

CWF AWARD
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Candidate
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NISSAN

Women network at Nissan

Nissan is a Japanese car manufacturer created in 1933, employing 180 000 people across the world and sold 3 769 886 vehicles in 2007 in the World.

In 1999, an Alliance was created between Renault and Nissan, Renault owned 44% of Nissan' shares and Nissan owns 15% of Renault' shares.

The CEO of the company is Carlos Ghosn. Our CEO is very well known to support the Diversity and he is very aware of the gender challenges in the industry. Since he is the CEO he always pushes very strongly to increase the cultural diversity and the number of women in the company in general.

Nissan International S.A is the European division of Nissan Motor Company Limited with its headquarters based in Geneva.

Without surprise, the company is quite male dominant. Women represent 16% of the total employees which is the standard ratio in the car industry.

Nissan International headquarter in Rolle, has 165 employees out of it 34 women are spread in several department such as Marketing, Product strategy, Finance, Purchasing, Sales, Legal, HR and IT.

In Nissan Europe only one woman is Vice President (Legal Department) out of 10, only 4 are General Managers.

I personally discovered women' network 6 years ago based on my mentor at that time. I then discovered that a glass ceiling exists, that I was not isolated and I have to learn some rules, gets trainings if I want to manage my career more efficiently. I did it with some success.

At Nissan, I had the opportunity to be part of some discussions regarding the challenges that some women were facing with their managers, they were as I was some years ago, I then decide to do something to support them and share what I've been learning.

I've proposed to our VP of Legal (the sole VP woman) to set up a women network with the mission of creating awareness around women challenges and possibly influence the HR department and the company itself.

I firstly went to the HR department to advise them of this initiative. Surprisingly enough, it was very well received and they ensure me their support if needed.

I've then organized a first meeting in June 28th, 2009 where all the women based in Rolle were invited for a coffee chat. The objective was to share with them what added value a Women network can bring in their career management.

22 women out of 34 attended the meeting with interest and curiosity. Nearly none of them knew that women' network exist, that stereotypes can hit negatively their career, that our HR department was very supportive in developing women and that they were empowered to manage their career.

Based on the feedback of this first meeting, two workshops were scheduled in October and November; one based on worklife balance and one on career blockers at Nissan.

Each workshop was a 2 hours sessions, the attendance to each was about 50% of the audience with very valuable contribution from each of them.

The results and conclusion of these two workshops were presented in December to the European Career Manager, European Diversity Manager and the Senior Vice President of Europe.

I've presented why a Women Network was necessary and our requests based on our meetings.

Our proposal below was validated by our executive representatives;

- The implementation of a mentorship program to support better the talent pool of women
- To make visible and official the Women@Nissan network via some communication on the Intranet. The Vice President of HR and the Senior Vice President of Europe proposed to add a quote in order to show their strong support to this initiative. This will be published in January 2010
- The HR department to communicate better on the career path and career evolution strategy. They have started to set up "coffee chat" for 2010.
- A workshop for women on Networking tips and career management will be delivered end of January by an external facilitator, JoAnne Freeman.

The HR representative requested us to do more in depth work on the worklife balance issue and come back to them with more proposals.

The Network will be expanded to Paris office where more that 130 women at based. The first event will happened the 19th of January, 2010.

In February and March, Women network of companies around Nissan will visit us for a coffee chat to share the added value and experience of having such a network.

In April the Vice President of the European sales department will share his own networking and career management tips with our network.

All our initiatives are very well received in the company. The attendance rate is still high with about 50% to 70%.

Our activities are also influencing some decision in the career committees meeting which are happening in each Business Unit, to promote more women.

We are still a new network, however the support of some key people such as our CEO, Carlos Ghosn may help us to keep influencing positively the company.

My next step will be to liaise with the Renault Women Network and identify how we can leverage better the activities.

Last but not least I will measure the success of our influence by the number of women who will be promoted in the coming year. I've been asked to be part of the Diversity Advisory Board, chair by the VP of Human Resources; I expect to see more activities to support women in the workplace.

Malika MIR