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Women Expatriates: Where are they?

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**Abstract**

This paper will dive into research by those in the field of women studies and international business to analyze the reasons behind the lack of expatriate women through examination of (1) the current status of women in business in the U.S. compared to the Middle East, (2) importance of being an expat to the professional future of women, (3) stereotypes surrounding women as managers (4) why companies are not sending women on international assignments, and (5) how the political status of the U.S. today could affect women in international business. Globalization has created a competitive market where the need for expatriates is necessary in the success of companies. Companies have had to start moving away from homogeneity and towards diversifying their workforce: they must be ready to merge cultural differences, create a diverse management team, and be able to integrate different perspectives to be successful in the international market. Research that will be discussed in the paper shows that companies are still having difficulties looking past gender stereotypes, even if the women are as qualified as their male counterparts, and justifying their actions of not selecting women on the assumption that women do not want to be sent abroad.

**Keywords:** Women, expatriates, women in management, international assignments

## **The need for expatriate talent**

The term “globalization” began to be commonly used around the 1980’s when technological advances made international transactions easier; over the last two decades globalization has the most drastic increase since its start (WTO). Total stock of direct investment abroad by the United States has more than tripled from 2000 (\$1.32 trillion) to 2015 (\$5.04 trillion) (Statista). The increasing importance for worldwide business only intensifies the need for expatriates, a person who is a citizen of one country but lives and works in another country for some extended period of time (business dictionary). Expanding business abroad and a diversified work environment are now vital components in the success of any organization and maintaining a global competitiveness in any market. With the growth of the interconnected economy and emerging markets, opportunities of global expansions are infinite and the financial growth is an attractive quality for companies. Of course just because a company is able to expand their global operations, does not automatically mean they will be successful. In the global market in order to be successful a company must be ready to merge cultural differences, create a diverse management team, and be able to integrate different perspectives to meet company goals. So why are companies that are looking to expand and build a diversified team looking past women to send overseas? While targeting females for future expat leaders is not currently at the top of any company’s organizational plan, could it ultimately create the competitiveness and success needed in the global market place? This thesis will dive into research by those in the field of women studies and international business to explain the reason women have begun to succeed as entrepreneurs here in the U.S versus women in the Middle East, describe the transition to becoming an expat, explore the barriers women are facing in becoming expats, and take a look at what the future of women expats may be.

## **Barriers in climbing the professional ladder**

In the past, more so than the present, entrepreneurship has been perceived as a masculine activity requiring women to face constant hurdles and barriers towards entering the role. Over the past few years, women have been one of the fastest growing groups of entrepreneurs in America, yet still the numbers are lower than they should be. The biggest challenge women face in starting their own business is access to capital, but the National Women's Business Council (NWBC) has found that female entrepreneurs start companies with 50% less capital than male entrepreneurs. Women-owned entrepreneurs are more reliant on personal rather than external sources of financing and overall raise small amounts of capital in financing their firms. According to the 2016 State of Women-Owned Business report, the number of women-owned businesses has grown five times faster than the national average over the past nine years. Even with the extreme increase, women still own drastically less than men who currently own 62 percent of all businesses in the US versus women's 38 percent. Nancy J. Adler, professor of organizational behavior and cross-cultural management at McGill University, has exclaimed that no systematic evidence to prove that women are ineffective as managers in any level position has been found yet the higher the rank in an organization, the fewer women one can find (1993 p 291).

Firms are looking for women who have business management and start-up skills to send abroad, but to raise the chances of sending a female, firms need to start making changes in their home country. According to Catalyst, women currently only hold twenty CEO positions at S&P 500 companies: only a total of four percent. Globally, women's labor force participation rate has decreased from 52.4% to 29.6% between 1995 and 2015. The odds that a woman will be in the labor force is almost 30% of a man's odds (Catalyst). Rosabeth Moss Kanter, a Harvard Business

School Professor and author of *Men and Women of the Corporation*, has concluded through her years of experience that women are given more routinized jobs versus men who are given the high risk/high reward jobs. Because of this men gain more power and more promotions. She speaks of the absurdity of quotes such as “Women derive power from men” and “Behind every great man is a woman” as she explains that until recently the single most common role for women in companies was a secretary while others occupied behind-the-scenes roles (311). Women were always in the shadows of men: they have been expected to support and follow them instead of becoming leaders of their own. Kanter believes that “If jobs “create” people, then the corporation is the quintessential contemporary people-producer. It employs a large proportion of the labor force, and its practices often serve as models for the organization of other systems” (3). Kanter thus believes companies have the social responsibility to hire more women and help them develop towards higher job positions.

