

Why Women

**The Leadership Imperative
to Advancing Women
and Engaging Men**

Jeffery Tobias Halter

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Foreword

I had the pleasure of meeting Jeffery Tobias Halter for the first time in the fall of 2013. As founder of the Center for Women in Business at Bentley University, I was helping to conduct a symposium on Engaging Men to Advance Women in Business. Jeffery was our closing keynote speaker and it was the first time I was introduced to his YWomen's Integrated Women's Leadership framework.

In Jeffery's words, "We don't need to convince women about the need for change, we need to convince men. Men still occupy almost 85 percent of the executive positions in corporate America. If we are to drive long-term systemic change in organizations we must have ownership from the highest level of the organization, and today that is still men."

Engaging men is truly the new frontier for advancing the women's leadership agenda. How can it be that women hold just 10 to 15 percent of the senior leadership positions in corporate America? Why haven't we made more progress given that women represent 58 percent of our college graduates and hold 50 percent of middle management positions, with 40 percent holding positions that include purchasing authority? The statistics go on and on and numbers alone are not enough to convince male leaders to change.

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Yes, of course, there has been progress along the way; and yes today we have more female leaders than a generation ago, but the numbers are still very small at the top organizations. To make matters worse, the conversations we're having about gender and work today are the very same conversations we were having when I was President Clinton's advisor on women's issues in the White House during the mid-1990s. It seems like yesterday, but we've been at this for almost twenty-five years. I'm not talking about the post-60s feminist movement, but the true business integration of talented women that began in the early 90s. While it is positive to reflect on the now over twenty female CEOs in corporate America, it is a sad statement to make that out of the Fortune 500, approximately 475 are led by men.

We reach for programs and initiatives that might help us, and some such as sponsorship, flexibility and accountability—are moving the needle. But corporate leaders and their teams are frustrated by the lack of gender progress as well as the gender tension (both overt and covert) that still permeates organizations. In an age of political correctness, men and women are forced to hide their true selves at work for fear of saying or doing the wrong thing. All of this strains energy and emotion, and even worse, engagement and productivity for companies.

The good news is that many companies are in fact reaching consensus on the need to advance women. Many CEOs are no longer asking “why” they should include advancing women in their organizations but “how” to begin to do it.

Why Women, the Leadership Imperative to Advancing Women and Engaging Men is written to tackle this question of how to build an end-to-end corporate solution. As Jeffery points out “the problem is, companies have intellectualized the numbers and the objectives, but they’ve never internalized it, placed economic value on it, and held their organizations responsible for truly driving change.” Too often today in organizations, what passes for gender efforts, is a series of discussions, and disjointed programs and processes in which women find themselves talking to other women. I know from my own experience that my goal was often merely to get budget, signoff, and resources from leadership to move my agenda on women forward within the organization. For many of us in this field, this is been a meaningful and productive strategy, but it hasn’t been woven into the fabric of the organization. And, in many occasions, a committed CEO, with the best of intentions, has gone away believing that his support, plus periodic face time was sufficient.

What we know for sure is that what got us here won’t get us there. Companies need to acknowledge that what they are doing is simply not working. It is not moving the needle and it is not preparing their organizations for a future workforce that is increasingly female and multicultural. The old saying is true; insanity is doing the same things and expecting different results. But to get to a different result – to truly support, retain and promote women in the workplace and capitalize on women in the marketplace—shouldn’t we be engaging men in the conversation as full partners?

Why Women, the Leadership Imperative to Advancing Women and Engaging Men is a business book written by a business leader. In business

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language, Jeffery articulates the three simple reasons for corporations to think strategically about women: 1) to grow revenue, 2) to improve operating profit, and 3) to enhance company reputation. Jeffery examines the critical need to engage every function within the organization in the strategy ultimately resulting in scorecarding and hard metrics. Most importantly, we must do so with a sense of urgency as the world we compete in today is changing in an ever-escalating manner. This is a must-read guide for all leaders in an organization, not just women or HR professionals but for men and line leaders who want to know how to win with women today.

Jeffery is a passionate advocate for the advancement of women and his stories provide insights into his own epiphany regarding the power of women in organizations. And while the book is filled with research and data, he knows that all the data in the world will not move men from passive participants to active champions.

