Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia
• China • India • Japan • Singapore

"The Gender Diversity Benchmark Report enormously enhances our understanding of the challenges faced by companies seeking to 'move the dial' on diversity in Asia. This new report is valuable on three fronts: It creates a 'roadmap' - charting the progress of women in key Asian economies. It allows global companies to compare their performance with competitors in the region. And it permits companies to identify best and next practice. What initiatives and programs have been most helpful in accelerating progress?

Threading through this report is a powerful business case. Given the dramatic economic and demographic shifts in Asia, women need to be much better leveraged. Companies - and nations - cannot afford a 'leaking pipeline' when it comes to female talent."

Sylvia Ann Hewlett PhD
Founding President of the Center for Work-Life Policy and Director of the Gender and Public Policy Program at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, USA.

Participating Companies:
American Express, Barclays Capital, Cisco, Goldman Sachs, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, PepsiCo International - Asia, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank

Sponsored by
Shalini Mahtani
Anne Marie Francesco
Winnie Ng
March 2009
About Community Business

Community Business is a unique membership-based, non-profit organisation, whose mission is to lead, inspire and support businesses to continually 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 diversity in the workplace, corporate community investment and CSR strategy and policy. Founded in 2003 and based in Hong Kong, Community Business works with a number of organisations, small, medium and large, committed to CSR. For more information, visit [www.communitybusiness.org.hk](http://www.communitybusiness.org.hk)

Acknowledgements

At Community Business we are grateful to the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network for initiating this research and working with us to develop its shape and scope. Thank you to our participating companies, including American Express, Barclays Capital, Cisco, Goldman Sachs, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, PepsiCo International - Asia, Shell and Standard Chartered Bank. In addition, thank you to American Express for funding this project.

Community Business would like to thank Norma Jarboe, former Director of Opportunity Now, Business in the Community in the United Kingdom for providing us with invaluable counsel on gender benchmarking.

Thank you to Kate Vernon for helping shape the benchmark project, Sandy Chan for designing the cover, and Chris Lau for taking notes and collating the responses from the phone interviews. Finally, thank you to Annemarie Evans for editing this report.

Contact Us

Email: info@communitybusiness.org.hk
Telephone: (852) 2152 1889
URL: [www.communitybusiness.org.hk](http://www.communitybusiness.org.hk)

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Foreword by Community Business

The Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia is the first gender benchmark report on companies operating in this region. It is a significant milestone for gender diversity in the workplace, and I applaud all the participating companies for their commitment to women in the workplace in Asia.

This Report was the brainchild of the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network - a core group of companies in Asia dedicated to understanding diversity issues in various markets in the region. One of the key objectives of the Network is to collectively deliver a tangible output each year that will go some way towards furthering the discussion of diversity in Asia. The tangible output chosen by the Network in 2008 is this Report.

Why the focus on women? Women make up more than half of the world’s population and a significant percentage of the workforce in all four countries - China, India, Japan and Singapore - in this Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia. Women are also important consumers of goods and services worldwide. It is therefore necessary to have a balanced number of women leaders in companies as they often better understand and reflect the needs of women employees and customers alike. Research has proven, time and again, that having more women leaders is good for business.

Companies that want to capitalise on the talent that women bring to leadership understand the importance of tracking the representation of women at different levels. It is only when we begin to measure gender ratios that companies can assess their own progress over a period of time and also compare their performance with other companies.

This Report will give a clear indication of the percentages of women we are seeing at junior, middle and senior levels in the workplace in leading companies across the region. The Report also provides insights into what women leaders say has helped them and also what has hindered their progress. This Report will provide you an opportunity to benchmark your company’s performance on gender diversity with others.

This Report is a very positive first step in benchmarking, and over time, my hope is that it will evolve, as gender benchmarks have done elsewhere, to include greater detail and more companies.

I hope this Report will encourage other companies to be part of this benchmark in future years.

Yours sincerely,

Shalini Mahtani, MBE
Founder & Chief Executive Officer
Community Business
Foreword by Sponsor

To quote our Senior Vice President and General Manager for Merchant Services Asia Pacific, Tracey Bowra, “For American Express, diversity represents a range of opportunities and challenges that are central to our ongoing success as a global organization in the 21st century. We are a global company, serving diverse people around the world, and our success is based on how well we embrace diversity in our work force. It is a key advantage in serving our evolving customer base and in entering the new, high growth markets we have targeted. Diversity is essential to maintain market share, a competitive edge and ensure long-term survival. It builds bridges to new markets, new products and new customers. A diverse workplace is a laboratory for new ideas. Beyond being a good corporate citizen, practicing Diversity and Inclusion is critical to business survival.”

The first Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network (DIAN) was launched in April 2008, and, as one of the founding partners, American Express was proud to be the sponsor for this important regional benchmarking research on diversity. The 13 founding members have ranked “gender in the workplace” as a priority diversity issue across the region for 2008. It is without a doubt that women have progressed significantly in the workplace over the years, and women continue to make their mark in the business world, becoming influential figures in the world of business, economics and politics. Companies must be committed to giving women a fair chance to develop their potential without being subjected to discrimination or barriers.

I am proud to say that American Express is committed to fostering and reinforcing an organizational culture in which individuals are enabled to contribute to their fullest potential by leveraging their unique experiences, perspectives, and viewpoints for the collective benefit of all stakeholders. At American Express, we firmly believe in developing female talent in the workplace.

Companies need to adopt an open and supportive mindset towards women in order to fully harness their talent and potential. Ultimately, this will benefit business in the long run.

In order to do so, metrics and benchmarking to access levels of progress in this area are vital and that is why American Express believes this first benchmark report on women in leadership positions in Asia will help all of us to advance discussion in this area.

We would like to thank Community Business for developing this report and DIAN’s 11 multinational corporation members that contribute for the important work done throughout 2008 and the commitment to this benchmark work.

Yours sincerely,

Bianca S.K. Stringuini
International Diversity Manager (on behalf of the JAPA Diversity Council)
American Express Intl.
Executive Summary

The Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia is an initiative of the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network. This is a unique network of diversity professionals from 13 companies brought together by Community Business. One of the objectives of the Network is to collectively deliver a tangible output each year that will go some way towards furthering the discussion of diversity in Asia. The tangible output chosen by the Network in 2008 is this Benchmark Report.

The objectives of the Benchmark Report are to:
- Enable companies to compare:
  - their company’s own performance across key areas in Asia, and;
  - their company’s performance with other leading multinational companies operating in the same country
- Assist companies in identifying what is working and what other measures need to be taken to further the progress of women in the workplace in Asia
- Develop a benchmark for the region which can track progress over time.

Eleven companies participated in Part I: What Successful Women in Asia Say by nominating two women leaders who work in the countries of interest. The women leaders were interviewed by telephone and asked to respond to questions related to their personal profile, factors contributing to their success, challenges, women’s contribution to business, empowering others, and conditions for women in the countries in which they worked. Ten of the 11 companies also participated in Part II: What the Numbers Tell Us by providing company data about the number of employees and percentages of women overall and at different levels within each of the four countries where they had operations.

