

Benja Stig Fagerland

Benja Stig Fagerland was selected for the 2012 Women Inspiring Europe Calendar

*“Women are in many ways much more modern in their outlook and are not afraid to be confrontational”, - says **Benja Stig Fagerland** creator of the NHO “Female Future – mobilizing talent” project which has become a model for other countries and also a great incentive for women to show initiative. “Gender is not a women’s issue, but a business and economic imperative!” states Benja Stig Fagerland, the innovator of “**SH3conomy™**” and a leading international expert in the field of women in management and women on boards.*

SH3conomy™ - it's your business!

“Still, a major proportion of corporate boards and organizations suffer from a lack of female talent representation in corporate boards and in management. Governments and corporate leaders have been talking about this for quite some time, but it seems some (still) misunderstand and see the talent imbalance as an “equality” issue, instead of what it really is: An business imperative: “More women as leaders means a strengthened bottom line!” The (NHO) Female Future rapport 2003. Women in corporate boards and decision-making positions, is not a matter of being right, it’s a matter of being smart. It’s a business imperative and a possibility to “detox” outdated systems, boards and organizations and boost economic growth.” says Benja.

In 2001 she introduced a new rhetoric and arguments for "WOMEN IS BIG BUSINESS" what she call the SH3conomy™- rhetoric and "sold" the quota to Norway's business community to gain greater social equity and a competitive edge: Profit and value is made by employing the best talent, regardless of gender!

A new rhetoric

- This was not about gender or equality but about human talent. The Independent.

"...Benja Stig Fagerland, the businesswoman who was first asked to advise Norway's business organisation, the NHO, on how to find and prepare women for the boardroom. "The first step I took was to have a new rhetoric," she said. "This was not about gender or equality but about human talent and how we could release half of that female talent which was there, but hidden away." The Independent.

"In Norway we tried voluntary compliance unsuccessfully for several years. In order to accelerate growth one needs to introduce quotas."- says Benja Stig Fagerland, commenting on the Norwegian model intended to increase the number of women on the company's boards after being asked by the government to be consultant when implementing gender equality regulations. "We'd love to have more women, we just can't find them": That's what Norwegian CEOs told Benja before she rolled out the Female Future project.

Norway had introduced a quota of hardly 7 % for women in boards of companies. Now there are more than 40 per cent. Benja lists the advantages: *"Instead of having to do with quota-induced talents, the boards have been able to rid themselves of their weakest (male) directors and introduce top-qualified and motivated (female) talents". Even more: "Women are in many ways more modern in their outlook and are not afraid to be confrontational".*

Study after study has shown how gender diversity on top correlates to greater company profits, this is not the only argument why organizations should promote women to senior ranks. It pays to diversify for an array of other reasons. Here are the top five:

1. More diversity, more innovation.
2. More women, fewer problems.
3. More women, stronger corporate ethics.
4. More women, more effective problem-solving.

5. More women on top, more women in the pipeline. (source: Catalyst)

Benja Stig Fagerland is brimming with energy although she herself was a victim of the so called female glass roof. There is a good reason for other women to say “goodbye Mrs nice girl”. Benja says: *“Women need to get a career on their own, female terms. It's no use trying to be sweet as sugar and kind. What do I get out of this? - Women should ask questions more often instead of automatically saying 'yes' to tasks. Introduce yourself as you wish to be perceived. Be careful not to over play and leave emotions at home. Highlight your results. Learn the game. All jobs have rules. Learn them, then you can easily assess how to best use your resources. Create ambassadors. One does not reach the top alone; it is worth having ambassadors who know what is good for different networks. Take calculated risks. Playing safe seldom brings large gains. Know your limitations - and do something about them. Women should allow them self to be FLAWSOME”*

When talking about herself, she would compare herself to those *“strong, conscious and ALIVE women willing to take a risk, women like Madeleine Albright and I often quote her in my presentations”*. One of Benja Stig Fagerland favourite quotes:

“There's a special place in Hell for women who don't help each other”, Madeleine Albright. “From SoME to SoWE”, says Benja.

Metadata

LANGUAGE: Danish, English

GENDER AREAS: [decision-making](#), [economy](#), [power](#)