



7304 Old Vincennes Road
Floyds Knobs, IN 47119 USA
+1.812.923.9277
kelly@keepcustomers.com
www.KeepCustomers.com
www.LeadershipArabWomen.com

Women Are the Key to Meeting Emiratisation Goals ... and to Keeping Organizations Competitive

Written by Kelly Watkins

Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership
President, Expressive Concepts

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Executive Summary

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) faces a unique challenge, in that only 18% of the country's inhabitants are native Emiratis. The remaining 82% of its population are expatriates. "Emiratisation" is a UAE initiative designed to cope with this situation and to encourage employment of its citizens. The government has set a goal for 20,000 Emiratis to be hired in the private sector within five years.

Where will these 20,000 Emiratis come from? Companies who are struggling to meet this quota cannot afford to ignore half the labour pool. Women will need to be hired.

Lucky for these companies, Emirati women are talented and educated. Therefore, organizations should begin to view women as solutions.

Female employees can provide organizations with many benefits that lead to a competitive advantage and increased profitability. Women offer unique perspectives, varying viewpoints, and specific knowledge of UAE markets, as well as technical skills and expertise.

How can companies maximize the contributions from their female employees? In addition to hiring Emirati women, organizations must be willing to make short-term and long-term investments in order to receive long-term benefits.

In the short-term, some Emirati women may need extra training - especially in professional and soft skills (leadership, communication, professionalism, global business styles).

In the long-term, these women deserve continual development opportunities. This goes beyond offering a simple "training seminar." Organizations need a systematic process to provide for long-term development. Women should be offered opportunities to learn, to gain experience, and to grow their leadership skills. Employees who are more fully trained are able to contribute more significantly to the productivity and profitability of the organization.

Expressive Concepts has designed a **6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women**. (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com) This Model clearly identifies the path to successfully developing women both prior to their employment and throughout their careers.

Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, asks, "*Will your organization be proactive and benefit from hiring and developing women, or will you ignore the situation and lose your competitive advantage?*"

On a global level, there is a trend toward promoting women to the highest positions in organizations. This trend is gaining momentum at an astounding rate. The mandate has started at the Board level and is trickling down to all positions within companies. This will result in increased pressure for organizations to hire and promote women at all levels.

The mix of global pressure to hire women combined with Emiratisation quotas can present organizations with the perfect opportunity to benefit from hiring and developing female employees. The companies who have systems in place to train and develop these women will enjoy a competitive advantage in a global market.

1. Why?

Emiratisation quotas

The population of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was 9.2 million in 2012, according to World Bank. Of that total population, only approximately 18% are native Emiratis. (The exact number of expatriates vary, depending on the reporting source.)

Emiratisation is an initiative by the UAE government to counteract some of the negative effects of such a high expatriate population. The purpose is to encourage organizations in both public and private sectors to hire native Emiratis.

The Emiratisation initiative was instituted by the UAE government more than a decade ago. Strong results have been seen in the public sector.

However, the private sector is another story. Only 19,874 Emiratis were working in private businesses in 2011, according to the 2011 Labour Report. Conversely, there were approximately 3,895,695 total people employed in private sector jobs. That means only 0.5% (one-half of one percent) of corporate employees are Emirati.

According to Mr. Al Qattami, Minister of Education, there were 1,700 nationals hired in the private sector in 2012. The number for 2013 has dropped to 1,000.

Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed, deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, has stated that the goal is to hire 20,000 Emirati in the private sector within five years.

Proactive versus reactive - Don't ignore half the candidates

Where will these 20,000 Emiratis come from?

When companies exclude or don't actively pursue women, they are ignoring half of their potential recruits. There is a higher percentage of women graduating from college in the UAE than men. In fact, more than 70 percent of Emiratis in federal higher education institutions are women.

To some degree, it is inevitable that Emirati women will enter the workforce. When these women seek a position, whose company will they work for?

