

»CHANGING COMPANY CULTURES – AVOIDING CAREER BREAKS«

Company Culture Reasons for the Career Breaks of Women in Management Positions –
Results of a Study in Nine Large-Scale Enterprises in Germany

Simone Kaiser, Katharina Hochfeld, Elena Gertje, Martina Schraudner



ALLIANZ BASF BAYER BOSCH DAIMLER DEUTSCHE BAHN EADS INFINEON MICROSOFT

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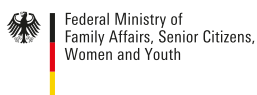
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The authors, October 2012

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1

The Project »Changing Company Cultures – Avoiding Career Breaks«

1.1 Overview of the Key Results

The goal of the Fraunhofer project »Changing Company Cultures – Avoiding Career Breaks« is to develop new approaches on the basis of a comprehensive root cause analysis to avoid career breaks among women in management positions. The project was conducted by the Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft in collaboration with nine partner companies: Allianz Deutschland AG, BASF SE, Bayer AG, Bosch-Group, Daimler AG, Deutsche Bahn AG, EADS, Infineon Technologies AG and Microsoft. The objective of all participating companies is to increase the proportion of women in management positions.

As part of this, the project illustrates the importance of company culture for women's career opportunities:

- (1) The reasons for the career breaks of women in management positions can be found in the company-cultural framework conditions (Chapter 2). The results show that individual measures to improve the reconciliation of work and family life or measures to expand the competences of female high potentials such as mentoring or seminar programmes are not sufficient to avoid career breaks by women. In order to increase the proportion of women in management positions, a comprehensive change in company culture is required.
- (2) The company-cultural factors identified as causes for career breaks by women are evident in varying degrees from company to company. Not all companies are confronted by the same problematic situation, but rather face culture-specific challenges. Four ideal-typical cultural patterns were identified. Their characteristics define the specific challenges to achieve the objective of »more women in management positions« (Chapter 3). As such, the four cultural patterns also provide starting points for the organisational-specific recommendations for action (Chapter 4).

In view of this, the successful commitment towards increasing the number of women in management positions makes a detailed analysis of the company-cultural framework conditions necessary.

The four cultural patterns identified are:

Open High-Performance Culture:

In this cultural pattern, which is characterised by a high degree of openness, flexibility and extreme performance-orientation, a (temporary) limitation of performance and flexibility – by, for example, child-care responsibilities – represents a barely surmountable career barrier. Due to caring responsibilities, which are today largely carried out by women, this means the end of the career for many women. The key to increase the number of women in company management positions according to this cultural pattern is a stronger orientation towards life phases on the part of human resources policy.

Conformist Formal Culture:

Strong informal behavioural norms for managers are characteristic for this conformist formal culture. In a male-dominated environment, the conformity demands resulting from these norms become an exclusion mechanism for women. Behaviours and perspectives of women are perceived as unusual and inappropriate, negative preconceptions regarding the leadership competence of women also reinforce these perceptions. An important area of action for company cultures pertaining to this cultural pattern is to realise an appreciation for difference and to perceive differences as a resource for innovation.

Conservative Exclusion Culture:

A very traditional and conservative company culture is characteristic of a conservative exclusion culture, in which men occupy all key positions. Within this company culture, the non-consideration of women for management positions is normatively grounded. Men are attributed the responsibility for the professional sphere, women the responsibility for the domestic sphere; both spheres are considered irreconcilable. A central recommendation for companies exhibiting this cultural pattern is to convince senior management of the economic importance of the objective of »increasing the number of women in management positions« and to initiate the relevant measures in a top-down process.

Change-Oriented Preservation Culture:

This cultural pattern is characterised by ambivalence within the company culture. On the one hand, there is a distinct orientation towards innovation and change, which is expressed in the strong commitment on the part of management to increase the number of female managers. On the other hand, strongly conservative-hierarchical structures and values can be identified. In order to dispel any doubts regarding the credibility of such diversity commitment and at the same time to win over men for equality objectives, the key for companies with this cultural pattern lies in the economic justification for committing to more women in management positions.

An overview of the company-cultural reasons for career breaks by women identified within the project:

- The economic benefits resulting from a higher proportion of women in management positions are not yet well known by managers. Any line of argument for committing to more women in management positions should incorporate the economic benefits of diversity. The study showed that »gender diversity« in appointment procedures is taken more strongly into consideration when the economic advantages of diversity are understood and communicated.

- Measures aiming at more women in management positions are largely targeted at women. Activities to increase the number of women in management positions are only associated with advantages for women. The added value for men in companies is not yet perceived and communicated. The cultural changes required for more women in management positions must, however, address both men and women. Special offers just for women are rather counterproductive. Both genders should be able to benefit from changes to the culture.
- Company cultures are geared towards uniformity and conformity. Seemingly »female-typical« approaches and perspectives are not viewed as an enrichment, but instead as an irritation factor. Heterogeneity must be recognised as a value-added resource, in order to win over and retain women for (further) management positions.
- The reasons for the small number of women in management positions are sought among the women; company-cultural obstacles are not questioned. Women are confronted by problems of acceptance and stereotyping; they are attributed a lack of career ability. The competences and qualities relevant for a career are attributed to men. In order to avoid career breaks among women, it is thus crucial to highlight how the differences in (management) teams can be utilised profitably.
- Management positions are appointed via personal networks, and as a result, appointment procedures appear to lack transparency. In an environment aimed towards uniformity and conformity, the network dependence leads to career disadvantages for women. Transparent and objective appointment procedures are a central prerequisite for avoiding career breaks among women.
- Existing career paths and personnel-policy processes have a strongly standardising effect. There is a lack of awareness regarding life phases. Implicit promotion criteria such as age, availability and continuity should be disbanded. There should be the possibility to organize careers flexibly and different career paths should be made available.
- Non-occupational responsibilities often lead to career breaks. Management positions are considered hardly reconcilable with other duties. As women take over caring responsibilities more frequently than men, they are more strongly affected by the negative consequences. The one-dimensional picture of the constantly available manager must be broken apart and management positions must be organised in such a way that areas of flexibility are created, and a sustainable work-life balance achieved.
- Taking part-time work and/or time off is associated with career disadvantages. Merely a short parental leave of mothers remains unaffected by career disadvantages. For men, all forms of part-time work and parental leave (even for short periods) are associated with even larger career disadvantages. It remains a future task to enable managers to take part-time work and time off, without facing career disadvantages. Women and men who rely on these instruments during specific life phases should thus be granted the opportunity of a career progression.

1.2 Background and Aims

Despite the enhanced commitment on the part of politics and companies to increase the proportion of women in management positions in private industry, this is only rising slowly. At the beginning of 2012, the proportion of women in senior and middle management in large German companies was only 14.9 per cent (Hoppenstedt 2012: 7).

To promote the career opportunities of women, companies have since implemented a number of measures. Thus, for example, the framework conditions for reconciling work and family life have been improved, women's networks have been established and offers to expand the competences of women have been introduced. However, despite the various support measures, it has not been possible yet to win over a sufficient number of female potentials for their next career steps.

This is the starting point for the project »Changing Company Cultures – Avoiding Career Breaks«, which is being conducted by the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft and the Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research. The project is sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as part of the phase plan »Women and Men in Management Positions«. The aim of the project was to identify the reasons for career breaks among female managers in Germany in a scientific study and thereby to examine company cultures as an impact factor. On the basis of the reasons identified, new approaches to increase the number of women in management positions were to be carved out. These approaches are intended to go beyond existing measures of the improved reconciliation of family and work life or offers for competence enhancement exclusively for women. We aimed at highlighting how company cultures can be established in which both women and men can and wish to take on management positions.