The women we interviewed primarily came from working or middle class families where there was a focus on hard work. They often took part in extracurricular activities that allowed them to demonstrate leadership at an early age. The women felt that personal characteristics such as being hard working, willing to take risks, and being reliable contributed to their success. They also received good external support from mentors and bosses, and the organisations where they had previously worked. Growth in key markets, in particular China and India, was also seen as a contributor to success.

When discussing the challenges they faced in achieving their current roles, the women were reluctant to say that those challenges were gender related. But, they did list many challenges that were more likely to be raised by women. Work-life balance, filling quotas, doing “extra” to prove oneself, and making sacrifices such as giving up time with family were all mentioned. Some women also mentioned that it was difficult to strike a balance between being assertive and being aggressive.

In their current roles, the women continued to struggle with maintaining a good work-life balance and also experienced some of the other gender-related challenges mentioned above. They also found it challenging to find executive sponsors and to think about their next career moves. Another concern was the more strategic nature of their jobs which removed them from day-to-day operations.

When asked to comment on how women contribute to business, our leaders focused on the need for diversity and inclusion in a global workforce. They also told us that they thought many women were better at seeing things in certain ways - women were more creative and humane for example. They also said that women could contribute by acting as role models for other women and having a better understanding of female customers.

Our senior women managers suggested a number of things companies could do to increase the participation of women at senior levels. They said there was a great need for positive female role models. They also recommended that senior
management should be held accountable for results tracked through gender metrics and gender ratios. Companies should review their appraisal processes and ensure leaders were not gender biased and provide gender sensitivity training to all leaders. Finally, it was seen as important to identify high potential women and create a pipeline that would give women visibility and access to executive sponsorship.

The women leaders also identified a number of actions they could take themselves, including giving their female direct reports stretch jobs and taking risks with them, sharing experiences with more junior women, mentoring high potential women, and acting as advocates for them.

Finally, in looking at the favourability of each country for women living and working there, there was a very different picture in each country. In China, the positives were that it was a dynamic and exciting place to work and develop a career with a lot of demand for talent and many opportunities. There was also good availability of affordable domestic help and other women in leadership positions who were role models. On the negative side were the lingering effects of chauvinism. Some felt women were treated unfairly, and others suggested that there was a cultural expectation that women take a bigger role in the family as caregivers, taking care of children and housework.

In India, a major economic transformation has resulted in many opportunities for women, and there are many more women in senior positions, creating positive role models. Extended families and affordable domestic help ease some of the family burden. On the negative side was a culture of diversity and equality that was still in the very early stages of development and an expectation amongst extended family members that the career of a married woman should be less important than her husband’s. Large differences between the working environment in multinational and local companies were also noted.

In Japan, the positives were greater government and company focus on women and more opportunities for women than there had been previously. Japan was also seen as very safe, clean, and efficient. For the negative factors, the leaders noted that Japan was still a male-orientated culture, and it was difficult for women leaders to gain acceptance, particularly from men. There was also a lack of understanding and support for pregnant women.

Singapore was seen in a very positive light with support and sympathy for working mothers, incentives to support women in the workplace, such as taxes and schools, many female role models and many women in the workforce. Singapore was viewed as an easy place to manage a family as it is small and everything is close by. There is affordable domestic help, a good education infrastructure, and it is safe. On the negative side, working hours may be long.

In looking at Part II: What the Numbers Tell Us, in all countries, except Singapore, the participating companies on average employ a smaller percentage of women than are employed in the corresponding national labour force. However, there is wide variation among the companies, and several have a much higher percentage of female employees than are employed nationwide. The percentages of females were generally highest at the junior level and lowest at the senior level across countries and companies. Overall, there were more women employed in the companies in China and Singapore than in India and Japan.

Based on these findings, we concluded that both the women leaders - and the companies where they work - have done a great deal to promote gender diversity in Asia. However, as the numbers show, a “leaking pipeline” results in very few women in senior positions, indicating that both the women and the companies must continue the good work that they have started and work even harder to achieve true gender diversity.
Introduction: The Business Case for Gender Diversity

The Business Link

There is a business case for investment in diversity policies. Academic experts have believed for some time that with an increasingly more diverse global workforce, effective management of diversity can be a competitive advantage.

This view is supported by human resource leaders in the United States who believe that diversity initiatives positively affect the company’s competitive advantage (91%) and improve corporate culture (79%), employee recruitment (77%), and client relations (52%). Further, major companies in the United Kingdom at the cutting edge of good practice in diversity, overwhelmingly support the idea that diversity policies contribute to economic success.

How a company manages diversity may even influence their stock price. Companies that were recognised by the United States Department of Labour for exemplary Affirmative Action programmes experienced stock price increases. This was in contrast to those companies that had to pay to settle discrimination lawsuits who saw a decrease in their stock values.

Women’s Participation in the Workforce

Analysts at Goldman Sachs believe that by increasing the number of women in the workforce - thus narrowing the gap between male and female employment rates - it would result in a hugely positive impact on the global economy. The results have already been proven in Europe where increased female labour force participation over the 10-year period from the mid-1990s accounts for a significant proportion of economic growth. The concept of “Womenomics” developed by Goldman Sachs analysts in Japan suggests increased female labour force participation can boost Japan’s growth rate and have a positive impact on performance in many Japanese companies.

Women as Leaders

Companies that have greater numbers of women on their boards of directors outperform those with fewer numbers. A comparison of the financial performance of Fortune 500 companies over a number of years showed that those with more women board members outperformed those with fewer board members in terms of return on equity, return on sales, and return on invested capital. These findings generally held across industries.

Women as Customers

Since women make the majority of purchase decisions for themselves and their families, it is important that companies understand the female perspective in order to successfully market their products and services. For example, in the United States women are directly involved in 85% of purchases and influence 95% of all products/services sold.
Background

The Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia is an initiative of the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network, which is a unique network of diversity professionals from 13 companies brought together by Community Business.

About the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network (“Network”)  

The Network has three principle objectives:
- To build strong relationships between members to maximise the benefits of networking
- To facilitate knowledge sharing and development of best practice
- To collectively deliver a tangible output each year that will go some way to progressing the discussion of diversity in Asia

About the Gender Diversity Benchmark Report for Asia (“Benchmark Report”)  

The Network members understand that the full participation of women in the workplace is essential for business growth and success. They also understand the value in tracking gender participation in their companies against other best practice companies in the region. While gender benchmarking tools exist in the United States and Europe, until now they have not existed in Asia.

Community Business together with network members and external counsel determined the scope of this Benchmark Report. Network members determined the countries to be covered.

The objectives of the Benchmark Report are to:
1. Enable companies to compare:
   - their company’s own performance across key geographies in Asia, and;
   - their company’s performance with other leading multinational companies operating in their countries
2. Assist companies in identifying what is working and what other measures need to be taken to further women in the workplace in Asia
3. Develop a benchmark for the region that can track progress over time

In order to achieve this, it was decided that this Benchmark Report should include both a qualitative and a quantitative element. While data tracking is important, it is also crucial to hear some of the stories behind the numbers. Therefore this Benchmark Report also includes interviews with women leaders across the participating companies.

This Benchmark Report is divided into two parts, Part I: What Successful Women in Asia Say and Part II: What the Numbers Tell Us About Women at Different Levels and in Different Countries in Asia.

