

Gender, Communication & Leadership

“If the three wise men had been women, they would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, brought practical gifts, and there would be Peace on Earth.”

- *Why Women Should Rule the World*
Dee Dee Myers

Gender, Communication, & Leadership

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Overview

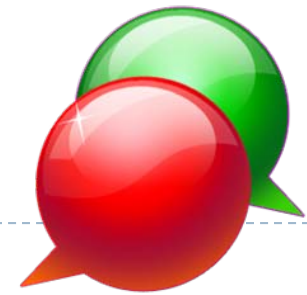


Cautionary Note

- ▶ Female/male leadership research is relatively recent
- ▶ There are confusing findings due to an effort to over-generalize and combine findings from differing populations
- ▶ There are more similarities than verifiable differences between genders – nevertheless, the relatively few differences often have significant consequences



1. Communication Tendencies



Verbal Behavior	Male	Female
1. Hedges more (e.g. sort of, you know)		
2. Offers more disclaimers (e.g. I'm not sure, I suppose)		
3. Uses more tag questions (e.g. Isn't it? Right?)		
4. Talks more		
5. Uses more aggressive language		
6. Interrupts more often		
7. Discloses more intimate information		
8. Discloses more information on non-intimate topics		
9. Offers more affective (as opposed to cognitive) info		
10. Communicates more effectively		

Communication Tendencies *(cont'd)*



Nonverbal Behavior	Male	Female
1. Dresses to avoid disapproval (rather than win approval)		
2. Uses more gestures		
3. Prefers to interact side-by-side		
4. Has more personal territory		
5. Approaches others more closely		
6. Values eye-contact more		
7. Averts gaze more often		
8. Establishes eye contact more often		
9. Values smiles more		
10. Are better judges of nonverbal behavior		

Male Reactions to Female Tentativeness

Perceptions of ...	Assertive Style	Tentative Style
Power	↑	↓
Competence	↑	↓
Intelligence	↑	↓
Likeability	↓	↑
Influence	↓	↑

2. Characteristics of Effective Leaders

- ▶ Use powerful (not powerless) language
- ▶ Have strong internal locus of control (believes “I” am the independent variable making things happen as opposed to circumstances or fate)
- ▶ Are very determined, persistent; have high energy, tenacity, stamina
- ▶ Have high need for power (of all types) and willing to use to accomplish desired ends
- ▶ Have high need for achievement, are ambitious
- ▶ Do not have high affiliation needs



Characteristics *(cont'd)*



- ▶ **Are willing to communicate**
 - ▶ Want to be at the table and have voice heard at the table
 - ▶ “Like to give speeches” (key predictor in upward mobility)
- ▶ **Are willing to argue—like to make the argument, but are respectful and not verbally aggressive**
- ▶ **Demonstrate verbal acuity – articulate, verbally framing to catch the essence of issues and relate to the audience (this also relates to a verbal style that is more “transformational”)**

3. Gender & Leadership

- ▶ Women lead in a more democratic or participative manner than men
- ▶ Men focus more on winning short-term goals (win-lose); even though women focus on the task, they also encourage cooperation and relationship building (win-win)
- ▶ Women use integrative strategies (asking questions, listening, sharing information) to find solutions that satisfy both sides; Men are more inclined toward competitive strategies (staking out a position, holding firm, making threats, resisting concessions)



Gender & Leadership

- ▶ Women are more likely to be *transformational* leaders (e.g. collectively setting goals and empowering their teams to achieve them)
- ▶ Men are judged to be equally effective whether they use autocratic or democratic styles; women who use autocratic styles are judged less favorably

4. Tendencies of Women

- Able to multitask
- Adept at developing relationships
- Have higher emotional Intelligence
- Understand the importance of collaboration
- Perceive power more in terms of “Power with” rather than “Power over”



Interlude: A Study of UWGB Working Climate

Climate Dimensions	Male	Female
1. General Communication Effectiveness		
2. Relationship with Supervisor		
3. Sense of Belonging		
4. Relationship with Co-workers		
5. Relationships with Different Departments		
6. Commitment to UWGB		
7. Mentoring		

5. So What?



▶ Male Perspective

- ▶ Be aware of unintended nonverbal messages
- ▶ Recognize the value of tentativeness (acknowledge uncertainty)
- ▶ Decide when relational issues should trump task issues (and vice versa)
- ▶ Listen to females about unintended messages you might be sending to others
- ▶ Provide more mentoring opportunities for females
- ▶ Yield the stage from time to time

So What?



