Re-Examining the Female Path to Leadership Positions in Business

A White Paper from the Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS)

ABSTRACT: On a global scale, companies continue to struggle with increasing gender diversity in leadership, leaving few women in prominent positions. This paper explores this topic using a critical thinking analysis, integrating current research literature with qualitative insights from a 2010 Center for Advanced Human Resources (CAHRS) working group session. First, the problem is defined, and its effects and causes are explored. Solution criteria are laid out before addressing the solutions. Although organizations still have a long way to go, implementing an integrated set of solutions will allow them to minimize the barriers impeding women's advancement in the workplace.

By Rebecca Heller, GAP, Inc. Graduate Research Assistant and Pamela Stepp, Ph.D., Faculty, ILR School; edited by Sarah Thompson, CAHRS
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The scarcity of women in business leadership is not new. However, women's representation at senior levels in organizations today is far from where it needs to be. Given the higher number of females getting degrees, representing the majority of graduates in the major countries in the world, they still represent only 6% of executives in the largest companies. This paper assesses this significant issue by critically analyzing the problem, its causes and effects. The authors offer solution criteria and possible solutions to guide direction for organizational action steps.

This analysis is based on the current research literature and insights from fifteen participants in a 2010 CAHRS working group from partner companies spanning the oil/gas, diversified industrials, construction, electronics, health insurance, banking and financial services, pharmaceutical, retail, and consumer products industries. This review also includes an interview with a chief human resource officer (CHRO) who could not attend the meeting.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

This is a complex problem that goes beyond the fact that women are under-represented in management: women hold negative attitudes toward advancement, earn less than men, and have begun to opt out of the corporate environment. Further, women who obtain leadership positions face unique health and stress factors that are particularly debilitating. Yet companies, although beginning to understand the problem, are taking few actions to address it. To understand the picture better, Eagly and Carli (2007) describe the context a woman faces as a labyrinth, arguing that the notion of the "glass ceiling" is outdated.

WOMEN ARE UNDER-REPRESENTED IN MANAGEMENT: According to a recent study by the United States Government Accountability Office, in 2007 (the latest year available), women accounted for 40% of managers in the U.S. workforce. That percentage has only increased by one percentage point since 2000, indicating nearly a decade of stagnation. When looking at the largest companies, only 15% of all Fortune 500 company directors are women.[1] Furthermore, in those same companies, women account for only 6% of executives[2] and 3% of CEOs.[3] Women account for only 2.8% of Fortune 1000 company CEOs.[4] In 2010, Hansen, Ibarra and Peyer published an analysis of the 100 best-performing CEOs worldwide, and only one woman (Meg Whitman, EBay), made the list.

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[1] Soares, Carter & Combopiano, 2009

[2] Eagly & Carli, 2007

[3] Women CEOs, 2009

[4] Women CEOs, 2009

Globally, women are under-represented on corporate boards and executive committees. While they hold 16% of directorships in North America, women hold only 9% of those roles in Europe and 2% in Asia. Women hold 15% of executive committee positions in North America, compared to 4% in Europe and 2% in Asia.[5] Moreover, these disparities appear to extend beyond the private sector. According to a gender statistics study of the further (or continuing) education sector in the U.K., women are also under-represented at the senior leadership level, despite growth in female employment in the sector.[6]
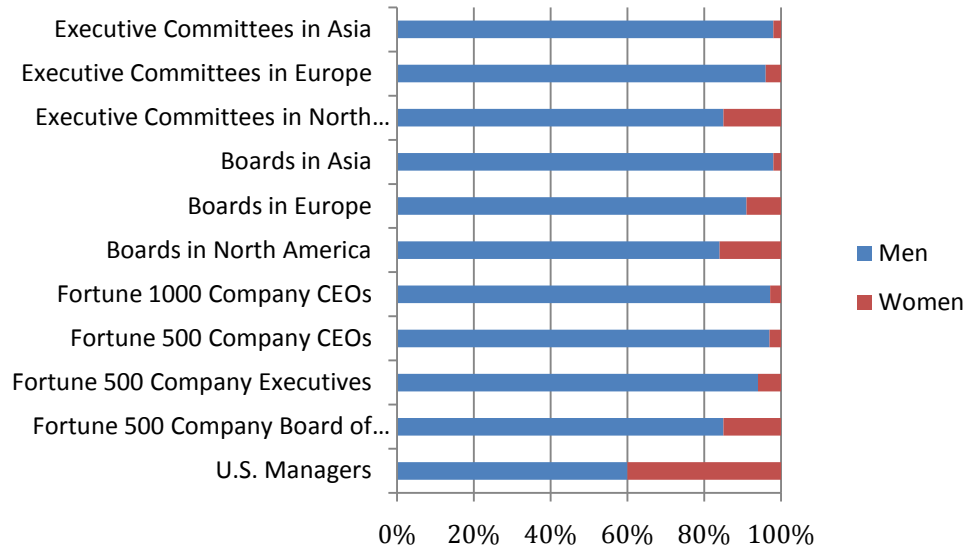

FIGURE 1: WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

WOMEN HAVE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD ADVANCEMENT: According to data from a large-scale survey by Catalyst of MBA alumni who graduated between 1996 and 2007, men had greater career advancement satisfaction than women at all managerial levels except for entry-level.[7]

WOMEN EARN LESS THAN MEN: According to the Catalyst survey, adjusting for initial position, women are paid $4,600 less than men on average. Even when controlling all factors that may differ between men and women—such as experience, time since receiving MBA, first post-MBA job level, global region and industry—men still earn higher starting salaries in their first post-MBA jobs than women.[8]

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[5] Ricol, Lasteyrie & Associés, 2006. The presence of women in executive committees and on boards of directors in the world's top 300 companies. (as cited in Wittenberg-Cox & Maitland, 2008)

[6] McTavish & Miller, 2009

[7] Carter & Silva, March 2010

[8] Carter & Silva, Feb. 2010

According to the GAO report, in 2007 women earned 81 cents for every man's dollar, an increase of only 2 cents since 2000.

WOMEN ARE OPTING OUT OF THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT: Women are leaving the corporate world and starting their own companies or small businesses.[9] Being an owner and entrepreneur allows women more control and autonomy over how and when they work. As one CAHRS working group participant put it, the choice for many women comes down to "BEING ABLE TO CONTROL [OUR] ENVIRONMENT VERSUS BEING COMPLETELY CONTROLLED BY THE ENVIRONMENT THAT [WE'RE] IN."

