



# Why I'd Love to See More Women in Business

Aki Kalliatakis

You've probably heard that scientists from Health Canada concluded that the results of a recent analysis revealed the presence of female hormones in beer, and suggested that men should take a look at their beer consumption. The theory is that drinking beer makes men turn into women.

To test the theory, 100 men were each fed 6 glasses of beer within a one-hour period. It was then observed that 100% of the men gained weight, talked excessively without making sense, became overly emotional, couldn't drive, failed to think rationally, argued over nothing, had to sit down to pee, and refused to apologise when wrong. We all love these jokes - but they hide the truth about women.

Half of you reading this article will probably want to beat me up with a baseball bat afterwards, but I can tell you that there is no doubt in my mind that when it comes to customers and leadership, more women "get it" than men. And I'm not talking about women acting like men in the boardroom: I'm talking about women being themselves.

Why would a typical 56-year old conservative male espouse the benefits of women in leadership positions in business? I know I am risking stereotyping men and women, but there are some important qualities in the leadership styles of women versus men.

I am delighted to see that more women are taking over companies - both here and overseas - and I believe

that the proportion is just too low. It makes me sad that when a woman becomes a CEO of a large company, usually for a lower salary than her male counterpart, it is deemed newsworthy.

That's about to change. Proportionately more women are attending business schools today, and out-performing men in academic results. Maybe it's because women buy more books than men do, (65% versus 35% according to Exclusive Books,) and they don't waste time in meaningless competitive activities that satisfy macho war-like impulses. (Will you ever see 65000 women packed into a stadium watching 30 people beating each other's brains out? I doubt it.)

More women are starting their own businesses with incredible success. It is estimated that by 2020, there will be more women millionaires in England than men. Apart from the fact that they will spend more money on meaningful things like employee development, environmentally friendly sustainable projects, and healthier food in the staff dining room, we can also look forward to cleaner toilets for customers and staff.

When it comes to customer care and managing people, the skills of empathy, communication, sensitivity to others' needs, and ability to seek win: win are far stronger. In addition, women tend to be more collaborative, and to work better in teams. Women find it easier to apologise for mistakes - even if it wasn't their fault. This results in a business culture that is far more satisfactory from a customer's perspective, and for employees. Even men who work with women bosses become more aware of the skills and habits so desperately needed in today's world.

Many (men) reading this article will want to point out the weaknesses and problems that women leaders bring to companies: the tendencies to manipulate others, to gossip, back-

stab, being bitchy, and so on. Men say women are not focused on the final goal, and allow themselves to be distracted by irrelevance. I will challenge you to look at the testosterone-induced win-at-all-costs behaviour and show me how that contributes to the bottom-line.

A few years ago I was in a chocolate shop in Johannesburg when a poster caught my eye. It said: "When men are frustrated and depressed, they invade another country. When women are depressed, they eat too much chocolate and go shopping." It hit me like a whack on the head: It's a whole different way of thinking. Men are often puzzled by this seemingly irrational and illogical behaviour, but I notice that women aren't.

I love being a man, because my life is far easier. Mechanics and builders tell me the truth. I can wear a white t-shirt and slops to the beach. I will never get pregnant, and only vomit when I eat something bad. I can pee anywhere, and my wrinkles are a sign of "wisdom" and "character," not old age. I can open all my jars and bottles, and get credit for even the smallest acts of thoughtfulness.

But imagine a world if we were all men: when we became lost in our cars, nobody will stop to ask for directions. We would just drive around in circles forever, scowling at the street signs. Over enough time, the whole world would be on the roads, just driving and driving, everyone growing old looking for wherever it is he was originally going. Imagine the traffic jams. Imagine the road rage. It would be the end of life as we know it.

This is how the world would end: not with a bang, but with a bunch of guys beating each other's brains out with baseball bats.

## About the Author

Aki Kalliatakis is the Managing Partner of The Leadership LaunchPad, a

company dedicated to helping clients become more customer-driven.

#### Co-ordinates

Web:

[www.LeadershipLaunchPad.co.za](http://www.LeadershipLaunchPad.co.za)

Mail: [Aki@LeadershipLaunchPad.co.za](mailto:Aki@LeadershipLaunchPad.co.za)

Twitter: [@AkiKalliatakis](https://twitter.com/AkiKalliatakis)



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