

**SALLY HELGESEN**  
**FORTE FOUNDATION, MAY 7, 2008**

**PURPOSE TODAY IS TO LOOK AT:**

- OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN LEADERS
- HOW WOMEN ARE SHAPING FUTURE TRENDS
- HOW WOMEN ARE REDEFINING SATISFACTION

**CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTSTANDING WOMEN LEADERS:**

- FOCUSED ON RELATIONSHIPS
- BIAS FOR DIRECT COMMUNICATION
- COMFORTABLE WITH DIVERSITY
- UNWILLING TO COMPARTMENTALIZE
- SKEPTICAL OF HIERARCHY
- DESIRE TO LEAD FROM THE CENTER

**WHY THESE CHARACTERISTICS ARE APPROPRIATE:**

- NEED TO CONNECT DIRECTLY WITH CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS
- KNOWLEDGE ENVIRONMENT REQUIRES HIGH MORALE
- TECHNOLOGY SUPPORTS DIRECT COMMUNICATION
- GLOBAL ECONOMY IS HIGHLY DIVERSE
- LEAN ORGANIZATIONS UNDERMINE HIERARCHICAL MODEL
- WEBLIKE ORGANIZATIONS WORK FROM CENTER OUTWARD
- WORK AND HOME HAVE BECOME HARDER TO SEPARATE

## **CHALLENGES REMAIN**

### **I. THE CHALLENGE OF VISIBILITY**

- WOMEN HAVE SKILLS, OFTEN DON'T FULFILL POTENTIAL
- WOMEN OFTEN UNCOMFORTABLE DISPLAYING STRENGTHS
- STUDY OF WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
  - BEST AT DOING HIGH QUALITY WORK
  - WORST AT LETTING PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT IT

#### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- FIND NEW WAYS TO SHOWCASE OUR CONTRIBUTIONS
- BECOME ADVOCATES FOR OUR STYLE
- KEEP LEADERSHIP IN THE LOOP
- ARTICULATE HOW OUR STRENGTHS STRENGTHEN OTHERS
- DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP PRESENCE

### **II. THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING WEBS OF SUPPORT**

#### FOUR KINDS OF POWER IN ORGANIZATIONS

- POWER OF CONNECTIONS IS KEY
- MY STUDY OF FIRST SIX MONTHS:
  - WOMEN FOCUS ON BUILDING EXPERTISE
  - MEN BUILD CONNECTIONS TO INSURE SUCCESS

**LEADERSHIP IS ABOUT:**

- GETTING OUT OF SILOS
- MOVING AWAY FROM CONTENT EXPERTISE
- BUILDING POWERFUL WEBS THAT SUSTAIN US

**KEYS TO STRENGTHENING OUR WEBS:**

- SPOTLIGHT ACHIEVEMENTS, ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS
- IDENTIFY MUTUAL ADVANTAGE
- DO WEB WORK EVERY DAY

### **III. THE CHALLENGE OF WORK/LIFE INTEGRATION**

#### **BALANCE REQUIRES KNOWING WHAT LIES AT OUR CORE**

- TAKE INVENTORY OF VALUES AND GOALS
- FIND INTERSECTION BETWEEN OUR TALENTS AND THE ORGANIZATION'S NEEDS
- AVOID UNNECESSARY BURDENS
- IDENTIFY SOURCES OF SATISFACTION

#### **BALANCE REQUIRES BEING HIGHLY CONSCIOUS OF TIME**

- TECHNOLOGY POTENTIALLY ADDICTIVE
- NEED TO EXERT PERSONAL DISCIPLINE
- NEED TO BECOME OUR OWN HR DEPARTMENT

#### **BALANCE REQUIRES NEGOTIATING TIME NEEDS IN ADVANCE**

- THE HIGHER WE GO, THE MORE WE GET PAID FOR THINKING
- EQUITY IN JOB FORMS THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION
- OUR PERSONAL PORTFOLIO ESTABLISHES OUR VALUE

#### **BALANCE REQUIRES PRACTICING THE RHYTHM OF RENEWAL**

- INCORPORATE ACTS OF RENEWAL INTO EVERY DAY
- BEWARE MULTITASKING
- LEVERAGE THE POWER OF SLOW

## **WOMEN ARE LEADING MAJOR WORKFORCE TRENDS**

- END OF ONE-SIZE-FITS ALL AND POWER OF THE NICHE
- PORTFOLIO CAREERS
- BREAKDOWN OF TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES
- EMPHASIS ON CULTURE AND VALUES
- FOCUS ON PURPOSE
- WORK/LIFE INTEGRATION

## **THE KEY ROLE OF SATISFACTION**

- INDUSTRIAL DEFINITIONS OF SATISFACTION ARE ERODING
- THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IS KEY
- WHAT THIS MEANS FOR WOMEN, MEN, ORGANIZATIONS,  
AND THE FUTURE

**OUR JOB IS TO HELP WOMEN RECOGNIZE, ARTICULATE AND BELIEVE IN THEIR LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL**