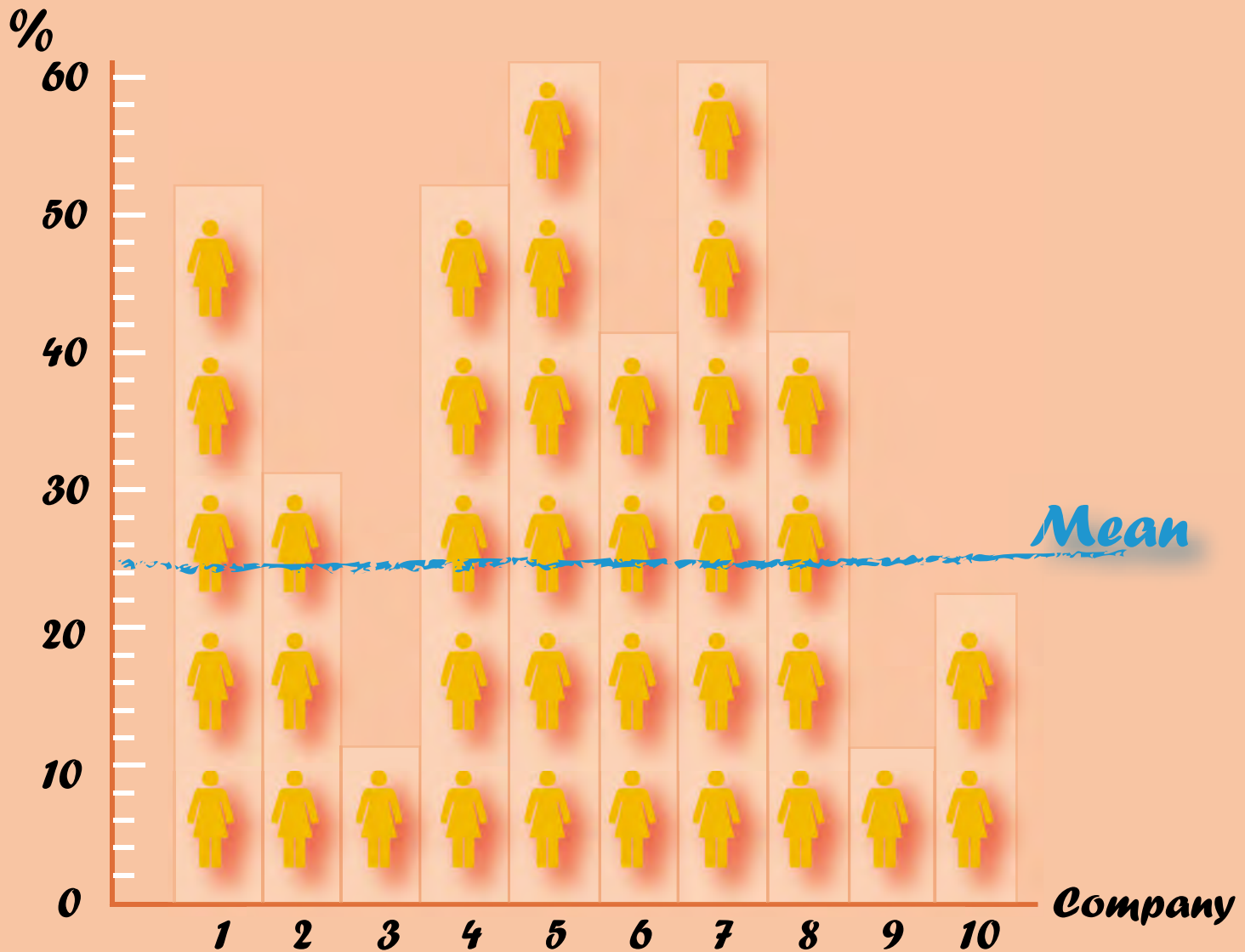


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- China
- Hong Kong
- India
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Singapore



Participating Companies:

Accenture, AECOM, American Express, Arup, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Barclays Capital, Cisco, Coca-Cola, Deutsche Bank, EMC, Ernst & Young, Goldman Sachs, Herbert Smith, HSBC, Linklaters, Microsoft, Nomura, Schlumberger, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank, UBS

Sponsor:



With Contributions From:



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International Centre for Women Leaders,
Cranfield School of Management

Anne Marie Francesco
Shalini Mahtani, MBE
July 2011

ABOUT COMMUNITY BUSINESS

Community Business is a unique membership based non-profit organisation whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to improve their positive impact on people and communities. Community Business provides training, facilitation and advice to some of the world's leading companies in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its major areas of focus include: CSR strategy, corporate community investment, diversity and inclusion and work-life balance. Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong, Community Business currently works with a number of organisations, small, medium and large, committed to CSR. For more information, visit www.communitybusiness.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Community Business thanks Shell International BV for its leadership and sponsorship of this **Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011** report. Community Business acknowledges all the Participating Companies of this study and thanks them for collating and sharing their data and nominating high potential women to take part in the telephone interviews. Participating Companies include: Accenture, AECOM, American Express, Arup, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Barclays Capital, Cisco, Coca-Cola, Deutsche Bank, EMC, Ernst & Young, Goldman Sachs, Herbert Smith, HSBC, Linklaters, Microsoft, Nomura, Schlumberger, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank and UBS.

Community Business also thanks Ripa Rashid, from the Center for Work-Life Policy in the United States and Susan Vinnicombe, OBE from the International Centre for Women Leaders, Cranfield School of Management in the United Kingdom for reviewing the preliminary findings and providing an international perspective on this study.

Finally, thank you to the Community Business team, including Winnie Ng for managing this project, Sandy Chan for designing the cover, Amanda Yik, Kevin Burns and Pooja Shahani for taking notes and collating the responses from the telephone interviews and Kate Vernon for editing this report.

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FOREWORD BY COMMUNITY BUSINESS



Community Business is delighted to present this Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011 report. This is the second study of its kind for the region and has been made possible by the leadership and sponsorship of Shell International BV.

Promoting the advancement of women has always been at the heart of Community Business' diversity work. For many years we have conducted gender related research, exploring the experiences of women and looking to uncover what more can be done to enable them to achieve their full potential in the workplace.

Critical to this discussion of the advancement of women is the availability of relevant and appropriate data. Our first Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia published in 2009 was the first of its kind for Asia and has already given companies in the region the data they need to initiate discussion and provoke change. We hope this new study - extended to more companies and countries in Asia, will continue to do the same.

In line with international studies, the data gathered through this extensive study show that whilst women may be generally well represented in the total workforce and at junior levels in many companies across Asia, they are poorly represented at more senior levels. The interviews with high potential Asian women point to some of the reasons for this and to where some of the challenges for women in Asia lie. It is hoped that armed with the data and findings from this report, companies will be in a stronger position to assess their own performance with regard to gender diversity in the region and drive further improvements.

This study has been a collaborative effort, and on behalf of Community Business, I would like to thank all our Participating Companies for sharing their data so openly. In particular I would like to thank all the women who took part in the interviews for sharing their experiences and insights and informing the findings of this report. Finally thank you to our researcher, Dr Anne Marie Francesco and our international contributors Ripa Rashid and Susan Vinnicombe - all experts in their field and with whom Community Business shares a common goal: a desire to see a greater representation of women in leadership roles. As always, many thanks too to the Founder of Community Business and co-author of this report, Shalini Mahtani.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Vernon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Vernon
Managing Director and Head of Diversity & Inclusion
Community Business

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FOREWORD BY SPONSOR



We are proud to have worked with Community Business and our fellow companies in the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network (DIAN) to produce this second Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia. This report, coming 2 years after the inaugural, demonstrates our continued commitment to women in the workplace in Asia.

At Shell, we believe that Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) is a strategy for winning - by unleashing talent and empowering engaged employees, D&I directly supports our ambition to be the world's most competitive and innovative energy company.

Whilst we have been recognised for our progress in D&I, we are committed to 'raising our game' in this area. Last year, our CEO, Peter Voser joined the board of Catalyst, an NGO that supports a global community of organisations to develop and improve ways to attract, retain, and advance women in the workplace. Our sponsorship of this report in 2011 and our participation in DIAN as a founding member complements these efforts in Asia.

We have many interventions and programmes within Shell addressing the challenges of retaining and progressing women in the workplace. Women's Networks (Employee Resource Groups) run in many of the countries that we operate in and help to create an inclusive workplace for all staff. Many of our talented women have attended our Women's Career Development Programme to develop awareness and skills for leveling the playing field at the workplace. Organisational interventions such as diversity metrics and shortlists have helped us improve the representation of women in senior positions.

Whilst the focus of this report is on gender, it is important to consider other aspects of difference as well for any effort to be successful and sustainable. At Shell, our approach to D&I goes beyond gender and includes regional/nationality differences, disability, generations, culture, sexual orientation, and inclusion to name a few. We strive to create a more inclusive workplace that more effectively engages and retains the diverse talents within our workforce.

Finally, leadership accountability is a critical success factor in diversity efforts - many of our business leaders continue to have dialogue at the most senior level on their under-represented talents and put their time into mentoring these talents in their teams. As the most senior Asian leader in Shell, I chair the Shell Asian Talent Council that looks into developing and expanding our cadre of future Asian leaders in the organisation. My personal commitment is to see that our D&I sets us apart in terms of staff development, achievement and career fulfillment, and at the same time, brings a demonstrable advantage to the company.

In Shell, we believe metrics are an integral part of efforts to improve D&I in our workforce - 'what gets measured gets done'. Metrics and benchmarks provide the basis for leadership focus and dialogue in driving effective diversity interventions. We would like to thank Community Business for developing this report and the forward-thinking organisations who have contributed to it. We hope that this benchmark study will help like-minded companies to better understand and advance the diversity of their workforce in this region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "T. Meng", written over a light grey background.

Tan Chong Meng
Executive Vice President, Global Commercial
Shell International BV





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This **Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011** (GDBA 2011) comprises two parts: a quantitative study and a qualitative study. Through the compilation of data, it examines the representation of women at junior, middle and senior levels of 21 Participating Companies in six key geographies in Asia, including: China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore. Through a series of interviews, it also provides the perspectives of high potential Asian women working in multinational companies in Asia to help understand the issues they face and what more can be done to help women in Asia attain leadership positions.

Key Findings - Quantitative Study

Analysis of the data provided by the 21 Participating Companies reveals the following:

General

- The representation of women in the total workforce of the Participating Companies is close to or above the female national labour force participation rates in all countries - except Japan.
- The representation of women is highest at the junior level and lowest at the senior level across all countries. This is consistent with many other gender studies, both regionally and internationally.
- A comparison of data from the GDBA 2009 and GDBA 2011 studies indicates that the overall percentages of women working in the Participating Companies are similar at all levels with a noticeable increase only for China.

By Country

- Looking at the total workforce, the highest percentages of women are employed in China, followed closely by Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. The lowest percentages of females are employed in India, with Japan the second lowest.
- Malaysia performs best in terms of the representation of women at senior positions (27.57%) and it is the only country where the Participating Companies outperform the national female labour force in their total workforce, junior and middle level positions.
- India is consistently the worst performer in terms of the representation of women in the total workforce, junior and middle level positions. It performs only slightly better than Japan at senior level positions.

Women at Junior Level Positions

- In terms of junior level positions, the best performer is China and the worst performer is India.
- For all countries except India, the average representation of women at junior level surpasses the average national female labour force.
- Many companies have a female majority at this level.

Women at Middle Level Positions

- In terms of middle level positions, the best performer is Hong Kong and the worst performer is India.
- The average percentage drop from junior to middle level positions is 29.06% with India (48.07%) having the most significant drop at this level.
- However, the representation of women at this level is only just below the percentages of women that are employed in the corresponding national labour force in China, Hong Kong and Singapore, and in the case of Malaysia they are above.

Women at Senior Level Positions

- In terms of senior level positions, the best performer is Malaysia and the worst performer is Japan.
- The average percentage drop from middle to senior level positions is 48.04% with Japan (70.24%) having the most significant drop at this level.
- The representation of women at the senior level is far below the national female labour force for all countries.

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The Leaking Pipeline Explored

- In all the countries except for India, the greatest leak (ie the largest percentage decrease of women) takes place between middle and senior level positions and not junior to middle level positions.
- In India the greatest leak takes place between junior and middle level positions.

Key Findings - Qualitative Study

Interviews with 24 high potential Asian women from the countries that were the focus of this study provide some interesting insights into the experiences of women in the workplace in Asia.

Factors Contributing to Success

One of the key success factors mentioned by the high potential women interviewees was a strong family emphasis on education when they were growing up which led them to high educational attainment and often an opportunity to study abroad. Positive early career experiences that included recognition and support by bosses or mentors were also deemed important. The major personal characteristics that the women identified as responsible for their success included curiosity and desire for knowledge, persistence, and being hard working. Support from bosses, leaders or mentors was by far the most important external factor cited. However, for many women the mentors were not those assigned by the company or other organisation but individuals they had chosen themselves who were considered most helpful.

Aspirations for Leadership

Over 80% of those interviewed aspired to senior leadership positions. Many thought they deserved promotion and the corresponding recognition, satisfaction, and sense of achievement. Others looked forward to the challenges and learning opportunities a more senior role could bring, and some were attracted by the possibility of having a greater ability to impact others in a positive way. Although the majority of women were interested in senior positions, about one-third of all those interviewed expressed some ambivalence about moving up. Some had concerns about work-life balance, others thought they were already quite senior, and a few were considering options such as starting a business or teaching.

Challenges

Although almost all of the women had high aspirations, they expressed various concerns about moving into a more senior role. The most often heard were related to work-life balance issues and the time needed to do a good job. In order to reach the next level, the women interviewed felt they needed to develop and expand their networks and increase visibility, expand and develop their teams, and learn more.

The women interviewed each identified their three current greatest challenges, either related to work or themselves. Overwhelmingly, the most often mentioned were issues related to work-life balance with several citing gender issues as well. When asked about specific perceived obstacles to career progression, almost all of them cited family factors such as childcare and elder care.

Supporting the Advancement of Women in Asia

In looking at the role of companies, almost all of the Participating Companies had programmes or initiatives for either women or high potentials and these programmes were viewed positively. Although flexible work arrangements were available in many of the Participating Companies, they were not widely adopted by women in Asia and/or had to be individually negotiated with a supervisor.

The high potential women presented suggestions on how companies could further support the advancement of female executives. Many of these ideas were already being practiced in some companies, but the interviewees thought more could be done. The most popular suggestions centred around greater flexibility in working time, special support for women with families, more women in senior management, stronger network development, more training, mentoring and experience sharing programmes.