WOMEN FACE HEALTH AND STRESS ISSUES: Women who do attain leadership positions often also face additional stressors related to their distinctive position. These could include discrimination, gender stereotyping, sexual harassment, tokenism, work overload, organizational politics and possibly work-home conflict.[10]

For example, although men today take on a larger share of domestic work, the majority is still done by women.[11] According to interviews with 40 female executives in the U.S. and Europe conducted by Cormier (2006), these women reported feeling isolated by not fitting in with the dominant male culture, and facing time and work pressures restricting them from forming social networks.

The negative impact of isolation was echoed in our CHRO interview: "OFTEN YOU FACE CHALLENGES . . . BECAUSE YOU WERE AN 'ONLY,' AND ANYTIME YOU'RE AN 'ONLY,' WHETHER IT'S THE ONLY WOMAN, THE ONLY PERSON OF COLOR, YOU . . . DON'T FEEL THAT YOU HAVE THE FULL ACCESS TO THOSE THAT ARE NETWORKING REGULARLY." Moreover, women are more likely than men to cope with stress by smoking, further reducing quality of health.[12]

COMPANIES ARE NOT TAKING ACTION: According to a 2010 global survey by McKinsey & Company, although 72% of respondents believe there is a relationship between diversity and financial success, an overwhelming majority reported "no change in their companies' view of gender diversity as a strategic issue" since the financial crisis.[13] Out of 540 U.S. companies surveyed by Mercer in September 2010, 70% reported not having a strategy for developing women into leadership positions. Additionally, 43% of respondents did not offer any programs targeted to develop women leaders, and only 5% of respondents offered robust programs.[14] In other words, companies were eight times more likely to *not* take any action to develop women than to take strong action.

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[9] CAHRS working group, 2010; Cormier, 2006; Nelson & Burke, 2000

[10] Nelson & Burke, 2000

[11] Eagly & Carli, 2007

[12] Nelson & Burke, 2000

[13] McKinsey & Company, 2010

[14] Mercer, 2010

WOMEN FACE A LABYRINTH, NOT A GLASS CEILING: The "glass ceiling effect" argues that women face a barrier at one specific point in their careers—reaching the top seat. This implies that at levels below the C-suite, men and women have equal access. However, women actually face barriers much earlier in their careers.[15] Eagly and Carli (2007) argue that the nature of these barriers is more like a *labyrinth*—a complex career journey with obstacles along the entire path, not just prior to attaining that top spot.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE PROBLEM

The dearth of female business leaders has significant business consequences. CAHRS working group participants cautioned that by not taking a more robust approach to diversity, companies are losing out on future business. According to analyses by Wittenberg-Cox & Maitland (2008), if gender equality were obtained in the workforce, the GDP would rise by 9% in the U.S., 13% in the Eurozone and 16% in Japan. As women's education levels rise, companies also miss out on hiring, promoting and retaining highly educated employees. And, because women (by common industry estimates) account for 85% of all consumer purchases, companies will lose out on sales if they don't maximize gender diversity. Lastly, in today's global marketplace, organizations need diverse viewpoints in order to compete.

COMPANIES ARE NOT HIRING, PROMOTING AND RETAINING HIGHLY EDUCATED EMPLOYEES: Women are highly represented in the pipeline of talent coming out of academic institutions. They are achieving higher-level degrees at greater representation than men in the U.S., [16] and in some instances, worldwide.
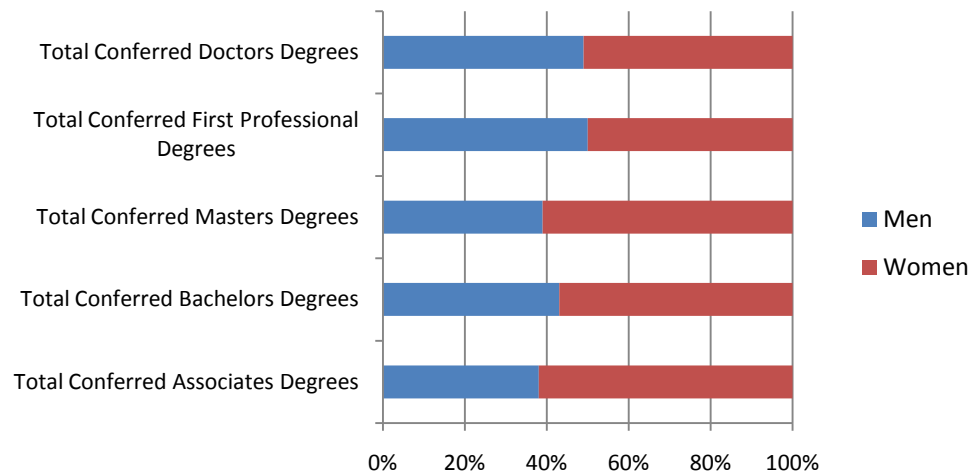

FIGURE 2: WOMEN'S EDUCATION STATISTICS

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[15] Carter & Silva, March 2010
[16] United States Government Accountability Office, 2010

According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, women make up the majority of students attaining post-secondary degrees (associate, bachelor, master and doctoral), and account for half of all First Professional Degrees (covering dentistry, medicine and law). Moreover, by 2016, the percentage of women attaining graduate degrees is projected to increase by approximately 16%. For men, that number is estimated at a mere 1.3%.[17]

Country	2005	2015	2020
Australia	56	62	62
Czech Republic	57	55	61
Denmark	59	66	68
France	56	65	66
Germany	53	65	61
Hungary	64	66	73
Italy	59	68	70
Japan	49	49	54
Korea	49	54	56
Poland	66	63	62
Sweden	63	74	76
Switzerland	43	49	48
Turkey	44	35	37
United Kingdom	58	72	72
United States	58	61	57

OECD (2008), 'The Reversal of Gender Inequalities in Higher Education: An On-going Trend' in *Higher Education to 2030- Volume 1- Demography*.

FIGURE 3: TOMORROW'S TALENT (% AGE OF WOMEN GRADUATES)

COMPANIES ARE LOSING OUT ON SALES: Women represent the majority of consumers worldwide. Globally, women represent $20 trillion in annual consumer spending; in the U.S. alone, women account for $4.3 trillion in annual consumer spending, or 85% of all consumer purchases.[18] According to a recent Harvard Business Review study depicting the female economy, the growth market of women consumers is twice as large as that of China and India combined.[19] Women do the majority of consumer spending in areas ranging from groceries to new homes and cars.[20]

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[17] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (as cited in Cormier, 2006)

[18] Marketing to Women: Quick Facts, n.d.; Silverstein & Sayre, 2009

[19] Silverstein & Sayre, 2009

[20] Marketing to Women: Quick Facts, n.d.

