

COMPANY PROJECT REPORT

DIANE LERECULEY-PÉRAN

FEMINIST STAKEHOLDER THEORY: A SOLUTION TO THE BARRIERS WOMEN FACE IN ACCESSING EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN THE LODGING INDUSTRY

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LYCar is the last course students undergo at Hotelschool the Hague before completing their bachelor. It is made up of two components: the company project report and the career portfolio. Students have to choose a specific track based on their research and internship component, and are assigned a coach based on the topic of their research. I chose track 2, carried out my research for Professor Lombarts and did my internship at BR-ND People.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although there has been an increased interest from academics on the topic of women in executive positions, a good proportion of the research focuses on justifying the need to have more women through financial (e.g. bottom line) and non-financial (e.g. corporate social responsibility reporting) reasonings. However, the ethical considerations of the question seem to have been side-lined and could bring a new perspective to the current vision centred around neoliberal arguments. Considering the plethora of ethics theories, the focus was narrowed down to the feminist stakeholder theory as it gives a female perspective on a business ethics theory designed solely by men in a business world made for men. Based on this, the research was set out to explore the following research question:

How can feminist stakeholder theory help women gain access to executive boards in the lodging industry?

To explore this topic, semi-structure e-interviews were conducted with eleven women holding executive positions and general management positions in the Netherlands. The interviews were carried out based on an interview guide designed from the main proposition formulated around the feminist stakeholder theory principles.

Proposition 1: When an organisation is interwoven with its stakeholders, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 2: When the changing external environment is seen as an opportunity for creativity, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 3: When the management style of the organisation is focused on collective action and communication, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 4: When the strategy is formulated with solidarity in mind, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 5: When the hierarchy is decentralised and focused on empowerment, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Upon completion, the interviews were transcribed and analysed through a thematic approach, making deductive findings appear regarding the relevance of having open communication, collaboration with all stakeholders, radical empowerment and embracing personal changes. Some emergent inductive findings emerged due to the lack of research on the topic from this perspective. The main elements in this regard were the lack of transparency in Dutch lodging companies in their board compositions, making awareness and accountability challenges. Furthermore, motherhood appeared as a key defining moment in women's careers from their company's side and from a societal side with judgement of full-time working mothers. This constituted only one of the barriers which women encountered, with others focused around the lack of trust in competencies, of flexibility in work methods and of support and having to adapt to maladjusted rules. Therefore, this is how in theory the feminist stakeholder theory can provide an adequate framework since the four elements could provide an environment of open communication, psychological safety and flexibility in business processes and work methods to embrace personal changes employees go through and help them combine it. Based on this, a framework was created to represent the interrelations between the different concepts and how it can benefit a wide array of stakeholders, especially women.

To translate this into a practical solution and integrate a design-based research approach, co-creation sessions were conducted with BR-ND People, the placement company, and its relevant stakeholders. From the different insights, it was decided that a playbook would be created to benefit the community. It was designed in a self-explanatory and easy to implement way with worksheets and links but also the background explanation for each chapter. The four chapters outlined are creating awareness, hiring policies, revising reporting lines and creating brave spaces. BR-ND People evaluated the playbook and its added value as a team, and it was further built upon through a reflection of the whole design-based research process to identify how it can be further improved.

G L O S S A R Y

Executive Board:

Top management who “is responsible for attaining the company's objectives, its strategy and policy and the ensuing results” (de Jong, DeJong, Mertens and Wasley, 2005, p.480)

Lodging Industry:

“provider of accommodations and other amenities for travelers and other desiring customers.” (Ottenbacher, Harrington and Parsa., 2009, p.276)

Feminist Stakeholder Theory:

A theory of business ethics where corporations create “value for an entire network of stakeholders by working to develop effective forms of cooperation, decentralizing power and authority, and building consensus among stakeholders through communication to generate strategic direction” (Wicks et al., 1994, p.493).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	14
Effects of More Women on Executive Boards	14
Barriers for Women to Get to Executive Positions.....	15
The Lodging Industry in this Context.....	16
Feminist Stakeholder Theory: The Missing Puzzle Piece?.....	18
METHODOLOGY	22
Data Collection	22
Data Analysis.....	24
Addressing Ethical Issues	26
FINDINGS.....	27
DISCUSSION.....	35
Limitations and Future Research	41
Conclusion	43
DESIGNING A PRACTICAL SOLUTION.....	44
IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION	49
Future Clients.....	49
B Corp Community.....	49
23plusone Friends	50
EVALUATION.....	51
PROCESS REFLECTION.....	53
LIST OF REFERENCES	55
APPENDICES	61
Appendix 1. Interview Guide.....	61
Appendix 2. Steps to Transcription and Analysis.....	66
Appendix 3 Informed Consent Form	67
Appendix 4. Data Management	69
Appendix 5. Transcripts.....	72
Appendix 6. Coding tables.....	166
Appendix 7. Declaration of Confidentiality.....	204
Appendix 8. Panel Discussion	206
Appendix 9. Playbook for gender equality in executive positions	207
Appendix 10. Summative Assessment.....	212

Appendix 11. Client Evaluation Form	213
Appendix 12. Dissemination.....	215
Appendix 13. Proof of proposal assessment	220
Appendix 14. Mid-Term Appraisal Form.....	221
Appendix 15. Final Appraisal	223
Appendix 16. Proof of Word Count.....	225

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Relationship Between Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Pizam, 2009, p.183)	11
Figure 2: The E-Interview Research Framework for Understand E-Interview Research (Salmons, 2014, p.4)	22
Figure 3: Thematic Overview	25
Figure 4: The Role of the Feminist Stakeholder Theory in Creating a Paradigm Change	40
Figure 5: 24 Human Drives of 23Plusone (Cramer and Koene, 2010).....	47

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: From Masculinist to Feminist Elements of the Stakeholder Theory (Wicks et al., 1994)	18
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INTRODUCTION

The proportion of women in executive positions has grown over the years, but is still low with 16,9% of women holding board positions worldwide (Deloitte, 2019). In the Netherlands, the two-tier board system where executive board and non-executive board are two separate entities is predominantly used (Luckerath-Rovers, 2015). When looking at executive board members in the Netherlands, only 12,4% of positions are held by women (Statista, 2019). To ensure a common understanding of executive board, it is defined as top management who is “*responsible for attaining the company's objectives, its strategy and policy and the ensuing results*” (de Jong, DeJong, Mertens and Wasley, 2005, p.480).

