

Boards

Latin American Board-Ready Women

A Win-Win For
Global Boards?

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Amrop

Leaders For What's Next

Latin American Board Ready-Women

A Win-Win for Global Boards?



The best global Boards understand the importance of reflecting their organization's diversity; their employees, consumers, shareholders and their wider communities. Diversity gives a voice to the needs of key stakeholder groups. It improves the chances of avoiding thinking errors and bias, ('groupthink' being one example). And it improves performance.

In a nutshell, diversity leads to robust discussions, decisions and outcomes. Diversity is not only societally healthy and morally equitable, it brings business results. Gender diversity in particular is positively associated with enhanced financial value¹, improved CSR ratings², and ethics³. This also means that, at the highest level, diversity supports wise decision-making (ethical, responsible and sustainable). And this is increasingly important for an organization to earn legitimacy⁴.

So, there is a compelling case for raising the representation of women on your Board. And if your company has operations in Latin America, or markets services or goods to this vast region, the case for this female representation to be Latin American is more compelling still. We are confident that during the next decade, global Boards will increasingly invite Latin American women to sit at their tables.

Does your global Board want to bring out the best in an existing Latin American female board member? Are you ready to accept a new profile on your Board? Does Latin America have the talent up and ready? Let's look at the case for change.



Clarisa Vittone joined Amrop in Argentina in 2011, becoming a Partner in 2013. Previously, she worked for executive search firms in Argentina and the Latin American region. She developed her career as a corporate lawyer in the financial services and legal sector (Deutsche Bank, EFG Bank and Marval, O'Farrell & Mairal). She has a Law degree from Buenos Aires University Law School, and a Masters in Non Governmental Organization Management from San Andrés University. She completed further law and negotiation programs at Harvard University in the USA.



Verónica Vaquer has a degree in Psychology from Universidad del Salvador and a specialization in Cognitive Psychotherapy with the Aiglé Foundation. Following 5 years of professional experience in consulting and Executive Search in the LATAM and Argentinian markets she joined Amrop in 2016. Since joining Amrop she has led complex projects, many involving diversity challenges. She has actively participated in a number of Latin American Region mappings of female top talent, offering her exposure to the best corporate Women Directors in this part of the world.

¹ Hunt, V., Layton, D., Prince, S., (2015) Diversity Matters, McKinsey

² Hyun, E, et. AL, (2015), Women on Boards and Corporate Social Responsibility, sustainability, 2016, 8, 300.

³ VandePol, M., Ludlam., J., (c. 2016), The Case for a Gender Diverse Board, www.magazine.ethisphere.com

⁴ Wise Decision-Making: Stepping Up to Sustainable Performance, Amrop, 2018



A vibrant and extensive region. Does it have potential?

20

countries

3%

average
15y
GDP growth⁵

Given this economic picture, companies will want to choose wisely where to invest or expand. This is a volatile game, and countries differ widely in their performance. In a recent study⁶ the World Bank analyzed the economies of 189 countries to determine which offer the best environment and conditions to do business. The 5 countries in Latin America that received the best scores were Mexico, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Costa Rica.

Uneven performance
by country

Notwithstanding the unevenness of the region, it contains a wealth of emerging, high potential investment opportunities. Furthermore, most Latin American countries welcome foreign investment and Latin American markets are determined to play a bigger role in the global marketplace.

650m

people

5. Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum)
6. Doing Business (World Economic Forum)

Latin American Talent

A Unique Value Proposition?



Latin America has been the cradle for a host of notable professionals. From Nobel Prize-winning scientists, to award-winning writers, musicians, artists and politicians.

How is the region's unique DNA reflected in its corporate leaders? Here's our assessment, based on the last 20 years of intensive interaction with clients and candidates in our operating markets.

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- 1 Cultural Diversity:** Each of the countries that makes up Latin America has been marked in some way by conquest, colonization and immigration (the latter is still very active today).
 - 2 Resilience and adaptability:** the ability to withstand and rapidly respond to changing contexts partly relates to the region's often-turbulent history. Devaluations, inflation, and political instability are just some phenomena. This uncertainty leads to a strong sense of pragmatism, 'getting things done'. It also intensifies the willingness of Latin American professionals to engage in continuous professional development to meet evolving demands.
 - 3 Tenacity:** We do not give up! This is a survival skill. Blended with a high tolerance to frustration; it results in an ability to quickly bounce back from failure, learn from it, and persevere.
 - 4 Open-heartedness and empathy:** these characteristics translate into good communication and interpersonal skills. They are highly valued, because they encourage team building, and improve performance levels (higher work satisfaction, engagement, motivation are just some indicators).
 - 5 Passion:** when moderated by self-regulation, this quality brings a high level of energy and commitment to the table.
 - 6 Creativity and innovation:** these qualities are nourished by a frequent lack of resources (funding, faraway sourcing of all kinds of supplies and services, etc.), diversity and changing context.
 - 7 English fluency:** considerably improving over the past 10 years. Given the growing recognition of its value in business, the study and use of English has grown in numbers. Most corporate leaders from the region now speak the language fluently.
 - 8 Inter-regionality/cultural adaptability:** Latin American countries are geographically very distanced from other regions (Mexico is the exception given its proximity to North America). This led to a significant growth in inter-regional executive positions, and a new dynamic. Leaders who have operated in a relevant number of Latin American countries are highly valued, as each country still has unique characteristics in the way it does business.

Latin American Women More Unique Still?



What happens when this powerful Latin American DNA is also embodied by female leaders? In our experience, there are 2 major factors.