When commenting on hiring and developing Emirati women, Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, asks, "*Will your company be scrambling to catch up, or will you be on the cutting edge and receive the benefits*"

of women's contributions? In short, will you be profitably proactive or negligently reactive?"

The decision to hire women should be an easy one. To help organizations successfully utilize their employees, Expressive Concepts has created a **6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women**. (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

When companies have a systematic approach to growth, they can maximize the contributions of employees and improve the company's bottom line. (See Benefits section)

Global mandate

The directive to hire and promote women isn't new. In many countries, it has been occurring for more than half of a century. But, the recent **speed** at which the mandate is growing worldwide is astonishing. Equally astonishing is the **strength** of the message to place women in top positions.

The concept has leapfrogged from "hire a few women" to "put women in charge NOW." The challenge is gaining momentum and speed at astounding rates.

Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, says, "The movement to propel women is becoming a tidal wave. Companies can either grab a surf board and ride the wave to competitive advantage, or they can bury their heads in the sand and be washed out to sea."

The command can be heard in every corner of the globe ... select women on Boards; appoint women as CEOs; promote women to senior management; move women into middle management, hire more women in entry-level professional positions.

Women on Boards – Global

There is a global push to place women in Non-Executive Director positions on Corporate Boards. Groups have formed to help facilitate this mandate. One example of a powerful and influential group is "Global Board Ready Women." The movement was started by the European Business Schools / Women on Board Taskforce. It has grown to become a global initiative, including leading business schools and professional organizations from around the world. The group has created a global database of Senior Women Executives and Professionals. These women have been pre-approved and vetted to ensure they meet criteria to serve in Non-Executive Director positions on Corporate Boards. (Note: The author of this report, Kelly Watkins, is a member of the group.)

Some countries have introduced mandatory quotas, and others have created recommendations or guidelines. But, regardless of regulations, most countries

are addressing, or at least discussing, this issue. (Note: The purpose of this paper is not to argue “for” or “against” quotas. This is informational only.)

Norway leads the way. In 2005, they instituted a quota of 40% female participation on Boards. They were serious about the consequences of non-action. The cost of non-compliance is dissolution of the corporation.

Today, Norway has 40.9% of Board positions belonging to women, according to Catalyst. They rank #1 in the world. In second place is Sweden with 27%. Rounding out the top ten (in order) are Finland (26.8%), France (18.3%), UK (17.3%), Denmark (17.2%), South Africa (17.1%), Netherlands (17.0%), USA (16.9%), and Israel (15.0%).

Based on current statistics, the countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have a long way to go. (The GCC countries are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.) The current representation of women on Boards is dismal for the GCC countries. Oman is first with 1.8%, and the UAE is fourth with 1.2%, according to Catalyst.

Women on Boards – UAE (Sheikh’s decree)

The GCC, and the UAE specifically, are not immune to this trend. Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade, has said, “Collaboration will need to start from the top. If the government shows a genuine concern for empowering women, then the concerned agencies, the private sector and the general public will follow suit.”

In December 2012, the UAE Cabinet made it compulsory for corporations and government agencies to include women on their Boards of Directors. Upon making the historic declaration, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, tweeted, “Women proved themselves in many workplaces and today we want them to have a strong presence in decision-making positions in our institutions.”

Spill Over and Trickle Down

So, how do all these Board-level mandates affect hiring and training at the employee level? This is not an isolated issue. The concept of appointing more women on boards doesn’t exist in a vacuum.

The pressure to more effectively utilize women will spill over and trickle down to impact all aspects of hiring and training. Organizations will be expected to hire and promote women at all levels.

According to Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women’s Leadership, “*This intersection of global trends supporting women and Emiratisation goals are creating a*”

perfect opportunity – for organizations in the UAE with enough foresight to capitalize on it.”

There needs to be a pipeline. It begins with new hires and moves to emerging leaders, middle management, and senior management. Organizations will need a comprehensive system to identify and train High Potential Women at all levels of a company.

Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women’s Leadership, asks HR Executives, “How will you respond when your CEO asks you to recommend some High Potential Women ... and you haven’t even identified them, let alone provided them with training and development?”