The final area of inquiry was the role of others. The women interviewed suggested executives could give women more opportunities, support, and encouragement to get ahead, promote based on merit rather than positive gender discrimination, and promote and participate in diversity events and networks. They also thought other organisations such as NGOs, professional women's associations and universities could provide more opportunities for women to share experiences, create networks and raise awareness in diversity issues.

Observations and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study and our wider research on the advancement of women in Asia, Community Business provides a number of observations and recommendations.

The Leaking Pipeline - Characteristics in Asia

- In China, the Participating Companies do well but the issues that prevail mainly impact women between middle and senior levels. The growing demand for mobility of women (both in China and internationally) conflicts with family responsibilities (particularly with regard to ageing parents) and may be getting in the way of greater advancement for many.
- In Hong Kong, the Participating Companies do well in overall terms and fall just short of the national female labour force. However, gender bias persists with perceptions that women have to work harder than men to prove themselves or get their voices heard. Domestic help appears to be a double-edged sword in Hong Kong and may be adding to the expectation for women to work long hours at the expense of time with family - a sacrifice that many are simply not willing to make.
- India has the lowest national female labour force and the largest leak in the pipeline takes place early on in a woman's career - from junior to middle level positions. This means the leaking pipeline in India is in fact more severe than in the other geographies as the pool of women is much diminished at an earlier stage. High potential women are concerned about the personal sacrifices they may be making in terms of possibly foregoing having children for their career and also highlighted the role of their parents in their decision-making.
- In Japan, the Participating Companies employ a significantly smaller percentage of women than the national female labour force. With few women leaders, gender issues are evident and senior women can feel lonely and isolated at the top. Concerns about fulfilling traditional roles as mother and wife mean that many do not aspire to more senior positions.
- In Malaysia, the Participating Companies do the best with employment of women. Gender issues were not highlighted and further research would be interesting to understand and learn from the range of policies and programmes that exist for women.
- In Singapore, like Hong Kong, the Participating Companies, fall just short of the national female labour force. However, unlike Hong Kong, the women do not tend to feel discriminated against and say that there is a positive attitude towards working mothers with many role models.

Other Key Observations

- This research highlights that high potential women have many characteristics and traits that are similar to women leaders that Community Business has interviewed over the years. It may be that these high potential women are en route to leadership or perhaps there is a 'woman leader type' in Asia.
- Some women, particularly those from India, raised the subject of personal sacrifice (in terms of having children) in the quest for career success. Community Business suggests further research in this area to understand whether this is a new phenomenon emerging in Asia similar to what has been experienced in the US as highlighted in research by Sylvia Ann Hewlett in her pioneering book, *Creating a Life: Professional Women and The Quest to Have Children*.⁹
- Across Asia these high potential women talked about the central role of the family and in particular parents and in-laws in their decision-making at all levels. In Asia in particular, parents are closely linked to their children throughout their lives and there is an expectation that children will look after their parents in old age. Often the onus of this will fall on the woman as the daughter-in-law or daughter and this can limit women's ability to take up career opportunities - particularly where this involves mobility or overseas assignments but also for roles that require long working hours and late night conference calls.

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- Work-life balance is a priority and was raised by every woman we spoke with in some way. Women in Asia - particularly those fulfilling regional or global roles, face specific challenges that may not be faced by their counterparts in the US or Europe. To accommodate different time zones they often have to work unreasonable hours and this can have a serious impact on social and family life. Companies need to seriously consider policies, programmes and work culture that will address this.

Recommendations

- **Consider the whole career life cycle.** Look at understanding women's aspirations and provide assistance with career planning from an early stage. Present the options that are available for a woman at different stages in her career and life so that managing a family and a career is seen as an achievable goal.
- **Engage directly with women.** Speak directly with your female employees in different locations in Asia to understand their priorities and concerns and develop appropriate policies and programmes relevant to their context.
- **Remain flexible.** Do not be limited by policies and programmes but be flexible - keeping in mind that the objective is to retain and develop talent.
- **Consider the role of men.** Ask what role companies can play in changing attitudes and allowing men to take on more family responsibilities.
- **Provide enabling environments.** Community Business' research, including the interviews from this study, indicates that there are a number of factors that are critical to enabling women to succeed. These include: leadership commitment to diversity, networks, raising the visibility of women, mentoring, elimination of gender bias and including men in the discussion.

Concluding Remarks

Traditional attitudes are changing across Asia and women want to succeed in the workplace. They are willing to work hard and develop skills and want to be recognised for their contribution. Women do not want quotas or positive discrimination. What they want is for companies to realise that the current demands of the workplace do not recognise the many roles that women have - particularly in terms of the family.

The issues of greatest concern were related to work-family balance. Companies are encouraged to take a more holistic and creative approach to the career trajectories of their women employees - with a focus on enabling them to fulfill their professional and personal responsibilities at different stages in their life and career. Only then will women be no longer required to make tough choices that force many to settle for less challenging roles or opt out of the workforce altogether.

The Participating Companies in this study have done some great work in addressing what can be done to retain women. But ultimately if we are to see significant improvements in the representation of women in senior positions in Asia, we need to see two things. One is leadership that goes beyond rhetoric - and the second is a more flexible workplace. The benefits will be far-reaching, for as companies resolve to address the needs of female talent they will find that they are ensuring the greater inclusion and engagement of all employees.

International Perspectives

Comments from international experts on the findings of this report suggest that there are many similarities and also some differences between the situation in Asia and those in Europe and developing countries.

- An emphasis on education was found to be instrumental to the career trajectories of female talent and greatly fuelled their professional aspirations. This is in line with other international research which finds women in Asia, in particular India (86%) and China (76%), have higher aspirations for top roles than their counterparts in the US (52%).



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- However, as in other parts of the world, the representation of women in the workplace in Asia declines sharply with seniority and this applies across industry. While childcare and family responsibilities are assumed to be the primary derailleurs of women's careers around the world, the reality in Asia is found to be more complicated. Family ties are strong and women in Asia often enjoy childcare support from their parents or in-laws. However, the flip side of this strong family tie, especially for women, is the responsibility of eldercare. In India and China in particular, the guilt working women in Asia feel towards their elders, 'daughterly guilt', can outweigh maternal guilt.
- Work pressures for Asian women were also found to be different from those in the West in a number of ways. These include the strong cultural disapproval in relation to travel, gender biases in the Asian workplace as well as exclusion from informal social activities.

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BACKGROUND

In 2009, Community Business worked with the member companies of its Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network (DIAN), to produce the first Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia (GDBA 2009).¹ This study looked at the representation of women at junior, middle and senior levels of 11 Participating Companies in four geographies in Asia, including: China, India, Japan and Singapore. It also explored barriers and enablers to women's success in the region through interviews with women leaders in each of these geographies.

GDBA 2009 has been a pioneering piece of research, providing valuable benchmarking data for the region. Since its publication, it has been welcomed and referenced by organisations and companies around the world and proven to be a valuable tool for those looking to develop their gender diversity strategies in the region.

In April 2010, member companies of DIAN expressed an interest in updating the study, adopting the same methodology but expanding to a greater number of companies from a wider range of industries. This 2011 study (GDBA 2011) was conducted with 21 Participating Companies and extended to include six geographies - the original four plus Hong Kong and Malaysia as these were markets that were identified by DIAN member companies as being of interest.

The objectives of this GDBA 2011 study sponsored by Shell are therefore to:

- Build on the work of the GDBA 2009 study.
- Enhance the value of the GDBA by extending it to more companies.
- Establish the GDBA as a measure of gender progression in the region over time.
- Enable companies to track and compare:
 - their company's own performance on gender progression across key geographies in Asia.
 - their company's performance on gender progression with other leading multinational companies operating in the same geographies.

Like the 2009 study, this GDBA 2011 comprises both a quantitative and qualitative study. For the quantitative component, Community Business invited Participating Companies to submit data showing the representation of women at different levels within their organisations in each of the different geographies of the study.

For the qualitative component of GDBA 2009, Community Business conducted telephone interviews with senior women leaders. Through this we were able to explore the experiences and perspectives of women leaders in certain countries in Asia. Over the last two years, Community Business has been able to enhance understanding of key issues surrounding women in leadership in Asia through its research on women on boards in Hong Kong and India. (See Women on Boards: Hang Seng Index 2009² and Standard Chartered Bank: Women on Corporate Boards in India 2010 Report.³)

To gain a broader understanding of the challenges that women in Asia face throughout their career, Community Business together with the Participating Companies, chose for the purpose of this study, to focus on a different target group of women, namely high potential women in Asia.⁴ These are women who have been identified by their companies as having leadership potential. The views of these women are critical to understanding what might be causing the often cited 'leaking pipeline' and the lower representation of women at the top of organisations. Hence, interview questions were designed to explore some of the issues women at this level struggle with and what more they think their companies can do to enable them to reach leadership positions.

The work of Community Business focuses on Asia. However, many of the companies that we work with are global. In order to give corporate Asia an understanding of how the situation in Asia compares to that in Europe and North America, Community Business invited leading international experts who have conducted similar gender studies in these regions to review the results and provide their insights.



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METHODOLOGY

Scope of Research

The GDBA 2011 covers six key geographies in Asia, namely: China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore.

Approach

Part I: What the Numbers Tell Us

Collection of data

In July 2010, Community Business developed a data template which was sent to all Participating Companies to complete. Participating Companies were asked to provide the following data as of 30 September 2010 for each of the six geographies:

- Total number of employees
- The percentage of women in the total workforce
- The percentage of women at junior level
- The percentage of women at middle level
- The percentage of women at senior level

Consistency of data

Referencing standard definitions provided by Hays and Mercer,⁵ Community Business provided Participating Companies with guidance on the definition of junior, middle and senior level positions. To ensure further consistency of data, Participating Companies were asked to exclude data from any Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) or Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) units which are particularly prevalent in some markets such as India.⁶

Data analysis

In conducting this study, Community Business has relied entirely on each Participating Company to provide complete and accurate data and has not undertaken any independent auditing. Completed data tracking templates from Participating Companies were collated and sent to the researcher, Dr Anne Marie Francesco, Professor of Management at the Hong Kong Baptist University, who conducted the analysis.

In reviewing the findings presented in this report, readers should bear in mind that each company is different, each industry is different and company sizes can have a significant impact on the percentages presented.

To protect the confidentiality of the Participating Companies in this study, data shown in this report have been aggregated and not attributed to the individual companies.

Part II: What High Potential Women in Asia Say

Selection

Participating Companies were asked to nominate one high potential woman from each country covered in the scope of the study. It was agreed with Participating Companies that the individual nominated should be:

- identified as high potential by the organisation;⁷
- based in the selected country;
- Asian by ethnicity - or if not, have spent a substantial number of years progressing her career in Asia and therefore able to speak to issues in that geography;
- comfortable expressing her thoughts and opinions in English.

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From the nomination list, Community Business selected a maximum of two women from each Participating Company to interview, ensuring an even representation of women across functions and geographies. In total 24 women were selected for interview with four interviewees representing each geography.

Interviews

A 60-minute telephone interview was conducted with each high potential woman between February and March 2011. Interview questions were related to personal profile, factors contributing to success, future aspirations, challenges and the role of companies and others in facilitating women's advancement. A full list of interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The responses of the interviewees have informed Part II of the findings of this report, and where applicable, country differences have also been cited. The views of the individual women have been kept anonymous unless prior permission to use their names has been obtained.

The views expressed here are the views of the high potential women interviewed and cannot be assumed to be the views of all high potential women in the corporate sector in these countries.

FINDINGS

Part I: What the Numbers Tell Us

Twenty-one companies participated in the data tracking component of the GDBA 2011 study. The Minimum (Min), Maximum (Max) and Average (Avg) in the tables below are calculated based on the number of companies participating in the benchmark study in that country. Table 1 indicates the number of companies that provided data for their operations in the listed countries.

Table 1. Number of companies that provided data in each country

Country	No. of Companies
China	19
Hong Kong	19
India	17
Japan	19
Malaysia	17
Singapore	21

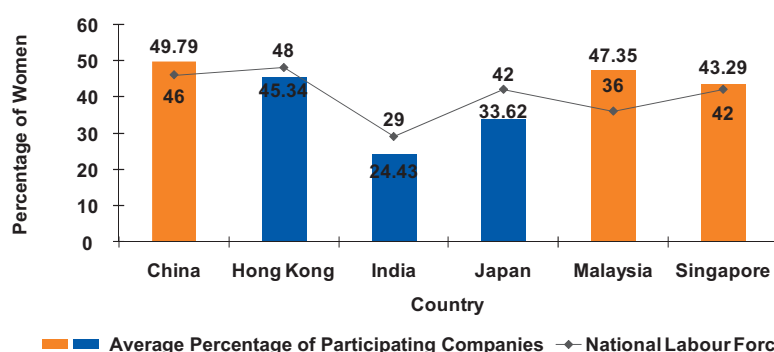
Representation of Women in the Total Workforce in Asia

Figure 1 shows the average percentage of women employed by the Participating Companies in the total workforce in each country in Asia. This is compared to the national female labour force in each country. The bars in orange in Figures 1 to 4 indicate where the average percentage of women employed by Participating Companies in that geography is higher than the national female labour force. The bars in blue indicate where the average percentage of women employed by Participating Companies in that geography is lower than the national female labour force.

The national female labour force is being used by Community Business as a barometer of women's representation in the workforce. Although a parity of men and women (ie 50% men and 50% women) in the workforce may be an ideal, it is perhaps not a reasonable expectation given that the participation of women in the wider workforce in many countries falls short of this level. By using the national female labour force in each country, we are able to assess to what extent the Participating Companies' workforce actually reflects the country-wide workforce.

The average percentages of women employed by the Participating Companies in their total workforce ranged from 24.43 - 49.79%. China emerges as the country employing the highest average number of women in the total workforce at 49.79% and India as the lowest at 24.43%.

Figure 1. Percentage of women in total workforce in each country



	Min	Max	Avg	National Labour Force 2010	Higher (+) or Lower (-) than National Labour Force
China	20.8	75	49.79	46	+3.79
Hong Kong	23.96	68.67	45.34	48	- 2.66
India	9.7	46.15	24.43	29	- 4.57
Japan	0	60.32	33.62	42	- 8.38
Malaysia	18.18	66.9	47.35	36	+11.35
Singapore	21.3	73.19	43.29	42	+1.29

* Data of National Labour Force shows women's share of the adult (15+) labour force (%) in 2010 taken from UN Statistics Division (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/Annex%20tables%20by%20chapter%20-%20pdf/Table4Ato4D.pdf>)

In comparison with the national female labour force, the Participating Companies employ on average a larger percentage of women in China, Malaysia, and Singapore, with a much higher percentage in Malaysia. In Hong Kong, India, and Japan, the Participating Companies employ on average a smaller percentage of women than are employed in the corresponding national female labour force - and in Japan the gap is the widest.