Ten network members participated in both Part I and II of this Benchmark Report, and one additional network member participated only in Part I. Participating companies include: American Express, Barclays Capital, Cisco, Goldman Sachs, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Merrill Lynch, Microsoft, PepsiCo International - Asia, Shell and Standard Chartered Bank.
Methodology

Consultation Process
An online survey was sent to network members in October 2007 to solicit ideas and thoughts on the Network deliverable for 2008. At a conference call in November 2007, the network members agreed to work on a gender benchmark report for Asia.

Network members met in Singapore and India in April and June 2008 respectively and together with Community Business and external counsel fleshed out details of the Benchmark Report, including its objectives, scope, process, definitions, data tracking template and interview questions.

Scope of Research
This report covers four key markets in Asia. They are: China, India, Japan and Singapore.

Findings

Part I: What Successful Women in Asia Say

Selection
Participating companies were asked to nominate two women leaders from the countries covered in the report. It was agreed that the women nominated should be:
- in management and widely respected
- based in the selected country with a good understanding of the issues in that country

Community Business selected the women to be interviewed in each country and worked directly with each company to set up interviews. Our aim, as far as possible, was to interview and profile an equal number of women from each of the four countries.

Interviews
A 60-minute phone interview took place with each woman in the months from September to November 2008. Interview questions were related to their personal profile, factors contributing to their success, challenges, women’s contribution to business, empowering others and conditions for women in the countries in which they worked. A full list of interview questions can be found in the Appendix.

In each interview, there were at least two interviewers. They included Shalini Mahtani, CEO of Community Business, Kate Vernon, Managing Director of Community Business and/or Dr. Anne Marie Francesco, Professor of Management at the Hong Kong Baptist University. A Community Business intern was also on each call to assist with note taking.

Responses of the interviewees have informed this section of the Benchmark Report, and where applicable, country differences have also been cited. The views of the individual women are anonymous unless prior permission to use their names has been obtained.

The views expressed here are the views of the women interviewed and cannot be assumed to be the views of all women leaders operating in the corporate sector in these countries.
Part II: What the Numbers Tell Us

Collection of Data
A data template was sent out to all the participating companies in July 2008. Participating companies were asked to provide the company data below in each of the four locations:

- total number of employees
- the percentage of women in the workforce
- the percentage of women in junior level positions
- the percentage of women in middle level positions
- the percentage of women in senior level positions

Participating companies were asked to determine the definition of junior, middle and senior level positions within their companies. Where there was confusion of definition, Community Business provided clarification and communicated this to other participating companies to ensure that all companies had the same understanding.

Participating companies were asked to submit data with year end as of 31 December 2007. However, due to internal reasons, not all companies were able to do this and therefore provided data as close as possible to this date.

Data Analysis
Community Business has relied entirely on each company to provide complete and accurate data and has not undertaken to check any of the data given to us. When Community Business received completed data tracking forms from participating companies, their company names were removed from these forms and sent to Dr. Anne Marie Francesco who collated and analysed all data.

Please note as you read the data in this report: each company is different, each industry is different and company sizes can have a significant impact on the percentages presented.

Due to confidentiality, data shown in this report is not attributed to the individual participating companies.
Findings
Part I: What Successful Women in Asia Say
Profile of Women Leaders Interviewed (by Alphabetical Order of Last Name)

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Country Living In</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karen FAWCETT</td>
<td>Managing Director and Head of China Company</td>
<td>Barclays Capital</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>GOH See Chen</td>
<td>VP, Business and Financial Solutions</td>
<td>American Express</td>
<td>India</td>
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<td>Kyoko IMAMURA</td>
<td>Director of Medical Affairs</td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson</td>
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<td>Cindy LAU Ching-Han</td>
<td>President, Consumer Group, China</td>
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<td>Yumiko ITO</td>
<td>Associate General Counsel Executive Officer</td>
<td>Microsoft Company, Limited</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kayoko KAWAMURA</td>
<td>Director, Open Application Development, GBS</td>
<td>IBM, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alka MANCHANDA</td>
<td>Director, Engineering</td>
<td>Cisco, India</td>
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What inspires you the most?
- "Excellence - and those who pursue it. I am inspired by challenging people to exceed what even they may have thought possible. I have seen examples of innovation and creativity from those who are determined to achieve nothing less than excellence. This is the belief that I try to instill in all my teams. As a leader, I challenge my team to maximise their potential and go from ‘Good’ to ‘Great’.

What was your proudest moment?
- "I don’t think I have had my proudest moment yet!... but there have been a number of highlights. These include getting into Cambridge and the opportunities I have to influence the development of others in my current role. For me every day is an opportunity to challenge yourself to be your best and to achieve something to be proud of."

What inspires you the most?
- "Networking, team members"

What was your proudest moment?
- "Helping my team to be successful. I have my proudest moment every month when members of my team achieve their target."

What inspires you the most?
- "Courage"

What was your proudest moment?
- "Helping my team to be successful. I have my proudest moment every month when members of my team achieve their target."

What inspires you the most?
- "The ambition to get things done and to win"

What was your proudest moment?
- "I am really inspired by people who have overcome huge challenges and odds to achieve a goal they set for themselves while being passionate, persevering and honest about what they want. For example, Mark Inglis who was a double amputee who climbed Mount Everest and Lance Armstrong who overcame cancer to become a [cycling] champion. These people are truly inspirational. I get very excited when I hear stories like that..."

What was your proudest moment?
- "When I was promoted to the role I am in today, it is a role that involves leading one of the largest teams we have in American Express India. It is a complex role; it has a huge amount of cross-functional project work across the globe and is about driving and managing a huge amount of change. It felt wonderful that the company had the faith in me to do the role."

What inspires you the most?
- "The first time was the letter of admission and scholarship to go to the United States for undergraduate studies. This is the moment I remember so clearly in my mind. I grew up in India and my parents had never stepped out of India and had no idea that I was applying for these colleges and wanted to go to the U.S. I received a telegram as this was 20 years ago. I graduated Magna Cum Laude and was very proud."

What inspires you the most?
- "The launch of a product where the ethical, health and safety of the product needed a lot of attention. After all our efforts, we achieved a great launch, so giving hope to cancer patients. Also when I got my PhD from the University of London"

What inspires you the most?
- "Seeing young Chinese become very successful leaders and I love to read their success stories."

