

# **Sex in the Boardroom**

Merydith Willoughby

# Contents

<b>About the Author .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>How to use this book .....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Chapter 1 <b>Upline Upfront.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Chapter 2 <b>Square Peg.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Chapter 3 <b>Planning.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Chapter 4 <b>Everyone's Different .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Chapter 5 <b>Performance .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Chapter 6 <b>Your Style .....</b>	<b>79</b>
Chapter 7 <b>Workplace Culture.....</b>	<b>91</b>
Chapter 8 <b>Thinking.....</b>	<b>105</b>
Chapter 9 <b>Continuous Improvement ...</b>	<b>117</b>
Chapter 10 <b>Keep it Simple.....</b>	<b>129</b>
Chapter 11 <b>Meetings.....</b>	<b>143</b>
Chapter 12 <b>Stress .....</b>	<b>157</b>
Chapter 13 <b>Ignorance is Bliss .....</b>	<b>169</b>

Chapter 14 <b>Fear</b> .....	183
Chapter 15 <b>Fake it until You make it ...</b>	197
Chapter 16 <b>Bullying</b> .....	209
Chapter 17 <b>Holidays</b> .....	225
Chapter 18 <b>Globalisation</b> .....	239
Chapter 19 <b>The Long &amp; Short of it</b> .....	255
<b>Case Studies</b> .....	264
<b>Glossary of Terms</b> .....	267
<b>Index</b> .....	291



## **Chapter 19**

# **The Long & Short of it**

## **SEX IN THE BOARDROOM**

### *Insight*

You need the heart and you need the brain; effective leaders are those who get the right balance in using those two body parts. Rick

An erudite leader not committed to leadership development is unlikely to assist their organisation and people to go from strength to strength. Rather it is likely they will continue to attain more of what they don't want. Successful leaders know that being well read is only one component to powerful leadership. When a systematic process is adhered to, you can be a leader who is admired for their capability, authenticity and ability to lead powerfully because it's clear you know what you are doing and you have the results to show.

You may be the new kid in town or you may be a seasoned leader. It really doesn't matter where you're placed on the corporate ladder because there is always so much more to learn. The first thing you have to do is to get your act together because you can't be effective if you are mediocre in the way you lead, with your attitude or with the behaviour you demonstrate.

I wrote *Sex in the Boardroom* to guide, encourage, inspire and to empower you to stop, sit down, think and to audit your systems and processes. Then and only then can you identify what's working well and what the 'gaps' are. It is expected the various chapters of the book will give you the information you need to challenge yourself, to recognise what you're doing well, to

## **SEX IN THE BOARDROOM**

acknowledge your successes and to have your eyes open for areas you can fine-tune and improve. The book has enough information, tips and ideas to transform your organisation, yourself and those you lead if you're willing to do the required work. You need to be proud of your achievements because that helps you to keep striving for excellence and to get through any bad patches.

The possibilities are endless with this type of work. You start working with yourself and your people. You help them unravel what's really happening and step by step you all forge ahead. Everyone starts focusing on what has to be done, they get their systems and processes in place, managers give their people clear, direct instructions and each person stops wasting time on things that don't make a difference. They are specific and strategic, the whole team knows what has to be done and they just *get on with it*. They do what they've been hired to do: think, plan, develop, get into action, measure what they have done to see how effective it *really* is. They tweak what needs tweaking. Everyone works towards the common goal and they know their role in the scheme of things. There is nothing better than seeing a workplace function like this. It looks like a well-oiled machine in operation.

Leadership is exciting. The better you get at it,

the more confident you become and the more you'll want to experiment with what you're doing. You will always be learning what you could do better and once confident, you can trial new things out just because you can. There is no ego, there's just hard work to find out what you're doing effectively. Leaders don't allow whinging – they expect their people to be part of the solution.

Being in management is not for the faint hearted, for those who don't like people or who can't sustain the constantly changing face of business. But it can be fantastic and that's why those who love it keep doing it even with all the obstacles they face. Leaders use their intellect to foster change and to implement great policies and procedures that really do work in the workplace.

Everything you do must be well thought out. There's no room for action without thinking and planning. Take regular time out to think, plan and review and do a major re-think at least every 12 months. Keep the lines of communication open between senior management and employees. Let everyone work towards one goal – that is to achieve outstanding business success year in and year out.

Successful leaders may fake it when required but they don't just jump head first into new territory without doing their homework. They know *what* the

## **SEX IN THE BOARDROOM**

likely impact will be of any proposed changes and they know *how* they will sell it to those people who will have to put it in place. They have a contingency plan and are always monitoring results, ready to change pace and direction when it is necessary. And just as you learn to acknowledge yourself when things are going well, if you have teams who are under-performing then you must take responsibility for that too. As the leader you'll have to wear the good bits and the bad bits. You are It.

I never tire of working in the leadership development area. My passion and enthusiasm never wanes because when people are serious about the way they lead, the changes are evident within a short period of time. I work with all types of leaders – textbook and others. From my perspective I have the best job in the world. I see the way management can influence their whole organisation when they are focused and switched-on. There's nothing better than seeing this in action with everyone working together – they are each part of the jigsaw and it all fits together beautifully.

We'd all love our personal assistant to present us each day with our To Do List. If you don't have one, you'll have to do it yourself because being organised is a big part of success. Having your head spin with 'where is this' or 'what do I have

to do' is unhelpful. Make room for interruptions but stay on task. Don't let other people's agendas dominate you, because that is effectively choosing to get on a treadmill. Pushing yourself too hard won't achieve powerful results because anyone who works themselves to the bone performs below par in the long run.

Just as you need to have your finger on the pulse each day in the workplace you need to be aware when it's the right time to move on. Leave when you are at your peak, when you've achieved what you set out to do. Don't wait until 'it's all over red rover' and people are questioning your ability to do the job. Or worse still, when you're pushed. There's nothing more demeaning or humiliating for a leader who has achieved great things to not know the right time to go – it undermines everything for which they worked so hard. Move on, find your next challenge and do great things in your next position.

***And, now for the *piece de résistance!****

When you have your organisation and people on-track, you've learnt to delegate and you have great teams to work with, I want you to look elsewhere. Look to where you can invest time that also gives you the same feelings of satisfaction, power and feeling valued that you get in the boardroom or

## **SEX IN THE BOARDROOM**

from working with your people. Think of it as cross training. You will be a better, more creative leader when you put energy into and explore other areas of your life you might just have neglected for a while. Enjoy those same hot, heady feelings you've had in the boardroom but a long way away from it – you deserve it. There is no point being like my new-friend in the introduction where all she could do was to dream, hope and wish the delights would come her way.

Chapter 19 The Long & Short of it