The analysis of company cultures was designed as a qualitative study. In guided, semi-structured interviews, female and male managers from Germany were interviewed regarding their career development so far, their career plans as well as the obstacles and success factors in their professional career to this point. Over a period from March 2011 to November 2011, 220 interviews were conducted in partner companies of the project; of these, 141 were interviews with female managers and 79 were interviews with male managers (cf. also Chapter 5: Methodology).

2

Reasons for Career Breaks Among Women in Management Positions

The aim of the project was to identify the root causes in company culture for the career breaks among women in management positions in multinational companies. The results confirm the importance of company culture for women's career opportunities. The identified company-cultural causes for career breaks among women managers are presented in detail in the following.

2.1 Is There a Recognition of the Economic Benefits of Heterogeneous Management Teams?

It became clear as a result of the interviews that the goal of a mixed-gender composition of management teams was generally welcomed by the managers interviewed. A more differentiated picture emerges when managers are asked about the reasons regarding the articulated importance of mixed-gender teams. An economic added value on the basis of innovation and creativity benefits is only rarely mentioned as a reason here. Instead, the commitment to increase the number of women in management positions is founded largely in an abstract definition of a more agreeable form of collaboration.

»I think that having a woman on the team contributes a lot to a harmonious environment, although this means that many topics are addressed that would otherwise be ignored. [...] But people say that there is a different atmosphere when a woman is around.« (m)

The problem with this reasoning is that knowledge regarding the economic benefits of mixed-gender teams plays an important role when considering gender-related aspects in appointing positions. The analysis reveals that gender-related aspects in appointment procedures are only taken into consideration when the economic benefits of mixed management teams are communicated and perceived. A lack of awareness for the innovation and creativity advantages of mixed-gender management teams thus represents a major company-cultural obstacle for more women in management positions.

»I hire the person who has talent. As such, I don't look consciously at whether this is a man or a woman. I had a young Dutch man, the girls and other nationalities. But I wasn't aware of this diversity, it just happened.« (f)

Successful gender-diversity management in companies requires an economic basis for legitimacy in company culture. The identification and communication of company-specific business case »diversity«, that is, the specific economic motives and benefits of having more women in

management positions, should become the focus of a company's internal diversity strategy and communication. The integration of commitment to more women in management positions into the company strategy, and the organisational anchoring of activities for the gender-neutral career advancement of women and men in a relevant organisational unit, additionally underline such an economic line of argumentation.

Good Practice at Deutsche Bahn

Diversity management anchored in the organisation and integrated into the process of group-wide change in company culture

The project analysis showed that an organisational locating of diversity management is important to enable sustainable change within company culture. By expanding existing diversity management and embedding it within the process of cultural change, the first steps of the project recommendations have already been realised. With this, the DB board of management will enhance its credibility with regard to its company objectives of increasing the general proportion of women and the proportion of women in management positions. Moreover, this will provide a clear signal that cultural change is a crucial prerequisite for affecting gender-neutral change and developing the possibilities of diversity in this way.

Annette von Wedel, Deutsche Bahn AG, Head of Diversity Management

2.2 Whom Do the Gender Diversity Measures Address?

The project results show that one of the reasons for why the existing measures have not yet brought about the desired success lies in the group of addressees: a large number of measures in the area of »gender diversity« address female employees and/or managers. As a result, women are stigmatised: this feeds the stereotype that women have deficits, which must be eliminated by means of special measures. The structures and processes of the organisation are not questioned here.

Furthermore, the reconciliation between work and family life is still considered an additional challenge for female managers and does not represent the norm. Thus, when making use of instruments to create a better work-life balance, female managers must still anticipate career setbacks. Due to the perception of these instruments as »special measures for women«, the negative impact on careers is far more pronounced for men (cf. also Chapter 2.8).

»If a management position at level three or higher becomes vacant, women find themselves in situations – children, family – in which the orientation towards their career diminishes. This isn't fundamentally different for men, but women face different demands, of course.« (m)

At the same time, men are unsettled by measures and targets aimed at more women in leadership positions. They are concerned by how these targets and measures may impact their own career opportunities. The project results show that diversity measures in the companies are almost exclusively associated with benefits for women and are thus not perceived as an added value for men.

As a result, male managers often do not pursue diversity targets with complete commitment, or struggle to implement measures within their areas of responsibility.

»The company is making the effort to make up for lost opportunities of previous generations and can overdo it now and again. The young male colleagues then state that they don't have a chance to make it here, anyway.« (m)

In order to successfully increase the proportion of women in leadership positions, it is thus essential that measures address men as well as women. Their benefits in particular should be made clear to the companies and all their employees.

Good Practice at Infineon

The gender diversity approach is aimed at women and men

The project »Changing Company Cultures – Avoiding Career Breaks« confirmed it: if we want things to change, it is important to address both women and men equally. We believe in emphasising the benefits of diversity in leadership positions – for women and men. We would like to achieve awareness for this in the entire company. Infineon already set itself the target in 2010 to increase the proportion of women in management positions: from currently 11 per cent to 15 per cent by 2015, and to 20 per cent in 2020. With our gender diversity approach as part of the initiative »Infineon – An Attractive Place to Work«, we are already taking account of a central recommendation by Fraunhofer. Our cultural change addresses women and men. Our goal is an equal opportunity company culture, in which women and men are equally enthusiastic about technical professions and are supported within the company, and in which different life situations and needs are taken into consideration.

Gerlinde Bitto-Khalili, Infineon Technologies AG, Head of Diversity Management

2.3 Difference as a Resource or an Irritation Factor?

Traditional conceptions of behaviour and roles originating in company cultures with a high proportion of men still define what is considered to be »target-oriented« and »successful« management behaviour. Deviations from this are perceived as a considerable irritation factor.

»Those men who are used to be among men during meetings behave differently if only one woman is present. They are also afraid of things being different.« (f)

Female managers are frequently confronted by reservations regarding their leadership competence – and not just on the part of men, but also on the part of other women. In the interviews, the benefits of female managers, such as empathy and issue-orientation, are often mentioned, but the mentioning of such supposedly typically female »advantages« is also always associated with a »but«, which limits the originally positive attribution of competences. In almost all company cultures, women are not considered ambitious, assertive and decisive enough.

»My boss reproached me for dealing with my clients too harmoniously. Apparently, I wasn't strict enough, not tough enough, not an alpha female. He even sent me to coachings. [...] I did things differently, which was strange to him. For him, it wasn't enough male rutting behaviour, and he couldn't relate to it.« (f)

Career ambition is also often questioned. This is usually attributed to women's wishes or the responsibilities of women to care for their families. The equal treatment of all female and male employees in a team can thus become a form of unequal treatment: as women take over caring responsibilities more often than men, this represents a career obstacle if the different needs in heterogeneous teams are not taken into account.

As a result, women are not in the focus when it comes to appointment decisions, as they are not considered to possess the will and the possibility to have a career. In view of these results, it is crucial to train managers in dealing with heterogeneity and to show them how difference can be utilised in a beneficial way. In order to underline the major importance of this, these offers should be integrated into general management training programmes. In parallel, diversity-appropriate leadership behaviour should be defined as a performance requirement for managers and operationalized and demanded in target agreements on the basis of measurable and bonus-relevant indicators.

