

Women do or don't have the brains to be a leader?



In the business world women are still the minority in upper levels of management, as chief executive officers and presidents and members of governing boards. Explaining this discrepancy is not as easy as saying there aren't enough smart women to fill these positions.

Actually, business appears to be at odds with the old stereotype that only men have the brains and mentality to assume the role of leadership, and the **leadership qualities exemplified by women already in leadership positions.**

Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman respectively CEO and President of Zenger|Folkman, a leadership consulting and training firm, have recently reported in the Harvard Business Review the results of an in-depth survey of gender leadership. A total of 7, 280 leaders from a cross-section of "... public and private, government and commercial, domestic and international" businesses were rated.

The **survey confirms the male majority** (64%) of leadership positions and the supporting leadership hierarchy – 60% of male managers report to 67% of senior male executives who report to 78% of the top male managers.

All the leaders were rated by "peers, bosses, and direct reports", on leadership effectiveness in 16 competency areas. The results of a gender breakdown indicated that while men held majority leadership positions, **women scored higher in leadership effectiveness for all leadership categories measured.**

If women leaders are perceived as outranking male leaders in effectiveness, then the old questions of women having the brains to be leaders can be put to rest. However, the next **obvious question is why women leaders are not holding a larger percentage of leadership positions?**

In the next post, Zenger and Folkman will take a closer look at the entrenched gender difference.

Sources:

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