

Management for Professionals



Paul Vanderbroeck

Leadership Strategies for Women

Lessons from Four Queens on
Leadership and Career Development

 Springer

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Paul Vanderbroeck
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For Joëlle, an accomplished woman leader, and for Magdalena, that she may become one.

Preface

Almost 25 years ago, a few of my colleagues and I designed an “added value” system for people moves within Royal/Dutch Shell. For the company’s population of managers and engineers throughout the world, we devised chains of moves: A replaces B replaces C, and so on. Our aim was to create value with every move, beyond merely filling a job. The added value might be in the form of a promotion, a developmental assignment, a coordinated move for a career couple, or an expatriation of a non-Brit or a Dutch employee. And, yes, sometimes it was a gender diversity move, although we did not use the word “diversity” back then. Even now, I do not see diversity as a goal in itself; adding value is the central aim. Integrating more women in the talent pool simply adds value to organizations and makes them perform better. From this perspective, I have worked at promoting gender diversity throughout my career as an HR executive and a leadership expert.

This book originates from my convictions that gender diversity is inherently advantageous for organizations and that the lessons of history are undervalued and underutilized in educational settings, especially management education. That doesn’t mean leaders are constantly reinventing the wheel, but it does often lead them to make the same mistakes over and over again. As such, rather than offering a broad perspective, business schools have fallen victim to the same short-term thinking that has permeated organizations since the late twentieth century. Educating leaders to think in that way has, in my view, contributed to the worldwide financial and economic crisis that persists in 2013.

Many people have contributed to this book. First, I thank my wife Joëlle, who read every draft and, I might add, has successfully applied the book’s lessons in her leadership practice. Second, I would like to acknowledge Professor Susan Schneider (HEC University of Geneva) for her unrelenting and challenging support. Finally, many thanks to two up-and-coming female leaders—Maaïke Riesthuis and Geneviève van der Veen—for their diligent analysis and feedback. I am also indebted to the many female clients and fellow coaches who have consistently encouraged me to make this project happen.

Geneva, Switzerland
May 2013

Paul Vanderbroeck

Endorsements

“A wonderful selection of much-needed role models of powerful women who shaped their time with distinctively authentic styles, all their own. An inspiration for both men and women of what more gender balance in global political and economic roles has to offer the world.”

Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, CEO 20-first and best-selling author of *Why Women Mean Business* and *How Women Mean Business*.

“We all know we can learn a lot from history. *Leadership Strategies for Women* does this in the unexpected context of gender diversity. Nicely written and original, the book is a powerful example of how looking back can help us moving forward.”

Frank Uit de Weerd,

Vice-President HR Innovation, Research & Development, Royal Dutch/Shell

“An inspiring narrative that creatively leverages lessons from four women from the past, each of whom had to play the cards she was dealt, and each a force of nature who prevailed against the odds and shaped her world. Today’s crop of aspiring women leaders, who often start from scratch and face a bewildering array of options and tough performance expectations, would do well to absorb this book’s tightly drawn lessons.”

Ingo Walter, Seymour Milstein Professor of Finance, Corporate Governance and Ethics, NYU Stern School of Business

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