

Contribution Angelika Bräm

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to participate in this exiting event.

Rita Knott already explained to you that I work closely together with women – as the managing director of EVALUTION as well as as the responsible person for the **mentoring.ch** project. On the one hand I work together with decision making women, on the other hand I am in close touch with growing talents. These many years of teamworking have been very interesting, challenging and offered me a lot of insights.

In the beginning of 2005 during the World Economic Forum in Davos the study „Measuring the global gender Cap“ was presented. I felt deeply moved when I realized that in this study Switzerland was placed only on the 34th position – somewhere between Uruguay and Bangladesh. The reason is given by the fact that in Switzerland the amount of women in top decision making positions is as low as 3%. Also you will very rarely find women in the administrative boards of conglomerates.

Being the circle of economic women in Switzerland we therefore asked ourselves which actions we have to take concretely to produce a change to this nuisance.

Our conclusion was that it is essential to launch a broader discussion for “women in management”. We should build up an audience in the media, on the level of top of decision makers and last but not least within the women themselves as well. We decided to implement a state-of-the-art mentoring programme which would achieve the goal of being heard broadly.

I took the responsibility for this important project. I worked out a concept and offered this to the Swiss Federal Office for Gender Equality (which deals with all relevant questions concerning equal opportunities) together with the request for financial support. The programme was approved and we received the financial support requested. And this allowed us to start this broadly based mentoring programme. With a big “kick-off”-event in September 2005 the programme was launched and it was well observed and accompanied by intense reporting by the media.

The concept states: One day at the side of an experienced executive.

At the very first moment this might sound a bit short cut and superficial. But the idea behind is to match a mentee with a leader personality like an administrative president, a CEO or even a political VIP for example. During one day the mentee learns how the mentor has made his or her way to the top. What would the mentor change if he or she had again the chance to go to the top? Which hints and tips could they provide? Are there people or networks it would be helpful for the mentee to be introduced to in view of the building-up of her own career?

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The accepted mentees have the opportunity to participate in a voluntary coaching workshop to prepare themselves best possible for their day with the mentor.

The actual experience demonstrates that in over 50% the contact between mentor and mentee was kept – some met a few times more, some developed an even longer mentoring connection. In the meantime we matched more than 130 duos.

So far we have been extremely successful. We succeeded in gaining the Crème de la Crème of the Swiss economy for our project and not less than 5 out of our 7 top politicians, the Federal Councillors, are so far participating. The media show as well a high interest and in the meantime a lot of articles and reports have been published. So, the result is quite encouraging and we may assume that we reached our goal to broaden the discussion publicly.

Additionally, we received feedbacks of various CEOs stating that by participating in the programme they have started to analyse their own organizations and reconsider their companies' corporate culture, especially regarding female encouragement.

Mentoring – in which form ever – is for me a very effective instrument to foster women's career advancement.

To sustainably increase the percentage of women in leading positions and to make utmost use of the potential of best educated women these initiatives can only be seen as a good starting point. In addition, we alongside need a strong political will and the corresponding support (and this seems to be the case at least here in Luxembourg). And last but not least also structural adaptations and changes such as day schools, more part-time jobs etc. are needed.

But I will also not forget to mention and make clear that it is also within the responsibility of the women themselves to come up with their own career expectations in the right time at the right place and to initiate the building-up of their own appropriate professional network.

All together under the motto:

“Better snap, more self-consciousness with a clear commitment”

Thank you very much and I will be pleased to share my experience in the forums with you.