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The Glass Ceiling for Women in Logistics

**A Survey Report on the Opportunities and Challenges Faced by Women in the
Logistics Industry**



LOGISTICS AND SUPPLY CHAIN

EXECUTIVE SEARCH · TRAINING · CONSULTANCY · OUTPLACEMENT

FOREWORD

As 2009 starts, we look forward to a year of challenges and opportunities. However, we all know that it will be a difficult year where we will have to be open to rethinking our business models, cost structures and future strategies. Nothing will be as constant as change.

Management leadership will be the defining point in how companies steer their way through these troubled times. Leadership will include tough decisions on staffing levels and cost structures across global business activities. History has proven that difficult times bring the best out of people. The reality is that in good and bad times, people play an important role in the success of a company, not just at the highest management levels but also at middle management levels to keep personnel motivated and focused.

In most developed countries, the logistics sector accounts for around 9% of GDP. With the current global economy largely facilitated and supported by the logistics and supply chain industry, it is essential to be aware of the current trends in the different regions. Therefore, Europhia Consulting works together with leading partners, in the key logistics regions and countries around the world, to keep abreast of the latest developments within our sector.

This study is part of a series of global surveys and research conducted by Europhia Consulting on a number of HR issues faced by logistics and supply chain companies, over the past 12 months. Even though the issue of 'Shortage of Talent' may temporarily ease until the global economy recovers and starts to grow again, demographic data confirms that the shortage of talent will remain an issue facing the industry in the longer term.

We challenge companies to make use of the information provided in our reports to assess their HR strategy for the coming 3-5 years as part of a company's strategic business planning process. The report provides a number of tools to facilitate strategic management discussion around recruitment and training processes. It discusses questions surrounding 'employer of choice' and what motivates people to stay with or leave a company. Our reports provide insight into recruitment and retention concepts based on feedback from over 10,000 industry professionals worldwide.

We are confident our strategic HRM report - based specifically on the logistics and supply chain sector - is very informative and helpful in evaluating and (re)designing your Human Resources strategy. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to contact us for further information about our surveys and other HR related services.

Best wishes,



Eelco Dijkstra
Managing Director
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1 INTRODUCTION

Employees are the major contributor to a company's success. A survey conducted by Deloitte in 2006 shows that CEOs place employees at the top of their success pyramid, as they consider 'high-quality' employees to be the factor that has contributed most to the growth of their company. However, availability, cost, and quality of labour are major concerns for companies all over the world. In today's tight logistics and supply chain labour market, the number one operational challenge for CEOs in managing their company's growth is "finding, hiring and retaining qualified employees".

In the nineties, the buzzword was the "employability" of individuals to better equip themselves with relevant skills and experience for the labour market. Today, it is about "**employability**", to describe what companies must do to be recognised, as an "employer of choice". Knowledge about employees' view of an 'employer of choice' and the reasons they join, stay with or leave a company facilitates the development of successful human resources management strategies.

Overall, it is essential to identify the areas companies should focus on to better attract and retain valuable employees. This survey provides logistics and supply chain employers with useful insight on the opportunities and challenges faced by women in the logistics industry. It was conducted over a period of 12 months and in collaboration with a series of media and industry partners, examined logistics and supply chain professionals' perceptions about the industry. Responses from over 8,000 logistics and supply chain professionals and students/fresh graduates on human resources management practices and possible improvements have provided the basis for this section.

2 WOMEN IN LOGISTICS

The issue of women in logistics was briefly addressed in Europhia's previous survey where it was discovered that, globally, women are paid 23% less than their male counterparts are. Do women have the same opportunities as their male counterparts in the industry?

2.1 Is the Logistics Sector Still Male Dominated?

Women are still underrepresented in the logistics and supply chain sector. Europhia's research shows that women make up less than 20% of company management positions within the logistics and supply chain industry and other recent analyses confirm this. A study conducted by the European Transport Federation shows that only 20,5% of the employees in the transport sector are women.¹

With a lack of availability of labour it is a concern that, similar to other sectors, in the logistics sector women are underrepresented at management levels. The industry can do a lot more to better attract, support and retain women within the sector and this point is key to a successful HR recruitment and retention strategy.

¹ *Innovative Gender Equality Measures in the Transport Industry*

2.2 Opportunities for Women in Logistics

Almost three quarters of the logistics and supply chain professionals surveyed feel that opportunities for women to build a sound professional career in logistics are better today than they have ever been. These findings are in line with results by the Ohio State University². However, across regions, women are less optimistic than men when evaluating their own and their female colleagues' present and future career opportunities. This comes as no surprise, as women still have to face a number of challenges.

Almost half of the logistics and supply chain professionals still think that working in logistics is more difficult for women than for men. In addition, almost two thirds are convinced that women need to show higher performance in order to receive the same amount of recognition and are less often considered for management positions than their male counterparts with equivalent qualifications.