As it stands, decisions are being made by a cohesive group prone to groupthink. This term is defined as “*failure of board members to consider alternatives to the dominant view when making decisions*” (Kamalnath, 2017, p.85). As such, the overrepresentation of men on boards could impede on the board’s role of monitoring (Kamalnath, 2017) and of making decisions with women in mind. Furthermore, having women hold these high-profile positions would create strong role models for young women, especially considering the importance of gender-matching in having impactful role models (Lockwood, 2006).

The imbalance could be understood in a male dominated industry. However, within the Dutch lodging industry, defined as the “*provider of accommodations and other amenities for travellers and other desiring customers.*” (Ottenbacher, Harrington and Parsa, 2009, p.276), women make up 54,7% of the workforce (Arbeidsmonitor, 2018). In the Netherlands, women occupy 10,7% of executive board positions in the trade and hospitality industry (Statista, 2020). From figure 1, where the difference between tourism and hospitality industry is displayed, the overlap of lodging within the two suggests the same underrepresentation can be expected. As such, women appear to be confined to precarious jobs within the industry.

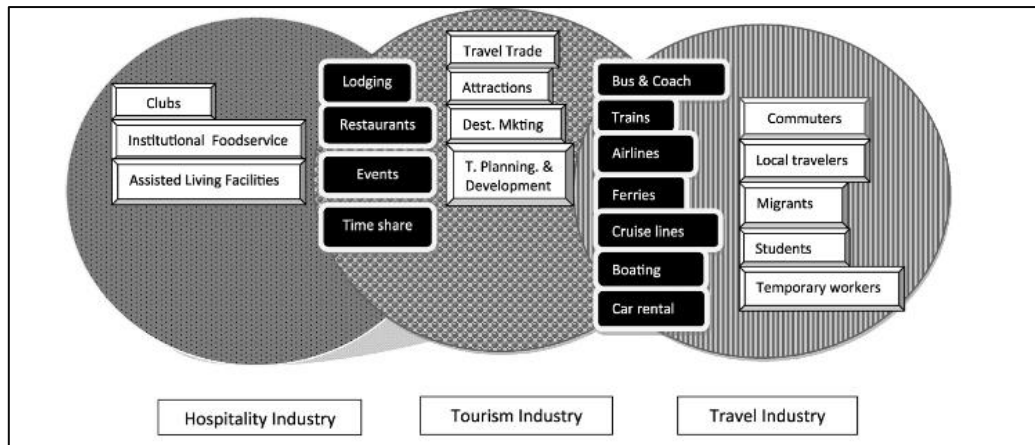


Figure 1: Relationship Between Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (Pizam, 2009, p.183)

Governments and supranational entities recognise the need to tackle this problem. The United Nations have gender equality on the agenda with sustainable development goal 5: Gender Equality. As such, they highlight the ethical need to end gender discrimination by identifying it as a basic human right (UNSDG, 2020). The Dutch government placed a special focus on getting more women in senior positions (Government of the Netherlands, 2018). Yet, within the 2021 Target Law implemented by the Dutch government, quotas are only applicable for supervisory boards of publicly traded companies (Lückerath-Rovers, 2020). For executive boards, the comply or explain principle applies, meaning companies need to explain if they do not have 30% of women on boards (Lückerath-Rovers, 2015). Despite this, progress has been slow in the Netherlands and the numbers are still far from 30% (Emons, 2019). This threshold has been identified as the critical mass (Dahlerup, 2006; Joecks, Pull and Vetter, 2013; Yarram and Adapa, 2021), after which women have an impact on board dynamics and decision making (Joecks et al., 2013). With the global pandemic, the gap to be bridged seems even greater as more women are downshifting their careers or leaving the workforce (ILO, 2020). With already a record number of 76% of women employed part-time in the Netherlands (Government of the Netherlands, 2018), COVID19 and its consequent lay-offs could set the country back in achieving gender equality.

Another approach is needed since legal obligations were rejected by the Dutch parliament for executive boards (Lückerath-Rovers, 2020), and the numbers show a need for improvement. The predominant one is motivating businesses by emphasising financial (bottom line) and non-financial (e.g. CSR reporting) benefits of having more women on boards (Nguyen, Ntim and Malagila, 2020). This far, these arguments at the service of neoliberalism (Cullen and Murphy, 2017) have dominated the debate, but some academics are starting to prone an in-depth look into the ethical question. This is the case of Risse (2019) who asks for a reconsideration of gender equality as a respect of human rights and equity as final objective.

Therefore, it would be interesting to examine it from business ethics stakeholder theory, specifically through feminist stakeholder theory. The stakeholder theory is one of the prominent theories in business ethics but has some shortcomings as it was elaborated solely by men (Burton and Dunn, 1996). Therefore, a feminist approach overcomes the number of limitations it poses (Wicks, Gilbert and Freeman, 1994). Through this feminist stakeholder theory, corporations create “*value for an entire network of stakeholders by working to develop effective forms of cooperation, decentralizing power and authority, and building consensus among stakeholders through communication to generate strategic direction*” (Wicks et al., 1994, p.493). This view is interesting and relevant for the question of women in executive positions in the lodging industry as over 50% of the employees are women and nearly two thirds of travellers are women (Harris, 2018). They give meaning and definition to the corporation yet are not getting access to executive positions. This leads us to the research question:

How can feminist stakeholder theory help women gain access to executive boards in the lodging industry?

