

Molly's Letter

Dear friends and colleagues,

I hope you are enjoying the summer! We at *The Leader's Edge/Leaders By Design* have been busy with clients, events and speaking engagements, as well as a new research study on the role that confidence plays in women's careers.

A highlight of the year (so far) for me has been our Women On Board program, which took place on April 15th & 16th at the Ritz-Carlton Philadelphia. Women On Board is an intensive, two-day course for senior women executives that answers their questions and helps them prepare a strategy for obtaining board of director positions. In today's corporate climate, Women On Board is more relevant than ever before – it shines a spotlight on not only the shortage of women sitting at the table, but also the strong contributions women can make when they have the opportunity to be decision makers.

As of October 2014, women have only a 19.2% share of board seats at S&P 500 companies. This number pales in comparison to the fact that the workforces of these companies are 45% female. If there are so many women in the workplace, there should be equal representation in the top tiers of organizations. But how can women gain the credibility and visibility necessary to blaze the trail? That is where Women On Board comes in—to coach women in assessing their skills and crafting a strategic plan to get noticed by those who count.

One of the guest speakers at Women On Board was Erin Essenmacher, who is the Chief Programming Officer for the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD). Erin walked the participants through the significant responsibilities and obligations of board members. She talked about "duty of loyalty" (to act in the organization's best interests and not personal ones) and "duty of care" (to be well-informed prior to making decisions), as well as the differences between oversight and management. Women can bring many skills to the table to accomplish these tasks. Women are predisposed to strategic-thinking and problem-solving: they have an innate tendency to involve both sides of the brain to be both logical and focused and empathetic and collaborative when tackling a problem. For example, women can use their skills for long-term planning while also keeping the impact on the customer in mind. These are essential characteristics for good board members.

Even though many women possess the aptitudes that boards desire, actually developing a plan and putting it into action is a daunting task. There is a myth that an individual must have a position in the C-suite before a board will even consider him or her. This is not true! Don't discount your background and accomplishments. Boards look for candidates with a wealth of experience, including marketing, research and development, finance, law, and other expertise. It is also crucial to use your network to make sure others know that you're



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looking to join a board. To gain credibility, seek out opportunities to speak at conferences or on panels and get published and become known as an expert in your field. Finally, do your research! It is important to make sure that the organization's culture is a good fit for you, and that you can make the time commitment that is required.

It was a pleasure to meet another class of accomplished women at our Women On Board program, and I am so proud to see the continuous progress women have made in the workforce. A lot of change still needs to happen, but I am confident that we are headed in the right direction!

Have a relaxing summer!



Confidence in the Workplace

A 2015 Research Report Developed By *The Leader's Edge/Leaders By Design*

FEMALE CONFIDENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

As executive coaches and leadership development consultants, we have worked with hundreds of female professionals over the last 15 years, helping them to advance their careers. One issue that we have seen remain consistent over time is the lack of confidence that women feel in the workplace. Confidence is a factor affecting their performance, communication and advancement, so we decided to explore it further.

We recently surveyed 220 women leaders, many with more than 25+ years in the workforce, who provided anonymous responses on their level of confidence in the workplace environment, how they feel it compares to their male colleagues, and what techniques they have developed to maintain and increase that confidence.

Read the full report at http://www.the-leaders-edge.com/files/Confidence_Survey_Report_FINAL.pdf



10 Tips on Increasing Your Confidence

By: [Mary Jane Reed, Regional Vice President](#)