About two thirds of participants think that women have a different style to men in the way they manage supply chains and these differences are viewed as an advantage for companies.

2.3 Lacking Support From Schools and the Logistics Industry

A key concern for the industry is that less than 30% of the logistics professionals think that schools and universities are supportive in promoting the industry to women. In fact, only few respondents feel that the industry as a whole is supportive in this respect. This may suggest that the influence of schools and the industry as a whole on the longer-term development of (young) women into the logistics industry is not taken into sufficient consideration when making strategy decisions for the development of the sector.

2.4 Making the Industry more Accessible and Attractive to Women

More programs that ensure work-life balance, gender equality and better career opportunities for women are seen as the most important factors to make the logistics and supply chain industry more attractive and accessible to women (see Table 8). Work-life balance, discussed in Chapter 4, seems to be the greatest issue, followed by a lack of career opportunities.

Table 8: Ways of attracting women to the industry

Rank	Overall	Asia	Europe	Americas
1	Programs for work-life balance 58%	Program for work-life balance 58%	Program for work-life balance 60%	More career opportunities 50%
2	More career opportunities 45%	More career opportunities 54%	Gender equality 44%	More female role models 44%
3	Gender equality 41%	Gender equality 39%	More career opportunities 39%	Programs for work-life balance 31%

² 2007 Career Patterns for Women in Logistics

Given the shortage of personnel and especially that of female personnel, more actions need to be taken to create a better gender balance within the logistics and supply chain sector. Other industries/sectors such as banking, government, education, FMCG show a much better gender balance in labour participation.

Whereas initiatives and task forces are dedicated to the advancement of women in logistics, such as the Dutch 'Women in High Logistics Positions' mentoring project, the 'Section Tour' initiated by the European Transport Worker's Federation, and programs at educational levels, the current glass ceiling remains intact.

Change is imminent but needs support. Companies need to improve their marketing strategies to better attract female employees and offer more support to women. Schools and universities need to be supportive in promoting the industry to female graduates since they have a tremendous influence on the next generation of professionals. Industry organizations need to ensure that initiatives for improvement are started, discussions take place, and action is taken.

Measures such as providing women with career path opportunities and a mentoring system to keep women on an advancing career track, more help with (on-site) child-care and other family services, being thoroughly fair in allocating pay and promotions, making it easier for women to report violations and put forward clear policies against offenders could benefit both women and the industry, as a whole.

3 CONCLUSION

Today's overheated logistics and supply labour market forces companies to engage in a tough competition for talent. As competition intensifies for a declining supply of qualified entry-level workers human resource managers must reinvent their human resources strategies by determining how to efficiently attract, select and most importantly retain employees who have the skills and abilities to perform successfully. Moreover, companies need to address talent issues at all levels.

Concerning women in logistics, results show that they are not only underrepresented but they also earn less than their male counterparts do in general. Taking into consideration the present situation for women in logistics, Europhia Consulting advises logistics and supply chain companies to develop clear plans that would make working in logistics and supply chain more attractive and unproblematic for women.

METHODOLOGY

Europhia Consulting has always been committed to the study and research of the latest HR developments in the supply chain and logistics industry. This commitment to research stems from the need to identify and understand the latest developments and rising opportunities; to be able to reinvent and improve Human Resources management.

This survey report, “*The Glass Ceiling for Women in Logistics*” is part of the “*Global Logistics and Supply Chain HR Strategy Report 2009*” which consists of 10 surveys that address different HR-related topics, that are currently discussed within and of importance to the logistics and supply chain sector. The objective of these survey series was to identify potential improvements of HR management practices around the world by analyzing logistics professionals' opinions of the industry.

This report provides research material for the logistic and supply chain industry worldwide. The success of the series is underpinned by the increasing numbers of participants from the first series onwards. In total, over 10,000 logistics and supply chain companies, professionals and students, from all over the world, took part in the ten surveys discussed in the present industry ‘white paper’. The high number of respondents comes as proof for the validity of the results, the popularity of the surveyed topics in the industry and the fact that there is a high demand for industry specific HR information.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the thousands of respondents for taking the time to participate in Europhia Consulting's surveys throughout the past year. Their responses have provided the basis for this report and crucial information for the logistics and supply chain sector.

We owe a special thank you to the media and industry partners who have supported us in reaching out to logistics and supply chain professionals worldwide. They have contributed most notably to giving weight to the results by facilitating increased rates of responses to our surveys.

Europhia Consulting is an international company providing recruitment, executive search, consultancy and training services specialised in the logistics and supply chain industry. The company has offices in Singapore covering the Asia Pacific region, and in The Netherlands and Belgium covering Europe. For more information about our services and upcoming HR forums, please visit www.europhia.com or contact us at info@europhia.com.