

Resource Box:

Ursula Schinzel

<http://ursula-schinzel.com>

News about Human Resources and Sports in Luxembourg

View my site for free news and articles

### **3.3.2.1.14 Seminar Femmes Leaders Luxembourg – Open Leadership Forum Wednesday, 29 September 2010, 18h30, Hotel Hilton, 19th floor**

How Women do business

Eliane Fuchs, President Femmes Leader Luxembourg opened the Forum in the 19th floor of the Hotel Hilton.

Minister Françoise Hetto-Gaasch made a wonderful speech for the opening of the event. The equal chances for women are not yet available in our society. There are fewer female creators of companies, fewer female managers and fewer female directors. Why? It could be a lack of courage and self-confidence in women to realise their dream, to overcome their fears and to get things accomplished. It would be important to encourage the women to find value in their professional life. There should not be a competitive atmosphere between men and women.

Yvonne O'Reilly organized today's Leadership Academy that was held for the entire day. She worked in Human Resources for State Street Bank and for Delphi Automotive Systems, before she started her current role as a coach. The subject of today is "self-leadership". We hear a lot about "savoir-faire" – knowledge of the leader, but we do not hear enough about "savoir-être" – being, having the personality of the leader. It is about the finding the leadership within yourself. We want to promote the female leadership in Luxembourg.

- Avivah Wittenberg Cox was the invitee of honour for the evening. She is author of "How Women Mean Business" and CEO of 20-First, based in Paris. Avivah is for a revolution! It has never been better a better time in history than now to be a woman. She said: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century is over! The 21<sup>st</sup> Century is here. We have to work towards Gender Balance. Why? How?  
Why: Because we are living in a world influenced more by the internet than by war.  
Because we are living the mixity  
Because we are more linked than hierarchal.  
Women have changed, but we forgot the speed of the change. Only 50 years ago, we saw women arrive in men jobs.  
Why do companies care?  
It is about 3 components: Leadership, Talent and Market  
The questions are:  
Leadership: Is our leadership team prepared to lead in today's globalising multicultural world?  
Talent: Are we attracting the world's best talent?  
Market: Do our staff & services accurately reflect our clients and their expectations?

One question remains unanswered. In education, more women than men are performing well. What happens later in the workplace with all these well educated women?

The Harvard Business Review of September 2009 writes about “The Female Economy”. They write, that the “female income is the world’s largest opportunity”. “Forget China, India, the future is female!”

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has three challenges, the three W:

Web: the technology revolution

Women: the gender balance

Weather: the environment protection and climate change

How? How can we get to gender balance?

Stop what we have been doing until now. Stop fixing the female problems.

There are principles:

- 1) Women are not a minority
- 2) Don’t ask women to solve gender issues
- 3) Recognise women as equal and different

The Implementation of these principles has to be made at the Top Management Level, where action plans and objectives must be defined. And at General Management Level, where awareness has to be built and local action plans defined.

Key Success Factors are:

- 1) It’s a business issue, not a women issue
- 2) Requiring strategic and sustained initiatives, like any other change management program
- 3) Led by credible leaders
- 4) Evaluated with measurable success criteria and milestones

Fouad Rathle, President IFBL and Director Bank Garanti, ABBL, POG, was elected first Ambassador of Femmes Leaders Luxembourg.

## **Round Table**

After the Opening Ceremony, a very interesting round table followed moderated by Margaret Ferns, Responsible Communication Lombard International Insurance: with Avivah Wittenberg Cox, Fouad Rathle, Britta Jaegde, Director Hottinger & Cie, Nicolas Rasson, DHR ING Luxembourg.

The Round Table said:

around 2007 the 2 big issues in Luxembourg were:

- 1) the war for talent
- 2) the aging of the population

The gender issue was to be pushed to the debate, but then came the financial crisis around 2008...

The financial crisis had 2 impacts on gender issues

- 1) Hunkering down backwards: firing employees, the elderly, the expensive
- 2) Maybe it's time to change how we do things: how can a company survive that is losing 50% of their management to retirement within the next 5 years?

Is Gender Balance a subject discussed in Luxembourg banks in 2010?

- 1) Women are blocked from opportunities by men, women are considered weak for a number of reasons, i.e. motherhood
- 2) At a management level, only the economic outcome is reviewed: who is the best person for the job? And only this point is taken in consideration
- 3) Not all women want to be in management positions.

Possibilities for changes:

- 1) Recruitment has to be changed
- 2) The balance between professional and private life has to be realised through flexible working hours and the purchase of vacation days
- 3) Equality in the decision taking for promotion to management level positions
- 4) Telework is a solution to assist in the combination of professional and private life.
- 5) If we don't change, the new generation currently joining the work force will change us.
- 6) "Maternity leave" has to be cancelled and replaced with "parental leave", like in Sweden and recently in Germany
- 7) Flexible working hours: some people take 1 hour to do what others can complete in 8 hours
- 8) The young recruits have to be taken care of especially. New hires, interns have to be promoted rather than discouraged.
- 9) We have to make men-fathers, to solve the issue women-mothers!
- 10) We have to completely review Standard HR procedures and practices, i.e. promotions are typically made at 25-35 years old, exactly when women have babies.

### **Report on the extraordinary experience of leading and working with horses**

The "Horse Concept" Experience was explained and reported on based on the day at the Leadership Academy. Horses are excellent to study Leadership qualities and identify your areas for improvement. The question is: who will be the boss? you or the horse? without force and aggression? It is a question of "the Dominated" and "the Dominant". You have to negotiate with the horse, to get him to do what you want. And the horse returns the communication showing your errors.