Business Women Leaders and their Professional Support Systems

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Agenda

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Facts

► Fortune 500 high-tech companies women make up only 11.1 percent of corporate officers.

► Matz (2001) study on *Women leaders, their style and confidence* shows that low self confidence correlates with the limited access to educational and professional support systems (p.1).

► Catalyst reported it is a “male-dominated business culture, poor recruitment and professional development, and work-life balance issues” that holds women leader back regardless of the industry.


Research Questions

► What professional support systems are currently being utilized by women business leaders?

► What professional support systems are currently being utilized in USA & Canada, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe?
Knowing what professional support systems are being utilized can assist in further research on female leaders (PSS help female leaders to be more confident and successful)

Conducting following study will uncover the gaps. (female leaders don’t utilize some of the support systems)

Cross cultural aspect of the study will help to share the knowledge – provide the potential support for global female leaders

The results will aid the young female leaders – educational manual on professional support systems
There is not one single clear definition of what exactly professional support systems are. Vanessa DiMauro and Gloria Jacobs in their presentation to the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting in San Francisco in 2003, referred to Professional support systems as “opportunities for teachers to take active roles in their professional community”. It was referred to “promotion to recognize their leadership outside of the classroom” where critical components of the professional support systems (PSS) are networks and mentoring each other (AERA, 2003). Other sources connected professional support systems with furthering one’s own development, where support systems should be available for all of general education (Eastern, 2005).
Theory (Mentoring)

► One problem in the mentoring literature as stated by Robin Redner (1999) is “the lack” of one comprehensive, yet functional definition of mentoring

► Mentoring has been defined as a developmental relationship in which a less experienced organizational member receives help and guidance from a more experienced member with the aim of improving the career opportunities and growth of the junior person (Kram, 1985).

A “network” can be defined as the pattern of ties linking a defined set of persons or social actors. Each person can be described in terms of his or her linkages with other people in the network (Burt, p.6).

According to Burt’s theory (1992; 1997), networks rich in structural holes provide ego with three primary benefits: more unique and timely access to information, greater bargaining power and thus control over resources and outcomes, and greater visibility and career opportunities for ego throughout the social system.


Theory (Self-education & Training)

- Val Singh (2003) in her survey on UK directors discovered a need for further intellectual development (p.328).

- Other professional support systems for female business leaders according to Vinnicombe S.; Singh V. are women-only trainings.


Method

Selection

- 125 female business leaders in United States (East Coast), Europe (UK, Slovak Republic) and Pakistan
- Entrepreneurs, CEO, middle management, Junior Management
- Mailing lists; internet

Procedure

- Mailing, emailing
- Reminder postcard will be mailed / emailed 3 weeks later
Instrument

- The items were created based on the theory/rationale of professional support systems.
- three sections: mentoring, networking and self-education and training.
- the section on mentoring has 8 items, section on networking 6 items and section on self-education & training 8 items.
- The inter-rater reliability was 0.95.
- Time to fill out the survey: 15-20 minutes
Demographics (Participants)

- USA + Canada
- Center and Eastern EUROPE
- ASIA
- WESTERN EUROPE
- South America
Demographics (Industry)

- Finance: 38%
- Art: 6%
- Legal: 6%
- IT: 0%
- Accounting: 6%
- HR: 6%
- Others: 21%
- Others: 23%
Demographics (Age)

- Younger than 25: 5%
- 25-30: 13%
- 30-39: 17%
- 40-49: 22%
- 50-59: 43%
- Over 60: 0%
Results (mentoring)

Modes of communication

- One to one meeting
- Telephone Chats*
- E-mails

USA
Slovakia

Bar chart showing the modes of communication.
Results (mentoring)

Mentor specification

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<th>Slovakia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Results (mentoring)

Did you choose a mentor?

- Mentor choose me
- I choose mentor
- Mutual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>Slovakia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor choose me</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I choose mentor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results (mentoring)

My mentor is:

- Family member
- Friend
- Peer
- Supervisor

USA
Slovakia
Results (mentoring)

Functioning of the mentor

- Helps me be more visible on the organization
- Provides me with challenging assignments
- Protects me from those who may be out to get me
- Suggests specific strategies for achieving career aspirations
- Helps me attain desirable positions
Results (mentoring)

Who inspired you to seek a mentor?

- Reading material
- Family member
- Colleague
- Professor
- Observing others
- Others

Results (mentoring)

USA
Slovakia
Results (mentoring)

Did you choose your mentor

- USA: 18% yes, 82% no
- Slovakia: 50% yes, 50% no

40% of the respondents chose a mentor, while 60% did not.
Results (mentoring)

► Benefits of having mentor:
  - Confidence
  - Gaining more understanding
  - Alternative point of view
  - Help in achieving goals
  - Motivation

► How has mentor helped you:
  - Advice
  - Get confidence
  - Inspiring
  - More visibility in community
  - Challenging the individual
Results (Networks)

Benefits of networks

- Self-confidence
- Friendships
- Learning and Growth
- Business Contacts

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
Results (Self Education)

MAGAZINES:
- Manager
- HR Magazine
- Business week
- Harvard Business review
- Fortune
- NAFE
- Legal assistance
- Money
- Entrepreneur

NEWSPAPERS:
- NY times
- Advocate
- Financial Times
- Wall Street
Results (Self-education Leadership Books)
Results (Networking – Associations)
Results (Self-Education (workshops))

Negotiation
Communication
Motivation
Assertiveness
Presentation skills
Empathy
Team Building

Were the training/Workshops mandatory?

![Bar chart showing the distribution of mandatory workshops in USA and Slovakia.](chart.png)
Drawbacks

- Industry
- Biased answers
- Instrument
- Sample size (cross cultural)
Conclusion

- Need for PSS
- New market Central (Eastern Europe)

Evaluation of Support systems

- MENTORING
- NETWORKING
- SELF-EDUCATION

Legend:
- USA
- SLOVAKIA
THANK YOU !!!