Considering the inexistent research through this prism, hopefully this will provide a framework for practitioners, industry bodies, educational institutes and governments. By expanding current perspectives on women on executive boards, this research aims to give a first impression of what an ethical perspective could look like and create a holistic framework. Another mean of dissemination is having the findings published in a journal to accentuate the credibility. The stakeholders have been identified as they are involved in the decision-making process of the industry. This can raise awareness on the problem at hand and create sustainable change. Academics can pick up on this research and explore it in different cultures or industries and see if the findings still hold. Members of educational entities will be invited to the presentation of the research to understand the problems the industry currently faces, and act upon the findings. Finally, professional women would also be interested in the outcomes of the research to ensure they can tackle the problems they will encounter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effects of More Women on Executive Boards

Scholars studying corporate governance have increasingly studied the topic of women on executive boards (Nguyen et al., 2020; Kirsch, 2018). This is in line with governmental and supranational bodies' focus on gender diversity through the multiplication of measures to increase the number of women in leadership positions (Lückerath-Rovers, 2015; Matsa and Miller, 2013; Kirsch 2018). One of the main topics studied is the effects of having more women on executive boards, with focus on financial (e.g. bottom line) and non-financial (e.g. CSR) results of increased board diversity.

The evidence regarding financial performance is contradicting, as shown in Nguyen et al.'s (2020) systematic literature review. Some report a negative impact like Jeong and Harrison (2016) through a meta-analysis of 146 primary studies. Others found a positive impact like Reguera Alvarado, Fuentes Ruiz and Laffarga Briones (2015), looking at 125 non-financial firms in the Madrid Stock Exchange. To balance the different echoes, more academics leave it to circumstances such as Carter, D'Souza, Simkins and Simpson (2010), and Joecks et al. (2013) who pinpoint 30% of women on the board as the tipping point between negative and positive impact on financial performance. The latest evidence points towards positive performances, once the critical threshold of 30% of women has been crossed, despite the dissonance between academics (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Non-financial results create a consensus among academics regarding the positive relation, when there is an increase of women on the executive boards. Indeed, none of the articles reviewed by Nguyen et al. (2020) looking at the relation of the two portrayed a negative relation. This is in line with the literature on CSR reporting and women present on boards (Yarram and Adapa, 2021; Ben-Amar, Change and McIlkeny, 2017; Liao, Lin and Zhang, 2018). Once again, the 30% threshold is found in Yarram and Adapa's (2021) work, where

CSR reporting improves significantly when women represent 30% or more of the board. Ben-Amar et al. (2017) support similar findings, adding that there is an increase in voluntary reporting and transparency. Liao et al. (2018) also found more gender diversity led to better connections, fair representation of all stakeholders, and better CSR reporting. Both for financial and non-financial performance, there is an array of quantitative studies. Looking at both combined, the overall effect of having more women seems positive, yet they remain underrepresented due to persisting barriers.

Barriers for Women to Get to Executive Positions

The question of barriers still hindering women's access to executive board position has been of interest to academics (Risman, 2004; Segovia-Pérez Figueroa-Domecq, Fuentes-Moraleda and Muñoz-Mazón, 2019; Chizema, Kamuriwo and Shinozawa, 2015). Risman (2004) created a framework of gender as a social construct, recognising gender as deeply connected to society and cultural expectations. This conceptual framework regroups barriers at three levels: individual, interactional, and institutional (Risman, 2004). It was built upon by Segovia-Pérez et al. (2019) in the context of Spanish hospitality. By interviewing 30 executive women, they adapted the original framework to fit the specific context of hospitality, and the Spanish culture. The initial findings were confirmed, but the intersectional level including gender roles and work-life balance were identified as another barrier.

However, academics recognise the cultural specificity of gender inequality, and need to adapt frameworks and concepts to fit each context (Segovia-Pérez et al., 2019; Chizema et al., 2015; Nguyen et al., 2020). Chizema et al. (2015) studied 45 countries and assessed the impact of economic, political and religion institutions and how they affected women on boards. From this analysis, it is evident that country specific context is paramount when considering women in executive positions (Chizema et al., 2015).

The Lodging Industry in this Context

Regarding women on executive boards in the lodging industry research is limited. There is research regarding boards of directors in the hospitality industry at large (including restaurants, hotels and airlines) but focusing mainly on the size, the composition in term of inside and outside directors or on the board involvement (Ozdemir, 2020). Across the Atlantic some studies have explored the barriers and effects of more women in executive positions in the specific context of the lodging industry (Song, Yoon and Kang, 2020; Blayney and Highway, 2013). Within their research, Song et al. (2020) support that having more gender diversity leads to new perspectives, more harmony, better monitoring of top management and overall improve the strategic decisions being made in the boardroom. Blayney and Highway (2013) explored both the benefits of having more women in executive corporate positions and identified the main barriers and recommendations to overcome them.

However, in Europe, the research is still limited. Segovia-Pérez et al.'s (2019) research bridges a gap in the literature, by looking at women in executive positions in the Spanish hospitality industry. It would be useful to build on this knowledge and gain more qualitative insights on the topic. In the Dutch context specifically, a male perspective on the matter has been explored by Emons (2019), through semi-structured interviews to understand the barriers women face in gaining access to executive positions. This offers valuable insights from the ones currently holding positions of power (Emons, 2019), but there is a lack of research in the women's perspective on the matter in the Netherlands.

