

THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES: EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS



Cracking the Ceiling, Raising the Floor.

The Women's Empowerment Principles call on companies to assure sufficient participation of women – 30% or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas.



WHY

There is a compelling business case for improving the rates of female representation on boards and at senior executive levels.

- Higher female board representation means **better financial and organizational performance**
- **A company's management functions should reflect the diversity of its full range of stakeholders** - shareholders, employees, customers and the community - and 50% of the world's population are women
- Higher participation by women at senior levels has **downstream gender equality impacts**

"Companies where women are most strongly represented at board or top management level are also the companies that perform best on both organizational and financial performance"

- McKinsey 2007

"Companies need a mix of men and women - teams with a gender balance achieve the best results in most areas that drive innovation - they are more likely to experiment, share knowledge and complete tasks"

- London Business School 2007



"Companies with sustained high representation of women board directors... significantly outperform those with sustained low representation"

- Catalyst 2011

"Gender diverse boards show greater evidence of a diversity of thought and perspective and at the same time, greater unity and collegiality"

- Insync Surveys 2010

"Companies with women in senior management outperform peers in return on assets and annual sales growth"

- Columbia University & University of Maryland 2011

HOW

What you can do to crack the ceiling and raise the floor.

Ensure that gender equality is integrated into all management selection processes:

- Conduct **broad searches** when identifying candidates to fill management roles by looking outside the traditional corporate executive pool. Expand the search to include the public, non-profit, professional services and academic sectors, and women in the level of management just below the board

- Recognize that the full benefits of gender diversity require more than a token woman
- Search registers and databases of qualified women, and membership rosters of trade associations
- Connect with and support organizations promoting women in leadership positions
- Make explicit the company's commitment to gender equality in all appointments
- Ensure that female and male candidates are equally considered based on merit. Make explicit the reasons why a female candidate who reaches the final stage of a selection process is not successful.



Develop and open your **internal leadership experience pipeline** to prepare women for senior roles

- Offer coaching, network-building and mentoring programs for women in your company
- Ensure women are exposed to and included in leadership development activities, e.g. through professional development opportunities and participation in executive committees

Set **gender diversity targets and KPIs** relating to board composition and pipeline development

Use sex-disaggregated data to **measure and publicly report on progress**

Connect with initiatives, resources and expertise in your region: WEPrinciples.org



United Nations Global Compact



United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

References

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