Beyond being motivated by fear of a wrathful CEO, companies should be developing women for profitability reasons as well. Companies can enjoy many benefits from better utilizing this portion of the labour force. (See Benefits section)

Although designing a successful process for developing women leaders can be daunting, there are many options. Expressive Concepts has created a **6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women** that can help. (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

2. Challenges

There are various viewpoints regarding Emiratisation and the employment of women. Everyone involved has a unique perspective.

Since 2007, this Author has interviewed people who represent all sides of this situation. Interviewees include Emirati women, corporate HR professionals, corporate executives, women business owners, professional expatriates, business consultants, and Emirati men.

Below is a summary of the most frequent comments, most common barriers, and strongest concerns. Due to space constraints, these comments are abbreviated and may appear blunt.

Disclaimer: These comments don’t represent the feelings of every Emirati woman, of every company, or of every husband/father. This is a sample of the challenges expressed by all sides.

Challenges faced by Emirati Women

These are divided into two groups: Women who are currently working and women who aren’t employed, yet.

➤ **Women who are already in workforce**

- They feel pressure from their families to get married.
- After they are married, they feel pressured to quit their jobs and raise their children.
- Family members (Fathers or Husbands) won't allow them to travel for work-related meetings. This limits the types of positions the women can hold and also limits promotions.
- Family members (Fathers or Husbands) won't allow them to travel to attend out-of-town conferences or professional development opportunities.
- They feel discriminated against by companies.
- The companies resent having to hire them because of quotas.
- Companies don't give them advancement opportunities ... claiming they will just leave to have babies.
- Companies don't invest in training and development for them ... claiming they will just leave and go to another company.
- Men in the companies don't respect them or view them as capable, credible colleagues.
- Men in the companies don't respect their input and recommendations.
- They are not perceived as professional and knowledgeable.

➤ **Women who are post-college and ready for employment**

- They discover their education isn't enough. They don't have the work experience they need to be hired or to be successful after being hired.
- They don't have leadership experience.
- They don't know how to communicate in a professional environment.
- Their families pressure them not to seek employment.

Example -

A December 4, 2013 article in Zawya quoted research from Oxford Strategic Consulting. It showed that 76% of high school Emiratis have not been involved in any work activities. (This means they have not participated in part-time work, volunteer work, or career events.)

Challenges faced by corporations

- They are forced to meet quotas.
- Emiratisation is an additional cost, and it is a hassle.
- Some Emiratis aren't qualified. They don't have enough work experience, leadership experience, professional skills, or communication skills.
- If you invest in training Emiratis, they quit and go to another company.
- If you invest in women, they quit to stay home with their babies.
- It is risky. It is hard to fire Emiratis, if they underperform.
- It is unfair to other employees who are qualified and who are working hard.

- It is hard to compete against the public sector for employees. The public sector is able to offer fewer hours, more holidays, better pay, and better benefits.

Example -

Because of the advantages of working in the public sector, women are much better represented there versus in the private sector. As was previously mentioned, women constitute 66% of the public sector workforce (according to the UAE Statistics Office in 2010). It is promising to note that of those women, 30% were in Senior positions. Also, 17.5% of the Federal National Council (FNC) are women.

Recap

The comments above are blunt and candid. This feedback was gathered from more than six years of interviews and conversations. Not everyone within each group feels this way. But, these are common concerns.

Bottom Line

➤ Women need to be ready to work

All new hires entering into a professional position should be ready to work. They don't need to be an expert at everything on the first day. However, they should be "work ready."

This includes Emirati women. They not only need education and technical skills, but also soft skills. They must have leadership and interpersonal skills. They need to communicate like professionals. In the UAE, this also includes the ability to speak Business English.

Women must show up on Day One ready to work and not expecting any special considerations. They need a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

Young Emirati women have self-identified the need for professional and leadership development. They are, for the most part, pleased with the college education they have received. But, they have identified that they lack experience and leadership opportunities.