Good Practice at Daimler

Bonus-dependent target figures for the proportion of women in leadership positions

In 2006, Daimler already defined target figures for the proportion of women in management positions. From the beginning, it was clear to us that diversity management is not an issue for the women in our company, but a management and cultural issue that has to be lived by all those responsible. We therefore set down target figures and broke them down for each individual area. We decided to link bonus payments for our managers with the achievement of specific proportions of women in the corresponding areas. The Fraunhofer results showed us how important this step was and is: all managers in the company are required to take over the organisational responsibility for a gender-sensitive appointment and arrangement of positions, because only then can a major obstacle for more women in management positions be overcome. As part of this, the steering of bonus payments is a suitable tool to face up to this challenge.

Ursula Schwarzenbart, Daimler AG, Chief Diversity Officer & Director Performance and Potential Management

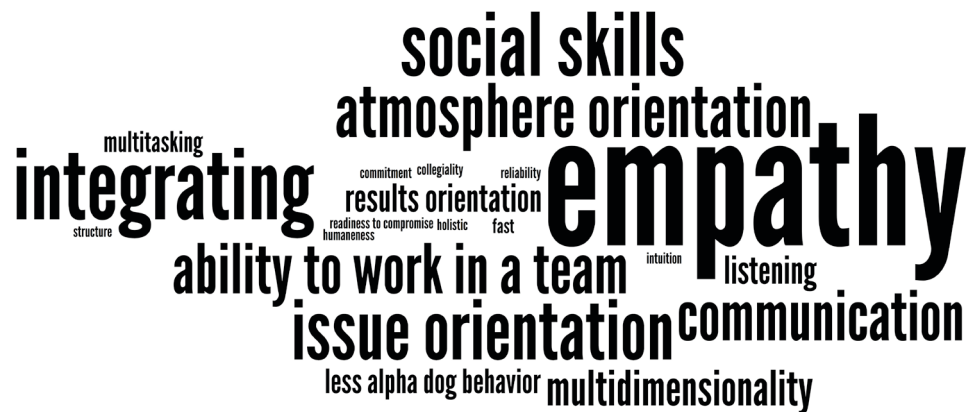
2.4 Are the Success Factors for a Career Gender-Biased?

Female and male managers unanimously verify that assertiveness, self-promotion, self-confidence, promptness and a good network represent the decisive factors for professional success. This list of success factors becomes a problem for female managers when one considers the strengths of female and male managers mentioned by the interviewees.

»Perhaps [the difference] is due to the fact that women are typically or naturally, due to the mother role, more able to assume the listening role. But a female manager who isn't consistent or goal-oriented isn't really a manager.« (f)

Figure 1 illustrates the strengths of female managers mentioned in a tag cloud. This shows clearly that the competences of female managers are described in a positive and approving manner. The terms mentioned most frequently are those in the largest print, such as »empathy«, »integrating«, »issue orientation« and »social skills«.

Figure 1: Tag Cloud of the Strengths of Female Managers



Source: Fraunhofer 2012; in the interviews, 220 male and female managers were asked »In your experience: what are the strengths of female managers?«. The font size increases with the frequency of mentions.

A completely different picture emerges when one considers the strengths of male managers depicted in Figure 2. The most frequently named strengths of male managers are »assertiveness«, »self-promotion« and »networking«. The success factors and competences considered important for a career are exclusively associated with male managers.

Figure 2: Tag Cloud of the Strengths of Male Managers



Source: Fraunhofer 2012; in the interviews, 220 male and female managers were asked »In your experience: what are the strengths of male managers?«. The font size increases with the frequency of mentions.

The unequivocal attribution of success-critical competences to male managers revealed by the analysis represents a clear obstacle for ambitious female managers. Their skills and competence are examined far more intensively than those of their male colleagues.

»Men do not view women as their successors in the professional environment, which relates to subconscious appreciation. [...] They think that if a woman succeeds them, then the job can't really be that difficult.« (f)

In order to get more women in leadership positions, the aim of cultural change within a company must be to judge managers on their actual strengths and not according to stereotypical competence attributions. Otherwise, women will continue to adapt to male behaviours in order to be successful within a homogenous management culture – often paying the price of high dissatisfaction and frustration as well as the risk of a self-chosen career break.

Good Practice at EADS

The GROW Programme networks female potentials

In 2010, we had an intensive debate on how to best support our female talents in their personal development. The issue is creating a platform for women, who still represent the minority in the management programmes that have existed here for years, in order to enable them to work among their peers openly and jointly on career issues, professional development and the associated challenges. With this, we want to encourage female managers to retain and pursue their career goals. The two-day GROW Programme (Growing Opportunities for Women) aims at defining a »personal stocktaking«; that is, for example, identifying personal career obstacles and implementing this in a career strategy and/or plan. An important part of the programme is the development of a network of like-minded women, in order to receive continuous mutual support, to work together and in particular also to actively drive company change forward. We organise approx. ten events with 25 participants every year. The feedback is overwhelmingly positive, as one participant confirmed: »excellent programme content, interesting exercises and exchange, great opportunity for networking, good mix of participants and above all, the right focus on »my own development««.

Karsten Doppler, EADS, VP Talent & Executive Development

2.5 How Transparent are Appointment Procedures?

The lack of transparency in appointment procedures was identified as a cause for the low proportion of women in leadership positions. Management positions are generally filled via personal networks. However, female managers face difficulties in accessing the relevant networks due to reservations (cf. Chapter 2.3). A lack of networking leads to female potentials not being addressed. They thus do not have the opportunity to express their interest in a vacancy and are therefore not considered in the selection. The higher the level in the hierarchy, the higher is the perceived lack of transparency.

»On the lowest management level, those interested are well aware what is required of them. On that level, there is a high level of transparency. On the next step to executive, this is more limited. After that – in my experience – it's simply non-transparent.« (m)

The network dependence of the appointment process leads to a major importance of individual supporters and mentors. Due to the fact that decisions of who is to be supported are usually determined on the basis of similarity factors (cf. Chapter 2.3) and that conformity remains decisive for a career, it is more difficult for women to obtain mentors than men.

Due to the strong network dependency of the appointment procedure, the relevant performance criteria for the appointment decisions often appear non-transparent. Female managers thus experience a demotivating breakdown of competence and performance principles. If potentials are nevertheless included in the talent pool, they often fail to receive feedback about further career steps. A departure from the pool is neither accompanied nor analysed, and is often interpreted as a personal decision.

»Senior management is like admission to a club. But unfortunately, the rules for club membership aren't made public.« (f)

Good Practice at Allianz Deutschland AG

»Best People« through transparency and reporting

From the project, Allianz Deutschland AG obtained the understanding that an effective strategy for more women in management positions requires an overarching process of change. The interviews with female and male managers showed that the appointment process is of major importance within this change management. Transparency and objectivity are central prerequisites for more women in management positions. In order to achieve this, a clearly defined path is necessary, ranging from the selection of suitable male and female employees to measures aimed at retaining them at the company. The criteria on which the personnel decisions are based must also be transparent. Ultimately, what is crucial is how the process of appointing vacant positions takes place, how it is monitored and how progress is regularly reported. This year, Allianz Deutschland AG has addressed exactly these processes and has already taken the first steps towards future change through greater clarity and consequential reporting.

Dr Claudia Pfeifer, Allianz Deutschland AG, Head of HR Guidelines and Policy Allianz Germany

Long-term, life phase-oriented career planning is currently not implemented or accepted. As a manager, career opportunities are taken without hesitation or one is no longer the focus of promotion. If a manager plans her/his own career steps in accordance with her/his personal life situation, she/he is considered inflexible.

