

Workshops n°3 and n°5

« How can women's values be identified and used in company? »

&

« How can the men-women balance be implemented on a day to day basis? »



Speakers :

- M. Vincent COMMENNE, Coordinator of the European Network for Responsible Consumption
- M. Michel DE KEMMETER, company manager and author of "La valeur du Temps"
- M. Benoît PROOT, General Director of Reprobel (Belgium)

And

- M. Christian SCHARFF, President of the Societal Movement Institute in Luxembourg and member of Dexia International executive committee in charge of human resources.

The objective of these two very interactive workshops was to show that respecting the men-women balance and integrating feminine values on a day-to-day basis were resolutely interesting for the company.

Why is this issue critical? Because many factors – opening of new markets, economic development, population ageing – opened the labor market to women and other socio-professional groups who could never access it so far. Because the diversity of its workforce allows the company to meet the very various needs of its always more demanding clients. **Today, companies have to deal with a more and more heterogeneous population and must then find appropriate management methods.**

Men and women bring complementary skills to the company. When observing brains, one can observe that **women have ten times more white matter** (capacity to do several tasks at the same time) **whereas men have 6,5 times more grey matter** (they are more capable in finding their bearings and in arguing longer on one topic). Women are better than men when negotiating for others and stricter, especially in terms of sanctions. They have a greater mobility than they used to, as they tend to postpone their pregnancy in order to advance professionally.

Women brought new working methods within the company. So-called feminine values are developing within work relationships and can be actually carried by men as well as women.

Masculine values such as trust, ambition, self-confidence, independence, competitiveness or dominance still rule the workplace environment.

Feminine values like intuition, compassion, sensitiveness to others or emotional bring another dimension to work relationships, in the **research for meaning**.

Those feminine values are compulsory for any company willing to look forward and be acknowledged by its internal and external publics. The company commitments towards Social and Environmental Responsibility are therefore embodied in these values.

M. PROOT, as CEO of a big Belgian company, highlighted the limits of masculine values, yet basis of many businesses: lack of communication and personalities often difficult to manage within a group. He takes his own experience as an example: **increasing feminine values in his company's corporate management helped to improve the workplace environment and atmosphere**. According to him, six feminine values can help managers to ensure their employees' wellness and a better economic global performance of their company's activity: listen, support, respect of others, closeness, consensus reaching and "pleasing". In order to strengthen these values in his company, M. PROOT set up personal development seminars that were seen in a very positive way by his employees and granted better relationships among them.

Atmosphere in the workplace is critical to obtain good results. The company can decide to implement services reaching essentially women in order to improve the work life balance. For example, Dexia Bil offers a corporate child-care center in its facilities, home services (ironing, hair-dresser), and a training program for women going back to work after maternity leaves.

But man-woman equality concerns everyone in a company and not only human resources. Each organization must find a fair balance between feminine and masculine values in order to implement a balanced management mode. The 21st century manager must deal with all these values to be effective: listen attentively, communicate, and manage efficiently while respecting people.

Some highlights :

Philippines : 50%	} ... of managers are women
Brazil : 42%	
Thailand : 39%	
Russia : 34%	

→ The salaries discrepancy between men and women is 12 to 13% in France. The worst European countries for salaries discrepancies are Cyprus and Slovakia (around 25%) and the best is Malta.

→ Very few countries are or were governed by women (Germany, Chile, Philippines, New-Zealand, Finland, Ireland, United-Kingdom, Canada)

→ The highest percentages of women in parliaments are in northern countries and the lowest are in Arabic countries

→ The percentage of women working part-time was 16% in 1985 in France, and 38% in 2005.