However, there is great variation among the companies as can be seen by the difference between the minimum and maximum figures for each country. Also a number of the companies have a much higher percentage of female employees than are employed nationwide.

Representation of Women in the Workplace at Different Levels in Asia

Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the average percentages of women at different levels in the Participating Companies in each of the different geographies. The data show that the percentages of women are generally highest at the junior level and lowest at the senior level across countries and companies. These findings are consistent with other tracking studies, including Community Business' GDBA 2009.

Junior Level

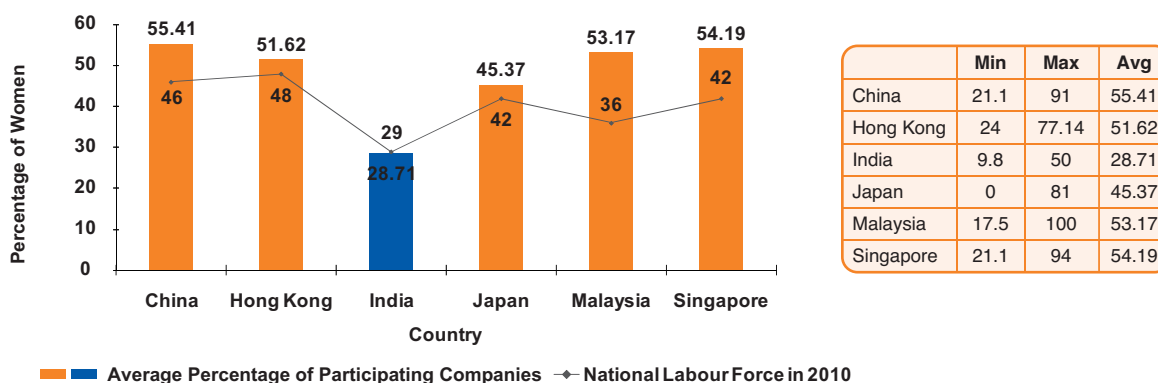
Top Performer: China

Worst Performer: India

At the junior level, as Figure 2 shows, the percentage of women is relatively high. In all countries except India, the average rates surpass the average national female labour force participation rates and many companies have a female majority (over 50% of their workforce) at this level.

China does the best with women at junior level (55.41%) followed closely by Singapore (54.19%) and Malaysia (53.17%). India has the lowest representation of women at junior level (28.71%).

Figure 2. Percentage of women at junior level positions in each country



	Min	Max	Avg
China	21.1	91	55.41
Hong Kong	24	77.14	51.62
India	9.8	50	28.71
Japan	0	81	45.37
Malaysia	17.5	100	53.17
Singapore	21.1	94	54.19

Middle Level

Top Performer: Hong Kong

Worst Performer: India

At the middle level, as shown in Figure 3, the percentages are slightly lower than the junior level data with a similar pattern across countries. However, the numbers are only just below the percentages of women that are employed in the corresponding national female labour force in China, Hong Kong and Singapore, and in the case of Malaysia they are above.

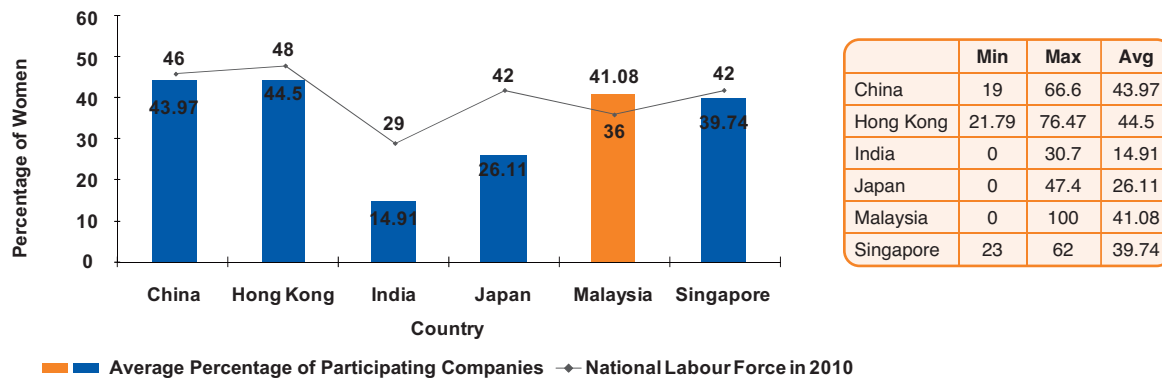
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Hong Kong overtakes China as the top performer of employing women in middle level positions (44.50%) - but China (43.97%) remains close behind, as does Malaysia (41.08%). Japan (26.11%) and India (14.91%) perform most poorly at this level with both the lowest percentages and the greatest differences with the national female labour force participation rates.

Figure 3. Percentage of women at middle level positions in each country



Senior Level

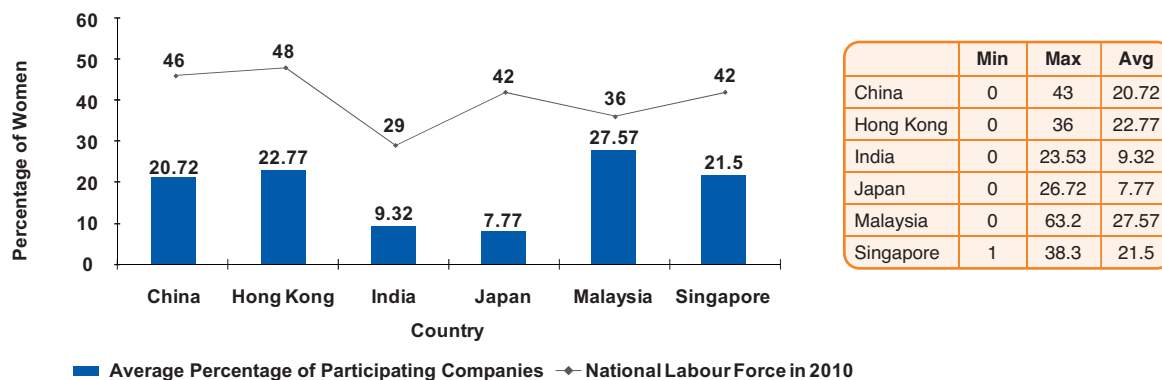
Top Performer: Malaysia

Worst Performer: Japan

At the senior level, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of women is very small. Disappointingly, almost all companies are very far from the overall national female labour force participation rate.

Malaysia (27.57%) overtakes Hong Kong and emerges as the country with the highest representation of women at senior level, followed by Hong Kong (22.77%) and Singapore (21.50%). India (9.32%) and Japan (7.77%) again perform most poorly, with percentages in single digits and much lower than the other four countries.

Figure 4. Percentage of women at senior level positions in each country



The Leaking Pipeline Explored

The 'leaking pipeline' is a term that is commonly used to describe the drop out or decline in number of women from lower to upper levels in an organisation. Table 2 explores this phenomenon in our Participating Companies in Asia and shows the percentage change of representation of women at the different levels.

Table 2. The Leaking Pipeline in Asia (as a percentage drop)

	Junior	Middle	Senior	The Leaking Pipeline	
				Percentage change from junior to middle	Percentage change from middle to senior
China	55.41	43.97	20.72	- 20.65	- 52.88
Hong Kong	51.62	44.5	22.77	- 13.79	- 48.83
India	28.71	14.91	9.32	- 48.07	- 37.49
Japan	45.37	26.11	7.77	- 42.45	- 70.24
Malaysia	53.17	41.08	27.57	- 22.74	- 32.89
Singapore	54.19	39.74	21.5	- 26.67	- 45.90
Average	48.08	35.05	18.28	- 29.06	- 48.04

Table 2 reveals a number of interesting findings:

- For all geographies, except India, the greatest decrease in representation of women occurs between the middle and senior levels and the average percentage drop is 48.04%.
- India is the only geography that has a greater decrease in female representation between the junior and middle levels with a drop of 48.07% compared to 37.49% from middle to senior levels.
- Looking at the percentage decrease in the representation of women from junior to middle levels, Hong Kong is the best performer with only 13.79% decrease, and India (48.07%) and Japan (42.45%) are the worst.
- Looking at the percentage decrease in the representation of women from middle to senior levels, Japan loses by far the greatest percentage (70.24%) and Malaysia the least (32.89%).

The above findings indicate:

- Malaysia has the least serious issue with a leaking pipeline compared to the other geographies.
- Japan has the most serious issue with a leaking pipeline - and this is of particular concern from middle to senior level positions.
- Whilst India seemingly appears to fare well in terms of the decrease in representation of women from middle to senior levels (37.49% compared to the average of 48.04%), the multiplier effect of the leaking pipeline should not be ignored. With fewer women making it from junior to middle levels, the pool of women able to move to senior level positions is that much smaller and therefore the problem of the leaking pipeline is actually more severe.

Representation of Women in the Workplace in Different Countries in Asia

Tables 3-8 show the representation of women in the Participating Companies on a country by country basis, presenting the data by total workforce as well as at junior, middle and senior levels. The data have also been broken down by size of organisation so that a more appropriate comparison can be made with other organisations of the same size.

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China

Table 3: Percentage of women in the workplace in China

Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Total Workforce			Junior Level			Middle Level			Senior Level		
		Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg
>1000	9	20.8	71	41.42	21.1	76	44.52	19	60	37.04	10	34.7	20.47
100-999	6	44.02	71.7	54.33	49.47	77.1	60.12	29.57	58.1	45.69	0	37.7	21.81
1-99	4	51.6	75	61.8	61.5	91	72.85	43	66.6	56.98	0	43	19.68
All	19	20.8	75	49.79	21.1	91	55.41	19	66.6	43.97	0	43	20.72

In China, there is a relatively high average percentage of female participation overall (49.79%). Ten of the 19 companies have 50% or higher female labour force. The percentages vary by company size category: the bigger the company, the smaller the percentages of women at all levels, except for senior level where the percentages are similar for different sized companies.

At the junior level, 11 out of 19 companies have more than 50% women employees with seven of those over 70%. At the middle level, eight of the companies have more than 50% female staff with only two less than 20%. At the senior level, ten of the companies have 25% or more female employees while four companies have none.

Hong Kong

Table 4: Percentage of women in the workplace in Hong Kong

Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Total Workforce			Junior Level			Middle Level			Senior Level		
		Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg
>1000	10	29.7	57.3	44.55	36.27	63.1	51.74	21.79	57	41.05	8.7	36	25.71
100-999	8	23.96	66.6	43.42	24	75	48.29	25	69.15	44.82	0	27.3	18.37
1-99	1	-	-	68.67	-	-	77.14	-	-	76.47	-	-	28.57
All	19	23.96	68.67	45.34	24	77.14	51.62	21.79	76.47	44.50	0	36	22.77

Compared to the other countries in this study, the representation of women in the Participating Companies' workforce in Hong Kong can be described as moderate (45.34%). Seven of the 19 companies have a female workforce that is over 50% of their total. The single small company has the largest size category percentages overall with the medium and large categories showing smaller and fairly similar percentages for junior and middle levels and the largest companies having slightly higher percentages of senior women.

Twelve of the 19 companies have more than 50% women at the junior levels, and two of these are over 70%. At the middle level, seven companies employ more than 50% women, and at the senior level, nine companies have 25% or more females, and only two have less than 10%.

India

Table 5: Percentage of women in the workplace in India

Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Total Workforce			Junior Level			Middle Level			Senior Level		
		Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg
>1000	11	9.7	43.03	23.75	9.8	45.29	26.47	6.8	30.7	16.51	3	23.53	9.95
100-999	5	16	28.7	21.58	21	40.5	29.4	11.4	20	14.38	0	19.2	9.78
1-99	1	-	-	46.15	-	-	50	-	-	0	-	-	0
All	17	9.7	46.15	24.43	9.8	50	28.71	0	30.7	14.91	0	23.53	9.32

Based on the data from the Participating Companies, India has the lowest representation of women in the workplace of the six countries. Only two of the 17 companies have a female labour force of more than 40% with an average of 24.43%. The average percentages for the medium and large companies are similar with more women employed at the lower levels. The single small company has 50% women at the junior level but none at higher levels.

At the junior level, ten out of the 17 companies have women making up more than 25% of the workforce at that level with four of them over 40% and only one less than 10%. At the middle level, only five companies have 20% or more women, and four have less than 10%. At the senior level, all companies have less than 25% women employees with five companies employing less than 5% at this level.

Japan

Table 6: Percentage of women in the workplace in Japan

Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Total Workforce			Junior Level			Middle Level			Senior Level		
		Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg
>1000	9	18.95	60.32	32.61	21	65.73	44.79	11	45.6	24.20	1	26.67	10.18
100-999	6	13.67	56.9	36.51	14.3	80.8	48.43	10.8	41.04	27.64	0	26.72	7.84
1-99	4	0	56	31.59	0	81	42.09	0	47.4	28.1	0	9	2.25
All	19	0	60.32	33.62	0	81	45.37	0	47.4	26.11	0	26.72	7.77

Based on the data from the Participating Companies, Japan has the second lowest representation of women in the workplace of the six countries. Four of the 19 companies employ more than 50% women, but seven have less than 25%. The percentages did not vary much by size of company for the total and junior and middle levels, but the larger companies employ slightly higher percentages of women at the senior level.

At the junior level, five of the companies employ more than 60% women employees with two companies over 80%. There are also three companies that average less than 25%. At the middle level, eight of the companies have over 30% females with six less than 15%, and at the senior level, the percentage drops considerably with only three companies employing more than 20%, and five companies employing no women at the senior level.

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Malaysia

Table 7: Percentage of women in the workplace in Malaysia

Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Total Workforce			Junior Level			Middle Level			Senior Level		
		Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg
>1000	5	25.9	66	49.86	17.6	68	51.34	21.4	64	43.58	11.8	31	21.58
100-999	5	25.8	66.9	46.81	17.5	67.4	45.78	19	73.1	44.48	0	50	27.63
1-99	7	18.18	65	45.96	19.1	100	59.76	0	100	36.87	0	63.2	31.82
All	17	18.18	66.9	47.35	17.5	100	53.17	0	100	41.08	0	63.2	27.57

The Participating Companies employ the second highest overall percentage of women in Malaysia. Eight of the 19 companies have a workforce that is over 50% female with only one less than 20%. Overall, the pattern by company size is mixed with the overall percentages of women employed similar but no clear trend across levels.

Ten of the companies employ more than 50% women at the junior level with only three employing less than 20%. At the middle level, seven of the companies employ 50% or more women with two that have none at that level. Four companies employ 50% or more women at the senior level, and three have none.