This results in the following recommendations: promotion criteria should be presented in a transparent manner and made available to all potential candidates. The availability of vacant positions must be made visible to all. To eliminate gender-specific disadvantages, gender-neutral and objective criteria for management positions should be defined. Potentials require continuous career assistance and long-term career planning in order to weaken the dependence on individual networks and to increase the objectivity in appointment procedures. The nomination of female managers requires continuous support by a strong human resources management, which ensures the quality of performance evaluation and appointment decisions.

Good Practice at BASF

Careers are planned for the long-term and are fostered sustainably

One of the issues we would like to address as a result of our collaboration with the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft is the further support of long-term oriented career development. Time off for family or care reasons must not harm a career; it would be better if, for example, concrete development steps are already agreed on for re-entry. Such agreements should provide more transparency and commitment for those returning to work, in order to enable a re-connection after taking time off. A staff interview prior to leaving, contact retention programmes during time off as well as targeted support following their return are effective measures to avoid or reduce a break in female potentials' careers. Long-term and sustainable career development addresses both women and men, and independently of previous time off. Binding further steps promote and challenge female as well as male potentials to pursue their self-chosen career path and not to let it discontinue.

Dr Kate Reiner, BASF SE, Diversity + Inclusion

2.6 How Life Phase-Oriented is Human Resources Management?

In the minds of most managers, a career up to senior management is still associated with a continuous and thus interruption-free, hierarchical advancement. A key factor in this understanding is to accept career opportunities without hesitation and never to refuse career opportunities.

»What everyone confirms, you can say No once, not twice, and then you are never asked again.« (f)

This clearly expresses the demand for constant availability of managers by their company. In view of this, career time-outs become a career disadvantage that can hardly be made up. Female managers in particular decide to take time off during the family phase. Only rarely do they manage to take up their career again subsequently. Careers are tightly standardised in terms of lifetimes. The interviewees unanimously considered decisions regarding careers in middle and senior management as being made between 30 and 40 years of age. This lack of life phase-orientation represents a significant drawback to all people with care responsibilities. As care responsibilities are still taken over largely by women, they are currently most affected by these drawbacks.

»The fact that we have more men, also in leadership positions, I think, is due to the availability of women. The time during which men make many career leaps is exactly the time during which many women drop out. [...] I think that your own expectations, perhaps I'll have a family, a house, a job and will still have a career and a busy social life, can kill you. But society creates the impression that it's all possible. I think that's wrong.« (f)

A stronger life phase-orientation focuses on creating flexibility and plurality of career paths. This depends on a detailed – but always life phase-sensitive – definition and operationalization of performance and competence requirements for particular management levels, as well as the breaking apart of implicit promotion criteria such as age, availability and the freedom to take time off from a career. In order to fully exploit the management potential in a company, a systematic tracking of career decisions and career goals of potentials as well as managers, and long-term career and/or re-entry planning is required.

Good Practice at Bosch

Parental and care leave as career building blocks

The Fraunhofer result showed that in particular female employees with family responsibilities often experience career disadvantages. The reasons are frequently family-related time off and/or limited flexibility in terms of time and space. We have recognised this at Bosch: the career building blocks defined for senior management levels, such as experience abroad, changes in business units and functions as well as additional special projects, involve more difficulties for women, as generally, family duties are still taken over largely by women. With the change in use of our career building blocks, we have reacted to this and since 2012 have also begun to acknowledge parental and care leave as career building blocks. For Bosch, the introduction of the family-oriented career building block is an important step towards life phase-sensitive promotion structures. In doing so, we have laid the groundwork for more women in management positions.

Heidi Stock, Robert Bosch GmbH, Vice President Associate Development and Diversity Management

2.7 Do Non-Work-Related Duties represent an Exclusion Criterion for Managers?

The interviews clearly showed that leadership and non-work-related duties are today often still considered irreconcilable in the companies. As women assume the lion's share of care responsibilities and/or this role is attributed to them, they are more strongly affected by the associated exclusion mechanisms. The reasons for the perceived irreconcilability between leadership and family responsibilities are specific framework conditions of leadership positions, which are considered unchangeable: large time commitment, high mobility, flexibility and 24/7 availability are inseparably associated with the image of a manager. This time burden for managers is, however, hardly reconcilable with non-work-related duties. In addition, the anticipated workload at higher levels of the hierarchy discourages especially women to pursue their career paths. As a result, leadership positions are often held by managers with no non-work-related duties and/or family responsibilities. The majority of male managers with children live in partnerships in which the partner is not employed or in part-time employment and can assume many of these duties. Female managers generally have partners in full-time employment and are more often childless than their male counterparts.

»[I work] very long hours, my Blackberry is never switched off. I also usually work on weekends. [...] That's normal, my colleagues work just as much. [...] The company expects that, too, if you're at senior management level.« (f)

Good Practice at Bayer

Development of innovative working time models

It is an important goal at Bayer to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions. The results of the study »Changing Company Cultures – Avoiding Career Breaks« confirmed us in our conviction that innovative working time models represent an important prerequisite in achieving this goal. It was surprising that the instruments already put into place for this, as well as the organisation of our work day, provides further potential for more innovative solutions. In particular the issue of acceptance and utilisation of existing flexible working time models are areas of action that we shall address in the future. In this regard, it is important to us that existing solutions and opportunities are known and can be made systematically available. In this way, we can ensure that managers who spend a large amount of time with non-work-related duties and responsibilities can bring a greater amount of heterogeneity into management levels.

Michael Taschke, Bayer AG, Labor Relations

In addition to a high level of time commitment, around-the-clock availability is considered a norm for managers in the companies. This expresses on the one hand in a strong culture of being present, and by a culture of being available on the other. That entails career drawbacks for women and men who are not able or willing to achieve constant availability due to non-work-related duties. High mobility demands also mean that leadership positions are hardly reconcilable with non-work-related duties.

»If someone starts here and says, I have to [...] take my child to kindergarten every morning, you can push that through, but it's extremely difficult to keep up because the job is so unstable.« (m)

It will be the task of the companies to organise even senior management positions in a way that allows for a balance between flexibility and availability. In order to achieve this, the one-dimensional picture of the constantly available and absolutely mobile and flexible manager is disbanded.

2.8 Are Working Part-Time and Time Off Associated with Career Disadvantages?

In the companies examined, a number of part-time and time off models exist, but the use of these instruments frequently leads to a career slump. Leadership in a part-time position is just as unimaginable as a manager with a one-year (family-related) leave of absence.

The higher the management level, the less realistic part-time models of managers are considered. If part-time opportunities are nevertheless taken advantage of by managers, this often means the end of further career opportunities in the company. The same applies to parental and family leave: parental leave that goes beyond maternal protection leave represents a risk to further career progress. This career risk is even higher for men. When men make use of part-time employment or parental leave models, they have to count more negative career consequences than women. As a result, very few men take advantage of these opportunities.

»I know cases where women have had a child and then reduced their hours. As a result – in my view – their career was over.« (f)

»I have a co-worker who took a year's parental leave. He said that he wouldn't want to miss that, but that it would surely be the end of his career.« (f)

An important reason for the difficulty in taking part-time and time-off options is the unclear implementation of offers in the companies as well as the non-systematic access and the dissemination of innovative solutions. Even if possibilities exist within companies for managers to take up part-time employment, the workload often has to be compensated for by colleagues. In order to prevent this, more flexible areas of responsibility, job-sharing in management positions, or specific »stand-in« management positions could be introduced.

