

Corporate Culture; Male versus Female viewpoints; different or similar?

November 4, 2012

A recent article¹ prompted an analysis of the data from an on-line survey managed by 'corporate innovation online'². The survey seeks to secure respondents views on 25 Factors focused on **management practices impacting innovation**. The Factors are based on researching highly-innovative companies and a good proxy for understanding the culture of an organization.

The data base includes responses from both sexes. While there is a close resemblance between the responses from each sex, there are some differences which should be noted. The analysis of the 25 Factors is presented three headings;

- leadership,
- organization and management of day-to-day affairs and,
- idea generation and realization.

The data presented represents the 'Ideal' corporate culture as reported by respondents, i.e. for each Factor the respondent enters their opinion of what would be best practice. Respondents are also asked for their opinion on their own situation; their 'Reality', also for each Factor. The 'Reality' is not addressed in this report.

The 'Best of the Best' (BofB) is provided as a benchmark and is based on researching highly innovative companies.

Leadership

For four of the five Factors which are attributed to leadership, female respondents assign a value which is closer to the 'Best of the Best' than do the male respondents. The only Factor in which the male response is closer to the BofB has to do with uncertainty in the planning process.

Summary

Female and male views on management practices – organizational culture – are very similar.

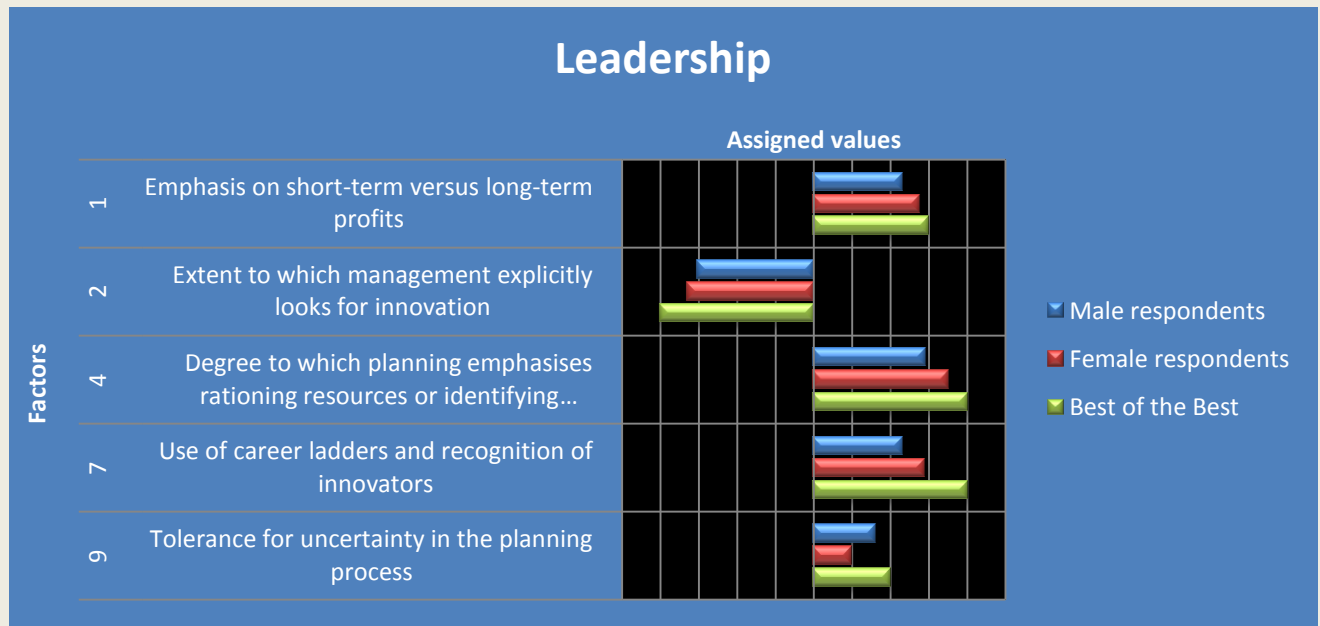
Female respondents have a view of their 'ideal' situation which is closer to the results for highly-innovative companies than are the opinions of male respondents, at least 13 of the 16 Factors analyzed in this report.

