



Women In Leadership

Recently there was an article on the DiversityInc website, which indicated “women occupied only 16.4 percent of corporate officer positions in Fortune 5600 companies in 2005.” My first thought was this is sad, but maybe not. Perhaps women have found that the view from the top isn’t all that grand. I know that women are capable of running mega corporations; I just don’t know how many of us really want to do that. Many of us feel that if we have to work sixteen hours days, then let it be for our own businesses and not someone else’s.

The study cited that one reason there are so few women at those top levels is that many of us settle for ‘staff positions.” You know the ones, HR or PR, those that aren’t considered to have a direct connection to the bottom line. I wonder how many of us look at our job opportunities as to whether or not they have a bottom line connection. What’s your connection to the bottom line?

If you are one of the women who want to make it to the top in the corporate world, start now making sure that you are crafting your own career path. Look at the positions that are highly visible, bottom line focused and get yourself aligned to these. Be sure that you understand how you contribute to the bottom line and speak in terms that let others know you understand the bottom line.

Be sure that you are ready for the next step, take time to develop your skill sets your leadership capability, big picture thinking and strategic thinking. These are the competencies that will carry you through. As technology starts to erode the mundane tasks, what is left to do in organizations is thinking. Daniel Pink, author of *A Whole New Mind*, is absolutely correct when he says that this is the era for the right brain thinker. He says, “A master in fine arts will be the ticket to success in this century.” Women have been right brain thinkers for a long time. That is not being said to dismiss the left-brain thinking, but rather, here is a talent that we have just waiting to be unleashed.

For those companies that have figured out that women at the top is a good thing, the Catalyst survey said, ‘ companies with the highest percentage of women corporate officers have an average 35.1 percent higher return on equity.” I would say that taking it to the bank!

The road to top is not easy, but it isn’t impossible either. Take over managing your own career, from finding mentors, coaching and the right career path. Feedback is going to be a big portion of getting yourself ready, so take it in the right perspective and use it to become better at what you are already good at.

Send me an email to val@valariewillisconsulting.com and let me know how you are making it in the corporate world and what you need more of.