Good Practice at Microsoft

Flexible working through result-orientation

At Microsoft, we live flexible working. Result-orientation rather than a culture of presence is the priority. Employees and managers can decide themselves where and when they perform their tasks. The results of the project »Changing Company Cultures – Avoiding Career Breaks« showed us that we are on the right path with our flexible working time models, as they enable women (and men) to create spaces for other areas of life.

The results of the project also showed us what the next steps should be for Microsoft: suitable models for female and male employees with temporary (family-related) interruptions or working hours reductions must be further developed, and the possible benefits for the company of part-time work and parental leave must be communicated. In this way, Microsoft aims to enable women and men in all phases of their lives to make use of their potential for Microsoft and to experience Microsoft as a top employer.

Brigitte Hirl-Höfer, Microsoft, Senior Director HR Germany

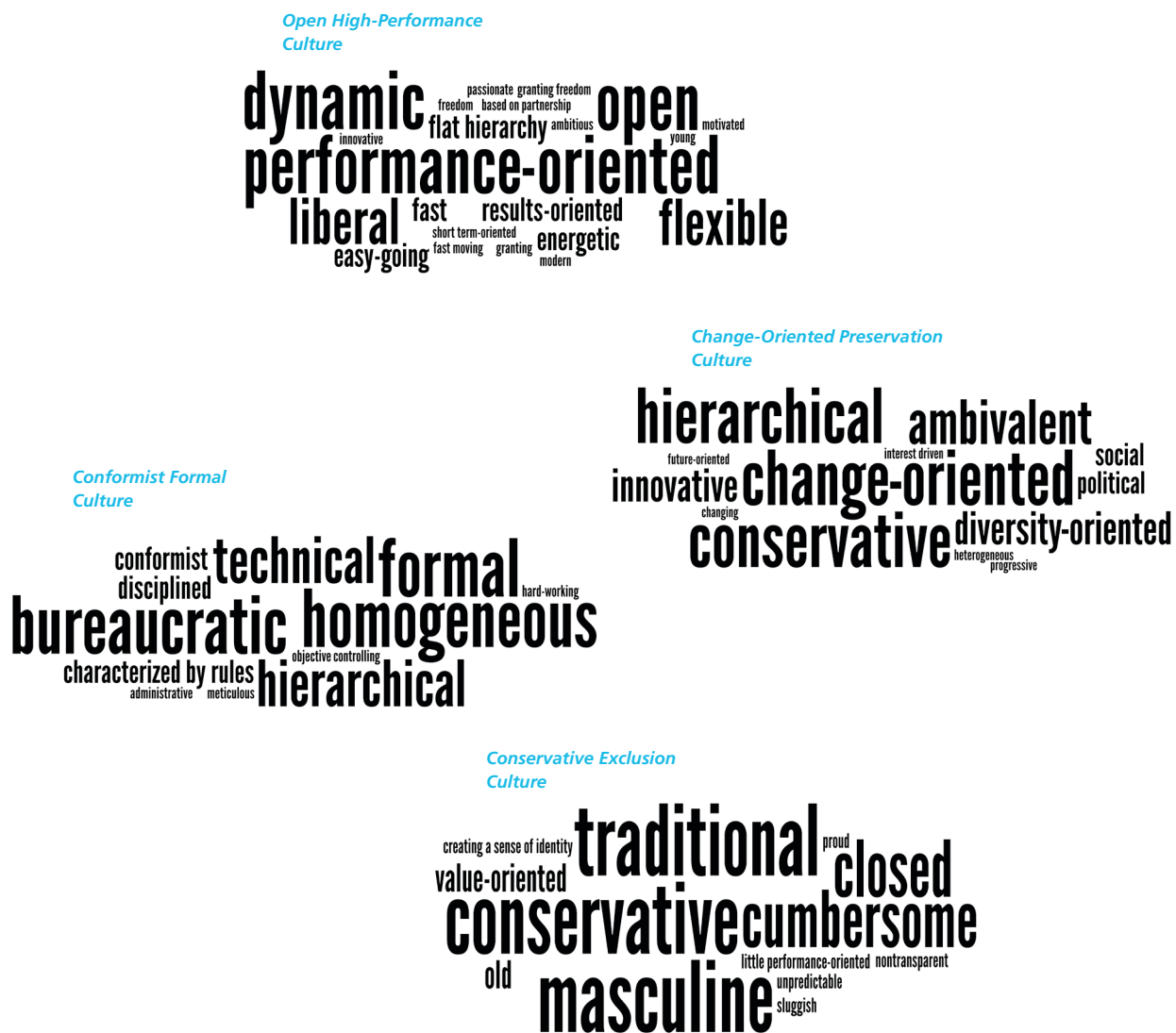
3

Challenges Relating to Cultural Patterns

The causes identified for career breaks by women confirm the importance of company culture for women's career opportunities. However, company-specific analyses clearly show that the company-cultural causes for career breaks by women described in the previous chapter are evident in varying degree in the individual companies. The specific culture of a company also contains obstacles for women in reaching leadership positions. Not all companies face the same problems, but instead are confronted with very different culture-specific challenges.

On the basis of specific characteristics of company culture, four ideal-typical cultural patterns can be derived. Ideal types represent an intellectual and rhetoric accentuation of typical characteristics of empirical reality. An ideal type is thus a non-existent »unified thought construct« – a »utopia« – which in reality, cannot be found in this demarcation (Weber 1904:191). Each cultural pattern therefore represents ideal-typically a particular set of challenges on the way to more women in management positions. Company cultures can thus be assigned to individual cultural patterns according to their characteristics (cf. Figure 3).

Figure 3: Cultural Patterns



Source: Fraunhofer 2012

The cultural patterns can serve as an orientation, as they specify the relevant challenges involved in increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions, differentiated according to the starting position in the company.

In the following, the four different cultural patterns will be introduced. The four cultural patterns are: open high-performance culture, conformist formal culture, conservative exclusion culture and change-oriented preservation culture (cf. Figure 3).

3.1 Cultural Pattern I: *Open High-Performance Culture*

Company cultures belonging to the pattern of *open high-performance culture* are characterised by a pronounced dynamic and flexibility. They are described as being open to change and innovative, but also as fast-moving. This requires managers to have a high degree of professional as well as spatial and temporal flexibility.

»We are flexible in the extreme, of course. We exaggerate. That means that everything is possible. You can tell that many people in the organisation are achieving maximum flexibility, and then it gets hard.« (f)

A further feature of this cultural pattern is the pronounced high-performance orientation that contributes strongly to a sense of identity. A very high level of energy, high motivation and passion for very ambitious goals are considered the most important leadership qualities. Performance is considered the top priority and is placed above other factors such as durability, sustainability and predictability. Managers are also judged rather by their current performance than by their potential.

»We work at completely different speeds. Many people who aren't used to that give up half-way. That's why we pay particular attention to a candidate's personal stability when we fill positions.« (f)

In addition, the company cultures in the *open high-performance* pattern are characterised as open, less formal and liberal. People behave in a young and modern way. In general, these companies only have flat hierarchies. The openness and informal mode of interaction in cultures of this pattern have the effect that new perspectives and heterogeneous opinions are appreciated and new ideas and approaches are received positively. Everyone can act, dress and behave as he or she likes. Therefore, managers of different genders, different origins or different backgrounds have, in principle, the same opportunities to move up the career ladder, without their »difference« being an irritation factor within the company.

