

CIO – Corporate innovation online

Innovation management best practices

Male versus Female viewpoints

Different or similar when it comes to innovation management practices?

A recent article¹ prompted an analysis of the data from CIO's² on-line survey. The survey seeks to secure respondents' views on 25 Factors focused on **management practices impacting innovation**. The Factors are based on researching highly-innovative companies.

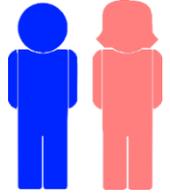
CIO's data base includes responses from both genders. While there is a close resemblance between the responses from each gender, there are some differences which are noted.

The analysis of the 25 Factors is presented under three headings;

- leadership,
- organization and management of day-to-day affairs and,
- idea generation and realization.

The data presented represents the 'Ideal' corporate culture as reported by respondents, i.e. for each Factor the respondent enters their opinion of what would be considered best practice. Respondents are also asked for their opinion on their own situation; i.e. their 'Reality', also for each Factor. The 'Reality' dimension is not addressed in this report.

The 'Best of Breed' (BofB³) is provided as a benchmark and is based on researching highly innovative companies.



Summary

Female and male views on management practices – organizational culture – are very similar.

Female respondents have a view of their 'ideal' situation which is closer to the results for highly-innovative companies than are the opinions of male respondents - at least for 13 of the 16 Factors analyzed in this report.

Where is there a difference?

- Tolerance for uncertainty in the planning process where females seek more certainty than males (Factor #9).
- The desire to have greater input (participation) from a broad cross section of the organization is greater amongst females than males (Factor # 12).
- Females see a need to have more involvement by staff (versus line) in the decision process (Factor #20)

Conclusion; it looks like females have a stronger preference for *collaboration* than males!

¹ What do you value: Title, paycheck or corporate culture? November 3, 2012. The Globe and Mail, Report on Business, Globe Careers. Article by Leah Eichler. Leah.eichler@femme-economics.com

² For reference visit <http://www.corporateinnovationonline.com>

³ Also referred to as the Best of the Best in this paper

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Leadership

For four of the five Factors which come under the theme of leadership, female respondents assign a value which is closer to the 'Best of Breed' than do the male respondents.

The only Factor in which the male response is closer to the BofB has to do with tolerance for uncertainty.

Overall, however, there is little significant difference between the two genders.

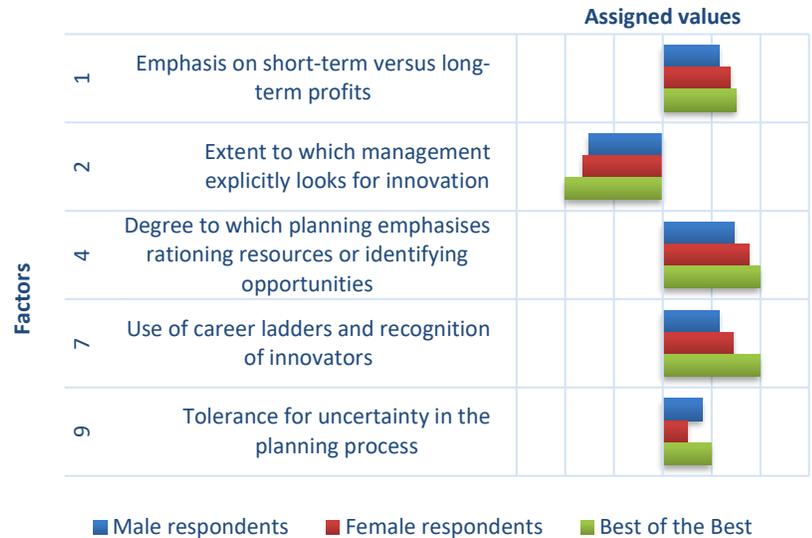
Organization and management of day-to-day affairs

Four of the eight Factors; Factors #6, #10, #11, and #12 - show a close correlation – i.e. no apparent differences - between the opinions of male and female responses. All are under our BofB measurement.

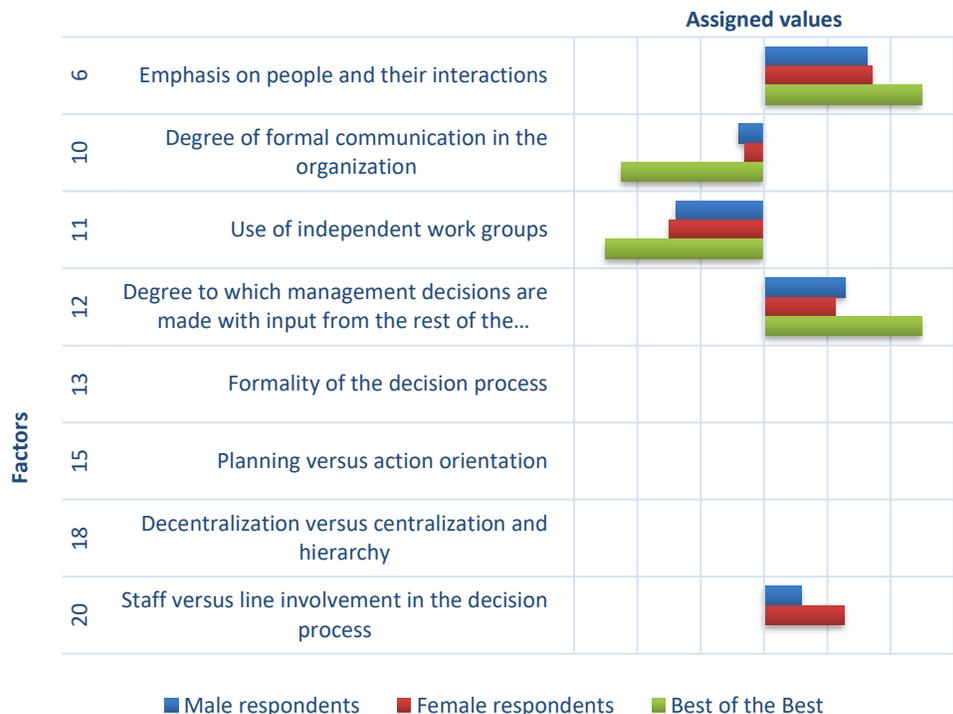
Females desire to have more staff involvement in the decision process – Factor #20, than do male registrants.

