

management focus

essential management knowledge for today's leaders



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May/June 2011**

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*Aspiring female
leaders in France*

An interview with:
Mark Thompson
and Brian Tracy



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Welcome to Management Focus

... and welcome to the May/June issue.

Leadership styles have changed dramatically over the past 30 years. There is a definite male and female leadership style. Emotional intelligence has facilitated the emergence of women leaders, as have changing societal factors. A recent study looked into the situation in France, which has changed drastically since the milestone date and epoch of 1968. Although there were certain aspects that were peculiar to French culture, no evidence has been found to suggest that France is in any way a "cultural exception".

This article examines the question of whether changing leadership styles, emotional intelligence and different organizational requirements have favoured the emergence of women leaders in France, specifically to determine whether this country is in line with the general trends or not. A shortened version of that study and its findings is published here in this latest issue of *Management Focus*, devoted to aspiring to and achieving greatness in business and management.

This issue's interviewees are Mark Thompson and Brian Tracy. Thompson and Tracy have joined forces on a revolutionary book whose ideas are as inspiring and thought-provoking as they are accessible, practical and deliverable.

In our interview, they talk about that book, ***Now... Build a Great Business***.

Finally, our latest issue of *Management Matters* discusses the subject of becoming, and staying, a great manager. What does it take to achieve greatness, or what do you need to do when you have greatness thrust upon you?

Remember, log on to our website at: <http://first.emeraldinsight.com> to expand on the topics highlighted in this issue of *Management Focus*.

Best wishes,

Giles Metcalfe
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Aspiring female leaders in France

This article examines the question of whether changing leadership styles, emotional intelligence and different organizational requirements have favoured the emergence of women leaders, and then switches its attention to France specifically to determine whether this country is in line with the general trends or not.

Progress made, and the French situation

Regarding women's progress since the 1960s, the study revealed a consensus that a lot of progress had been made in France, and substantial lobbying had been carried out to promote French women in the workplace. Women are generally "more present" but are not on an

equal footing. Recent attempts to have gender parity in local elections for instance (as introduced by the Sarkozy government) were often proved to be merely symbolic, with men inevitably carrying away the key posts. Certain sectors have become saturated for women, such as the areas of social services, teaching, health, etc. Four interviewees in the recent study saw 1968, the year of

social unrest and general strikes, as being symbolically important for women. This year heralded a new financial autonomy for married women, who hitherto were not even allowed to open a bank account without their husbands' consent.

However, to cite another example, in the employers' union MEDEF there is still "only one regional president and seven departmental heads" who are women (France is divided into 95 administrative departments), and only three women in France are Presidents of Chambers of Commerce. There is a general dearth of women decision-makers in the top corporate circles.

Gender discrimination

The gender gap at top executive and CEO level was frequently cited in the study, and one of the main reasons for this was the difficulty of having to manage both work and the family simultaneously. The telling time is when women have children and have to "put their professional lives in parentheses". Although many initiatives have been introduced in France, one being ex-Prime Minister Raffarin's law on gender parity in the public sector, there are still serious doubts about their applicability. There was unanimity of feeling in the area of remuneration in the study, with interviewees often citing the 20-25 per cent pay differential for the same job. Opinions were divided regarding discriminatory recruitment practices, however; with one interviewee stating that "the age of 25 is decisive for women's recruitment". There still appears to be an underlying feeling that prejudices still prevail when it comes to recruiting women who may be about to have families.

By and large, the women interviewed in the French study stated that significant headway had been made to further women's advancement in the workplace in France. It was generally accepted that the role and image of the woman had changed and prejudices are decreasing. Access to education was the most frequently quoted explanation for this, and especially the French Continuing Education Law (1972) which obliges companies to contribute a percentage of their payroll to management training programmes. Changing work habits such as remote working and flexitime schedules are often mentioned as playing a vital role in women's advancement. The majority of the respondents felt that gender equality would increase in the coming years, although progress would be slow and will depend on to what extent companies adopt a more

"When questioned on advantages that women executives have over their male counterparts, there was a consensus that women were often 'stronger in the fields of organizational ability, anticipation, multi-tasking, and the general propensity to put their team's welfare before considerations of personal ambition'."

proactive approach in terms of trying to prevent women from opting out and keeping them "in the system".