What was your proudest moment?
- "When I was transferred to Taiwan as marketing director, because of the high turnover in the company, it was difficult to find people to join the team. However, after six months, I was able to recruit a new team and turn the situation around. Later, many members of the team became successful marketing leaders in different companies."
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Country Living In</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kalpana MARGABANDHU</td>
<td>Director, Adapters, WPG and WDI Development and AIM Development, India, Indian Women’s Leadership Council, Chairperson</td>
<td>IBM</td>
<td>India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gyan NEWMAN</td>
<td>Managing Director, E-Commerce Sales</td>
<td>Barclays Capital</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mari M. SAITO</td>
<td>VP &amp; Head Global Establishment Services for Japan and Korea</td>
<td>American Express</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathy M. MATSUI</td>
<td>Managing Director and Chief Japan Strategist, Co-Director of Pan Asian Investment Research</td>
<td>Goldman Sachs</td>
<td>Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chiang Ling NG</td>
<td>Managing Director - Real Estate Principal Investment Area</td>
<td>Goldman Sachs</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>SHI Xiao Li</td>
<td>Shell Global Solutions General Manager</td>
<td>Shell</td>
<td>China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaku NAKHATE</td>
<td>Managing Director, Co-head of Equities DSP Merrill Lynch Ltd. India</td>
<td>DSP Merrill Lynch</td>
<td>India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yoriko OZAWA</td>
<td>Managing Director - Head of Investor Client Coverage Group, Japan</td>
<td>Merrill Lynch</td>
<td>Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica TAN</td>
<td>Managing Director, Microsoft Operations</td>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>Singapore</td>
</tr>
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**What inspires you the most?**
- "Working with people who are passionate about their work and the technology they work on."
- "The chance to make a difference and the opportunity to accomplish something that seems impossible."
- "Knowing that I had played a part in her success and that I was recognised for her achievements and given a big award."
- "Talent inspires me and the possibilities that can be achieved. I get charged up by people who are good at what they do and want to make a difference."

**What was your proudest moment?**
- "Two life changing moments for all women in India."
- "In 2006, when I ‘regained my former self’. I had been ranked number 1 before I was diagnosed with breast cancer and when I returned after my recovery in 2002, it took me a few years before I could reach that level of performance again."
- "The day when one of my best salespeople was achieved. I get charged up by people who are good at what they do and want to make a difference."
- "The day I made Managing Director."

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**Company:** [www.communitybusiness.org.hk](http://www.communitybusiness.org.hk)
Profile of Women Leaders Interviewed (Continued)

Name: Annie YOUNG-SCRIVNER
Title: Chairman
Company: PepsiCo Foods (China) Co., Ltd
Country Living In: China

What inspires you the most?
“Watching the growth and development of my team and seeing how they can accelerate to the next level”

What was your proudest moment?
“My proudest moment was when I had my children.”

Name: Geetu VERMA
Title: Executive Director
Company: PepsiCo India
Country Living In: India

What inspires you the most?
“The challenge of being able to make a difference. It must be in an environment with like-minded, inspired individuals whose experiences are diverse and I can draw upon.”

What was your proudest moment?
“My proudest moment was a career moment related to my work for the Indian snacks team. I was part of the section team that had grown the business from a very small size to that of market leader. I was responsible for creating the marketing function, leading the strategic portfolio and I was proud of what we were able to create as a team.”

Name: Rose WANG
Title: Director, Government Affairs & Corporate Marketing, Cisco Systems (China) Networking Technology Co., Ltd.
Company: Cisco Systems
Country Living In: China

What inspires you the most?
“Trying to achieve something bigger than yourself”

What was your proudest moment?
“The proudest moment was when I passed the admission exams to enrol into the [prestigious] Foreign Affairs College in China. I was one out of 100 people to get in.”

Additional Profile Information (of the 21 women leaders)

Age
The age range of the women leaders interviewed was between 34 and 56 and the average was 44.7 years.

Educational Attainment
The highest level of education for six of the interviewees was a Bachelor’s degree, for 14 women it was a Master’s degree and for one woman a doctorate degree.

Marital Status
At the time of the interview, three women were single, 16 married and two divorced.

Children
Eight women had no children, three women had one child, eight women had two children and two women had three children. The age of the children ranged from three to 24 years old.
Factors Contributing to Success

In this section, the focus was on identifying factors that contributed to the success of the women leaders. The women commented on their personal stories, personal characteristics that contributed to their success, and external factors that helped them to be successful.

Personal Lives

Many of our women leaders come from working class or middle class families often characterised by a strong work ethic and a focus on education. When they were younger, they often were involved in extra-curricular activities such as sports, competitions, and work, and many had opportunities to study and/or work abroad. The women received support and encouragement from their parents, extended family members, teachers, and bosses. Several women considered their willingness to work hard as a contributor to success or told us that they were not afraid to take chances. This is a typical story from one of our women leaders:

“Our parents felt that it was important for us to have good values as children so I started working on our family farm at an early age as our parents believed that money did not grow on trees. It had to be earned.”

Personal Characteristics

When asked what personal characteristics contributed to their professional success, our women leaders named a number of traits that characterise successful people in general. Many considered themselves to be optimistic, positive thinkers. They told us they were curious, inquisitive, open to new ideas and opportunities, willing to take risks, and comfortable embracing change. As one manager told us:

“I am not afraid to take risks. By thinking positively, I can always find a solution.”

Many of the women also mentioned that they were persistent and would never give up:

“Nothing is easy. There are a lot of difficulties in life, and some people give up, but I keep on going. I knew from a young age that I was persistent and hard working.”

Several of our leaders said that they enjoyed working with others, that they were people-orientated, inclusive and team players. For example, one woman said:

“I have a collaborative style that helps people to work together. I reach out and build relationships, and that inspires trust in others.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders

Karen Fawcett | Standard Chartered Bank

“Pursue excellence and aspire to be the absolute best you can be.”

Goh Swee Chen | Shell

“Leadership is genderless. Whatever you do, be the best you can be. Whether you are male or female is interesting but not relevant.”
Many leaders also responded that they were very focused, reliable and able to get things done. A very typical response was:

“I put in more hours than most when I want to get something done. I am reliable and can be depended on.”

Other characteristics that were also considered to contribute to success included being a good communicator, passionate, open, honest, having integrity, the ability to learn continually, a strategic thinker, sincere, humble, fun loving, and flexible.

**External Factors**
The most important external factor mentioned by the women leaders as contributing to their success was the support they received from mentors or bosses and from their families. The following three quotes illustrate this:

“Mentors, both informal and formal. They are my personal board of directors, giving me a third party perspective on critical decisions. Most of my mentors have been informal; in fact there wasn’t any mentoring programme at [name of company] when I joined.”

“I had leaders who believed in me. I had one manager who, when he saw my potential, moved me to the next level, even before I thought I was ready.”

“I have a facilitating family environment. My parents take care of my kids. My husband is proud of my career, and he steps in when I need support.”

The women also considered the support they received from colleagues, friends, clients, and teachers as well as the training, coaching, or education they had been given as contributing to their success.

Another important category of external factors was related to the organisations where they worked currently or in the past. Many of these companies provided them with good opportunities or good platforms, had supportive organisational policies, or performance-related cultures where gender and age were not barriers to getting ahead. For example, one respondent had this to say:

“I joined one of the best companies [name of company] at the beginning of my career. For nine years, I experienced the golden times of [name of company]. I got good training, mentoring, and coaching… I benefited a lot…and it built up my confidence.”

A final factor that was mentioned by some was economic growth in the country where they were working. This was particularly true for women in China and India.

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**Advice to Future Women Leaders**

**Kyoko Imamura | Janssen Pharmaceutical K.K.**

“You need to be patient, constantly work on challenges, and never give up.”

**Yumiko Ito | Microsoft Company, Limited (Japan)**

“Don’t think much about being a woman. There are many male leaders who are not perfect.”
Challenges

We also asked about the challenges faced by our women leaders in getting to where they are today and in their current role.

