

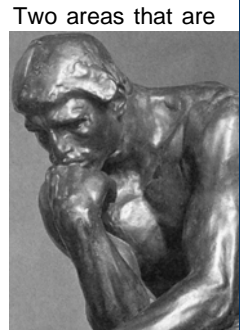


Chief Executive Notes

In this issue of *Talents*, we are glad to share more insights on ways to leverage individual strengths. Two areas that are getting a lot of attention have been brought into focus: woman leaders and multinational HR strategies. As Executives from Europe and Australia discovered during their visit to Shanghai, talent management is indeed a top priority for businesses growing in China.

The feature report discusses women leadership, and ways for female executives to develop and leverage their own unique personal leadership styles. Not that we are left with a few good men. We have many great women. The articles "Selecting Top Performers" and "Maximizing the Value of Your Talent" are postponed till next issue, to make room for this fascinating topic.

Enjoy, and let us know your thoughts.



Feature Report

Women Leaders in the New Economy

Dr. James Song's "Dragon TV" interview on Women Leaders in the New Economy

"Personality does not readily change. Just as we cannot easily switch from being right handed to left-handed: We are what we are! More importantly, we do what we are! People become successful when their internal motivation, that innate urge, gets to live to the fullest. Instead of sacrificing feminine behaviors in order to compete, it is recommended that women focus on leveraging their own strengths. "

[Learn more](#)



In Action

International EMBA Workshops

Shanghai Jiao Tong University. June 18th-22nd, 2007

Few question whether to come to China or not. Many ask when and how. What are the leading success factors? What are the major operational risks? In June, Executives and EMBA's from Europe and Australia, including those from St. Gallen University of Switzerland, gathered in Shanghai to find out. The conversations focused on one issue business leaders cannot afford to neglect: Who will run their operations in China?

[Learn more](#)



Research Center – Your Turn

Let yourself be heard. Tell us about your favorite leadership style by answering questions in the July 2007 survey. [Click here to start](#). Information collected will be kept confidential. Answer all questions to earn points. You can request a complimentary PCA personality profiling test and essential report by collecting 10 points (two surveys total).



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Women Leaders in the New Economy

Dr. James Song, CEO of Waterville, spoke to Mr. Zhuangmiao Li, senior reporter and producer of Dragon TV's weekly news magazine *BizWatch* on the subject of women and leadership. Below is this interview's transcript.

Mr. Li: Compared with male business leaders, the number of female leaders is still quite small. Even in the US, women only account for one-fourth of the total biz leaders. What are the obstacles that hinder women to top the corporate management teams?

Dr. Song: The biggest obstacle is time. It is simply history.

We all want to see more women in leadership roles, for all the right reasons. We can see that things are clearly headed in the right direction. Not only do we have more woman CEOs and Presidents serving top corporations, from Xerox to Kraft, from eBay to Haier, but also we have been seeing woman prime ministers, foreign secretaries, in countries ranging from Japan to the US, from UK to India, and from New Zealand to Korea. And we have had so many Nobel laureates that are women, in science, peace.

Often times these conversations tend to be emotionally loaded. But fortunately, we have science on our side. We don't argue with the results. More and more woman leaders are helping make life happier, and make the world better. Regardless of all those wonderful happenings, things take time. You can't change everything within one generation.

What are the characteristics of female leadership? What are women leaders' advantages and disadvantages over male leaders?

We are really talking about two things here: leadership itself, and woman leaders. There are so many clichés around in people's minds. So we need to be careful, to avoid the pitfalls of rushing to judgment. Leaders come in all shapes and colors, men or women. There appear to be common strengths shared by very successful women and their male counterparts. In the mean time, women and men, on the whole, also tend to display some respective personality strengths.



Sensitivity to Feelings and Emotions Research which compares the psychological profiles between men and women in corporate leadership positions indicates that female executives tend to be significantly more sensitive, responsive to emotional signals. In other words, women leaders listen to their hearts as well as their minds. Women leaders tend to be more aware, more observant, and possibly more attentive of people's feelings. In today's business environment, this could be a real plus.

Details and Flexibility The data seems to validate a long-held intuition. In the mean time, there also seem to be some areas where woman leaders are different from male leaders in a counter-intuitive way. For example, woman leaders may tend to be less attentive to details, to being very careful and very thorough, and to following set structures. Perhaps the biggest difference is in flexibility: Women in executive roles prioritize flexibility much more than men.

[Do women leaders have to sacrifice their feminine behaviors in order to compete with men?](#)

Interesting question. And here are a few thoughts.

Personality is not easy to change First, personality is not easy to change, the same way we cannot easily switch from being right-handed to left-handed. We are what we are, and more importantly, we do what we are. It is the personality traits that drive most human behavior, particularly under stress. Well, leaders often have to make tough decisions in response to challenging, stressful circumstances. Therefore, people do not readily change their thinking patterns.

Changing behavior is hard and unwise Second, changing behavior is not only hard, it may also be unwise. Perhaps we need to revisit how we define success. There is this common notion that people become successful and powerful because they are super good, or super lucky. The key factor, by which people, women and men become successful, is whether we get to apply our natural strengths to what we do.

