

ASK<sup>®</sup>

# COACHING for WOMEN in LEADERSHIP

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NAVIGATING THE LABYRINTH TO REALISE  
POTENTIAL and AMBITION



Let's  
Learn

“Leadership should be born out of the understanding of the needs of those who would be affected by it.”

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MARIAN ANDERSON

## HELPING WOMEN TO LEAD

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The future of organisational leadership faces a demographic problem. The Baby Boomer generation is reaching retirement and, at least in the West, the following generations are not just younger but smaller in number.

Even in a globalised world, we can neither simply import leadership nor endlessly extend retirement ages. By 2030, the world will be missing about 200 million individuals of leadership age. Our existing leaders will have retired and will not be replaced - at least not by younger men.

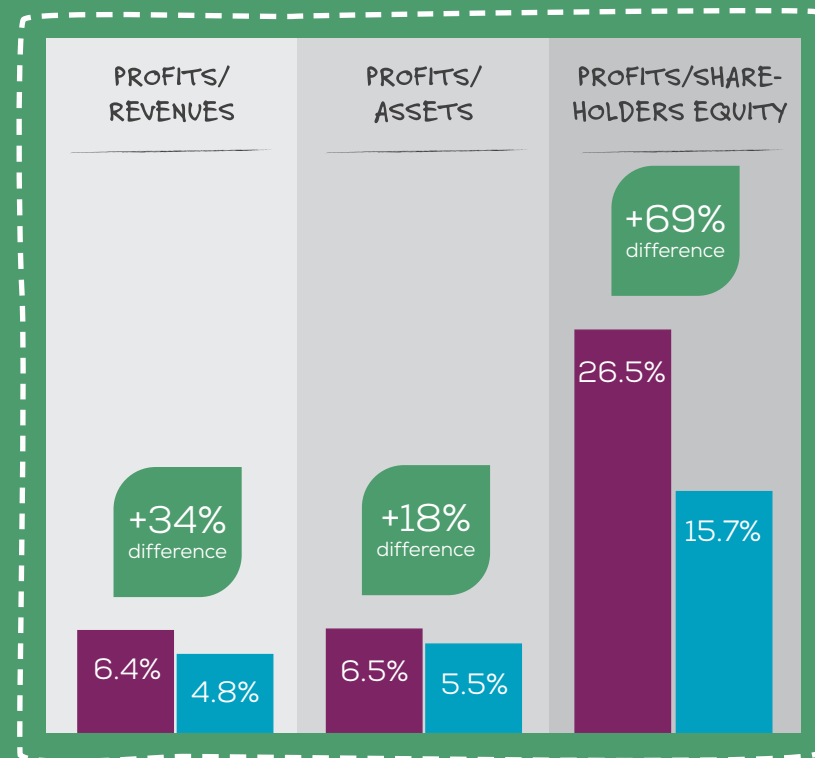
Yet one group remains hugely under-represented at the highest corporate levels: *women*. Despite evidence of the enhanced performance of organisations with gender-diverse management teams, women face specific challenges that deprive them of opportunities and their organisations of their talents.

ASK® offers coaching that respects the needs of individual women and their career stage, but also addresses the specific challenges they face in fulfilling their ambition and potential, drawing on proven effective coping strategies to meet and overcome these hurdles.

# WHY IT MATTERS

In their book, *Coaching Women to Lead*, Averil Leimon, François Moscovici and Helen Goodier provided many reasons – if any are needed – for developing women into leadership positions. One of these, ‘Building the Leadership-Rich Corporation’, draws on the results of many studies of gender diversity and corporate performance.

We appreciate that correlation is not causation, but the following statistics should nevertheless prove persuasive.



■ Gender-diverse Management ■ 25 Companies' Median Performance

SOURCE: Statistics from McKinsey & Company research

## DON'T YOU KNOW THAT IT'S DIFFERENT FOR GIRLS (and women of other ages too)?

For most women, the career path is more akin to navigating an organisational labyrinth than moving along a clearly defined linear route.

In negotiating this maze – and learning to be more pro-active in developing their careers – coaching is one specific development intervention that can help.

