

## FOCUSED PROGRAM ON WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

### **Networking and negotiating: areas needing improvement**

*Forty company executives from all different sectors participated in the first program held in Spain on critical aspects of female leadership. Glass ceilings, work-family reconciliation policies, quotas, and careers were the top subjects. The sessions took place from March 12 to 15, 2007, at IESE's new campus in Barcelona. They used the case study method and teamwork and were supplemented with individual coaching sessions.*

After the diagnosis extracted from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), professors Pablo Cardona and Nuria Chinchilla addressed the relationship between the most common personality features and the executive personality, while psychiatrist Alberto Ribera gave an in-depth look into the personalities of female executives.

The diagnosis of competencies revealed that, while female executives are making satisfactory progress overall, they still need to improve their networking (or developing their network of contacts) and negotiation skills. Both of these skills were examined in depth by professors Fabrizio Ferraro and Rama Velamuri, respectively. According to these experts, female executives are more wary than males about “using” their personal contacts in the workplace, and they tend to underperform when it comes to negotiating for job conditions as compared to their male counterparts. However, as was shown in the session on conflict management and coaching, their time management and interpersonal communication skills are more highly developed.

During the program, participants also debated the results of a study performed by the ICWF with female executive IESE alumni to describe their current status and analyze to what extent women are able to act as agents of change in companies. The report assesses decision-making criteria, both personal and professional; conflicts or tensions derived from being simultaneously devoted to work and family; and finally, developing executive skills as a result of this life situation.

The study showed that Spanish female executives claim to feel highly satisfied (85 percent) with their family life; however, they also claim to be “split by a double workday” in 67 percent of the cases. Despite this, 70 percent do not believe that they are taking care of their family alone, nor do they accuse their husbands or colleagues of failing to support them. Neither company policies (3 percent) nor professional mentors (10 percent), which most likely include their bosses, are very positively evaluated as determining factors in their careers and in their harmony between these the personal and professional spheres.

On a personal level, only 13 percent admit to having used a career strategy, and only 4 percent have been successful at making use of their contact network, something that men are expert at harnessing. Despite being a highly developed skill, only 31 percent feel satisfied with their time management.

The participants in the program include female executives from a variety of business sectors:

- Pharmaceuticals and healthcare (Pharmión, Medysif, Clínico de Barcelona, Clínica Universitaria de Navarra, Sanofi-Aventis, Transport Sanitari de Catalunya, Texapel)
- Infrastructures and logistics (Tragsa, FEVE, Grentidem, Logística y Transporte S.A, Beulas)
- Food (Condis, Diageo, Sodexho, MGHS Brands, Comercializadora de Electrodomésticos, S.A)
- Energy (Endesa, Repsol) and the media (Edipresse Hyma, El Progreso de Lugo and El Heraldo de Aragón)
- Consultancies (Ernst&Young, Peix&Company, Karisma) and Telecommunications (Promax, Instituto de Formación *on-line*)
- Professional contractors, like partners in law firms and architects