

A resource sheet for agencies

Why women on boards?

If you want to know why it is beneficial for your agency to have more women on boards, look no further. This resource sheet outlines the main reasons why your agency should work towards a more equal gender mix on all your boards by encouraging greater participation of women at the board table.

Women on boards is good for business. A study undertaken by Catalyst in 2004 found companies with a higher proportion of women in leadership performed better financially than those with low representations of women.

Other business outcomes include improved marketing strategies, new product development and a broader clientele.

Corporate performance and gender diversity are integral to each other such that good corporate performance is linked to greater gender diversity on top management teams and vice versa. (Catalyst, 2004)

Board diversity is associated with better corporate governance, including more effective use of directors' skills and experiences, better debate on issues, collective decision making, and greater transparency. Good governance 'sets the tone' of an organisation.

Again in 2006, Australia's female representation in corporate leadership continues to lag behind that of our leading trading nations, the United States and the United Kingdom. (EOWA 2006)

Women on boards not only benefit company profitability, but contribute in other intangible, yet important, ways. Appointing women to boards leads to, for example, a better public reputation for the organisation.

Drawing on women's expertise is necessary in the current context of skills shortages and an ageing population.

Women are participating in the workforce in greater numbers than ever before. Diverse boards more accurately reflect this changed workforce demographic.

Putting women in positions of leadership provides positive role models to young women and other emerging leaders.

An inclusive leadership model has flow-on effects for the organisation more broadly, and can result in the attraction and retention of diverse staff, and better staff morale.

Having a visibly diverse board signals that the organisation takes diversity seriously and that these different perspectives and viewpoints are given a voice at the top. (Jane Allen, 2006)

Women's representation on boards demonstrates a commitment to equity. Women currently comprise 45% of the total workforce yet hold only 2% of Chairs and 8.7% of board directorships in ASX200 Australian companies.

More information on the *Women on Boards* Strategy can be found on the Office for Women's website. Visit www.women.qld.gov.au/womenonboards or call 1800 177 577 between 8.00am and 6.00pm.