DEVELOPING WOMEN LEADERS

A Guide for Men and Women in Organizations

ANNA MARIE VALERIO

WILEY-BLACKWELL

Developing Women Leaders

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Anna Marie Valerio

Praise for *Developing Women Leaders*

"In any organization today, women leaders will help drive business growth and improved performance. Anna Marie Valerio's *Developing Women Leaders* is a practical guide that helps organizations not only to achieve this growth objective, but also to create the right opportunities for talented women to develop their careers and to advance within that company."

Nancy McKinstry, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Executive Board, Wolters Kluwer

"Dr. Valerio's thoughtful and thought-provoking book is essential reading for anyone who cares about the development of the next generation of leaders, regardless of gender. As a female president and CEO in a historically male-dominated industry, I recognize the value and insights offered in the book, and applaud the proactive approaches to gender issues in the workplace."

Nancy Hill, President-CEO, American Association of Advertising Agencies

"*Developing Women Leaders* is a trove of useful advice for the advancement of women. Many talented women whose careers have stalled at mid-management can apply the book's strategies to move into top-level careers. Women and men benefit when we have the most talented people leading organizations. Valerio offers something for everyone. There are great 'tips' for women who want to advance their careers, administrators who control access to the top, and for human resource departments that can help to increase the number of women in leadership positions."

Diane F. Halpern, Claremont McKenna College

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Dedication

With love and gratitude to my mother, Fernanda, and to the memory of my father, Nicholas, both of whom imbued in me a love of learning and fostered my educational achievement.

To my cousin, Angela, and to the memory of my aunts, Mary, Anna, Margaret, and my cousin Anna, whose pride in my accomplishments I will always cherish.

Series Editor's Preface

The *Talent Management Essentials* series presents state-of-the-art thinking on critical talent management topics ranging from global staffing, to career pathing, to engagement, to executive staffing, to performance management, to mentoring, to real-time leadership development. Authored by leading authorities and scholars on their respective topics, each volume offers state-of-the-art thinking and the epitome of evidence-based practice. These authors bring to their books an incredible wealth of experience working with small, large, public, and private organizations, as well as keen insights into the science and best practices associated with talent management.

Written succinctly and without superfluous "fluff," this series provides powerful and practical treatments of essential talent topics critical to maximizing individual and organizational health, well-being, and effectiveness. The books, taken together, provide a comprehensive and contemporary treatment of approaches, tools, and techniques associated with Talent Management. The goal of the series is to produce focused, prescriptive volumes that translate the data- and practice-based knowledge of organizational psychology, human resources management, and organizational behavior into practical, "how to" advice for dealing with cutting-edge organizational issues and problems.

Talent Management Essentials is a comprehensive, practitioner-oriented series of "best practices" for the busy solution-oriented manager, executive, HR leader, and consultant. And, in its application of evidence-based practice, this series will also appeal to professors, executive MBA students, and graduate students in Organizational Behavior, Human Resources Management, and I/O Psychology.

Steven Rogelberg

Preface

This book grew from initial conversations several years ago with a colleague who pointed out to me that my background provided me with a unique vantage point from which to explore the topic of women's leadership. My background as a psychologist, my prior leadership roles in Fortune 500 companies, and my current work as an executive coach in independent practice all provided me with advantages for examining and writing about these issues. The collection of my professional experiences has contributed to my knowledge base, shaped my approach to the topic of women's leadership, and positioned me well for this effort.

I started doing interviews with people in Fortune 500 companies and universities to hear what was in their minds and hearts. At the first interviews I was surprised by the degree of excitement expressed by the interviewees. "Keep going with this – we all need to learn more!" was the unanimous response. When my clients and their bosses learned about this endeavor, they expressed the same sentiments. At professional meetings I began presenting programs, creating panel discussions involving colleagues, and wrote articles on the subject of developing women leaders. The outpouring of enthusiastic responses I received for this work from executives, colleagues, graduate students, and others further spurred me onward. My efforts culminate in this book.

During the past thirty to forty years we Americans have witnessed a seismic shift in our views of women as adults and as leaders. Back

then "the girls" were channeled into the study of school teaching, nursing, and social work. Airline stewardesses were dismissed when they got married. Although women's career advancement has evolved slowly, we now have women as senators, governors, and corporate CEOs. Women fight in wars and fly into space. These are no longer "remarkable" events. The tide hasn't fully turned, but the trends are clear. The day will come when we won't have to discuss "gender roles" when we talk about women as leaders. Right now, however, we do.

Behavioral scientists have been tracking this shift, chasing away myths and folklore with solid research information. Much of that information has been in scientific journals and books, is hard to read, and even harder to apply. This book tries to bring the best information to light, and do so in a readable, organized way.