According to the department of education, girls are less likely than boys to be held back in school and statistics also show that girls of every race and ethnicity are passing middle school algebra at a higher rate than their male peers. For high school math and science courses an equal amount of girls and boys are enrolled across the board, but a higher number of girls are enrolled in AP classes overall especially science and foreign languages. From 2009-2010 females represented 57.4% of students enrolled in a bachelors program and 62.6% for masters. Although being a great student and acquiring an MBA has helped women enter entry level and grow into middle level positions, it has not helped them attain executive positions (Adler 1993 p 293). Entry into senior level management is based on other criteria besides receiving the highest of education, such as stereotypes. In a poll conducted by Fortune of 201 CEOs of America’s largest companies, consisting of all men, only 16% considered it very likely or somewhat likely that

their company would have a women CEO in the next decade (Fisher 1992). Few admitted that the number one reason for this being, plain and simple discrimination. The CEO of Sara Lee, John H. Bryan can be quoted during the poll saying, “I’m not sure there’s a lot that women can do about it. They’re already working hard and are very qualified... too many senior managers, and particularly CEOs, tend to want to pass their jobs along to someone who’s the image and likeness of themselves.” A lifetime of social conditioning has trained many men to think of women as wives, daughters, secretaries-not as equal colleagues (Fisher 1992). The hope is that MNCs realize their companies can’t afford to ignore potential talent just because it’s wearing a skirt.

### **Global comparison**

The lack of women holding executive positions is a pattern that is visible across all cultures, religions, and in all economic classes. According the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, six out of ten of the world’s poorest people are women. This is due to the fact that women still face discrimination in the economy and most women continue unpaid as they focus on taking care of their home and caring for their children. This is especially true in developing nations where women’s main role is to stay home. In India women’s participation in the labor force continues to fall with minimal percentage having any executive position. (Catalyst).

According to the World Bank thirteen of the fifteen countries with the lowest rate of women in the labor force are in the Middle East and North Africa. Because of this the region loses 27% of income. To compare, in the United States 56% of women make up the labor force while in Saudi Arabia, it is only 20%. The lowest is Jordan at 14% (International Labour Organization). In these regions, women who get married no longer continue work in the private

sector. Gender norms define the types of jobs women in the region can have are in the public sector because they are more stable and the hours are more socially acceptable for women.

According to the World Bank, the distribution of academic scores for boys and girls is the same in most of these regions. In some countries like Saudi Arabia women even outperform men in science and math. So if women are outperforming men, why are there such fewer women in the labor force? Could it be that because boys know they are favored for jobs, they lose the incentive to achieve higher grades or are women truly just smarter in these subjects than men?

Reza Aslan, council on foreign relations, has proclaimed that “the less economic opportunities women in the Arab world have, the less hope there will be for the creation of a stable, viable, and democratic future.” According to Aslan’s research female literacy rates in the Arab world are roughly equal to those of men even though there are higher number of women. While college graduation rates are gender equal, Arab women outperform men in the hard science yet there still lacks women presence in fields of technology, engineering, and sciences.

Although most companies in the Arab world say they prefer women because of their soft skills, they do not hire them because they believe the societal standards placed on women would keep them from succeeding in any position (Aslan). It seems perception trumps reality, but this perception could be hurting the region’s economic growth. Denial of women in the workforce is causing the Arab world to diminish its competitive position in the now globalized market. While no Arab country currently has legal quota for the percentage of women it needs to hire, the Ministry of Labor in Saudi Arabia in 2013 allowed companies to start hiring expatriate women in seven business activities: health, education, dressmaking, childcare, in wedding halls, and as cleaners. Dubai’s Sheikh Muhammad has also created a plan that will force all public board in the country to have at least 50% of women (Aslan).

FILLER SENTENCE. The current status and future for women is bright in not only the United States, but even in the Middle East where gender discrimination is the highest. While women are getting their foot in the door, there is still so much improvement to be made worldwide. Women have shown more success in the United States than in Arab countries, but in the now globalized world, success cannot be defined until women worldwide have achieved at the same level. In sending females on international assignments, companies want host nationals to accept the women just as they would be accepted here. In this case, countries must work together to achieve the rise of female expatriates.

