



**FEMALE
EXECUTIVE
SEARCH**

**CONNECTING
BUSINESSES WITH
FEMALE LEADERS**

Women Leaders Insight Paper published by CEO Worldwide

**MULTICULTURAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER,
AND PRACTICES USED TO FOSTER EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY**

Written by Pascale Etemad

International Organizations have laid down principles, promoted programs and taken an increasing number of initiatives to foster respect for cultural diversity¹ and equal opportunities². Thereby, utmost importance is attached to the development of intercultural skills and the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Likewise, great emphasis is placed on equal opportunities, not only with regards to men and women (gender mainstreaming), and on non-discrimination. These vast concepts, based on a numerous criteria, play an essential role in human interaction, in both professional and private life, and in the training room.

Indeed, the facilitator must avoid referring to one single culture or gender and must focus in their presentations on the wealth created by the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Organizations' staff. We sometimes still hear multicultural audiences complaining that the ideas, concepts or examples given are too oriented towards one single culture and that the instructor has not moved beyond the "borders" of a specific cultural reference. So, how can cultural dominance, real or perceived, be subtly circumvented in the training room? How can we avoid marked allusions to a religion, language or culture while at the same time bearing them in mind? How can we encourage individual expression in the knowledge that some cultures are more inward-looking?

Any provider commits to adhere to these values and concepts by focussing on them within its group of speakers. The speakers are partly selected according to their ability to adapt to multicultural audiences. We have chosen to present this section in the form of a chart which becomes our code of good practice for multiculturalism, equal opportunities and diversity.

¹ It was in 1991 that the Treaty establishing the European Union, in Article 128 (which later became Article 151), gave culture its rightful importance.

² The setting up of a "Fundamental rights, fight against discrimination and equal opportunities" group to develop a coherent policy in the fields of fundamental rights, the fight against discrimination, the integration of minorities and support for equality between men and women; the creation of a "European Institute for Gender Equality", etc.

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COMMITMENT

A - IN THE DELIVERY OF TRAINING COURSES, IN PARTICULAR CONTENT, METHODOLOGY AND REFERENCES

A. 1. In the facilitation of courses:

- To adopt a suitable attitude, free of any discrimination or remark which would go against the principles of **multiculturalism**, **equal opportunities** and respect for **diversity** in the International Organizations.
- In the **language** used:
 - to cut down on jargon
 - to (re)-define new words
 - to reformulate
 - to word speeches in a comprehensible, audible manner for everyone
 - to pay attention to body language and non-verbal communication
 - to ensure the "neutrality" of their words as regards to gender, making sure that equal reference is made to both genders.
- To observe this **neutrality** when presenting concepts such as management styles (hierarchical or matrix) and avoid imposing any preference on the group.
- To keep an **open mind** and offer positive solutions.
- To make up groups for role-playing or other activities which
 - are mixed,
 - respect a certain balance (between cultures, male/female, ages, etc.),
 - are supported by the group,
 - do not marginalise any participant who could then feel discriminated against.
- When feedback is being given, to avoid giving only negative feedback, and to balance the positive and the negative.

A. 2. In training course content:

- To make preferential use of reciprocal acculturation processes and avoid any apparent domination of one culture by another³.
- To encourage a pragmatic approach: it is the right practice or solution to the problem that matters, and in particular the content of a training course:

³ This means that the contents should never use perfectly identifiable models or cultural archetypes explicitly relating to one country or civilisation.



- can be understood from a wide range of angles and cultural starting points,
- is likely to inspire discussion and further consideration amongst all the participants,
- is applicable by all participants.

A. 3. In the methodology:

- **Not to see contributions as dogmas** or as exclusive reasoning processes. For example, a purely analytical approach (breaking down a problem or situation into constituent elements) or a strictly deductive approach (statement of principles and examination of their various consequences) cannot, irrespective of their scientific nature, be established as unique lines of reasoning.
- **To favour** working methods which call upon **the most universal cognitive capacities** in order to foster respect for the diversity of cultures and for different ways of taking on board knowledge and practices:
 - sense of observation (modalities, protocols, etc.),
 - classification ability (forms of classification, rankings, etc.),
 - the linking of cause and effect (the establishment of relationships between phenomena).

A. 4. In the references used:

- To use **several types of reference** (institutional, procedural, cultural, etc.) keeping three imperatives in mind:
 - To draw on obligatory knowledge using a reference which will inevitably be integrated and shared,
 - to highlight an event or item of work which indisputably reflects a European culture,
 - to show a diversity of references which in one way or another enrich or throw light on the subject at hand.
- To avoid references with a very strong national connotation, even if they are important references, and to use a variety of sources to voice a range of cultural contributions.

B - IN TEACHING RESOURCES

- To make it easier for participants from different cultural backgrounds to grasp and understand the documents by:
 - Seeking to present the documents offered in a **sober** manner,
 - visualising the concepts in question whenever the content makes this possible,
 - making use of metaphors, comparisons and examples which facilitate the representation of the contents,
 - looking for examples and case studies **free of all stereotypes** (for instance, do not always talk about a female secretary and a male manager) and **expand the spectrum of references**,
 - Laying emphasis on the links which relate the document in question to other information or knowledge resources,



- For long and complicated documents, by creating a **glossary of main terms** used in the official languages of the International Organizations.



PROFILE

As Managing Director, Pascale has run several branches of a Learning and Consulting company at international levels. She has experience in the public sector, the education sector, the leaning industry and outsourcing industry and has been working in Belgium, Dubai, France and Iran. She is available for interim, permanent and coaching assignments.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Pascale has developed the international bidding strategy of a company resulting in a yearly revenue of M€ 5 to 6 , generating a profitable business. She was responsible for the selection, recruitment and management of 200 experts and trainers, 12-15 member staff, and the delivery of 4000 man-days of services.

Click here to [view Pascale's Short Bio](#)

ABOUT FEMALE EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Female Executive Search is a brand of the international executive recruitment company CEO Worldwide Ltd, operating since 2001. The intention of Female Executive Search is to actively support women leaders on their way to Top-Level-Positions bringing more diversity to company boards.

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