



# E-zine v/m

Newsletter Opportunity in Bedrijf

## Newsletter March 2011



*Opportunity E-zine f/m is OiB's online newsletter. It covers news and events within 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).*

*N.B. For the Dutch version of this E-zine, please surf to: [www.opportunity.nl](http://www.opportunity.nl)*

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- **Diversity Game helps foster dialogue and implementation**
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## Opportunity Events

### Annual programme for 2011: from organisational commitment to personal engagement



The theme of "personal engagement" will underpin the many events and projects that Opportunity is once more organising this year. You can read about some of our plans for the coming months below. We circulated a set of postcards at the start of the year setting out our annual programme. If you would like to receive them as well, send an e-mail to [wrambelje@opportunity.nl](mailto:wrambelje@opportunity.nl).

You can also visit our [website](http://www.opportunity.nl) for more information.

### 24 March – Cross Mentoring now in fifth year

Opportunity's successful mentoring programme has entered its fifth consecutive year. In addition to one-to-one mentoring sessions, the programme includes various meetings for mentees. Their next get-together will be on 24 March at Pepsico in Utrecht, where they will discuss how to time the use of "feminine" and "masculine" traits and leadership styles. The peer-sharing part of the programme will ask mentees to share "the secret of their success". The meeting is restricted to Cross Mentoring Programme participants and coordinators.

### 31 March – Sampling the Diversity as Strategy course



Are you looking for more solid theoretical underpinnings, but are you also eager to test theories in practice – and get results? Diversity as Strategy, a post-Master's course that will be starting in September for the third time, gives you a chance to explore diversity from both vantage points

You have the chance to hear several of the alumni talk about their impressions of the course at an interactive meeting on 31 March. In particular, you can sample what Diversity as Strategy – developed jointly by Opportunity Advies and the ABK Business School at Radboud University in Nijmegen – has to offer you. The meeting will focus on diversity

as it relates to power and influence. An inspiring lecture by Prof. Yvonne Benschop (professor of Organisational Behaviour at Radboud University) and an interactive session monitored by Sandra Doelman and Astrid Elburg (senior trainers and coaches at Opportunity Advies) will help you look at your own organisation, its diversity strategy, and your position in that context through the "prism" of power and influence.

We have invited both members and non-members of the Opportunity network to this special "sampler session", as well as the course alumni. That makes this event an ideal opportunity to network and exchange ideas with others. To register for the sampler session and for more information on the course, contact [evzuilichem@opportunity.nl](mailto:evzuilichem@opportunity.nl).

### **Diversity Game – fostering dialogue and implementation**



Several years back, OiB developed a challenging management game for organisations in our network focusing on diversity and inclusive leadership. Recently updated, the game allows managers, HR professionals, mentors and recruiters to probe their attitudes toward diversity and to learn more about it. It also gives them a chance to engage in dialogue with others and to exchange feedback with other players.

Another unique feature of the Diversity Game is that it highlights discrepancies between what people think and what they actually do. It is as much about opinions and intentions as about actions and conduct in the everyday world of work. Players can finish off the game by identifying their "type" (what type of manager are you when it comes to diversity?) and by drawing up an action plan.

Opportunity is organising a workshop this spring exploring how and in what situations the Diversity Game can be used (Opportunity members will be receiving an invitation shortly).

### **Mark Your Calendar: 14 June 2011, a special event held by Opportunity and Catalyst**

OiB, Catalyst Europe AG, and sponsor Shell International B.V. are delighted to invite Opportunity members to **Engaging and Retaining Women: Organisational Culture and the Role of Leaders**. Opportunity and Catalyst have joined forces for this symposium in order to share their expertise with companies in both their networks. The symposium will explore the most effective strategies for improving diversity, based on both theoretical insights and the practical experience of CEOs and diversity managers. The focus will be on the role of leaders in this context.



delen met de bedrijven in hun beider netwerken. Op basis van zowel

The course will offer participants:

- an understanding of the critical success factors for engaging and retaining talented women;
- insight into the importance of managers and the quality of supervision

in women's career progress;

- effective and practical examples of talent development and inclusive leadership;
- an opportunity to share lessons learned with other companies, in particular the insights of managers who make a difference;
- help in analysing elements of their organisation's culture.

