy and networking



back to "Interventions at key career stages"

Emerging Leaders

Aimed at those in middle to senior management demonstrating leadership aspirations and qualities via a selection process - run jointly with you.

Level:

Typically women with potential to reach senior roles: coming up to VP/ Director level in corporations, or Partner candidates in professional services firms

Timing:

9 months to 1 year

Programme:

This is a cohort-based programme with monthly interventions and aligned with your firm's Talent process. Participants' bosses as well as role models are involved at various stages of the programme. Themes include:

- Women and leadership
- Confidence and personal impact
- Influencing for success
- Becoming strategic
- Staying strong
- Moving on up

Benefits individuals gain:

- Mature perspective on leadership and strategic thinking
- Enhanced visibility in the organisation and clearer career prospects
- Increased confidence
- Peer group to test ideas securely
- Improved personal resilience
- Exposure to senior role models

Organisations gain:

- A key, female cohort geared to leadership - individuals prepared for promotion to senior roles
- Better retention through the cohort-based approach (particularly where there are very few women at this level)
- Future role-models
- Bosses who are potentially less unconsciously biased within the organisation



back to "Interventions at key career stages"

Senior Women Coaching

Aimed at women leaders who may have taken on a new, senior role, or those who need a boost in an established role.

Level:

Directors, Partners

Timing:

2-3 hours each session

Content:

Executive Coaching tailored to each individual. This will cover both gender-neutral themes of leadership skills and team development, as well as issues specific to senior women, as identified in our research.

White Water experts use a proprietary evidence-based approach in choosing interventions - we have been coaching leaders for over 20 years. We have also developed specific content for those issues that are recurring themes for senior women

Benefits individuals gain:

- Refreshed definition and meaning of career success
- Enhanced confidence
- Safe environment to test ideas and receive feedback on strategic thinking and leadership style - particularly if the organisation has few relevant role models
- Honing of senior management skills and their applications to team development and upward management
- Taking personal time out to focus on professional development

Organisations gain:

- Well-rounded business leaders who can operate better within the senior echelons of the organisation
- Less-stressed senior women who are invigorated by their personal development - and are less likely to leave, boosting the senior female talent pipeline
- Real, senior female role-models



Working with



Look and Feel

White Water is not a standard, off-the-shelf-solutions consultancy: everything we do is driven by our desire to make a real difference to our clients, and this usually means changing behaviours, not writing reports.

We do the heavy number crunching so you don't have to, but this is just the beginning. Our interventions are based on sound research; this way we can confidently say that we know what works.

Good habits take time to install, perceptions take time to change, so most of our programmes have iterations built-in. We also find that group-work provides the right level of support and reinforcement, hence our preference for cohorts.



Quotes

“WW people demonstrate a refreshing combination of deep subject expertise underpinned by superb delivery”

“Without WW support, like most women, I would have just worked harder at a great personal detriment. Instead I adapted to cope with the challenges and kept a healthy approach”

“WW has been working with our emerging leaders for years... they provide resilience and equip them with the skills, attitudes and confidence they need to progress in their careers”

“It has been hugely valuable to understand how my behaviour and reaction to certain situations can affect the whole team's morale and way of working”

“A clear willingness to listen and not preach. The advice is based not only on long years of experience in our industry, but on a deep knowledge of human psychology”

“Coaching and feedback are challenging but supportive; I feel that the team at WW are genuinely interested in my long term development and attainment”

Clients



So, what next?

To discuss how we can work together to accelerate the payoff from your Gender Diversity efforts, give us a call on **+44 (0)20 7036 8899** - ask for Averil Leimon, François Moscovici or Helen Goodier.

Alternatively, drop us a line at:
info@whitewaterstrategies.eu

We look forward to hearing from you!
www.whitewaterstrategies.eu