WANT MORE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT THE SPACE SECTOR? DESIGN IT

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There is no greater indicator of an innovative culture than the empowerment of women.
In companies that have the top 20 percent of financial performance, 27 percent of leaders are women.

– worldwide survey, conducted by US-based human resources consulting firm DDI
TYPICAL HEADS OF SPACE AGENCIES PANEL

13:30 - 15:00  Plenary 1: Heads of Agencies

Location: Ussishkin Auditorium, Jerusalem International Convention Center (ICC)

The Heads of Agencies plenary event will bring together the leaders of major space agencies worldwide. Like previous years, this year’s Heads of Agencies Plenary will begin with an introductory presentation, followed by a discussion on specific topics as well as an interactive Q&A session with the audience.

Panellists:

Isaac Ben-Israel
Chairman, Israel Space Agency (ISA), Israel

Charles Bolden
Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States

Igor Komarov
Head, Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos), Russia

A.S. Kiran Kumar
(invited)
Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), India

Johann-Dietrich Woerner
Director General, European Space Agency (ESA)

MODERATOR
Uli Bobinger
Journalist, UV Media Production, Germany
Our Challenge

How do we change the numbers at the top?
Exploring what holds women back from stepping into leadership and decision making roles in the space sector requires looking beyond the obvious answers.

It requires culture change.
Restructuring, changing processes, or incentives can lead to people feeling like change is being forced upon them rather than participating and being a part of the change.
A HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH TO CREATING CHANGE

One of the biggest differentiators between success and failure in driving organizational and system change is whether the emotional dynamics of what it takes for people to change behaviors are factored into the change strategy.
This is why any new set of “rules” has to be balanced with a shift in an organization’s underlying “rituals.”
THE RULES

The formal part of the system: goals, strategies, processes, metrics etc. They’re the things that can often be written on paper.

Leaders like to work with the formal system because it’s rational and easy to communicate.
THE RITUALS

Values, power dynamics, personal networks that guide interactions and information flow, and sources of pride that drive the amount of effort and commitment people put into their jobs.

Rituals are seldom codified or reference-able.
Rules speak to the head, and rituals speak to the heart.

Our behaviors are driven by both.
TRANSFORMATIVE EMPATHY

• Gain a deep understanding of the system

• Need-finding interviews, in order to identify early, high potential opportunities for impact and the right problem to solve.

• Co-design with men. People support what they create.
REFRAME SOURCES OF PRIDE

• Monitor both data / metrics and human stories

• Culture change can be achieved by identifying existing sources of pride and reframing them in way to motivate the behaviors we want

• Capture meaningful stories early and frequently and to ensure that they are part of the communication and outreach approach
BUILD MOMENTUM BY TAKING ACTION

• Often people are unaware that a change is possible

• An experimental project or behavior change can show people that something different is possible

• Create quick wins so that people will want to join in and become part of the change
BUILD MOMENTUM BY TAKING ACTION

Could it mean less of a dependence on metrics and optics and more prototyping of new types of recruiting methods, meeting practices and facilities?

Could it mean managers who approach others in the workplace with empathy and genuine curiosity as to another’s lived experience when conflicts arise?

Could it mean employees who feel capable and empowered by creativity to take a beginner’s mind when addressing problems relating to team dynamics?
CONCLUSION

How might we change the flow of the river so that the river is actually making it easier to behave in the right way?

What are those things we design that support or discourage certain ways of behaving in the space sector?