Although such statistics clearly show contrasts in men's and women's buying behavior, many businesses have yet to tap into this lucrative market. Women's money will go to companies that adapt to them through market research, product marketing and development, and customer service. But few companies have done this well enough to capitalize fully on the female consumer market.[21] One key way to respond to this untapped market is for companies to *mirror it*—by hiring, promoting and retaining women in their companies.

COMPANIES ARE NOT ADAPTING TO GLOBAL COMPETITION: To remain competitive in the market, companies must take risks, adapt quickly, and get employees to think differently. As one CAHRS working group participant said, "THERE IS MORE COMPETITION GLOBALLY, [REQUIRING] CORPORATIONS AND THEIR BOTTOM LINE . . . TO LOOK AT DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS AND LOOK AT THEIR ORGANIZATIONS FOR ATTAINING DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS. THEREBY, THE NEED TO HAVE MORE DIVERSE TEAMS IN TRYING TO COME UP WITH THOSE SOLUTIONS IS MORE IMPORTANT." Due to this need, gender diversity has potentially significant financial returns. And some recent data backs this up. According to Graham (2007), the most profitable and efficient Fortune 500 companies also had the highest percentage of female directors.

WHY LEADERSHIP	WHY TALENT	WHY MARKETS
❖ 73% greater return on sales ❖ Significant improvement in corporate performance ❖ Overall profits 43% higher ❖ Better oversight	❖ 59% of EU graduates ❖ 72% of UK graduates in 2015 ❖ 76% of Swedish graduates in 2020 ❖ Since 2000, women have filled six million of the EU's eight million new jobs ❖ In January 2010, women made up the majority of U.S. payrolls[22]	❖ Women's purchasing power = $20 trillion per year ❖ Women's total annual earnings = $13 trillion in 2009 ❖ Women influence $4.3 trillion of $5.9 trillion U.S. consumer outlays

FIGURE 4: RELEVANCE OF LEADERSHIP, TALENT, AND MARKETS[23]

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[21] Silverstein & Sayre, 2009

[22] U.S. Labor Department, Employment Situation, January 2011. (released February 2011)

[23] Wittenberg-Cox, 2010, p. 126

CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

The shortage of female business leaders is caused by the interplay of several complex factors. To understand those factors, we move beyond a single viewpoint to explore interactions among *cognition-based* causes—such as underlying prejudices, organizational buy-in, and the current leadership model—and *technical* causes, or the practices within organizations (or lack thereof) that restrict women from reaching the leadership ranks. As research shows, although many women *do* aspire to be at the top, they face disadvantages along the way starting with their first professional job.[24]

COGNITION-BASED CAUSES

Business leaders and employees have varying views about diversity, which is one factor impacting women's under-representation in leadership roles. Such *cognition-based* obstacles include underlying prejudice and biases regarding women in leadership, lack of stakeholder buy-in for the business case for diversity, and organizations' perceptions regarding effective leadership attributes, and who possesses them.

UNDERLYING GENDER BIASES: There has been and continues to be prejudice regarding women's abilities. In Philip Goldberg's seminal 1968 experiment, in which participants were asked to rate either a male's or female's essay—which were identical—findings showed participants scored essays written by females lower than those written by males. Shockingly, this study has been validated nearly forty years later.[25]

Further, according to Carter (2010), similar negative views about women's leadership abilities create barriers to their advancement. Carter cites that masculinity is viewed as the key leadership characteristic, and how women are perceived to lack the required skills and personality for success in line management roles.

"THE IMPACT OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS, LINKED WITH VARIOUS ASSUMPTIONS THAT LEADERS/MANAGERS MIGHT HAVE ABOUT WHAT WOMEN ARE WILLING OR NOT WILLING TO DO…" was cited by working group participants as one reason for the lack of women leaders. But bias and discrimination are not just prevalent in the U.S. According to a survey conducted by Sen and Metzger (2010), 61% of women executives in Latin America have experienced discrimination in the workplace, compared to 21% in the U.S.

LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL BUY-IN: According to McKinsey & Company's 2010 Global Survey, the single largest barrier to implementing gender diversity was a "LACK OF AWARENESS OR CONCERN FOR GENDER DIVERSITY AS A CRITICAL MATTER." This lack of buy-in is most prevalent among middle managers, said CAHRS working group participants and the chief HR officer interviewed. They cite that this situation is partly driven by businesses

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[24] Carter & Silva, March 2010
[25] Eagly & Carli, 2007

focusing solely on competition and short-term gains, and since diversity has long-term benefits, it often falls to the wayside behind making the short-term numbers.

As one working group participant put it, "THE CONTINUED SHORT-TERM FOCUS AS THE DRIVER OF SUCCESS . . . AND THE COURAGE IT TAKES TO MAKE THIS [DIVERSITY] A PRIORITY WHEN IT'S MORE EXPEDIENT TO SURROUND YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE THAT YOU KNOW WILL GET IT DONE, THAT YOU CAN TRUST, AND THAT YOU KNOW THINK LIKE YOU . . . IS A HUGE BARRIER TO THESE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT WOMEN."

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES: Another key factor in women's failure to achieve leadership positions at parity with men is what people *perceive* as effective leadership traits versus *actual* effective traits.

According to Eagly and Carli (2007), many people hold the perception that an effective leader is a male. This is because more agentic traits (characterized by aggression, ambition, domination, self-confidence and force), are all thought to be indicative of an effective leader. Such traits also describe the *transactional* leadership style, which is more common among men. In contrast, *transformational* leadership—the dominant leadership style for women—is characterized by gaining others' trust and confidence to influence.

Although the perception is that males are more effective leaders because of their transactional leadership style, research shows that transformational leadership can actually be more effective.[26] And in today's organizational climate, the need for transformational leadership— with more teamwork, compromise and proactive problem solving—may be greater than ever. This viewpoint was mirrored in comments by one working group participant: "THERE IS ONE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP OPERATING—PRIMARILY THE . . . MALE DOMINATED, AGGRESSIVE, ASSERTIVE STYLE THAT IS HIERARCHICAL IN NATURE, AND LESS ABOUT A COLLABORATIVE, CONSENSUS-BASED MODEL FOR LEADERSHIP."

CAHRS working group participants also cited the tendency for organizations to want to fill open leadership roles with people with similar attributes as the predecessor—which in many cases tends to be a white male—as another factor possibly causing women to lag behind in the leadership ranks.