To move men to advocacy it takes a personal connection and in Jeffery's case it is being the father of a daughter. Jeffery believes that fathers of daughters have an absolute responsibility to be advocates in the workplace. To quote from the book, "As a business leader I need to realize that if I am not advocating for women in my workplace today then no one is going to advocate for my daughter ten years from now when she's faced with the same biases, challenges, inequities and, quite frankly, bullshit, that I see women put up with today. As the father of a daughter this is just unacceptable."

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Engaging men in the advancement of women is truly the new frontier for every company in America, and this is the book that will show you how to do it.

Betsy Myers is the Founding Director of the Center for Women in Business at Bentley University. Betsy is the former COO and Chair of Women for President Obama's 2008 national presidential campaign, and during the Clinton administration she was the first director of the White House Office for Women's Initiatives and Outreach. Betsy is also the author of the best-selling business book, Take the Lead.

Chapter 1

The Epiphany!

“We must therefore strive to achieve nothing less than total enterprise realignment around this awesome, burgeoning, astoundingly untapped market!”

—Tom Peters,
*Re-imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age*¹

“I’m a straight white guy. What the heck do I know about Diversity?” Those were my first thoughts almost 15 years ago. The Coca-Cola Company had just settled a \$200 million discrimination lawsuit and I was being asked to lead an initiative on diversity education. My background was as a sales manager and a business leader. What did I do wrong to get this assignment?

This was an event that would change my life and be the start of my epiphany regarding women in leadership.

Like most male leaders, I didn’t know what I didn’t know. Not just about this “women's” thing, but about all the things that we as male leaders pay no attention to on a daily basis—such as sexism, bias, and

“white male privilege.” These are the things I would learn deep lessons around in the ensuing years. Now, before you begin to think that this is just another one of those touchy-feely diversity books stuck on the worn out arguments of compliance and fairness, let me set the record straight and, for once, move this dialog forward:

I AM A RAVING CAPITALIST!

I want you to read this book and make more money—for yourself and your organization! If you ask most senior business leader today, one simple question, “What keeps you up at night?” I guarantee, you will hear one or more of at least three major issues:

Major Challenges Facing CEOs ²

1. Customer relations/growing revenue
2. Human capital/growing people
3. Operational excellence/growing operating profit

Business today is tough. Every organization is faced with their share of the same financial challenges and constraints. Since 2008, companies have met many organizational goals with mid to flat revenue growth. While this strategy was accepted at the time and necessary for economic recovery, shareholders are now demanding a return to growth strategies. Wall Street analysts are challenging companies saying, “You can no longer cut and save your way to earnings results, we need to see revenue growth.” ³

“I need to drive topline growth in these challenging times.”

Similarly, pressure is still on to continue to drive ever-increasing operating profits. Since 2008, organizations have worked diligently to cut costs, expenses, and people. The challenge now is to accelerate growth rates of operating profits to the high, single-digit to double-digit rates that had been achieved through cost-cutting and improved efficiency. The fat was cut a long time ago and we are well into the bone. We must now find new ways to drive efficiency.

“We must re-examine every aspect of our business that is not maximizing operating profit.”

The final thing keeping leaders up at night is something that is rarely talked about but always in the front of their mind. There has never been a time where more focus has been paid to company reputation than in today’s business and social environment. In this day and age of corporate hackers, websites, and social media channels, everyone is aware of what goes on in a company. Companies today are constantly being questioned and criticized in social media at every turn. Being a good corporate citizen is no longer enough. You need to manage your company reputation proactively, aggressively, and on a daily basis.

“My company’s reputation is always on the line now, and under constant scrutiny.”

These three issues are the number one reason for companies to rethink their points of view on women. Women today are one of the most significant untapped and underutilized resources in your company.

The purpose of this book is very straightforward. I want you to embrace an integrated organizational approach to women in your organization. Not because it is a nice thing to do but because it is an absolute business imperative. There are three very simple reasons you must treat this as a business imperative.

Growing revenue, improving operating profits, and enhancing your company reputation are the three primary reasons to implement an Integrated Women's Leadership Strategy.

