

Opportunity E-zine October 2010



*Opportunity E-zine f/m is OIB's online newsletter. It covers news and events in our network and current issues related to diversity.*

*We hope you enjoy this number.*

*On behalf of the Opportunity team, Lizzy Venekamp, director*

*If you have any questions or would like to suggest copy, please contact [mberkel@opportunity.nl](mailto:mberkel@opportunity.nl)*

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Opportunity Events

**Opportunity meeting on 26 October: "Leadership – how do we learn (from one another)?"**

**New perspectives and practices**



How do we learn what effective leadership is and which leadership style suits us? How do we manage and coach people who come from entirely different backgrounds to our own? What can different generations, older and younger people, men and women, Dutch people and bicultural individuals learn from one another?

These questions will be addressed at a meeting that Opportunity is organising with Netherlands Railways (NS) on Tuesday 26 October (5 to 7.30 p.m.) at the NS headquarters in Utrecht. We will be looking at all these questions from an entirely new perspective: the role of the brain.

The meeting will feature various interesting speakers (including a brain expert) and encourage those attending to share familiar dilemmas and unexpected examples from their own work.

Be sure to mark the date in your diary now. Opportunity members will receive an invitation and a programme shortly.

**"Diversity as Strategy" course – a shot of inspiration for diversity managers**



*"The course offered me an effective framework for thinking about everyday practice, exploring it in depth and arriving at new insights. It's especially valuable to do this with colleagues who work in various different sectors, with enthusiastic specialists and expert coaches. It was a real shot of inspiration!"* (Marja Marcus, diversity manager at KPMG, participant in the 2009 course).

Nine eager diversity managers at large companies and institutions recently started the post-Master's course in "Diversity as Strategy". The location was a splendid country estate in the south of the Netherlands. This is the second year in a row that Opportunity Advies has run the course with Radboud University Nijmegen. Programme coordinators Yvonne Benschop (professor of Organisational Behaviour at Radboud University) and Sandra Doelman (senior consultant/trainer at Opportunity Advies) have once again put together an exciting, challenging and interactive programme. The aim of the

course is to explore how theoretical insights into organisational change, group dynamics, diversity and power stand up to everyday practice.

Basing themselves on the unlimited opportunities of the "Blue Ocean" strategy, the participants began by asking themselves "How do I incorporate diversity into my organisation's strategy?" During the second session, guest lecturer David Armstrong of the UK's Tavistock Institute guided the participants into "the organisation in the mind". In Armstrong's unique method, people are made more aware of the implicit and often unconscious processes in organisations that influence the results of a diversity strategy. Other specialists such as Mohamed El Achkar of TNT and Ndo Ntoane of Netherlands Railways shared their tales from the trenches. The course will conclude in December, when the participants will give a presentation before a professional jury. They will then receive a certificate from Radboud University.

Interested? The post-Master's course will be repeated in 2011. If you'd like to register, watch for the announcements in this magazine or at [www.opportunity.nl](http://www.opportunity.nl). You can also send an e-mail to [sdoelman@opportunity.nl](mailto:sdoelman@opportunity.nl) to ask for more information.

#### Conference on 8 November: "Talent & Diversity...Creating Possibilities"



**WOMEN INC.**

CONTENT  
PARTNERS

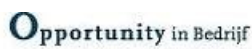


focus on new approaches to leadership in gender diversity and have opportunities as its underlying theme.

Talent to the Top is collaborating with various other organisations on a trendsetting conference that will take gender diversity to a higher plane. The conference, scheduled for 8 November, will

During the conference, OIB, Women Inc, Lof Media and LEAP! will be joining forces with Talent to the Top. Each organisation will hold a parallel session in which it will share its expertise and its specific approach to retaining and promoting female talent. For more information or to register for this event, go to [read more](#)

#### The benefits of mentoring: a two-way street



##### Cross Mentoring programma

About one hundred and fifty guests gathered at Eureko/Achmea's splendid high-tech conference centre in Zeist on 14 September, where Willem van Duin, the insurance company's CEO, opened the kick-off meeting for the Cross Mentoring programme.



This year no fewer than ninety mentees and an equal number of mentors will be participating in this Opportunity programme, in which female high potentials are mentored by senior managers from another organisation. Besides mentoring, the programme also offers a number of subject-specific sessions and peer-sharing.

The kick-off meeting augured well for the rest of the programme. Participants were not only inspired by Willem van Duin's personal views about his time as a mentor, but they also appreciated Achmea's approach to making better use of female potential. Thanks to its multifaceted approach, the percentage of women in Achmea's senior management has increased from 8% in 2006 to 24% in 2010. Mentoring helped make this increase possible.

The Cross Mentoring programme is unique in encouraging cross-fertilisation in different ways and in enabling both mentors and mentees to learn from their experience. "It's a two-way street, and that makes it incredibly useful," says Willem Van Duin.

Another interesting presentation was given by Wiebe Draijer, managing partner of McKinsey Benelux. He used a number of short films and slides to explain the business case for diversity. Enterprises that have – and actually utilise – both masculine and feminine leadership capacities are considerably more successful than those that do not.