Regarding ethics, as was clearly portrayed from Myung's (2018) systematic literature review between 2006 and 2015, the research is once again restricted. This study portrayed that only 62 of the articles had been focusing on ethics, leaving unexplored areas in this domain. Regarding gender inequality, the focus so far has been on the differences regarding ethical decision making (Yaman and Gurel, 2006; Calvert, Martin, Beck and Lin, 2008; Chan, Jamilah and Rusinah, 2012, Becker and Gao, 2010; Mattila and Choi, 2010). Although gender is one of the most used variables when it comes to ethics, "*board gender diversity is still an emerging area of increased attention*" (Chen, Ni and Tong, 2016, p.618). Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no research this far has focused on the ethical reasoning behind having more women in executive positions. Nguyen et al. (2020) write:

"If women are going to be appointed to corporate boards on a long-term sustainable basis, then, arguably there ought to be an overarching rationale or theoretical reason"

(Nguyen et al., 2020, p.2)

Although this line of thought resonates with the corporate world, we would like to challenge this, and argue that there is an ethical reasoning behind it. This has already been put forward by Risse (2019), who articulates a need to recentre the debate, frameworks and tools around morality and ethics. Therefore, to have a holistic view on the matter, the question of ethics ought to be explored.

Feminist Stakeholder Theory: The Missing Puzzle Piece?

One of the key business ethics theories was coined by Freeman (1984) with the stakeholder theory. However, it has been re-examined by scholars denouncing that it had solely been elaborated by men and was not holistic enough. To counter the pitfalls, the feminist theory was included. First defined by Wicks et al., (1994), it was further built upon by seeing humans as inherently relational. Therefore, this theory is one of the few business ethics theories embracing this human characteristic (Burton and Dunn, 1996). This research will focus on the five key elements brought forward by Wicks et al. (1994) to adapt the stakeholder theory into feminist stakeholder theory (table 1). Although the main elements of the feminist stakeholder theory were coined 25 years ago, they have been elaborated by scholars, whilst preserving their essence.

Principle	Masculinist	Feminist
Relationship between the company and its stakeholders	Corporations are autonomous entities	Corporations are a web of relations among stakeholders
Changing external environment : friend or foe?	Corporations should enact and control their external environment	Corporations need to thrive in chaos of environments changing
Management style of the company	Competition and conflict as terms to describe management of a firm	Communication and collective action
How to formulate the company's strategy	Objective way of thinking and generating strategy	Strategy as solidarity
Hierarchy within the company	Power and authority should be structured in strict hierarchies	Radical decentralisation and empowerment

Table 1: From Masculinist to Feminist Elements of the Stakeholder Theory (Wicks et al., 1994)

Relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders is the first key theme tackled by Wicks et al. (1994). The distinction lies with the fact that on the one hand corporations are separate from their stakeholders and free-standing, and on the other as interdependent with all its stakeholders. This is in line with the feminist corporate governance body of literature identifying stakeholder relationship as a web of care giving, care receiving and obligations within relationships (Machold, Ahmed and Farquhar, 2008). Within this same study, the authors recommend future research be carried out specifically regarding boards of directors in this light to examine governance through a different lens.

Proposition 1: When an organisation is interwoven with its stakeholders, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

The perception of the changing environment is one of the key constructs of business as it is seen in the stakeholder theory. The contrast here lies in seeing the changing environment as a foe or a friend; as a threat or as an opportunity. Within the highly competitive hotel industry, being creative is key, and this creativity is only possible when management can cope with uncertainty (Darvishmotevali, Altinay and Köseoglu, 2020). As such, the feminist stakeholder theory can be a strength, instead of trying to control the external environment to limit chaos in the industry. Ideally, a lodging company would benefit from taking on the feminist perspective, but the question remains as to whether this is currently being embraced or not.

Proposition 2: When the changing external environment is seen as an opportunity for creativity, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

The management style of the organisation varies here between one focused on the use of business language within the company to manage employees. In the masculinist perspective, the terminology is focused around competition and conflict, in a very individualistic vision of the company. Instead, in the feminist perspective, it is much more focused on the communication and collective action (Wicks et al., 1994).

Proposition 3: When the management style of the organisation is focused on collective action and communication, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

The process of formulating the strategy of the organisation was traditionally viewed as an objective thought process, in line with Porter's idea that economic tools should be used to evaluate attractive or unattractive industries (Porter, 2008). Another key theory in this same line is the resource-based view, making the most out of any internal running of an organisation (Barney, 1991). However, these theories ignore the fact that humans are emotional and social beings. As such, cultural analysts from the 1980s have explored the importance of understanding each other's cultures to then create cohesive ways of acting. The main theory in line with this is behavioural strategy, defined as bringing "*realistic assumptions about human cognition, emotions and social behaviour to the strategic management of organisations*" (Powell, Lovullo and Fox, 2011, p.1380).

Proposition 4: When the strategy is formulated with solidarity in mind, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

The hierarchy within the organisation is the final concept, in line with the evolution of companies since 1990s. Indeed, an increasing number of companies are opting for decentralised organisations, with empowerment of employees and less rigid structures. It has been said that, “*the defining characteristic of the organisational structure of hotels is a strong hierarchy*” (Çelik and Erkus-Öztürk, 2016, p.438). With the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, decentralised organisations, seen as more humane, may be an advantage in the hotel industry, traditionally much more vertical (Filimonau, Derqui and Matute, 2020).

Proposition 5: When the hierarchy is decentralised and focused on empowerment, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The methodology was designed through the E-Interview research framework (figure 2) as explained by Salmons (2014).

