



Are you ready to break through the glass ceiling?

Sarah Hopkins shares some Top Tips for Women to maximise their Business Careers

A recent global study by McKinsey found that CEO's believe that the Top Four attributes for leadership success are:-

1. Intellect & stimulation
2. Inspiration
3. Consultative decision making
4. Setting clear expectations/rewards

In addition they found that these attributes are most commonly found in women leaders.

This begs the question – why are there so few of us?

If you look at the numbers of females in higher education, graduating and entry level into business there are high levels of representation....at some point the 'leaky pipeline' has a massive impact on the number of women that are able to reach the top.

If you are ready to break through and maximise your career here are some 'Top Tips' for you:-

1. Sponsor – reach out and secure a sponsor to promote and support you. This investment in yourself really can enable the 'Tipping Point' to be reached for many women. Having a sponsor is a key success factor to enable you to navigate and leapfrog the shooting and golfing networking you may never get invited too...

2. Push yourself out of your comfort zone to ensure you have all the basic 'camping equipment' for the commercial environment, e.g. Enrol on a financial course for non-financial managers; look out for and accept opportunities to take the speaker platform.
3. Ensure you are acting as role model in your own organisation; look at the opportunities to develop your broader commercial skillset within your organisation. Plus hold your managers accountable; when they are recruiting and promoting are they providing the most diverse candidate shortlists?
4. Have confidence in your language in particular in your CV ensure you are positive about your success and focus on the ROI & analytics. Try to keep your CV to one page, two maximum. It is a teaser document to make someone say 'I want to learn more about this individual' not war and peace on your career. I can easily tell the difference between male and female CV's with names taken off. Women will have far more subjective text Plus I still regularly see 'Maternity Leave' but never Paternity Leave highlighted.
5. Use the same approach with your LinkedIn profile; LinkedIn is your public CV and your profile should be a strong, selling document. This is how people will look you up so ensure your name reflects the name you are most commonly known by.... Much as some women want to change their names because of marriage, or divorce, be aware that if you don't reference your 'business name' you will be harder to find and identify. Again remember men are not likely to be changing their surnames during their business career. As an aside be aware that women are generally more social and open with their FB and Twitter usage and these media can now be accessed by systems that are looking at your profile and as such used as referencing tools. My advice is to take care and lock down your security settings as you really don't want a potential employer seeing you not looking your best at friend's party....

6. Finally, prioritise yourself and your career. We are not talking about trying to be a 'man in a skirt' but you should be true to yourself and be courageous. Take the call when a head-hunter rings! Most men will have the conversation with me but women will have other things to juggle and either not make the time to take the call or neglect to call me back as they think they are not ready to look outside for a job. I have a lovely example of how it can be juggled as recently when a female MD confirmed our call she booked it for whilst she was having a manicure at her beauticians! I suggest you think about it more about investing in yourself to develop your network and keeping abreast of the external market trends.

Sarah Hopkins, Director HopkinsLongworth Executive Search, August 2014

sarah@hopkinslongworth.com

www.hopkinslongworth.com