Challenges in Reaching Current Position

Many of our leaders were wary of saying the challenges they faced in reaching their current positions were related to being female, but many who said this then went on to describe some very clear examples of challenges that were gender-related.

For example, a number of women felt that there was a bias against women or a perception that women were holding jobs only to fill a quota. Some felt that men were uncomfortable with women leaders or initially judged women to be incapable since women leaders were not the norm in the countries where they were working. Many women mentioned that they felt they needed to work harder and longer, “do extra”, or achieve more than male counterparts in order to get recognition. These are some typical comments:

“You may, as a female, have to prove yourself a little bit more. For blue collar or rougher jobs, sometimes some people think you can’t handle it. You don’t have to be one of the boys to be successful though; you have to be yourself. You don’t have to dress like them or act like them.”

“The initial years were tough, and some men used to ignore me as they thought women could not contribute directly in the financial world.”

Almost every woman mentioned work-life balance as a major challenge. The long hours that were expected in order to advance a career in a major multinational company conflicted with the women’s desire to spend more time with their partners and families. It also conflicted with traditional family and societal expectations that they should be taking primary responsibility for their families. Late night conference calls and overseas travel contributed to the challenges that many of these women faced in integrating their work and personal lives.

The women often had to make many sacrifices in order to move up the corporate ladder. For example, one woman told us:

“Although I had the support of my family, I was wearing two hats. I would wake up at 5am to prepare things for my son. I wanted to be good at everything.”

Another one said:

“I had to make sacrifices. I didn’t spend much time with my older daughter.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders

Kayoko Kawamura | IBM, Japan

“Take up challenges, use your imagination, and take a balanced approach.”

Cindy Lau Ching-Han | Johnson & Johnson

“Don’t give up your career. You can always find solutions to balance your personal life and career. Don’t give yourself excuses to give up.”
Finding the right style was also seen as a challenge by a number of women. They felt it was important to strike a balance so that they were seen as assertive but not aggressive:

“A woman executive may have a similar style to a man, but she will be perceived as very aggressive or unfriendly. Women are supposed to be pleasant and obedient.”

Since all of our interviewees worked in global corporations, some felt that communicating with people from other countries or understanding cultural differences was another challenge.

**Challenges in Current Role**

When asking about the challenges in their current roles, we heard many of the same themes that were identified as being challenges in getting to their current positions. Our respondents were still wary of identifying any challenges as specifically gender-related, but in fact many of them were.

Similar concerns included bias against women and the perception that a woman is holding a job only because she fills a quota; work-life balance and prioritising work and personal life; creating the right image - being assertive but not aggressive or threatening, and relating to others, particularly men, from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Some additional challenges reflected the more strategic nature of the work that our interviewees were engaged in as a result of their seniority. For example, they cited challenges related to current task responsibilities where they needed to look at strategy, which removed them from “day to day” operations and customers. This sometimes made it difficult to have a clear understanding of what was happening at the market level. As one woman said:

“I am more detached from the front line and the consumers and the sales people. I believe that in [this industry], you have to keep up with the front line. I have had to adapt no matter how high up the hierarchy I am.”

How to gain visibility and find the right executive sponsor in the firm to advocate for them were also concerns. This was particularly true for some of our women leaders, who have headed up new markets or businesses in uncharted territory and may be “forgotten” if they do not make themselves seen and heard. Some of our women leaders said they made time to cultivate relationships with people at the most senior ranks and to nurture these relationships. Several women also saw career development, particularly planning for the next job, as a challenge.

A few women also mentioned that beauty and youth could work either for them or against them. Being a beautiful young woman would get them noticed, but because older men were the norm in the industry or at a senior level, they felt an even stronger need to prove themselves.

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Advice to Future Women Leaders

**Baomin Li | Barclays Capital**

“Balance well your work and those needs that are deep in your heart.”

**Preeti L. Lobana | American Express**

“It is important to prioritise, network, empower, be assertive, and be passionate about what you do.”
Women’s Contribution to Business

Our interviewees also told us how they thought women had a positive impact on business. They mentioned many traits that they felt were more characteristic of women than of men. Many of these were related to interpersonal interactions such as women being more open, inclusive, collaborative, caring, sensitive to people, friendly, and team spirited. For example:

- “Women can understand people’s problems more easily.”
- “In general, women are more sensitive to people’s feelings and make the business meetings more relaxed and friendly.”

Another set of traits was more related to the way women work. They viewed themselves as more practical than their male counterparts, less political, more detail-orientated, able to make decisions and implement them more quickly, and able to take a more balanced viewpoint. They saw themselves as stronger in crisis/conflict situations, better at communicating, and more intuitive. As one manager told us:

- “Women look at things more in detail and more humanely.”

Another idea that was mentioned was that greater diversity leads to better business performance. Our leaders suggested that:

- “Women in management bring a different perspective which is why we are so focused on diversity and inclusion.”
- “It is important in a globalised world to have a more diverse workforce. You have to have a more inclusive workplace.”

Our respondents also thought that women had a positive impact on business because they were able to understand the female perspective for recruiting and developing women in the company. They could provide positive role models for younger women, and they were able to understand and respond to the needs of female consumers. As one manager said:

- “Women in high positions encourage junior women. It shows by example that there is an opportunity. I am the first female director to take such a position… In Japan, when hiring new employees at an organisation job fair, this can increase the number of female candidates. It gives a good public image. People are interested because it is a rare case.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders

Alka Manchanda | Cisco, India

“Don’t be afraid to learn and ask questions. Surround yourself with people that you can learn from. Be a master of all trades and a jack of none. Experiment and try new things.”

Kalpana Margabandhu | IBM

“Go where others have not gone and make a path for yourself. At the same time, bring others along with you.”
Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia

China             India            Japan           Singapore

Empowering Others

Our women leaders responded to questions about increasing the participation of women at senior levels, the role of current women leaders in empowering others, and advice to aspiring young women.

How Companies Can Increase Participation of Women at Management Levels

Our women leaders had many suggestions for increasing the participation of women at management levels. One set of ideas was related to “walking the talk,” the need for positive female role models and real practice, encouraging management to grow female leaders, and holding them accountable for the results which could be tracked through gender metrics and gender ratios. They suggested companies should review their appraisal processes and ensure leaders are not gender biased. They should also provide diversity training, including gender sensitivity training, to all leaders.

Furthermore, companies can identify high potential women and create a pipeline, making sure these women are getting visibility. These high potential women should be connected to the leadership, and there should be internal processes to ensure that they get what they need to become leaders. As one woman said: “Make sure high potential women are getting the opportunity and visibility that they need.”

Another suggestion was to give women equal opportunities and not assume women can’t or won’t want to take them. One leader suggested: “Try and assign competent women to bigger roles with more responsibility. They might fail, but this happens to men as well. Young women in business need career role models.”

Programmes such as mentoring and women’s networks that recognise and develop female talent can be very helpful. So are formal or informal forums for sharing experience. As one leader suggested: “Companies should give more inspiration to their junior and middle [level] female workers by getting all the senior [level] women to share their success stories.”

Our respondents also felt it was important to create a culture that is friendly to women executives. As one said: “Build up a culture that is friendly for women executives, rather than the women having to make the effort to make it friendly. They do a great job in [name of company] headquarters but it is not happening in the [Asia] region - just on paper.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders

Kathy M. Matsui | Goldman Sachs

“Share your experiences, share your mistakes, and share your successes with the next generation. Don’t underestimate the value of that.”