Things are not that simple in practice, however, because gender bias can be unconscious and deeply rooted. Gender diversity therefore demands constant vigilance and organisations must be prepared to keep the pressure on when it comes to this issue.

The kick-off meeting was also the first time that the participating mentors and mentees had met one another, and it gave them an opportunity to engage in lively discussion.

Would you like more information, or are you considering participating in the Cross Mentoring programme yourself? Then send an e-mail to [mberkel@opportunity.nl](mailto:mberkel@opportunity.nl)

## Diversity helps Akzo Nobel enter a new era



Akzo Nobel is entering a new era of rapid and sustainable growth. When its CEO Hans Wijers presented the company's new mid-range targets to the financial markets, he emphasised that Akzo Nobel is solidly positioned to achieve its strategic aims. That it partly because it has a strong management team. Akzo Nobel plans to extend its operational management team by creating a new Executive Committee. The composition of both this and other management teams will be based on diversity, so that the company can serve its increasingly international market more effectively.

"We intend to fill no more than one out of every two vacancies with a Western male. The other vacancy must be filled by a woman or someone from a non-Western minority," says Hans Wijers. By 2015, the company wants 20% of all top executive positions to be held by women and non-Western minorities. The new Executive Committee already meets that criterion: one of the five members is a woman.

### Quote of the month:

"Talent has neither passport nor gender"  
(Ben Verwaayen, CEO of Alcatel-Lucent )

## Opportunity thinks....

### Women lead to success



**What used to be a minor matter is now crucial. Some aspects of leadership were considered less valuable in the past, but today they are regarded as more important than ever.**

Encouraging and supporting the personal and professional development of employees, inspiring them, sharing responsibility for decision-making, creativity, integrity, and global thinking: according to research by McKinsey (Women Matter 2, 2009) and IBM (Capitalizing on Complexity, 2010), these are the traits that matter if companies want to be successful and remain that way. Both studies asked senior managers what they considered the most important trends today and which leadership qualities were needed to key into them.

The traits that they identified turned out to be precisely the qualities that women tend to possess. The business case for a gender-balanced management is therefore clear. All that remains is to put it into practice and rid ourselves of deep-rooted biases, because it's obvious that many people still believe "think manager, think male".

## News from the Opportunity network

### Boardroom Coaching – "an enjoyable necessity"

Opportunity recently launched an animated round-table discussion about its Boardroom Coaching programme, which links a male or female senior executive to a female executive potential in other company. Besides one-to-one meetings, the programme also features several plenary sessions and peer-sharing.

Former Opportunity chairwoman Trude Maas moderated a discussion between three CEOs about their experience of the Boardroom Coaching programme, intended to help female junior executives make their next career move. One of the CEOs called it "quite enjoyable, but evidently also a necessity".

Their discussion covered such topics as the position of female senior and junior executives in the Netherlands, motivation and lessons learned as a mentor/coach, and the value of gender diversity within their organisation. The discussion was videoed and will soon be available on the OiB website.

### Philips and Alliander put their energy into diversity



Opportunity is delighted to welcome two new members to its network: Philips and Alliander (formerly part of Nuon, now an independent network company). Both operate in a "hard" technical sector but are well aware of the importance of "soft" aspects. We will tell you more about their policies and approaches in a future newsletter, and introduce you to some of the people involved.



### BAM sets an example in the building industry

Since Joop van Oosten – CEO of building company BAM until 1 October – became a member of the Glass Ceiling Ambassadors Network, the company has made the hiring and promotion of female employees a priority. BAM became a member of OiB and asked Opportunity Advies to

organise Inclusive Leadership workshops and a Female Empowerment programme for it.

In its recent report on "Gender diversity: Women in Annual Reports", Citigate First Financial (CFF) mentions BAM no less than three times as a good example. CFF notes that BAM applies specific KPIs, the target being to have women comprise at least 15% of all employees who join the company and no more than 5% of all employees who leave. BAM also has an active women's network, Female Capital (FC) BAM, and is a member of the Ambassadors Network for the Building Industry. The report notes the importance of the leadership training and female empowerment programmes.

#### Essent appoints Diversity & Inclusion Director



Chantal Groot Kormelink (37) has been appointed Diversity & Inclusion Director at energy company Essent. Groot Kormelink has worked for Essent in various marketing and communication management positions since 2002. In addition to the company's diversity policy, she will also be focusing on labour market communication. Chantal reports directly to Essent CEO Peter Terium.

Essent is convinced that diversity in teams will help improve its operational results. It aims to achieve a good balance between men and women, people of various ethnic backgrounds, and employees of different ages. Essent's aim in the next few years is to be regarded as the best employer with respect to talent and diversity and to extend its diversity policy.

