

Educated Women are the Key to Brazil’s Talent Crunch, Finds New Study by the Center for Work-Life Policy

São Paulo, Brazil; December 15, 2011 - A new study by the Center for Work-Life Policy (to be renamed the Center for Talent Innovation in 2012) reveals that the solution to Brazil’s talent crunch is hiding in plain sight: educated Brazilian women. The results of the study entitled “The Battle for Female Talent in Brazil” were announced at an event sponsored by Siemens and Sodexo at Booz & Company’s Brazil headquarters in São Paulo.

Of all the BRIC nations, Brazil is the most poised for sustained growth and is expected to become the fifth largest economy in the world within the next decade. Yet this economic success is contingent upon employers finding highly skilled and qualified talent, which has proven to be no easy feat. In fact, a 2010 Towers Watson study revealed that 81 percent of businesses in Brazil reported difficulties in identifying talent with critical skills.

“The Battle for Female Talent in Brazil” reveals that this type of deeply qualified talent can easily be found in the impressive talent pool of educated Brazilian women. Sixty percent of university graduates in Brazil are women and these women are far outpacing their male peers in terms of performance in the tertiary education sector. In addition to being highly educated, this female talent pool is also highly motivated, ambitious and loyal.

However, the study findings make clear that Brazilian women face a unique set of challenges that can derail otherwise promising careers. While childcare is a minimal concern (the *parentela*, a network of extended kin, often pitch in to take care of children, and daycare solutions are socially acceptable), eldercare weighs heavily on Brazilian women. More than two thirds of the women surveyed have eldercare responsibilities and a third provide regular financial support to their parents.

In addition to the all-too regular “push-factors” of prejudice and bias in the workplace, a distinctive and powerful push factor for women working in Brazil’s cities is safety. Brazilian women regularly experience violence and danger—sixty-two percent of the study participants reported feeling unsafe on their commute to work, the highest among all the BRIC countries. Safety concerns exert a large influence over women’s preference of workplace, prompting many forward-thinking companies to introduce safety provisions.

“The Battle for Female Talent in Brazil” concludes that multinational companies can overcome Brazil’s talent crunch if they develop the right policies and processes to attract female talent. The study provides examples of best practices from companies who have developed a deeper understanding of the aspirations, challenges and opportunities facing educated women. With the right policies and programs in place, multinationals have the ability not only to overcome today’s

talent constraint, but also to gain a lasting competitive advantage in one of today's fastest growing markets.

Key findings about highly qualified Brazilian women:

- **Well-educated**— 60 percent of the million-plus university graduates entering the Brazilian labor force every year are women and they now outperform men in the tertiary education system.
- **“Shooting for the stars”**—fully 80 percent aspire to top jobs, compared to 52 percent in the U.S.; while 59 percent consider themselves very ambitious, compared to 36 percent in the U.S.
- **Impressively committed to career**— 81 percent love their work, a figure higher than in the U.S. (71%), and 95 percent are loyal to their employer, with 58 percent intending to stay at their current job for three or more years.
- **High-earning**—More than a quarter (28%) out-earn their husbands—the highest figure in the BRIC countries.
- **Pulled by Family**—Although there are multiple “shoulders to lean on” for childcare, cultural pressure to place family above career can be heavy: 59 percent experience maternal guilt and 44 percent deal with daughterly guilt.
- **Responsible for Eldercare**—Some 69 percent have significant eldercare responsibilities and many provide financial support to their parents or in-laws. This support averages approximately 13,000 reais—23 percent of their annual income.
- **Face discrimination**—More than a quarter (26%) (and 23 percent of Brazilian men) believe that women are treated unfairly in the workplace because of their gender. 40 percent consider scaling back their careers or quitting their job because of bias and discrimination
- **Lack sponsors and mentors**—Among the least likely of the BRIC women surveyed to have a sponsor or mentor: less than a third (30%) have a sponsor, and just over half (58%) have a mentor.
- **Attracted to the Public Sector**— 65 percent describe the public sector as a very desirable place to work. The top reasons: job security, benefits and work-life balance.
- **Concerned about Safety**—62 percent of Brazilian women—the highest among BRIC countries—report feeling unsafe while commuting to work.