Kaku Nakhate | DSP Merrill Lynch India

“Recognise your strengths and work on your weaknesses. If you put your heart into what you do, success will follow.”

“Strong team work by far surpasses individual stars. Be a great team player. Contribution to the team should be paramount.”
Finally, an essential task that was mentioned by almost all our respondents is that companies need to break down barriers that prevent women from fully engaging in their careers. Organisations need to make it easier for women to take time out or “off ramp” and then return (after childbirth or a period of time taken off for personal reasons) or “on-ramp”, and the companies should create flexibility so women can balance family and work responsibilities on a day-to-day basis. As one woman said:

“We have to ensure women know that they have choices. It does not have to be either/or in terms of work or family.”

What Women Leaders Can Do

At the personal level, the women leaders had good ideas about how they could empower others and these ideas were consistent with what they thought companies could do. Many talked about giving their direct female reports opportunities or jobs that would stretch their capabilities, taking risks with them, and giving women real power. Another suggestion that came from almost everyone was to act as role models, share experiences, and create networking opportunities. The leaders told us:

“There is a lack of role models in India, and I see many women in my workplace struggling to cope with events in their lives such as marriage and giving birth. All these major events make some of them think that they don’t need to work. They need to see successful examples of coping and working. We can be role models by sharing our stories, having discussions, and holding informal lunches during which we discuss and share our experiences.”

“Let successful women talk to young women leaders. They know how tough it is for other women leaders to balance their lives.”

Along the same lines, our leaders suggested that they could act as mentors, particularly for women with high potential. One of them suggested:

“Be a good career counsellor to help young people take the next steps in work and life.”

Another suggestion was to use their positions to support and advocate for women and create a positive organisational culture. For example:

“Influencing management to put in place policies that make women comfortable at work - ensuring comfortable working hours and making it easier to have babies and come back to work seamlessly will play a big role in making that [leadership] a reality for younger women employees.”

“Influence the organisational climate. Speak to groups, attend networking events, and go and look at what other companies are doing. Change the mindset and empower women.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders

Gyan Newman | Barclays Capital

“Don’t be afraid to try. Learn from your experiences. Realise your full potential.”

Chiang Ling Ng | Goldmans Sachs

“Always focus on your strengths and build upon them.”
The women leaders also suggested other ways to empower women such as teaching them skills, encouraging them and helping them to build self-confidence and working out work-life balance issues.

Advice to Aspiring Young Women

Finally, our women leaders had many pieces of good advice for aspiring young women. They suggested that it was important to do well and to excel at something enjoyable. Many also said to forget about gender. These are some examples:

- “Be better than anyone else around you.”
- “Try to be very much result driven and add value to the company, then you will be recognised. Forget about gender.”
- “Do what you think you enjoy and what’s sustainable for your own life.”
- “Don’t focus on gender and the fact that you are a woman. Focus on your strengths and who you are. Focus on your role and focus on doing it really well. You need to be in a diverse environment to develop.”
- “Be ambitious and do not set a career ceiling for yourself.”
- “Realise your full potential. Don’t hold back. Make the most of what you can be.”

Some suggested it was important to have self-confidence and to believe in oneself. One woman suggested:

- “Always remember you can do it. Keep a positive attitude and look for opportunities to take the next step.”

Other advice included being creative, optimistic, and pursuing individual goals with passion.

Advice to Future Women Leaders

Yoriko Ozawa | Merrill Lynch

“Have the courage and flexibility to accept new challenges. Don’t be afraid to raise your hand when opportunities come along.”

Mari M. Saito | American Express

“Don’t try to be perfect. Be flexible and open - minded. There are lots of opportunities.”
Favourability of Each Country for Women

In this section, we asked our women leaders to tell us what was good and not good for women living and working in the country in which they were living.

China

Positive Factors
Our women leaders working in China felt that it was a dynamic and exciting place to work. Some felt it was the best place for both men and women to work and develop their careers. Since the economy was growing quickly, there was much demand for talent and many opportunities. Our respondents noted that there were females in senior positions who provided good role models and women had a respected image. As one woman mentioned:

“There are women leaders in some industries and government and universities. You can find examples of success in many different areas.”

Another positive point mentioned by almost all our women leaders working in China was the availability of affordable domestic help.

Negative Factors
Several women mentioned the lingering effects of chauvinism. Some felt women were treated unfairly, and others suggested that there was a cultural expectation that women take a bigger role in the family, taking care of children and housework. As one woman said:

“Chinese culture can be a negative. Women have more of a role in the family and need to take care of kids and housework. They also want to perform in a working role. So women need to manage both well.”

Other factors that our respondents mentioned as negative were health risks, poor air quality, limited availability of healthcare, and safety issues making travel for women by themselves risky in some areas.

Advice to Future Women Leaders
Shi Xiao Li | Shell
“Don’t give yourself any limitation. It doesn’t matter if you are a man or a woman, as long as you are capable.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders
Jessica Tan | Microsoft
“Enjoy what you do and be the best that you can be.”
India

Positive Factors
Our respondents mentioned that India has been undergoing a major economic transformation resulting in many opportunities for women. In the past, there have been many women in senior positions - including a former prime minister - and this creates positive role models. People in India are used to working in a culturally diverse atmosphere, which makes them more inclusive of women in the workplace.

On the home front, our women leaders noted that they often could get help from extended families or find affordable domestic help. As one woman noted:

“There is access to a lot of domestic help. Those who are well paid can have a network of domestic help - cook, driver, babysitter - with backups in place. They don’t have to stress about things that are taken care of by domestic help. This is a privilege of a handful of people who can afford it.”

Negative Factors
Our women leaders pointed out that there was an evolving culture on diversity and equality for women in India. A certain amount of chauvinism still existed, and it was difficult to break through the glass ceiling. There may be large differences between the working environment in multinational companies (MNCs) and local companies. As one leader noted:

“Gender harassment is far and scattered in MNCs, but in government offices and smaller businesses adequate women’s toilets are not provided, and often there is male domination and harassment, especially in the northern part of the country, making the workplace even tougher.”

Some of our leaders also mentioned that families were not always supportive. They may want females to stay at home or to put their own careers second to their husbands’. As one manager told us, there was:

“No recognition by men that a woman can be a good worker and a good mother. Women often give up their jobs when they get pregnant.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders
Geetu Verma | PepsiCo India

“When you find that the going is tough and you are running against the tide, that is actually the time when you can make the most difference. So please stick it out, and it will pay.”

Advice to Future Women Leaders
Rose Wang | Cisco Systems

“Work very smart - not only very hard - and have good work-life balance.”
Japan

Positive Factors
Our women leaders in Japan told us that government and companies are focusing more on women and that there were many more opportunities in Japan today than in previous years. For example, one leader said:

“There aren’t many excellent business women so they [the excellent ones] are easily recognised and have more opportunities.”

Our respondents also commented that Japan was very safe, clean, and efficient.

