

4 Reasons Females Struggle in Leadership Roles

Valerie Naidoo

The last decade has seen more females on the upward rise to management roles across the globe. There are some that are doing exceedingly well and getting ahead positively yet there are others that remain stagnant. Let's explore a few points that are holding female leaders back:

1. **Not knowing your own management style** – So what is your leadership style? Sadly, this is something not thought of amongst many female leaders and this results in new managers copying those around them. What might work for one manager might not necessarily work for another manager because there are vast differences in how each person leads. Establish your leadership style because people respond to different types of leadership– is your style collaborative or service, etc? Perhaps use a tool such as a survey, quiz or take an assessment to determine your strengths and blind spots. Mind Tools, Idealist Careers, etc, are popular and useful quizzes that will help you find out your leadership style so that you will be able to motivate your employees, handle challenges more efficiently, improve communication and empower yourself.
2. **Women leading from the masculine gender** – unlocking the full force of feminine leadership in a male dominated environment doesn't mean that we must act like men to get ahead. Some women feel the necessity to permanently step into the masculine gender and copy male leadership styles and in doing so lose their femininity, hence the organisation loses out on opportunities of feminine leadership. This can be avoided if women recognise and incorporate their own specific female strengths into the leadership spectrum. So, for example a male leader might shout at his employees to get results, a female leader on the other hand can achieve similar results by asserting her feminine nature and using her voice assertively. There is no right or wrong approach to management because both masculine and feminine expression brings a balance to the workplace.
3. **Women struggle to champion other female leaders** – there aren't enough women supporting females coming through the ranks of leadership. The corporate battle with female participants builds up in every industry. In the [NY Times](#) a survey that was conducted by the Workplace Bullying Institute showed that 40 percent of workplace bullies are women. Let's try adjusting our mindsets and behaviours – there's no need to pull other women down so that you can progress ahead. This level of thinking and behaviour should be eliminated from the business landscape. Try working together

with your female colleagues to increase the percentage of women in leadership roles and to create a more supportive working environment.

4. **Lacking a voice** – Some female leaders are too afraid to voice their opinions due to the belief that they will not be liked, might get certain things wrong or might jeopardise their position at the company. Professionalism and capability outweigh popularity and weakness and women may have trouble with understanding the difference. So, for example, should you have a difference in opinion regarding an issue with your male counterparts – address it professionally in a calm and dignified manner by keeping your emotions at bay while showing respect to the other party.

It will take a bit of practise to master the art of speaking up, speaking out, and contributing, however with perseverance you will experience a great journey in your leadership role while creating a space for future female leaders.

Valerie Naidoo

Career Consultant | Interview Coach | Trainer