Shell's CEO Peter Voser and PwC's chairman Robert Swaak have already agreed to cooperate. Be sure to mark the date on your calendar now. Opportunity members will receive an invitation in April.

For more information about our [annual programme for 2011](#)

### **Opportunity - development and training**

#### **Tackling dilemmas and taboos concerning parental leave HR Programme offers an effective tool for promotion and employee retention**



**Opportunity Advies**

A pro-active and effective maternity policy can help companies prevent "regretted losses" and remove obstacles to promotion. Opportunity Advies and Van Iren Consultancy have developed a "train the trainer" programme for Human Resources professionals that

focuses on providing parents/parents-to-be and their managers with effective guidance. The programme gives HR professionals a useful checklist for developing their organisation's maternity leave policy and for tackling the associated dilemmas and taboos. This can make an important contribution to employee retention and to avoiding "regretted losses".

### **Lessons learned at Loyens & Loeff**

Law firm and tax consultants Loyens & Loeff recently asked Opportunity Advies to help it set up a maternity programme. **What made them decide to do so?**

Angelique De Bruin, Senior HR Adviser at Loyens & Loeff and a member of the firm's Diversity Council, explains. "The most important reason for starting up a maternity programme is that we had scarcely discussed this subject with our staff. When female staff returned from maternity leave asking to work part time, we consented automatically. In some cases, we even pre-empted their request by asking them which days they wanted to work part time. We didn't really explore why they wanted to cut down on their hours. By talking to our employees, we discovered that in almost every case, what they really wanted was more flexibility, and not necessarily to work part time. We realised that if we explore what actually lay behind such a request, an entirely different picture might emerge."

### **What problems do young parents encounter at Loyens & Loeff?**

"What we see is that young parents – and in particular young mothers – get into trouble with the firm's career policy, which requires legal staff to spend 11 to 12 years with the firm before being made a partner. Young parents and staff who wanted children tended to think: "I'll never manage that if I want to have children or achieve a good work/life balance", and they would simply give up trying. Their careers stagnated or they quit their jobs without discussing the reasons with HR or their manager. Mind you, it remains a difficult topic to discuss, even for partners. Too often, they thought they already knew what young parents – usually mothers – were thinking: if they want children, then they must want a different work/life balance and that means they no longer have career ambitions."

### **What did the participants think of the programme? What effect has it had on the HR advisers?**

"The programme was very well received. The advisers especially appreciated the link between the theory and the practical implications for our firm. Most importantly, it forced us to think about our own assumptions and presuppositions – because everyone in fact has them. We also discovered that we HR advisers differ a lot from one another. We have a shared basis in HR, but we look at the issue of maternity very differently, and have different ideas on how to deal with it. One of the biggest eye-openers was a study by OiB showing that women often quit their jobs not because they wanted or had children or wanted a better work/life balance, but because they lacked challenges and felt unappreciated..."



The most important outcome is that our HR advisers now do everything possible to encourage staff members and managers/partners to discuss this topic. That's very important if we really want to change things. We no longer base our actions on assumptions or seemingly obvious attitudes. We've noticed that HR can take the lead in that respect, for example by making maternity a standard topic in our appraisal and career progress interviews and in any discussion of leave periods. Most of all, we are pushing to discuss the issue in-depth with our firm's partners. But we are also offering the secretaries in the HR department a short training course in how to deal with requests to work part time."

