

News monitored for: Pepsi - Corporate

# PepsiCo to Have 40% Women in Leadership

Beyond the leadership level, the company is also looking at expanding the talent pool of women for the FMCG sector

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**New Delhi:** Beverages and snacks major PepsiCo India has more women in leadership roles than most other companies and it's gearing up to improve the numbers further.

The company plans to have at least 40% women among its top 50 managers in India in the near future, up from 23% currently. It is already ahead of the curve in gender diversity, having five women in its 14-member executive committee, which reflects a robust 35% representation for them.

"I think there is enough empirical evidence globally now to show that higher representation of women on boards over a long period of time produce better results. That's what most people are see-

king," said PepsiCo India CEO D Shivakumar. "Getting the numbers is just one part. The second is to create the culture, and the third is to have role models in the company. When women see women in the management team, they aspire to be there," Shivakumar said.

The five women in the firm's executive committee are Suchitra Rajendra, vice president-HR; Kimsuka Narsimhan, senior vice president-finance; Deepika Warrior, vice president-nutrition category; Neelima Dwivedi, vice president-corporate affairs; and Poonam Kaul, vice president-communications.

The diversity agenda at PepsiCo is driven at the top. "Anyone can provide policies, but providing a culture which fosters and encourages women at work is difficult. For big company initiatives and



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change agenda, the tone from the top is very important for the rest of the managerial cadre to say that this is the mandate in the company," said Shivakumar.

The principle the company tries to follow is: hire the best women and have a performance culture in the company, he said. "Both are important. We make an effort to look out for women candidates and have a diverse set of women to interview."

With its eyes set on grooming leaders for the future, PepsiCo in 2014 launched a shadow programme where it identifies senior managers (both men and women) who it sees as leaders 10-15 years after. For instance, this year four women are shadowing Shivakumar for a week each. The company in all has 61 shadows this year for the management team to give them a first-hand feel of the chal-

lenges faced by senior executives.

Beyond the leadership level, the company is looking at expanding the talent pool of women for the FMCG sector. It has recently rolled out an initiative 'Impact 10K', which has now been renamed 'Nayee Disha', to increase the talent pool in the FMCG sector by making women in rural and semi-urban areas aware about work opportunities.

"The objective is to familiarise and acquaint graduates and post graduates from tier I, II towns through skill-building workshops on skills required for the workplace, assess them and help them with job opportunities," said Suchitra Rajendra.

The programme has so far covered approximately 1,000 students and it will be scaled up over the course of this year to impact 10,000 women in the country.