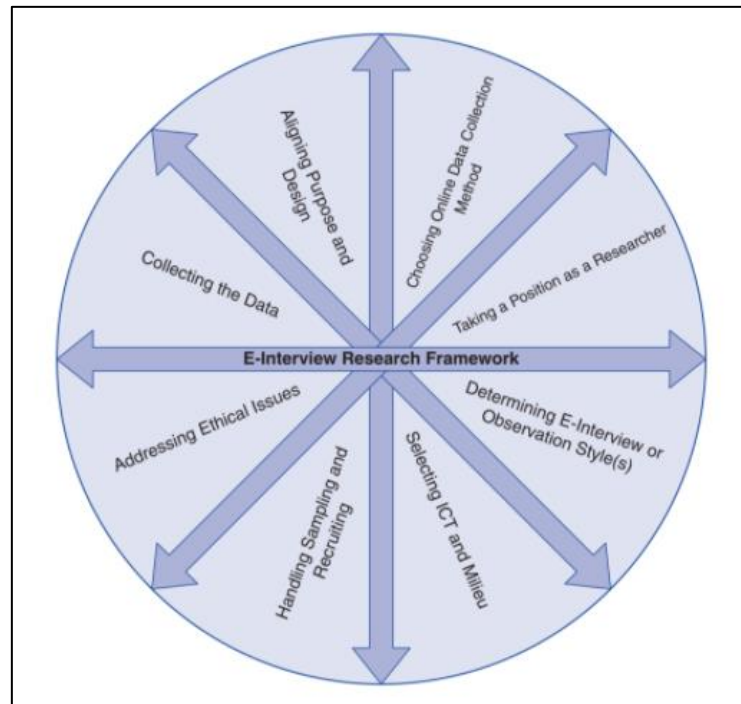


Figure 2: The E-Interview Research Framework for Understand E-Interview Research (Salmons, 2014, p.4)

This study aimed to explore how feminist stakeholder theory could affect the number of women in executive positions in the lodging industry. A qualitative approach was chosen because Nguyen et al. (2020) highlighted the lack of this type of research (only 27 of the 642 articles). Furthermore, it will give more insights on underlying reasoning and examples to help create a better understanding of the situation. The interview was chosen as data collection method. To ensure that the purpose and design are aligned, the interview guide (Appendix 1) was designed in line with the propositions and the elements characteristics of the feminist stakeholder theory. Due to COVID-19, the fluctuating restrictions and the disease's associated risks, online interviewing was judged a safer option for both participants and researcher. Then, the research

was carried out across the Netherlands, therefore with the geographical dispersion, data collection was easier through internet interviewing, especially since the quality of the results collected are comparable to face-to-face interviews (Bolderston, 2012).

In this context, the researcher took the role of *gardener* in that the “*interviewer uses questions to plant a seed and then cultivates the growth of ideas and shared perceptions through extended dialogue with participants*” (Salmons, 2011, p.19). This is key to identify possible researcher biases in terms of limitations and minimise them and consider ethical considerations. It built rapport with (Archibald et al., 2019) the interviewee through active listening skills (Xiao, Zhou, Chen, Yang and Chi, 2020). In line with the researcher’s *gardener* role, the semi-structured interview approach was chosen as it has both structure and flexibility (Salmons, 2014). To make them resemble face-to-face interview most, the synchronous method was chosen, meaning the interview “*takes place in real time using venues such as video-conferencing, instant messaging or internet chat rooms*” (Bolderston, 2012, p.73). To do this, videoconferencing was chosen and the platform itself was Zoom. This software was chosen for its ease of use and interactivity to build rapport with the participants (Archibald, Ambagstheer, Casey and Lawless, 2019). For three of the respondents Microsoft Teams was used due to personal preference, and a fourth was conducted over the phone.

The research was conducted in the Dutch context for different reasons. Firstly, because of the cultural nature of the Netherlands, as it is a feminine culture with high indulgence, meaning that there is an accent put on leisure time, enjoying life, and having a work/life balance where all are included (Hostede, 2020). Yet, the Netherlands is far behind the progressive Scandinavian countries but also countries with traditionally high levels of masculinity such as France, Germany or Italy (World Economic Forum, 2020). The population of interest was women in executive boards of Dutch lodging companies. However, after some preliminary research, it was found that this population is very limited, with few women occupying these

positions. Therefore, the population was expanded to women holding or who have held positions in management teams of Dutch hotels.

For this research, non-probability sampling was chosen, and specifically judgement sampling. This method enables a “*choice of subjects who are most advantageously placed or in the best position to provide the information required*” (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016, p.248) due to the specificity of the research. In this case, it would be the most meaningful way of investigating, as the ones who can provide insights are women currently sitting on executive boards, who have been sitting on boards or women in management team member positions. From the adapted population, a total of 11 women were interviewed.

Data Analysis

The first step to qualitative data analysis was the transcription of the interviews (Bailey, 2008). To make the reading of the transcriptions easier, they have not been transcribed verbatim. Although this method would ensure rigor, quality, veracity of the interviews since every word is written, it can also be chaotic (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006; Poland, 1995). However, to ensure a consistent transcription and analysis, specific steps were taken (Appendix 2). Once all transcriptions were completed, a thematic analysis was done through NVivo by first becoming familiar with the content of the interviews and coding them individually. This created the initial coding, which was then regrouped into themes on the software, making the elements of the propositions emerge as main themes, as well as some inductive findings. Figure 3 offers a full overview of the initial codes and the final theme. A second reading was conducted to ensure no elements had been overlooked in the interviews and the quotes were then displayed in table format (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016).