In my work as an executive coach I am privileged to have the trust of talented women and men who share their feelings about being "high achievers" in their worlds of work and personal life. Theirs is not an easy journey. It seems to me that both men and women can benefit from open discussion and dialogue about the influence of gender and gender roles on leadership. Fortunately, social science research provides us with some answers on both gender similarities and differences in leadership and the influence of gender roles. It is time for managers and others in organizations – men and women together – to discuss gender issues and to arrive at better solutions for all. It is a topic that touches men and women alike, as many of us have been influenced by the experiences of our mothers, aunts, and sisters and have heard the stories of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers. For the most part, the stories describe their hard work in order to make things better for the next generation.

As a woman and as a professional, it has been an especially personal task to write this book. I hope that it will not be read with a sense of detachment, but rather with a feeling of wonder at how we as a society have struggled upward over these years. These feelings should motivate you to create change in your own life, in your organizations, and in your communities. This is not a novel, yet it is a story of our lives, our relatives' and neighbors' lives – based on good science applied to real people in real organizations. It is a status report of the dialogue about women and leadership. Such a conversation reflects every aspect of our society – business, government, families, careers, health, law – and our collective view of merit, fairness, and social parity.

My hope is that by facing these issues together, women and men will arrive at solutions that will create organizations and societies that serve us better, whatever our role or gender. And, yes, that *our* hard work will make it easier for the next generation of women to pursue leadership.

Book Overview

The topic of Developing Women Leaders has many stakeholders and many audiences who need to know about it. The book is meant to be a practical, user-friendly guide for women and men in organizations. It is designed to appeal to a very broad audience of people in organizations interested in developing the leadership capacities of women. This audience may include women, men, their bosses, Human Resource (HR) executives and professionals, CEOs, their top leadership teams, and others seeking to make informed decisions for themselves and their organizations regarding leadership development for women.

What You Will Learn

There is something in this book for everyone interested in the topic of leadership. Some chapters are written for the entire audience. Three chapters are addressed to CEOs and HR executives, managers, and women, respectively. CEOs and HR executives may discover new solutions implemented by some best-practice organizations on the forefront of leadership development. Male and female bosses will acquire practical tips and suggestions to help them improve their own leadership and manage talent in their groups. Women will learn what actions they can take to be proactive in their own development. All stakeholders will gain insights from the chapter containing five first-hand accounts written by successful women about their leadership experiences: defining moments, obstacles overcome, lessons learned.

The conclusions and recommended actions offered in the book rest upon the strongest social science research findings on the behaviors that contribute to effective leadership. The book emphasizes what men and women need to know about leadership research and development in the areas of leadership competencies, personality, leadership styles, and stereotypical perceptions of gender. It explains

development options such as job assignments, coaching, mentoring, and formal development programs and the pertinent research results associated with each. Throughout the book the comments from high-achieving men and women interviewed by the author provide thoughtful, real-world commentary.

Audience

This book is intended for men and women in multiple audiences: those in management in both for-profit and non-profit organizations who are interested in developing talented women; those male and female executives and managers interested in advancing their female direct reports; and those who wish to learn to work better with their female bosses, women executives, and managers who would like to enhance their own job performance. Both HR and line professionals charged with the direct responsibility of managing corporate talent may find it helpful. Indeed, some parts of this book may be of interest to those in other organizational roles, such as the direct reports and peers of talented women. This book will also appeal to the young women and men who are just starting their careers with the hope and expectation of learning from each other and meeting the daunting challenges that they face in today's organizations. When finished with the book, readers should be able to use the information to better carry out their work objectives in their jobs. Ultimately, the development of women leaders will improve organizational capability and financial performance, and lead to greater teamwork and job satisfaction for both the men and women in today's organizations. The book focuses primarily on people in U.S. organizations, where much of the underlying research has taken place. However, some of the thoughts and suggestions in this book may apply beyond the American culture to spark some creative ideas in organizations that originate in other cultural contexts.

The topic of developing women leaders has relevance across the range of all organizations, including Fortune 500 companies, government, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and small businesses. Hence, the book targets a very large audience and hopes to bridge the gap between the valuable findings from scholarly research and the people who stand to benefit from it the most. As you turn the pages of this book, here are some things to look for:

- *For women*: This book will provide you with insights on how to take responsibility for your own development, advance your own career and that of other talented women. You will find ideas and suggestions for actions you can take to give yourself the experiences that will enhance your growth as a leader.
- *For men*: If you are curious about how to develop women as leaders, this book will have tips for you. Many men confront these challenges, and this book will help you think it through. Because a large percentage of what we know about leadership development is the same for men as for women, as you think about what you need to develop talented women you will also be helping talented men as well. Armed with the knowledge in this book, you will have greater insights into your own behavior and how to grow as a leader.
- *For CEOs and HR executives*: As chief stewards of the organization's mission and strategy, you occupy a unique role in building your organization's capability. The power and influence of your business decisions can have ramifications for years to come and the human resource policies and practices implemented under your watch can affect all stakeholders. In recent years your number one issue has been talent management and you recognize that talented people are your most valuable asset. This book will help you meet the overall needs of your organization as you encourage *all* of your employees to flourish by using their talents and skills for the sake of the enterprise and for that of themselves and their families.
- *For the bosses of women*: You play a pivotal role in developing the talent in your organization. As you know, helping your staff solve performance problems and develop their individual potential is a central aspect of your responsibilities to them and to your employer. This book will help you with those tasks by enabling you identify the things that only you can do to contribute to the successful performance of the women who report to you. At the same time, of course, you build the capability of your organization.
- *For HR professionals*: You will find ideas for creating or enhancing Human Resource programs, policies, and practices to attract, retain, and develop talented women in your organization. This book will also help you influence key decision-makers and communicate to others how developing women leaders can add momentum to the overall diversity initiatives in your organization. The book will also

assist you in your important role as an HR professional in helping the managers in your organization.

- *For coaches and their clients*: You coach people about work behaviors that will increase their success on the job. The knowledge in this book will allow you to better manage the coaching engagement and to help your clients manage the requirements of their jobs in a proactive, productive way. In addition, this book could be used as a recommended read for your clients and their managers when you perceive the need for greater understanding of women managers and their developmental needs.

- *For researchers*: Because this book is written for an audience whose knowledge of the social science literature ranges from little or none to expert or Ph.D. level and beyond, it is written in more of a "friendly," vernacular voice, rather than a scholarly, scientific one. The research studies published on the topics that pertain to women's leadership number in the thousands and it would be impossible to include all of them in this volume. Rather, this book takes the strongest research findings from a number of different disciplines and topic areas and incorporates it into a foundation for the ideas and suggestions offered here. The Notes section at the end of the book will provide you with the references for further reading.

Author's Interviews

This book attempts to offer practical solutions that rest on a solid research foundation. Blended into this mix are the views of women and men in today's organizations taken from forty interviews conducted from 2006 to 2008 by the author with high achievers in major U.S. companies and universities. In the text they are identified as "interviewee" or with a position title such as "vice president." They were interviewed with the understanding that 1) the book was aimed at helping managers and organizations develop women leaders, and 2) their remarks would not be attributed to them. These conditions allowed them to speak truthfully about their personal experiences and their views on the potentially controversial topic of the influence of gender on women's leadership development. Some of the results from the initial interviews were summarized and published by the author in a brief article.[1] As explained below, in Parts II and III the

interviewees' ideas about what they believe can be done to develop and advance talented women lend a supportive voice and vitality to the research findings and recommendations.

How Is This Book Different?

In comparison to other books on the market, this book presents research-based, practical solutions to help people in organizations develop talented women. Many of the current books on women and leadership have as their focus the relevant research studies or essays from thought leaders in women's leadership. Their emphasis has been on delineating the results from academic and field research and offering commentary on the current state of women's leadership. While these have been invaluable to advancing the field of women's leadership to academics and researchers, they have not been an easy read for most people.

In contrast, this book will appeal to those working in organizations on the "front lines" every day and who have neither the inclination nor time to read a scholarly tome about leadership development. It is written for those whose split-second decisions have far-ranging influence on who gets promoted, on the climate created in their organization, and whether or not the company is perceived as a good place to work. This volume uniquely translates the findings from social science research into strategies and tips that people in management can apply.

Acknowledgments

Many people have helped me with this book and I thank them for their contributions. My deep gratitude goes to Debra Robinson and Robert J. Lee who helped me to refine my ideas, read the first drafts, and provided consistent support and encouragement throughout the entire process. I would like to thank Dick Kilburg for the seminal discussions that sparked this book and for providing his wisdom about the process of writing. Diana Cunningham's superb librarianship saved me countless hours that would have been spent in researching articles and refining the initial draft of the manuscript. Special thanks to Marian Ruderman and Martin Wilcox for their help in the development of the article that appeared in CCL's *Leadership in Action* publication.

I am especially grateful to the five high-achieving women who graciously consented to anonymously write the first-hand accounts that appear in Chapter 7. Your heartfelt stories breathe life and meaning into the research findings. Your lives and work inspire those who know you personally, and now your influence extends to the women and men who are touched by reading your narratives.

There were many people whose support and advice were invaluable, and I am thankful for their various contributions: Judith Albino, Elizabeth Barasch, Mariangela Battista, Victoria Berger-Gross, Traci Berliner, Sue A. Brush, Dianne Chong, Allan Church, Michelle Crosby, Lynne Doherty, Katharine Frase, Amy George, Nathalie Gingras, Andrea Goldberg, Shami Goswami, Dee Hall, Katherine

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