1. **Body Language Matters** – Research shows that assuming a “power position” increases our feelings of confidence. Assuming a power position for as little as two-minutes increases testosterone and reduces cortisol, giving us the feeling of power and confidence. Furthermore, someone with open and expansive body language is perceived as confident by others.
2. **Slow Down and Speak Up** – People who speak in a low vocal tone and a calm and relaxed manner are perceived as more confident. Ask for feedback on how well you communicate in meetings. Do you speak too rapidly? Is your volume too low? Is your voice pitch too high? If you do not contribute in meetings, you will quickly become invisible. To be noticed, make an effort to speak up early and often, in every meeting you attend.
3. **Do not overthink it...Just do it** – Since most women use both sides of their brain simultaneously, we often have circular conversations in our heads. When this happens, take several deep breaths, cease self-criticism and take action. Confidence is all about executing on our thoughts and ideas.
4. **Take on New Challenges** – The best learning always happens when we take on a new project or challenge, even if the task seems formidable. Think back to all you have learned in the past and remember you can do it again. Taking on new challenges of increasing complexity is key to building your confidence.
5. **Ask for Feedback and Help** – Feedback is the “breakfast of champions.” Ask a trusted colleague for feedback on how you are perceived by others. Remember to listen attentively and do not become defensive. If you wish to make a change (i.e., speaking up more in meetings), share your intent with your colleague and ask him or her to observe you in a meeting and provide specific feedback.
6. **Build Mentoring Relationships** – Build a network of trusted colleagues with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Seek their guidance when faced with new situations and gain their insights into the broader picture of your business. Find people who will help you move out of your comfort zone and onto the next level.
7. **Take Care of Yourself** – When we are overwhelmed with work and life, we rarely show up at our best. Reflect on what helps you to reduce stress so you can take care of yourself and be at your best in the workplace.
8. **Do Not Copy Men** – Men often appear confident by demonstrating aggressive behavior. Using aggressive behavior or language rarely works well for women. Instead, we need to find our own “assertive sweet spot,” that demonstrates confidence without being aggressive. Again, your voice tone and body language are critical in accurately conveying your intent.
9. **Cultivate Your Emotional Intelligence** – Self-knowledge is the key to wisdom. Knowing your emotional triggers and learning to manage them is a fundamental part of success.
10. **Become a Student of Leadership** – Read books and articles on leadership to learn what leaders do and do not do. The more you are exposed to great examples of leadership, the more confident you will be in your own leadership capabilities.



- **Be Confident:** Speak, and approach the conversation confidently – “I am interested in, and would LIKE the opportunity...”
- **Note the Bottom Line:** “Instead of going to the XYZ conference this year in Minneapolis, I’d like to earmark those funds to engage a coach.”
- **Have a Business Case:** If coaching has been used in a remedial fashion, begin to set the stage for change, as coaching is now primarily an investment in valued talent in order to retain and develop them.
- **Do Your Research:** There are demonstrated benefits of using an external coach who has strong business acumen and can offer the coachee a personal and corporate perspective for introspection in a safe and productive place. Research a renowned coach in your area and bring your recommendation to the table.

Before having the conversation, work on shifting your mindset to realize the value you bring, and will continue to bring to the business. Review your accomplishments, discuss them with trusted colleagues, take a deep breath, and confidently “ask for the order.” You most likely will be pleasantly surprised!

Improving Company Strategy through Generative Thinking

By: [Peter Dean, Ph.D.](#), Founder & President, *Leaders By Design*

Generative Thinking Strengthens Governance

One of the three areas of responsibility for boards of directors has intensified since 2002—governance of fiduciary matters. This has made the corporate financial facts and figures more transparent for the purpose of fostering accountability. The Securities Act of 1933 protected CEOs from legal responsibility for the accuracy of financial statements. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act, signed into law in 2002, reversed this. If any violations are found in financial statements, the CEO could personally face many years in jail. This fiduciary component requires CEOs and board directors to use resources and comply legally and ethically with the guidelines of Sarbanes-Oxley. As a result, both CEOs and directors allocate most of their time and attention to fiduciary governance.



A board’s second area of responsibility, however, involves strategic governance. Here, the directors hopefully work with senior management, asking questions about market share, market positioning, a company’s advantage over the competition and outside challenges. Strategic governance involves setting priorities, reviewing strategic plans and monitoring performance of senior management against expectations. Unfortunately, strategic governance often gets less attention than fiduciary governance, although directors will say they should be spending more time on strategy.

The question is how to do that? The answer is by ensuring that directors set time aside to engage in the third area of responsibility: generative thinking.

Generative Thinking

Generative thinking tackles habits of thinking that hold us back from making good strategic decisions. It involves inventive ways to produce ideas. In a boardroom, the board uses three ideas in its leadership role of *deciding what to decide, usually with an executive coach to facilitate the generative thinking process.*

Generative thinking strengthens the purpose and presence of a board's governance and provides an opportunity for board directors to operate as a source of leadership in strategic decision-making. Generative thinking involves three requirements:

1. A willingness of the CEO to steer the board culture toward shared governance
2. The ability to set aside and replace personal ego-based preconceptions for organizational needs
3. A willingness of the CEO and directors to practice three kinds of generative thinking

There are three nonjudgmental ways of creative thinking that coaches help directors to produce good ideas and explore subsequent decisions. They are:

1. Generate a large quantity of ideas to solve a single problem, without judgment of the ideas until all the ideas have been posted.
2. Generate a variety of ideas outside of logical, already established approaches.
3. Generate focused and detailed improvement of one idea or solution.

It is necessary to be open to practice these three kinds of creative thinking, which serve as a foundation for shared governance.