### **Lack of female expatriates**

With professional labor markets becoming progressively globalized, companies as a whole have had to move away from homogeneity and towards diversity. Women and minorities have gained access to positions they once were not even considered for. Adler believes global opportunities open up more doors for women. In her research she has found that the global arena is more receptive to female managers than they are domestically. Globalization has increased competition for companies, so they are looking to hire only the best and more qualified employees, even if that person is a woman. One of Adler's books, *Competitive Frontiers: Women Managers in a Global Economy*, she explains that global firms are more inclusive and less hierarchical thus making it more accessible for women to reach success. Although globalization has brought new opportunities for women, these opportunities are being given to them unhurriedly.

While the growth in the amount of people willing to accept global assignments is much slower than the need for them, only a small percentage of expatriates from Western organizations are women. (Caligiuri and Cascio p.394). According to the 2016 Global Relocation Trends

Survey, in 2005 women made up 23% of international expatriates while in 2016 the number increased slightly to 25%. There does not seem to be any growth in the number of women being sent on international assignments. If you were to look at 2010 statistics, only 17% of expats were women that year, a decrease from 2005. International experience is increasingly a necessity for those who want to become global leaders. 94% of the 164 companies that responded to a recent KPMG survey said it was important to send people on international assignments today (Caligiuri and Cascio p.394). Not being chosen for global assignments is severely impacting the long term career for women, and in the new global economy can even hurt the competitiveness of a company.

The 2016 Global Mobility Trends Survey states only 29% of company's say they use candidate assessment when selecting which employees to send on international assignments. Having no formal assessment, like 71% of the respondents admitted, leaves great room for bias when selecting who to send, whether intentional or not. To ensure companies are sending the most qualified high potential employees overseas, a formal assessment needs to be developed by talent management. Companies claim that they want to develop careers of their female employees, but only few are taking the initiative of placing women in high-profile global roles. Companies who were truly dedicated to increasing the number of woman expats should create more programs training women for international assignments and leadership skills that would increase their preparedness and chances of being offered more career enhancing opportunities.

### **Do women want to go?**

Throughout Nancy Adler's years of studying women in business and international business, she has continually found evidence that proves companies assume women do not want to take positions overseas (1984). Companies tend to think women would rather stay in their

home base with their family rather than relocating their entire family abroad. They theorize that when women begin to have children they will work less or not be as involved with their work life causing them to believe men are a bigger return on investment. These assumptions make companies think that career moves like taking on international assignments are not as important or even desirable to women. If companies think family obligations and responsibilities are an obstacle holding back women in their careers, why aren't they for men too?

In regards to family life, there are positive and negative consequences for women becoming expatriates. Women with children going on international assignments can give their children opportunities they may never receive in their lifetime: the world of being an international citizen comes with learning new languages, new surroundings, and new educational opportunities. Of course the initial culture shock and language barrier cannot be ignored, companies can help families transition by giving cultural training to all family members. Unfortunately, the economic downturn seems to be hurting the chances for women expats. Being in a dual-income family may make women reluctant to take on international assignments because of their husbands having to relocate (Adler 1984). Companies can take the burden of spouses by creating spousal-assistance programs to prepare their mindset for their new life and find programs abroad that will help them if needed. Becoming an expat involves many factors, and companies must take them all into account including the cost of moving an expat's family abroad, however it is their duty when sending any employee abroad to give them and their family proper training so they have all they need to be successful abroad.

Several researchers have debunked the assumption that women do not want to go on international assignments. Nancy Adler took 1000 male and female M.B.A students in seven top business schools and asked both genders how they feel about taking on international

assignments. Her results show no significant difference between men and women in their interest or desire to have an international career (1984). Also, a PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) study that examined the expectations of 4,271 Generation Y university graduates found that 78.5 percent of the 2000 female graduates aspire to work outside their home country during their career. The Boston Consulting Group recently also surveyed over 200,000 people from 189 countries and asked them about their willingness to work abroad. While the global average was 63.8 percent, only 35 percent of Americans said they would take on an international assignment. Looking into this percentage closer, The Boston Consulting Group determined that of these 35 percent, 59 percent of the millennials in the US would move overseas to seek job opportunities, the highest of all the countries surveyed.

