For businesses to be trusted, their leadership must be representative of society

10% of leadership ranks are women, despite accounting for the majority of college graduates.

Companies that include more women at the top tend to outperform those that do not by some estimates, with a 47% average return on equity.


Regulatory Board diversity

Governments and business continue to debate whether regulatory, legislative or voluntary routes are most effective.

Whichever approach is taken, women on Boards has become a global debate.

Source: Catalyst, Increasing Gender Diversity on Boards: Current Index of Formal Approaches (August 2014)

Business benefits of having women on Boards can include:

- **Economic development of your organization** – moving into new markets, women will want to join an organization which is gender balanced with career opportunities.
- **The need for your organization to represent your customer base** – more women now have spending power as a result of increased further education opportunities.
- **To attract and retain** diverse talent.
- **Enhanced reputational benefits** for your organization.
- **Women enrich** the organizational culture.
- **Diverse workforces** are more **agile, resilient and capable of innovation**.
- **An opportunity to help to change society**; locally and corporately.
- **Women** who are family members, **can be influential role models**. How many of your Board colleagues have daughters?

Source: KPMG
Recognising the value of Diversity

"Businesses that have better diversity in their management teams and Board sustainably produce better results”

Inga Beale, first female head in the 325-year history of the Lloyd’s of London insurance market, #Davos 2015

Boardroom Questions

1. What are we doing to attract, retain and promote female talent?
2. What are our policies, targets, measurement and ambitions towards reducing gender parity at leadership level?
3. What are our gender statistics at graduate, middle management, senior management and Board levels?
4. What are the relative turnover statistics? Are women leaving our organization in greater numbers than men? If so, why and what can we do to address this?
5. What are our organizational barriers or unconscious biases that may prevent women from achieving their full potential in the company? How does management identify and address them?
6. Does management mentor high potentials? Beyond mentoring, do we have high level sponsors who ensure they have the right opportunities and visibility?
7. How do we measure and reward success?
8. Women are often the primary caregiver for both children and parents: what childcare, eldercare and other flexible working do we provide to assist these transitional periods?

What actions could the Board consider?

Be patient but persistent
Cultural change requires a long term perspective. Start the process now, and keep it going.

Initiate change
Collaborate with management on a few key gender initiatives, visible role models and provide support and advice to ensure they succeed.

Lead by example
How diverse is the Board? Are Board members serving as mentors and champions of high potential executive women? Do we look for diverse candidate lists when we discuss CEO succession? Do we serve as positive role models?

Require ownership
Identify key executives who will be held responsible for progress - starting with the CEO.

Demand accountability
What gets measured gets done, particularly when the Board is asking the questions.

CLICK HERE for further information

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