



Women in Leadership Highlights June 24, 2011

“Internal Women’s Networks: Navigating the Corporate Labyrinth” Presenter: Dr. Liz Roling; Panelists: Kristin Hannah, Michele Golden, Nikki Nickerson, & Sylvia Little

Introduction and Research Summary by Liz Roling

- I. Does the glass ceiling still exist?
 - a. New metaphor of the labyrinth
 - b. Some women have made it to the top
 - c. It is a puzzle/maze to be worked through
 - d. Use problem solving to navigate (more accurate, and also more encouraging image to describe current situation)
- II. Keys to navigation
 - a. Balancing assertiveness and warmth - women are expected to be nice, but also must be assertive to be seen as leaders. Balancing the 2 is key.
 - b. Building social capital - women feel less comfortable ‘benefiting’ from relationships
- III. Internal Women’s Networks
 - a. There is little to no research concerning what/why/benefits of WN
 - b. The purpose of the dissertation was to understand internal women’s networks
 - c. Definition of WN – Internal groups within organizations that provide members (often female managers) with a series of programs to provide networking and career-development opportunities (Catalyst, 1999)
 - d. Hypotheses – 12 hypotheses total, with overarching hypothesis that participation in women’s networks would provide women with resources to cope with work stressors (e.g., more access to mentors within the organization), which would enhance work-related well-being, and in turn, reduce turnover intentions and enhance organizational commitment
 - e. Methodology – e-mails were sent to WIL, external networking group and 12 organizations with known internal women’s networks
 - f. Four types of activities found
 - i. Social Activities
 - ii. Management Development Activities
 - iii. General Self-Development
 - iv. Organization-focused activities
 - g. Networking opportunities are the most popular event type
 - h. Utility – 70% say ‘my time is well spent’ in Women’s Network Activities
 - i. 53% responded positively to career utility - raises the question, if women are not receiving career-related benefits, what are they receiving?
 - ii. Clearly, there is something else beneficial
 - i. Social activity participation is most closely correlated with enhancing leadership skills and other career outcomes (even stronger relationship than with management development activities)

- j. Women participating in WNs reported greater personal network supportiveness, or the extent to which those in personal network are concerned with one's career advancement and success.
- IV. What do WN do for an organization?
 - a. Help women deal better with job stressors which leads to greater well-being
 - b. Greater well-being contributes to commitment to organization and lower turnover
- V. Implications
 - a. WN provide supportive relationships
 - b. Turnover reduction – significant as women often have a higher turnover rate than men
 - c. WN are beneficial!
 - i. They provide social support
 - ii. Provide access to developmental relationships/mentors

Panel Discussion – Opening Remarks

Kristin Hannah, KPMG

- WN helped with social connections by providing opportunities for mentoring and meeting peers
- KPMG's WN [started in 2003 by Chris St. Clare](#) and was piloted in Atlanta - originally designed to retain women and to increase the number of women partners
 - Created to help with technical skills
 - Provide opportunities to network internally and externally
 - Supports business strategy
- Now KPMG's network hosts events at which KPMG women, clients, and women in the community can network

Michele Golden, Turner Broadcasting System

- As HR generalist, she was told to build a diversity strategy six years ago, as part of the CEO's commitment to diversity
- In forming it, they involved the employee group and created *Turner Women Today*
- *Goals*
 - Helps with skill development
 - Balancing both core and soft skills (assertiveness and warmth)
 - Raising business acumen – understanding business model
 - Help foster relationships
 - Build networks across organization
- Over 1,300 women are involved across the globe – New York, Atlanta, Asia, etc.

Nikki Nickerson, Reed Elsevier

- Involved in WN at Reed Elsevier since 2002
- Attended an all-girls Catholic school and is still close with her classmates
- Her biggest champions and supporters are women
- She is thankful for the resources to have a WN
- WN helps with work-life balance and finding one's passion

Sylvia Little, Kimberly Clark

- She began in *manufacturing* – all men!

