

## GENDER CHOICES

Now that we have addressed the more aged population as employees and leaders in the last two weeks, let us consider the published information about hiring male or female employees. Research findings, however, confirm that age is a far more significant consideration in both genders in determining leadership abilities. With age-related abilities, it appears that the “having been there—having done that” carries more weight than gender in the outcome of leadership success.

Society expects (in many cases) that successful leadership is associated with masculinity. Historically, there seems to be an automatic association of “think manager—think male.” However, the research findings on males’ or females’ good or bad decision-making styles may differ somewhat but were not research-significant. Therefore, many individuals (regardless of gender) are suited to decision-making situations and job positions. Both genders have equal task and relationship abilities.

Leadership success (no matter the gender) seems to be mostly related to the culture of the facility/organization. For instance, males are usually more suited to military leadership, whereas social service and education are more suited to women due to universal female nurturing attributes. In the past two decades, women have become more prominent in significant leadership roles.

The listing of published research on male leadership qualities is not as available as on women’s leadership qualities. With the recent increase of published accolades regarding the hiring of women as leaders, the research findings related to the qualities of women are reiterated as follows (not in order of importance).

Women usually:

1. Are assertive and persuasive.
2. Have a strong need to get things accomplished.
3. Are willing to take risks.
4. Are empathetic and flexible.
5. Have strong interpersonal skills.
6. Read situations accurately.
7. Take in information for decision-making.
8. Have the ability to bring others around to their point of view.
9. Genuinely care about others.
10. Leave others with a feeling of understanding, support, and value.
11. Are persuasive.
12. When rejected—carry on with an “I’ll show you” attitude.
13. Are high in teamwork, stability, motivation, and recognizing trends.
14. Have a high business aptitude.
15. Act on new ideas.
16. Have high credibility with management.
17. Recognize future potential.
18. Have insight.
19. Are sensitive.
20. Work well with people.
21. Have team-building abilities.

22. Have problem-solving and decision-making abilities.
23. Are more likely to ignore rules and take risks.
24. Are more confident and caring.
25. Experience more obstacles on their way to top leadership/management roles.
26. Are more likely to practice Transformational Leadership and Shared Governance.  
(Transformational Leadership is working with teams/people to identify needed change.  
Shared governance is a system that promotes inclusion and shared decision-making related to partnership, equity, and accountability.)

Still—even knowing these researched findings, unconscious gender bias is a concern. Discrimination and gender equality are at risk. Even the careless use of employment ad and interview language can infer gender. Interview language and questions should be carefully phrased—i.e., family planning, children, childcare responsibilities. (Such interviewing language is illegal in the U.K.) A computer tool for easy access called “gender coder” helps identify the associated language to help lessen the unconscious employment gender bias.

Consider “Blind Recruitment.” It simply provides an equal (non-gender bias) start for all job candidates by removing their name and identification/identifiable information from the application form when reviewed by a hiring committee.

Yes—gender makes a difference in any potential work or decision-making situation. Realizing these differences and acting responsibly as a leader regarding the propensities and talents of each gender shows responsible leadership.

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