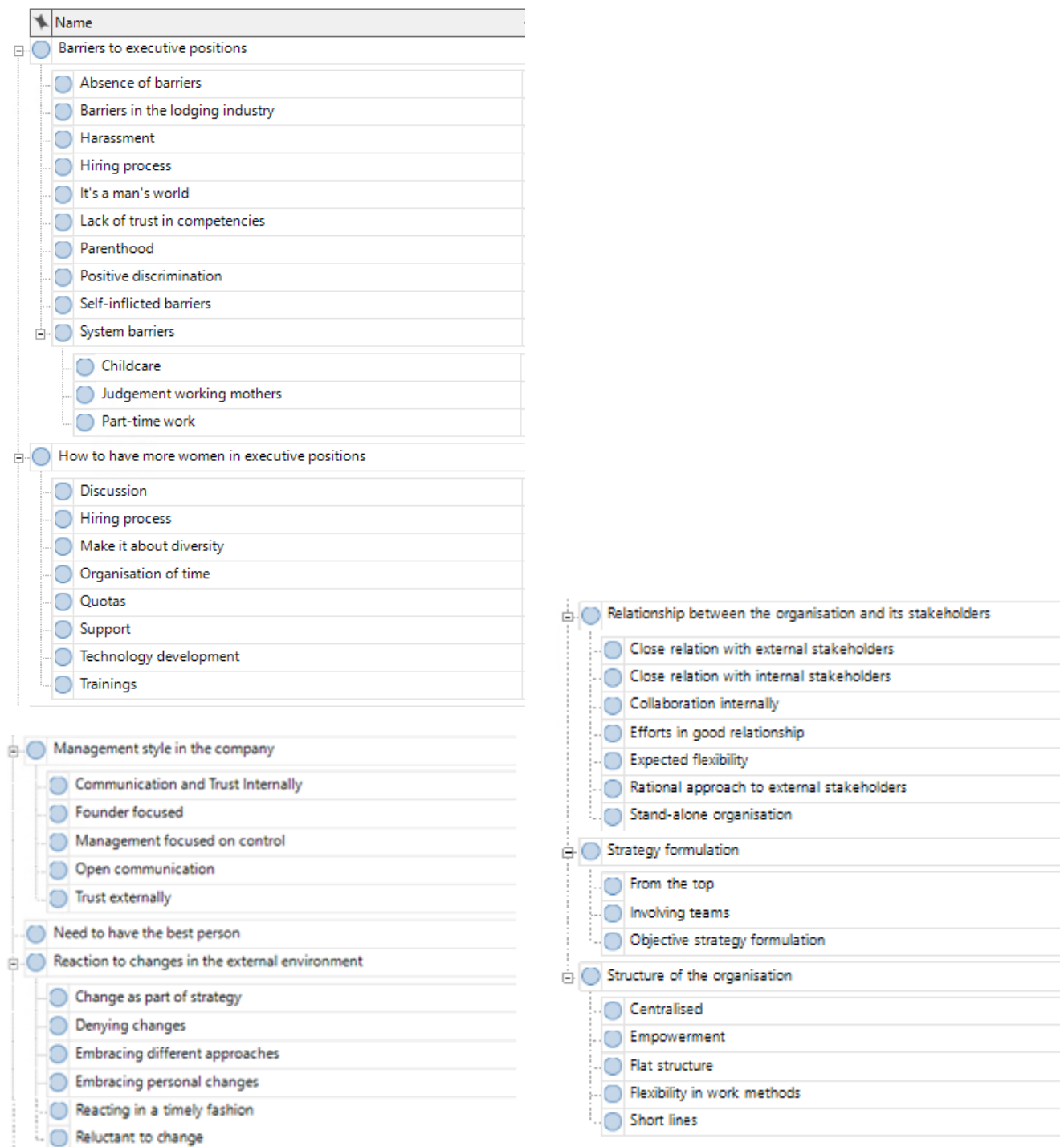


Figure 3: Thematic Overview

Addressing Ethical Issues

As the research was collecting personal data, an informed consent form was issued for ethical data management (Salmons, 2014) (Appendix 3). These gave transparency regarding the treatment of the information, anonymity and collected the participants preference for role disclosure. Anonymity was ensured by using codes, previously established, and removing identifiers which could trace the identity of the participants (Bolderston, 2012). The generalised elements to keep anonymity were names, places, occupation to ensure the data would still be relevant for the research. However, complete anonymity can be unachievable, since the people involved in the research process knew who the participants were, and external readers closely tied to the field may be able to recognise people through specific references (Saunders, Kitzing and Kitzing, 2015). Considering this, sensitive information was treated with integrity to respect the interviewees. In line with this, all interviewees were provided with the transcript of their interview to review. Any element which they wished to omit was removed from the transcript and all changes mentioned were made before analysis (Hagens, Dobrow and Chafe, 2009). The transcripts of the anonymous interviews were then all stored via the Hotelschool the Hague research centre (appendix 4).

FINDINGS

To collate the findings, pertinent quotes were selected but full transcripts can be found in appendix 5, with a summary table of the codes in appendix 6.

Proposition 1: When an organisation is interwoven with its stakeholders, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

The relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders in the feminist stakeholder theory is based on collaboration and a web of interrelated entities. This appears to be the most used approach among the participant; seven of the eleven participants mentioned this idea of cooperation, talking about “*close*” (J) relationships and it being “*easier to help each other*” (A). This transcends having business relationship with stakeholders, as is said by two management team members “*we help each other, even in competition*” (G) and “*we were working together with a lot of competitors and also with the public services and the province*” (C). The interlinkages and dependences were clear for those respondents, mentioning the desire to create “*win-win situations*” (F).

Likewise, two other notions emerged from interviews with executive board members, the first one was wanting relations to be “*based on our values*” (K) and that it is important to be “*sharing a vision*”. The second notion is the idea of having “*partnership in the long-term*” (I) and focusing on creating “*a long-term partnership instead of being on the penny*” (I). These two ideas show the web of relations with an extra depth of long-lasting and common principles.

However, some companies still maintained the idea of companies being autonomous, as is portrayed by one owner stating she had “*no relationship with competitors*” (D) and that “*I don’t work with suppliers*”. This shows the detached nature between the owner and the other entities within the web of relations a company is tied to. In a similar fashion, one management team member recalls “*They would not really reach out to the partners that were alongside so kind of like an independent individual*” (F).

A key element was also looking at the importance given to the internal stakeholders and fostering a close relationship. Both executive board members and management team members mentioned “*we’re very protective of each other*” (E), “*Because you know that all those people, they have to pay their mortgage, or they have to pay the rent, and sometimes they have a family*” (G) or even “*to also see people see them as they are, that was very important for me to remember.*” (F) However, it seemed that these were elements women brought themselves to the company, and something they valued in their job.

Having said this, it is also important to note that the pandemic may be a catalyst for change in this aspect as one participant noted that “*we are all in deep trouble, we should be very close to each other and as open as possible*” (A). The troubles the lodging industry is currently facing are bringing out the necessity to have a genuine web of relations with all stakeholders.

