

## FALL NEWSLETTER 2008

**Thursday, October 30th, 2008 IIE WCC Gala/Dinner honoring  
Susan Decker, President of Yahoo**



**Opening Remarks:**

Tom Byers, Professor, Stanford University

**Co-Chairs:**

Akiko and Jerry Yang, Sheryl Sandberg and David Goldberg, Debra and Blake Jorgensen

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### **Interview with Wendy Beecham, CEO, FWE&E**

**Wendy Beecham, CEO**, Forum for Women Entrepreneurs and Executives (FWE&E) heads an organization in the San Francisco Bay Area that connects professionally successful women from a wide range of disciplines and industries. By facilitating collaboration and fostering deep connections between executive women FWE&E helps enhance their potential and impact on the community. In anticipation of the October 30, 2008 IIE West Coast (IIE WCC) gala/dinner in honor of Susan Decker, President of Yahoo, Wendy has shared her insights with Grazia Bennett, IIE WCC Development Director.

Wendy has spent most of her previous career in the field of electronic publishing, holding a variety of senior leadership positions including Managing Director of Thomson's Sweet & Maxwell Division in London and SVP of the Enterprise & Library Division of LexisNexis in the US.

**It is a fact that there is lack of women in C-Suite positions and on Boards of Directors. The technology sector and Silicon Valley in particular have even lower numbers of women. To what do you attribute this?**

This is not just a Silicon Valley issue, but the numbers tend to be lower in the technology sector because this has traditionally been a male dominated field. Change is driven from

the top and we won't see change in this sector until more CEO's take a personal interest in changing their corporate cultures and become intentional about building a more diverse workforce. Unfortunately, the past 3 years show a downward trend of women graduating with science and technology degrees vs. men so the pipeline issue continues to be a real concern in Silicon Valley.

**What can women in technology do in order to raise the awareness and, more importantly, what tactically could they do to make a difference in these statistics?**

Women need to take advantage of "the power of the many" by working together at the senior level. Having the confidence to "speak up" and have their ideas heard is also a critical success factor in raising awareness. Women tend to hang back until they feel confident that they have something "different" to contribute. As with all change, tying results to the strategy and ROI of the company versus discussing the issue as theoretical will also make a bigger impact. Women also could be more strategic about their advancement and become more visible within their organizations outside of their known area of expertise. Building more specific knowledge critical to the top in the areas of finance, legal, global markets, competition and positioning will also show an interest and desire for advancement

**What could companies be doing differently to attract and retain more senior women leaders, especially in technology?**

As stated previously, any change needs to be driven by visible, tangible support from the CEO that goes beyond traditional training or mentorship programs. Women who have "sponsors", people who go beyond the mentorship role and actually try to create opportunities for colleagues they are supporting, seem to have a clear advantage. And retention is becoming an even bigger issue that needs to be addressed for many organizations. Support of family responsibilities should be more of a corporate issue than a "woman's" issue.

**What differences do you see in how men lead vs. women and what could women do differently to help them move forward faster?**

One of the biggest differences is seen in how women and men network. Men tend to have shallower networks that are broader reaching. Women tend to have deeper relationships and wait until they know how their networking will be reciprocated before taking advantage of these connections. The key is to not focus on the give/get equation but to have a larger base of contacts. Women tend to over perform in order to prove themselves but then don't broadcast it due to the concern of being seen as egotistical or aggressive. The perception is that men are assertive leaders and women are great in teams because of their strength in building collaboration. Women typically do not "ask" for what they want or promote themselves as strongly as men do therefore causing them to be overlooked when potential key assignments are created. Women need to be more vocal and visible about wanting different assignments, especially those with strong operational or global components, in order to gain the experience and visibility for higher level positions. Stereotyping still exists and women are sometimes not offered these assignments because of the assumption that family obligations will inhibit their ability to perform effectively.

**On October 30th IIE West Coast is honoring Susan Decker, President of Yahoo! for her leadership and achievements. Why are women, like Susan, such important role models for the current and future generations of women?**

Susan is an important role model as there are so few that have achieved her level of success and future generations need to feel that there is a possibility for them to follow in her footsteps. She is a perfect role model of a leader who has developed a broad, portable, strategic skill set and leveraged her network and social capital to take advantage of opportunities that came her way. Great leaders talk about how they didn't get there alone and it will be interesting to hear more about Susan's story at the Awards ceremony. In addition, having a strong financial foundation is key but adding in the customer focus and the global awareness are ways of illustrating the well roundedness and strategic view necessary for senior women leaders to succeed.

#### **IIE WCC - News Flash**

**The Women in Technology Program (WIT)** held its Global Team Meeting mid-August in San Francisco. The country managers from Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Lebanon, Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen and Oman gathered for a week of training focused on program administration and evaluation, and workshops focused on strengthening their leadership, supervisory, communication and project management skills. The seven women team was introduced to blogging at Google and visited Hewlett Packard and local organizations such as Kiva and WISE. Their presentation on the scope and impact of their work in each country fascinated and inspired many IIE Bay Area supporters.

**Chevron and IIE WCC:** Naoko Dunnigan is the IIE WCC manager of the **Chevron International REACH Scholarship Program for the children of employees and retirees**. IIE WCC has managed the program for 11 years and it has grown from 9 to 326 grantees in 47 countries. In recognition of her professionalism Chevron has chosen Naoko to be part of the Chevron Management Institute Leadership Challenge Workshop.

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