Singapore

Table 8: Percentage of women in the workplace in Singapore

Number of Employees	Number of Companies	Total Workforce			Junior Level			Middle Level			Senior Level		
		Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg	Min	Max	Avg
>1000	10	21.3	65.1	42.81	21.1	70	48.01	23.9	62	40.16	14.7	34.5	23.63
100-999	8	27.03	73.19	40.83	27.8	83.16	51.91	23	55.2	34.93	1	38.3	20.81
1-99	3	48.94	53	51.45	66.7	94	80.84	39	60	51.18	12.5	22	16.26
All	21	21.3	73.19	43.29	21.1	94	54.19	23	62	39.74	1	38.3	21.50

The Participating Companies employ a moderate number of women in Singapore (43.29%) where six of the 21 companies have more than a 50% female workforce. These averages are highest overall and for the junior and middle levels in the small companies while the large companies have the highest percentage of senior level women.

At the junior level, eleven out of 21 companies have more than 50% females with three employing over 80% and only one under 25%. At the middle level, there is moderate female participation with six companies over 50% and only three under 25%. Five of the 21 companies have more than 30% women at the senior level.

Tracking Performance with 2009

The data for this GDBA 2011 are compared with the data from the 2009 study for the four countries that were included in both studies and this is shown in Table 9. In addition the percentages of women in the corresponding national labour forces are also provided for comparison purposes. It should be noted that the first study was based on data from ten Participating Companies and the second with data from 21 Participating Companies. Nine companies participated in both the 2009 and 2011 studies.

Table 9: Comparing data from GDBA 2009 and GDBA 2011 - percentage of women at each level**

Country	National Labour Force*		Total		Junior		Middle		Senior	
	2009	2011	2009	2011	2009	2011	2009	2011	2009	2011
China	44.3%	46%	42.9	49.79	53.5	55.41	28.7	43.97	13	20.72
India	28.1%	29%	25.2	24.43	34.1	28.71	16.2	14.91	8.2	9.32
Japan	41.2%	42%	33.8	33.62	50	45.37	20.7	26.11	8.9	7.77
Singapore	40.1%	42%	43.8	43.29	52	54.19	34.4	39.74	17.3	21.50

* These are the figures that were referenced for the GDBA 2009 and relate to the female national labour force in 2006.

** Data for the GDBA 2009 study was as of 31 December 2007. Data for the GDBA 2011 was as of 30 September 2010.

Overall, no clear pattern emerges with ups and downs at different levels and in different countries. As the Participating Companies and the base profiles of the companies are not the same, it is difficult to make any clear conclusions. Any changes could be due to actual movements over time or just be due to the inclusion of a significant number of different companies in the sample. If this benchmark study is repeated, as it evolves over time, more insights and conclusions may be drawn on the progress of women in the workplace.

However, Table 9 reveals the following:

- Overall increase in representation of women in the national labour force has increased minimally in these geographies.
- For the Participating Companies, the percentages in the total workforce in 2009 and 2011 are similar in all countries (except China) suggesting that no significant improvements have been made with regard to the representation of women in the workplace in Asia over the last two years.
- The notable exception is China where percentages in 2011 have increased at all levels since 2009 and especially at middle (53% increase) and senior levels (59% increase).
- Singapore too has seen some improvement in the representation of women at all levels - except the total workforce.

Part II: What High Potential Asian Women Say

For the qualitative part of the study, twenty-four women participated in a telephone interview - four from each country. All the women were identified as high potentials by their organisations and were all ethnically Asian and based in the country that was the focus of the study.



Profile of High Potential Women Interviewed (by Country)

China	Hong Kong	India
 <p>Name : CHEN Lin Title : Senior Manager - M&A and Commercial Finance Company : Shell (China) Limited</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Learn new things, explore the world and make my impact."</p>	 <p>Name : Carmen AU Title : Associate, Transportation Company : AECOM</p> <p>What inspires you the most? “以力服人者，非心服也，力不贍也；以德服人者，中心悅而誠服也，如七十子之服孔子也。” - 孟子 (When one subdues people by force, they do not submit to him in heart. They obey, because their strength is not adequate to resist. When one subdues people by virtue, deep in their hearts they are pleased, and sincerely submit, as was the case with the seventy disciples in their submission to Confucius. — By Mencius)</p>	 <p>Name : Sapna CHADHA Title : Director of Product Management Company : American Express Banking Corp</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Creating change in people's lives is why I work and what inspires me most - whether it is through our products and services that we offer to our customers or through having an impact on the lives of people that work for me, in seeing how they can progress and advance in the organisation. That is what makes me tick."</p>
 <p>Name : Ella LIU Title : Marketing Director - Coca-Cola Company : Coca-Cola China</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Steve Jobs. He has such a character that he lives with his values and pursues what he wants. He is very persistent with what he wants and despite the fact that people do not necessarily go the same direction as him, he still insists on his value and has come out with many great things that changed the world. He really inspires me."</p>	 <p>Name : Eppie CHAN Title : Financial Controller for Greater China Company : EMC Computer System (FE) Limited</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "To be a successful working mother."</p>	 <p>Name : Tabassum INAMDAR Title : Managing Director, India Banking and Finance Research Company : Goldman Sachs</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Being challenged and also people around me, like my superiors, colleagues and role models helping me along the way."</p>
 <p>Name : Martine TSENG Title : Managing Director, Wealth Management, China Company : UBS</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Excellence, and those who pursue it. People who are persistent and always try to do the best."</p>	 <p>Name : Grace CHAN Title : Director - Head of Loyalty, Rewards and Brand Communications Company : American Express</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "To see my people sincerely passionate about their work, grow, and achieve success."</p>	 <p>Name : Nidhi SHARMA Title : Senior Environmental Scientist Company : AECOM India</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Desire to learn every day and to know more about various sectors/fields."</p>
 <p>Name : Grace YU Title : Managing Associate Company : Linklaters</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "The pursuit of knowledge"</p>	 <p>Name : Winnie CHUNG Title : Senior Associate Company : Herbert Smith</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "As a football fan, I am inspired by Arsene Wenger's philosophy in managing Arsenal. Focusing on organic growth is important to the successful management of any organisation."</p>	 <p>Name : Susheela VENKATARAMAN Title : Managing Director, Internet Business Solutions Company : Cisco Systems</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "What inspires me is when I am doing work that is really impactful, that makes a difference to society and the people that I am working with."</p>

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Japan	Malaysia	Singapore
 <p>Name : Tauchi HISAYO Title : Senior Software Engineer Company : Schlumberger</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "To help others - when I feel I am making something better, I am motivated the most."</p>	 <p>Name : Catherine GOH Title : Customer and Partner Experience (CPE) Director Company : Microsoft Malaysia Sdn Bhd</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "My mom, in terms of how she steps up and manages the challenges in life, how she stood up for us despite all the adversities and difficulties that she has to go through being a single mother."</p>	 <p>Name : CHIA Uen Li Title : Cluster General Manager, SEA-South and MacroDistributors Company : Shell Eastern Petroleum (Private) Limited</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Passion, commitment and making a difference."</p>
 <p>Name : Nagisa INOUE Title : Head of Operations Technology Company : Goldman Sachs Japan Holdings</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "To be able to function, contribute and inspire people."</p>	 <p>Name : Firdous JAN Title : General Counsel, Asia Pacific Company : Schlumberger</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Variety, Opportunities, Challenges, People and the satisfaction of a job well done."</p>	 <p>Name : Teresa KOH Title : Director, Operations Company : Barclays Capital Singapore</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Knowing that my help is making a positive difference to someone who is going through difficult times."</p>
 <p>Name : Misaki JINNAI Title : Director Company : Deutsche Securities, Inc</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Recognition from others that helps me to be more innovative and perform better."</p>	 <p>Name : Rena TAN Geok Nee Title : Manager, Process Improvements, Malaysia Company : Standard Chartered Bank</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Being able to make a positive change in the organisation, regardless of the size of the issue."</p>	 <p>Name : Florence TAN Title : Senior VP Commercial Banking Company : HSBC Singapore Branch</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Passion is the key to driving your career aspiration."</p>
 <p>Name : Chie YOKOYAMA Title : Executive Director, Investment Banking, Capital Markets Dept Company : Nomura</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "What motivates me most at work is to make the team happy, to build the sense of trust or union with the team to improve business performance, and especially to achieve win-win business with clients and to obtain trust and appreciative words from them boost my motivation."</p>	 <p>Name : Betty THONG Title : Senior Manager, Talent and Organization Performance Company : Accenture</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "The opportunities to learn, to do the best I can and to work with high performing individuals"</p>	 <p>Name : Ruth WONG Title : Fire Safety Engineer Company : Arup Singapore Private Limited</p> <p>What inspires you the most? "Creativity, doing new things, being challenged at what I do. I like the feeling of coming to work and knowing that I have done something worthwhile."</p>



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Additional Profile Information

Age

The age range of the high potential women interviewed was 29 to 52 years and the average age was 38 years with 75% of the women below the age of 40.

Educational attainment

The highest level of education for 11 of the interviewees was a Master's degree, for 11 women it was a Bachelor's degree and for two it was a professional qualification.

Marital status

At the time of the interview, seven women were single, 15 were married and two were divorced.

Children

37.5% of the women interviewed had children or were pregnant. For those who had children already, the average number of children was 1.5. Fifteen women had no children, three women had one child, three women had two children and one woman had three children. Two women were pregnant at the time of the interview. The age of the children ranged from one to 24 years old. Of the seven women with children, six of them had one or more who were 12 or younger.

Factors Contributing to Success

The first part of the interviews focused on what the individual women believed were factors that had contributed to their success to date. The women commented on their personal stories, personal characteristics as well as external factors that they believed had helped them to be successful.

Personal Lives

Our high potential women came from diverse backgrounds from very poor to privileged, but virtually all of them mentioned the strong emphasis their families placed on education. These women were encouraged and expected to do well in school, and they often went to the best schools in their area or even in their country where they attained outstanding academic results. A number of the women had the opportunity to study or work abroad early in their careers and most of these experiences took place in Western countries. A number of our interviewees told us how being in a Western cultural environment helped them to become more independent, outgoing, and motivated. Many women also mentioned very positive early career experiences where bosses or leaders recognised their potential and provided support and opportunities for them to develop themselves in different ways. As one manager told us:

"I had a good education background, and with a well laid background, when the opportunities came later in my career, I could capture them more easily."

Personal Characteristics

The list of personal characteristics that our high potential women thought were responsible for their success was long and varied. However, a few key characteristics stood out. Many mentioned that they were inquisitive, loved to learn or try new things, were curious, and had a desire to know more. In summary, these women see themselves as being personally motivated and driven.



How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Eppie CHAN | EMC Computer System (FE) Limited

"Provide more training and opportunity to put women in senior roles and prove that women can show competence and can be more powerful than men sometimes."

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For example, one woman said:

"I have a desire to learn; I'm never afraid to ask people questions."

Another common response was that they were very results-oriented, patient, tenacious, and not willing to give up. As one manager told us:

"I am not the sort of person that would give up. I think in life we go through situations for a reason; it is a form of learning and helps us to become more successful people."

Many women also described themselves as very hard working. This is one example of how it had an early career impact:

"I'm a quite hardworking person. I'm not a workaholic, but I am willing to stay longer, put in more hours and effort to make sure that my work reaches a certain quality. This had a big impact in my junior days when I was learning a lot of new stuff. I was willing to go the extra mile, talk to people, read cases, and so forth in order to speed up the learning process."

External Factors

In terms of external factors that had enabled success, overwhelmingly, the most important factor cited was the support from bosses, leaders, or mentors. For many of these women, the mentors were not those assigned by a company or a programme, but individuals that the women themselves had identified. Often these were current or former bosses. Several felt that these informal mentors were more helpful than mentors who were formally assigned by a corporate or other initiative. These individuals acted as role models and provided good advice, introductions, and often opportunities to our high potential women. As one woman told us:

"Very supportive and caring bosses [have contributed to my personal success to date.] They always exposed me to the right roles and opportunities at the right time for me to advance to the next level. They understood my career aspirations, gave me the opportunity to do the right roles and connected me to the right people, giving me visibility."

Another set of external factors that helped our high potential women was related to networks. Our interviewees learned from and got support from primarily informal networks of peers, colleagues, direct reports, and even customers. These ranged from current or former co-workers to school mates and members of alumni associations. One woman told us:

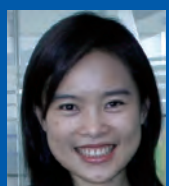
"It is not just about the support from the mentor, but the informal network that the seniors provide is important. It is easy for me to reach out as I have the connections with the senior leaders in the region who can give me advice, input, and information that helps me do my work."

A number of women also mentioned that corporate policies were helpful - but referenced this for different reasons. Some felt the policies helped them to do their jobs better by providing guidelines on things like ethics or the correct way to do their jobs. Others were happy that the policies provided for a fair system of performance assessment. A few women mentioned policies that specifically provided support for women.

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Grace CHAN | American Express

"Encourage high potential people to always take on new experiences and challenges — new assignments, new roles, new countries."





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Finally, some women working in China commented that the economic development there was helpful in giving them greater opportunities.

Future Aspirations

After gaining some understanding of why our high potential women were successful, we asked about their future aspirations. Our interviewees told us about what positions they aspired to in the future and why, any concerns they had about taking on a more senior role, and what they thought they had to do to reach the next level.

Aspiring to More Senior Positions

Over 80% of our high potential women aspired to more senior positions such as CEO, CIO, managing director, general manager, senior leader/manager, and regional manager/leader. The reasons they wanted these higher level positions varied considerably. Many felt they deserved to be promoted and wanted the recognition, satisfaction and sense of achievement that would go with it. For example, one woman said:

"I want to make more progress in my career and to be promoted to MD, which is the top level in the organisation, and have greater responsibility and manage more people in the team. It's a natural progression in my career, and I think I deserve it. I work quite hard and want to get the reward from doing that."

Others mentioned that they looked forward to being challenged, to stretching their abilities, and being able to learn more. A number of women also mentioned that they wanted to move up so that they could be in a position to make a difference or have greater influence and control. One said:

"I would like to be able to progress to be a CEO... to have experience of various job roles so I can learn more. I think I have [the] passion in what I do. I also enjoy what I do. When you enjoy what you do, you will want to learn from people around you and would like to make a difference."

A number of women also focused on how they could have a positive impact on others and wanted to move up so they could train other people and help them develop, could act as a role model or be able to inspire and motivate others. As one woman said:

"My aspiration is to take a senior role in either the regional or business line perspective... I would like to have my own team of people... I really like to train people, teach people to get work done. That's how I feel complete and satisfied."

Many of the women who aspired to senior positions expressed ambivalence about moving up. Altogether about one-third of our interviewees were not sure if they wanted to move up further or had some reservations about doing so. A number of these women were already in demanding senior positions and expressed concerns about work-life balance. These are two examples:

"I am still struggling with this. I see the possibility of going to a more senior role, but... I need to think about my family, my parents, and possibly having children."