Proposition 2: When the changing external environment is seen as an opportunity for creativity, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

In the feminist stakeholder theory, the changes in external environments should be embraced as the only constant to ensure creativity and pleasant relationship with all. Interestingly, participants shared instances where change was not embraced or acknowledged by the hotel they were in, leading sometimes to leaving the industry. One management team member explains this in the context of having children: “*we just pretend that there's nothing happening, but there's everything that is happening, everything is changed*” (F) The denial of change is directly harmful for the employees and pushes them out of the industry. This attitude may have prevented her from continuing to grow in her career. Likewise, another respondent explained her first experiences in the industry when wanting to change the badge from “*trainee*” to “*stagiaire*” to avoid misunderstandings from French-speaking guests: “*Can you please change it and have stagiaire [...] And the HR manager that was really very cross at me, and he said, No, I’m not going to change. But in the afternoon, all the female trainees had to go to the HR*

office and all their badges were changed.” (G) In this example, the general manager stepped in to make things change, but initially the first response was that there would be no change. The respondent also shared examples where she faced the same challenges when wanting to become head steward and when wanting to go abroad for her internship based on sex. From these two examples the lack of adaptation to change could prevent career growth. A couple of executive board members however shared the idea that change is part of the strategy and of the way the company operates, stating that “*we have to be very flexible to change and adapt to circumstances if they ask us to*” (J) or that “*every year we make a risk analysis and we use it to see if we have to change our way of working*” (H). However, most other respondents also mentioned reacting in a timely way to external changes in the environment, making internal changes seem to have the biggest impact.

Proposition 3: When the management style of the organisation is focused on collective action and communication, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Most of the respondents who were part of executive boards mentioned the ideas of communication, collaboration and creating trust internally. One of them mentioned this idea that “*I think I trust all my people but they do ask for approval*” (B) and another brought forward that “*what is most important is that you have an environment within your company, within your team, where there is trust and a feeling of safety*” (K). Looking at external stakeholders, one owner also mentioned the importance of building trust through constant communication “*you have to have trust in your environment*” (J) with banks, suppliers and competitors.

Management team members of women who had left the industry depicted different scenes, where it is more about control and competition so if you could not match the requirements someone else could do the job. One example of this was explained as “*He said, I need you to commit to me whenever I need you. He said, and that means 24/7. So if I need you at 8pm, you need to be at 8pm. If I need you at 1am to do stuff, you need to be at 1am.*” (F). This example

is not based on collaboration and undermines the trust and human interaction. The interviewee described this interaction was “*shocking*”. Others did recognise the need to be more collaborative and created that “*I changed that the other way around to also involve people more in all the parts of the processes and I think with great success*” (C) making them more involved in the collective action. It seems that through rigidity of the industry and the control in the management style women are being pushed out of the industry. On the contrary, when there is communication, collaboration and trust women have stayed and were able to progress.

Proposition 4: When the strategy is formulated with solidarity in mind, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

A common finding from all interviews was that strategy remained a theoretical process regardless of whether employees were included or consulted. This is shown in the goal-orientation some respondents depicted “*we have to look at our competitors, and our financial situation, where we would like to grow*” (H) or in the processes described “*we'll make a yearly sales and marketing plan and that's based on the strategy*” (A) or “*the mother company says what their vision and strategy is for the coming years, and then it narrows down*” (G). The process is clearly designed, considering the threats and opportunities in objective ways.

However, the approaches varied slightly. In certain instances, they were described as “*top-down exercise*” (G) “*it was shareholders together with the board set the high level steering direction*” (K) making the process more objective and rational. Others mentioned the fact that it was a process left for hotel managers as mentioned by “*the strategy is being thought of by ourselves in the hotel*” (A). Others tried to involve the teams within the process in a more bottom-up process, sharing that “*every department ends with their strategy and we put it all together into one strategy*” (C) or also mentioning “*we do it together*” (J) and that the aim is that the “*team should contribute to that to really be a part of it*” (K). The intentions to have more involvement of internal stakeholders is evident, but still mainly focusing on objectives

and facts. It is already a more inclusive and human approach, but no interviewee mentioned that strategy goes beyond the facts and considers a variety of stakeholders and their different impressions of the situation. One struggle mentioned was that “*I realize it's always hard, because people in the hostels are more operational*” (H) and not what the executive was searching for in their input. Although different inputs are sought, they are expected to still be within the frame of objective higher-level strategy building. In all these approaches to creating strategy there were no striking differences. For all, different levels of engagement were used but with no evident impact on accessibility to boards.

Proposition 5: When the hierarchy is decentralised and focused on empowerment, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Most respondents, on the topic of hierarchy, described flat hierarchy with a wish to empower different levels of the organisation. Indeed, respondents described their company as “*they are quite flat*” (D) or saying “*we tried to make it flat*” (C). However, what is most interesting to look at is how elements of decentralisation are put into practice given specific examples.

Actually, many women holding positions in executive boards mentioned the idea of delegating and interdependence as a way of getting to where they were. Indeed, one of them said “*And so I think all the judgments which are there, but then you'll have to work 24 hours and you have to be available. [...] you can delegate you can empower others*” (I). Likewise, another executive board member shared that in her past company “*she was the second female board members. So for her because we were so complimentary, [...] But that also gave me an enormous flexibility in working hours, because she fully accepted it.*” (K). We can see in those two examples elements of empowerment, delegation and interdependence. On the contrary, certain women who left the industry or are on management team level mentioned managers saying “*you are part of the executive team, you cannot work less hours, because that would*

give a wrong impression of your position” (F). It would then appear that this company did not apply decentralisation and therefore no interdependence and empowerment principles.