Even though women are just as likely as men to accept offers to work abroad, they are less likely to even be offered the opportunity to do so. 64% of women say they were never offered any position abroad versus 55% of men (Catalyst). While women must go out of their way to show interest and ask for consideration for an expat position, men are automatically invited if they are qualified. It appears that the only way women are being selected to go overseas is if they have nothing tying them to their home country: not being a homeowner, having no family, and being single would make them the perfect fit. Although we can't dismiss the idea of women self-opting out of considerations for international assignments because of home-life, we cannot let companies believe this to be true for all women. Sometimes all it takes is having a conversation with a female employee about what they want instead of assuming. Companies can also offer women with families who are unable to relocate, short term international assignments. Although the objective of short assignments are not as strategic, women will gain valuable skills and training that will benefit them in the long run. Foreign

assignments continue to be masculine, but slowly women are making a breakthrough. Their attempts though will not be successful until their employers change perspective on women's roles. "The paucity of female international managers is caused by companies' unwillingness to believe that they could succeed-and thus their unwillingness to send them- rather than women's lack of interest in international management" (Adler 1984).

### **Gender Stereotypes**

Sex stereotypes for as long as humans have interacted, have existed. They are the root of all gender bias in the workplace and a reason women are not being staffed properly. These stereotypes effect how many women are hired and in many cases their gender defines what position they will be hired for. Before women receiving promotions were more common, those few women who did manage to climb the professional ladder were seen as exceptions; however even in achieving a higher position of power, coworkers did not show the same respect to these women as a man in the same ranking. Now that the possibility of women being in a managerial position is much higher, while stereotypes continue to limit their managing success, in some ways it may help them.

Men and women handle power differently and for employees who have been accustomed to male managers, the transition to having a female manager can be difficult. Women and men in the same position, women can be seen as being much bossier than men because of their nagging tones. The most common descriptions of men that can be used to describe them as effective managers include: aggressive, independent, unemotional, objective, dominant, active, competitive, logical, worldly, self-confident, ambitious, and adventurous (Adler 2002 p 747). Some of these same qualities, if had by a women (i.e aggressive, dominant, unemotional), would be described as bossy, callous, and cold: three things that employees do not want in a manager.

While some women are naturally independent and may have similar domineering qualities as men, women have their own stereotypes that may help them manage successfully in their own way. Traditional descriptions of women include: talkative, gentle, tactful, religious, quiet, empathetic, aesthetic, submissive, and expressive (Adler 2002 p. 747). These characteristics of women help them manage a company much more as a democracy versus men's mild authoritarian style. Women tend to manage with more inclusion, participation, and interaction: they are known to have higher interpersonal relations in the workplace because of this. Women's more calming demeanor also help them solve problems more peacefully than with men's aggressive nature. Psychologists explain that women tend to value their social networks much more than men because women view their relationships with others as part of their identity. In the workplace these characteristics help them build their networks and be more effective as mentors.

How gender stereotypes are viewed not only depends on which management style employees like better but also is dependent on job setting. In certain jobs such as sales, men are viewed as convincing and aggressive. They are able to close more sales and turn contacts outside of the company to new clients versus women who have a harder time being forceful while also lacking the self-confidence level needed in closing a sale. However, in fields such as hospitality, women's ability to build customer relationships are perceived to be much greater than men. Women are believed to be more trustworthy, secure, and have better people-handling skills than their male counterpart so in a global setting they can build relationships with new coworkers quicker than men would.

Global cultural agility and collaboration are dynamic qualities companies look for when hiring for leadership roles and selecting who to send on international assignments. A women

manager's ability to balance good relationships with employees while maintaining a relationship with headquarters makes them "model global managers" (Tung 2004). Self-confidence and a willingness to assume risk that may accompany any failure are two traits that are tied to innovation and high growth entrepreneurship both of which research has shown higher in men than women. Although women are often described as less confident in themselves than men and their fear of failure can be a major weakness in their career, women have been found to take more calculated risks thus having fewer failure experiences than men. (NWBC).

Gender status beliefs are overall a disadvantage to women entrepreneurs. This statement has been proven by multiple studies. Sarah Thebaud, a sociologist at the University of California, conducted random experiments to find the effect of gender on perceptions of entrepreneurial competence. Students in the United States and United Kingdom were asked to evaluate quality of ideas from descriptions of new ventures. Descriptions were otherwise identical but were given male or female entrepreneurial names. The results found showed that business ideas that came from men versus their women counterparts were rated higher for competence. A similar study was done by researchers from Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Researchers had adults watch two videos of business plans being pitched. Once again the pitches were identical besides the fact that women and male voices were randomly assigned to the videos. Results shown were the same as Thebauds. Just by being female, ones chances of getting an investment, their competence levels, and the quality of ideas decrease immediately. It seems that people unconsciously (or consciously) tie entrepreneurship to men. Scott Shane, professor of entrepreneurial studies at Case Western Reserve University, poses the question, "[Do] people form those perceptions because most

entrepreneurs are men or whether most entrepreneurs are men because people hold those perceptions?”