At this point, you may be asking yourself, why is a man writing a book about realigning the entire organization around this opportunity called women? Well, I gave you part of the reason. I am a capitalist . . . and a business consultant. Through an extraordinary set of circumstances, I have spent a significant portion of the last fifteen years focused on women, business, and leadership.

In his book, *The Outliers: The Story of Success*,⁴ Malcolm Gladwell defines an expert as someone who has put in a minimum of 10,000 hours of study on a given subject. By that definition, and compared to most men, I am an expert in the field of women in business and organizations.

However, when my expertise is compared to the average woman, I unabashedly admit that I don't have a clue as to her motivations, challenges, struggles, and the issues that she deals with on an hourly and daily basis. But I am aware, deeply engaged in the conversation, and taking action. It has taken me over thirty years to figure this out and frankly, we don't have time to wait any longer.

The purpose of this book is to create powerful conversations in organizations to drive business results with a sense of urgency. This book is written for senior leaders in organizations, both men and women. That being said, my belief is the primary purchasers of this book will be senior women and HR professionals. As you will see throughout the book, most men and most organizations are not ready to have this conversation. My goal is to change organizational conversations regarding women and to support, educate, and embrace advocates for change.

As one of the female participants in a focus group pointed out upon reading my draft manuscript,

I immediately wanted to give a copy to every male colleague and say “Read this book!”

One of the most powerful lessons I learned in working with women is that you really don’t have to convince them that this is a good idea. They already get it. They live with issues and challenges every day. My job is to convince men (and quite frankly, a few women) that this is really a good thing for them and their organization.

Men also need to hear this message from another man. They need to hear it from a guy who’s been on the front line with bottom line responsibility—and has the scars to prove it. I am going to provide you with facts and data. I’m a man, and if you’re going to convince other men you will need facts and data. Additionally I will say that many men and many organizations are starting to realize the importance of women to their organizations and to their bottom line.

The primary issue that's lacking in most organizations is a true sense of urgency.

It's very easy for leaders to intellectualize these concepts, but it takes an entirely different mindset to internalize them and take action, and do so with a sense of urgency.

We have been talking about women in the workplace and marketplace for over twenty years but the pace of change lacks a true sense of urgency. That should be the goal for leadership and it is the goal of this book.

As a man, it is also not my intent to throw men under the bus. This is not a male-bashing, hyper-feminist left-wing conspiracy book. This book is plainly written for business and executive leaders (still 84 percent men) who want to solve their biggest business issues.

I believe that women provide one of the best solutions for doing this, yet men have a difficult time adjusting to this new line of sight. Men tend to function very well and are quite comfortable in today's world of business and it's not hard to understand why. The world of business was designed by men for men at a time when companies were populated almost exclusively by men. For that underlying reason, it's difficult for men to view their workplace from any other perspective.

Nevertheless, as a leader, you need to take a hard look around the table at your organization and form a realistic view. Chances are, your organization and your leadership team are comprised of people who will never comprehend, let alone be able to internalize and operationalize, these concepts. Increasingly, more men in positions of

leadership are questioning the past and developing this new line of sight.

“I don’t think we have any”

The best example of a company having its own epiphany is one I had the privilege to work with a few years ago. It is a mid-sized publicly traded company with a great corporate culture, great growth, and terrific profits. It is a proto-typical great place to work. Yet, when the company president looked around the table at his executive team, he saw eight white men looking back at him and he said,

“Gentlemen, I don’t know much about this ‘Diversity Thing,’ but as I look around me, I don’t think we have any.”

When you look at your leadership team, what does it look like? Chances are it looks just like this president’s team. What’s important to note is that they were already very successful. It would have been easy to maintain status quo. Instead this visionary leader realized they were missing something. That’s how simple this is . . . and how hard.

Now I know what many of the men are thinking right now: “Eight white men at a table can in fact be diverse.” I will acknowledge that this is true and I would never seek to homogenize any group of individuals. That being said, chances are, most of these men act, behave, and think in a manner very similar to the other men sitting at the table. These men arrived at their position in the company by performing and acting in a very similar manner to the seven other white men in the room.

As I said they were successful but yet realized they were missing something because . . .