Invisible barriers

The glass ceiling is still in place in French organizations, although a number of respondents deemed that this phenomenon is decreasing. There are still very few women at board level and they are often "relegated to positions in HRM and Communication". The barriers of "male nepotism and co-opting" are factors that represent major obstacles in women's climb to the top of the corporate ladder. Women have to "make greater efforts, be more self-confident and have more tenacity" than men to arrive at the same levels in the hierarchy. Women's "physical appearance, their attitudes, and their attire are constantly scrutinized". The glass ceiling effect is not static: on the contrary, it tends "to move in accordance with women's own self-limitations"; hence the notion that women are not as ambitious as men in aspiring to top leadership positions. Gender diversity in France should be seen as "an opportunity and a driving force in terms of innovation and attaining higher performance levels".

Women's advantages as leaders

When questioned on advantages that women executives have over their male counterparts, there was a consensus that women were often "stronger in the fields of organizational ability, anticipation, multi-tasking, and the general propensity to put their team's welfare before considerations of personal ambition". It is not "power itself, but how power is exercised that constitutes the overriding difference between men and women leaders". Women tend not to be warmongers, and are more "relations-than production-oriented". In the field of

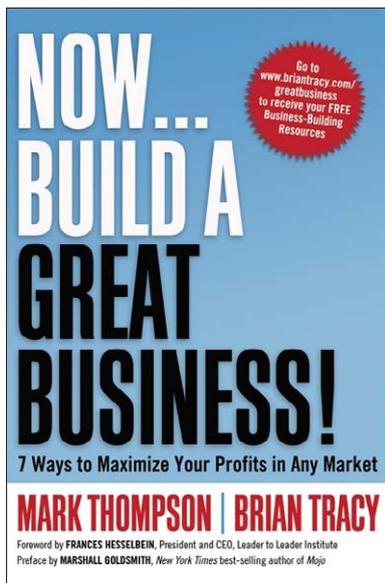
union negotiations women are "less confrontational and more in search of compromise" compared with their male counterparts. Other qualities cited were that women tend to work better in complexity, are better listeners, and are more emotionally intelligent in as much as they control and analyse emotions more effectively.

The male perception of women leaders is changing, certain stereotypes are disappearing, and it is no longer "absolutely necessary for a woman to dress like a male CEO in order to gain recognition". Strong women leaders are often admired, especially for their ability to balance their personal and professional lives simultaneously.

The majority of respondents saw women-led corporations as being more successful. The main explanation offered is that women "tend to be more effective in the field of financial management, applying a greater degree of restraint and prudence and a constant concern not to become over-indebted". They are more cautious in general, more long-term-oriented but perhaps "don't dare to ask for large sums of money"; this may, to some extent, explain why certain venture capitalists, seeking a quick return on investment, are less likely to invest in women-owned companies in France. Women are less likely to take financial risks and are anchored firmly in the long term.

This is a shortened version of "Aspiring to leadership ... a woman's world? An example of developments in France", which originally appeared in *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal*, Volume 17 Number 4, 2010.

The author is David Evans.



Now... Build a Great Business: an interview with

Mark Thompson and Brian Tracy

Interview by Giles Metcalfe

Giles Metcalfe: Before we get into the nuts and bolts of building one, how do you define a “great” business?

Brian Tracy: In its simplest terms, a great business is one that has a great product or service. This is defined as something that people really want, need, can afford and can enjoy and take full advantage of.

The simplest measure of all to predict a business success is to calculate the number of times that a customer, after using your product or service, or visiting your place of business, says the magic words: “This is a great company! This is a great service! This is a great business!”

Every successful business or product in the marketplace is described as being a “great” product or business. When everyone in your company is focused on eliciting this response from every single customer, your business will transform, and often very quickly. One of the biggest mistakes that businesses make is attempting to use clever marketing and sales strategies to sell a product that isn’t really that great, or which isn’t really much better than anything else that is available. Any strategy that resorts to simply putting a better spin on your product or service is ultimately doomed to fail. The only thing that works is for you to produce and offer a great product at a great price that elicits a great response from customers.

GM: Would you share a few tips or techniques to ease the challenges of finding great people and keeping them motivated?

Brian Tracy: Your business can only grow to the degree to which you can attract and keep great people who can help your business grow. A great person is someone who contributes much more in dollar value than you pay them in salary, income, and bonuses.

Therefore, a good person is actually “free.” Even more, a good person is “free, plus a profit.” What this means is that a good person contributes more than they cost, and much more, yielding a profit every time you can hire one of these people.

A good person is one who fully understands what he or she is expected to do and is fully trained or qualified to do that job. The manager then provides the essential leadership, guidance, and motivation, creating an environment where peak performers can thrive.