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

CHIA Uen Li | Shell Eastern Petroleum (Private) Limited

"Recognise females have different needs at different phases in life. Companies should therefore think creatively about paths for females to continue to contribute and get to senior level positions."



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"I am still deciding if I want to get to the next level which is at senior executive level. I am still debating between work and life because it would take more time at work with higher responsibilities. I am concerned because I plan to start a family and it would definitely have an impact on work. I already put in 15 to 16 hours a day and don't spend a lot of time with my husband during weekdays... [If I do move up,] there will be sacrifice - either work quality or time with kids."

Other women were at a crossroads in terms of the direction they wanted to take. Some were happy with their current positions or felt they wanted a lateral move to learn something new. Others thought they might want to change the field they were in or even start their own businesses. One woman told us:

"I am clear on the type of role that I want to be in, but which 'aspect' I am still thinking through. In terms of the role, I am clear that I want to be able to inspire and motivate people. I am very clear on that front. That gives me two routes that I am constantly thinking through. 1) I continue in the same role but I look for vertical progression so that I can develop and then motivate employees that work for me. 2) The other route that is always in my heart as well, do I go into the academic space and try to become a lecturer, teacher? So I can use my experience to develop people on that front."

Concerns about Taking on a More Senior Role

The list of concerns expressed was long but many were unique to individuals. A number of women had concerns related to work-life balance, particularly whether they could meet their families' needs and expectations and still do a good job. These are some typical comments:

"My concern is not that I cannot do the job. It is more about having to devote a lot of my time to the work and not having enough time for the family or for myself."

"I cannot stay away from home for 180 to 200 days a year, which I observe is typical of senior executives here. Being an Asian wife and mother who does most of the childcare, there are expectations from my husband and children."

There were also concerns expressed about the time needed to do the job well. For example:

"I am concerned I would have more responsibilities and more time commitment. I am not sure if that is something that I would like to do."

Some additional concerns expressed include corporate politics, being the only or first senior woman, the level of responsibility, the need to relocate and possible prejudices or biases against females.

Reaching the Next Level

Our high potential women identified many different things they thought they needed to do to reach the next level in their careers. A large number of these fell into three categories: develop and expand networks and increase visibility, expand and develop teams, and learn more.

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Winnie CHUNG | Herbert Smith

"Provide support while they are junior to let them know what their options are so that they could make the best career decisions for themselves."





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Some of our high potentials felt they needed to further develop their networks and build business relationships in order to move ahead. By connecting with a greater number of people both in and outside the organisation, they could learn more and become aware of opportunities. For example, one woman told us:

"I need to keep developing my network. My network has helped me a lot, not just with getting jobs for myself, but people have given me advice and taught me a lot of things."

Closely related to networking is a need to be visible. As one woman suggested:

"I need to pick up the frequency of interaction with senior management, especially those in headquarters..., to discuss thoughts and ideas on how to develop business [here]."

Many women also suggested they needed to develop or expand their teams before they could move up. For example:

"Really focusing on building up my direct reports so that from a succession planning perspective, we'll have a strong management team. Sometimes I find that if a senior leader doesn't have a strong management team, that's when he or she steps in to clear things that are urgent and loses focus on the key things. For me to take on a more senior role, it's important to develop the next level of managerial strength."

A number of women also mentioned that they needed to learn more in different areas. Some felt they needed more training in how to be a manager or a leader; others talked about feeling the need for more technical training. As one woman commented:

"I need more guidance in terms of how to become a leader... Technical knowledge - the hard part - I'm good at. To become a leader, you need the soft part. My boss is helping me, grooming or mentoring me to take on the soft part - how to make sure that you don't become too emotional and stay calm and collected, even in times of crisis."

There were a range of other things identified that were more specific to the individuals. Some of these included the need to do an assignment in a different location, developing a more strategic organisational view, becoming more client-oriented, and getting a mentor. One of the more interesting comments was:

"More grey hair and wrinkles will help. I don't think ladies like it, but the reality is that if you show some grey hair, it helps."

Challenges

We looked at the obstacles and challenges our high potential women faced at this point in their career and also explored how individual, family, and organisational factors were perceived as obstacles to career advancement.



How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Catherine GOH | Microsoft Malaysia Sdn Bhd

"Recognise females have different needs at different phases in life. Companies should therefore think creatively about paths for females to continue to contribute and get to senior level positions."

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Biggest Obstacles and Challenges

We asked the interviewees to identify the three biggest obstacles or challenges they faced at this time in their careers, either personal or work-related. By far, the largest number was related to work-life balance issues. Our high potential females were concerned about having enough time to do their work and still meet their family and personal needs. Some of the women who were still single expressed a desire to marry or were being pressured by their families or society to do so. A number of women were concerned about starting a family and worried how they would manage a demanding job and children at the same time. Some typical comments were:

“Work-life balance - we have conference calls at night and a lot of overtime. Work wise we are given a lot of flexibility, but still it's our own call to decide how to balance between work and life - that's a personal challenge.”

“Stress at work affects me personally. At the same time I am also trying to start a family. It could be a contributing factor why I don't have a little one yet.”

Several women also cited gender issues. They felt they needed to put in a greater amount of effort and prove that they were more competent than male colleagues in order to get ahead or they were not given the respect that their positions deserved. For example:

“Gender is a bit of a disadvantage. We are still not at a stage where we are completely treated as equals. It requires much harder work [for women]. Some women are doing a great job, but the men would talk about how they think they are not quite there.”

Some women also felt that they were an isolated minority where there were few women in similar positions within their organisations. One woman told us:

“As the minority, sometimes I feel isolated. I have nobody to talk to; there are very few females at my level in the region. Sometimes (or actually all the time) male executives do not feel comfortable to invite females to informal drinking sessions.”

Many different obstacles and challenges that were more specific to individuals were identified here too. Some of these were a tough/demanding job or heavy workload, the need to be more mobile or move to a position outside their home countries, feeling 'different' perhaps as an Asian working in a Western multinational or outside their home country, dealing with company politics, and maintaining good health while working long hours.

Perceived Obstacles

Our high potential women identified perceived obstacles to career advancement in terms of individual, family, and organisational factors. In some cases, they may not have actually experienced these obstacles but felt that these factors might stand in the way of their moving ahead in the future.

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Tabassum INAMDAR | Goldman Sachs

“Flexible timing - having a long term programme where females can take a break and come back with the same or a higher level position.”





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Individual factors

The first set of factors we asked about were individual including gender, age, career interruption, physical appearance, and physical abilities. About one-third of the women we spoke to felt that none of these were obstacles for them. For the others, career interruption, gender, and age were mentioned. In talking about career interruption, the major focus was on women who stopped working temporarily in order to have children or take care of other family responsibilities. Some typical comments were:

“Women have different phases in life, and organisations and the people in them don’t entirely get it. A woman in her early 30s may have to take a break to make changes. Companies need to recognise and appreciate this as well as allowing people to come back in.”

“Others told me, ‘If you leave the market for two years, it would be too long for you to pick up and for the market to recognise you.’”

In commenting on gender, this was seen as an obstacle primarily in Japan, but some other women mentioned it as well. In Japan, traditional gender role stereotypes created stress in different ways. Women were expected to put family first, and even when they were serious about their work, they did not get treated as if they were. There was also the assumption within the work sphere that because they were women they must be relatively junior in rank. As one woman commented:

“Positioning within the organisation is tough... It is a male dominated society. No one likes to see women progress in their careers. I feel I am hated because I am not following the norms, trying to swim against the tide.”

Another interesting comment about how gender could be an obstacle reflected a different perspective:

“My company is trying to push females. But, I’m afraid it works in the opposite way. Because the company is pushing so hard, people don’t think the individual deserved the position. That might not work so well in the future.”

Finally, those who saw age as an obstacle were mostly worried about being seen as too young to do a certain job, as highlighted by the quote below:

“I do not see the trend of having young leaders... so I do feel I have to reach a certain age in order to do a certain role.”

However one woman was concerned that being seen as too old could be an obstacle too.

Physical ability was mentioned by a few people whose main concern was that they needed to be healthy in order to do such a tough job. Physical appearance was generally not seen as an obstacle.

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Misaki JINNAI | Deutsche Securities, Inc

“The situation is not going to change the next day; it is an ongoing process. Increasing the population of female professionals would help female talent to be more comfortable at work and help people to stay in their positions.”



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Family factors

The second set of factors we looked at were family-related including marital status, childcare or eldercare responsibilities, and household and family responsibilities. Only two of our respondents felt that none of these were obstacles. The majority of women mentioned childcare responsibilities as an obstacle while some said it was more of a challenge. For women who already had a family, they worried about not having enough time to take care of their children's needs including providing day to day care, helping them with school work, and spending quality time together. A number of the women we spoke to were pregnant or hoping to have children in the near future and were very focused on how they would manage work-life balance issues in the future. Some typical comments were:

"After having children, I had to take care of them. This meant I had to change my work style and go home earlier to take care of the baby. Then, I had to continue to work after the child went to bed."

"Having a baby changed my whole life. I needed to cut back the hours staying in the office, really pushing me to be more efficient. But it also allowed me to learn to delegate tasks to other people... It doesn't always work. There were incidents where I delegated, but the work didn't live up to the standard I needed. Something that I'll need to keep trying."

"I do see having a child slowing me down in the future a little bit."

A number of women also expressed a future need to take care of their parents and worried how that might influence them. As one woman told us:

"When my parents get older or if they get sick, maybe I have to take care of them and abandon my career. I know many people who have done this. Either they end their careers or change their jobs to be closer to their parents."

Different women perceived some of the other factors as obstacles related to their personal situations. For example, marital status was seen as an obstacle because the women needed to consider the needs of their partners or other family members. Family responsibilities created an obstacle mostly because of time issues. The few women who mentioned this spoke about not having enough time to spend with their families due to long working hours or travel. A small number of women also spoke about the difficulty of finding a husband either because they did not have enough time to find one or because they were too successful.

Organisational factors

Finally, we looked at organisational factors including exclusion from social/informal network groups, gender discrimination, inflexible work schedule, and organisational culture. About one-third of our high potential women felt that none of these were obstacles, and many of them made note of how supportive their organisations were to them and to women in general. For those who viewed organisational factors as obstacles, exclusion from networks and inflexible work schedules were mentioned more often, and a few people mentioned gender discrimination and the organisational culture. Some representative comments were:

"They're not doing it on purpose, but I could be isolated quite easily due to few women [in the organisation.] I actually have gotten used to it and think this feeling is shared by many females in the organisation. It's hard to be the only one and could feel quite uncomfortable."

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Teresa KOH | Barclays Capital Singapore

"Don't just pay lip service to work-life balance and flexible working arrangements. Actively cultivate a strong pro-family culture and encourage women to take up flexible working arrangements."





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“I would say there is a bit of a boys’ club here. It probably isn’t gender discrimination, but there is exclusion from social groups. I am experiencing that now... My peers and my boss and even my boss’ boss will go down for a drink and they won’t even think to ask me.”

“People tend to stay at the office late, and many visitors [from other places come here] - there is an expectation that you have to attend social events after work and not enough respect for your personal life.”

The Role of Companies

In this section, we asked about the kinds of programmes companies were currently offering to enable or support high potential women to reach senior management and the types of flexible work arrangements companies offered and how they were received. We also asked our interviewees to give us ideas of how companies could further support the advancement of high potential women.

Company Programmes and Initiatives for High Potential Women

Almost every company had programmes or initiatives that targeted either women or high potentials. A small number of companies had programmes that were specifically designed for high potential females. There were also a few companies that did not offer any such programmes in the country of the interviewee although perhaps there were some in other parts of the world where that company had operations.

Programmes that were focused on women were often part of diversity and inclusion initiatives. Examples of these were women’s or diversity networks, policies that made it mandatory to consider female candidates for all openings, International Women’s Day celebrations, and Woman of the Year awards. One woman told us:

“[We have a] role-model series where senior women can share their experiences and inspire others. It helps women to aspire to be something more and gives them the tools with which they can do it. It’s available to all women.”

Many women had strong positive comments about programmes for high potentials. A number of these programmes were tailor-made for individuals such that they received the guidance and support they needed, including training or developmental opportunities to prepare them to move into senior management positions. Generally these programmes were only accessible through nomination, either a self-nomination with management endorsement or a direct nomination by the supervisor. This is what one woman had to say about a programme she was participating in:

“I have been amazed by how [my company] focuses on the people. I am on a management programme that stretches nine months with three modules. The first one was in London, the second one was in Hong Kong and the third one will be in New York. They bring in senior or high potential directors from across the firm regardless of department. It covers areas of key leadership perspective. They assign coaches and expose us to the really senior people within the firm. And the networks built across the functions have been very, very valuable. So the development programmes here are very strong. They are for men and woman; there is no bias around gender.”

How can companies support women’s advancement to more senior roles?

Nidhi SHARMA | AECOM India

“Companies should be open and not be skeptical of hiring women at senior levels. It’s important to have a diverse group of leaders with both men and women so as to solve problems more effectively. There have been studies that show that women leaders react in a calmer manner when compared to men in similar situations. With more diversity, we will come up with different solutions to a complicated problem/issue.”



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Finally, a few companies had programmes that were specifically designed for high potential females. These might include training or talks about being a woman leader, opportunities to meet senior leaders within the organisation, female mentoring programmes, and opportunities to 'shadow' a senior leader. These are some examples:

"The company has organised a lot of women leadership forums to help us understand the opportunities we have, to deliver a clear message that the company cares about women leadership. They try to nurture more women leaders. Through these forums we have more understanding and opportunity to contribute, to make the environment better."

"[There is a] female sponsorship programme where a senior manager who could be male or female sponsors a high potential female to provide advice related to her career."

Flexible Work Arrangements

The large majority of our interviewees told us that there were flexible work arrangements available, but they either were not used by many people and/or had to be individually negotiated with management. Several women mentioned that the availability of flexible work arrangements depended very much on the type of work that someone did and the attitude of managers working in that country. Flextime and working from home were more widely practiced, but job sharing and part-time work were infrequently used. These are some typical situations:

"Yes [we have flexible work arrangements], but for back office not for front liners because it is difficult to arrange. But, we do have informal arrangements with our bosses. I can work from home or via Blackberry - this type of arrangement is depending on who your bosses are. Like my boss, I just need to let him know. And generally, most bosses are flexible."

"There is work from home, job sharing options. Out of 600 people in the department about ten percent take advantage of the flexible work arrangements, and it is not widely known. People who know about the options are quite happy with the options offered."