Where there is a difference

- Tolerance for uncertainty in the planning process where females seek more certainty than males (Factor #9).
- The desire to have greater input (participation) from a broad cross section of the organization is greater amongst females than males (Factor # 12).
- Females see a need to have more involvement by staff (versus line) in the decision process (Factor #20)

¹ What do you value: Title, paycheck or corporate culture? November 3, 2012. The Globe and Mail, Report on Business, Globe Careers. Article by Leah Eichler. Leah.eichler@femme-o-nomics.com

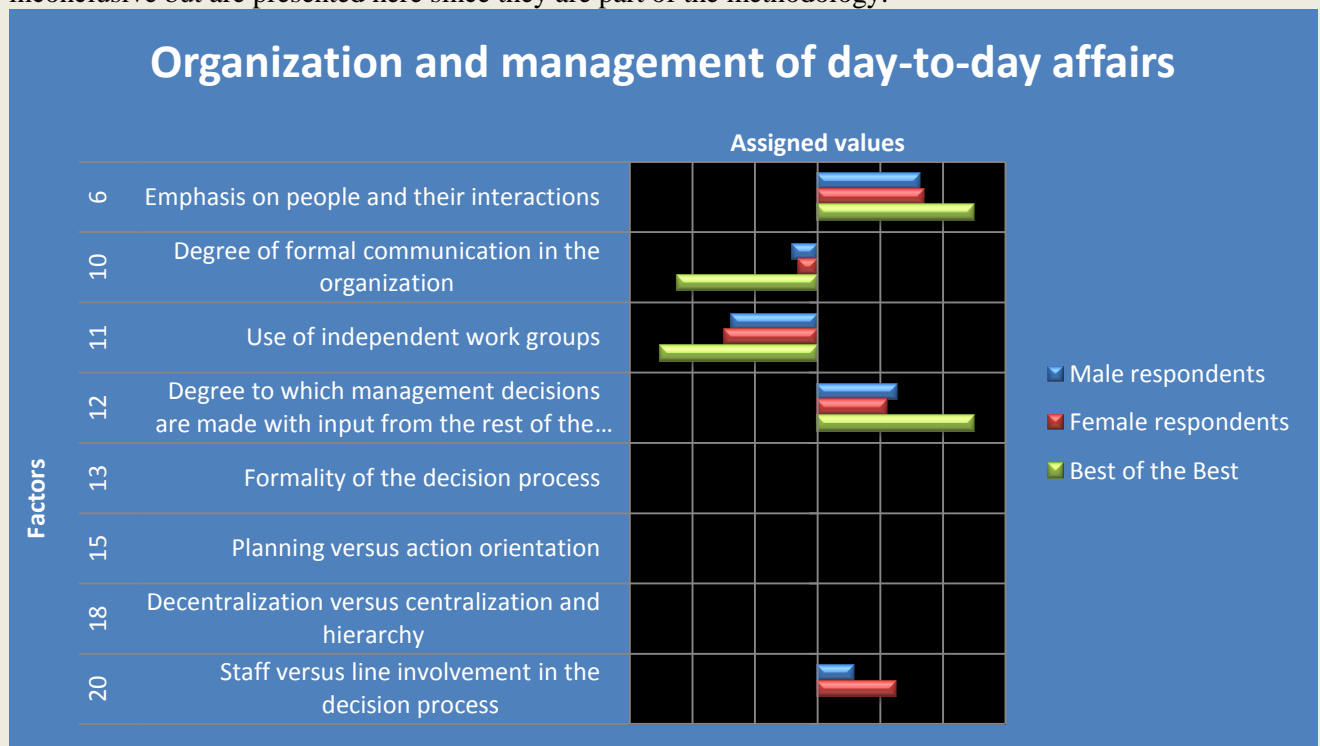
² For reference visit <http://www.corporateinnovationonline.com>



Overall, however, there is not much difference between the two sexes.