Negative Factors
The leaders noted that Japan was still a male-oriented culture. As there were few female leaders, it could be difficult to gain acceptance, particularly from men. As one remarked:

“For working women, the male-oriented culture is still there. Even if the company feels it is okay to give a woman a big position, they may be worried about customers’ and counterparts’ perceptions.”

Another negative issue that was mentioned by more than one woman was a lack of understanding and support for pregnant women. A related issue was that it was difficult to get childcare, and it was difficult for women with children to have work-family balance unless they received good support from their families.
Singapore

Positive Factors
Almost every woman in Singapore had only positive factors to talk about. They found support and sympathy for working mothers, incentives to support women in the workplace such as taxes and schools, many female role models and lots of women in the workforce. One leader commented that with many females in the workforce in Singapore, that there were often business occasions that included only women that made it possible to socialise in different ways:

“There is a different twist to socialising. We were all women and went for a massage. It is easier to talk to other women.”

It was also noted that there were choices for women in Singapore. As one woman mentioned:

“There is a pro-gender diversity culture. The government is pushing this.”

Singapore also was thought to be an easy place to manage a family since it is small and everything is close by. There is affordable domestic help, a good education infrastructure and it is safe.

Negative Factors
Only one woman mentioned a negative - the long working hours.
Part II: What the Numbers Tell Us

Ten companies participated in the data tracking section of the Gender Benchmark Report.

The Minimum (Min), Maximum (Max) and Average in the tables below are calculated based on the number of companies participating in the benchmark report in that country.

Table 1 indicates the number of companies who provided data for their operations in the listed countries.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No. of Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Percentage of women in total workforce in each country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>National Labour Force in 2006*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percentage of total labour force that is female. Data taken from UN Statistics Division

In Table 2, the minimum, maximum, and average percentages of women employed in the participating companies as well as the national female labour force participation rate in each country are given. The average percentages of women employed by the participating companies in their total workforce ranged from 25.2 - 43.8% with over 40% in Singapore and China, 33.8% in Japan, and 25.2% in India. In all countries except Singapore, the participating companies on average employ a smaller percentage of women than are employed in the corresponding national labour force. However, as can be seen from the table above, there is wide variation among the companies, and a number of them have a much higher percentage of female employees than are employed nationwide.
Women in the Workplace at Different Levels

As Tables 3, 4 and 5 below show, the percentages of females were generally highest at the junior level and lowest at the senior level across countries and companies.

At the junior level, as Table 3 shows, the percentage of females is quite high. In all countries, the average rates surpass the average national female labour force participation rates, and in all countries, except India, participation of women is close to the population percentage.

Table 3: Percentage of women at junior level positions in each country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the middle level, as shown in Table 4 below, the percentages were somewhat higher than the senior level data with a similar pattern across countries (China and Singapore higher than India and Japan).

Table 4: Percentage of women at middle level positions in each country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Min*</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A value of "0" indicates the percentage of women employed was zero

At the senior level, as Table 5 shows, the percentage of women was very small with slightly higher percentages in China and Singapore compared to India and Japan. In addition, most companies are far from the overall national female labour force participation rate.

Table 5: Percentage of women at senior level positions in each country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Women in the Workplace in Different Countries in Asia

## China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
<th>Total Workforce</th>
<th>Junior Level</th>
<th>Middle Level</th>
<th>Senior Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Avg</td>
<td>Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In China, there was a relatively high percentage of female participation overall (42.9%), and five of the 10 companies have 50% or higher female labour force.

At the junior level, six out of 10 companies have more than 50% women employees with one company at 94% and three other companies over 60%. At the middle level, there is a range from 11 - 50%, and at the senior level, three companies have more than 25% female employees while five companies have very few or none.

## India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
<th>Total Workforce</th>
<th>Junior Level</th>
<th>Middle Level</th>
<th>Senior Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Avg</td>
<td>Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

India has the lowest percentage of female participation of the four countries. Eight of the nine companies have a female labour force of less than 40% with an average of 25.2%.

At the junior level, four out of nine companies have women making up more than 40% of the workforce at that level with one company at 70%. At the middle level, there is a range from 2 - 24% with six companies under 20%, and at the senior level, all companies have less than 20% women employees with four out of nine employing very few or no women at this level.
Gender Diversity Benchmark for Asia

China             India            Japan           Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
<th>Total Workforce</th>
<th>Junior Level</th>
<th>Middle Level</th>
<th>Senior Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Avg</td>
<td>Min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were moderate levels of female workforce participation in Japan. The two companies with the highest percentages had 49% and 56% women employees overall with the rest below 45%.

At the junior level, six out of nine companies employed more than 50% women employees with very high percentages (75%, 82%) at two companies. At the middle level, there is a range from 0 to 40% with only two companies over 30%, and at the senior level, the percentage is very small (8.9%) with only two companies employing more than 20%.

Singapore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Number of Companies</th>
<th>Total Workforce</th>
<th>Junior Level</th>
<th>Middle Level</th>
<th>Senior Level</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Min</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Avg</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>43.8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Singapore has the highest percentage of female participation of the four countries, and seven out of 10 companies have more than 40% women employees in their workforce.

At the junior level, seven out of 10 companies had more than 50% females with two companies employing 79% and 80% females. At the middle level, there is moderate female participation with two of the companies having 65% and 53% women, and at the senior level, three of the 10 companies have more than 30% females, but three have very few or none.
Observations and Recommendations

Among the four countries represented in our study - China, India, Japan and Singapore - there is a similar pattern of female employment. There are a large percentage at junior levels, a moderate number at middle levels, and very few women at senior levels. This suggests a pattern that has been found in other countries that is known as the leaking pipeline\(^\text{10}\) whereby the number of women lessens as the positions increase in seniority. Within the context of the countries being studied, the pattern is more severe in India and Japan than in China and Singapore.

We have an insight into the reasons why this situation exists from our women leaders. In all four countries, negative perceptions of women have created challenges for women leaders both in getting to the jobs they are in now and while in their current positions. Our women leaders noted that they almost always had to work harder and perform better than men to get ahead and they were sometimes seen as fulfilling quotas. Our women leaders told us that they had to work extra hard to gain visibility and find executive sponsorship. Many of our women also expressed difficulty in finding a working style that would help them earn the respect of those around them. Being assertive was important but it was equally important not to be seen as aggressive or threatening to others.

Another major concern that was widely expressed was the difficulty in balancing work and personal life. Our women leaders told us that family and societal pressures often caused their female peers to stop working when they got married or had children since companies often did not have programmes or the organisational culture in place to easily allow women to manage both family and work responsibilities. Similarly there are limited opportunities which give women [and men] the opportunity to “off ramp” or leave the workplace for a period of time and then to “on ramp” when they are ready to rejoin the workforce.

These factors are similar to those found in similar studies in North America and Europe, but Asian women also face some unique circumstances. On the positive side, the recent economic developments in some Asian countries, particularly China and India, are providing unprecedented opportunities for women. The great demand for workers, both skilled and unskilled, has forced employers to hire women in greater numbers than they may have in the past. Another plus for working women in some Asian countries (including China, India, and Singapore, but not Japan) is the availability of affordable domestic help which can ease the burden of taking care of home and family. Further, working women in Asian countries are often able to get help with childcare and other household responsibilities from members of their extended families. On the negative side, Asian women in many countries may face a greater degree of gender discrimination due to more traditional attitudes in comparison to North America or Europe. The issue of gender diversity is still evolving in many countries and organisations.