"Top management is trying to allow this kind of flexible work arrangement - ladies in top management. But for the director level, they are not exactly supporting it. They want to push and get work done and are not that flexible. From the top they want it, a corporate directive, but when implemented, even for directors who run projects, it's difficult... Flextime is not very common or popular, but it's getting better, better than when I first joined the company. Flexible working location and hours is a trend; we need to look at output and performance. If someone can deliver, this is more important than having a rigid work location or hours."

Further Support for the Advancement of High Potential Women

Although many of the companies participating in our study already have good programmes and practices to support high potential women, we looked to our interviewees for further suggestions. Even though many of the proposed ideas were already being practiced in some companies, our interviewees suggested that a lot more could be done.

The suggestions centered around a number of themes including greater flexibility in working time, special support for women with families, more women in senior management, stronger network development, more training, mentoring, and experience sharing programmes.

How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Betty THONG | Accenture

"Everyone should be given a fair chance to perform and deliver. Capable women should be given the right coaching, roles and opportunities to get ahead in their careers."





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Many of our high potential women thought companies could do more with making work hours flexible both long- and short-term. They wanted more flexible work arrangements on an ongoing basis and also wanted on/off ramping programmes where they could leave the workplace for a period of time and be able to rejoin the organisation when they were ready. As one woman suggested:

“On and off ramping - companies can be more flexible and look at different pathways for women to return.”

Related to this, several women also suggested that companies could provide more support for women with family responsibilities including providing on-site day care centres or financial subsidies for external day care, extra child care paid leave for mothers, more support for those with children on overseas assignments, and support for women after marriage and especially after they have children. One woman told us that companies should:

“Offer good support to married women or women who have children. This includes things like day care or emergency medical assistance. Women who I have talked to feel they have to spend more time taking care of the kids. There is just no support there... So building support for women after they get married and especially after they have children is very important.”

A number of our interviewees were also concerned about getting women into senior positions. They felt a need for more female role models and a balanced management team. A number of women mentioned that it was important to promote women who were well qualified into senior positions and that gender should not be considered in the decision making. Another suggestion was that companies need to take away women's concerns or fears about a male-dominated workplace and promote the benefits of holding a higher position. As one woman told us:

“Any promotion of a woman should be because she deserves it, not because she's a woman... I wouldn't want to hear that 'She was promoted because she's a woman.' I would like to hear that 'She was promoted because she's the right person for the job.' It's important to have policies, but at the end of the day, someone should be promoted because they deserve it.”

There were also a number of ideas relating to companies creating or supporting networks where high potential women could meet other people, professionals, senior women, senior men, etc. Some thought that as women it was sometimes difficult to join informal networks, and therefore it would be helpful for their companies to create more formal networks and networking events. This is what one woman suggested:

“For [my] industry, there are parts that are very male dominated, so I need support on network and relationship development. I talk a lot to guys and need those skills. Networking events should be more formal (rather than like a drinking session) and may be in other formats so that it would be more comfortable for women. Arranging for high potential females to meet more people would also be helpful for the job.”

Another set of suggestions was related to offering training and development programmes for high potential females. In addition to programmes on leadership and management skills, some women also suggested they wanted to learn more about how to interact with men or with other cultural groups.



How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Susheela VENKATARAMAN | Cisco Systems

“Creating an environment of equality, of mutual respect, of taking the bias out and saying that we are all equal.”

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This was one of the suggestions:

“Senior management is more male dominant. Sometimes you feel you don’t have the same language or the same jokes. How to interact with men at senior level probably needs some skills. We need ideas, training, mentoring, whatever to help understand and interact with males at senior level.”

There were also a number of ideas suggested relating to mentoring such as having women, senior women or professional mentors and having more women championing mentoring programmes. One woman commented:

“We need more role models and more direct mentoring by senior female executives.”

Finally, there were a number of ideas about experience sharing programmes. For example, our interviewees suggested that companies should organise talks by successful women to understand how they got to senior positions, how they managed work-life balance issues, how they interacted with men in the workplace, etc. There could also be best practice sharing. As one woman suggested:

“Get more best practice sharing. In other countries, there are really senior women leaders - as high as Group CEO or Senior VP in global. Understanding how they deal with their roles, how they balance their life and family - their cases will help us understand how to prepare ourselves to be ready for that role.”

The Role of Others

In this final section, we asked our interviewees what role they thought executives, male and female, and other organisations such as universities, NGOs and professional women’s groups had to play in promoting the careers of women executives.

The Role of Executives

Our interviewees suggested a number of things that both male and female executives could do. Many of them encouraged executives to support and encourage women by giving them opportunities, recognising the contributions women make and finding ways to give them greater visibility within the organisation. One suggestion was:

“Being able to recognise the strength that high-potential women bring and make that visible to other senior leaders. For example, I’m working with somebody on a project and someone identifies my strength as being able to deal well with uncertainty, that executive should more consciously highlight that to others who are influential. That would open up opportunity.”

Several interviewees also mentioned that giving women opportunities did not mean positive gender discrimination. They wanted executives to be fair, by making decisions that were based on merit and performance. As one woman said:

“[Executives should] look at the recruitment strategy and appraisal system to make sure there is a fair ground for employing females. We don’t want to be seen as a token to be promoted. It easily makes people think that way when you are the only one at senior level.”

How can companies support women’s advancement to more senior roles?

Chie YOKOYAMA | Nomura

“Have more female business heads and executives in companies and increase female representation at senior level positions.”





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Another suggestion was that all executives should join diversity events and networks and raise awareness of diversity issues. As one woman suggested:

“Both female and male executives should also take part. For males, the reason is to get them to understand the diversity issues.”

Some additional ideas for both male and female executives included sharing experiences so women would understand the role of senior management and how they could get to that level, and communicating with women at different levels in the organisation to understand their concerns and challenges.

There were also some specific suggestions for either male or female executives. For males, it was suggested they could act as role models by showing how to treat women fairly and recognising and supporting their needs. For women, our interviewees suggested they could act as mentors, share their experiences and try to change male thinking to be more encouraging and supportive of women executives.

The Role of Other Organisations

Our high potential women also had a number of ideas about how other organisations could promote the careers of women executives. One popular suggestion was that these organisations could create opportunities for women to share their experiences and successes through blogs, websites, other kinds of publications or publicity, and events. For example:

“Universities can support women’s groups to develop blogs or websites where women can interact and share problems, opportunities, and success stories.”

“More success stories of women should get published. People can see that these women have challenges as well but have gone a long way to conquer the challenges and have been able to balance the many areas of their lives. This will encourage women from a younger age. I feel that all the events that our company is doing should start at a younger age, even in college, specifically targeted to the younger ladies around preparing their future for coming into the corporate world.”

There was also a suggestion that these organisations could create networks where they could meet women from other companies and industries. As one woman said:

“Networking is very important - help establish networks for women to know each other, share different experience from different organisations.”

Other ideas were that these organisations could help raise diversity awareness, help promote women to reach higher levels, influence management, give women equal opportunities in their own organisations, study the issues more objectively, help companies set up diversity programmes, and hold seminars to promote gender equality.



How can companies support women's advancement to more senior roles?

Grace YU | Linklaters

“Provide flexible work arrangements including unpaid leave.”

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

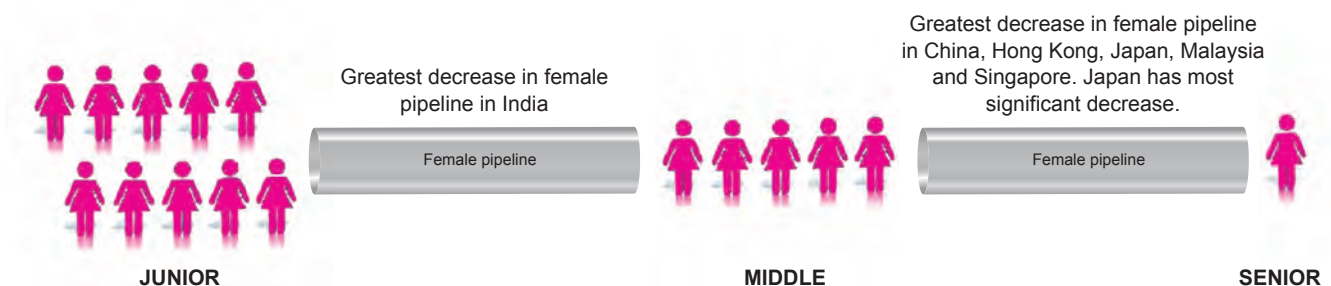
According to the Participating Companies in this study, the highest percentages of women are employed in China, followed closely by Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. The lowest percentages of females are employed in India, with Japan the second lowest.

However looking at these percentages in isolation is of limited use - they must be looked at within the environmental context of each country. As we review the performance of Participating Companies in employing women across Asia, we therefore do so using the national female labour force as a barometer. The national female labour force is extremely important to consider as it is a reflection of the supply of female talent in that country and companies can either do better or worse than this national average. The national female labour force can be also be seen as a reflection of women in that society - and whether women choose to, have the ability to, or are provided equal opportunity to be engaged in gainful employment.

Where Participating Companies do better than the national female labour force, they should be commended. Where they do worse, serious questions should be asked - particularly for those who pride themselves as being an employer of choice or an equal opportunity employer. Consistent with the GDBA 2009 data and tracking studies done in other parts of the world, the percentages of females are generally highest at the junior level and lowest at the senior level across countries and companies. Judging by this data, it is clear that the phenomenon of the 'leaking pipeline' is very much evident in Asia. It is interesting to look at the characteristics of this in Asia and consider the key contributing factors.

The Leaking Pipeline - Characteristics in Asia

Figure 5. The leaking pipeline explored



China - Performing Well but Commitments to Family Can Limit Career Opportunities

China has the second highest national female labour force participation rate among the six geographies. Therefore, it is not surprising that in their total workforces, the Participating Companies do the best in China. China is the top performer for women at junior levels and remains close to the top performer, in terms of percentage, for women at middle and senior levels. China also shows the greatest level of improvement since the last time this study was conducted in 2009.

These positive numbers were also reflected in the interviews with high potential women. Gender was not generally seen as a barrier to career advancement and given the presence of many female leaders in the workplace, senior positions were regarded as an attainable goal for those who are committed and good at what they do. As one woman reflected, when it comes to childcare working mothers in China may be regarded as more fortunate than women in Europe. With access to domestic help to do the routine housework and family members often willing to look after children, it is quite easy to get the support for career women to continue work.

However, digging deeper into the numbers we see that the situation in China is perhaps not as rosy as a superficial review might suggest. The data show a difference of 53% in employment of women at middle versus senior levels. This difference



between middle and senior levels is second largest after Japan (70%). One obvious reason could be that the percentages of women in the pipeline were lower in the past, but beyond that it could be that something significant in the workplace or perhaps in the community itself is discouraging women from taking on more senior roles or indeed encouraging or forcing women to opt out of the workforce altogether once they have reached middle management.

Through the interviews we heard how commitment to family and a desire to be near ageing parents can influence a woman's decision to pursue business and career opportunities. This is significant as greater demand for mobility both within China and internationally as a prerequisite for promotion is likely to put a strain on relationships where both husband and wife work and the needs of children and/or ageing parents need to be considered. This may continue to limit women's advancement in multinational companies unless creative solutions for women can be developed.

Hong Kong - Making Progress but Gender Bias Persists

In Hong Kong, which had the highest female labour force participation rate, the Participating Companies do well in employing women at junior and middle levels, outperforming this rate for these two levels and employing the highest percentages of females at middle levels. Although they do not meet female labour force participation rates in the total workforce or at the senior levels, Hong Kong did rank second highest for the senior level in this study.

However, as the interviews revealed, gender issues do persist in the workplace in Hong Kong, a finding that has also been seen across Community Business' other gender research in Hong Kong. There is a perception that women are not always taken seriously - because of both age and gender, and that they need to work extra hard to prove themselves and earn respect. As one woman put it:

"There's a sense that men are promoted on their potential while women [are promoted] on their performance. It's time for companies to value and recognise the potential of women."

This is an issue that should be of concern and we encourage companies to look at how they are appraising employees to ensure there is no gender bias. There is evidently a need for greater education of managers about the importance of gender equality and the benefits of gender diversity. As the interviews highlighted, women leaders also have a role to play in advocating for their female colleagues and employees, particularly when they are at risk of being undermined by male executives.

Affordable domestic help is available in Hong Kong and plays a key role in enabling working mothers to return to work. However, this ready availability of domestic help can also be a double-edged sword working against the work-life balance of women. There is often a general assumption on the part of employers that women (and men too) are relieved of their parental duties, so do not need to rush home to see their children or take time off to take the child to the doctor. However, this ignores the fact that parents in Hong Kong - like anywhere else, want to be closely involved in the care of their children and spend time with them. In addition the long working hours culture of Hong Kong and the general acceptance that you need to put in more hours the more senior you are makes work-life balance an issue and poses challenges around how to manage having a family and a career.

This is perhaps why we see a much bigger percentage drop for women in Hong Kong from middle to senior levels (49%) compared to junior to middle levels (14%) and is an area that employers would be wise to address.

India - Dropping out Early in Careers or Making Personal Sacrifice

India has the lowest national female labour force participation rate, and therefore it is not surprising that the Participating Companies have the lowest percentages of female employees in India compared to the other countries. What is most noteworthy about India is that unlike the other five geographies that were the focus of this study, the greater percentage decrease in employment of women takes place between junior and middle level positions (48%) and not between middle and senior level positions (37%). Although it is interesting that the percentage drop between middle and senior level



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positions is not as high in India as other geographies, leaders should not be congratulating themselves for having lower attrition rates at this level. The higher leakage from junior to middle means that the overall talent pool is already much diminished and puts companies in India at a disadvantage much earlier in the pipeline.

Indeed this leaking of the pipeline at an earlier stage suggests that women in India are giving up their careers at a younger age than in other markets. This finding is new for Community Business but remains consistent with what we know about the role of women in Indian society. It also draws our attention to the cultural expectations of women in India to get married and have children at a relatively early age and the importance of understanding the role of the family in the decisions of individual women.

Indeed the interviews with high potential Indian women revealed that cultural and family expectations have a significant impact on their career decisions. We were told that certain career choices were made 'to please parents' whilst opportunities away from home were often declined because of not wanting to be too far from family and in particular ageing parents. At the same time flexible work arrangements are not readily available and commuting hours are long, so juggling family life and a career can be especially tough.

Interestingly, none of the women we interviewed had children - so whilst they had made it to the middle level, one could question at what cost or personal sacrifice. The subject of personal sacrifice is raised by Community Business for the first time in this research and is worthy of further study to understand the factors that influence the choices women in India make around marriage and having a family. We know however, from the data in this study and elsewhere that the majority of Indian women do not pursue leadership roles and choose to stay at more junior levels or leave the workforce altogether to fulfil their family responsibilities.