As well as taking into account any coaching requirements from the individual's personal working context, *Coaching Women to Lead* acknowledges two key research findings:

- Women's needs vary at five identifiable career and life stages
- Specific strategies can help women develop their potential in a holistic, demonstrably effective and sustained way

Women comprise 50% of those joining the corporate world, but only 5% of board level directors.

# FIVE CRITICAL STAGES

1

## STARTING OUT

*From age 22\**

Typically no coaching required; companies invest mainly in line management and mentoring.

2

## ASSISTANT/ JUNIOR MANAGER

*Age 24-26\**

Typically no coaching required, although many women could benefit from it; companies invest mainly in line management and mentoring.

3

## MIDDLE MANAGER

*Age 27-30\**

Many women make alternative choices and elect to leave the corporate world. Yet companies rarely provide coaching to help them review these options and make informed choices, or show possible routes for a subsequent return to work.

4

## SENIOR MANAGER

*Age 32-35\**

Coaching is on offer for top performers identified as having potential for more complex roles; women returning to the workplace at this stage, however, do not always receive significant support in doing so.

5

## THE BOARD

*Age 35 upwards\**

Executive coaching is available to support transition and the visible leadership required at this level, but many talented women in this age group remain invisible to those responsible for organisational talent strategies.

\* indicates a typical age

# EIGHT EFFECTIVE COPING STRATEGIES

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The London School of Economics has identified eight coping strategies that women can use to overcome the main barriers they face as they seek to advance within organisations:

1. FAMILY AND CAREER BALANCE
2. SYSTEMATIC INVESTMENT IN CAREER AND DEVELOPMENT
3. CONFIDENCE\*
4. NETWORKING\*
5. UNDERSTANDING CORPORATE CULTURE
6. CAREER PLANNING
7. KNOWLEDGE OF OWN STRENGTHS\*
8. ROLE MODELS\*

\* consistently stand out as having been proven to be effective

SOURCE: Janna Walvoort, 'Overcoming Barriers in Female Career Progression', cited in A Leimon, F Moscovici and H Goodier, 'Coaching Women to Lead (Essential Coaching Skills and Knowledge)', Routledge



## ADDRESSING FOUR KEY STRATEGIES

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### CONFIDENCE

This is a consistent theme throughout women's careers, as they typically experience lower levels of both confidence and ambition than their male colleagues. Coaching can help women to tackle the effects of 'the Paula Principle'.

### NETWORKING

For women, this means providing opportunities to create mutually supportive relationships (and support in forming them), understanding them understand 'the rules of the game', and giving opportunities to meet regularly with senior staff.

### KNOWLEDGE OF OWN STRENGTHS

For women, this means overcoming limiting beliefs and being more self-assured in their own skills and capabilities, believing in their potential to become a senior leader, and persevering in the face of set-backs.

### ROLE MODELS

The support of senior women has been shown to be essential in increasing the number of women leaders, not least in re-igniting the high hopes and sense of self-esteem with which many women initially entered the corporate world.

# HOW IT WORKS



- Coachee identifies Coaching need

ASK



- ASK® recommends up to 3 Coach Profiles for Coachee to review
- Coachee chooses which Coach/es to meet for Chemistry meeting



- Chemistry meetings take place



- Coachee confirms Coach choice to ASK®

2



1



Line Manager

- First coaching session with Line Manager to agree objectives

3



- Review after 3<sup>rd</sup> session

5



4



- Coachee completes Evaluation Form and returns to ASK®

6



Coaching sessions



- Completion of Development Plan and review success after 6<sup>th</sup> session



# OUR OFFER

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Like all of our interventions, Coaching for Women in Leadership is a tailored approach that combines our extensive direct experience with the latest findings from research. We develop a specific programme for each client, matching them with a coach from our pool of highly experienced and qualified coaches.

We take an integrated approach that strikes a balance between:

- The coaching client's career stage
- Their individual needs
- Proven, effective coping strategies



Does your organisation offer a clear route map for women, or a labyrinth?

If the reality is closer to the labyrinth, why not give us a call to discuss how - or who - we can help?

**ASK**<sup>®</sup>

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