By natural strengths I mean what motivates us, and the innermost reason that makes us happy and passionate. Do we get to have the right buttons pushed in us in our lives? Everybody is different, and therefore should be encouraged to succeed on her or his own terms. People become successful when that internal motivation, that innate urge, gets to live to the fullest. Women, like men, become successful when they get to channel their mental, emotional, and intellectual energy towards suitable sorts of things. So it is really when women have the opportunity to focus the power inside them to the right place in life that will make them do well.

What, Why, then How Third, changing our behavior requires that we understand what is being done, why, and then how. Similarly, behavioral adjustments also must start from what and why and then how, the answers of which depend on the individual, for each person is differently gifted. Instead of sacrificing feminine styles in order to compete with men, I would urge women to focus more on leveraging their own strengths. For instance, the business world obviously needs strong leadership in the area of people, relationship, and human dynamics. Possessing that natural focus is a significant advantage for women. Why give it up? Women should integrate those innate strengths into their endeavors and leverage them to tackle challenges.

Will there be a trend that more women will move towards the top positions in companies?

The trend is already here. The trend will continue, and maybe even intensify in China, due to several factors.

Changing Success Factors First, the success factors are changing. The new economy is becoming more knowledge intensive, and service intensive. Both tend to level the ground, and in the case of service focus, strong people-focus is a real plus. As we move forward, more and more leadership positions will be created. So women wouldn't have to compete with men in a zero sum game.



Globalization Second, globalization is rapidly becoming a reality. The saying that women were born politicians has taken on a new meaning when you look at how many foreign ministers, and trade representatives are women. Women have been so active and productive in key business areas such as sales, service, marketing, negotiation, law, human resources, administration, and research and development, that there have to be a lot of them entering leadership roles, by simply earning it.

Competitive Labor Market Third, the labor market has become very competitive. Talent management has become a serious issue which businesses must face. Hiring, developing, and retaining the best people, again, demands the most intense focus on people. And again, woman leaders could offer their strength.

Demographics & Education Fourth, it's the demographics and the way people get educated. Urban populations today feature a very high percentage going to college or even graduate programs, and many young women are from one child families. Huge value is placed on education. And every young person, along with their parents, wants to do well, to succeed. Putting these together, it will be only natural to see more and more women, educated, ambitious, and equipped with their great personality strengths, joining leadership ranks.

Cultural Tradition Finally, the cultural tradition favors Chinese women. Compared to many cultures, particularly those of neighboring Korea and Japan, China actually has a long tradition of gender parity, which may not be immediately apparent to people living elsewhere in the world as the conventional wisdom. Contemporary Chinese society is even more favorable. We have more women owning and running businesses in China, and more female Chinese MBA students in international programs. Nowhere are women given more room to grow than in Shanghai. [▲ Back to Top](#)

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So what, if anything, is *the* leading factor in business success in China?

Antai College of Economics & Management, Shanghai Jiaotong University. June 18th-22nd, 2007

“How do I develop effective recruitment channels to identify and attract local talent?” asked the Business Development Manager of a services company headquartered in Germany.

“Then, how can I create a work environment where my local employees feel motivated and develop loyalty?” added the General Manager in charge of China operations of a Swiss IT company.

More than 100 executives and EMBA students attended the workshop on “Doing Business in China”, which was held last month at Shanghai Jiaotong University Antai College of Economics and Management. The participants were from Australia, Switzerland, England, Germany and Italy, with the largest delegation from St. Gallen University of Switzerland. While some have had experience working the Chinese market from afar, for most this was the first time to come to China. The discussion covered a wide range of topics, including:

- Do's and don'ts when negotiating with Chinese business counterparts
- Trends, opportunities and challenges in the next few years
- The cultural DNA of contemporary China
- How the Chinese business mind contemplates and formulates a business strategy

The one question that had all the participants riveted was the issue of human capital.



China faces some of the most complex human resources challenges in the world today. MNC executives believe that most of the graduates from Chinese Universities are not adequately prepared to enter the workplace due to a lack of: (1) training to develop the necessary business skills, and (2) leadership, creative/innovative thinking and team work capabilities. According to the European Chamber of Commerce, less than 10% of Chinese job candidates have “the appropriate skills and qualities that are required by companies with an international angle.” Moreover, there are “no established channels to link companies in need of qualified staff with potential talents.”

For several years in a row, the members of the American Chamber of Commerce have named talent shortage as the top issue they face. Companies are left struggling on their own to meet their growing business human capital needs in China and this bottleneck is slowing the country's continued economic

development. Things are turning worse for MNC's as domestic companies are in a stronger position now to compete, by offering better salaries and opportunities for personal growth. Using headhunters does not make the problem go away, as headhunters are recycling, not creating talents.

“We have no other choice but to bootstrap ourselves out of this quagmire,” quipped Dr. James Song of Waterville, who led the discussion during the workshops. “Somebody must start building the overall talent capital through training and developing, or we will be stuck here for a long time. The real issue is whom we want to train and develop.” To maximize the return over talent development investment, Dr. Song suggests that employers adjust their hiring strategy, switching their focus from solely pursuing those that are immediately prepared and qualified to identifying and gathering those with the best potential that will contribute to creating business value in the long run. [▲Back to Top](#)

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