A 29-year-old Emirati woman, who was interviewed for a research project, was quoted in *The National* on April 29, 2013, as saying, "Emiratisation is showing that education alone is not enough. Many locals have degrees but **we need more qualification, more experience.**"

➤ Organizations need to be progressive and willing to invest

On the other side, companies must be forward-looking. They need to view Emirati female employees as an asset. Emirati women can not only be positive contributors to companies, they can be **top** contributors.

Organizations should be asking:

- How can we help these women to be more successful (and improve our profits at the same time)?
- What tools and development opportunities do these women need?
- How can we leverage these assets?

Organizations must respect the knowledge that the Emirati female workers can contribute. Corporations must also commit to continuing the Professional Development and Leadership Skills of women throughout their careers.

3. Solutions

How can Emirati women become positive (even top!) contributors in the workforce? How can they arrive Ready to Work on Day One? How can they progress and succeed during their years with the company?

Expressive Concepts has developed a systematic process to train and develop Emirati women to help them be successful in the professional workplace. **This Model can be applied to help women at any level succeed on-the-job and to help them prepare prior to entering the workforce.**

In addition to Training, there are other factors to consider to ensure success.

According to Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, "Training doesn't exist in a vacuum. Participants need opportunities to apply what they are learning. That's why development must be comprehensive and integrated."

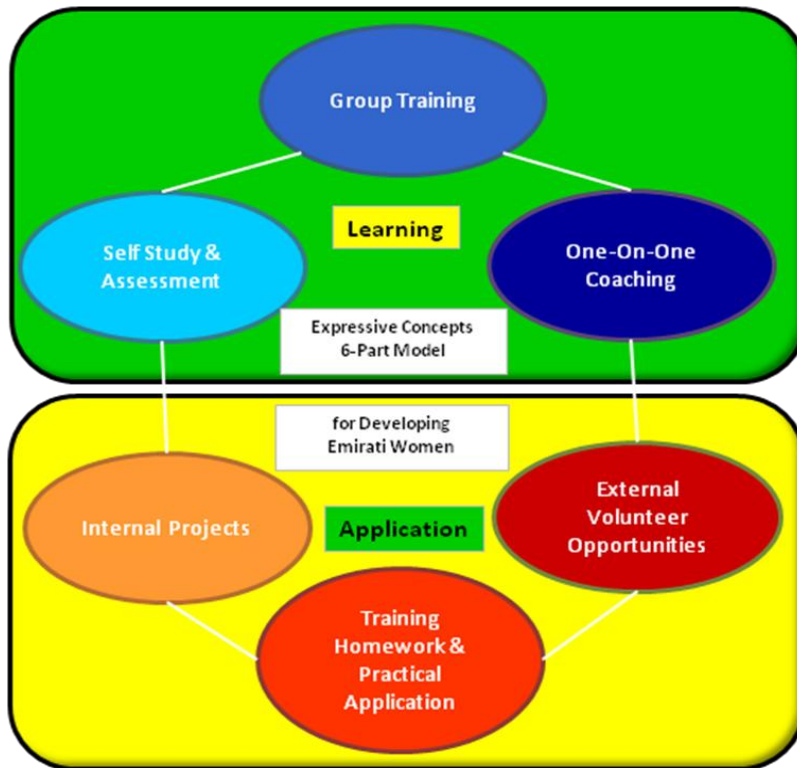
Training doesn't exist in a vacuum

In addition to training, participants need development opportunities. That's why Expressive Concepts' Model includes both learning and opportunities to apply that knowledge.

According to Adult Learning Theory, adults learn "by doing." That is, they learn best when they can apply their new-found knowledge to practical situations. Expressive Concepts' incorporates this practical application into the learning model.

Expressive Concepts' 6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women

The Expressive Concepts' Model contains six inter-related elements.



