

# Human Resource and Diversity Management

## Managing gender diversity in the workplace

### *Case study*



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## CASE STUDY (IN PAIRS/20 MINUTES OF THOUGHT)

- Objective: to identify the current issues of gender equality in the workplace and to propose courses of action for companies.
- Question 1: what are your **own stereotypes** about gender in professional life, i.e. with regard to women and men? Identify those that you have as a “woman” with respect to women and men/those that you have as a “man” with respect to women and men.
- Question 2: how do you explain the **persistent inequalities** between women and men in professional life?
- Question 3: beyond the respect of the laws in force, propose **two concrete actions** to be taken in the company to try to remedy the inequalities of treatment between women and men. Support your proposals with concrete elements.

## TO START: SOME FIGURES

- 4% of drivers, construction workers and mechanics are women.
- 18% of engineers and computer scientists are women.
- Women outnumber men in food service, cleaning, health care, clerical and cashier jobs.
- 4% of CEOs of publicly traded companies are women, and women make up only 22% of supervisory board members.



# THE VARIOUS STEREOTYPES

- **Hetero-stereotype:** stereotype about a group to which one does not belong.

*Ex: I think that computer scientists are useless. Homosexual employees are more tolerant.*

- **Self-stereotype:** stereotype about a group to which one belongs.

*Ex: the sales force is the most important position in our company. In my team, those who have the same degree as me are the most successful.*

- **Meta-stereotype:** an assumed stereotype that someone would have about themselves.

*Ex: women don't have a chance in this company, I don't apply. I've been in such and such a position: I'm sure X will promote me for that, it happens all the time.*

# PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: THE CASE OF THE GLASS CEILING

- **Definition**
- It concerns all countries and, in France, both the private and public sectors.
- **Only 15%** of company managers with 20 or more employees are women.
- Women are more affected by unemployment, especially recurrent and long-term unemployment, including when they are graduates of a Grande Ecole.



# PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: THE CASE OF THE GLASS CEILING

- How can we explain the glass ceiling?
- The persistence of gender stereotypes but also of “self-censorship” on the part of women
- A preference for similarity (homophily): “masculine” organizations (norms, codes)
- More limited women’s networks
- The “family-work” conflict
- A different vision of career and power
- Sexist attitudes in the workplace (lack of an inclusive climate)

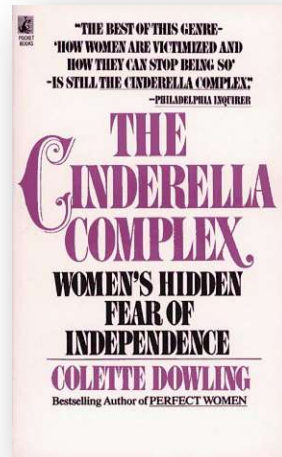


# PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: SUMMARY

- On the offer side
- Existence of a **glass ceiling**.
- Employers have insufficient demand for women in leadership positions due to **ordinary sexism** and **gender stereotypes**.

→ The Cinderella Complex

→ The Smurfette principle





# THE SMURFETTE PRINCIPLE

- #3 The Smurfette Principle (Feminist Frequency, 2011)

**A TROPE IS A COMMON PATTERN  
IN A STORY OR A RECOGNIZABLE  
ATTRIBUTE IN A CHARACTER  
THAT CONVEYS  
INFORMATION TO THE AUDIENCE.**



# PERSISTENT INEQUALITIES BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: SUMMARY

- On the demand side

- Women are less likely to offer their services for leadership positions because:
  - a lack of identification and self-censorship (**queen bee syndrome**)
  - a lesser proactivity (the Cinderella complex)
  - the desire for a balance of life times (the Cinderella complex)

→ The Curie myth

→ “Gender fatigue”



# CONCRETE ACTIONS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITIES

- Importance of “role models” to fight against the Cinderella complex
- Highlighting women with inspiring and exemplary backgrounds



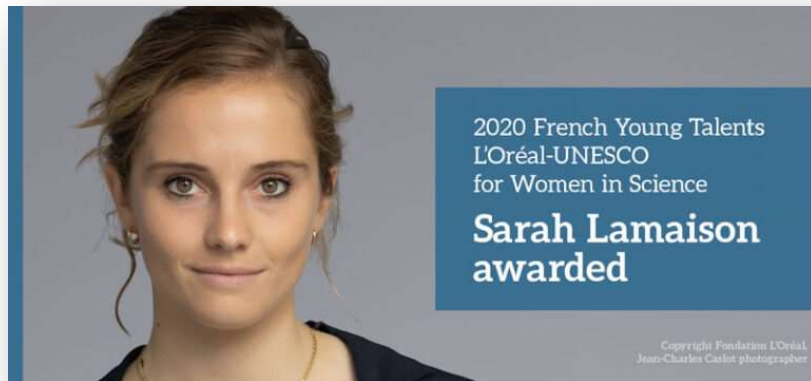
The example of **Ines Leonarduzzi**

CEO of *Digital For The Planet*

Her objective: to raise awareness of digital pollution, to accompany economic actors towards more virtuous uses, to raise citizens' awareness

# CONCRETE ACTIONS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITIES

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- Highlighting women with inspiring and exemplary backgrounds



The example of **Sarah Lamaison**

CEO of *Dioxycle*

X/Cambridge/Collège de France graduate

Her objective: to convert CO<sub>2</sub> into chemical raw materials (chemicals, fuels) that are currently produced from fossil resources.

# CONCRETE ACTIONS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITIES

- Setting up **mentoring** and **coaching**
- Creation of an **internal network of women** (e.g. Dell)
- Collaborate with associations to organize awareness-raising events and set up mentoring (e.g. WonderMeufs in Montpellier, Women and Mathematics...)
- **Mixed gender meetings** to get to know each other and “break” certain stereotypes
- Neutral recruitment process, based on skills. Gender-neutral job descriptions and job offers
- **Training of managers** against discrimination and for the benefits of gender diversity in the company
- **Transparency and fairness in remuneration**: truly applying the principle of “equal pay for equal work”
- Strengthen policies to **balance private and professional life**

# CONCLUSION

## ■ Key points

- Real professional equality between women and men is everyone's concern.
- Despite the legal arsenal put in place in France, many inequalities persist.
- Many European countries can serve as examples on the issue of professional equality (Iceland, Norway...).

## ■ Managerial challenges

- Know the French legislation on the issue of professional equality.
- Be aware of stereotypes that can become decision-making biases.
- Be able to propose concrete actions to remedy inequalities in treatment between women and men.



**Thank you for your attention  
and have a great day!**