A lack of visionary characteristics among women may be another cause of the problem. A study by Ibarra and Obodaru (2009) found that 360 degree evaluations scored women higher than men on the majority of leadership dimensions, with the exception of "envisioning." Envisioning refers to the ability to set strategic direction and recognize new opportunities and trends, a dimension critical to success. However, the question is still up for debate.

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[26] Sen & Metzger, 2010

According to the CHRO we interviewed, "ONE OF THE THINGS YOU HAVE TO ASK YOURSELF IN RESEARCH IS, 'WHAT GIVES PEOPLE THE CONTENT TO HAVE A VISION AND SET STRATEGY?' SOMETIMES IT'S ACCESS, IT'S PERSPECTIVE, IT'S CONTEXT . . . AND YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THE INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONAL CAPABILITY. DO THEY HAVE THE APTITUDE . . . [AND] ACCESS TO A BROAD STRATEGIC INITIATIVE SO THAT THEY CAN ACTUALLY ABSORB IT."

TECHNICAL CAUSES

Bearing in mind the fundamental differences between men and women, organizations must make attempts to give them an equal career playing field. However, many organizational programs and practices do not translate the same way for men and women; some can even hold women back from attaining leadership positions. The most troubling practices and issues for many women in business relate to work/life balance, job placement and networking.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE: Women, more so than men, feel the pressure of balancing a career with familial obligations.[27] As a result, women take more time off from their jobs, or move into part-time work schedules. The resulting career interruptions and reduced work experiences leads to decreased earnings and slower career progression.[28] According to Mercer (2010), work-life balance was reported as the third largest barrier to women's advancement.

These pressures also affect subsequent generations. According to participants in the CAHRS working group, younger generations of women form perceptions about the choices they must make in order to advance their careers. As one participant said, "THERE ARE FEWER WOMEN IN THE PIPELINE [AS A RESULT OF] SEEING LEADERS HAVING TO GIVE UP FAMILIAL COMMITMENTS." Participants suggest that since entry-level women perceive leadership as a sacrifice to one's personal life, they may opt out at an early stage.

JOB PLACEMENT: Beginning with their initial job positions, women are often excluded from certain roles deemed critical for business success, and tend to pursue opportunities that slow their careers.

- **Initial positions:** Even when controlling for years of experience, industry, global region, and children living at home, men start their careers at higher levels than women. Continuing forward, men advance their careers higher and at faster rates than women.[29] This is true even in female-dominated fields such as nursing, social work and elementary education.[30]

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[27] Padma, 2010

[28] Eagly & Carli, 2007

[29] Carter & Silva, Feb. 2010; Carter & Silva, March 2010

[30] Eagly & Carli, 2007

- **Lack of international and P&L experience:** The second largest factor preventing women from advancing, according to Mercer (2010), is "insufficient breadth of experience." Women are largely under-represented as expatriates, despite expressing as much interest in international experience as men.[31] As a result, women may lack the global skills critical for advancement.[32] In addition to international roles, only 10% of female managers in the U.S. hold line jobs with P&L responsibility.[33] Participants in the CAHRS working group concurred, expressing concern that women may not be as ready to take on certain higher ranking positions in organizations because they've had fewer opportunities in roles with P&L oversight.

- **Non-traditional career moves:** According to research by Carter & Silva (2010), making a non-traditional career move—into a non-profit, government organization, or into education—negatively affected women's advancement, yet had no effect on men who took non-traditional positions.

LACK OF NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES: Generally speaking, women have less opportunity to network and form relationships that can help them gain visibility in their organizations.[34] Many women run up against the "who you know factor," which is partially a result of work-life balance pressures,[35] as well as the difficulties associated with networking in a male-dominated field.[36]

> "WHEN A POSITION COMES OPEN AT THAT HIGH LEVEL, THE FOLKS AROUND THAT LEADERSHIP TABLE LOOK TO EACH OTHER AND SAY 'WHO DO YOU KNOW?'" EXPLAINED ONE CAHRS WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT, "AND IT'S [THE ANSWER IS] TYPICALLY 'SOMEONE THAT LOOKS LIKE ME' AT THAT LEVEL OF THE ORGANIZATION."

Furthermore, a recent study in the Harvard Business Review (Ibarra, Carter and Silva, 2010), shows that women who *are* networking benefit from mentors who provide feedback and career advice—but lack sponsorship-people with influence who advocate for their advancement. In contrast, men are more likely to have a sponsor who can go to bat for them. Mercer has also cited this trend as a critical stumbling block for women's advancement. According to their 2010 survey, lack of executive sponsorship was reported as the leading barrier to women advancing in their organizations.

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[31] Adler, 1984 (as cited in Harris, 2002)

[32] Harris, 2002

[33] Wittenberg-Cox & Maitland, 2008

[34] Carter, 2010; Nelson & Burke, 2000

[35] Cormier, 2006; Eagly & Carli, 2007

[36] Eagly & Carli, 2007

Any solution to the problem of women lagging behind in leadership must address three key issues: gender equality, productivity and engagement.

- *GENDER EQUALITY -* Organizations must find a way to create gender equality in the management ranks. To achieve this, organizations have to base promotions on performance, not politics.

- *PRODUCTIVITY -* Organizations must design jobs and career paths in ways that elicit high quality work from both male and female employees.

- *ENGAGEMENT -* Engagement is a predictor of productivity and is therefore important for business success. In order to increase engagement, organizations must foster work-life balance for both female *and* male employees to minimize their daily stress levels and pressures.

WHERE TO TURN: SOLUTIONS

Balancing the leadership playing field requires organizations to design and implement new processes and programs; to reassess how the organization perceives existing processes; and to open opportunities from which women are currently cut off. We recommend solutions targeted to the six main factors affecting gender disparity identified previously: underlying gender biases, lack of organizational buy-in, perceptions about leadership attributes, work-life balance, job placement and lack of networking opportunities.

MINIMIZE GENDER BIASES: Biases can be reduced only when management makes their employees aware of gender bias and prejudice in their organizations. To do this, organizations can conduct prejudice awareness programs, such as diversity training. However, the risk is high of failing to reap the benefits from this investment. In order to be effective, training content must be backed up by what is said and done daily.[37] Albeit difficult, participants in the CAHRS working group validated the need to prove the long-term ROI of such programs by continuing the process after the training ends.

CREATE ORGANIZATIONAL BUY-IN: Organizations must get buy-in at all levels for the business case for gender diversity in leadership, with particular focus on middle managers, those with hiring responsibilities, and the CEO. When middle managers buy-in—an effective strategy, as indicated by CAHRS working group participants—this translates into saved dollars and time for the organization. Such savings can be conveyed by calculating the amount of sales needed to recoup the cost of a possible discrimination lawsuit, or the cost in lost time to an organization trying to make up the difference in sales that women could bring.

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[37] Eagly & Carli, 2007

Another strategy identified in the CAHRS working group was to foster an open discussion among line leaders, focused around the importance of creating a diverse and inclusive environment. It is also important to obtain buy-in from those responsible for hiring, whether hiring manager or human resources. By shunting the issue to the diversity team, organizations are doing themselves a disservice.

As one working group participant stated, hiring managers' current notion is, "MY JOB IS TO HIRE AS FAST AS I CAN, AND I DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR THE DIVERSITY STUFF." Bringing together HR and hiring managers will allow for more diversity within open promotions.

Last, but perhaps most important, buy-in at the top is critical. As another working group participant said, "IF YOU WANT TO CHANGE SOMETHING, IT'S GOT TO COME FROM THE CEO." In addition, almost half of the respondents answering the McKinsey & Company survey claimed that the CEO and executive team "visibly monitoring" gender diversity programs had the "biggest impact on increasing gender diversity in general."

ADOPT A NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL: If organizations want to stay competitive, they can't continue to use one transactional leadership model. It is clear that forcing women to adapt to this male-dominated leadership style in order to advance has proven ineffective. As the competitive climate changes, companies must adopt a new leadership model that incorporates the more effective transformational, female-dominant leadership attributes.

According to Denise Cormier (2006), the new leadership model should focus around traits such as priority-setting, delegating, growing talent, collaborating, communicating through complex layers and having a global mindset. Operating under this new model requires organizations to identify high potentials, promote and train employees based on the model.

ADOPT FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS: Since work-life balance pressures often create barriers to women's advancement, organizations must make every effort to minimize them. Although conflicts over dual responsibilities are inevitable, companies must recognize this, encourage women to ask for help, and respond to requests with receptiveness.[38]

One way to minimize these pressures is to adopt flexible working arrangements, which provide services that enable women and men with workplace and domestic responsibilities to attend to both. These include, but are not limited to, flex-time, job sharing, telecommuting, elder care options, adoption benefits, dependent child care options and on-site child care.[39]

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[38] Nelson & Burke, 2000

[39] Carli & Silva, Feb. 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Nelson & Burke, 2000; Mercer, 2010

Another way organizations can reduce the stress some women feel at work is by introducing healthy stress-coping mechanisms into the workplace, such as yoga and meditation classes, exercise facilities, and an on-site psychologist.[40]

Flexible working arrangements are critical for organizations facing today's heightened competition. As David B. Dillon, chairman and CEO of the The Kroger Company states, "COMPANIES THAT ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER CHANGING BENEFITS AND POLICIES THAT SUPPORT TODAY'S WORKING FAMILIES WILL PUT THEIR BUSINESSES IN A BETTER POSITION TO DEVELOP AND RETAIN A RICH POOL OF TALENTED EMPLOYEES. AS A RESULT, THEIR OWN WORKFORCE MAY BETTER REFLECT THE VERY CLIENTS AND CUSTOMERS THEY WANT TO ATTRACT."[41]

Beyond being good for business, flexible work arrangements also seem to help close the gender-leadership gap; Eagly and Carli (2007) cite research findings showing that organizations that implemented flexible work arrangements increased their number of women in management in subsequent years. However, they also emphasize the importance of encouraging men to take advantage of these benefits. If women are solely utilizing flexible working arrangements, they will be viewed negatively.

GIVE WOMEN MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES: Women currently lack certain opportunities to gain experiences critical to advancing in the workplace. Organizations must work to turn this around by giving women stretch assignments, line management positions, and international experience.[42] This will allow more female employees opportunities to directly impact the business. According to Thomas Falk, chairman and CEO of Kimberly-Clark Corporation, "WHY NOT IDENTIFY CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL ROLES WITH P&L RESPONSIBILITY AND PRIORITIZE WOMEN AND MINORITIES FOR THESE KEY DEVELOPMENTAL ROLES?"[43]

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[40] Nelson & Burke, 2000

[41] Carter & Silva, Feb. 2010

[42] Carter & Silva, Feb. 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Harris, 2002

[43] Carter & Silva, Feb. 2010

GIVE WOMEN A NETWORK: Organizations must increase networking opportunities for women seeking to advance. This can be achieved by offering one-time networking events, employee resource groups and sponsorship programs.

- **Networking events***: Participants in the 2010 CAHRS working group identified practices inside their organizations targeted at providing more networking opportunities for women. One example was a women's summit—a panel discussion about networking with women holding top global positions in the organization.

- **Employee resource groups (ERGs):** Having global, regional and local councils that are linked to the business strategy and having senior sponsorship will allow women to form a wider network in their organizations. But working group participants noted that, in order for them to be successful, companies should encourage all employees—not just women—to participate in ERGs.

- **Sponsorship programs:** According to McKinsey & Company (2010), mentor/sponsorship programs are one of the most important practices for yielding positive gender diversity effects. Participants in the CAHRS working group had both positive and negative experiences with mentoring programs inside their organizations, but provided guidance for how to make them most effective. First, participants emphasized that the entire organization needs to know and understand the difference between mentors and sponsors. Although mentorships that emerge naturally are difficult and timely to foster, they are more effective than forced, formal mentorship programs. Working group participants suggested that hosting informal career discussions is a good way to start building informal, organic mentor relationships.

- **Root programs led by boardrooms and executive committees in central strategic change:**[44] Management should be careful not to push all of the work onto their female employees—making leadership advancement and gender equity a "female problem." Specifically, organizations should refrain from labeling such efforts as women's initiatives, and instead call them what they are—*business initiatives*.

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[44] Wittenberg-Cox, 2010

CONCLUSION

The path to female leadership is a complex journey beginning at entry level and moving onward. Women in today's organizations are key players, but there is still a great need for fundamental change. Beyond quotas, gender diversity in business leadership represents the ability for companies to sustain continuous innovation, competitiveness, and responsiveness to changing economic, educational and workforce demographics. Without it, companies will lose out on critical business opportunities.

Many women still face barriers when seeking to advance in their organizations, caused by a combination of factors: gender bias; lack of buy-in; operating under a single leadership model; work-life balance pressures; lack of opportunity; and lack of networking. By addressing these factors, and advancing employees based on performance, organizations can reap a positive return on investment by fostering a productive and engaged workforce. Those companies that have implemented programs to help break down these barriers are clearly experiencing financial returns.