### **How will Loyens & Loeff deal with the topic of maternity from now on? What effects are you aiming to achieve?**

"We plan to develop a handy booklet drawing attention to the vulnerable period that precedes and follows childbirth. We want to be pro-active in raising this issue with employees. One of the remaining challenges is how to get young men involved in the discussion. Our ultimate aim is to retain talented staff and benefit from employee diversity. Our short-term goal is to continue talking to one another and to encourage people to discuss one another's attitudes. We would like to use the HR agenda to structure the discussion and draw attention to the issue. For example,

our Diversity Council is reserving time for diversity in our Academy for young fee-earners. The Council will devote a full Academy session to assessment and career paths in relation to diversity. That means that fee earners will be made aware of the issue and its importance to the firm from their very first year at Loyens & Loeff.”

For more information on the maternity programme, read [the complete article](#) or send an e-mail to [sdoelman@opportunity.nl](mailto:sdoelman@opportunity.nl).

## Good Practice

### Essent introduces “plus-one scheme”



Essent heeft een unieke positie in de Nederlandse energiesector. Het is Essent has a unique position in the Dutch energy sector: it is the only energy company that has a woman on its Board. Nina Skorupska is Essent’s Chief Technology Officer. (See our previous number of *E-zine* for an [interview](#) with her). Essent’s aim is to create more gender diversity at its executive and management levels, the underlying idea being to optimise business operations. One of the measures that it has introduced is the “plus-one scheme”.

Women currently make up 34% of Essent’s workforce. They account for 21% of all positions at the uppermost levels of the organisation (the Board and the two management layers below the Board), and 18% of all middle management positions. To ensure that it achieves its aim of having women in 25% of all middle and senior management positions, Essent has required every business unit and corporate staff director to increase the number of women in senior or middle management positions by at least one during the course of 2011. The point is not just to recruit talented women, but to hold on to them as well. If no vacancies arise among senior or middle managers, however, the directors are not supposed to simply create positions. Essent wants to promote positive action – to raise awareness as well as encourage promotion.

## Opportunity thinks...

### The term “glass ceiling” is no longer enough



The term “glass ceiling” has long been used as a metaphor for the small number of women who have climbed to the top echelons of private and public-sector organisations. The metaphor does not go far enough, however. The various mechanisms that benefit men’s careers and are disadvantageous to women’s operate beyond the organisational levels just below the top. In fact, they affect every level of an organisation and influence many different aspects of corporate culture. The term “glass labyrinth” is therefore more appropriate.

For [more information about these mechanisms](#) (in Dutch)

## News from the Opportunity-network

### Arcadis joins the Opportunity network



Opportunity would like to extend a warm welcome to Arcadis! We have already acted in an advisory capacity for this fascinating company, and we are thrilled that it has now joined our network and intends to take part in our Boardroom Coaching Programme. Look for an article on Arcadis – an international company providing consultancy, design, engineering and management services in the fields of infrastructure, water, environment and buildings – in a future number of *E-zine*.

### ABN AMRO and Unilever get top scores in studies on diversity and management development

In “MT101”, an annual survey of non-sexist companies conducted by trade publication *Management Team*, ABN AMRO gets top marks. The bank, a long-standing member of the

Opportunity network, has been promoting gender diversity at the senior levels of its organisation for many years. A little more than a year ago, it was the one hundredth company to sign the Talent to the Top Charter.

There was also good news for another member of the Opportunity network, Unilever. In its Best Companies for Leadership Study, organisation consultants the Hay Group found that Unilever offers managers the best opportunities in Europe, putting the company at the top of the Hay Group's annual Top 10. One striking finding of the study is the growing appreciation for diversity and the increasing action taken by companies in this regard. Some 85% of the respondents in the Top 10 indicate that their organisation runs a leadership programme focused specifically on managing diversity. For the group surveyed as a whole, that figure is less than 70%.

