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WINNING THE WAR FOR TALENT IN EMERGING MARKETS

Why Women Are the Solution

by Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Ripa Rashid

The rapid expansion of emerging markets has presented multinational corporations with unprecedented prospects for growth—but only if they can overcome the short supply of well-qualified skilled labor. New research shows that the solution to the talent constraint lies hidden in plain sight: educated, ambitious women who have the ability to fill the skills gap but are often overlooked by both global and local business leaders.

In **WINNING THE WAR FOR TALENT IN EMERGING MARKETS: Why Women Are the Solution** (August 30, 2011; Harvard Business Review Press), economist **Sylvia Ann Hewlett** and management consultant **Ripa Rashid** identify the opportunities at hand for employers in the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and in the United Arab Emirates.

The female talent pool in these markets is indeed impressive: 55% of college graduates globally are now female and two-thirds of highly qualified women in BRIC/UAE consider themselves very ambitious—twice the rate of their American peers. The truth is, educated women in emerging markets do not conform to western stereotypes. These are not oppressed victims, rather, they comprise the best prepared segment of the talent pool.

Despite high aspirations, women in BRIC/UAE nations deal with a complicated and culturally nuanced web of pushes and pulls that can threaten their career ambitions. Oftentimes they find themselves coping with an extreme job (workloads of up to 70 hours a week) while navigating a complex terrain where traditional expectations around women's roles collide head on with their increasingly important role on the social and economic stage. Also distinct from their peers in the West are their care responsibilities, marked by eldercare and extended family pressures.

Hewlett and Rashid's analysis of the opportunities and challenges of talented women in emerging markets is drawn from original data and in-depth interviews of female and male managers in these geographies including line managers, human resource directors and chief diversity officers. The book includes actionable solutions: 30 case studies from lead players

which range from Pfizer and Siemens to Wipro and Google who have developed innovative programs to retain and accelerate female talent in BRIC. Among them:

- Become a talent magnet – establish a reputation for becoming a standout employer of talented women. For example, **Infosys**' program IWIN (Infosys Women's Inclusively Network) aims to address the major stress point for women, and has resulted in offering an extremely flexible "child care sabbatical" for new mothers.
- Claim and sustain ambition – ensure that talented women feel valued, give them opportunities to network and build relationships. **Cisco** has amplified their Connected Women employee resource group network by launching Power Camp, a two day event where women meet to talk about their goals, obstacles, and solutions while developing an ongoing community of support.
- Deal with pushes and pulls – keep in mind conflicting priorities and approach each unique challenge with imagination, sensitivity, and flexibility. Find solutions balancing a global mindset and local knowledge. For example, **Ernst & Young India** regularly holds an open house "Family Day" to help demystify the place of work for skeptical family members or in-laws.

With the solutions like these presented in **WINNING THE WAR FOR TALENT IN EMERGING MARKETS**, any company can strengthen their talent pipeline in the world's fastest growing markets.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Economist **Sylvia Ann Hewlett** is founder and president of the Center for Work-Life Policy, and the author of ten acclaimed books including *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps* and *Top Talent*. She has been interviewed by *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *60 Minutes*, *Today*, *Charlie Rose*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Oprah*, *The View* and NPR. **Ripa Rashid**, executive vice president at the Center for Work-Life Policy, has over fifteen years of experience as a management consultant and talent innovation expert in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific for leading multinationals. Ms. Rashid has been featured by Bloomberg Radio, Fox News, and *Newsweek*. They live in New York City.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

WINNING THE WAR FOR TALENT IN EMERGING MAREKTS: Why Women are the Solution

Harvard Business Review Press

Publication date: August 30, 2011

\$35.00 hardcover

288 pages; ISBN: 978-1422160602