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Hansen, M., Ibarra, H., Peyer, U., von Bernuth, N., & Escallon, C. (2010). The best-performing CEOs in the world. *Harvard Business Review, 88*(1/2), 104-113.

Harris, H. (2002). Think international manager, think male: Why are women not selected for international management assignments?. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 44*(2), 175-203.

Ibarra, H., Carter, N., & Silva, C. (2010). Why men still get more promotions than women. *Harvard Business Review, 88*(9), 80-126.

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McKinsey & Company. (2010). Moving women to the top: McKinsey global survey results. *McKinsey Quarterly, October 2010*, 1-8.

McTavish, D., & Miller, K. (2009). Gender balance in leadership?: Reform and modernization in the UK further education sector. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 37*(3), 350-365.

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Nelson, D., & Burke, R. (2000). Women executives: Health, stress, and success. *Academy of Management Executive, 14*(2), 107-121.

Padma, S. (2010). Leadership attributes among women employees. *Advances in Management, 3*(7), 36-40.

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Soares, R., Carter, N.M., & Combopiano, J. (2009). *2009 catalyst census: Fortune 500 women board of directors.* Retrieved November 13, 2010, from <http://www.catalyst.org/publication/357/2009-catalyst-census-fortune-500-women-board-directors>.

United States Government Accountability Office. (2010). *Women in management: Female managers' representation, characteristics, and pay* (Publication No. GAO-10-1064T).

Wittenberg-Cox, A. (2010). *How women mean business: A step by step guide to profiting from gender balanced business.* Chichester, England; Hoboken, N.J.:J Wiley.

Wittenberg-Cox, A. & Maitland, A. (2008). *Why women mean business: Understanding the emergence of our next economic revolution.* Chichester, England; Hoboken, N.J.: J. Wiley.

Women CEOs. (2009). Retrieved November 13, 2010, from <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2009/womenceos/>

Carter, B. (2010). Systems theory: changing the hegemonic impact on leadership advancement for women. In C. A. Lentz (Ed.), *The refractive thinker: An anthology of higher learnings: Ethics, leadership and globalization*, pp. 217-234. Lentz Leadership Institute LLC.

Abstract: Chapter 11 of the book "The Refractive Thinker: An Anthology of Higher Learning: Ethics, Leadership and Globalization," Volume Four, edited by Cheryl A. Lentz is presented. It discusses the importance of systems theory to alter hegemonic effect on leadership advancement for women. It mentions the functionality of systems theory to offer possible solutions to the barriers to leadership advancement opportunity for women and other minorities.

Carter, N., & Silva, C. (2010). Pipeline's broken promise. Retrieved November 13, 2010 from <http://www.catalyst.org/publication/372/pipelines-broken-promise>.

Abstract: Pipeline's Broken Promise examines the conventional wisdom of the past two decades in which leaders have counted on parity in education, women's accelerated movement into the labor force, and company-implemented diversity and inclusion programs to yield a robust talent pipeline where women are poised to make rapid gains to the top. Findings reveal that instead of women and men being on equal footing and their career trajectories gender-blind, inequality remains entrenched. Among high-potential graduates from elite M.B.A. programs (Respondent Profile)—those companies count on for future leadership—women lagged men in advancement and compensation starting from their first job and were less satisfied with their careers. This report includes perspectives from CEOs and other senior leaders, who considered the findings a wake-up call and made recommendations for corrective action.

Carter, N., & Silva, C. (2010). Women in management: Delusions of progress. *Harvard Business Review, 88*(3), 19-21.

Abstract: The article discusses research on gender bias against women executives in the workplace. The study, which was sponsored by Ernst & Young company, followed master of business administration (MBA) graduates between 1996 and 2007. Information is given about the women's first post-MBA jobs, their career advances, and the reasons why they changed jobs. The issues of inequity in career development resulting from corporate culture, the disproportionate rate of career advancement for men in management, and the treatment of women by difficult managers or first bosses are discussed.

Cormier, D. (2006). Why top professional women still feel like outsiders. *Employment Relations Today, 33*(1), 27-32.

Abstract: The article reports on why top professional women still feel like outsiders. It presents the challenges and issues confronting today's women leaders and how they can conquer the "outsider syndrome," and explains why it is necessary to remedy the situation. It also highlights the issues on loneliness and isolation. The article suggests three solutions to the problem, namely, professional development, culture change and creating networks.

Digest of Education Statistics. (2007-2008). Retrieved November 13, 2010, from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_268.asp>.

Abstract: This graph shows the number of degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions, by level of degree and sex of student from 1869 through 2018 (projected).

Eagly, A., & Carli, L. (2007). Women and the labyrinth of leadership. *Harvard Business Review, 85*(9), 63-71.

Abstract: Two decades ago, people began using the "glass ceiling" catchphrase to describe organizations' failure to promote women into top leadership roles. Eagly and Carli, of Northwestern University and Wellesley College, argue in this article (based on a forthcoming book from Harvard Business School Press) that the metaphor has outlived its usefulness. In fact, it leads managers to overlook interventions that would attack the problem at its roots, wherever it occurs. A labyrinth is a more fitting image to help organizations understand and address the obstacles to women's progress. Rather than depicting just one absolute barrier at the penultimate stage of a distinguished career, a labyrinth conveys the complexity and variety of challenges that can appear along the way. Passage through a labyrinth requires persistence, awareness of one's progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead. Routes to the center exist but are full of twists and turns, both expected and unexpected. Vestiges of prejudice against women, issues of leadership style and authenticity, and family responsibilities are just a few of the challenges. For instance, married mothers now devote even more time to primary child care per week than they did in earlier generations (12.9 hours of lose interaction versus 10.6), despite the fact that fathers, too, put in a lot more hours than they used to (6.5 versus 2.6). Pressures for intensive parenting and the increasing demands of most high-level careers have left women with very little time to socialize with colleagues and build professional networks--that is, to accumulate the social capital that is essential to managers who want to move up. The remedies proposed--such as changing the long-hours culture, using open-recruitment tools, and preparing women for line management with appropriately demanding assignments--are wide ranging, but together they have a chance of achieving leadership equity in our time.

Hansen, M., Ibarra, H., Peyer, U., von Bernuth, N., & Escallon, C. (2010). The best-performing CEOs in the world. *Harvard Business Review, 88*(1/2), 104-113.

