

New Study Finds the Solution to China’s Talent Crunch is in the Hidden Talent Pool of Educated Chinese Women

Beijing, China; March 22, 2011 – A new study by the Center for Work-Life Policy finds that the solution to China’s search for skilled talent is closer at hand than it may appear: highly qualified Chinese women. The study findings were announced today at an event at the new Intel Beijing office in the Beijing Global Trade Center with remarks by Edward Tse, Chairman for Greater China, Booz & Company, among others.

Just as China is feeling the talent squeeze of rapid growth, Chinese women are emerging as a deeply qualified and ambitious talent pool, rivaling not only Chinese men but also their US counterparts. The study reveals the extent to which Chinese women are surpassing their peers, but also how they’re impacted by cultural traditions and demographic trends that are quite different from their female counterparts in other nations.

For example, compared to their American and European counterparts, working mothers in China have more shoulders to lean on for childcare. In China there is no social stigma in sending one’s child to daycare, boarding school, or to depend on their grandparents to provide childcare while their mother pursues a career.

Although childcare does not pose a heavy burden on Chinese working mothers, eldercare does. The vast majority of Chinese women have eldercare responsibilities which directly affect how they approach their career paths (i.e., transferring from one city to another to be closer to aging parents, taking a higher paid but less stimulating job to pay for eldercare expenses, even dropping out of the workforce entirely). “These sharp differences between Chinese women and their counterparts in other countries show that multinationals can’t have one cookie-cutter global policy for women,” says Rosalind Hudnell, Chief Diversity Officer and Global Director of Education and External Relations, Intel.

In addition to exploring the complexities of this talent pool, this study also showcases best practices from leading global and China-headquartered companies to show how corporations can leverage this information to tailor their workplace policies to the specific needs of Chinese women.

Tse says “Women should be an essential part of every company’s China strategy. Understanding the unique needs of this essential talent pool is one of the most overlooked secrets to succeeding in this complex market.”

Key Findings:

- Chinese women are graduating from university at nearly the same rate as men (47%).
- 76% of Chinese women aspire to top jobs, compared to 52% of American women
- Chinese women have impressive levels of commitment: 70 percent love their jobs and 76 percent are willing to go the extra mile for their employer. Over 85 percent express loyalty to their employer.
- “Daughterly guilt” is as bad as “maternal guilt” – 88% of women in China struggle to balance a career with the demands of eldercare obligations.
- 95% of Chinese women have eldercare responsibilities, and more than half (58%) provide financial support for their parents.
- The average workweek for Chinese women working for multinational organizations routinely exceeds 70 hours, one of the highest rates among the women surveyed among emerging markets.
- Over 35 percent of survey respondents (men as well as women) believe that women are treated unfairly in the workplace.
- Problems of bias can be severe enough to make nearly half (48%) of women in China disengage, scale back their ambitions or consider quitting.
- The public sector is also a compelling alternative to private-sector employment, with 57 percent of educated Chinese women viewing government jobs as desirable. The top reasons: the benefits, job security and prestige.

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

Sylvia Ann Hewlett, President, Center for Work-Life Policy

Rosalind Hudnell, Chief Diversity Officer and Global Director of Education and External Relations, Intel

Denice Kronau, Chief Diversity Officer, Siemens AG

Carolyn Buck Luce, Global Life Sciences Sector Leader, Ernst & Young LLP

Ripa Rashid, Executive Vice President, Center for Work-Life Policy

Laura Sherbin, Senior Vice President, Center for Work-Life Policy

Edward Tse, Chairman for Greater China, Booz & Company

David Wan, CEO, Harvard Business Publishing

Panelists included:

Elaine Chang, General Manager, Marketing and Channel Group, Intel China

Pully Chau, Chairman and CEO, Greater China, Draftfcb

Iris Kang, Primary Care 2 Business Unit Head, Pfizer China

Kelvin Koh, Director of Greater China Research, Goldman Sachs

Bessie Lee, CEO, GroupM China

Stella Ling, Head of Public Affairs in China, Bristol-Myers Squibb

Tao Wang, Head of China Economic Research, Managing Director, UBS Securities

Methodology

Research for this study was comprised of focus groups, virtual strategy sessions, one-on-one interviews, a multinational survey (in October 2009 with 4,350 respondents), and a U.S. national survey (in February 2010 with 2,952 respondents), conducted by Knowledge Networks under the auspices of the Center for Work-Life Policy, a nonprofit research organization.

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The Hidden Brain Drain Task Force

Founded in 2004 by Sylvia Ann Hewlett (Center for Work-Life Policy and Columbia University), this private sector task force aims to identify, develop, and promote a second generation of corporate policies and practices that support the ambition, work, and life needs of highly qualified employees across the divides of gender, generation and culture. The 63 global companies and organizations that comprise the task force—representing four million employees operating in 190 countries around the world—are united by an understanding that full utilization of the talent pool is at the heart of competitive advantage and economic success.

About the Authors

Sylvia Ann Hewlett is the founding president of the Center for Work-Life Policy (CWLP), a New York-based think tank where she chairs the “Hidden Brain Drain,” a task force of companies and organizations committed to global talent innovation. She also directs the Gender and Policy Program at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. Hewlett is the author of eight *Harvard Business Review* articles, ten critically acclaimed books including *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps*, and *Winning the War for Talent in Emerging Markets* (Harvard Business Press, forthcoming 2011).

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 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.

DeAnne Aguirre is a senior partner and one of Booz & Company’s foremost organization, talent management and change leadership experts. She has been based in the firm’s San Francisco, New York and Sao Paulo, Brazil, offices. She has contributed to numerous Booz *strategy+business* thought leadership pieces. Aguirre holds an MS in business management from Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business and graduated summa cum laude with a BS in mathematics and computer science from Fort Hays State University.

Rosalind L. Hudnell is the chief diversity officer and global director of education and external relations for Intel Corporation. In this role, she oversees Intel’s strategic approach to the development of diverse workforce worldwide, college relations and the global branding and marketing of Intel’s image as workplace of choice. Hudnell has received numerous awards including the Black Engineer of the Year for Corporate Promotion of Education and the Ruth Standish Baldwin Award.

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