

30 September, 2009

‘Women improve boardroom effectiveness’- according to IDDAS’ latest ‘Board Dynamics- a female perspective, Women on FTSE 100 boards’ report

A new report entitled ‘Board Dynamics - a female perspective’ is being launched today by boardroom consultancy IDDAS, providing an insight into the views of female board directors of FTSE 100 companies and exploring their role and effectiveness on boards.

It includes research that shows that although many of the characteristics of successful female board directors are the same as for their male counterparts, women do believe that they bring a different perspective and are more likely to have certain strengths and weaknesses than men.

IDDAS conducted in-depth interviews with a fifth of all the female board directors of FTSE 100 companies¹, asking them about the factors that led to their own success and to that of other female directors they have worked with. The research also probed, among other things, how women raise tough issues, how they are recruited, what holds them back, the impact of being the only woman on a board and the role of the chair in women’s development.

Key findings include:

*Female directors in FTSE 100 companies are particularly adept at promoting teamwork on the board, at raising tough issues in a non-confrontational manner and at probing without fear of seeming foolish.

*Because women are such a rarity at this level, they operate under a constant spotlight and are driven to prepare and perform exceptionally well.

*Having more than one woman on a board makes life easier for the female directors, by normalising their presence and turning them into ‘a director’ not ‘a woman’.

*Women are less ego-driven than men and committed to the organisation’s goals rather than their own agenda.

¹ IDDAS interviewed 24 women, including 14 NEDs, 5 with executive and NED positions and 4 executive directors

The report, which is illustrated by personal comments from the interviewees, highlights the characteristics of successful women directors: social intelligence, courage and resilience, breadth of view and energy and drive. It also examines the less successful characteristics including low self confidence, perfectionism, telling executives how to do their job and challenging or aggressive behaviour.

The women were also asked their views on training and development and many felt that not enough weight is given to performance management, development and assessment. Coaching and mentoring and external courses were suggested as ways of clarifying responsibilities, expectations and liabilities. Another issue examined is the role of the chair in ensuring a diverse board works effectively, giving examples of good chair performance.

Helen Pitcher, Chairman of IDDAS, spoke of the views of this group of powerful women reflected in the report:

“With a growing crescendo of voices for more effective challenge and openness at Board level including Harriet Harman, Trade Minister Lord Davies and The Walker Review, the women who spoke to us comprising almost a fifth of all female board directors on FTSE 100 companies, clearly identified their ability to challenge effectively, leave their egos at the door and the sheer diligence of their effort, make a real difference to this agenda. In particular their qualities would seem the ideal profile for effective NEDs and as a matter of urgency and necessity we need to actively facilitate their inclusion in greater number on many more Boards”

“Less than 11% of FTSE 100 board directors are women” continues Pitcher, “Women clearly add huge value to the boards they sit on. Organisations should be more creative in the way they evaluate the particular combination of skills, experience and personal qualities an individual brings to the board.”

‘Board Dynamics – A Female Perspective’ concludes with Top Tips for Board Success, showing women how to get ready for the role and how to secure such a position through effective networking and building sound relationships with key head-hunters.



Note to Editors

IDDDAS, member of the AIM listed Savile Group Plc- is the only full service organisation meeting the needs of individual directors and boards through a range of services which include: assessment, coaching, mentoring, facilitating, board effectiveness reviews, corporate governance, ethical leadership and women & boards.

The IDDDAS team includes the following, whose biographies can be found on the IDDDAS website (www.idddas.com):

Helen Pitcher(Chairman), Mark Winkle (COO and Executive Coach),Jonathan Cohen (Director), David Stewart, Lord Freeman, Philip Beddows (Director), Stephen Barden (Senior Executive Coach), Mary Allen, Ian Bell, Diane Bright, Claire Coldwell, Denise Collis, Sue Cox, Stewart Davies, Elizabeth Filkin, Cristina Grace, Tony Goddard, Ffion Hague, Annie Harding, Laurel Herman, Daniel Hodson, Chris Leslie, Kevin McGeever, Sir Nick Montagu, Philip Parker, Ian Parsons, David Potter, Harry Richardson, John Salmon, Hilary Sears, Martin Smith.

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