



WHO'S THE BETTER MANAGER: A WOMAN OR A MAN?

On May 6th, 2007 Segolene Royal lost the French Presidential Race against her male challenger Nicolas Sarkozy. But Ms. Royal was not the first Female, who tried to enter a – at least until now – men-dominated sphere; there have been for instance also the Slovenian politician Barbara Brezigar and Benito Ferrero-Waldner from Austria, who did not succeed in recent years.

But what worried me more than the loss (or better the opportunity for a change) were question from journalists like “Aren’t women ready yet?” And as I read appropriate answers from their “counterparts” I asked myself, how does this look like in Business? And who is the better Manager: a woman or a man?

Without having any exact statistical and empiric information, but with some experience and with the background of Allan and Barbara Pease’s books I am ready to write about that topic. And on the basis of the following items I would rather like you to be honest to yourself than to polarize between women and men.

Is it true that – what many people say – women can stand stress and psychological pressure much better than men? I realized this phenomenon especially with female associates, who already raised children. Perhaps you already had the same experience and you share my opinion that someone who has to wake up little kids in the morning by convincing them with smiles and songs to get out of the bed, prepare breakfast for the whole family, dress the little ones for kindergarten or school while the dog is already nervous, because he couldn’t go out to pee so far – before SHE is able to prepare herself for the office, understands what is meant by “working under pressure”.

Of course, also WE men are quite busy in the morning: preparing ourselves for the office by reading the daily newspaper, jogging with business partners and – in worst case – taking children to kindergarten or school.

Several women, who became Managers, told me that the first recommendations they got from their mentors was to work very hard to keep their position. And “to work hard” means for many, especially young Managers to spend much more time for the job than others; if not in the office then at least at home and besides all their family-related obligations, because they have to prove to their own colleagues – who immediately became competitors – that they are absolutely the right ones for that position.

Most of the male Managers usually get totally different advice from their mentors. ::: *If you are a man, please STOP here and try to remember first what your mentor told you before you continue reading my article!* :::



Yes, you are right, it could have sounded like: “My friend, you have been promoted to a very important Management position in our company. Many of your colleagues are jealous and they would like to sit in this chair instead of you. What you have to do now is to look for the right people in your environment, to enter certain networks and to do lobbying all the time, inside and outside the company. **And this will keep you alive!**”

Imagine the following scenario: You, regardless if you are a woman or a man, are the Head of the Sales Division of an International FMCG-Group and in charge for both of the Sales Departments. But those two Managers, one responsible for Eastern Slovenia and the other in charge of the Western part of the country, do not really cooperate. On the contrary, they are quarrelling and arguing all the time. How would you react, if you are a man? And what would you, dear Madam, do?

Perhaps women would – against the stereotype – approach both the wranglers **in the same simple and emotional way like Mummies would do it with little kids who are arguing in the sandbox** with “...guys, what is the problem?” whereas men would start their “political and strategic engine”:

“What would happen if...?”, “Shouldn’t we first consider this before we do that...?” or “Which consequences would it have to interfere and shouldn’t we therefore better wait for some while?” are some of the questions I heard many, many times male Top Managers saying...

Dear Reader, what kind of approach do you prefer?

During the last few years I recognized more and more competition, but not just between men and women in business, also among women. Young Females, most of them with certain international background and excellent appearance, **are today eager to climb up the career ladder even quicker than their male counterparts**. Yes, why not? If there wouldn’t be a “BUT”...

Two of my former colleagues, both women with excellent business skills, have been considered to be developed as future Top Managers – with one big difference: one of the Ladies worked very hard to contribute for our company, the other one just had her career in mind: in a very aggressive and pushy way she always tried to be better than her colleague and whenever it was possible she came to the foreground.

But guess what happened at the end? The “aggressive” one totally lost the sight of her personal goal and the relationship to her environment. Instead she just saw all the materialistic benefits and therefore she accepted positions at any price... **just to become more important than her husband – because HE was literally the opponent**, as she told me after she fell on her nose! And the other Lady made an excellent career in our company...



Dear Reader, I don't want to say that this won't happen to a Male as well, but I believe that it's one of the Females' biggest mistakes to see men in business as their opponents, competitors or enemies. **Or even worse, if women try to copy men with only wish: to be better, quicker, more important and more successful.**

Both of us, Women and Men, already proved that we are able to be successful, but ... with different approaches and different management styles. And to be honest, I see much more opportunities in the collaboration between female and male Managers than in a separated and "isolated" world.