1. Group Training
2. Self-Study & Assessment
3. One-on-One Coaching
4. Internal Projects
5. External Volunteer Opportunities
6. Homework & Practical Application

To learn more about this Model ... (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

Implementation

The method in which this model is applied depends on the needs of each organization. Any project should begin with a Needs Assessment – to ensure the company’s specific needs are being met and to ensure the highest ROI (Rate of Improvement ... as well as Return on Investment).

To learn more about implementing the model ... (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

Development

Since successful training programs must also include development opportunities, the Expressive Concepts Model provides training initiatives that are integrated, comprehensive, and long term.

The Model also includes Assessments. This allows participants to monitor their progress and identify next steps throughout their career. Development is not a

“one-time class.” It is an on-going process throughout all successful professionals’ careers.

Prior to Entering Workforce

How do Emirati women receive more experience and training before entering the workforce? Students need to receive Professional Development training - aimed at their level. **Expressive Concepts’ 6-Part Model** can apply here, also.

(www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

The basic framework is the same. There are simply modifications in the execution of the components. For example, “Internal Projects” would occur at school (either secondary school or college). As another example, “External Opportunities” could include internships, as well as volunteer jobs.

Various organizations have a vested interest in helping prepare Emirati Women to enter the workforce. These include government-sponsored groups, chambers of commerce, women’s associations, corporations, and colleges. The Expressive Concepts Model can be utilized for this purpose.

Broader View

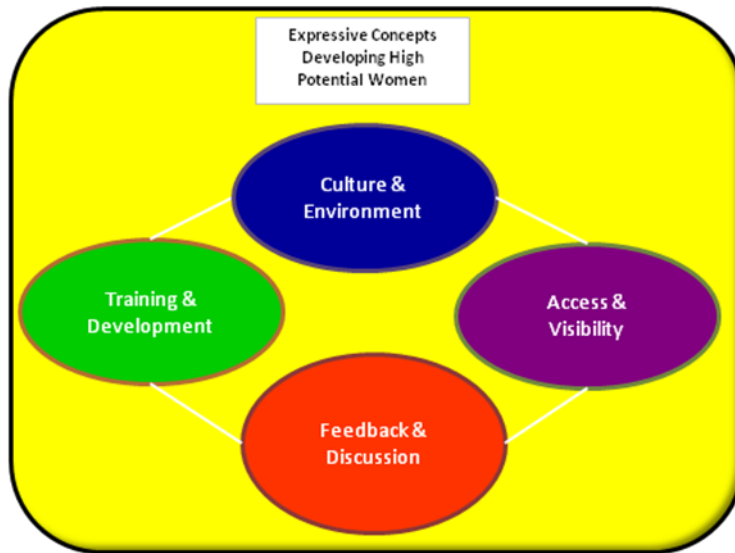
Even a comprehensive view of Training and Development isn’t sufficient to ensure an employee’s success. Training and Development is just one of the ingredients needed to fully develop employees.

Employees don’t exist alone. They are part of a larger entity – a company, government agency, organization, etc. They interact with others – internally and externally.

According to Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women’s Leadership, “Organizations need a comprehensive plan, in order to provide High Potential Employees with meaningful development.”

In order to develop to their highest potential (and to provide organizations with the highest contributions), employees need an integrated plan. Expressive Concepts has developed a System to help organizations provide comprehensive growth to their employees. This System addresses the four major components that impact the effectiveness of development.

Expressive Concepts’ 4-Part System for Comprehensive Development of High Potential Women



1. Culture & Environment
2. Training & Development
3. Access & Visibility
4. Feedback & Discussion

The actual application of this System depends on the organization's specific needs. To learn more about this model and how it can help organizations to be more productive and profitable ... (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

A complete discussion of this Model is beyond the scope of this Report. However, by way of introduction, the Author has included comments and instruction on the first component – Culture and Environment.

Culture & Environmental Factors

An organization's culture is just one of the key elements to be considered for successful participation in the workforce by women (or men, for that matter). This concept is covered in more detail in **Expressive Concepts' 4-Part System for Comprehensive Development of High Potential Women**.

