

‘Lean In’ Revisited

Challenges, lessons learned by up-and-coming female leaders BY BRANDON HALL



Brandon Hall is a veteran learning analyst and former chairman of Brandon Hall Group. He can be reached at editor@CLOmedia.com.

Too few women are in top positions, and the percentage hasn't budged in 10 years. Women can and must do more about this themselves. These two themes are from Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, and they sounded alarms for anyone concerned with accessing available talent. They also grabbed the attention of any parent who, like me, has a daughter. A few other points stood out:

Stagnant progress: Sandberg says women have earned 50 percent of the college diplomas during the last 30 years, but they make up only 4 percent of CEOs and 14 percent of executives in the Fortune 500. They make up just 18 percent of Congress, 10 percent of governorships and 4 percent of national leaders globally.

Ambition and likability: McKinsey & Co. surveyed thousands of employees in 60 leading companies and found that while most men and

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women wanted to advance at least one level, only half as many women as men aspired to the executive level. Sandberg cites research on possible causes, including the fact that for men, more success equals more likability. For women, more success equals less likability, by both men and women. The differences appear early: Little girls who try to lead are often called bossy. It's not the same for little boys.

Work and family: Leslie Joyce of aluminum company Novelis said she enjoyed Sandberg's TED Talk, but won't read the book. She questions whether large numbers of women today really can reach the top and raise a family simultaneously.

"Raising a family is difficult. It creates demands that do not occur to people without those responsibilities, whether they are men or women," she said.

Reaching the top requires tremendous time, effort and focus — more difficult for those who must juggle the demands of a family.

"Until society changes, until women are no longer the primary caregivers, the barriers that are inside of organizations are unlikely to change." Her view counts: She is senior vice president and chief people officer for \$11 billion Novelis, holds a Ph.D. in organizational psychology, was vice president and CLO at Home Depot and global director of organization effectiveness at GlaxoSmithKline.

Dawn Adams Miller, business engagement manager of the learning and development solutions group at networking equipment company Cisco, said, "When I started at Arthur Andersen years ago, I heard women concerned about being treated differently. I finally realized we were treated exactly the same as the men: expectations of 60- to 70-hour weeks. The difference was the men had wives. Women had two roles; men had only one.

"Now there are books for women on dealing with the challenges, to not sit and wait, how to talk with management. Those conversations are happening more frequently. I see women saying things like, 'For me to be able to do that for you, then I will need this from you. So let's work it out.' Management encourages women 110 percent here, partly because of the diversity conversation. Women populate all levels at Cisco ... although it is a little thin at the top."

Teresa Roche is vice president and CLO at measurement equipment company Agilent Technologies. She sees Sandberg reinvigorating discussions about career, women and family. Roche has dealt with these issues by "modulating," making adjustments based on what matters most to her. At 40, she left her position to pursue her Ph.D., taking one class a semester to be home with her daughter. Modulation applies in the short range, too.

"I have a mental dashboard of the things that matter to me," she said, including work, marriage, child, career development, community and health. She regularly scans for what is upcoming, mindful of possible impact on other areas. When an adjustment is needed, she talks it over with those involved. She says currently her dashboard shows she is about a quart low on sleep and exercise. "I have never tried to have it all, not all at the same time," she said. **CLO**