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### **Study Finds Women Misunderstand What Power Affords**

*Global study finds women do not understand that power can give them what they want out of their career*

NEW YORK, December 9, 2014 –Women at the peak of their careers perceive that the burdens of a powerful position outweigh the benefits (60 percent of women in the U.S., 65 percent in the U.K. and 49 percent in Germany), according to a new study released today by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI). Yet, findings from the study show that, between the ages of 35 and 50, women in the U.S., U.K. and Germany who have power in their current roles are more likely to get what they want from their careers than women without power in their current roles expect. The report, *Women Want Five Things*, explores the disconnect between women’s expectations of a powerful job and the realities of one.

Despite being highly ambitious (80 percent of women in the U.S., 77 percent in the U.K., and 85 percent in Germany), less than one-fourth of mid-career professional women surveyed aspire for a position of power. They see an executive role – a position that affords power – delivering a hefty salary but little else of what they want: the ability to flourish, reach for meaning and purpose, excel, and empower others and be empowered. This perception is at odds with the reality reported by women who hold positions of power. A closer look at what women want exposes their misunderstanding of power and illuminates the benefits it can bring:

#### **Flourish:**

- Fifty-eight percent of women with power in the U.S. and 36 percent of women with power in the U.K. report having the ability to flourish.
- The majority of women without power – 82 percent of women in the U.S. and 78 percent in the U.K. – believe that an executive position would not allow them to flourish.

#### **Reach for meaning and purpose:**

- More than a third of women with power – 63 percent in the U.S., 40 percent in the U.K. and 35 percent in Germany – have the opportunity to reach for meaning and purpose through their careers.
- The majority of women without power – 74 percent in the U.S., 72 percent in the U.K. and 78 percent in Germany – expect that an executive position would not allow them to reach for meaning and purpose.

#### **Excel:**

- Most (87 percent) women with power surveyed in the U.S. report being able to excel.
- Thirty percent of women without power in the U.S. expect that an executive position would not allow them to excel.

#### **Empower others and be empowered:**

- Sixty-one percent of women with power in the U.S. and 35 percent in the U.K. enjoy the ability to empower others and be empowered.
- The majority of women without power – 86 percent of women in the U.S. and U.K. – believe that an executive position would not afford them the ability to empower others and be empowered.

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### **Earn Well:**

- Only 37 percent of women with power in the U.S., 24 percent in the U.K. and 35 percent in Germany report that they earn well.
- More than half of women without power – 71 percent in the U.S., 55 percent in the U.K. and 57 percent in Germany – expect an executive position would allow them to earn well.

“Women need to understand that with power they can achieve what they say they want from their careers and lives,” stated Sylvia Ann Hewlett, founding president of CTI. “The narrative around power needs to shift. Instead of stories of sacrifice and guilt, powerful women need to speak up about the rewards that power has afforded them to encourage more women to reach for the top.”

The report also finds that women who perceive that an executive role will fulfill their value proposition are more likely to strive for top leadership roles (34 percent versus 12 percent in the U.S., 43 percent versus 10 percent in the U.K. and 23 percent versus two percent in Germany) than those who do not.

“American Express is proud to collaborate once again with the Center for Talent Innovation on research to overcome the barriers keeping women from advancing to the executive ranks,” said Valerie Grillo, Chief Diversity Officer, American Express. “Women are fiercely ambitious and are proven drivers of innovation across industries. Companies who commit to helping female talent realize their aspirations and better understand the opportunities that power can bring will see more of them pursuing top roles, and benefit from their leadership.”

The report features company initiatives designed to increase the pipeline of high-potential female leaders into C-suite positions. Featured companies include American Express, AT&T, Bank of America, Boehringer Ingelheim USA, Merck KGaA, and The Moody’s Foundation.

To view the report findings, visit [www.talentinnovation.org](http://www.talentinnovation.org).

### **Research Sponsors**

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### **Research Authors**

**SYLVIA ANN HEWLETT** is an economist and the founding president and CEO of the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), a nonprofit think tank where she chairs the Task Force for Talent Innovation, a group of 86 global companies focused on fully realizing the new streams of talent in the global marketplace. She is also the codirector of the Women’s Leadership Program at the Columbia Business School. She is the author of 11 Harvard Business Review articles and 12 critically acclaimed nonfiction books including *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps*; *Winning the War for Talent in Emerging Markets*; *Forget a Mentor, Find a Sponsor* (named one of the best business books of 2013); and *Executive Presence* (an Amazon “Best Book of the Month,” June 2014). In 2014, she was recognized as the Most Influential International Thinker by *HR magazine* and won the Google Global Diversity award. Her writings have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, she’s a featured blogger on the HBR Blog Network, and a frequent guest on television, appearing on Newshour with Jim Lehrer, Charlie Rose and The Today Show. Dr. Hewlett, who has taught at Cambridge, Columbia, and Princeton universities, earned her BA at Cambridge University and her PhD in economics at London University.

**MELINDA MARSHALL**, senior vice president and director of publications at the Center for Talent Innovation, drives the Center’s research on sponsorship and innovation. She coauthors articles for the Harvard Business Review (“How Diversity Can Drive Innovation”; “The Relationship You Need to Get Right”) and CTI reports including *Women Want Five Things, Innovation, Diversity and Market Growth* as well as *Sponsor Effect 2.0: Road Maps for Sponsors and Protégés*. She is currently leading research on “Becoming a Global Executive,” which draws on both CTI’s innovation research and its deep tranche of work of executive presence. A journalist and editor whose experience ranges from wire service reporting to national humor columnist, she has published 11 books in collaboration, and is the author of the award-winning *Good Enough Mothers: Changing Expectations for Ourselves*. A magna cum laude graduate of DUKE University, she earned her master’s in Human Rights Studies at Columbia University.

### **About the Research**

The research consists of a survey, Insights in-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) involving more than 65 people from our Task Force organizations, and one-on-one interviews with 45 men and women in the US, U.K., and Germany. The survey was conducted online in June 2014 through August 2014 among 5,309 respondents (2,671 men and 2,638 women: 3,928 in the U.S., 1,006 in the U.K., and 1,005 in Germany) between the ages of 21 and 64 currently employed in certain white-collar occupations, with at least a bachelor's degree. Across all geographies, 2,024 of female respondents reported having power and 614 of female respondents reported not having power. Data in the U.S. were weighted to be representative of the U.S. population on key demographics (age, sex, race/ethnicity, region, education, and income). Data in the U.K. and Germany were weighted on age and sex. The base used for statistical testing was the effective base.

### **About the Center for Talent Innovation**

The Center for Talent Innovation is a nonprofit think tank based in New York City. CTI's flagship project is the Task Force for Talent Innovation—a private-sector task force focused on helping organizations leverage their talent across the divides of gender, generation, geography and culture. The 83 global corporations and organizations that constitute the Task Force, representing nearly six million employees and operating in 192 countries around the world, are united by an understanding that the full realization of the talent pool is at the heart of competitive advantage and economic success.

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