(www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

The most common term is "corporate culture." But, the environment of any organization has a bearing on the success of its employees. This applies to every type of organization - government agency, small business, multi-national corporation, not-profit association, school, etc.

When looking at success factors for hiring and retaining Emirati Women, it's vital to look at the environment or culture.

➤ Don't Set Them Up To Fail

There's an expression, "Don't set them up to fail." In other words, is the company putting Emirati women in situations where they know they will fail? Are they putting them in situations on the first day that will be difficult?

The author isn't suggesting that Emirati Women receive special treatment. She is suggesting that companies can make an effort to place all new hires (regardless of gender) in initial situations where they can flourish.

➤ **Teamwork**

Companies should work to integrate Emirati Women into the rest of workforce. The women should become part of the team and part of the company ... not an "outcast who meets a quota."

On the other side, Emirati women need to work to become a part of the team. They need to embrace a positive attitude and a willingness to learn. (See Section on Women's Responsibilities)

➤ **Executive Mindset**

If gender-bias isn't tolerated by top management, others won't risk acting in an unacceptable manner. When leaders exhibit proper behavior and attitude, then the rest of the organization understands what is expected of them. Leadership has a responsibility to set the tone.

To learn more about the other three components of **Expressive Concepts' 4-Part System for Comprehensive Development of High Potential Women.**

www.LeadershipArabWomen.com

Outside Objectivity & Global Perspective

Expressive Concepts' 6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women can be applied internally by Training Departments. However, there are distinct advantages to utilizing the services of an outside firm.

➤ **Advantage One**

The professional work culture of the UAE is international. Employees need to understand Standard Global Business Practices. Regardless of opinions about westernization, there is an emphasis on Western work styles within most organizations in the UAE.

When a group of people (such as Emirati women) are being prepped to work in professional positions for organizations in the UAE, they should be trained by a company that is familiar with Global Business Practices. That means the Training Company must be familiar with:

- Global Leadership Practices
- International Customer Service Standards
- International Business English

- Global Business Communication
- Professionalism in a Global Work Environment.

➤ **Advantage Two**

Emirati women don't need to be taught what it is like to be a woman in the UAE. They are already experts on that! What they need are global perspectives. They need global examples and best practices. Then, they can adapt the best practices to their own individual needs to meet their local situations.

According to Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, "When you are exposed to Global Best Practices, you can adapt the world's greatest ideas to your specific needs. You can keep the best and eliminate the rest."

➤ **Advantage Three**

When an outside firm designs a Training and Development program, they create a comprehensive long-term plan. This includes the entire process from Needs Assessment to design to execution.

This helps avoid a common pitfall. When a project is undertaken internally, there are too many chances for it to become derailed or unfunded. Internal training departments are frequently overworked and are subjected to the ever-changing priorities of their managers.

➤ **Advantage Four**

An outside firm can bring objectivity to the project. The hiring company receives the additional benefit of having a consultant onboard who provides a different perspective.

Selection Process: Sample Questions to Ask an Outside Firm

If an organization is hiring an outside firm to develop a Training & Development program for its women, here are questions to consider.

1. What type of experience do you have with female-specific professional development and leadership programs?
2. Are you familiar with the UAE, specifically Emirati Women?
3. What type of global perspective / experience do you have? Do you have a presence outside the UAE?
4. Does your company conduct highly-customized work? If you are a large consulting firm, what assurances do we have that you aren't providing a generic solution? Will you create a customized program, or will you use a previous "template" with a few word changes and a new cover?
5. Do you offer a comprehensive approach – from Needs Analysis to design to implementation?

6. During your Needs Analysis, do you interview all parties (from Executives to Managers to Participants to their Staff)?
7. Will the program be designed to align with our organization's strategies?
8. What assurances do we have that there won't be overlap and duplication? In other words, will the program seamlessly fit into our organization's existing programs?