### De business case, Diversity enters a new phase – and Opportunity's logo follows



#### Opportunity in Bedrijf

Diversity is entering a new phase as an issue. The business case has been demonstrated, and we now know how valuable diversity is for companies. The question they now face is: how do we generate more support for diversity among our managers and make it intrinsic to our organisation? Once managers recognise both the organisational and individual advantages of diversity and commit to it personally, they become inclusive leaders. Only then can their company reach the "tipping point".

Our logo has been overhauled this year, with a new typeface and symbol that fits in with the new phase of diversity today.

#### New Opportunity staff



We are delighted to introduce you to two new colleagues. Wendy de la Rambelje has worked as a project assistant for OiB since January. She plays a pivotal role in organising our various events, programmes and projects, and in the associated logistics. Wendy is highly experienced in this regard and well acquainted with the issue of diversity. Prior to accepting a job with OiB, she worked for DIV, the Netherlands' national diversity management network. Formerly part of Opportunity, DIV focused specifically on ethnic/cultural diversity.

Our other new employee, Jerome Balinge, also worked for DIV and will be joining OiB in April as a consultant and account manager. Jerome has considerable experience and expertise concerning diversity, in particular cultural/ethnic diversity. He will be introducing himself in a future number of *E-zine*.

#### Lessons learned at the DIV diversity expertise centre



For six years, DIV – the Netherlands national diversity management network – performed valuable work in the area of ethnic, cultural and age diversity. DIV was a government-funded project that was meant to be temporary from the very start. OiB was asked to run it because of its expertise in diversity matters and its business network. The project organisation was disbanded at the end of last year, but various organisations and persons who were inspired by DIV and benefited from its expertise have undertaken to continue a number of its activities. OiB is one of these. That means that members of the Opportunity network can continue to benefit from the expertise and *good practices* acquired by DIV.

DIV advised many hundreds of employers, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, and helped them get started on diversity management in their own organisations. It recorded major results in 2009 and 2010 when more than twenty industry and employers' organisations asked DIV to advise them on setting up and implementing long-range policy plans for achieving cultural diversity in their sector.

DIV always emphasised the "business case" for diversity, i.e. the business advantages of an ethnically and culturally diverse workforce. Two business networks helped spread this message:

the Diversity Ambassadors Network (2005-2007) and the TopFocus knowledge network (2009 and 2010).

Funding provided by the Ministry of the Interior in the past two years allowed DIV to advise and assist government organisations aiming to achieve more cultural diversity in their workforce. Local councils, water boards and provincial authorities benefitted most from these services.

Having been extended three times, the DIV project drew to a close after six years. The Dutch Government is considering how to ensure that employers remain aware of the benefits of a culturally diverse workforce. One approach would be to get employers' associations involved. In November 2010, the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Piet Hein Donner, commented that diversity management remained a point of concern for government employees and that it was necessary to incorporate it into standard, everyday policy.

The lessons learned by DIV have been documented in various Dutch-language publications, including the most recent one: *Het wordt pas spannend als het anders is. Succesvolle voorbeelden van diversiteit in het mkb* (December 2010). DIV's legacy also includes a handy toolkit that describes the lessons learned in the past six years and offers unique tables and summaries, for example a diversity terminology list.

For more information, contact [wrambelje@opportunity.nl](mailto:wrambelje@opportunity.nl).

## News round-up

### Should women avoid getting into arguments with one another?



Whereas men can simply "have an argument", women who argue with one another risk their dispute being depicted as a "catfight". Consider a report that appeared in FD, the Netherlands' financial newspaper, on 3 February: "Women in German Government quarrel about women". The article is about three members of the German Government who disagree about the need to set a quota for women on the management and supervisory boards of listed companies. The dispute was "instigated" by the Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Ursula von der Leyen. Shortly before, she had commented in *Der Spiegel* magazine that she wanted to introduce a law this year stipulating that at least 30% of all managing and supervisory directors have to be women.

