

KATE RAMSAY AND THE A#D COACHES WELCOME YOU TO OUR STAYING IN TOUCH NEWSLETTER.

The theme of this edition is gender inequality. In **Learning Moments** we report from a recent edition of the Harvard Business Review (HBR) about what is being called Second-Generation Bias. In **Did You Know?** we source pieces from the November 9/10 Sydney Morning Herald and research from The 100% Project about the continuing low number of women in senior positions in the Australian workplace and what can be done about this. Our **AnD Story** is a book about learning on the job and we end with a quote for chronic worriers.

## Learning Moments

Kate writes: You know how once you're interested in a particular brand of car you see them everywhere? Well that's happened to me about gender inequality since deciding to write about it in this newsletter: articles have landed in my in box, the November 9/10 Sydney Morning Herald devoted its editorial plus a full page in the News Review section about how two business groups are tackling the issue and The 100% Project's 2013 research paper looks at the unconscious bias of both men and women regarding flexible working arrangements.

I'll start with an HBR article from its September '13 edition called **Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers** written by Herminia Ibarra, Robin Ely and Deborah Kolb. The authors begin by suggesting that people become leaders by '*internalizing a leadership identity and developing a sense of purpose*'. They cite a case history in which the career of a high potential woman stalled in her thirties because she was said to 'lack presence'. Her reputation and confidence grew and her sense of a leadership identity strengthened when she was assigned to work with two clients whose CFOs happened to be women. The authors write:

*Despite a lack of discriminatory intent, subtle, 'second-generation' forms of workplace gender bias can obstruct the leadership identity development of a company's entire population of women. The resulting underrepresentation of women in top positions reinforces entrenched beliefs, prompts and supports men's bids for leadership, and thus maintains the status quo.*

The authors believe that this unconscious form of gender bias is the primary cause of women's persistent

underrepresentation in leadership roles and state that research has moved away from a focus on the deliberate exclusion of women toward investigating forms of this 'second-generation' bias. They propose these actions to support women's access to leadership positions:

1. Educate women and men about second-generation gender bias.
2. Create safe 'identity workspaces' to support women's transition to bigger roles.
3. Anchor women's development efforts in a sense of leadership purpose ... to give them insight into themselves and their organizations (and thus) enabling them to more effectively chart a course to leadership.

This is a long and informative article. Let me know if you'd like me to forward you a copy.

## Did You Know?

(i) The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)

The editorial in the November 9/10 SMH states that the under-representation of women in top jobs in Australia is directly related to the conscious and unconscious biases of decision makers which have the effect of inhibiting women's progression. It reports that both the Business Council of Australia (BCA) and a relatively newly formed group called Male Champions of Change have both issued strategies to tackle gender inequality. The SMH:

*The BCA is pressuring its big company membership to force chief executives to take unconscious bias testing and share the results, to accelerate the early career progression of women, to overhaul recruitment systems to remove pro-male bias, to abolish any gender pay gap, to increase flexibility to recognise parental leave and even salary punishment for managers who fail to reach equality goals.*

Further the BCA has set its members the goal of having women occupy 50% of senior positions by 2024.

Male Champions of Change has grown from a core of people who were handpicked by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick. It now includes Ian Watt (head of Prime Minister and Cabinet), Martin Parkinson (head of Treasury), army chief Lieutenant-General David Morrison, Qantas boss Alan Joyce, ASX chief Elmer Funke Kupper, banking heads Ian Narev (Commonwealth) and Mike Smith (ANZ), Telstra's David Thodey, Simon Rothery from Goldman Sachs, Stephen Roberts from Citi and KPMG's Geoff Wilson.

At a recent forum in Sydney the group launched a 12-point action plan aimed to increase the numbers of women in their senior ranks. They, along with the BCA, no doubt realise that it makes good business sense to select from 100% of the available talent rather than 50% and, as the group said in a joint statement,

*'We have found that women's experiences and their advancement are ... dependent on whether they are lucky enough to have a manager or sponsor who is supportive and inclusive. We need to end the leadership lottery.'*

Included in their plan is the 'plus one' initiative that expects their managers to add at least one woman to their teams as roles arise, and if not, they'll be asking 'why not?' Also included is mentoring and sponsorship of talented women, making sure women get 'hot jobs', normalising flexible hours, getting managers and recruitment agencies to cast their nets more broadly rather than 'like hiring like' and setting and implementing internal goals for better gender balance.

Surely once the efforts of these two highly influential groups start to take effect we'll see a change in this intractable problem of gender inequality in the Australian workforce.

## (ii) The 100% Project

The vision of this Melbourne based group is to:

*'See 100% of Australia's leadership talent, female and male, equally contributing to our social and economic future.'*

The 100% Project has released the findings of its 2013 research project called **Men at work: what they want & how unconscious bias stops them getting it**. The study found that both men and women are committed to

spending quality time with their families and to having a rich and full life outside of work but that they both unconsciously believe their career will suffer if they ask for flexible working arrangements. The study also revealed that the unconscious bias of both men and women is that work-life balance policies are appropriate for women only. As a result, men are unlikely to ask for flexible working arrangements because they fear a backlash from both their employer and their colleagues. This in turn leaves women continuing to carry the burden of home duties and childcare, thus hindering their ability to progress.

Dr Fiona Page, The 100% Project's Director and Chair of the Research Committee states that unconscious bias is:

*'A significant factor in gender diversity in the workplace and must be overcome in order to create gender equality in Australian organisations'.*

We at AnD make no apology for labouring the point about the impact of unconscious biases inhibiting women's full contribution to the Australian workforce and we are optimistic that with the BCA, a group of senior executives and current research all saying similar things and proposing the need for change then surely, as a well known Labor leader once said, 'It's Time'.

## An AnD Story

AnD Leadership Consulting is named to represent an and/both (rather than an either/or) view of the world. This AnD Story section is a 'taster' of things to come in our next newsletter. It's from the book **Changing on the Job – Developing Leaders for a Complex World**. The author, Jennifer Garvey Berger, states that all leadership development must be about helping leaders become more effective and about supporting them to cultivate wisdom because as she states, 'growing wisdom is as important as making cars or delivering the mail.'

And back to the theme of this newsletter, surely challenging one's unconscious biases is a huge step towards the getting of wisdom.

## And to close

Are you a worrier? Do you find yourself waking at 3.00 am with a busy mind? If so this wise old truism is for you:

*Worrying is wishing for the thing that you don't want to happen.*