

The Wine and Resources Industries – a Comparison

I believe the wine industry is a good analogy for the resources industry. Look at

Grapes as our young people

Vines and trellises – families and education systems

Winemakers – university teachers and industry supervisors

Brand of wine – your organisation

I see reds as the men and whites as the women in our industry. Now look at my cellar as a typical representative of the people in our resources industry - 80% red and 20% white.

But my cellar is dominated by old reds some of which have matured really well with the edges knocked off and are a sensation to present to others. Others are so terrible the only solution is to pour them down the sink.

Some of my whites are just as sensational – the aged Champagnes are the best and most versatile. But I am sad I just don't have enough aged Rieslings as I did not invest in them when they were out of fashion nor enable the ones I did buy to develop for long enough. Does this sound familiar?

So what about our industry? We have professional labour shortages staring us in the face. We have less than 8.3% women on our top 200 boards in Australia and probably a lot less on small to medium resource boards. As for non-Anglo Saxon men even less. We are now planning to import expats from other countries when there are many women who have either left the industry or are under utilised in their current roles. What if we invested some of the money needed to relocate and support expats into supporting our own professional women?

1. We have a group of aging **experienced baby boomer men** who want to leave the system - but gradually. However we do not have a robust part-time HR process that is superannuation proof that will enable us to get the most out of these baby boomers. We should have because many younger women have, for a long time, needed such a system to help them stay in the industry.

We need to make this user friendly and flexible for both groups. Maybe we could use these aging men to mentor our young men and women. Just use the ones that have matured well and are not the old rough reds we know exist and should be encouraged to leave asap.

2. We have a group of younger people who **want to see the world** and yet we are generally not very flexible on leave without pay. Example:- consultant engineering company.

3. We **now rarely think past FIFO** and wonder why we can't keep women in our workforce and when we do get them up north we don't assist them with child minding centres matched to our shift work schedules. Your brand will stand out from the rest in a positive way if you enable such services to be available.

4. When we are seeking to **better balance our company boards** and senior executive teams we make the easy choices of people who we know and this results in few women being given the opportunity to demonstrate their capability. Include women in the pool attending high level training courses at Harvard, Stanford etc. Encourage your senior women to represent your brand on internal and external working committees.

5. **And verbal harassment and bullying** is still rife. We all must keep our eyes and ears open and demonstrate that the put downs, sexual innuendo and pay inequalities are totally unacceptable. We all need to be champions for women so that our daughters, nieces and wives get a chance to have a satisfying career in resources.

6. Our **culture for promotion and networking** must change to one where women are seen - invite them to the networking opportunities at the football, cricket, yachting, lunches and as speakers at conferences. Your brand should be associated regularly in the external world by women as well as men.

I suggest you all identify some women in your organisations that are ready for a higher level of responsibility **and work to make it happen**. Enable your brand to be seen as a champion of change in this area.

In closing I would like you to think of me as a high quality, aged champagne – I hope I bring sparkle and life to any group and add value to any board meeting. There are many champagnes, aged Rieslings and young white wines looking to add variety and quality to your company's workforce but you have to make the investment to develop them and keep them in your organisation's talent pool.

In my experience Champagne will start any event on the right note and then you can choose a quality white or red to round out what ever else is on your plate.

Thank you

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