ADVANCED BOARDROOM
EXCELLENCE

DIVERSITY

RIDING THE WAVES OF THE EXECUTIVE PIPELINE

'Making it to the Top'

**Agenda
for
Change**
An
Extract
from
the Main
Report

ACTION THIS DAY

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Our respondents identified corporate culture, alternative working practices and more flexible career structures as key factors in tackling the leaky pipeline, along with the provision of coaching and mentoring.

Any serious effort to achieve this and to encourage more women to go for C-suite roles, requires a leadership down commitment that understands the business value of difference rather than just talking about what is politically correct.

This commitment must be embedded throughout the organisation, even if diversity is more complex to manage or involves letting go of long-held beliefs.

With this in mind, we have drawn up a list of recommendations for organisations, for leaders and for women and minorities that will help achieve better outcomes for all.

Our list reflects both this research and Advanced Boardroom Excellence experience from over 20 years working in the field of diversity.

THE ORGANISATIONAL 'SYSTEM': WHAT ORGANISATIONS CAN DO

Build the Right Environment

- Ensure that diversity is integrated into the business model

- Engage the board with integrating diversity in the executive pipeline

- Examine workplace culture and language from the top down and test it for gender bias

- Define and articulate leadership and management qualities that reflect the culture you want to achieve

- Redefine success, recognising results and outcomes, rather than 'time served'. Offer alternative working patterns and flexible career structures for men and women. Make flexibility normal

- Enable supportive networks and ensure that mentoring programmes target women and minority groups as well as 'traditional' male managers

- Understand what drives the reward and remuneration structures of the organisation

META ANALYSIS

Organisational system
- Policies & Procedures
- Barriers & Constraints
- Metaphors
- Language

LEADERSHIP
The Board
Leadership Team
Managers
TRACTION ZONE

Models & Tapes
Patterns of Behaviour
Barriers & Constraints
Careers & Ambition
Individual Psychology

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS

- Undertake 'sensitivity analysis' of proposed changes for their diversity impact

- Take a creative look at the talent management process and programmes to identify and overcome the barriers faced by under-represented populations.

Programmes

- Ensure board leadership of the organisation's strategic diversity agenda

- Integrate diversity into all leadership and management programmes

- Create a board-led mentoring programme to demonstrate the board's commitment

- Understand the 'outflow' criteria for under-represented populations

- Avoid separate programmes which reinforce stereotypes

- Ensure leaders and managers understand how language and metaphors can create barriers

- Make sure employees understand and have equal access to the organisation's sponsorship model

- Create a career management process which opens up the executive pipeline to all, with due regard to the barriers and constraints for different populations

- Creatively re-design the recruitment and promotion systems as diversity friendly and 'collaborative' not 'adversarial'.

LEADERSHIP TRACTION ZONE: WHAT LEADERS AND MANAGERS CAN DO

Environmental Factors

- Understand your organisation's business case for diversity and leadership buy-in for it

- Get the active backing of the CEO for integrating diversity into the leadership model

- Provide a clear executive committee commitment to increasing the diversity of the executive pipeline

- Create visible engagement from the board in the make-up of the executive pipeline beyond the usual statements of commitment to diversity

- Role model the behaviour required.

Programmes

- Design the leadership and management programme to both integrate and articulate the challenges of diversity in management action terms

- Provide leaders and managers with a platform to understand the barriers and constraints providing leadership opportunities for diverse populations

- Create greater traction and flow through the executive pipeline for diverse groups

- Look at the numbers at each level within your organisation to inform (or remind) yourself of the scale and nature of the problem

- "Take it on the chin" and accept that you may have to do something different to achieve real change

- Do not make assumptions about what people want or don't want. Ask them

- Be open-minded and flexible about what is needed for a particular role or stretch opportunity

- Learn the language and metaphors which encourage different styles of operating and communicating and don't assume that one is necessarily more indicative of 'merit' than another

- Be aware of your personal unconscious biases and how to counteract them.

INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY: WHAT WOMEN AND MINORITIES CAN DO

Environment (Personal Psychology)

- Create a networking strategy to increase visibility internally and externally and get noticed

- Take risks and look on setbacks as opportunities to learn

- Be a role model

- Understand the organisational psychology, dominant language and metaphors

- Make conscious decisions about the environment, culture and organisational model you want to work in, and the trade-offs implied; then develop your strategy to maximise your impact.

Programmes (Actions)

- Plan for your career

- Get a sponsor

- Use mentors and sponsors to support you and advocate for you

- Understand your own psychology – strengths, barriers to success, derailers, etc.

- Cultivate resilience

- Ask for a pay rise

- Learn to re-frame

- Learn fluent finance.