#### News Round-up

##### Time to follow Norway's example?

Although there are occasional glimmers of hope (for example, this summer Elite Research reported in the Dutch financial newspaper *Het Financieele Dagblad* that the percentage of women on supervisory boards had increased by 5% in 2009, somewhat more than the average annual increase of 2%), progress getting women into the senior executive ranks of Dutch companies has been painfully slow. The evidence can be found in *TopCounter f/m*, a survey conducted every other year by OiB and the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). A smaller-scale survey conducted in September by national newspaper *De Volkskrant* indicates that progress has stalled altogether.

Things are not much better in other European countries. EU Commissioner Viviane Reding recently said in an interview with German newspaper *Die Welt* that if the number of women occupying senior executive positions had not improved by the end of 2011, then consideration should be given to setting statutory quotas. "My target is for 30% of supervisory directors to be female by 2015, with an increase to 40% by 2020." Late last year, OiB argued in favour of introducing strict – although temporary – rules in order to speed up the process.

In the Netherlands, the Labour party (PvdA) has submitted a bill whereby 30% of senior executive positions in large companies must be held by females. Companies will have until 2016 to meet this target or be forced to comply with a statutory quota. The bill has yet to be passed by the Dutch Senate, however.

*(Sources: Het Financieele Dagblad, 6 July 2010; De Volkskrant, 13 September 2010; Die Welt, 17 September 2010, Toptelling v/m 2009 (OiB with SCP))*

##### Wall Street has lost its appeal for women



Stress, sexism and dismissals are only some of the reasons that women are leaving Wall Street in droves. Just when the big financial firms are doing their best to attract talented females, a study by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that 141,000 women (2.6% of the female workers in finance) left the industry in the past ten years, whereas the number of men working on Wall Street increased by 389,000 or 9.6%. At the same time, the share of women in the overall workforce grew by 4.1% in the same

period, outstripping a 0.5% increase in male workers.

While the number of women working in banks has increased steadily since the 1980s, the new figures contradict that trend. Most striking is that there are fewer and fewer young women working for the big financial firms.

*(Source: Management Team, 2 September 2010, "Vrouwen keren Wall Street de rug toe" by Kunieke Luth)*

##### Erasmus University's governing bodies most gender-diverse

CEOme published the findings of its study on the gender diversity of Dutch university governing

bodies in June, resulting in a list of the 13 most gender-diverse Dutch universities. First place was claimed by Erasmus University Rotterdam: 33% of its managing and supervisory directors are female and it also has a woman chairing its management board. The University of Amsterdam took second place, with 50% of its managing directors and 33% of its supervisory directors being female. Bringing up in the rear is Nyenrode University, which has no women either on its management board or its supervisory board.

(Source: [www.ceome.nl](http://www.ceome.nl), 16 June 2010)

#### □ Opportunity congratulates

Opportunity has taken note of the following appointments of women to top positions (in alphabetical order):

Jet Bussemaker, Crown-appointed member of the Dutch Social and Economic Council (SER)  
Elisa Carter, member of the Board of Directors, Erasmus Medical Centre Rotterdam  
Josephine Colijn, Director of Healthcare and Science Team for insurance broker Marsh  
Karin Dorrepaal, Senior Vice President of DSM  
Prof. Naomi Ellemers and Prof. Ineke Sluiter have been awarded the 2010 Spinoza Prize by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)  
Marieke de Goede, Professor of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam  
Karin Hubert, Director of the Internal Auditing Service for the Social Insurance Bank  
Karin Korstanje, Director of Secretary Plus/StarJob USG People  
Maria Martens, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Simavi  
Nieke Martens, Corporate Director for Van Lanschot  
Annemarie Mol, Professor of the Anthropology of the Body, University of Amsterdam  
Marjan Oudeman, Member of the Executive Committee of Akzo Nobel  
Marga van Praag, Crown-appointed member of the Dutch Social and Economic Council (SER)  
Paula Raijmakers, Director of Rabobank in Almere  
Jannita Robberse, Chief Engineer/Director of the Department of Public Works for the Province of Noord-Brabant  
Shula Rijxman, Chief Commercial Officer for IDTV  
Sarah Russell, CEO of Global Asset Management at Aegon  
Ingrijd Thijssen, Chairman of the Executive Board of NS Reizigers  
Joyce Thijssen-Steenveld, General Director of USG Juristen and USG Capacity  
Michaëla Ulrici, Chairman of the Board of Nauta Dutilh  
Jeanine van der Vlist, Chairman of Netelcom  
Mies Westerveld, Professor of Social Insurance Law, University of Amsterdam  
Marieke van Zuien, Insurance Talent of the Year

#### □ More information

**For more up-to-date information and good practices, go to:**

**[www.opportunity.nl](http://www.opportunity.nl)**

*OiB is an expertise centre and national network of leading organisations that aim to achieve an even balance between male and female managers/executives. **Opportunity Advies** is a consultancy allied with OiB. Basing itself on the same philosophy. Opportunity Advies works on putting the associated policy into practice. It does this by guiding changes in corporate culture, providing training courses and advising clients on diversity and leadership issues. Opportunity is also associated with **the Netherlands' national diversity management network (DIV)**, focusing on cultural diversity in SMEs and government.*