To see more Selection questions and criteria, ... (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

By the way, Expressive Concepts is proud to say that they meet ALL the criteria listed above. In fact, the company's Managing Director (and Founder) is a female. Kelly Watkins is a Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership Development - having travelled to all 7 continents. She has been involved with Women's groups for 20+ years. To learn more about Kelly Watkins ... (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

Solution Conclusion

Emirati women can be great contributors to all types of organizations. In some cases, they need additional training and development before hiring or upon the initial hiring. In all cases, women deserve development opportunities on an on-going basis throughout their careers. This is a smart investment for companies.

Expressive Concepts has created a **6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women**. (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com) It can be utilized prior to entering the workforce or as part of an on-going career development program.

4. Benefits

What are the bottom line advantages to organizations when they employ women?

According to Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, "Hiring women is not only the right thing to do, it is the profitable thing to do."

Here are three advantages to having female board members, according to a July 5, 2012, article in *Forbes* written by Heather R. Huhman.

1. Women are responsible for 75% of buying decisions, so they can be instrumental in helping businesses appeal to their customers.
2. Diverse thinking leads to better outcomes and more innovation within a company. If too many board members are too similar, they may be blinded to customer needs.
3. A diverse group actually drives better financial performance. Companies with gender diversity at the top create an average 36% better stock price growth and 46% better Return on Equity.

Catalyst conducted a study entitled, “The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women’s Representation.” Here are a few key findings.

1. Companies with the most women on Boards outperformed those with the least women.
 - a. Specifically, in ROS (Return on Sales), they outperformed by 16%.
 - b. In ROIC (Return on Invested Capital), they outperformed 26%.
2. The differences soar when more women are included on the Board. For the following statistics, companies with three or more women on their Boards were compared to those with zero.
 - a. In ROS, they outperformed by 84%.
 - b. In ROIC, they outperformed by 60%.
 - c. In ROE (Return on Equity), they outperformed by 46%.

Finally, a study by Credit Suisse’s Research Institute showed that companies with female Board representation outperformed those with no representation in terms of share price performance. In addition, they found that even when markets are failing, the stocks of companies with greater board gender diversity tended to perform best. They also exhibited less volatility.

The above statistics apply to Women on Boards. However, as noted previously, the trickledown effect indicates there are also benefits to employing women at all levels within an organization.

Emirati women are talented and educated and ...

Emirati women are educated. There are higher number of female college graduates than male. Emirati women often feel more loyal to their companies than men. They have also expressed an interest in wanting to help their country grow.

Female employees in all positions provide organizations with different perspectives. Emirati women have a first-hand knowledge of the UAE market. Don’t forget ... they are also consumers.

Finally, Emiratis have built-in networks by virtue of being native to their country. Companies can benefit from these networks.

Government Support

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid has long been a passionate supporter of women in the workplace. This is evidenced by his support of organizations such as the Dubai Business Women’s Council (www.dbwc.ae) and the Dubai Women’s Establishment (www.dwe.gov.ae).

The combination of Sheikh Mohammed's history of supporting women and his current mandates should serve as a wakeup call to corporations operating in the UAE.

5. Women's Responsibility

Throughout this report, this Author makes the case for organizations to invest in training and developing Emirati women. The women also have an obligation to work on their own development.

As the expression goes, you can lead a camel to water, but you cannot make it drink. If corporations are providing a drinking fountain, then women must grab a large glass and fill it to the top.

Throughout the Author's interviews and conversations, most Emirati women are eager to prove themselves. They welcome this responsibility.

When looking at Women's Responsibilities, there are several challenge areas:

- Entitlement
- Lack of qualifications
- Mindset / Attitude on the job

Entitlement

With quotas, there is always the risk of "entitlement." If people feel they are entitled to a job, they may think, "I don't need to be qualified, don't need to be prepared, don't need experience, don't need to work hard to achieve the position ... and don't need to work hard once I arrive."

According to this Author's research, this isn't a problem with Emirati women now. However, there is always potential for this to become a problem. If just a few women begin to act entitled, it can do great harm and create misconceptions.