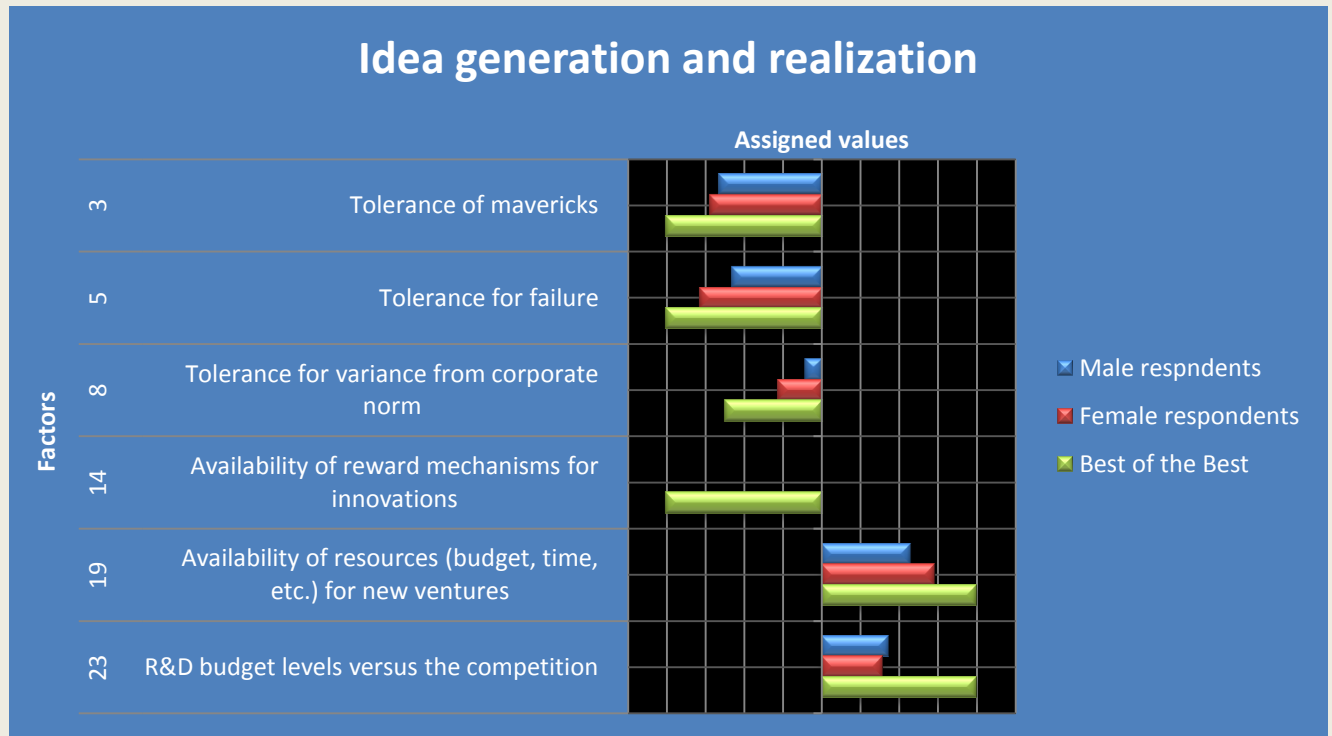
Organization and management of day-to-day affairs

Two of the 8 Factors show a close correlation between male and female responses but Factors #12 – input from the organization and #10, dealing with the formality of communications within the organization, suggest that both males and females are far from the BofB but of a similar view. Females desire to have more staff involvement in the decision process – Factor #20. Data on Factors # 13, 15, and 18 are inconclusive but are presented here since they are part of the methodology.



Idea generation and realization

Three of the six Factors addressing issues of idea generation and realization show a close correlation between male and female responses and are quite close to the benchmark; BofB. Two of these have to do with tolerance – a key characteristic of innovative companies. Female responses also indicate the desire to have a greater tolerance for out-of-box corporate norms – Factor #8.



The article has interesting examples and quotes which are supported by further researching the data base.

‘Women want to work for a company that “just feels right”. ‘It’s a company that you’re proud to say you work for’- quotes from Ms. Henderson. There are three Factors which measure the ‘feel right’ expression.

- Factor #22; indications are that the company has an innovative tradition versus not having such a tradition
- Factor #21; innovators tend to stay with the corporation as opposed to leaving
- Factor #24; innovation is increasing - rather than decreasing

All of which, in the data from respondents, are positive for their ‘Ideal’ and thus indicate a degree of satisfaction – ‘feels right’ – with their situation.

“I don’t think culture is more important to men or women” – quote from Ms.Flatt. We would concur, but there are some shades of difference that have been addressed in the above report.

Factor #17 asks whether the firm emphasizes loyalty to the firm exclusively or encourages personal development. Female respondents placed much more emphasis on this Factor than did male respondents. This Factor may reflect female interest in work-life balance issues.

Ms Flatt said that she has a client in the service sector that is trying to change its culture from one in which information is not shared freely and staff did not challenge instructions. The company's new focus emphasizes the sharing of knowledge, but management also wants all of its employees to connect with the firm's purpose. There are two Factors which are particularly relevant to this issue.

- Factor #10 deals with the formality/informality communications within the firm – a response as 'formal' would suggest a certain tightness with information. Getting the message out requires open communication.
- Factor #12 which addresses the desire to have input from a broad cross section of the organization into decision making suggesting a willingness to listen and have open communications.