▶ Female perspective

- ▶ Appreciate the limits of “assertiveness”
- ▶ Avoid being overly troubled by natural male blind spots (e.g. nonverbal cues, dress, etc.)
- ▶ Recognize the unique coaching opportunities you can offer **males** (e.g. males can often be more candid with females)
- ▶ Decide when task issues should trump relationship issues (and vice versa)
- ▶ Invoke position or expertise rather than gender as a framing tool

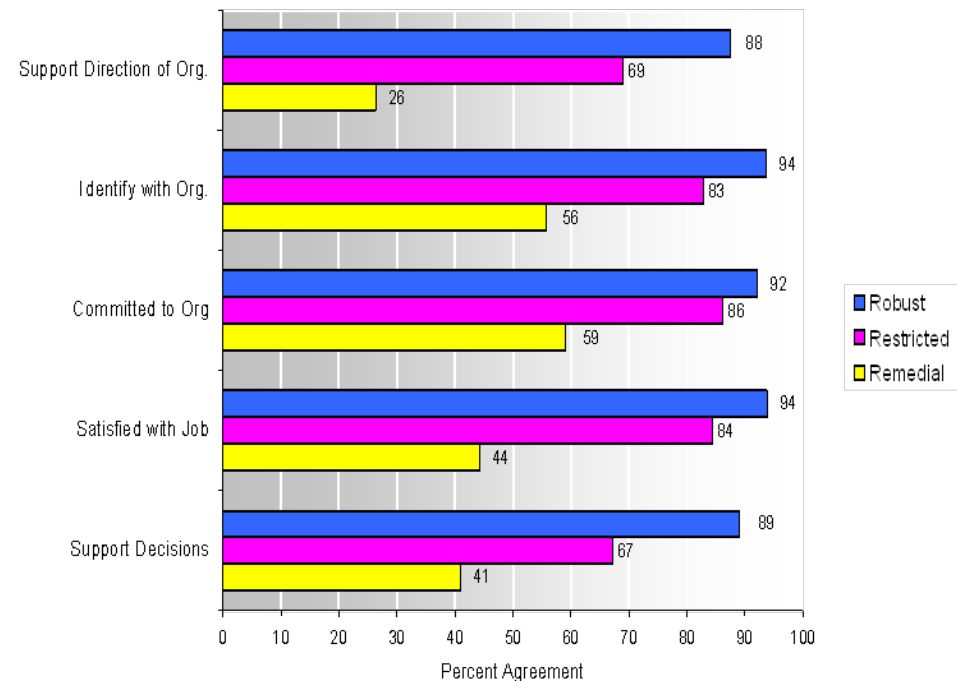
So What?

▶ Shared Perspective on Decision Downloading

Robust Communication Protocol

- What is the decision?
- How was the decision made?
- Why was the decision made?
- What were the rejected alternatives to the announced decision?
- How does the decision fit into the mission or vision?
- How does the decision affect the organization (WIFO)?
- How does the decision affect employees (WIFM)?

Impact of Decision Downloading Style





So What? The Future

- ▶ Although the challenges for women are many, the changing face of contemporary organizations offer new opportunities for women.

- ▶ “Women get high ratings on exactly those skills needed to succeed in the global Information Age, where teamwork and partnering are so important.”

- Rosabeth Moss Kanter
Harvard Business School

- ▶ “Women think through decisions better than men, are more collaborative, and seek less personal glory.”

- Douglas Elix
CEO, IBM Global Services Division



6. Now What?

- ▶ *You Just Don't Understand: Men & Women in Conversation* by Debra Tannen
- ▶ *Leadership: Theory & Practice* by Northouse (See chapter on Women & Leadership)
- ▶ Read our new book: *Progress Makers*
- ▶ Help us out on research: www.imetacomm.com/WorkGroupCom.asp