At the event to launch the study, remarks were made by:

- Marcio Luiz Verrone Federico, HR Vice President, Central & South America, Sodexo
- Sylvia Ann Hewlett, President, Center for Work-Life Policy
- Marcia Duarte, Supply Chain and Sustainable Development Director, Sodexo
- Adriana Ferreira, Head of Building Technologies Division, Siemens Ltda Brazil
- Edna Lima, Human Resources Manager, Bloomberg LP
- Ripa Rashid, Executive Vice President, Center for Work-Life Policy
- Melinda Wolfe, Head of Professional Development, Bloomberg LP

Methodology

Spearheaded by Bloomberg LP, Booz & Company, Intel, Pfizer and Siemens AG, research for the study comprised focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and a series of surveys in six geographies. The surveys were conducted online in Brazil, Russia, India, China and the UAE in October 2009 reaching a total of 4,350 women and men (a minimum of 1,000 people in each of four countries—Brazil, Russia, India and China—and 200 in the UAE). Qualified respondents were country residents with at least a bachelor's degree equivalent. The surveys were translated into the local languages.

The sixth national survey, which included selected emerging markets questions, was conducted in the U.S. in February 2010 of 2,952 currently employed men and women in white-collar occupations with at least a bachelor's degree. Data in this survey were weighted to be representative of the U.S. population of college graduates on key demographic characteristics (age, sex, race/ethnicity, household Internet access, metro status, and region).

Research Sponsors

Bloomberg LP, Booz & Company, Intel, Pfizer, Siemens AG

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About the Authors

Sylvia Ann Hewlett is an economist and the founding President of the Center for Work- Life Policy, a non-profit think tank where she chairs the “Hidden Brain Drain,” a task force of 71 global companies committed to talent innovation. She also directs the Gender and Policy Program at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. Dr. Hewlett is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Economic Forum Council on Women’s Empowerment. She is the author of 10 *Harvard Business Review* articles and 11 critically acclaimed nonfiction books including *Winning the War for Talent in Emerging Markets* (Harvard Business Press) and is currently ranked #11 on the “Thinkers50” list of the world’s top 50 business thinkers. Her writings have appeared in the *New York Times*, *the Financial Times*, and *Foreign Affairs*, and she is a featured blogger on Harvard Business Online and Forbes. She is a frequent guest on television, appearing on Oprah, Newshour with Jim Lehrer, Charlie Rose, the Today Show and CNN headline News. Hewlett has taught at Cambridge, Columbia and Princeton universities. A Kennedy Scholar and graduate of Cambridge University, she earned her PhD in economics at London University.

Ripa Rashid, executive vice president at the Center for Work-Life Policy, has worked across Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific and held senior diversity roles at Booz Allen Hamilton and Met Life. She is the coauthor with Sylvia Ann Hewlett of “The Battle for Female Talent in Emerging Markets” (*Harvard Business Review*), *The Battle for Female Talent in India*, *The Battle for Female Talent in China* and *Winning the War for Talent in Emerging Markets: Why Women Are the Solution* (Harvard Business Review Press). She holds an AB cum laude in astronomy and astrophysics from Harvard University, an MA in anthropology from New York University and an MBA from INSEAD.

Additional authors:

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The Center for Work Life Policy

The Center for Work-Life Policy (to be renamed the Center for Talent Innovation in 2012), a non-profit “think tank” based in New York City, has emerged as a thought leader in diversity and talent management, driving ground breaking research and seeding programs and practices that attract, retain and accelerate the new streams of talent around the world. CWLP’s flagship project is the Hidden Brain Drain Task Force—a private-sector task force focused on talent innovation. The 71 global corporations and organizations that constitute the Task Force—representing 4 million employees and operating in 190 countries around the world—are united by understanding that the full utilization of the talent pool is at the heart of competitive advantage and economic success.