Increased Productivity and Innovation

We relate this to the need for Latin American women to prove themselves in an environment still heavily impregnated with machismo. These factors, combined with their highly-tuned multitasking skills, continuously nourish the wells of creativity.



Improved Team Bonding & Dynamics

We relate this to the ability to promote dialogue and listen to different opinions, making decision-making stronger. Bonding through empathy strengthens communication and encourages problem solving.

And there is no shortage of Latin American female board talent

Every year, Latin Trade Magazine presents the rankings of the top 25 business women in Latin America. Winners are selected for their “astounding leadership skills in some of the region’s largest companies, and delivering impressive growth results.” Some examples from this ranking and our own field work.

María Fernanda Mejía

*President
Kellogg’s Latin America*

Ms. Mejía is also a Non Executive Director of the International Consolidated Airlines Group, and a Director of the Council of Americas.

Claudia Sender

*Board Director
LafargeHolcim and Gerdau*

Ms. Sender’s previous roles include Senior Vice President for Clients at LATAM Airlines Group, CEO for LATAM Airlines Brazil, Commercial and Marketing Vice President, TAM Airlines.

Carla Grasso

*Chief Administrative Officer and Deputy
Managing Director
IMF (until February 2020).*

Ms. Grasso has served on the Board of Stora Enso and as Chairman Brazil’s Pension Fund Authority.

Laura Diez Barroso Azcárraga

*Director and President of the Board of
Directors of Banco Santander de México*

Ms Diez Barroso has been at the head of 9 different companies. She also sits on the Board of Teléfonos de México SAB de CV.

Mayra González

*Division General Manager, Global Sales,
Nissan, Japan*

A former President and Managing Director of Nissan Mexico, Ms. González broke an industry record with 401,500 units sold in 2016, the highest ever for the Mexican automotive industry.

However, we cannot close this chapter without mentioning the still very low female representation at the top level of corporate leadership. The current average ratio for the LATAM region as a whole is still under 15%. And yet women represent slightly more than half of the population in the region. The under-representation is stark.

What can we do to change the low female representation?

We have referred to the correlations between gender diversity on Boards and enhanced financial performance, ethics, and social corporate responsibility. However, based on our field work and experience in recruiting executive talent, we propose that neither quotas nor further justification should be needed to promote the inclusion of women in the highest tiers of the corporate world. As stated at the beginning of this article: it is healthy for boards to reflect their organization's diversity; their employees, consumers, shareholders and wider communities. This alone should be a sufficient reason to redress the balance. Also, all Latin American women inspired by and dedicated to a career in corporate leadership, need to be prepared and ready to sit at a global or regional Board.

So, What Does it Mean to be Board-Ready? | A Profile

The Non-Negotiables

- Undergraduate and ideally postgraduate studies
- Minimum 10-15 years of recent experience in a senior leadership or executive role, plus a minimum of 5 years at C-Level, in reputable companies
- Significant P&L responsibility
- A solid grasp of financial reporting principles
- Relevant experience, with specific knowledge, of a relevant function and industry, and ability to extrapolate learnings and innovations with the Board
- High moral and ethical standards
- Independent and objective thinking skills.
- Excellent communicational and influencing skills
- Courage and the ability to ask tough questions
- Availability to grant between 40 and 60 hours per trimester to the Board
- Understanding of the fiduciary aspects of a Director role (with no conflicts of interest)
- Shares the values of the company
- Complements the existing Directors.

Also Highly-Valued

- Experience and commitment aligned with the company's CSR objectives and activities (education, environment, poverty, diversity, etc.). A track record in NGOs, universities, or other organizations that promote this type of cause
- Previous work as Professor, Lecturer, Speaker, authorship of papers/books
- For most boards, regional or global experience.



What's Next?

Are there Board-ready women in Latin America? And what would they bring to a global Board?

The move to promote more women to leadership positions is now well established. In some cases the main purpose remains to meet quotas and other compliance demands. In others, it is rooted in a fervent belief in the potential benefits of change. Whatever the case, and as we have seen, the results obtained are hard to ignore.

We celebrate the fact that amongst today's Latin American female executives, and with the exception of some more challenging countries, there is a trend to dedicate more time to their training and their career.

At Amrop, we are confident that any company that decides to incorporate a Latin American woman executive into its global leadership team will not regret it.

Pursue this route, and you will gain not only solid technical knowledge, but also a professional with a wide range of experience in unstable contexts. This will allow your new board member to come up with out-of-the-box solutions, bringing creativity and fresh vision to your executive team. The chances are also high that she will be adept in handling frustration and able to convey a sense of calm to others. Unlikely to feel cornered in the face of adversity, on the contrary, she will be able to stop, think, and execute an action plan. She will foster communication, and with it, the exchange of ideas that will enrich your team.

If you are a Latin American woman, we warmly invite you to have confidence in your value as a professional and to design a path for further development, inspired by your Board-ready peers. At Amrop we believe in the importance of knowing talent, knowing how to evaluate it, empower it and promote opportunities for a new generation — the Leaders For What's Next. We would like to give a gentle push to the Latin American women who are ready to take the plunge into the talent pool. And for those athletes who have just started out, inspiration to set Board membership as an attainable goal.



References and Further Reading

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About Amrop

With over 70 offices in all world regions, Amrop is a trusted advisor in Executive Search, Board and Leadership Services. Amrop advises the world's most dynamic organizations on finding and positioning Leaders For What's Next: top talent, adept at working across borders in markets around the world.

Amrop's mission: shaping sustainable success through inspiring leaders.

www.amrop.com/offices