

Why women are effective Leaders



As reported in the prior post – Women do or don't have the brains to be a leader, the two authors, Zenger and Folkman found in their survey that **women ranked higher at all business leadership levels as more effective leaders than men.**

The following **16 core competency areas** were used to measure leadership effectiveness:

- Takes initiative
- Practices Self Development
- Displays High Integrity and Honesty
- Drives for Results
- Develops Others
- Inspires and Motivates Others
- Builds Relationships
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Established Stretch Goals
- Champions Change
- Solves Problems and Analyzes Issues
- Communicates Powerfully and Prolifically
- Connects the Group to the Outside World
- Innovates
- Technical or Professional Expertise
- Develops Strategic Perspective

The **two significant areas where women excelled** are *takes initiative* and *practices self development*. Zenger and Folkman, consider these to be key leadership skills regardless of gender. In an attempt to understand the statistical difference, they conducted a post analysis commentary with other business women.

The commentary revealed that **women leaders in general ...**

- perceive their positions as still vulnerable
- feel they still have to work harder than men to prove themselves
- can't afford to make mistakes
- need to continue to prove their value to the organization
- willingly take on initiatives
- consider feedback important and follow through on it

Zenger and Folkman raise the issue of whether business that maintain discrimination and chauvinism can afford to ignore such a talented leadership pool when *"...these leadership skills are strongly correlated to organizational success factors such as retaining talent, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and profitability."*

It's their final opinion, leaders can gain the most from a mindset where they "cannot afford to make a mistake" and avoid complacency.

My personal comment:

Leadership roles by their very nature are demanding and pressured filled. The Zenger and Folkman analysis clearly demonstrates the high caliber of women's leadership skills.

For Zenger and Folman to extol the virtue of a lack of complacency is relevant to economic circumstances, but to expect leadership to take initiatives and focus on avoiding mistakes is inconsistent.

If women in leadership roles find themselves having to continue to prove themselves and not make mistakes, business for a while will have great women leaders. But businesses will encounter the same results as they do with their male leaders. Mentally and physically they will **lose their best leaders to burnout.** This creates a loss for leadership, a loss for business and a loss for women who decide not to pursue leadership roles.

Source:

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/03/a_study_in_leadership_women_do.html