Further, high degrees of freedom in achieving goals and implementing tasks are characteristic of cultures belonging to this pattern. Delegation of tasks is exclusively result-oriented. Where and how tasks are processed is not relevant, as long as the high expectations regarding performance and flexibility can be fulfilled. The fact that these expectations are so challenging often leads to the loss of the flexibility gain for managers, which is achieved by spatial and temporal flexible work. Also, the (temporary) reduction of working hours or parental leave is difficult to realise due to the high demands on performance and flexibility, and quickly and frequently lead to career breaks.

Thus, company cultures belonging to this cultural pattern are characterised by the fact that everyone has the same opportunities to move up the career ladder, as long as she or he is able to fulfil the high requirements of the company in terms of performance and flexibility. As long as managers can deliver their performance, they are judged positively, irrespective of gender or other features. But who fails to satisfy the consistently very high demands on performance and flexibility – even temporarily – is quickly out of focus for promotion. The extremely high degree of performance and flexibility is not achievable in all life phases, however. Due to family care responsibilities, which are more frequently assumed by women, high performance and flexibility demands become an obstacle, especially for female managers. Thus, they are more often faced with the challenge of balancing high performance and flexibility demands of their career with non-work-related duties.

3.2 Cultural Pattern II: *Conformist Formal Culture*

Company cultures belonging to the pattern of *conformist formal culture* are characterised by a much differentiated and strongly formative set of formal and in particular, informal rules. Moreover, a very consistent image of leadership and very clear ideas with regard to »appropriate« and »successful« leadership behaviour are typical. The interaction among managers is described as extremely formal and matter-of-fact. In many cases, these informal rules are supplemented by strong formal-administrative rules, which are reflected in a high level of bureaucracy and distinct hierarchies. Meticulousness, control and industriousness are important virtues within this cultural pattern. A further characteristic is the association of individual appreciation and prestige with proven or anticipated technical competence.

This rule observance as a formative element of the company culture has a very disciplining and standardising effect. The adjustment of the individual to the often unwritten, but very clearly perceivable rules becomes the prerequisite to success. A deviation from behavioural norms provokes questions, must be justified and is frequently sanctioned. Conformity on management levels is thus perceived a key feature of this company culture.

»Since I found out that this is a part of their insignia, I've ordered big cars. I get annoyed when I can't park this huge vehicle at home. But that's all part of the deal.« (f)

The challenges regarding the goal of »more women in management positions« in this *conformist formal culture* lie in the greater difficulty facing women in fulfilling these conformity demands. As already described in Chapter 2.3, the approaches and leadership behaviours of women in environments defined by male majorities are perceived as unusual and inappropriate. Due to their »difference«, the ability of women to fulfil leadership positions in accordance with the informal rules and male-defined success factors (cf. Chapter 2.4) is initially called into question. Within this cultural pattern, difference is not valued. By means of increased effort, women must first eliminate the irritation caused by them and prove that they can play by the defined rules.

»But from a certain level onwards, there's hesitation: can she really do it? Should we rather wait and take someone else? [...] Then there's an unconscious gender filter. Can she really tough it out, does she want that?« (f)

Women can only be successful within this cultural pattern if they adapt to the existing rules and provide evidence of their abilities. The fact that women's »difference« is perceived as an irritation factor in these company cultures, they have a competitive disadvantage in the competition to acquire leadership positions. Career breaks are therefore more likely. If women can successfully adapt to the dominant rule system, they are often considered »better men« – a strategy that is also often sanctioned by their environment.

»Women are better at certain things than men, but women often try to be the better men. Their own strengths are lost in the process.« (m)

3.3 Cultural Pattern III: *Conservative Exclusion Culture*

The company cultures belonging to the third cultural pattern, *conservative exclusion culture*, are characterised by strongly formative traditionalism and conservatism. Change processes are viewed sceptically in this cultural pattern. Companies within this cultural pattern are often described as cumbersome. Typically, this includes traditional companies with very prestigious and identity-creating products and strong, historically-shaped company values. As a result of restructuring programmes designed to address structural change over the last two decades, and the associated conservative recruitment policy, the average age of managers is comparatively high.

With regard to the goal of »more women in management positions«, the traditionalism and conservatism typical for this cultural pattern is reflected in particular in a general hostile attitude of the largely male decision makers vis-à-vis an increase in the proportion of women in leadership positions. This hostile basic attitude is often expressed in a very biologically-based notion of gender roles, according to which women are responsible for the domestic sphere and men are responsible for working and professional success. As such, women are not promoted largely because of a specific, traditional role-adherent value attitude of male managers. The justification for this attitude and the associated exclusion is generally not based on doubts regarding women's leadership competences, but is purely normative: women should not work in leadership positions.

»When you get to that point, I think that you can't underestimate the natural pause that comes about [through giving birth]. Lots of things happen to people then. Women can deal with giving birth – nature is sensational in that regard – but after two or three years, when the children start becoming independent, a lot of women find it difficult. [...] Then women face the additional pressure of children and family. And then they are supposed to perform? That's difficult. Blood is thicker than your pay cheque.« (m)

Within such a *conservative exclusion culture*, women are generally confronted by male groups and networks that they have no access to. The company culture is described as male, closed, as non-permeable. Decisions regarding careers and appointments are considered non-performance-related, non-transparent and unpredictable. The adaptation to behavioural demands and success factors considered important in the company do not increase the probability of advancement. Beyond a certain hierarchy level and for specific important functions, women are not appointed to management positions.

»If, as a woman, you want to enter the operational area, that's just not wanted. So, when men have to put up with women, then they'd rather have them in [support] functions. Women just shouldn't interfere in the operational area and they are given a management position in HR or something.« (f)

3.4 Cultural Pattern IV: Change-Oriented Preservation Culture

The *change-oriented preservation culture* distinguishes itself from the other cultural patterns to the extent that here, a pronounced innovation and change orientation on the one hand clashes with strongly conservative-hierarchical structures and values on the other. As part of this, a typical expression of innovation and change orientation is found in the high demands on progressivity and future orientation of the company and its products. Against this backdrop, an increase in the proportion of women in management positions as well as greater diversity among the staff of companies with this cultural pattern has been defined as an important company objective early on by company management. But middle and lower management often have conservative features. The change processes initiated by the top towards more diversity and openness thus represent a challenge for traditional leadership and career notions existing within the company as well as for the prevailing power relations.

»For many years, we have had intense debates with the chairman about diversity – with many programmes, many initiatives. The [chairman] was the only one among the managers who was honestly and genuinely committed, because he believes in it.« (f)

With regard to the goal of increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions, this results in a dual challenge: the company management within this cultural pattern communicates its innovation and change orientation very assertively, has typically long since been committed to improving the career opportunities for women as well as to more diversity among the staff, and communicated this objective very strongly internally as well as externally. As a result, it raises strong expectations within the company. Many women in companies belonging to this cultural pattern ask themselves why change is so slow and start to doubt the credibility of the commitment of their company. This is an additional frustration factor and can lead to women disbanding their own career plans.

The second challenge regarding the goal of »more women in management positions« results from the difficulty in implementing the targets set by senior management within the company. In particular at middle management level, managers are not always completely convinced of the importance and benefits of the target and can impede the implementation of measures and instruments, and in some cases block them altogether. Men – including those who actually support the target – can begin to feel disadvantaged in this culture. They realise that the endeavours are paying more than lip service and that more women are being/should be promoted. Thus, men with career ambitions are concerned that diversity measures mean that they have fewer chances for promotion in the next few years.