***If you look, think and act like me . . .
why do I need you at this table?***

More importantly, do you think, act, and represent the mindset of the majority of your employees and customers? These are important foundational thoughts, but here is how I will break it all down and operationalize the approach for you.

WHY WOMEN

Part One of our book examines how, as leaders of the organization, you need to **Internalize** the business case for women. Part Two draws attention to the five critical business functions needed to **Operationalize** a women's strategy. And Part Three is when everything comes together to guide and **Transform** your organization to a position of strength and success.

Part One will focus on the failure of organizations to truly think of women in a strategic way. Why? Because the strategic business case hasn't been made strongly and crisply enough by leaders who have real bottom line responsibility. The real value is beyond compelling.

The problem is . . .

Leadership has intellectualized the numbers and the objectives, but they've never internalized it, placed economic value on it, and held their organizations responsible for truly driving change.

Most organizations have failed to think strategically about women as a business opportunity and the potential solution to their biggest business problems. In Part One, we will set the context for creating a Strategic Integrated Women's Leadership Framework. We will examine why it's hard to do and examine what a solid foundation looks like.

What Men Aren't Telling Women

Chapter 2 is written for raging capitalists and for the women who want to know what men think about this topic. The answers may surprise you.

I will share the three things that you will NEVER hear a man say regarding women in organizations.

We will take a very practical approach and examine the primary reasons to launch a total enterprise realignment for women. And we will explore why change has been so slow in coming.

The 80/80/80 Solution

Chapter 3 will provide a specific measureable business case for change, which I term "The 80/80/80 Solution." The numbers you will

examine are your company's numbers, so you really won't be able to debate them. These numbers will motivate you to take a critical look at why we should even bother doing this work.

Having established the "Why" of the business case, we will then begin to look at the "How." How do you begin to operationalize your plan through your existing business functions, processes, and systems?

Part Two of the book will examine the critical business functions that are the most important for success. Specifically, I will take a deep dive into the responsibilities and interdependencies of:

- Marketing and Sales
- Operations and the Field
- Human Resources
- Senior Management
- Corporate Communications and Company Reputation

The \$20 Trillion "Niche"

Globally, women spend \$20 trillion annually, yet many companies still consider women a specialty market segment instead of the dominant force they are. In the United States, that number is \$7 trillion. Chapter 4 will focus on sales and marketing and the machine known as the "American Female Shopper." Women in the United States today spend more money than the economies of India and China combined!⁵ And while this should be a convincing statistic for business leaders interested in who's driving the U.S. economy . . .

Many organizations still view the female shopper as a niche!

In our chapter, “The \$20 Trillion Niche,” we will not only look at the market opportunity, but we will examine the challenges and issues many organizations and industries’ marketing and sales functions are facing in trying to do this right.

The Field Factor

Chapter 5 uncovers probably the greatest challenge facing organizations today. It is also the least talked about, researched, and understood. We will take a deep dive into that corporate area called “The Field.” This is where CEOs come from and it is a virtual desert for women to navigate. The C-suite is populated by line managers and leaders—those with sales, operating, and supply chain roles, and those with P&L responsibilities. I will show you that almost . . .

***Every one of the female CEOs in America today
has come from or spent time in the field.***

In “The Field Factor” we will examine how meritocracies really play themselves out and how the nature of the work, organizational requirements, and personal challenges combine to create a “perfect storm” of issues that prohibit women from staying and advancing to the highest level of the organization.

The HR Paradox

Chapter 6 focuses on human capital and the programs and processes of Human Resources. In “The HR Paradox,” we will examine the critical programs that are necessary in recruiting, retaining, and advancing women and why HR alone cannot be the sole owner of this responsibility.

There has never been a greater time in business history for Human Resources to redefine their role as strategists and secure a more important seat at the table.

I will examine critical and interdependent HR programs and processes that are not only important to winning with women but also necessary for winning with all employees.

The Leadership Imperative

Chapter 7 focuses the critical role of leadership today to creating an Integrated Women’s Leadership Strategy that holds the organization accountable. Today, companies measure every aspect of their business—from production, to sales, to profit—and they hold people accountable for quality, goal attainment, and efficiency. Yet in most companies, the critical and future-defining element of “women’s leadership” is missing in that set of critical metrics. In many organizations, it’s not even acknowledged.

