The Critical Role of Women in Shaping Communities, Institutions and Economies

Roslyn Dawson Thompson
Dallas Women’s Foundation
October 28, 2016
Investing in women is an economically sound strategy.*

*World Bank, World Development Report 2010*
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – by 2020*

*World Bank, World Development Report 2010
An investment in a woman changes her life, her family’s life, her community, her country and our world.
For every $1.00 earned by a woman, she’ll invest $0.90 in her family.
Women’s Leadership Matters

The Economic Impact

Women control consumer spending
...in the U.S. and globally*

94% of home furnishing purchases
91% of home buying decisions
92% of vacation decisions
60% of automobile purchases
51% of consumer electronic purchases

80% of family health care choices are made by women*

*Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010*
Women’s Leadership Matters

The Business Case

Fortune 500 companies with female board members **outperform** their peers with the least female representation.*

* catalyst.org, October 15, 2007
“The 75 Most Influential People of the 21st Century” – Esquire Magazine, September 2008

included 9 women.
#66 Oprah Winfrey (media mogul/philanthropist)

#11 M.I.A (musician)

#27 Samantha Power (journalist/professor/human rights advisor)

#5 Hillary Rodham Clinton (politician)

#29 Sonia Sotomayor (judge)

#47 Lisa Randall (physics professor)

#31 Melinda & Bill Gates (philanthropists)

#34 Meghan O’Sullivan (former national security operative)

#64 Scarlett Johansson (actress)
“The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women in 2016”
-Forbes, June 6, 2016

The Top 10

#1 Angela Merkel
#2 Hillary Clinton
#3 Janet Yellen
#4 Melinda Gates
#5 Mary Barra
#6 Christine Lagarde
#7 Sheryl Sandberg
#8 Susan Wojcicki
#9 Meg Whitman
#10 Ana Patricia Botín
“When women get the chance to lead, they actually lead better. We have ample evidence of this...one study shows that Fortune 500 firms with the best track record in raising women to prominent positions are 18-69 percent more profitable than median firms in their areas.”

-Christine Lagarde, International Monetary Fund
“The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women in 2016”
-Forbes, June 6, 2016

...the next 10
“Help others rise. Greatness comes from pulling others up.”

-Indra Nooyi, Charmain and CEO, PepsiCo
“The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women in 2016”
-Forbes, June 6, 2016

...the next 10
“Good leaders organize and align people around what the team needs to do. Great leaders motivate and inspire people with why they’re doing it. That’s purpose. And that’s the key to achieving something truly transformational.”

-Marilyn Hewson, Lockheed Martin
Women’s Leadership Matters

What does popular culture tell us about women leaders?

Who are the most visible women leaders in popular culture?

What do we think about them?
When I am getting a haircut or a manicure, I reach for:

- The Atlantic
- Forbes
- People
- Us Weekly
- Latest Self-Help Book on Women’s Leadership
Women’s Leadership Matters

Impact of the Current Environment:

Social and gender norms/stereotypes defined by, media, culture, race & class.

Effect of *implicit bias*.

One is *not* enough (30% rule).
EVE OF CHANGE: Women Redefining Corporate America, by Pamela Carlton and Lily Tang
Women’s Leadership Matters

Finding 1: Women Lead Transformational Change

57% of Everest’s women executives are leading change that impacts both corporate strategy and structure.

Women executives are creating corporate cultures more open to innovation.
Finding 2: Women Embrace Smart Risk

96% of Everest’s women executives consider risk taking part of their mission and mindset as leaders.

Women executives take risk primarily to advance the organization; career advancement is secondary.
Finding 3: Humility Is The New Power Tool

Humility fosters an environment of innovation where it is “safe to make change and to break some things”

Confidence is a prerequisite for humility...balancing being authoritative and inspiring confidence, with knowing when and how to be humble to harness that power and enhance credibility
Women’s Leadership Matters

Finding 4: Collaboration Is Not Consensus

Women executives create environments where ideas can be shared, but they remain at the helm and responsible for leading action that is best for the business.

Everest women lead through collaboration... first looking across the organization to access key skills and the right people for the most effective execution.
Finding 5: Difference Is More

Being different is a source of strength... gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and cultural background are integral parts of the leadership toolkit and what you bring to the table.

Women are multi-dimensionally competent... more adaptable, able to shift between contexts, apply cultural intelligence and use difference to lead transformation and build new corporate cultures of innovation.
“The great thing about women is we forget how hard it is. That’s why we go back and have a second child. It’s why you go back and launch a second network. There were times that I couldn’t breathe. There were times I felt exhausted. There were times I couldn’t imagine how I was going to put one foot in front of the other. But I just remembered the good parts. And you know what was interesting about my development? Everything sort of fits together. Everything has a purpose.”

-Gerry Laybourne, Founder and former CEO, Oxygen Networks
Thank you.