

According to a 2010 study by Catalyst, titled "**Women Experience Inequities at Every Career Stage, Even After Decades of Well-Intentioned Efforts**," the last decade shows little improvement in rank and salary for women in a world where women comprise 40 percent of the global workforce and are earning advanced and professional degrees in record numbers—even surpassing men in many cases.

Men, the report showed, were twice as likely as women to hold CEO or senior executive positions and less likely to be at lower levels, where women were over-represented. Parenthood and level of aspiration did not explain the results. The findings held when considering women and men without children, as well as those who aspired to senior leadership position. Men, in general, were also found to be more satisfied with their careers than women. Thus, despite well-intentioned programs, companies around the globe have neglected to develop talented women and failed to build meritocracies.

Suggestions for Change

CEOs and executives from major companies offered insights and suggestions on the study's findings throughout the report. Some of these include:

- Don't assume that the playing field has been leveled.
- Redesign systems to correct early inequities.
- Collect and review salary growth metrics.
- Build in checks and balances against unconscious bias.
- Make assignments based on qualifications, not presumptions.



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speaker engaging and motivating her audiences on topics such as: Driving Innovation, Building a High-Performance Team; 21st Century Leadership; Using Assessments to Improve Hiring and Organizational Performance; and How to Create Stakeholder Value. Ms. Light is passionate about working women issues and is a frequent speaker on Women in Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities.

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Priceless Leadership Lessons I Learned from my CEO

Women in Business Workshop

Boise State University

College of Business and Economics

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PRICELESS LESSONS I LEARNED FROM MY CEO

MY STORY

It's still not easy for women to move up the ladder into an executive position today — even though women have proven to be effective leaders. Why is it then that so many highly qualified women have such a difficult time reaching the executive level? Part of the answer lies in the senior management of the company they work for. To have their talent recognized, it requires the awareness, commitment and leadership confidence of those making the hiring decisions.

At the age of 35, I was recruited by the CEO of a publicly-held medical device company. The company's public listing price had dropped below SEC minimums and was obviously in big trouble. The position was VP/General Manager of their main business unit — a divisional turnaround was quickly needed. I accepted the challenge not only because the CEO did a good sales job, but most importantly, he convinced me that he believed gender was not an important consideration in running a business. The significant factors were skills, abilities and leadership qualities.

I would like to share with you some of the priceless lessons I learned along the way and what it took to stay on top of my game.

- 1 **FLEXIBILITY** is second only to INTEGRITY. Create a mindset that change is the way we operate our business. The ability to change course quickly when needed might mean your company's survival.
- 2 Always get the **FACTS** – it is easy to make a bad decision based on “false” assumptions; it's challenging to make the right decision even with the best data.
- 3 This isn't a popularity contest – learn to make those tough decisions regardless of whether you are liked at the end of the day. It's more important to be **RESPECTED** in the workplace.
- 4 Hiring the right **TALENT** will make your job easier – don't be insecure about hiring people smarter than you. If your group can't achieve – neither will you. You will not be successful unless your team is as well.
- 5 Attunement to the CEO's agenda – knowing what his/her expectations are (not what you think they are, or should be) is the key to your retention. Make sure you have **ALIGNMENT** with your boss.
- 6 Despite the complexity and clutter of day-to-day activities, you must **FOCUS** on your company's strategic thrust and making money for all stockholders – employees, customers and the investors. You must stay focused on this critical objective to assure company goals are achieved.
- 7 **LUCK!**

MY POV & PERSONAL TIPS TO GREATER BUSINESS SUCCESS AND A HAPPIER LIFE!

- 1 Avoid office gossip and politics – you should be too busy for this!
- 2 Support/Collaborate with your fellow women colleagues instead of competing with them. Women can be harsh to other women – don't fall into this category. Remember: “Kindness is Power”
- 3 One of my favorite sayings: “Your reputation is like money – hard to get and easy to lose!”
- 4 If you don't like yourself, why should anyone else?
- 5 Be positive, engaging, motivating and inspiring – otherwise, you'll attract the opposite... negative people with a lot of baggage.
- 6 Ask for what you want and say “NO” to what you don't want. So often we do things and get into situations we know we should have said no to, and regret it afterwards. Avoid a life of regrets.
- 7 Use the word “we” instead of “I” and experience the power of defusing a negative situation.
- 8 You can't change people, so quit trying – it's exhausting.
- 9 Use powerful words like “thank you,” “can I help you,” “what's your opinion on this” and “I'm sorry” when you need to be.

Eight characteristics that frame how I work, live and play

Cathy Light's Secret Sauce to Success

1. *Attitude: I'm a positive person both personally and professionally.*
2. *Confidence: I have the skills, abilities and talent to excel.*
3. *Drive: I'm ambitious. It's up to me to create my own success.*
4. *Visualization: I close my eyes, visualize my challenge, and see a positive outcome.*
5. *Negotiate: I've learned to ask for what I want and negotiate to equitable and fair agreements.*
6. *Energy: I'm action-oriented and can manage multi-tasking well as a mother, wife and busy executive.*
7. *Innovative: I like risk and pushing the envelope. I'm forward thinking and creating new ideas all the time.*
8. *Network: I have surrounded myself with a network of incredible people for which I am blessed and extremely grateful.*