

Are women no longer the gender issue?



Inequality

The recommendation is for women to **“...stop preaching to other women to change.”** That surely pulls the carpet out from programs and enterprises women have heavily invested in to address gender imbalances in the workforce. Not that it hasn't been a worthwhile pursuit, however Avivath Wittenberg-Cox, author of *How Women Mean Business* and a gender consulting CEO, thinks **it's time stop asking women why they haven't succeeded.**

Rather from her years of gender consulting experience, Wittenberg-Cox sees the **need to focus away from gender inequality as a “woman's gender issue”** to one of a business growth and performance issue that includes gender balancing. Now, this sound like the focus of gender balancing gets diminished among other issues and still keeps women from making progress.

However, what Wittenberg-Cox has found is that businesses who recognize the gender imbalance issue and attempt to rectify it often encounter some unanticipated and different perspectives.

During a recent leadership conference, **businessmen** cited the major road blocks for women as coming from a management mindset, criteria for leadership and having an effective career support process.

By contrast **businesswomen** saw a lack of advancement of career coming from “Self-criticism, lack of confidence and self-selection out of promotion pools.”

In other words to quote one business leader: **“The men blamed the system, the women are blaming themselves!”**

Businesses that have been try to address the gender inequality, according to Wittenberg-Cox make the error of approaching the issue the same way they do their customers. We’ll fix the problem by finding out what the customer wants the same as finding out what do the women want.

When they go to find out what women want, they consult women and amass information about what women are looking for written by women.

What Wittenberg-Cos is saying that the issues raised by women, while not without meaning and merit, by themselves have not proven to resolve the inequality. Rather, **a better strategy** is to focus on the talent required for business growth and performance and find and foster the talents of women that contribute to those objectives.

I’m not so sure that women need to stop preaching to other women, especially in areas that enhance professional skills and networking. But, I do think that Wittenberg-Cox is right in saying the issue of gender inequality in business needs to be re-framed into the larger issue. **Businesses need to take the responsibility and change and adapt their business model to accommodate an ever growing and talented workforce of women if they are to remain competitive.**

What do you think about this different approach to addressing the issue of gender imbalance in business?

Source:

http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2012/12/stop_asking_women_why_they_hav.html

