

Grace Hopper Proposal 2004
Due March 15th
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Catalyst, Inc

Title: Bit by Bit: Advancing Women in High Tech Companies

Audience: This presentation is valuable to any woman who wants to know why women are not reaching the top levels of the high tech industry in significant numbers, and what organizations can do even the playing field. It is particularly appropriate for mid-to-senior level women and attendees from a Human Resources background

Format: 60 minutes total
Research Presentation (PowerPoint slide show, 40 minutes)
Question and Answer session (20 minutes)

Topics covered:

- Just the numbers: Women in High Tech leadership.
- Shattering the myths of the meritocracy and the pipeline.
- The barriers: What's really holding women back?
- What can organizations do to address these issues?

Written Materials:

- About Catalyst: Women in High Tech (three page overview of Catalyst's research on the High Tech Industry);
- Paper copy of PowerPoint presentation

Competing points of view: Companies in the high tech industry report lower numbers of women in leadership positions than their Fortune 500 counterparts. Why does an industry known as a meritocracy have so few women in its highest ranks?

Knowledge participants will gain:

In 2003 Catalyst released *Bit by Bit: Catalyst's Guide to Advancing Women in High Tech Companies*, based on a series of roundtable discussions held with 73 senior executives, both male and female, from 27 high tech companies. The President of the Anita Borg Institute for Women in Technology and the Dean of Engineering at the University of Washington also participated. They discovered that:

- While women are visible and successful in the high tech industry, there are still very few at senior levels
- The lack of women in senior positions is not just an educational pipeline issue – a technical degree is not a prerequisite to success in this industry.

- Although the high tech industry is considered a meritocracy, the barriers to women's advancement – raised by both women and men – suggest that this is not the case.
- Participants described the following barriers:
 - The corporate culture at many companies is exclusionary and does not support women's advancement
 - The demands of work and career are at odds with family and personal responsibilities.
 - Women feel isolated due to a lack of role models, networks, and mentors.
 - Companies don't strategically and objectively identify and develop talent.
- All of the above barriers are solvable. Companies can and do make a difference in terms of developing and advancing women.

Participants will learn the key elements of successful diversity initiatives, and hear about company practices from the High Tech industry that identify and manage talent, promote work/life balance and implement successful mentoring and networking programs.

Speaker:

Kara Helander, Vice President, Catalyst

As Vice President of the Western Region, Kara Helander is responsible for bringing Catalyst's expertise and services to companies and women in the Western United States. Ms. Helander's expertise is in galvanizing strategic change within organizations to help them address complex challenges and opportunities. She brings experience as a strategy consultant, an entrepreneur, and a senior manager. Prior to joining Catalyst, Ms. Helander was an independent consultant with Bay Area companies, where she created compelling business cases to help her clients identify and gain internal support for change. In this role, she developed strategies for achieving the change and offered the tools for successfully executing the strategies. Ms. Helander began her career in management consulting, working with Fortune 500 companies in the high-tech and healthcare industries. She helped to launch The Partnership for Organ Donation, an innovative non-profit consulting firm that brought business strategy and process improvement expertise to a critical health issue. Additionally, Ms. Helander facilitates Interpersonal Dynamics at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business. She received her BS from Vanderbilt University and her MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania