

**Diversity Makes the Difference!**  
**~ Why Women are Good for Corporations ~**

By Alexandra Timbas and Ann Tardy

Women benefit corporations at all levels of the business. A recent study revealed a striking statistic: Fortune 500 companies with the highest representation of women in senior positions yield 35% higher return on equity and 34% higher total return to shareholders. Clearly, women are impacting companies in positive and lucrative ways, but what exactly do they bring to the table that makes them strong leaders and results in improved profitability?

The answer may be explained in terms of social differences and certain inherent strengths that are beneficial in managing employees and solving problems. Of the two genders, women tend to highlight relationships and communication in managing their employees, and as a result, employees feel valued and inspired by their managers and produce better work. (In fact, in one recent study, women scored higher than men in 42 out of 52 leadership skills surveyed.) Research has shown that women tend to exhibit the following social strengths:

- Women are greater nurturers—they are willing to nurture not only people, but projects, through rough times.
- Women encourage openness among their employees, and make themselves very accessible.
- Women are fabulous multitaskers.
- Women focus on relationship and tend to create lasting bonds and build bigger networks. They also express appreciation often.
- As leaders, women respond quickly when assistance is required.
- Women are tolerant of differences in others.
- Women can identify problems quickly.
- Women are great communicators—and, consequently, open to extended discussion when trying to solve problems.
- Women are flexible and willing to explore compromises.
- Women ask questions, and are able to assess quickly the needs of others.
- Women delegate responsibilities readily.
- Women focus on the company as a whole, rather than personal gains.

Clearly women have certain strengths that, together with a traditional management team, create an environment conducive to success. However, the true key to success in business is diversity—the balance of men and women of varying backgrounds and orientations leading with different opinions, viewpoints, and priorities.

Though still a long shot from equal, the numbers of women in top business positions in the United States is slowly rising and the leading companies that are hiring more women are reaping the benefits. Traditionally “female” styles of management and problem solving are no longer seen as weak or sub-par. Breaking the traditional “fraternity” of all-men leaders is becoming a priority among companies, because world-class companies understand that diversity on all levels yields the best results. Team diversity in businesses leads to a more accurate reflection of society and, by the same token, a more accurate understanding of what diverse customers want—which ultimately impacts the bottom line.

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