Abstract: The article presents this journal's top 50 ranking of the best-performing chief executive officers (CEO) at large public companies over the long term or a three-year horizon. The discussion focuses on the education of the CEOs, the change in market capitalization during their tenure, and industry-adjusted company returns. The list includes Steve Jobs of Apple in the United States, Yun Jong-Yong of Samsung Electronics in Korea, Alexey B. Miller of Gazprom in Russia, John T. Chambers of Cisco Systems in the U.S., and Mukesh D. Ambani of Reliance Industries in India.

Harris, H. (2002). Think international manager, think male: Why are women not selected for international management assignments?. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 44*(2), 175-203.

Abstract: The development of a global mind set can only be achieved through exposure to diversity. It is hardly likely that a homogenous group of managers will develop a global mindset unless the composition of the group is changed to reflect the diversity within the organization and potentially within its client base. In this respect, the fact that women who represent half the population in most countries in the world are barely represented at board level is problematic. In the Great Britain for instance, women comprise only 2% of executive directors and 9.6% of non-executive directors in FTSE 100. companies. The low incidence of women on international management

assignments is even more puzzling when one looks at research into the criteria for effective international managers. Here, the emphasis is on interpersonal, intuitive, and co-operative styles of management as the key skills for working internationally. By its very nature, the development of a global mindset can only be achieved through exposure to diversity. It is hardly likely that a homogenous group of managers will develop a global mindset unless the composition of the group is changed to reflect the diversity within the organization and potentially within its client base.

Ibarra, H., Carter, N., & Silva, C. (2010). Why men still get more promotions than women. *Harvard Business Review, 88*(9), 80-126.

Abstract: Though companies now invest heavily in mentoring and developing their best female talent, all that attention doesn't translate into promotions. A Catalyst survey of over 4,000 high-potentials shows that more women than men have mentors -- yet women are paid $4,600 less in their first post-MBA jobs, hold lower-level positions, and feel less career satisfaction. To better understand why, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with 40 participants in a mentoring program at a large multinational. All mentoring is not created equal, they discovered. Only sponsorship involves advocacy for advancement. The interviews and survey alike indicate that, compared with their male peers, high-potential women are over-mentored, under-sponsored, and not advancing in their organizations. Without sponsorship, women not only are less likely than men to be appointed to top roles but may also be more reluctant to go for them. Organizations such as Deutsche Bank, Unilever, Sodexo, and IBM Europe have established sponsorship programs to facilitate the promotion of high-potential women. Programs that get results clarify and communicate their goals, match sponsors and mentees on the basis of those goals, coordinate corporate and regional efforts, train sponsors, and hold those sponsors accountable.

Ibarra, H., & Obodaru, O. (2009). Women and the vision thing. *Harvard Business Review, 87*(1), 62-70.

Abstract: Are women rated lower than men in evaluations of their leadership capabilities because of lingering gender bias? No, according to an analysis of thousands of 360-degree assessments collected by Insead's executive education program. That analysis showed that women tend to outshine men in all areas but one: vision. Unfortunately, that exception is a big one. At the top tiers of management, the ability to see opportunities, craft strategy based on a broad view of the business, and inspire others is a must-have. To explore the nature of the deficit, and whether it is a perception or reality, Insead professor Ibarra and doctoral candidate Obodaru interviewed female executives and studied the evaluation data. They developed three possible explanations. First, women may do just as much as men to shape the future but go about it in a different way; a leader who is less directive, includes more people, and shares credit might not fit people's mental model of a visionary. Second, women may believe they have less license to go out on a limb. Those who have built careers on detail-focused, shoulder-to-the-wheel execution may hesitate to stray from facts into unprovable assertions about the future. Third, women may choose not to cultivate reputations as big visionaries. Having seen bluster passed off as vision, they may dismiss the importance of selling visions. The top two candidates for the Democratic nomination for U.S. president in 2008 offer an instructive parallel. The runner-up, Hillary Clinton, was viewed as a get-it-done type with an impressive, if uninspiring, grasp of policy detail. The winner, Barack Obama, was seen as a charismatic visionary offering a hopeful, if undetailed, future. The good news is that every dimension of leadership is learned, not inborn. As more women become skilled at, and known for, envisioning the future, nothing will hold them back.

Marketing to Women: Quick Facts. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2010, from <http://she-
conomy.com/report/facts-on-women/>.

Abstract: Provides quick facts and statistics regarding how to market to women.

McKinsey & Company. (2010). Moving women to the top: McKinsey global survey results. *McKinsey Quarterly, October 2010*, 1-8.

Abstract: A majority of executives believe gender diversity in leadership is linked to better financial performance, but companies take few actions to support women in the workforce.

McTavish, D., & Miller, K. (2009). Gender balance in leadership?: Reform and modernization in the UK further education sector. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 37*(3), 350-365.

Abstract: The further education (FE) sector employs a high proportion of women yet relatively few women progress into leadership positions. The article seeks to provide explanations for this gender imbalance and argues that despite change and modernization initiatives, the further education sector remains gendered in many aspects of leadership, governance and managerial practices. The article concludes that while change has increased opportunities for women, masculinized managerial practices have led in many instances to the re-gendering of organizational practices with unequal gender impacts.

Mercer. (2010). *Most employers lacking a strategy for developing women leaders.* Retrieved November 13, 2010, from <http://www.mercer.com/press-releases/1398000>.

Abstract: Despite organizations' efforts to achieve a diverse workforce, the majority – 70% – do not have a clearly defined strategy or philosophy for the development of women into leadership roles, according to the new Women's Leadership Development Survey conducted by Mercer in conjunction with Talent Management and Diversity Management magazines.

Nelson, D., & Burke, R. (2000). Women executives: Health, stress, and success. *Academy of Management Executive, 14*(2), 107-121.

Abstract: As more women participate in and lead work organizations, the health and well-being of women have important implications for organizational effectiveness. Although there is little direct evidence on executive women's health, we can extrapolate useful information from studies of managerial women and working women in general. While women share many of the health concerns of their male counterparts, they also face unique health issues. This article explores the context of executive women's health in terms of their progress in organizations and the obstacles they face in rising to top leadership positions. We present the stressors women executives face, the ways they cope, and the related health problems associated with work that they experience. We provide specific guidelines for executive women and for organizations that will help manage women's risks and enhance their health. We conclude by exploring what the increase in women's leadership will mean for the health of employees and organizations.

Padma, S. (2010). Leadership attribute among women employees. *Advances in Management, 3*(7), 36-40.

