

# Women in Leadership

Author: Sara Ekenstierna

Writer and lic. Psychologist

For a woman and an entrepreneur like myself, the question of gender and gender equality is inevitable. Even though progress has been made, gender-related inequality prevails, not least in terms of power, influence and salary. Judging by current research data, it's evident that on most counts it is advantageous to belong to the male sex.

Recent studies from Harvard reveal that women make up a scarce 3% of the top 500 CEOs worldwide. Less than 15% of the manager posts within the biggest global companies are occupied by women. In Sweden, the presence of women in management increases with a rate which means that we will see an even spread of men and women in leadership positions in the year 2030.

According to recent data, women leaders are still to a large extent represented in the public sector, while a majority of men hold the higher positions within the sought-after business sector. The division appears contradictory. From a perspective of leadership psychology, a coordinating leadership style is all the more preferred to an autocratic, hands-on approach. Studies show that women tend to exhibit the coordinating, coaching leadership style to a greater extent. Most importantly, all studies clearly suggest that both men and women, with the right personality, potential and experience, can develop excellent and formidable leadership skills.

Sweden, along with other Nordic countries, has for decades been in the forefront when it comes to wage developments. From a long-term perspective, the wage divisions are decreasing between men and women. However, in overall salary, women make just 85% of what men make. In the best payed, private sector, wages differ with as much as 7500 SEK.

Lower wages amongst women nurtures a vicious cycle. Women, for example still use benefits such as parental leave to a greater extent than men, since it is more financially defensible to the family. Long breaks in employment however negatively effects women's careers. It tends to make them less sought after amongst employers as well as less likely to get promoted. Women are also more likely to have part-time jobs, which worsens their career prospects and furthermore might explain why they hold fewer leadership positions.

One way to decrease the occupational sex segregation and raise women's wages is through a structural change, which moves women from the low-wage public sector, to the well-paid business and private sectors. As women establish themselves in the male-dominated sectors, support from other women become paramount. There are professional networks to join. I believe, like many contemporary writers, that female mentorship is the new kind of feminism. This way, female entrepreneurs and businesswomen can inspire each other, while the experienced can guide the new. The main idea being that women should support each other in a non-competitive way, in order to grow even stronger.

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