Shared Governance in Board Culture

When boards set up a culture for shared governance, they are asking the questions that come *before* fiduciary and strategic questions, such as:

- Who decides where the board puts its attention?
- Do we have shared governance? Does the board allow the CEO to govern? Are the board and the CEO in a forward-thinking role? Does the board impose most decisions on the CEO and the company? Is there shared governance where the CEO and the board actively engage?
- How are emergent problems or issues framed and who frames them?
- What process is used to decide if a given problem or opportunity deserves attention?
- Who has the most influence in determining what goes on the board's agenda?
- When the board decides to put an item on the agenda, what are the first steps during which all board members explore the agenda issue with full consideration?
- Is there enough time set aside to do creative thinking in board meetings?
- Is there an expectation to physically meet when a conference call will do to job?
- Does the board have a culture of openness to new ideas and a willingness to suspend judgment when the board is in idea-generation mode?
- Can board members tolerate time invested in creative thinking?

Setting Aside Personal Ego-Based Preconceptions

Breaking with preconceptions that restrict generative thinking and the willingness to use three kinds of creative thinking, requires honestly answering these four questions:

- Can directors suspend their tendency to soften their message (in an effort to only look good) and instead say what they are thinking at board meetings?

- Can directors monitor and manage their feelings of defensiveness, anxiety and nervousness when sharing thoughts and channel that energy into clearly presenting ideas each considers of value to the organization without worrying about receiving approval?
- During the times when the board is practicing the shared governance of generative thinking, can the CEO operate without feeling a loss of control or power?
- Can the CEO and all board directors accept the value of generative thinking in preventing disengagement and polarization?

Only with all three areas of governance responsibility—fiduciary, strategic and generative—can boards care for the organization, its employees, customers and investors. Generating creative ideas in the three ways above enhances the functioning of the fiduciary and strategic components of the board for true shared governance.

Recap: Women on Board 2015

In April, *The Leader's Edge/Leaders By Design* hosted its [Women On Board](#) program in partnership with Diversified Search. A comprehensive two-day program for senior women executives, Women On Board combines skills-building modules conducted by experienced facilitators with timely discussions led by dynamic guest speakers. As a result, each participant walks away with a board action plan and valuable insights from people who sit at the board table.



Panelists included:

- **Lisa Crutchfield of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce**
- **Irene Esteves, formerly of Time Warner Cable**
- **Yvonne Greenstreet, formerly of Pfizer**
- **Sunita Holzer of Realogy Holdings Corp**
- **Shawn Puccio of Saint-Gobain Corporation**

The program featured a schedule of executive guest speakers who shared their advice and anecdotes with the participants. Molly Shepard, President & CEO of *The Leader's Edge/Leaders By Design*, and Judee von Seldeneck, Founder & Chairman of Diversified Search, kicked off the program with a review of the state of women in corporate America. The keynote speaker for the program was Bill McComb, former CEO of Liz Claiborne, who gave a CEO's perspective on boards. Bill Strahan and Melanie Penna, both human resources executives at Comcast, gave an overview of board compensation issues. Other speakers included:

- Erin Essenmacher, Chief Programming Officer of the National Association of Corporate Directors
- Catherine Sohn, a former Women On Board graduate and professional board director
- Rosemarie Greco, Executive Advisor of Vision 2020
- Dale Jones, CEO of Diversified Search
- Donna Serdula, LinkedIn expert and author of LinkedIn Makeover
- Lisabeth Marziello, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Philadelphia

One of the highlights of the program was an element introduced this year—a panel of female board directors who spoke candidly about their board searches, the obstacles they faced, the experience they needed, and the commitments required of directors. Panelists included:

- Lisa Crutchfield of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce
- Irene Esteves, formerly of Time Warner Cable
- Yvonne Greenstreet, formerly of Pfizer
- Sunita Holzer of Realogy Holdings Corp
- Shawn Puccio of Saint-Gobain Corporation

The panelists shared tips for carving out your “niche” based on your experience and for getting known in your network and your industry. The panelists also offered advice on doing your due diligence before joining a board—getting an idea of the organization’s culture, assessing your skills to make sure you are a good fit, and evaluating the time commitment required.

In its ninth year, Women On Board has continued to prepare female leaders for success in the board room. If you are interested in learning more about Women On Board or about individual board coaching, click [here](#). For photos, click [here](#).

“(As women) We are great networkers when it comes to getting a babysitter or a housekeeper, but not as strategic when it comes to business networking.” – Molly D. Shepard

“The more diverse the board is, the better the outcome.” – Bill McComb, former CEO of Liz Claiborne, Inc.