Abstract: Heightened competition world wide has raised the performance expectation of organization which women still find it difficult to meet. Women have equal access to higher education but are not treated equally in comparison to their male counterparts while climbing the corporate ladder. Their biological differences, family culture and belief are the limiting factors. There are also many stereotype beliefs which are hindering women from breaking the glass ceiling. For women struggle at work and home seems to occupy her entire life. Despite achieving many historic achievements by women, these hold little promise for the women in their long-standing battle for economic quality. This study aims to understand the hindrances perceived by women themselves with regard to their management capabilities. This study also attempts to test whether the perception of women about their leadership capabilities are dependent on their age, social status and their education.

Sen, A., & Metzger, J. (2010). Women leadership and global power: Evidence from the United States and Latin America. *International Journal of Management & Marketing Research (IJMMR), 3*(2), 75-84.

Abstract: This paper examines leadership theories along with the advancement of women within the United States as well as in Latin America. Data from an exploratory survey of 19 women executives in Latin America and 19 women executives in the United States suggest that globalization has transformed the way in which organizations perceive and carry out leadership today. Globalization has paved the way for a new type of leadership style that is more collaborative and less hierarchal, in which relationship building and teamwork are critical. Data also suggest that women have emerged as effective leaders carrying out this new leadership style and their success has led to higher company profitability. This paper concludes by exploring ways in which corporations can maintain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace and how we, as humans, can begin to transform societies to cope with the Flat World while creating a flexible labor force and successful leaders.

Silverstein, M., & Sayre, K. (2009). The Female Economy. *Harvard Business Review, 87*(9), 46-53.

Abstract: As a market, women represent an opportunity bigger than China and India combined. They control $20 trillion in consumer spending, and that figure could reach $28 trillion in the next five years. Women drive the world economy, in fact. Yet most companies do a remarkably poor job of serving them, a new study by the Boston Consulting Group reveals. BCG surveyed more than 12,000 women from a variety of geographies, income levels, and walks of life about their education, finances, homes, jobs, activities, interests, relationships, hopes, and fears, as well as their shopping behaviors and spending patterns. In this article, Silverstein and Sayre, two of the firm's partners, review highlights of the findings and explain the biggest opportunities. While any business would be wise to target female consumers, they say, the greatest potential lies in six industries: food, fitness, beauty, apparel, health care, and financial services. Address women's concerns effectively, and your company could see the kind of rapid growth that fitness chain Curves enjoyed. Most health clubs are expensive and designed for men, with lots of complicated body-building equipment. Curves, however, understood that time-pressed women needed quick, affordable workouts, and came up with the concept of simple, 30-minute exercise routines geared to women and offered in no-frills spaces. Companies that likewise successfully tailor their offerings to women will be positioned to win when the economy begins to recover.

Soares, R., Carter, N.M., & Combopiano, J. (2009). *2009 catalyst census: Fortune 500 women board of directors.* Retrieved November 13, 2010, from <http://www.catalyst.org/publication/357/2009-catalyst-census-fortune-500-women-board-directors>.

Abstract: The 2009 Catalyst Census: Fortune 500 Women Board Directors details women's representation in corporate governance at the largest companies in the United States. For the first time, Catalyst expanded analysis to include lead directors and board chairs to gain a more robust measurement of women's power on boards. This annual report provides critical statistics to gauge women's advancement and highlights the gender diversity gap. Each year Catalyst tracks women's share of all board seats and of positions of board leadership; the representation of women of color directors; and the percent of companies having zero to three or more women and women of color directors. The appendices show additional points of comparison by Fortune Rank, Region, and Industry, and list companies with the highest and lowest representation of women board directors. In 2009, women held 15.2 percent of board seats at Fortune 500 companies, the same as 2008. In both 2008 and 2009, almost 90 percent of companies had at least one women director, but less than 20 percent had three or more women serving together. Similar to 2008, women of color held 3.1 percent of all board seats and represented about one-fifth of all women directors. In both 2008 and 2009, more than one-fourth of companies had one women of color director, but no company had three or more women of color directors serving together.

United States Government Accountability Office. (2010). *Women in management: Female managers' representation, characteristics, and pay* (Publication No. GAO-10-1064T).

Abstract: This testimony discusses issues related to women in management. Although women's representation across the general workforce is growing, there remains a need for information about the challenges women face in advancing their careers. In 2001, using 1995 and 2000 data from the Current Population Survey, we found women were less represented in management than in the overall workforce in 4 of the 10 industries reviewed. We also found differences in the characteristics and pay of male and female managers, which we explored using statistical modeling techniques. To respond to Congress' request that we update this information to 2007, we addressed the following three questions: (1) What is the representation of women in management positions compared to their representation in nonmanagement positions by industry? (2) What are the key characteristics of women and men in management positions by industry? and (3) What is the difference in pay between women and men in full-time management positions by industry?

Wittenberg-Cox, A. (2010). *How women mean business: A step by step guide to profiting from gender balanced business.* Chichester, England; Hoboken, N.J.:J Wiley.

Abstract: This follow-up to *Why Women Mean Business* takes the business case for women to the next step. *How Women Mean Business* presents ways in which companies can tackle gender equality. Wittenberg-Cox clarifies the challenge for women not as a glass ceiling, but "gender asbestos". Gender asbestos affects all stakeholders, from consumers to shareholders to research development, and combating it requires commitment from all involved. Following, she outlines four steps in which companies can obtain gender equality: audit, awareness, align, and sustain. These steps will enable businesses to get a better grasp on their own gender-diversity challenge, develop their own action plans, and sustain success.

Wittenberg-Cox, A. & Maitland, A. (2008). *Why women mean business: Understanding the emergence of our next economic revolution.* Chichester, England; Hoboken, N.J.: J. Wiley.

Abstract: The business case for gender equality has been widely proven and validated. Aviva Wittenberg-Cox and Alison Maitland's new book goes further to offer the ways in which business can change. They posit that companies should view women as business partners, not as a minority issue. The business case for women is explored, diving deeply into the economic data and trends that support an integrated labor force. Following, specific steps that companies can utilize to successfully integrate women into their workforce are outlined. In their analysis, a number of unsuccessful past strategies are also outlined, with their reason for failure. Wittenberg-Cox and Maitland then turn to the impact of culture, and provide insights into what drives women's business and market decisions.

Women CEO's. (2009). Retrieved November 13, 2010, from
        <http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2009/womenceos/>

Abstract: Currently, 15 Fortune 500 companies are run by women, and a total of 28 Fortune 1000 companies have women in the top job. That's up from last year, when 12 Fortune 500 and 24 Fortune 1000 companies were run by women.