Given the challenges around cultural norms, the desire to meet family expectations and the lack of flexible work options, it is not surprising that we are not seeing the progression of women in India to more senior positions. Companies should consider how they can work with parents, particularly parents of Gen Y, to influence positive career decisions. Often in India, it is a parent's greatest fear that their daughter will be unmarried. Therefore being able to present role models of women who have achieved both a successful career and raised a family is critical. Bearing in mind too that the primary role of a woman is regarded by many in India as looking after her husband and family, some work can be done to demonstrate how a working mother benefits the whole family. Companies also have a role to play in working with their male employees to help overcome gender biases. As one woman said:

"...it would be great to make sure that [men] go home and inspire their children, wives and their team to see women as equal in organisations and society."

Japan - Traditional Gender Roles Still Dominate and Few Women Make it to the Top

In Japan, our Participating Companies employ a significantly smaller percentage of women in their total workforce than the national female labour force.

The interviews in Japan highlighted that women face significant gender issues in the workplace. In particular they made reference to the isolation of being a lone female and how having a young appearance can work against them in terms of credibility and respect. In a hierarchical society such as Japan, having a 'young looking woman' attend a meeting sends a signal that this is a junior person and extra effort is required to earn the trust and respect of the client.

As women tend to represent a genuine minority in senior roles, companies should look at how to best support these women and consider engaging them in networks with other women leaders in Japan. We have found that such networks in Japan have begun to be important for women in leadership to gain support, have a friend at senior levels with whom to share ideas and issues as well as to network with.

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Whilst the women we interviewed aspired to take on more senior roles, we think this may be an anomaly for Japan. We know from research conducted by GEWEL,⁸ a not for profit in Japan, that working women in Japan tend to be content, even happy, to stay in one position and not to progress their careers. This is because career development imposes greater demands on women both personally and professionally. Having said this, companies are encouraged to engage with their women employees to find out what is holding them back and how to make senior roles more attractive to them. As women often will not put themselves forward for career development programmes, companies should look at ways of encouraging or inviting them to join.

In Japan, unlike some other countries in Asia (namely China, Hong Kong, Singapore, India and Malaysia) domestic help is rare and childcare facilities are limited and expensive. In this respect, childcare responsibilities can pose a real challenge for working women. In addition traditional family roles continue to dominate in Japan and this involves not only care of children but also of elderly parents. This issue of eldercare is likely to grow in significance for Japanese women, as Japan has the greatest ageing population - not just in Asia but globally. Companies will need to consider both child and elderly care as they encourage more women into middle and senior roles.

While the Participating Companies have the lowest levels of female representation in Japan and India, we must be careful not to assume that the issues companies face with regard to women employees in each of these countries are the same. Indeed, our research reveals that there are differences.

In Japan, the greater decrease of women in employment takes place between the middle and senior levels (70%) and not between the junior and middle levels (42%). The difference in percentages between the middle and senior levels was the largest of the six geographies we studied. This would suggest that the issues faced by Japanese women are perhaps more similar to those in the other countries where the greater decrease also takes place between senior and middle levels rather than junior and middle levels, but the situation seems to be even more extreme.

Malaysia - Performing Well and Leadership an Attainable Goal for Women

It is our view that of the six geographies, the Participating Companies do best in Malaysia. Their total female workforce participation rate is 11.35 percentage points higher than the national female labour force participation rate. In comparison to the other countries that are the focus of this study, the Participating Companies do well at all levels in Malaysia, and it is the only country in which they outperform the national female labour force at middle level positions.

Not only is Malaysia the country where these companies employ the greatest percentage of women at senior levels but the percentage of women they employ at this level (27.57%) is not far from the national female labour force (36%). It is therefore not inconceivable that in the foreseeable future the percentages of women employed in Malaysia by the Participating Companies at senior levels will reflect the labour force of women - and that is impressive.

This is the first time that Community Business has conducted research on women's representation in the workforce in Malaysia, and the situation there is arguably one of the most positive findings of GDBA 2011. This finding should be shared widely - not least because there is probably much best practice for corporate Asia to learn from the Participating Companies. Given Malaysia's majority Muslim population, there may also be some unique approaches that could be adopted in other parts of the region. These practices should be explored and further research conducted.

Women interviewed in Malaysia echoed what the data show. For the most part, their roles seemed manageable and although the issue of work-life balance was raised, the culture of working hours did not seem as long or as unreasonable as in Hong Kong, for example. Also, the notion of leadership did not appear out of reach to these women - which again is consistent with the data.



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Singapore - Making Progress and Gender Issues Less Evident

In Singapore, the Participating Companies do well in employing women in the total workforce and junior level positions - outperforming the national female labour force rate. However they fall short at the middle and senior levels. Similar to China, Hong Kong, Japan and Malaysia, the bigger difference is between middle and senior levels (46%) and not junior and middle levels (27%).

The women we interviewed in Singapore did not feel that they were discriminated against. Also, although not representative of the whole population, our Singaporean women had more children than in any other country, demonstrating that at least for these women, it is possible to find some form of balance and combine a career with family life.

For our interviewees that had children, their parents or parents-in-law were living nearby and contributed greatly to childcare. Also in Singapore although the role of the mother is to be primarily responsible for her children, working mothers are widely accepted.

When asked about challenges, our high potential women in Singapore cited work-life balance. However, their focus was on business challenges rather than gender related challenges - as we hope it would be for all women in the workplace.

Other Key Observations

The Asian Woman Leader - A Profile

From the over 100 women leaders interviewed by Community Business over the years, we see many similarities between them and the high potentials in this study. This is interesting because it may be an indicator that these high potentials are on the right path to leadership and that women develop these skills well before they get to senior positions. Or, perhaps it indicates that all women, once they achieve a certain level in the workplace, tend to have certain traits and characteristics - in fact perhaps there is a 'profile' or a woman leader 'type' in Asia.

We note that the women who become leaders:

- Have parents who support and encourage the education of their daughters
- Have been outstanding students
- Are personally driven, detail minded and hard working
- Have influential mentors that are often current or past bosses
- Belong to networks - either informal or formal
- Recognise they need visibility

Personal Sacrifice: Giving up Marriage and Children for Leadership?

Research by Sylvia Ann Hewlett in her pioneering book, *Creating a Life: Professional Women and The Quest to Have Children*⁹ explores the 'brutal trade off' that women in corporate America have made whereby 42% of all professional women are childless at age 40 but only 14% planned not to have children. In essence, women in the US have been lulled into believing that they can have it all when of course, they cannot. Is this situation taking place in Asia? From our interviews with the women in this study, it appears yes. Our interviewees were on average 38 years old; 29% were single and only 37.5% had children. This is only of concern of course if the women themselves want children and are 'putting this decision off' until some future time. Women, unlike men, have a biological clock to consider. This notion of the cost of personal sacrifice was raised specifically by the interviewees in India, but other interviewees mentioned that it was difficult to find a husband, either because they worked too much or their high level position made it difficult to find someone suitable, or the high level of work stress was possibly interfering with the ability to become pregnant. This is a new area to explore, and Community Business would encourage further research on it.

Central Role of the Family in Asia

Parents in Asia play a key role not only in the early upbringing and careers of their children but remain very closely involved

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with their children throughout their lives. From an early age, parents have expectations of their children and important life decisions are often made collectively by the family rather than by the individual alone. Whether or not to take a job, accept a promotion, take a career development course, or work abroad may be considered by many people, not just the individual involved. Also, as parents get older in Asia it is the norm and the expectation that their children will take care of them. In the case of a married woman, her parents-in-law will also play an active role and in some Asian cultures will assume the role of a parent. In many respects, this central role of the family in Asia can be seen to limit the career opportunities of Asian women. For example, taking up the offer of an overseas assignment or secondment - often regarded as a pre-requisite to career advancement, can become a point of tension and is simply not an option for many.

As companies recognise the influential role that parents in Asia play in the decision-making of their children, it is important for them to understand what role they can play to support the women and ensure a positive outcome. This will depend on each individual family and situation, but there will be some cultural norms and expectations in each society. By considering the obstacles at home that the women may face, companies can be better prepared to develop ways of addressing them - and therefore provide opportunities and the relevant support that would be agreeable to the woman, her family and the company.

Work-Life Balance is a Priority

If there was one overwhelming issue to focus on as a result of the findings of this study, it would be, without doubt, work-life balance. This is not a new issue and is a challenge faced by working women the world over. However women in Asia do face specific challenges that may not be faced by their counterparts in the US or Europe. Asians working in western multinationals - particularly those fulfilling regional or global roles often have to manage evening or night time calls to accommodate the time zones of their colleagues at corporate headquarters. This not only leads to unreasonable working hours but can also have a serious impact on social and family life.

What is also clear is that high potential women in Asia are at a critical stage in both their careers and personal lives and are struggling to maximise their commitments to both their professional and personal roles and succeed. The result is that they leave the workplace - as evidenced by lack of women in senior positions, or that they stay. For those that stay, many of them find themselves unmarried or not having children. The minority that do have it all and succeed have the constant struggle of how to balance the two. Work-life balance needs to be considered in its fullest sense from workplace policies, programmes and culture.

Recommendations

There is much work to be done as we look at women high potentials in Asia. There are many good examples of corporate programmes to support women from our Participating Companies, but as the numbers demonstrate, more work is needed. As companies think through getting started or getting better at retaining women in senior positions, we would ask them to consider the following:

Consider the Whole Career Life Cycle

Companies need to consider how they can help professional women think about their career options as early as possible in their careers and specifically how they can juggle their dual responsibilities of family and work without significant personal sacrifice. This suggests that more work needs to be done around career planning and taking a holistic approach to women and all the roles that they play. Getting it right from the beginning - with women as they enter the workforce and later as they make it onto fast track or high-potential programmes will be critical for establishing and sustaining the pipeline for senior leadership.

Engage Directly With Women

Rather than assume what women want, we recommend that companies engage directly with women both through externally managed focus group discussions and through internal discussions with their superiors. This is critical to understanding

the issues that the women face at different levels of the organisation and identifying ways of addressing these issues. For instance, despite the growing corporate interest in formal mentoring programmes, the high potential women in this study highlighted that the best mentors they had had were individuals they had identified themselves on an informal basis. As companies engage with their women they should explore in particular, the role and influence of family - and not just in relation to childcare but also parents and eldercare too. From this, a company can have a clear idea of what policies and programmes are necessary to put in place.

Remain Flexible

Although policies and programmes are critical to move forward on the retention of women, it is important to remember that each woman is unique and has her own set of experiences, issues, family and desires. Managers must be educated, empowered and encouraged to remain flexible as far as possible so that the needs of women (and men alike) can be accommodated. This is a question of retention of talent, and business managers should be looking at what can be done to retain this talent notwithstanding what is a written policy.

Consider the Role of Men

Think too about the role of men - in changing attitudes and allowing them take on more of the family responsibilities. The women who have children and are in senior roles are those that have strongly supportive husbands who are able to share the responsibilities. What role can companies play here? One of our interviewees suggests:

“Create a male community and get the message across on providing support to their female spouses, help men understand the childcare responsibilities do not only lie on women, give room for women to succeed”

Provide an Enabling Environment

In order for women to succeed, at any level in an organisation, there must be an enabling environment. As part of this study, as well as wider research that Community Business has conducted in this area, women across Asia have identified specific enablers that have helped them to be successful in the workplace. These are listed below:

- **Leadership commitment to gender diversity:** open, business focused and engaging.
- **Networks:** informal, formal and internal and external women’s professional networks to share experiences and provide support.
- **Visibility:** internal and external platforms to be ‘seen’ and raise the professional profile of women.
- **Mentoring:** formal, informal, male to female, female to female, inter country.
- **Elimination of gender bias:** a thorough review of all organisational policies and processes especially recruitment and appraisals and including questions of mobility.
- **Include men:** a conscious effort to include men and engage them through the business imperative but also in developing practical and necessary solutions to retain women.

Concluding Remarks

Traditional attitudes about the role of women do exist to varying degrees across Asia, but these are changing. A growing number of women across Asia want to succeed in their careers, whether at junior, middle or senior levels, and are willing to invest in their skills and competencies in order to achieve this. Career minded women in Asia want to be given an opportunity to progress because they are good at what they do. They are not asking for quotas or preferential treatment - and nor are we at Community Business.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that for the majority of women in Asia, their primary role is still about being a good mother, wife, daughter and daughter-in-law and the family is dominant in a woman’s life. A work environment, therefore, that refuses to look at a woman in this context and the multiple roles that she plays, runs a significant risk. It risks losing its pipeline of female employees, a major source of talent, and with it the competitive advantages that gender diversity brings.

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This highlights the need for companies to adopt a more balanced approach to the demands they make on their employees - and this applies to both men and women - allowing them to play their full range of roles without the risk of great personal sacrifice.

Although many companies, and particularly those that participated in this study, are doing some great work, with regard to the advancement of women, we know that what is being done currently is not enough. What is needed is a significant shift in the corporate approach. Much of the dialogue so far in Asia has centred on a problem-solving approach with diversity and HR professionals asking “what do we need to do to retain women?” Interventions are then introduced to address these problems - but many are piecemeal, rather than strategic and do not get to the root cause. It is our belief that two things could change this. One is leadership that goes beyond rhetoric and a genuine commitment to enabling women to contribute their full potential in the workplace. The second is a more flexible workplace. Without these, not much will change. The benefits will be far-reaching, for as companies resolve to address the needs of female talent they will find that they are ensuring the greater inclusion and engagement of all employees.

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

To put this study into a broader context, Community Business invited two leaders in gender diversity research - the Center for Work-Life Policy in the US and the International Centre for Women Leaders, Cranfield School of Management in the UK, to comment on the findings and provide their perspectives.



By Ripa Rashid
Executive Vice President, Center For Work-Life Policy

With women earning 55% of tertiary degrees across the world, they are a growing force in the global economy. Yet somehow educated women remain poorly understood and massively under-utilized as a talent pool, nowhere more so than in emerging markets. In the expanding body of work on business in BRIC¹⁰ and other developing economies, little attention is paid to the role or experiences of professional women. Community Business' second Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia goes a long way toward filling this gap in the Asian context.

The latest benchmark data reveal that women have already gained a considerable foothold in the private sector in Asia. Women represent between a quarter to half the workforce of participating companies, a direct consequence of their educational gains. In China, for instance, women are already 47% of university graduates and 45% of top MBAs, so it is little surprise that they represent 55% of junior and 44% of mid-level employees. Even in India, where the women's workforce participation remains much lower than in China or Southeast Asia, 42% of university students and 25% of MBA graduates are women, with women occupying 29% of junior level positions in participating companies.

