

Apple and gender diversity essay

[Business](#), [Business Ethics](#)



Apple and Gender Diversity Many women feel that it is unfair that they are paid only 78 cents to every dollar a man makes. But are the American people perpetuating the same problem we're trying to avoid? Apple Incorporated, the company that makes objects like the iPhone and iPad, seems to be perfectly content with those stereotypes. Out of the 12 people on their executive board, only one is a woman. Apple's executive board is one of the least gender diverse in Silicon Valley and the lack of diversity, is in fact, hurting the company.

According to the National Council for Research on Women, women compromise 51% of the population, but only 15. 7% of Fortune 500 company boards, and only 9. 1% of Silicon Valley company executive boards.

Studies have shown that companies that have a well-balanced executive board have a higher profit margin, and the more women, the better the return for the company. With an even split of men to women on an executive board, the company has an increased stock growth of about 36%. With companies constantly striving to increase their profit margins, they look to add new faces to do just that.

Although some companies in Silicon Valley seem to be struggling to find women to fill that gap, some have done extensive research and have found the key to their increased profits. Companies like Hewlett-Packard, Google, and Facebook that have some of the largest networks of users have women in the head positions of the company, and their stock prices continue to soar (Miller, Claire). Bill Campbell, chairman of Intuit said "" Simply put, we consider gender diversity at top levels a necessity for hiring and keeping

great talent.” But, while studies continue to show around a 53% increase in equity return for the companies, many of the companies tend to focus more on racial diversity, then gender diversity. Because many technological based companies tend to be global, “ they focus more on racial diversity, than gender diversity.

” Due to the fact that the companies tend to focus more on racial diversity then gender, there are few programs in place to get women to join technologically based companies (Miller, Claire). Out of the companies aforementioned that do in fact have female executives on their boards, they have been ‘scouted’ while employed as chief executives of other companies. Although Apple prides itself on being diverse, as seen in its diversity policy, which states, “ We are committed to diversity. Apple is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer,” even executives from other companies are noticing Apple’s complete lack of the very thing they pride themselves on. Salesforce CEO Mark Benioff was sitting in on the iPad 3’s launch and was tweeting insults at Apple. Some of the insults included “ The only racial and gender diversity in Apple’s keynotes is in the movies they show at the launches. #ipad3.

” It also included “ The only racial and gender diversity in Apple’s keynotes is in the movies they show at the launches. #ipad3 (Yarow, Jay).” If even executives from other companies are noticing Apple’s complete disregard for female executives, it can be claimed that Apple may soon lose some of its’ female customer base. A trip to any Apple store around the country will show that women do work at some managerial positions, and at many entry-level

positions, but the question remains as to why, out of their 12 members on their executive board, that there is only one woman. Major purchasers in recent years are women and minorities, believes Watermark CEO Marilyn Nagel. “ When a customer comes in and is a female purchaser in IT — if she talks to an all white male sales team — from that first impression she might not believe the company understands what her needs are,” she says. She also believes that women executives want to work for a team that has a balanced “ gender executive team,” and that women are intelligent and tend to research the company and that factor helps guide their decision of whether or not to work for the company (Landau & Chang).

Though many people feel that company executive boards in general lack women, Nagel suggests that it may be because “ tend to underplay their success and have greater humility around their accomplishments than is necessary.” With companies like Google, whose stock prices almost 30 points higher than Apple, having female executives on their boards seems to be what is keeping their stock prices, even in the recession, slowly climbing. So why are only 3% of tech chief executives in the United States women? Other companies in California aren’t doing much better either. Only about 10% of company executives in California are women, and that hasn’t changed in the 10 years that studies have been done. Although studies have shown a correlation between female executives and a company’s profits, the answer as to why is debated. In the Journal of Business Ethics, it is suggested that one of the many reasons this may occur is that, “ female directors tend to outperform their male counterparts,” and that women “ often bring a fresh perspective on complex issues, and this can help correct informational

biases in strategy formulation, and problem solving.” Though many of the studies point to women being able to more accurately solve problems, they should be interpreted differently. Hiring more women on an executive board doesn’t necessarily mean that a company will be more likely to succeed, but it does give the company access to a greater pool of talent, and the diversity is what leads to the heightened profits (Women to the Top).

In a US market where women are responsible for 83% of all consumer purchases, companies need to create a demographic in their own company that the consumer can relate to. In a basic business principle, the consumer wants their needs and expectations filled in order to buy a product. But, if those companies don’t have the employees to find the needs and expectations that are expected, why would a consumer want to buy the product? So, if women are making most of the purchases, companies should be aware of what their expectations are for their product. Both women and men bring different perspectives and are able to reach a larger demographic, and when the optimal demographic is reached, product flies off shelves (Women on the Top).

