

Women in the corporate world: where companies can and need to make a difference

Written by: Fernanda Antonelli - 06/03/2020

2020 is the first year of a decade. It is exciting and scary, motivating and shaking. It makes me think about the legacy we would like to leave behind and what we are doing to evolve and improve the lives of our and the next generations. I am a woman, 38 years old; a Human Resources (HR) professional of many years, working in a large company. I feel all the positive impact that I can make. For me, this is the theme of 2020.

In this month of March, in which International Women's Day is celebrated, the world's eyes are focused on women issues and there is consensus that progress has already been made on many things, but that above all, warning signals must remain on, as there is still a lot more to be done.

To put it in perspective, in Latin America, women's access to universities is one of the aspects that has evolved the most – while in the 70s we accounted for about 37% of the university population, today we represent more than 55%. This data from UNESCO shows that there are currently more women than men in undergraduate classrooms; excellent news.

However, on the other hand, data on women in leadership positions in companies shows that statistics remain almost stagnant. In 2016, only 7.3% of women occupied seats on the boards of directors of the 100 largest companies in Latin America. This percentage has increased by a mere 2.2% in the last 11 years and our region is only ahead of the Middle East in this regard. These indicators from Corporate Women Directors International (CWDI), a study center linked to the American Institute, GlobeWomen, make it clear that we need more focus and mobilization.

We recently created a working group dedicated to women at Horiens' risk and insurance consultancy team in which I lead the People, Communications, and Marketing area. The group is linked to our also recently formed Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which aims, through dialogue, to discuss, raise awareness and deepen our knowledge on relevant guidelines for people and companies.



In this sense, the group seeks to be a space to discuss and listen to our employees, from which I am sure that many ideas will emerge and will transform into practices to evolve as professionals and as a company. And we also aim to bring our male counterparts into the debate, stimulating an environment of engagement and learning.

Is this all we can do? Certainly not – and everything we have done in the past is not enough, either. But it is an important step; leave the automatic behind, provoke new insights, open new paths.

I am sure that this reflects positively on everyone's well-being and translates even in positive results for our company. I find it amazing how we can make a difference even in simple ways.