In addition to reporting that the female politicians "were fighting like cats", the FD also stated that the Minister for Family Matters, Kristina Schröder, was "in a huff" because of a non-compulsory plan to introduce a quota in phases. Having depicted the policy disagreement as an embarrassing catfight, FD completed the picture by claiming that the Minister of Justice, Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger, had "tried to hush up the spat" – on top of everything else with arguments that FD claimed made no sense.

### Major increase in senior female police officers results in more efficiently led teams



politietop divers  
naar een duurzaam perspectief

The number of female senior police officers has increased dramatically owing to a three-year intervention programme promoting diversity in the upper echelons of the police force. Specifically, the percentage of female chief commissioners increased from 11% to 32%. Unfortunately, the number of ethnic minority chief commissioners did not keep pace, rising from 1% to a mere 3%.

The strategies used to achieve these gains varied and included some unorthodox methods: seeking out candidates in other lines of work who wanted to make a career switch; appointing mentors from another police force to coach newcomers; and encouraging male managers to work outside the police force for a time and to make way for others.

Groningen University studied the impact of appointing women and ethnic minorities to top-ranking positions in the force. The researchers compared thirty management teams, half headed by women. The teams were equally effective, but those with female managers were more efficient. These teams were more likely to call in outside experts and they experienced less

internal competition and less staff turnover.

### **Opportunity congratulates**

Opportunity noteerde over de afgelopen periode de volgende benoemingen van topvrouwen (in alfabetische volgorde):

Kirsten Berger, Partner, Law Firm of Stibbe  
Lenny Berkers, Supervisory Director, LIOF Regional Investment Bank  
Désirée van Boxtel, Supervisory Director, LIOF Regional Investment Bank  
Mirjam de Blécourt, Managing Director, Baker & McKenzie Law Firm  
Ina Brandes, Managing Director, Grontmij Germany  
Fieneke van den Brink, Managing Director, Royal Wegener  
Marianne Donker, Director of Public Health, Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport  
Margreet van Ee, Chairwoman, Achmea Bank Holding and Achmea Hypotheekbank  
Marry de Gaay Fortman, Chairman of the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers VNO-NCW Amsterdam Region  
Lidy Hartemink, Managing Director, Zorgcombinatie Noorderboog Healthcare Centre  
Cateautje Hijmans van den Bergh, Chairwoman, Boer & Croon consultants  
Nicolai Heijster, CFO, Dudok Groepsholding  
Carla de Jong, Commercial Director, Nieuw Amsterdam publishers  
Klaske de Jonge, Supervisory Director, Dutch Heart Foundation  
Femke Jongsma-de Valck, Partner, Law Firm of Kneppelhout & Korthals  
Ria van 't Klooster, Director, NRTO Council for Training and Education  
Eva Knipschild, Partner, Law Firm of Kennedy Van der Laan  
Sandra Korthuis, Director-Manager, Woonconcept Housing Corporation  
Inge de Laat, Partner, law firm of Kennedy Van der Laan  
Karin Laglas, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology  
Marie-Christine Lombard, CEO, TNT Express  
Pauline van der Meer Mohr, Supervisory Director, DSM  
Christa Meindersma, Director, Prince Claus Fund for Culture & Development  
Nienke Meyer, Supervisory Director, Dutch Heart Foundation  
Elphi Nelissen, Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Eindhoven University of Technology  
Jeanine Peek, CEO, Unique  
Elly Ploumen, Management Development Director, Achmea  
Carolien Reijnen, Director, Commercial Bank Svenska Handelsbanken, Schiphol Branch  
Joyce Sylvester, Supervisory Board Chairwoman, Regional Broadcaster RTV Noord-Holland  
Barbara van Verseveld, Marketing Director, PepsiCo Netherlands  
Yolanda Valstar-van Die, Marketing & Communications Director, Ernst & Young  
Noor Zetteler, Executive Director, Law Firm of Wijn & Stael

### **More information**

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

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

***Opportunity in Bedrijf*** 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*** 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.