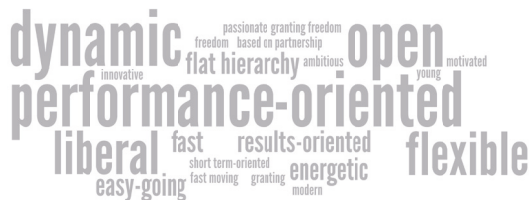
»At the moment, I have the impression that women are favoured in the case of equal qualification, as stated by the company. I think that it goes beyond that since then, that despite better qualifications and more experience, someone didn't get the job because he isn't a woman.« (m)

Recommendations for Companies

The description of cultural patterns in the previous chapter showed that there is a strong association between specific features of company culture and the particular challenges in avoiding career breaks by women. There exist no cross-company solution for the envisaged cultural change towards a gender-equitable company culture. Successful cultural change must rather take account of the specific challenges of the respective cultural pattern. Only then can the suitability and effectiveness of measures be guaranteed, and a successful company-cultural change towards more women in leadership positions be implemented. Each cultural pattern can be assigned a specific package of recommendations for action. These specific recommendations for action for each cultural pattern are described and explained in the following.

Figure 4: Culture-Specific Challenges

Open High-Performance Culture



Challenge

It is more difficult for women to meet high-performance and flexibility challenges, because they are commonly in charge of the caring responsibility within the family.

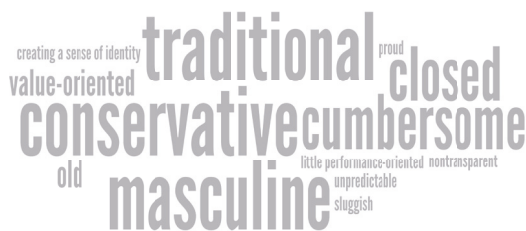
Conformist Formal Culture



Challenge

Women are an irritation factor. It takes more resources for women to prove their leadership skills. Dilemma: Women are either too feminine or too masculine.

Conservative Exclusion Culture



Challenge

Closed men's world prevents women from advancing. The exclusion is justified in a normative way by means of traditional gender roles.

Change-Oriented Preservation Culture



Challenge

Ambivalence due to high expectations by women, on the one hand, and a feeling by men of being disadvantaged as a consequence of the stated goal of increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions, on the other.

4.1 *Open High-Performance Culture: The Organisation of a Life Phase-Related Human Resources Policy*

The main factor responsible for career breaks by women in the cultural pattern characterised by openness, flexibility and high-performance orientation is the difficulty faced by women in delivering the required consistent performance and the associated temporal and spatial flexibility. This is far more difficult for women than for men, as they are more frequently responsible for family-related care duties. The key to increasing the proportion of women in management positions in these companies is a stronger orientation by personnel policy towards life phases. Such a policy involves individual personnel management and guidance in order to do justice to the needs of employees.

An important building block of a more strongly life phase-oriented personnel policy is the tracking and long-term career assistance of female and male potentials. In a company culture in which career advancement is linked exclusively to the current performance, such a system is necessary for the company to exploit the potential of employees following life phase-related working hours reduction, time off or career slow-down. It is difficult to organise the higher complexity related to individualised career paths within a single functional area. For this, cross-departmental and cross-functional planning is required.

The ability to realise temporary reductions of working hours and parental leave in a career-neutral way is a crucial prerequisite for more women in management positions. But a lack of stand-in arrangements often makes superiors hesitate when asked to approve part-time work or parental leave. In this case, stand-in procedures in particular must be specified in order to compensate for temporary capacity bottlenecks. As part of this, it makes sense to link stand-in solutions with a human resource development step for the interim manager.

With regard to a stronger life phase-orientation within the *open high-performance culture*, it is important to foster late careers (from age 40) and to use these to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions. Employees who are only able or willing to take over leadership responsibility relatively late in their career for life phase-related reasons, or would like to take over more responsibility after a life phase-related break, should be systematically identified and integrated into management development programmes.

The *open high-performance culture* is characterised by the strong demand for constant availability. Physical presence at the company is not necessary for this, but managers sense the expectations to be available around the clock, even including when they are on holiday. Employees with care-related duties find it very difficult to fulfil these demands. In order to exploit these potentials for the company and to retain them to the company, it is thus necessary to disband this demand for constant availability.

Recommendation

Organisation of a life phase-related human resources policy

- *Tracking and long-term career assistance of potentials*
- *Specification of stand-in procedures to compensate for temporary capacity bottlenecks caused by reductions in working hours and parental leave*
- *Foster late careers and exploit them for the increase in the proportion of women in management positions*
- *Disband the demand for constant availability, enable relief phases during the course of a career*

4.2 Conformist Formal Culture: Establishing the Appreciation of Difference as a Resource for Innovation

A major challenge facing the *conformist formal culture* is the exclusion of women from leadership positions due to strong informal behavioural norms for managers. These rules are defined and formulated by a male majority in the companies. They are thus largely geared towards behavioural patterns perceived as »typically male«. The perceived or even only anticipated »difference« of women becomes an almost insurmountable obstacle for assuming leadership positions. A main task of companies belonging to this cultural pattern is to disband gender-based stereotypes and to establish an appreciation of difference as a resource for innovation: in a *conformist formal culture*, the root causes for career obstacles facing female potentials are negative preconceptions held by their male colleagues regarding women's career ambitions and management suitability. In a conformist formal culture it is thus especially important to address both men and women as part of a change process to increase the proportion of women in management positions, and to emphasize the achievement of this goal as being the responsibility of both genders. Against this backdrop, enabling approaches must be viewed critically, as they confirm indirectly the imputed deficits and reinforce conformity demands.

The conditions necessary to disband the adjustment demands within this cultural pattern therefore include an initial raising of awareness among managers for the negative stereotypes vis-à-vis female managers, the experiencing of benefits of mixed teams and the conveyance of competences to utilise this difference. In order to achieve this awareness and expansion of competence, mandatory training measures on diversity-conscious management are necessary for all managers. As part of this, diversity aspects should form an integral part of all management development programmes.

Informal behavioural expectations and negative stereotyping affect the career opportunities of women all the more strongly when potential evaluation and appointment procedures are subjective. In view of this, it is an important prerequisite for more women in management positions to structure these procedures in a more objective and transparent manner. This means first examining all potential evaluation and appointment procedures with regard to their gender sensitivity. The focus should not just be on competences that are typically associated with male behavioural patterns. An appropriately operationalized performance requirement of »gender-conscious management« should be integrated additionally into the performance requirements of managers. In order to further reduce the gender bias in performance appraisal and appointment procedures, job interviews as well as assessment centres or regular performance and potential assessments should be conducted by mixed-gender teams. As part of this, all evaluation criteria used should be subject to a detailed and comprehensible operationalization. The scope for subjective interpretation in the assessment of how a particular competence is expressed or to which degree it exists, should thus be limited to a minimum.

Recommendation

Establishing the appreciation of difference as a resource for innovation

- Address both women and men in all change processes aimed at increasing the proportion of women in management positions, no enabling approaches
- Mandatory training measures on diversity-conscious management for all managers
- Examination of all potential assessment and appointment procedures with regard to their gender sensitivity
- Make performance evaluation and appointment procedures objective and transparent

4.3 *Conservative Exclusion Culture: The Commitment by Management to the Objective »More Women in Management Positions« is Decisive*

The *conservative exclusion culture* is characterised by a very traditionalist and conservative company culture, in which men hold all important key positions. The exclusion of women from management positions within this company is based in particular in normative terms on very traditional and often biological notions of gender role expectations.