As many of the high potential women interviewed here observe, an emphasis on education was instrumental to their career trajectories and greatly fuelled their professional aspirations. This aligns with recent research from the Center for Work-Life Policy on female talent in BRIC countries, which finds women in Asia to be among the most ambitious in the world. Of college educated respondents to our national surveys, 86% of women in India and 76% in China aspire to hold a top job; these figures are on par with other emerging economies such as Brazil (80%), and notably higher than in the US (52%). Our study also shows Asian women to be extraordinarily committed to their careers, with 92% of women in India and 88% in China expressing loyalty to their current employers, and 82% in India and 70% in China loving their jobs. Employers in the region would do well to recognize and reward the deep dedication to work uncovered by these studies.

Women's representation does however decline sharply with seniority, with women comprising a mere 8% to a high of 28% at senior ranks in participating companies. The paucity of women at the top is the consequence of a 'leaky pipeline' of female talent, a persistent issue for employers regardless of sector and geography. What's behind the leaky pipeline in Asia? Our research shows that the career-related pushes and pulls experienced by women in Asia are at once similar to and different from their peers elsewhere.

Childcare and family responsibilities are often assumed to be the primary derailleurs of women's careers around the world, yet the research points to a more complicated reality. Women in Asia have, in fact, a wide array of childcare options - in India and China 69% and 82% of women respectively rely on parents or in-laws for childcare, on top of having domestic help (India 50%, China 32%) and daycare (India 44%, China 60%) as options. Consequently childcare - while an important consideration - should not be considered the primary factor behind exodus of women from the workplace.

The strong family ties that ease childcare responsibilities have a flip-side: eldercare. 94% of women in India and 95% in China report shouldering eldercare responsibilities, a share higher than anywhere else, but hardly a surprise in societies where institutional eldercare is not only rare but viewed as highly unpalatable. In fact, the guilt working women in Asia feel

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towards their elders, 'daughterly guilt' outweighs maternal guilt in both India (88% vs.86%) and China (70% vs. 62%), further evidence of the importance of eldercare.

Work pressures for Asian women differ from those in the West in a number of ways. Many face strong cultural disapproval in relation to travel, especially extended or overnight work trips. Safety is a significant concern in rural or semi-urban areas, with 54% of Indian and 31% of Chinese women feeling unsafe while traveling. Biases in the Asian workplace echo those long analyzed in the case of professional women in the West. A sizeable proportion of Asian women (45% in India, 36% China) feel that they are treated unfairly at work on account of their gender. The impact? 55% in India and 48% in China consider scaling back at work. Exclusion from informal networks, which can involve activities off-limits for many women, such as smoking, drinking or after-hours socializing, is also an issue.

What can companies do to support and nurture the rich pipeline of female talent in Asia? The findings in this report underscore the importance of making talented women feel valued and engaged at work. Finding the right solution set requires a delicate balance between a global mindset and local knowledge. The menu should include providing women with access to growth opportunities, leadership visibility, custom career-pathing and flexibility around where, when and how work is done. Training mostly senior male managers to be aware of and respond to the specific pushes and pulls experienced by working women is also a critical part of the equation. As multinationals poise themselves for continued growth in Asia, they have a real opportunity to put in place processes and practices that enable ambitious women to flourish and contribute to their full potential.



By Professor Susan Vinnicombe, OBE
Director, International Centre for Women Leaders, Cranfield School of Management

In 2002 we carried out a research study to examine the career development experiences of 12 male and female directors in an international telecommunications organisation. Here I will focus on the interviews of the female directors and compare them to the 24 high potential females interviewed across Asia for this report.

In terms of barriers our female directors mentioned four. Lack of a degree was mentioned by one woman, who felt that it has probably held her back psychologically. Personality wise the female directors mentioned lack of confidence, perfectionism and being aggressive at times. These women were pioneers with a lack of positive female role models so it was difficult for them to work out the right style. Half of the female directors felt that being female had been a barrier, whilst the other half felt that it had increased their visibility. Family was seen as a source of stress when balanced with a career.

In terms of success factors the female directors mentioned having a mentor, being given challenges early on in their careers and being visible. Generally these three factors linked together. Interestingly the Asian high potential women also emphasised mentors together with a good education as factors contributing towards success. Whilst Asian women managers regard education as crucial to success, British women point to self confidence. The two are related as probably education nurtures self confidence. It was surprising that so few Asian women had children, as other research we have carried out in China indicated that the majority of senior women managers had children and employed home help to look after them. This meant that they were able to have uninterrupted careers.

The initiatives being employed across Asia to retain and develop high potential women look very similar to those used across Europe.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

List of Questions for Interviews with High Potential Women

(A) Personal Profile

- Name
- Job title
- Country living in
- A quote: If you could ask companies to do one thing to support women to take on more senior roles what would it be?
- Picture
- Company
- A quote: What inspires you most?

(B) Other Personal Information

- Age
- Number of children and ages (if applicable)
- Ethnicity
- Marital status
- Nationality
- Education level

(C) Factors Contributing to Success

1. What is your personal story? How have you got to where you are today?
(E.g. childhood, education, early career experience)
2. What personal characteristics do you have that you think have contributed to your professional success to date?
3. What external factors do you think have contributed to your professional success to date?
(E.g. mentors, networks, corporate policies?)

(D) Future Aspirations

4. What are your aspirations for the future?
5. Why?
6. (If not interested in senior management:) Why not?
7. (If want a senior role:) What concerns, if any, do you have about taking on a more senior role?
8. What do you think you need to do to help you reach the next level in your career?

(E) Challenges

9. What are the three biggest obstacles or challenges that you face at this point in your career? (They may be personal or related to your work.)
10. To what extent do you perceive any of the following to be obstacles to your career advancement?
 - Individual factors – gender, age, career interruption, physical appearance, physical abilities
 - Family factors – marital status, childcare or eldercare responsibilities, household and family responsibilities
 - Organisational factors – exclusion from social/informal network groups, gender discrimination, inflexible work schedule, organisational culture

(F) Role of Companies

11. What kind of programmes or initiatives does your company offer to enable or support high potential women like you to reach senior management?
12. Does your company offer flexible work arrangements – if so, what kind and how widely adopted and accepted are they?
13. What more do you think companies can do to support the advancement of high-potential women like you?

(G) Role of Others

14. What should be the role of executives in facilitating and promoting the careers of other women executives?
15. What role should other organisations such as universities, NGOs, professional women's groups, etc. take in promoting the careers of women executives?

Appendix 2: About the Authors



Anne Marie Francesco, PhD
Professor of Management at Hong Kong Baptist University

Anne Marie Francesco is a Professor of Management at Hong Kong Baptist University. She received an M.A. and Ph.D. in industrial/organizational psychology from The Ohio State University and a B.A. in psychology from New York University. Previously, she taught at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Pace University, New York, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the University of Alaska Fairbanks, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the University of Tennessee. Anne Marie was also the managing director of A.M. Francesco & Associates Ltd., a Hong Kong-based human resource management consulting firm.

Anne Marie is the co-author of the book *International Organizational Behavior*, and she has written numerous journal articles and conference papers. Her current research interests include cross-cultural management and organizational behavior, work-life balance, and culture and feedback processes.

In addition to teaching and research, Anne Marie has also been a consultant and trainer for a number of well known organisations in North America and Asia. She was a major contributor to Community Business's Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2009 study.



Shalini Mahtani, MBE
Founder & Advisor to the Board at Community Business

As the Founder and previous CEO, Shalini is now Advisor to the Board of Community Business. Shalini has advised many companies on CSR in Asia, Diversity & Inclusion, Work-Life Balance and Corporate Community Investment.

Shalini has conducted extensive research and written numerous publications on these subjects and is a sought after speaker in Hong Kong and globally. Some of the latest diversity and work-life related publications that Shalini has authored include: Standard Chartered Bank: Women on Corporate Boards India 2010, *Creating Inclusive Workplaces for LGBT Employees* (2010), *Women on Boards: Hang Seng Index* (2009), *Mentoring Programmes in Asia* (2009), *Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia* (2009), *The State of Work-Life Balance in Hong Kong* (2006, 2007, 2008) and many others.

Shalini was honoured by the World Economic Forum as a Global Young Leader in 2009. In 2008, Shalini was awarded an MBE from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II for services to corporate social responsibility in Hong Kong. In 2007, Shalini was named Asia 21 Young Leader by the United States' Asia Society and named as one of 35 global women leaders under the age of 35 in the '35 under 35' list by UK based World Business.

Shalini had a career in accounting and banking. She is a graduate of the London School of Economics and is a Certified Public Accountant. From 2006 to 2010 Shalini served as External Diversity Advisor for a US investment bank.

Shalini was born in Hong Kong and lives with her husband, Ravi Gidumal and their daughter Anya. She is ethnically Indian. Shalini was CEO of Community Business since inception and stepped down from this role in June 2009 following the sudden and unexpected death of Zubin, her three year old son and first child.

Shalini continues to play a key role in Community Business, particularly in diversity and inclusion and development and strategy for Community Business.



Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia 2011

• China • Hong Kong • India • Japan • Malaysia • Singapore

Appendix 3: About the Contributors

Ripa Rashid

Executive Vice President, The Center for Work-Life Policy

Ripa Rashid, is executive vice president at the Center for Work-Life Policy where she heads up the organisation's intellectual capital strategy. Ripa has over fifteen years experience as a management consultant and talent innovation expert. She has worked in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific for leading multinationals, including Booz Allen Hamilton, MetLife and PricewaterhouseCoopers. Ripa is co-author of *The Battle for Female Talent in Emerging Markets* (HBR May 2010) and a forthcoming Harvard Business Press book *Winning the War for Talent in Emerging Markets: Why Women are the Solution* (Sept. 2011). Other research publications include *Advancing Asian-American Talent*, *The Battle for Female Talent in China*, *The Battle for Female Talent in India*, and numerous whitepapers on global talent and gender strategies. Ripa has been featured by Bloomberg Radio, Fox News, Newsweek, South China Morning Post and Times of India, among other international media. She holds an AB cum laude in Astrophysics from Harvard University, an MA in anthropology from New York University and an MBA from INSEAD.

Susan Vinnicombe OBE MA PhD MCIM FRSA

Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Diversity Management

Director of the Leadership and Organisation Development Community

Director of the International Centre for Women Leaders

Susan's particular research interests are women's leadership styles, the issues involved in women developing their managerial careers and gender diversity on international corporate boards. Her Research Centre is unique in Europe with its focus on women leaders and the annual Female FTSE 100 Report is regarded as the global premier research resource on women directors.

Susan has written ten books and over one hundred articles, reports and conference papers. Her latest book, 'Women on Corporate Boards of Directors - International Research and Practice' (with R. Burke, D. Bilimoria, M. Husen and V. Singh published by Edward Elgar) was published in 2009. Susan sits on the Editorial Board of five academic journals.

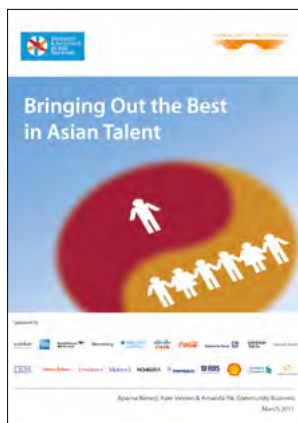
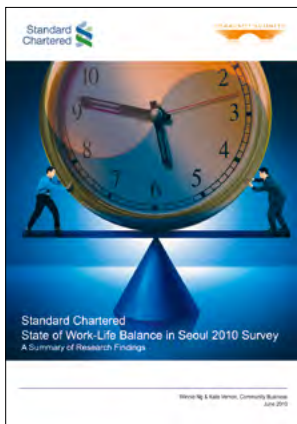
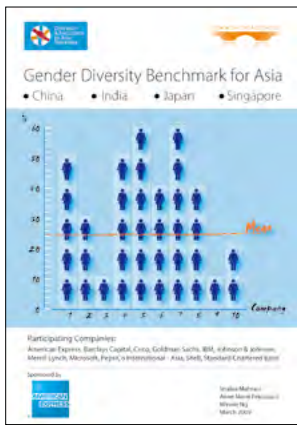
Susan has consulted for organisations in over 20 countries on how best to attract, retain and develop women executives. She has advised the government in the UK, New Zealand, Australia, Finland and Spain on how to increase the number of women on their corporate boards. Susan is regularly interviewed in the press and on the radio and television for her expert views on women directors, and is a frequent keynote speaker at conferences. Susan is the founder judge for Women in the City Awards and judge for many women's awards including Future Women of Achievement Awards. She is a Board member of the Saudi British Joint Business Council and Vice Patron of Working Families, a charity. She is also a Visiting Professor at Curtin University, Graduate Business School, Perth, Australia.

Susan was awarded an OBE for her Services to Diversity in the Queen's New Year's Honour List in 2005.



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Available for download free of charge on Community Business' website at:
http://www.communitybusiness.org/images/cb/publications/2009/Gender_Benchmark.pdf
- ² Available for download free of charge on Community Business' website at:
http://www.communitybusiness.org/images/cb/publications/2010/WOB_India.pdf
- ³ Available for download free of charge on Community Business' website at:
<http://www.communitybusiness.org/images/cb/publications/2009/WOB.pdf>
- ⁴ In fact the term 'Asian' is a misnomer, as there is no such thing as an 'Asian' person. Asia is made up of several countries with many subcultures. Please see page 9 for the profile of the women we asked companies to nominate.
- ⁵ To ensure the consistency of data, definitions of junior, middle and senior levels were provided for Participating Companies as reference. The definitions provided were based on the job classification models by Hays and Mercer which were both widely adopted by multinational companies operating in Asia.
- ⁶ This refers to the subset of outsourcing that involves the contracting of operations and responsibilities of specific business functions (or processes) or knowledge and information-related work to a third-party service provider.
- ⁷ For the purpose of this study the 9 Grid Talent Box definition was used to define high potential:
"Those individuals demonstrating high-level contributions, organisational values, potential to move up to an identified position within a given timeframe, and potential to assume greater responsibility. For example, some organisations operationally define high-potential employees as those who are able to assume greater responsibilities within the next two years and who exhibit a history of high-performance and leadership potential; also may be defined as employees who are able to advance two leadership levels within 4-8 years and who score well on various assessment criteria."
The definition is taken from Corporate Leadership Council, Guidelines for Using a Nine-Box Matrix, Washington: Corporate Executive Board, July 2005.
- ⁸ Working Women's Attitude Survey 2006 by GEWEL 2007
<http://www.gewel.org/06Working-Women-e.pdf>
- ⁹ Hewlett, S.A., *Creating a Life: Professional Women and the Quest For Children*, Miramax, 2002
- ¹⁰ 'BRIC' refers to the countries of Brazil, Russia, India and China where there are large and growing emerging markets. The term was used in the thesis entitled Building Better Global Economic BRICs' by Jim O'Neill, global economist at Goldman Sachs in 2001.



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