



## INFLUENCE BUILDER: WOMEN FIND YOUR VOICE

*“It’s important for women to know that having a voice really means having a track record of success and accomplishments, so that people want to listen to what you have to say, because you’re saying something of value. So use your voice, but use it strategically.”*  
– Dara Richardson-Heron, M.D., Chief Executive of the Y.W.C.A. USA<sup>1</sup>

Historically, women had no voice in politics or the workplace. Thankfully, times have changed. But are women taking full advantage of their potential and possibilities?

According to a recent article from Harvard Business Review, titled “**Managing Yourself: Women, Find Your Voice**” by Kathryn Heath, Jill Flynn and Mary Davis Holt, female executives still have challenges making their voice heard, especially in meetings where women are in the minority. After evaluating the feedback from 360-degree surveys, they found that women often appeared unprepared, rattled and timid in corporate meetings.

What can you do?<sup>2</sup>

- **Build alliances.** Make time to get to know your colleagues and understand their positions on key issues before meetings.
- **Be prepared.** Be armed with well-informed comments, thought-provoking questions and well-researched facts before you speak.
- **Maintain your poise.** Keep your emotions in check and express passion through the power of your words.

Remember, it’s business, not personal. Get comfortable with disagreement. Seek to understand other people’s point of view. But that doesn’t mean you have to back down.

1. What would happen if you let your light shine, not only for yourself, but for the sake of others as well?
2. What will you do to find your voice?

Start with something small. The next time you are asked for your opinion, give it honestly. When you become aware of an injustice, prayerfully seek a way to speak up to bring light to the situation. Small steps lead to great strides and finding your voice leads to influencing others.

<sup>1</sup> Bryant, A., Executive Women Finding (and Owning Their Voice) (accessed on Nov. 18, 2014): nytimes.com

<sup>2</sup> Heath, K., et al. “Women, Find Your Voice,” (accessed November 11, 2014): hbr.org.