- Wanted to help women achieve their goals
- Network goals – to achieve their potential and success for the organization
- Joined the WN to get mentors to navigate the transition and help with professional development
- Now she wants to work on work/family balance and creating a support system

Panel Questions

Kristin - What is the primary reason your women's network is supported and encouraged by your organization?

- At KPMG, the WN provides skills to advance careers, networking skill training, leveraging relationships
- Take relationships to the next step and apply to business
- Opportunities to know potential clients – external focus

Michele - What are the key factors to the success of the WN at Turner?

- It is sustainable and adds value
- Charter process – established goals aligned with commitment to diversity
 - People – how do we ensure growth
 - Perspective – how do we tell stories of all diverse employees
 - Programming (approval process)
- Telling stories from diverse points of view
- Portraying women in positive images in media
- Well-structured leadership team
 - Encourages senior-level women to give back through leadership roles
- Define and measure satisfaction and results
 - Show value to get more support

Nikki - What are the key factors to the success of the WN at Reed Elsevier?

- Told to “build something great”
 - Looked for ideas from within the organization
 - Took everything into account: career-driven programming, skill development, work-life balance
- Have events to help you better at home, so you can be better at work
 - Meets more than career needs
 - These are ways to make your entire life better (e.g., even laundry tips)
 - If you are better at home, you are better at work
 - If you are better in any aspect of your life, you are better in all
- Its an investment to spend time away from your family and work
 - You will be more invested in a company that does that for you
 - They accidentally stumbled on success by investing in the whole person

Sylvia - How and why do you encourage men to get involved in women's networks?

- At Kimberly Clark, men attend the events, which helps gain their support
- Women are holding men accountable to their support
- Men are aligning with women to help them reach their potential

- At KPMG, it is necessary to get men to understand and buy in, otherwise women continue to stumble; there is a push to include/educate men
- At Reed Elsevier, men enjoyed participating in the WN activities and asked why they were not invited this year.
 - New topic – Energy Management: Living Your Best Life
 - People explore things they enjoy doing outside and inside
- It is important to manage men’s perspectives and not isolate women
- The programming often naturally selects male involvement (e.g., when it is more career-focused)

Nikki – How do you go about making sure the programs provide something for everyone?

- At Reed Elsevier, they surveyed employees to see what needs there were; it helps employees consider roles and see what they want
- Try to help rediscover passion outside of work
- Ask people what is important to them and act on it
- Look at possibilities of what I could be; leads to action plan

Kristin – How has the social aspect of women’s networks helped you in your career?

- Provides an outlet for developing external relationships that can directly help develop business for the company
- At KPMG, women have access to other women’s real advice

Sylvia - Do you think internal women’s networks help increase the number of women in senior management? How so?

- Yes, but not rapidly enough
- Not sure if its the source, but it does empower women
- Women were recently included in the senior management selection process, which is something that was pushed by the women’s network

Michele - At Turner, what still needs to be accomplished through the Women’s Network?

- Globalization – drive international growth (economic, political and social issues have implications for the workplace)
- Demographics – there is a rapid change in the workplace toward a younger demography and still need to get more of the younger workforce engaged in the network
- Social Media – leverage technology to create global communication and collaborate in the workforce
- Raise awareness of how women are portrayed

Other Comments

- There are nine different networking groups at Turner
- At Turner, the programming focused on time and money saving at home is done through the Parent’s Network. *(This avoids reinforcing messages about women’s roles as caregivers and managers of the home, while still providing the time saving outlet that clearly helps enhance the home life)*
- Report cards are presented to the CEO to raise accountability
- Kimberly Clark is initiating a strategy to engage younger women

- Want to make sure that they are addressing needs of all
- Reverse mentoring – helps both ways
- Emory's women's network serves as an advisory board to the president to act on women's issues; they are considering bringing in more networking opportunities
- AT&T is establishing a younger networking group and working together with other networking groups
- At Coke, anyone who supports the mission can join the group