

Strategic Steps to Help Women Move Ahead In the 2020 Boardroom

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We are on the cusp of a major transformation. For the first time in history, the global workforce will be housing all five different generations in the workplace. While some women have found the confidence to earn a seat in the boardroom many are, unfortunately, held back by fear. Recent surveys reveal that almost 78 percent of women are considering leaving the corporate world because they do not feel encouraged enough to make a difference in leadership and the workplace.

A few steps that women can take to successfully transition in the corporate world:

1. Grow your Social Intelligence Skills

As women, we can grow our social intelligence skills to develop powerful relationships. Statistics prove that men easily take the lead when it comes to rubbing shoulders, however women often feel uncomfortable about reaching out, playing politics and doing business networking. Reversing this perception will work wonders within the organisational culture. By working to effectively build enriching, rewarding and professional relationships on all levels, regardless of whether we are referring to stakeholders, colleagues or directors, this will improve levels of confidence and the way others see us. Forming a female networking platform/forum will help women pull together to create a woman friendly culture in the workplace, hence growing your social influence on certain levels.

2. Teaming up

Inviting men to networking sessions and making them a part of the solution – will encourage support and participation from the opposite sex. Teaming up with our male counterparts will produce positive steps towards bridging the gender gaps in the workplace.

3. Overcoming Fear

Fear debilitates us on many levels and keeps us out of the loop. By unleashing the confidence to conquer the very thing we fear, we will draw closer to success – take the time to explore the various triggers. For example, if you have a fear of speaking in public or doing boardroom presentations, attend a public speaking course in order to address this issue.

4. Bridging the Generation Gap

By collaborating and openly communicating with women from the different generations we can understand the mindsets governing each of the five generations. For example, Generation Y and Z seek feedback and coaching in the workplace and Generation X can provide this mentoring structure. If properly addressed having five different generations in the workplace can produce phenomenal results and the future enterprise can have a friendly work practice.

5. Understanding the Political Arena

Embrace office politics instead of steering away. Take the time to understand the politics at play within the organisation and pay careful attention to how the most successful people within the company behave.

6. Integrating with the Google Generation

The internet is no longer a phenomenon but more of a necessity. Google happens to be the best friend of most adults and can solve any equation, providing facts, explanations, correct grammar, spelling etc. Business needs have evolved and technology is at the peak of its cutting edge therefore skill alignment is compulsory in order to keep abreast of developments. Being female is not a good excuse for not being up to speed with technology and skill. Take charge by assessing your skills, knowledge, etc and take the necessary action to bridge any digital gaps. For example, if need to know advanced Excel to create spreadsheets etc, try attending an excel course to improve your skill.

7. Coping Mechanism

Find mechanisms to cope with juggling being a mother, a wife, a home executive and an employee. Some days might be more stressful than other days. Get a support structure outside work to help you cope with the pressures of life.

8. Supporting other Female Colleagues

Ladies, take measures to keep that emotional barometer in check and most importantly let's give support to fellow female colleagues by championing their causes and ideas. Women in leadership roles should mentor women in junior positions.

9. Go the Extra Mile and become a part of the Solution

Don't expect favours because you are a woman; be willing to go the extra mile. This might require staying behind for an additional 30 minutes to complete a piece of task, do so whole heartedly. Find creative ways of sharing your perspectives and presenting ideas that would benefit processes and methodologies within the department. By striving to work towards the improvement of productivity and performance, we can become part of a solution.

10. Dress the part and Act the part

If you want respect, then you've got to command it. Your dressing speaks volumes about you. Dressing and image go hand in hand; spend some time working on your self-image and ensure that your wardrobe fits the occasion. No need to emulate your male counterparts but do act and speak with confidence. Flirt only in the ballroom and not in the boardroom.

Women with the help of men will be instrumental in reshaping the future workforce and bringing about revolutionary changes. By following these steps women will be sure to rock the 2020 workforce and succeed at boardroom level.