

Opportunities to Correct Gender Imbalance in the Boardroom By Adding Qualified Women Directors

Board Chairs and Nominating Committee Chairs:

Now, more than ever, there is a need for serious board evaluations. Rather than rely upon mandatory retirement ages or term limits to create vacancies on your boards, adopt a thoughtful process that requires the board annually to consider who is currently on the board and whether and how it can be made stronger. Mandatory retirement ages (that often are increased or ignored) can create expectations of unreasonably long tenure on the part of directors who may no longer contribute sufficient value in a constantly changing marketplace.

All Sitting Directors:

All directors, not just the women and members of nominating committees, need to (a) speak up on the issue of board composition; (b) get to know and to introduce to their peers accomplished women who have the potential to add value to the board going forward; (c) require search firms and nominating committees to include more women on their lists of prospective directors; (d) insist that the nominating committee interview women as well as men for each vacancy; and (e) encourage the board to expand its size in order to add a woman with exceptional capabilities when she is identified and becomes available for board service.

All Nominating Committee Members:

There are many sources to which you can look for assistance in identifying candidates who fit the changing needs of your boards. A notable resource is the newly unveiled Diverse Director Datasource (3D) that CalPERS, CalSTRS and The Corporate Library commissioned GMI to develop and maintain (www.gmi3d.com). *AgendaWeek* (www.agendaweek.com) recently issued "The Agenda International 100: Top Board Candidates With Global Skills," which supplements its September 2010 release of "The Agenda Diversity 100: Top Diverse Board Candidates You've Never Heard Of." And organizations such as ION, Catalyst and Women Corporate Directors are well connected to the pipeline of talented board candidates who happen to be women. Take advantage of these and other sources of great board candidates.

Executive Recruiters:

Don't sit back and wait for your clients to direct you to expand your search efforts to include accomplished women on the slates of board candidates you develop for them. Instead, make a concerted effort to identify and to meet with women who are not in your databases or are not yet "known" to you but who nevertheless have the skills and experience that would add value to the boards of your clients. Further, urge your clients to look beyond titles and familiar networks in considering board candidates and to take gender diversity into account in the board search process.

For more on this subject, please download [Gender Imbalance in the Boardroom: Opportunities to Change Course](#), ION's Eighth Annual Status Report of Women Directors and Executive Officers of Public Companies in 14 U.S. regions, available now on the ION website.

About ION

ION, the InterOrganization Network (www.ionwomen.org), is a national nonprofit organization representing more than 10,000 women dedicated to increasing representation of women on for-profit boards and in executive suites. ION creates a national voice for its 14 regional member organizations to influence, build awareness and expand opportunities and connections. ION's founding partner is [KPMG LLP](#), the audit, tax and advisory firm and U.S. member firm of KPMG International Cooperative ("KPMG International"). Earlier this year, ION published a [Diversity Policy](#) urging public companies to take action to achieve a critical mass of women in the boardroom.

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