Women as Entrepreneurs

Women have launched entrepreneurial careers in record numbers during the past two decades. The emergence and growth of women-owned businesses have contributed strongly to the global economy and to their surrounding communities, as well as impacted employment and workplace culture.

The preferred management styles of women may be associated with their motives for business ownership. In addition to using and maintaining higher levels of skill than they might in a corporation, women cite layoffs, ability to make one's own decisions, and hour-flexibility as reasons for starting their own business. Having young children also plays a role on women's self-selection of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial leaders are driven by passion, often with a strong need for success accompanied by a low need for status and power. Phyllis Apelbaum's (Arrow Messenger Service) aspiration was never power or influence, but being independent and self-sufficient:

> Right before my dad's death in June of that year, the company [City Bonded] where I worked was sold. I had new employers, and I wasn't really happy about the change...I decided I would go on and do something else. So I gave my notice and said I would work until November 1, 1973. What happened during that period of time was that my competitors...would call and say. "Oh, have we got a job for you..." And then, one night I was talking to a friend and that person said, "Could you imagine if you're worth that much to them what you could be worth to yourself?"

Not all entrepreneurs start or maintain their own businesses. This style of leadership is found in organizations of all sizes. Many contend that organizations must be more entrepreneurial to enhance their performance, capacity for adaptation, and long-term survival. The approach is strategic and tries to envision future possibilities and enable the organization to transform its current transaction set. Entrepreneurial leadership relies on the ability to (1) extract exceptional commitment and effort from all involved with the company, (2) convince employees and investors they can accomplish their goals, (3) articulate a compelling organizational vision, (4) promise their effort will lead to extraordinary outcomes, and (5) persevere in the face of environmental change.

Beth Prichard is an entrepreneurial leader. Former president and CEO of OrganizedLiving and instrumental in taking Bath & Body Works from 9 stores to 1,600, she says:

> When I was at Johnson Wax before I had my daughter, success was getting the deal done, being promoted faster. Success was defined in terms of title and salary; that was in my early years. In my mid years success was defined as being in an environment where I could grow personally and professionally. Not success is providing opportunity and growth for many people; that's the thing I get the most joy out of.

1. Values-based Leadership.

At least four leaders we chose for our study are in organizations that have explicit social as well as financial missions, and three of these are in for-profit companies. Mary Ann Leeper runs the Female Health Company, a publicly traded company with shareholders who hope to at least break even, but which is equally concerned with their product, female condoms, helping women in developing countries prevent HIV. Synthia Sanchez Crozier is the founder, CEO, and president of CS&C, a technology and education firm based in Chicago. A for-profit operation, it aims to improve education in Chicago and eventually around the country with innovative programs and services.

These leaders and the institutions they manage are committed to creating added social – it is part of their mission. The result is that although these institutions are not unprofitable, with the same investments they could have made more money in a different venue, or their leaders could have been more monetarily successful, if they had stayed in traditional corporate positions or worked in traditional markets. But these women's goals are socially focused, and their rewards are in satisfaction rather than money or power.

2. Ethical Leadership and Values Integration: "Values All the Way Through"

One leadership challenge in today's changing business environment involves integrating one's personal values in a competitive arena where ethical issues seem not to be part of everyday business. An important factor affecting managerial moral judgment is how managers and professionals prioritize personal, client, and corporate and professional responsibilities. Not every institution encourages independent decision-making or avenues to question potentially unacceptable activities.

We are enmeshed in a collection of overlapping social, professional, cultural, and religious roles, each of which makes overlapping demands. This becomes problematic when the demands of one role clash with another, or clash with societal norms or commonsense morality. Role morality can constrain ordinary moral reactions, such as during the Enron scandal when Sherron Watkins, a manager, sent a letter to the CEO regarding concerns, but did not blow the whistle outside of the company.

Many incidents such as fraud tend to repeat themselves when individuals lack a perspective on their role and fail to integrate personal, social and professional values into their business practice. The leaders in our study have an integrative approach to values-based corporate leadership linking these, and as a result, can better evaluate the issues they face.

What is the difference between ethical leadership and a values-based view? Values-based leaders create or propound values for their instrumental worth to create added social value, and they align employees and shareholders to accept and work for those values. Ethical leadership goes further. An ethical leader frames everything they everything they do in moral terms, and the values in the organization's mission and direction are worthwhile for their own sake, having value in the world even if not specifically achieved- female health and better education improvements are fine goals regardless.

As Calhoun has said about ethical leadership and its challenges:

The ideal organization respects and listens to its employees, appreciates people's life beyond work and makes that possible, but it also has to be financially sound enough to provide a stable ongoing opportunity for its employees to grow and make money. I think it's a tricky balance; you've got to make money. All that hard work isn't what everything is about, and you have to balance it...An ethical leaders realizes that there is no one set of leadership principles that work in all situations or in all organizations. A leader sees values and ethical principles as being applicable within certain spheres. She challenges herself and her organization to continually step back and rethink the values proposition they embody and operate under. That is, an ethical leader uses moral imagination to make difficult decisions that cross the boundaries of those sphere and frontiers of knowledge.

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