This chapter will examine how organizations can create a true Integrated Women’s Leadership Scorecard and hold people accountable for their relevant deliverables and success. We will also

examine the role of Senior Leadership—not just HR—in owning a “Leadership Mindset” around the Scorecard.

The Company Reputation Connection

Chapter 8 examines the final, but perhaps most overlooked element in a strategic plan: the role of company reputation. This last critical element serves as both one of the reasons “to do this” and also is one of the Key Business Levers. Your Company Reputation is an expectation and if you are a publicly traded company today, the public and your shareowners are looking to you for leadership.

The timing and importance of this function have never been more important and I will examine the connection that women can play in supporting, or jeopardizing, your brands, your workplace, and your overall company reputation.

In Part Three, “Realigning the Organization for Success,” I will provide an Organizational Toolkit that focuses on the critical factors needed to make this all work including, middle manager buy-in, male engagement, and other issues we never talk about in the hallways of corporate America.

The Need for Male Champions

Chapter 9 discusses one of the most significant keys to operationalizing your women’s strategy. Engaging men as champions and visual advocates who recognize the value of women is the cornerstone of organizational success. I believe that upwards of 20

percent of men are “ready-now” and willing to support the advancement of women. The actual number may even be higher. Men just need to be invited into the conversation.

I will explore the characteristics of Male Champions and why this is such a tough topic for men. We will look at how most of a man’s upbringing and cultural male norms work against us to support women in the workplace. Finally,

I will discuss the absolute responsibility that I believe fathers of daughters have to becoming visible and vocal advocates for women.

The Unmentionables

Chapter 10 will examine a few of the things that are rarely talked about in workplace settings. What are the real and often hidden impediments that most organizations face in executing an Integrated Women’s Leadership Strategy? I’ll examine organizational barriers and how companies can overcome them. I’ll also explore personal challenges that often arise and have the potential to thwart your efforts in doing this work effectively.

The RAVING CAPITALIST Action Plan

My summary at the end of the book will provide the actions needed to attack this work with a sense of urgency. This will provide you a final checklist to finalize your leadership strategy. This will not only serve as a recap for the plan you’ve written with me throughout this book, but also offer a summary checklist of the most important elements to

winning with women. Finally, I will provide a glimpse into future trends that will be impacting the future of women, men, and organizations in the next five years . . . and beyond.

I began this introductory chapter by declaring that women can be the solution to some of your organization’s biggest problems such as growing topline revenue, driving increased operating profit, and enhancing your company reputation.

Women are in the news every day, from powerful statistics on their influence in the marketplace, to cable news and talk shows on leadership, to global summits on women’s rights and values. This topic is only going to become more important.

As a leader, you have two choices: you can choose to ignore this obvious opportunity or you can harness it to improve the bottom line results of your organization.

You will notice the word “YWomen” used multiple times in my book. YWomen, is the name of my strategic consulting practice. The “Y” represents the Y chromosome, which as you know is the biological differentiator between a male and a female. My work focuses on creating integrated women’s leadership strategies by engaging men (i.e., the Y chromosomes). This is accomplished by engaging both men and women in a meaningful business dialogue regarding the power of women in organizations.

YWomen is designed to serve as a constant reminder to the reader that this work cannot be successful without engaging men in women’s leadership initiatives.

It's 2015. Why are we still talking about Women and Diversity?

Many millennials, both young men and women, question why we are still talking about this topic. Haven't we moved past this? Progressive companies like Tom's Shoes, Zappos, and Whole Foods aren't even talking about gender. Isn't great leadership genderless? The short answer is yes. The longer answer is many companies still haven't figured this out. Whether it is corporate culture, historical barriers, or a host of other organizational issues many companies are acknowledging they have challenges and what they have done in the past isn't working.

For this reason you will note that I often will use the words “women” and “diversity” interchangeably. While my work today focuses primarily on women, the frameworks, question raised, and the solutions are also applicable to many of today's organizational issues regarding race, multiculturalism, age, sexual orientation, and other deeper dimensions of diversity. My belief is, if organizations cannot have meaningful and actionable conversations regarding women then it may be premature to have a deeper dialogue regarding other types of differences in the marketplace and workplace.