Given the fact that most companies do not have experience in sending women on international assignments, their decisions in sending them are based on perception alone. It goes without saying that companies should not hire based on gender stereotypes, but instead they should test if each potential employee is a cultural fit with the company in order to validate any hiring choices. Can firms risk not choosing the best person available just because her gender does not fit their traditional managerial profile (Adler 1993 p.297)?

### **Reaction of host countries**

One reason, found by many researchers, why women are not chosen for international assignments is that many MNCs believe that sending a women abroad to a country that does not accept women in business settings will severely hurt their business. It is suggested by Linehan and Walsh that the greater the uncertainty of how a host country will react, the smaller the probability that a MNC will assign a woman to an expatriate role” (1999 p 523). Cross-cultural training is imperative for the success of women going on international assignments. Cultural sensitivity and awareness are crucial and can help women build better relationships with their co-workers abroad. Just as it is important than an employees’ home base prepares her to take on international assignment, companies abroad must also train their own employees in gender-based prejudice in order to welcome her.

One poll asked Asian and Australian host-national managers and expatriate managers to agree or disagree with the statement, “given people of equal ability, it is preferable to appoint a man to an international position” (Stone 1991 p 15). 56% of expatriates, 53% of Asian managers,

and 44% of Australian managers agreed with the statement and a majority in all three categories agreed that in countries such as Japan and Korea, expatriate women manager are not appropriate. Contradictory to that find, in a sample of 52 North American female expatriates in Asia, Nancy Adler found that 97% of them self-reported their assignment successful (e.g. being offered another global assignment after completion of their current one). Surprisingly 42% of these expatriates viewed “being a female” as an advantage. None of the women felt that they were limited to the same restrictions as local women; they were viewed as foreigners first and women second. Adler found that host nationals perceived that “if a women was sent by a company, then she must be exceptionally competent” (Adler 1987). Note however, Adler’s poll was only in Asia and view of the host nationals were assumptions, not factually based, however interculturalist, Saskia Meckman also discovered that when women go abroad they are seen as a “foreigner” first and a woman second. Even in the Middle East where there is the most bias toward women in the workplace, research has shown the success of North American women expats. (Adler 1987). Women are foreign and thus not expected to fit into the same standards as the local culture of where they are working. Because they are not constrained to local female restrictions they have more power to work the way they want and not have to be subordinates of men. If anything, women are going to work even harder to prove themselves to their host nationals and create higher quality work.

It seems companies are trying to justify the reason they are not sending women abroad, based on myths that have been continuously disproven. Regardless of research done to debunk this myth, the 1991 Civil Rights Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act protect Americans in foreign countries who are employees by American MNCs from discrimination- despite local customs (Caligiuri and Cascio p 399). In the

case *Fernandez v Wynn Oil Co.* (1981), the court held that no stereotypes of either gender in the host country justifies sexual discrimination in an occupational setting. A company cannot justify avoiding to send women abroad because of the potential discrimination women expatriates could face in their host country.

### **The future of women in business**

While studies and statistics show that the future for women may be bright, no studies have yet taken into account the current political status of the United States and how current politics will effect women in business. History has demonstrated that countries where women are empowered and where their rights are promoted, have had more stability, less violence, a reduction of poverty, and have shown greater economic growth (UNDP). President George Bush during his presidency identified the respect for women as one of the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity, but the new administration does not seem to share the same beliefs. The Trump administration, who have the fewest women on the cabinet since any administration in 40 years, may be reversing decades of work in promoting women's rights.

In order for a women to thrive in business she must first and foremost be accepted into the labor force. This can only happen if women are initially accepted in their home country, given their natural rights, and are given control of their destiny, just the same as men. President Trump is enforcing and reinstating laws here in the United States that are making it harder for women to make their own decisions. He has signed an executive order cutting off U.S. funding to global women's health organizations worldwide if they counseled, referred or advocated or access to abortion, known as the "global gag rule" (Asquith). The Trump transition team has even asked the State Department to submit details of programs and jobs that promote gender equality. The President has also been heard threatening to end funding for the UN Population

Fund which provides contraceptives to tens of thousands of women in some of the poorest regions of the world. According to the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, the United States makes a significant contribution of about \$75,000,000 yearly, thus cutting funds could have a huge impact globally. His advisers have described U.S. gender programs as radical feminist agenda that promote prostitution and sexual promiscuity (Asquith).