The basic rule in hiring good people is to do it slowly and carefully, one interview at a time. As Peter Drucker said, “Fast people decisions are usually wrong people decisions.”

GM: What should companies do less of?

Brian Tracy: Companies must continually re-evaluate their products and services, and make sure that what they offer is in alignment with what the customer actually wants. Many companies waste precious resources continuing to offer products and services that customers don’t even want or won’t pay a satisfactory price for. The majority of products and services brought to market will eventually fail. The key is to recognize which activities, products and services are not adding to customer satisfaction, and then take action to eliminate them immediately.

GM: What are the “4 Cs of Happiness”?

Brian Tracy: The most valuable

resource any organization has is its people. In order to build a successful business, you need a strong and motivated team. People are motivated and work more efficiently when they are happy, which is why it is so important to recognize the “4 Cs of Happiness” in your prospective employees. The 4 Cs are Control, Connectedness, Cause, and Continual Progress. Happy people feel they have control over their own lives and destinies; they are satisfied by the connections and relationships they have with others. They believe that they are part of a greater cause or meaning, and they feel that they are progressing and moving ahead in their lives. If you can hire people who possess these qualities, you will take an essential step toward team building.

GM: What are the “3 Ps of Leadership”?

Brian Tracy: The “3 Ps of Leadership” are Purpose, Passion, and Performance. They are essential qualities that leaders must possess in order to excel individually, inspire, and guide their teams. Leaders must feel certain why they get up every morning, so they can impart a sense of meaning to their employees and customers. They must truly like what they do in order to inspire others. Finally, they must channel their sense of purpose and passion into real, tangible, measurable results.

This is a shortened version of “Now... Build a Great Business: an interview with Mark Thompson and Brian Tracy.” To read a longer version visit <http://first.emeraldinsight.com>

Management Matters

Incisive commentary on topical business issues

Becoming, and staying, a great manager

Management means getting things done effectively through people to achieve the desired results. This requires a combination of leadership, communication and people skills.

A manager without any leadership skills is like a ship sailing on the high seas without a compass and a gyroscope. The manager, in that case, is merely a bureaucrat pushing paper and administering the daily chores and directives of higher-ups – a glorified order-taker.

Great managers usually exhibit nine common management practices:

1) Visionary big picture orientation

A great manager must have the capacity to see the “big picture” – the ability to see the forest rather than looking at individual trees. This unique attribute is the hallmark of a great manager. It requires the manager to think strategically, like a good chess player, planning several steps ahead. Equally important, it requires the manager to assess the implication of each move, especially their long-term impact, not merely short-term results.

2) A sense of curiosity and inquisitiveness

Curiosity is a very important attribute for a great manager. It prompts the manager to keep acquiring new knowledge and to seek a better way to get things done. It challenges the *status quo* mentality and practice. It also encourages us to explore alternatives and promotes diversity in critical thinking for problem solving and general management.

3) Being observant

A great manager keeps a close eye on what is happening around them.

4) Attention to detail

Besides “big picture” orientation, great managers must always pay attention to detail. Fortunately, this is made easier by the two preceding attributes. A great manager always ensures that he/she is well informed regarding the details of the business.

5) Manage with visibility and enthusiasm

A great manager must always be visible to all employees and customers. The old adage, “monkey see, monkey do” is an important axiom to remember for everyday practice.

Both customers and employees must see with their own eyes that the “boss cares.”

6) Crisis management skills

A great manager must be equipped with crisis management skills. They separate the pros from the amateurs. How one manages during a crisis defines the manager.

A great manager must be constantly prepared through regular training. This includes developing contingency plans with scenario analyses and frequent reviews, updating and adjusting if necessary.

7) Manage with openness and set an example

A great manager must be approachable and open to new ideas, setting an example for others.

8) Talent cultivation and mentoring

A manager is only as great as the people who work for him/her. This means he/she must develop an ongoing programme to cultivate talent for the organization. Jack Welch is one of the best managers in recent history. One reason was his accomplishment in creating a deep talent pool. Welch developed such a deep executive bench that, by the time he retired, he could select from a large group of executives.

9) People-management skills

A manager is like a conductor initiating every move so that every member of the orchestra can produce the desired sound for a cohesive outcome – symphonic music. How well the music sounds depends on the energy, leadership and management skills of the maestro. Since management is “getting things done effectively through others,” people-management skills are vital to achieving success.

The key, however, is execution with consistency.

Adapted from *Journal of Management Development*, Volume 30 Number 1.



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Final thought ...



Some are born great, some achieve greatness,
and some hire public relations officers.



Daniel J. Boorstin

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