



EVA Report “Women to the Top! – A Leader Regardless of Gender”

Recommendations

The steering committee of EVA’s “Women to the Top” project has compiled ten recommendations presented in the EVA Report “Women to the Top! – A Leader Regardless of Gender”. The recommendations are not numbered in order of importance. The implementers of the recommendations can rank them according to their own particular development needs. The recommendations are aimed toward Finnish firms, while some of them can be applied also in other spheres of society.

- 1) The board of directors of a company should make a decision according to which the best resources are used regardless of gender. A strategy for fostering a more even gender distribution can be drafted. The board should monitor the implementation of this decision and call for an explanation in the case of non-compliance.
- 2) Companies should draft plans aiming to promote equal opportunities for women and men. Goals for increasing the share of women in management positions should be quantified and their achievement monitored as a part of the development of human resources. The goals should be concrete: for example ‘10 per cent more women in operative management by the year 2010’.
- 3) In large companies a person should be named to be responsible for developing ideas and means for safeguarding and promoting workforce diversity. The firms’ management should be committed to achieving the diversity-oriented goals.
- 4) Achievement of workforce diversity should be taken into consideration already in the recruitment process. The company should encourage both men and women to seek promotions. Job-specific competency requirements foster equality among employees and facilitate recruitment on a gender neutral basis. The career development in male-dominated sectors favours men by nature. It is wise to start the process of reducing gender bias also externally.
- 5) Especially at the beginning of their careers women should be advised to seek diverse work experiences and take responsibility. This spawns workers with diverse skills. Continuing education and training should be equally available to men and women.
- 6) As an entrepreneur a woman automatically becomes a manager, but the companies founded by women often remain small. Small and medium-sized companies should be encouraged to expand via suitable means.
- 7) Companies should offer equal opportunities in the recruitment phase to both men and women. Educational requirements specified during recruitment can affect whether men or women apply for a job. Certain fields of education are still male- or female-dominated. The job criteria should avoid skewing the requirements to only one gender.
- 8) The lists of potential candidates drawn up by head hunters should be monitored in early stages of the recruiting process: if the group of candidates includes only men, it should be possible to question the appropriateness of the list. Head hunters’ contracts should include a clause that representatives of both genders should be sought.
- 9) Mentor and advisor schemes are a good way to screen and train potential climbers of the career ladder. Women should be active and supportive of other women in making progress in their careers. The mentor or advisor should try to alleviate unjustified fears about management tasks.
- 10) We should try to influence the world of thought of girls already at an early stage. For example, already during basic education girls should be offered possibilities to become familiar with male-dominated sectors by working for short periods of time in companies. The responsibility for fostering positive attitudes is foremost in the home, school and general attitude climate.