Public and private funding have gone towards advancing issues that affect women globally including the inclusion of women in typically male-dominated sectors. Because gender equality and women's rights are tied directly to national security, the State Department provides a great portion of the funding to combat global gender issues, however, President Trump wants to refocus the State Department away from development (i.e. women's economic empowerment) and towards terrorism even though research has shown a link between improved women's status and a decline in terrorism (UNDP). Women's advancement is a part of stabilizing and reducing political violence. Even if the gender equality and women empowerment is not on the Trump administration's to-do list, the United States is still obligated under The United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security to meet benchmarks on efforts for women's inclusion and empowerment

It has become clear that women empowerment is not a commitment the Trump administration will be making during his presidency, but will they make it harder for women to be chosen for international assignments? One policy that Trump has suggested that is pro-women is a six week paid maternity leave, but the plan omits paternity leave. This policy only furthers the old-fashion view on families in which the women is responsible of taking care of the children. Although this is an advancement for the United States, as it has been the only

developed country with no guaranteed family leave, it opens up even more doors for employment discrimination against women.

## **Conclusion**

Adler sums up the lack of women representation with the following: “Evidence suggests that the under-representation, under-utilisation, and skewed distribution of women managers is neither coincidental nor random, but rather a function of systematic cultural sanctions, educational barriers, legal restrictions, and corporate practices” (1993 p 291). The lack of women representation in the workforce is continuously growing worldwide, but the stats continue to show the underrepresentation in the number of female expatriates, executive positions in the home country, and in the workforce overall. While it may help, women speaking out for their desire to have certain jobs, it is not enough; Women need additional support. Companies must not only believe in the skillset of their women employees, but also provide them the training they need to be successful no matter the position they are in. Any of their male counterparts including those in executive positions and any coworkers need to look past the stereotypes and misconceptions of women. Women have proven they can be just as successful in both school and at work as men, and men need to see that existing achievement instead of the assumptions history and culture has made for women. Women worldwide also need the backing of their home country. No matter how far women have come, new laws can either reverse all the progress they have made or continue to advance them towards success.

CEO of Hewlett Packard, Carly Fiorina, has stated: ‘Anytime you have a fiercely competitive, change-oriented, growth business where results count and merit matters, women will rise to the top’ (Adler 2002 p 743). Women through history have continuously shown their strength, perseverance, and capabilities in the workplace. They have received the education they

need and have the qualities it takes to not only hold executive positions here in the United States, but to also go on international assignments. Not being offered the opportunity to take on these assignments is not only unjust, but detrimental to their careers and to the optimal success of their companies. Without the help and support of their companies, men will always outnumber women in the workplace.

Companies have the ability and resources to help women thrive in the workplace: helping their female employees succeed should be a part of their mission statement- a formal summary of their aims and values- for when their employees succeed, they will also succeed. While quotas have been frowned upon because they may cause further discrimination, simply voicing support for hiring women is not enough. SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely) goals involving the hiring of women need to be set to assure higher numbers are met. Setting up the affirmative action program may also be successful. Instead of being a rigid quotas, it creates a flexible target that requires companies to show they made a fair effort in meeting their goal. Diversity initiatives – goals devised to measure acceptance of minorities by embracing cultural differences – can also be very effective for combatting sexism. They include awareness, education, and positive recognition of cultural differences in the workplace. Once women are hired and companies are able to retain them in the workplace, training must also be established to prepare her for international assignments. First, companies must provide leadership training for women in order to improve on their leadership skills and make it clear what the company is expecting of them. Companies must also provide cross-cultural training to women who are seeking to go on international assignments along with their families. This will help them be as prepared as possible if they are chosen and ease them into the new position. Lastly, companies must also provide training for host nationals, especially those who are not accustomed to women

managers. Setting up these new policies and training programs for women can truly help their chances of success in the company and increase the probability of them being chosen for international assignments.

Companies cannot continue to use excuses such as that women are uninterested in being sent on foreign assignments, their families are holding them back, or that foreigners will not accept them. Although each situation is different, overall these assumptions have been disproved by research. Women have showed they are both qualified and interested in becoming expatriates, and companies are not only hurting the career of women, but also themselves in ignoring them as prospects. Any basic statistics will prove that drawing from a larger talent pool, on average, will make the chance of selecting better global managers higher, so there continues to be no reason for not selecting women to send on international assignments. Companies need to look ahead and make investments in their employees, no matter the gender, and give them international experience for they are the faces of the tomorrow's company.

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