“We don’t often think about our career as one of our assets, like a house or a car. I encourage you to think of your career as an asset and make investments in it.” – Bill Strahan, Comcast

ExCeL 2015 Recap

In January, *The Leader’s Edge/Leaders By Design* launched the second class of the [ExCeL program](#), a dynamic six-month process exclusively for talented female managers whose companies want to invest in their success. ExCeL combines interactive in-person sessions that enhance leadership skills with intimate small group discussions to reinforce learnings and practical application. Eighteen women participated, representing a variety of industries including pharmaceuticals, utilities and financial services.

The first session, entitled “Building My Leadership Identity”, set the stage for understanding the steps needed to build an effective leadership platform and ultimately assume a greater leadership role. Lisa Aronson, PCC and Betsy Reeder, PCC led the participants in an in-depth analysis of their strengths and accomplishments. Peter Dean, Ph.D. then facilitated an examination of their leadership styles by using the DiSC assessment instrument. The women found this discussion very valuable, as it offered insights into their personal styles and taught them how to recognize and respond to different personalities in the workplace.



“ExCeL was a wonderful opportunity to network with successful women in many different roles and organizations. It allowed for a renewed focus on leadership skills and opportunities for improvement.”

During the second session of ExCeL, Shelley Potente presented on “Building Executive Presence and Impact”. The participants were challenged to take stock of their visual, verbal and vocal behaviors, develop awareness of how they present themselves in the workplace, and determine how to enhance their communication styles. The third and final session, “Building My Contributions to the Organization”, enabled the participants to evaluate their influencing styles and identify appropriate tactics to use in

moving their initiatives forward. Nila Betof, Ph.D. shared her expertise and helped them identify the strategic relationships they should cultivate to enhance their visibility and advance their careers. The session culminated with a reflective exercise focused on crafting the participants’ development goals.

The ExCeL program enables emerging female leaders to build the self-awareness, confidence and enterprise-wide thinking necessary for future success. The next program will launch on January 2016. For more information, please contact Shelley Potente at spotente@the-leaders-edge.com.

“For me, ExCeL helped me realize that I have the skill set to achieve my career goals. The course was very uplifting and provided excellent external networking opportunities.”

Kudos

- **Lisa Anderson** joined the board of REVOLUTION Medicines.
- **Christine Aspell** was named Office Managing Partner of the KPMG LLP office in Baltimore.
- **Madeline Bell** was promoted to Chief Executive Officer of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia. Her appointment will begin on July 1, 2015.
- **Dorie Culp** was promoted to President, Devon Park Specialty at United States Liability Insurance Group.
- **Monica Warner Dimpfl** of *The Leader’s Edge/Leaders By Design* welcomed a baby girl, Collins Marie, on April 29th.
- **Jen Flaisher** was promoted to Vice President, Human Resources, US at Teva Pharmaceuticals.
- **Matthew Fradin** was promoted to Vice President and Senior Deputy General Counsel at Comcast.
- **Kelly Frazier** accepted a new position as Associate General Counsel at Sharyland Utilities.
- **Sara Fritz** was promoted to Client Solutions Director at Independence Blue Cross.
- **Rosemarie Greco** was elected to the board of Universal Display Corporation OLED (NASDAQ).
- **Kisha Hawthorne** was named interim CIO of The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.
- **Willa Hightower** was promoted to Director, Customer Financial Operation at PECO Energy.
- **Christina Hwang** accepted a new position at Guardian Life.
- **Christine Jacobs** was elected to the board of the Delaware Valley Floral Group.
- **Winnie Lee** was promoted to Managing Director at Bank of America.
- **Deb Macaleer** was promoted to Marketing Director for Treanda at Teva Pharmaceuticals.
- **Iris Melendez** accepted a new position as Director of Global Talent Management and Acquisition at Solenis.
- **Jill Michal** joined Independence Blue Cross as Vice President of Sales Services and Client Experience.
- **La Guardia Myers** of General Dynamics received the 2015 Minority Business Leader Award from the *Washington Business Journal*.

- **Kate Patarcity** was promoted to Head of North America Internal Communications at CSL Behring.
 - **Lesley Poole** was named CEO of The SEED Foundation.
 - **Alison Rosensweig** has been made Partner at Roundtable Investment Partners.
 - **Joanne Ryder** was promoted to Chief Administrative Officer at Beneficial Bank.
 - **Kimberley Wick** of KPMG LLP joined the board of the American Red Cross of Southwestern Pennsylvania.
 - **Melanie Wong** received a new position as Managing Director at BNY Mellon.
 - **Yvonne Greenstreet** joined the board of Moelis & Co.
-