In the past year, Apple has released the iPhone 4, a new storage system for their devices called iCloud, and the iPad 3 among other products. The market for these items is still prevalent, but could arguably be further reachable with new ideas brought forth by having a more diverse executive board. Apple seems to be following the same kind of business model that Converse follows: Keeping an original product, which in this case are the Chuck Taylors, and introducing new ones as well. Apple continues to revamp

products already created instead of creating new ones. For example, the iPhone is now in its' fifth generation, and the iPad, in its' third.

The market for a product, even with new upgrades is only so large, and Apple is going to need more creative input to continue to keep their customer base, which some news reporters have referred to as cult-like. As the news reports have stated, the base can be cult-like with people trying to avoid having numerous products that run different software systems. The popularity of these products is largely based upon the fact that the devices can wirelessly sync over an Internet connection with each other, and to a ' cloud' where files are stored elsewhere, so that files are never lost.

In order to continue to keep the customer base that the company has become famous for, Apple needs to head in the direction that so many of their competitors are trying to. Although many of the companies that have made an effort to increase the amount of women they have filling executive positions in their companies have increased their profits and will continue to, there have been some stumbles. When introducing any new member into a company, especially in a high-ranking position, there is bound to be an adjustment period needed. When adding in a completely new aggregation of people, there is bound to be communication problems and missteps in even companies with strong foundations. There are many different communication theories that have been explored throughout the years that both show the harm that changes like this can make, and ways to overcome them, and to benefit the company. The Cultural Approach to organizations theory by Clifford Geertz and Michael Pacanowsky argue that humans are enveloped in

a web of significance that spin, and that an organization is just that. They state that every company has their own stories, and symbols to make sense of the culture as well (Geertz). With adding new subcultures into the mix, it may take the company awhile to readjust to the new addition.

Genderlect Styles can also work against the executives, and that expresses Deborah Tannen's view on how women and men speak for different reasons. Men, Tannen argues, speak to gain status and independence, and women seek human connection. With the differences in even why both genders talk, it becomes more astonishing how the adding women into a corporate position in a company effectively increases its' profits. But, as studies show, companies with more females " demonstrate higher collective intelligence and better problem solving ability." With Apple's constant need to evaluate market demand, having a company that can demonstrate these skills is essential. Technologically based companies lack women at even the lowest levels because of their lack of interest in computer science. But, in order to continue having their profits grow, technology companies need to establish some sort of retention, and make women desire to go to school for computer science.

The lack of women in the executive board of Apple Incorporated has led to the company not being as profitable as other companies in the same field. If Apple were to create programs and scholarships to encourage women to attend college for computer science, they would have the ability to create a better percentage of retention to create a pool of executives to pull from. In an interview with Apple Customer Support representative James Pinkerton,

after being rejected to being interviewed by Apple's media hotline for lack of credentials, he stated that although he wasn't "actually aware" of the fact that in the head of his corporation there was only one female executive, he hopes to see that change. As far as risks, the only one involved would be actually taking the leap of faith in someone, and watching their stocks grow exponentially as new ideas come flooding in.

Apple should take examples from all the other companies that have done just that, and revel in the fact that they too have become a go-to company that people strive to work for. Works Cited" COMM300 – Communication Theory: Genderlect." Www. ic. arizona.

edu. University of Arizona. Web. 4 Apr. 2012. Francoeur, Claude, Labelle, Réal and Sinclair-Desgagne, Bernard, " Gender Diversity in Corporate Governance and Top Management" (July 13, 2008). Journal of Business Ethics, Vol. 81, 2008 Geertz, C.

(1973). The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books. Landau, Blake, and Angie Chang. " Study Shows Gender Diversity In Top Company Leadership Still Lagging At 9.

2% Women." Forbes. Forbes Magazine, 16 Dec. 2011. Web. 25 Mar. 2012. Miller, Claire Cain.

" Where Are the Women Executives in Silicon Valley?" Bits Blog. The New York Times Company, 9 Dec. 2011. Web. 25 Mar.

2012. Pacanowsky, M., & O'Donnell-Trujillo, N. (1983). Organizational communication as cultural performance. *Communication Monographs* 50, 127-147.

“ Why Your Next Board Member Should Be A Woman.” National Council for Research on Women. National Council for Research on Women, 24 Feb.

2012. Web. 25 Mar. 2012.

“ Women to the Top.” Women to the Top. Women to the Top, 2011. Web. 4 Apr. 2012. Yarow, Jay. “ Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff Was Ripping Apple During The New iPad Event.

” Business Insider. Business Insider Inc., 07 Mar. 2012.

Web. 25 Mar. 2012.