How to Read this Book

First, every chapter starts out with a story. Stories are one of the critical ways to deepen your cultural competency in an area. These personal stories are designed to guide you to your own epiphany as

they have for me. Each is true and each is served as a key learning moment in my journey. My hope is these stories will speed your learnings as you do not have time to waste to have your epiphany.

Second, look for the,

Call-outs that appear mid-page in bold. These are key quotes to help you quickly glean an idea. Many have a footnote which you can examine in greater detail in the reference list.

Third, as you as read you will find bullets in boxes.

W These are significant facts, data, and research that can provide provocative discussion topics for your organization.

Fourth, at the end of each chapter, you will find **Summary Points** of the key concepts from the chapter. The summary points are also ideal as ready-made discussion points for meetings with individuals, teams, or larger operating units in the organization.

Fifth, at the end of each chapter are a series of **WHY WOMEN Readiness Assessment** questions. These questions will be asked at the end of each chapter and also summarized at the end of the book to form a thirty-point organizational readiness assessment.

Finally, I will reference **Deepening Your Learning** elements. These are various books, links, and case studies that you can examine to deepen your learning in these areas.

Why Women: The Leadership Imperative to Advancing Women and Engaging Men, is 100 percent dependent on you taking action, questioning the status quo, and examining this opportunity with the sense of urgency you would give to any other \$100 million new project.

Every year I attend a large number of women's leadership conferences and each event is invariably a sellout with standing room only crowds. Women today are hungry to learn, to lead, and to aspire to the highest ranks of every organization. There is a collectiveness growing in this country regarding women, and a tsunami of change on the horizon.

At these conferences, I am usually one of only a dozen men in attendance. I will tell you firsthand, you cannot stand in a room of 2,500 women without feeling the kinetic energy of their unity and optimism. The takeaway for me is clear,

***The tsunami of change on the horizon is coming
and it's called Women!***

Summary Points from Chapter 1

- Most organizations have failed to think strategically about women as a business opportunity and how that strategy may possibly be the solution to some of their biggest business problems.
- For over twenty years, the business case has been clearly documented for women yet very little progress has been made. It simply hasn't been given a sense of urgency and articulated strongly enough by leaders with real bottom line responsibility.
- To be successful today, each sector of the organization must own a portion of your Women's Leadership Strategy and all sectors must be integrated in their business plan, metrics, policies, and procedures—including marketing, sales, operations, HR, and your senior leadership team.
- Your company reputation is under attack daily. Companies can no longer feel isolated and must work diligently to protect this valuable asset.
- Engaging men as champions and visual advocates who recognize the value of women is the cornerstone of organizational success. They must be leaders who get it and walk the talk every day in their actions and communications.

WHY WOMEN Readiness Assessment

1. If you think about the biggest issues that your organization is facing, those challenges that “keep you up at night,” how can you better leverage an Integrated Women’s Leadership Strategy as a potential solution?
2. As you look at the leadership team around you, does this group think, act, and truly represent the mindset of the majority of your employees and customers?
3. How is your organization moving from a conceptual conversation regarding women to strategies and programs that help to internalize and operationalize a women’s leadership strategy for all employees?

Deepening Your Learning

— Book —

Reimagine!: Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age, Tom Peters

— Online Article —

“Can Women Fix Capitalism?” McKinsey & Company (Sep 2014)

— Website —

<http://www.womenetics.com>

Bibliography

¹ Tom Peters, *Re-Imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age* (New York: DK Publishing, 2003)

² “The Conference Board CEO Challenge® 2014: People and Performance,” <https://www.conference-board.org/topics/publicationdetail.cfm?publicationid=2681>

³ “Wall Street Questions U.S. Companies’ Revenue Growth,” <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/81a008ae-f7f9-11e3-90fa-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3Mj6kO1lM>

⁴ *The Outliers: The Story of Success*, (New York, Hachette Book Group, 2008), p. 37

⁵ “The Female Economy,” *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2009/09/the-female-economy>