In view of the goal of »more women in management positions«, the companies belonging to the conservative exclusion culture have the furthest way to go. The normatively closed male groups can only be broken open very slowly and with great difficulty. The most important recommendation for companies belonging to the *conservative exclusion culture* is therefore an unequivocal commitment by the board to the goal of »more women in management positions«, and to link this goal with company strategy. Central for this cultural pattern is that the measures necessary to achieve this are specified in a top-down process. The conservative and strongly formative forces in the tradition-oriented management levels are too powerful to be affected by bottom-up change. Crucial for the credibility of the board's commitment is the institutional anchoring of the commitment to more women in leadership positions. The establishment of a gender diversity unit within the company is an important indicator and a signal for the strategic significance of the goal, and the effect will be stronger the closer this organisational unit is located to the board.

In addition to the board's commitment and the organisational anchoring, it is crucial for company cultures belonging to this pattern to position and make visible female role models at all management levels. Due to the strong orientation towards tradition, targets relating to the proportion of women at specific management levels are difficult to achieve and implement. In view of this, it appears to be a better strategy to rely on persuasion by means of positive examples. In this way, established male circles can be disbanded and a signal provided for all female junior managers. Female role models can have an especially successful effect if they distinguish themselves from their male colleagues on the basis of features other than gender. Thus, for example, they might represent a different kind of management style or share child-care duties with their partner. In addition, it is important for the perception of female role models that they assume leadership functions in particularly prestigious areas within the company, such as research and development, production, or similar.

Recommendation

Achieve a commitment by management to the objective »more women in management positions«

- *Unequivocal commitment of the board to the goal of »more women in management positions«*
- *Linking the goal to company strategy*
- *Specification of measures and activities in a top-down process*
- *Organisational anchoring and greater visibility of the goal of »more women in management positions« by establishing a gender diversity unit*
- *Position and make visible female role models on all levels*

4.4 *Change-Oriented Preservation Culture:* Specification and Communication of the »Diversity« Business Case

Change-oriented preservation cultures are characterised by ambivalence. On the one hand, there is a pronounced orientation towards innovation and change. This is typically reflected in a strong commitment by company management to increase the proportion of women in management positions as well as to the related measures. On the other hand, there are strong conservative-hierarchical structures and values.

Due to the strong commitment to the topic, the benchmark for assessing the success of diversity activities is extremely high. The increased expectations lead to an increase in frustration over the slow pace of change. This leads to a deficit in credibility, particularly among female managers. By contrast, the expansion of diversity commitment leads to an increase in reservations, especially on the part of male managers. They experience a growing sense of disadvantage. Against the backdrop of this initial situation, it is important for change-oriented preservation cultures to dispel the doubts of female managers with regard to the credibility of the commitment on the one hand, and at the same time, to win over the men for the formulated equity objectives on the other. The key for this is in the economic justification for commitment.

The foundation for such an economic line of argument and justification for commitment is the specification and communication of the company-specific business case of »diversity«. The business case of »diversity« quantifies the specific benefits arising for the company from more women in management positions. Innovation and creative advantages, improved market entry or access to a larger talent pool are taken into account. The support of more women in management positions by all managers in a company can only be achieved if the concrete advantages of more female managers are made clear to the male managers, for their own areas, their own departments or their own teams. A further recommendation is the parallel introduction of a »diversity« communication offensive, which explicitly addresses male managers. In addition to the communication of the business case, this should focus on the individual advantages for men that result from a more open company culture. As such, men can also profit from more flexible working and career models.

Bonus-relevant targets with regard to the envisaged proportion of women can, when supported by the above-mentioned economic arguments, represent a suitable and recognised means within *change-oriented preservation cultures* to incite the implementation of measures and targets. Due to the general orientation towards innovation and change within this cultural pattern as well as the long-term and economic-related commitment of company management to the increase in the proportion of women, a comparatively high level of acceptance for these measures can be assumed.

Recommendation

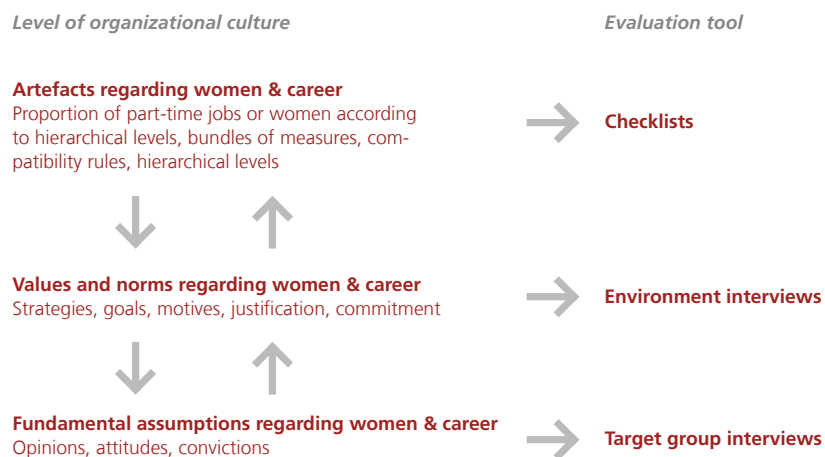
Specification and communication of the »diversity« business case

- *Specification and communication of the company-specific »diversity« business case*
- *Make heterogeneity benefits visible, e.g. by means of a »diversity award«*
- *Initiation of a »diversity« communication offensive that explicitly addresses male managers*
- *Implementation of bonus-relevant targets with regard to the envisaged proportion of women*

Methodology

Following Edgar Schein, the company culture manifests itself in three levels: artefact, values and norms as well as fundamental assumptions (Schein 1985, Kutschker & Schmid 2008). In order to capture all levels of a company culture, a three-fold study was structured with checklists, environment interviews and target group interviews (cf. Figure 5).

Figure 5: Relationship Between Organisational Culture and Study Design



Source: Fraunhofer 2012 after Schein (1985)

1. The first step of analysis was the evaluation of a standardised questionnaire distributed to the partner companies, the so-called **checklist**. The aim of the checklist was to systematically capture figures, data and facts as well as career development measures for women.

2. The **environment interviews** were targeted at values and norms underlying the commitment for more women in management positions. For this, semistructured, guided expert interviews were conducted in the partner companies with three to four people responsible for the implementation of diversity objectives (e.g. diversity managers, personnel development officers etc.).

3. The checklists and environment interviews yielded the knowledge about the organisations necessary for the conception and implementation of target group interviews. The **target group interviews** form the core of the analysis. The results presented in the previous chapters are based on these interviews. During the period from March 2011 to November 2011, 220 interviews were conducted, of which 141 interviews were with female and 79 with male managers. In every partner company, approx. 24 female and male managers were interviewed, of which six female managers had reached a management level above a »critical hierarchy level«. The remaining 18 managers held management positions on levels below the critical hierarchy level. The critical hierarchy level represents specifically for each company the management level above which the proportion of women in leadership positions is particularly small. This sampling ensured that the analysis does not just include the perspectives of female and male managers, but also the perspectives of women who have already surpassed the critical hierarchy level. The interviews were conducted as guided, semi-structured interviews and lasted for approx. 90 minutes. They were analysed according to the method of qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (Flick 2007, Mayring 2008).

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