Lack of qualifications

With the opportunity that quotas provide, comes responsibility. Women have the obligation to obtain the training and experience they need to perform well on the job.

As Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade, said in an interview, "As a woman I would prefer to attain my position by real merit rather than always wonder if I was appointed to the board just to hit a quota or through affirmative action." She was referring to quotas for women on corporate boards, but her point was – women should be qualified for their positions. And, when they are qualified, they can take pride in their accomplishments.

If a woman doesn't have the qualifications for a position she desires, then she should go obtain them! Don't just sit there and complain.

It is also a matter of honor and respect. When Emirati women obtain the necessary education and qualifications, they honor their gender and their nationality. In fact, becoming successful in the workplace is one way that Emirati women can help showcase the UAE to the world.

Mindset / Attitude on the job

Women need to enter the workplace with the right mindset. Yes, there will be barriers. Yes, there will be challenges.

These problems aren't unique to women. All workers face problems – men and women alike – even if the problems differ.

The issue of perceptions by both parties has been discussed. (See Challenges section) However, it should be mentioned that the employee's attitude will go a long way in overcoming those perceptions.

1. Recognize the perceptions
2. Understand why the perceptions exist
3. Work to change perceptions

1. Recognize the perceptions

Recognize that the corporation may view quotas as an expense and may view the Emirati woman as a burden. Before any feelings are hurt, please stop. Try to understand why the corporation has that perception.

2. Understand why the perceptions exist

Regardless of anyone's opinion about quotas, corporations incur additional short-term expense in hiring to meet quotas. (This Author argues that the cost or training and development is justified and provides a high long-term return ... if the employee remains with the company long term.)

So, new hires can see why a corporation may not initially greet them with a parade and a big hug.

3. Work to change perceptions

If the woman is willing to accept the challenge, she can make a difference. She can enter the workplace with an open mind. She won't take offense easily. She will allow her employer time to overcome misconceptions.

In the workplace, there will be issues that women can change, and things they cannot change. Don't focus on the negative. (...That negative sentence even sounds depressing!) Instead, focus on what you can do. Expressive Concepts offers seminars on "The Power of Positive, Professional Language."

www.KeepCustomers.com/customer%20service%20seminars.htm

According to Kelly Watkins, Thought Leader on Global Women's Leadership, "Sometimes you can't change the parameters set by leadership. You may feel stuck in a box. You have two choices. You can curl up in the middle of the box and whine. Or, you can be creative and push to the very edges of the box."

Note: there is an equal responsibility on the part of the employer to keep an open mind and work to overcome misconceptions. But, this section focuses on the employee's role.

6. Conclusion

Hiring women is an all-around smart decision. Companies can meet their quotas, improve their competitiveness, and increase their profits.

In order to reap the benefits, organizations must be willing to make the investment. They must be willing to invest in long-term training and development for their female employees.

The process may appear daunting, but there is help available. Expressive Concepts has designed a **6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women**. (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com) This Model provides a systematic process to help women successfully grow and develop throughout their careers.

7. Synopsis

"Emiratisation" is a United Arab Emirates (UAE) initiative designed to encourage employment of its citizens. When trying to meet these quotas, organizations cannot afford to ignore half the labour pool. Companies should view women as solutions, not as problems. The current mix of global pressure to hire women combined with Emiratisation quotas can present organizations with the perfect opportunity to benefit from hiring and developing female employees.

Although Emirati women are highly educated, many of them lack experience and leadership skills. Initially, they may need professional skills training. Over time, they deserve leadership opportunities. Organizations need a systematic process to provide for this long-term development. Expressive Concepts has designed a **6-Part Model for Developing Emirati Women**. (www.LeadershipArabWomen.com)

This Model clearly identifies the path to successfully developing women throughout their careers. Companies that are willing to make the short-term

investment in training and development will enjoy a competitive advantage in a global market.

Some research contributed by Abby Zinman, Research Assistant

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kelly@keepcustomers.com or +1.812.923.9277

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