Steps can be taken both by the organisations and by the women leaders to overcome the major barriers to women staying in the work force and moving into more senior positions.

At the Organisational Level

At a global level, many of the participating companies have been acknowledged for their outstanding work in helping women to move into senior management positions. In some cases, women felt that their companies were successful in their headquarters operations, but the mindset or programmes to encourage gender diversity did not exist to the same extent in Asia.

One reason for this is that leadership in Asia has not been fully engaged on the subject - diversity and inclusion is still relatively new to corporate Asia and our equal opportunity legislation in the region has not moved at the same speed as it has done in the United Kingdom and the United States for example. In some companies outside of Asia, leadership is held accountable for gender diversity and this is what is needed in Asia. Specific key performance indicators (kpis) around gender diversity should be included in the appraisal of all managers. In addition, companies must begin to track their gender diversity ratios in different countries in Asia and measure the success of their programmes against these metrics each year.
Companies can learn much from other companies operating in Asia. One way of doing this is to benchmark gender diversity numbers and practices against other best practice companies as well as industry peers. Another way to do this is to be part of country networks on diversity and inclusion such as the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network.

Organisations need to be made aware of the tools that women need to become leaders in Asia - namely flexibility, visibility and access to leadership. The role of families and extended families is very important in the decision-making process of women in the workplace in Asia and companies need to factor this into the development of their programmes. In addition to cultural norms in each country, there is also the issue of local support structures which also need to be considered in each marketplace.

Women’s networks have made an incredible impact on many of our women leaders and should be viewed by companies as an asset. Women's networks have the power to bring camaraderie to women who often feel isolated in their positions - particularly at the more senior levels. In addition, they act as a great way to give senior women visibility and provide role modelling and networking opportunities to more junior women.

Mentoring should also be encouraged - both on informal and formal levels - particularly because many of our women leaders have found this to be invaluable in their career progression.

Ultimately what we require is a culture where women are respected, valued and given an equal opportunity to achieve their full and desired potential. Creating a culture where this is understood is imperative if companies want to win the war for talent and attract, retain and develop women in the workplace.

At the Individual Level

At the individual level, virtually all the women leaders we interviewed recognised that as individuals they play a key role in the development of future women leaders. Many of our women leaders encourage gender diversity not only in their own organisations but often within the community as well.

Using themselves as positive examples of successful women, our leaders often hosted both formal and informal programmes that encouraged dialogue about the challenges women face and how to deal with these. They acted as mentors, coaches, and trainers, encouraging women to perform well on the job and helping them to balance work and family responsibilities.

Our suggestion to our women leaders is that they continue to act as champions of gender diversity and to strive to make their workplaces ones where women are valued and comfortable.

Concluding Remarks

The women we interviewed were incredible, and we were inspired by their personal stories. What stood out to us as researchers was that these women would succeed in any situation - they were very bright, super confident and friendly women. Many of these women were entrepreneurs - starting up new lines of businesses and markets and doing this from scratch. What was also very interesting was the role that their parents played - instilling the notion of hard work from a young age. We wish all these women the very best in their lives ahead and thank them for their time and honesty in furthering the understanding of gender diversity issues in the workplace in Asia.

It has been fantastic to witness the commitment of the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network to this Gender Diversity Benchmark Report - the first ever in Asia. We commend and thank them for starting the journey of gender benchmarking in Asia and look forward to developing the benchmark in the years ahead.
Appendix

List of Questions for Interviews with Women Leaders

A. Personal Profile
1. Name
2. Picture
3. Job Title
4. Company
5. Country Living in

B. Other Personal Information
6. Age
7. Marital Status
8. Number of Children and Ages *(if applicable)*
9. Nationality
10. Ethnicity
11. Education Level

C. Factors Contributing to Success
12. What is your personal story? How have you got to where you are today? *(For example, perhaps you can talk about your childhood and education)*
13. What personal characteristics do you have that you think have contributed to your professional success?
14. What external factors have helped you be successful? *(E.g. mentors, networks, corporate policies?)*

D. Challenges
15. What challenges, if any, have you faced to get to where you are today?
16. What challenges, if any, have you faced to get to where you are today as a woman?
17. What challenges, if any, do you face today in your current role?
18. What challenges, if any, do you face today in your current role as a woman?

E. Women’s Contribution to Business
19. How have senior women had a positive impact on business?
20. Can you give us an example of where having a woman on the senior management team has had a positive impact on business success? *(E.g. innovation of new products)*

D. Empowering Others
21. What more do you think companies can do to increase the participation of women at senior management levels?
22. What role do you think current women leaders, like you, can play to empower others?
23. What single piece of advice would you give to aspiring young women?
24. Quote: What inspires you most?
25. Quote: What was your proudest moment?
26. Quote: Advice to future women leaders?

E. The Country You Are Living in
27. What is good about living and working in this country for women?
28. What is not good for women living and working in this country?
29. Overall is it positive or negative for women living and working in this country?

F. Others
30. Is there anything else you would like to add?
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About the Authors

Shalini Mahtani, MBE
Shalini is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Community Business. She has written extensively on diversity and inclusion in Asia and work-life balance in Hong Kong and is a frequent speaker on the subject. Shalini provides diversity and inclusion advice and training to many companies in Asia and is a Board Member of the Women’s Foundation in Hong Kong.

Anne Marie Francesco, PhD
Anne Marie is Professor of Management and Director, Centre for Human Resources Strategy and Development at the Hong Kong Baptist University. Her research interests include international organisational behaviour, cross-cultural management, life balance and work-family interface.

Winnie Ng
Winnie is Project Manager at Community Business and manages the Diversity & Inclusion in Asia Network. Winnie is co-author of Community Business’ Work-Life Balance Report 2008. Winnie has lived in India and Hong Kong and has a strong interest in diversity in Asia.
“This report represents a landmark, in terms of being the first gender benchmarking report on Asia. Much has been written recently about women’s executive success in the region and this report is able to provide the vital figures. Singapore comes out best with an average of 44% women in the workforce in the participating companies and 17% at senior level. The authors conclude that the trends in Asia are similar to those in the West and many lessons for change are transferable.”

Susan Vinnicombe OBE MA PhD MCIM FRSA
Professor of Organisational Behaviour & Diversity Management, Director of the International Centre for Women Leaders, Cranfield University School of Management, UK

“The Gender Diversity Benchmark Report enormously enhances our understanding of the challenges faced by companies seeking to ‘move the dial’ on diversity in Asia.

This new report is valuable on three fronts: It creates a ‘roadmap’ - charting the progress of women in key Asian economies. It allows global companies to compare their performance with competitors in the region. And it permits companies to identify best and next practice. What initiatives and programs have been most helpful in accelerating progress?

Threading through this report is a powerful business case. Given the dramatic economic and demographic shifts in Asia, women need to be much better leveraged. Companies - and nations - cannot afford a ‘leaking pipeline’ when it comes to female talent.”

Sylvia Ann Hewlett PhD
Founding President of the Center for Work-Life Policy and Director of the Gender and Public Policy Program at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University, USA.