Data analyses on Factors # 13, #15, and #18 is inconclusive.

Leadership



Organization and management of day-to-day affairs

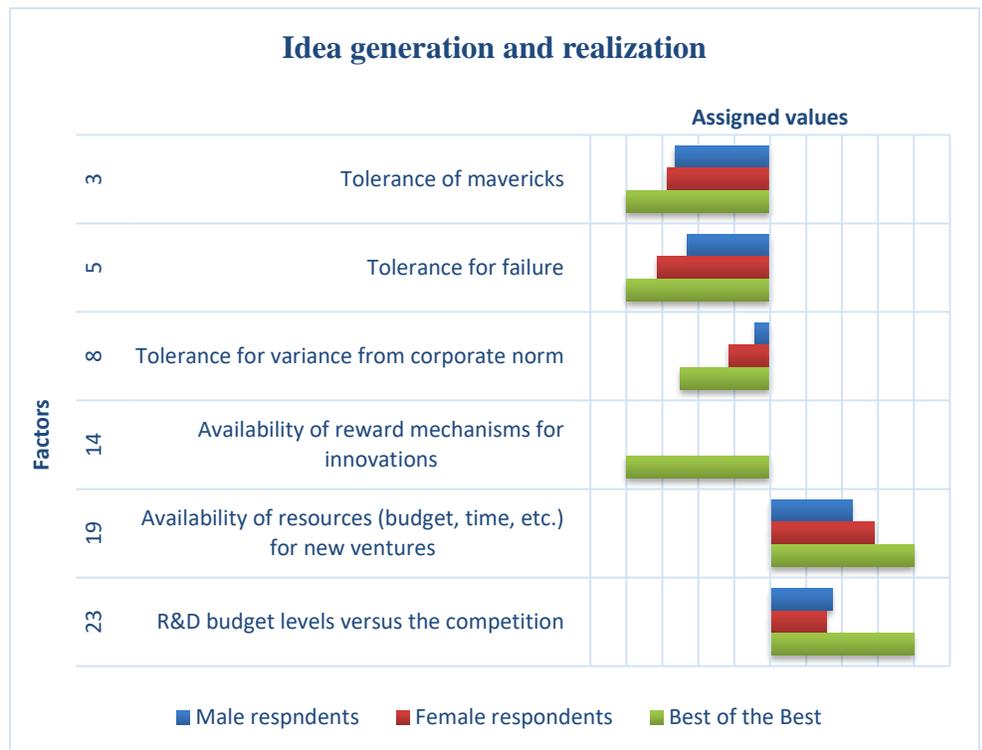


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Idea generation and realization

Three of the six Factors; #3, #5 and #19, which address issues closely associated with idea generation and their realization show a close correlation between male and female responses and are, at the same time, quite close to the benchmark; BofB. Two of these Factors - #3 and #5 - have to do with tolerance – a key characteristic of innovative companies.

Factor #8, dealing with having a tolerance for variance from a corporate norm – i.e. thinking out of the box – suggest that this is of greater importance to female respondents.



There is a consistent view of the importance of research and development spending as between female and male respondents but the result is below the highest benchmark; the BofB.

Responses are unclear on the subject of the ‘availability of reward mechanisms for innovations.

Other comments

The article⁴ has interesting examples and quotes which are supported by further researching the data base.

‘Women want to work for a company that “just feels right”. ‘It’s a company that you’re proud to say you work for’ - quotes from Ms. Henderson. There are three Factors which measure the ‘feel right’ expression.

- Factor #22; indications are that the company has an innovative tradition versus not having such a tradition

⁴ What do you value: Title, paycheck or corporate culture? November 3, 2012. The Globe and Mail, Report on Business, Globe Careers. Article by Leah Eichler. Leah.eichler@femme-economics.com

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- Factor #21; innovators tend to stay with the corporation as opposed to leaving
- Factor #24; innovation is increasing - rather than decreasing

All of which, in the data from respondents, are positive for their ‘Ideal’ and thus indicate a degree of satisfaction – ‘feels right’ – with their situation.

“I don’t think culture is more important to men or women” – quote from Ms.Flatt. CIO would concur, but there are shades of difference that have been addressed in the above report.

Factor #17 asks whether the firm emphasizes loyalty to the firm exclusively or encourages personal development. Female respondents placed much more emphasis on this Factor than did male respondents. This Factor may reflect female interest in work-live balance issues.

Ms Flatt said that she has a client in the service sector that is trying to change its culture from one in which information is not shared freely and staff did not challenge instructions. The company’s new focus emphasizes the sharing of knowledge, but management also wants all of its employees to connect with the firm’s purpose. There are two Factors which are particularly relevant to this issue.

- Factor #10 deals with the formality/informality communications within the firm – a response as ‘formal’ would suggest a certain tightness with information. Getting the message out requires open communication.
- Factor #12 which addresses the desire to have input from a broad cross section of the organization into decision making suggesting a willingness to listen and have open communications.