These elements of radical empowerment and decentralisation can be linked to the topic of motherhood which naturally emerged through inductive analysis in the interviews. One management team member mentioned that having a child led her to think *“I cannot make it happen. But there was not even the discussion on how”* (G) showing the lack of options discussed to make it work. Women who are holding executive positions also then understood the need for it and ensured that it was available for other women after them *“I said okay, then you work one day home”* (I). They recognised that *“a lot of women struggle, if they want to grow in a consistent career and also have a family”* (J). We see a gap between companies making arrangements through radical empowerment and those who are not. Two of the three management team members interviewed changed career path because of not being able to combine being a mother and their position and mentioned the rigidity and lack of communication with their employer.

This notion of empowerment appears to be linked to the idea of adapting to a changing environment and changing stakeholders. When there is flexibility and interdependence thanks to decentralisation and empowerment women flourish. However, when there is no flexibility and when the company is too rigid there is a loss of female talent.

Transparency

One of the inductive findings which emerged was the lack of transparency within the industry. Indeed, the process of finding the board composition was ad hoc, there are no databases and most companies do not disclose it, leaving one to question the reason behind it.

Barriers

Finally, it appears that the barriers women face are multiple. However, some talked about the advantages of being a woman as *“people like to have more diversity”* (D). They felt no barriers, *“on the contrary”* (E). But the majority did mention that barriers persisted. There were mentions that *“you are not taken seriously”* (J) and that they felt they had to *“prove yourself more”* (J) or again that you must *“stand up for you”* (G). This reflects a certain distrust in the capabilities and skills women have, but could also portray an underlying gender norm that men feel they are superior to women. Interestingly, one owner also mentioned that she *“trust[s] women more”* (E). Others also pointed to the fact that it was a question of being *“too shy”* (J) *“too modest”* (B), *“not placing themselves in the spotlight”* (C).

Although it was never pointed out as a clear barrier, the fact of having children also emerged as a turning point for certain women and could be a hurdle in career growth. The barriers are multiple, and the blames are also different. Indeed, some women argued that it was *“women themselves”* (C), whilst others pointed to the organisations needing to make more efforts, the social constructs of childcare specific to the Dutch culture or also the judgement from others of being a full-time working mother. This aspect emerged as a very important cultural elements with *“As a mother, you cannot work full-time”* (I), *“do you work five times? So then you will not have time for your children.”* (A). The judgement appeared to be strong, and one other interviewee mentioned *“I saw harassment, I felt harassment”* (I) so some very dark and impactful aggressions remain at both societal and company level.

Helpful elements

During the research, some elements emerged as paramount in helping women progress in their career. Some of them gave varying opinions, such as the question of quotas, brought up spontaneously, but many women mentioned *“But we should be careful, we should be elected because of our qualities and not because we are a woman.”* (D) or *“the quotas, that the governments are putting, I’ve never been a fan of that, I don’t think that works. I think it should come naturally”* (K). There was however a recurring idea that it should be about hiring the best person, and four women specifically mentioned having the *“best candidate”*, *“best person”*.

Important factors to progress were organisation of time, especially for working mothers, and getting support, whether it be personal or professional. For the former, interviewees mentioned *“So if you wanted me to work in the evening, that’d be fine. But then I would want to be off in the afternoon, so that I would still be able to see them.”* (F) or *“Combining a family with young children with a very demanding job, you have to organise it well”* (G). Most respondents brought this up within the interview as a key component to being a working mother. Then regarding the support, some mentioned family *“I had my parents, especially my mother, she was always supportive. So they did babysitting for a day a week or so”* (K) or professional *“bit by bit I went up also, because there was a leader who was keen on me and trusted me.”* (I).

DISCUSSION

From the findings, most of the barriers described by the women interviewed were like the ones already revealed in the study by Segovia-Pérez et al. (2019). Indeed, most of the respondents put forward the idea of not being taken seriously, or having to prove yourself and standing up for yourself. From our analysis of the elements it also reflects a lack of trust regarding skills of colleagues. This encompasses then other elements retrieved from the interviews such as the fact that some women interviewed also shared that they trusted women more. Another women also mentioned that she experienced harassment. This indicates it could be more a failure in creating a company culture which fosters psychological safety and trust.

Moreover, another factor which emerged as a barrier at the individual level was that women were perhaps too modest, too shy in comparison to men who are more boisterous or outspoken in general. In this sense, women need to adapt to a more aggressive leadership style to succeed, in line with Segovia-Pérez et al. (2019). However, some new barriers emerged, which are country specific. This type of new barrier was expected since Risman (2004) and Chizema et al. (2015) pointed out the deep connection between gender as a social construct and cultural expectations. The recurrent culture-specific barriers were the judgement of full-time working mothers from the rest of society, but also the lack of support in the governmental aid in general.

Surprisingly, women who had not had children said that they did not feel they faced any form of barrier and saw being a woman as an advantage in the career progression. In Segovia-Pérez et al. (2019) research, the respondents were unanimous that there were barriers at different levels. For women who had had children, the lack of flexibility, of discussing options and not having role models to look to also consisted barriers. Looking at the literature on the matter of work-life balance, it is consistent with Obrenovic, Jianguo, Khudaykulov and Khan's (2020) study on the work-family conflict on psychological safety. Indeed, this study reveals that by

limiting work-family conflict, psychological safety can be increased, which then positively affects employee performance.

When looking at what women mentioned as helpful in their career progress, it appeared that it was not a question of formal actions or policy actions, but a question of support, communication and being able to organise your time. There could be more done from employers to be creative and encourage women to stay, but at the moment it is just the idea that if you do not fit the 'ideal worker' type centred around masculine norms then you are not fit for executive board (Costa, Breda, Bakas, Durão, Carvalho and Caçador, 2017).

Finally, an emerging finding which was surprising was the lack of transparency in the Dutch lodging industry. The numbers and board compositions were very hard to come by, and even after extensive research there is still uncertainty as to whether or not a complete overview was created. Without this clarity it is hard to paint an accurate picture of the situation and drive change. There is a global need for more disclosure on governance matters, and more transparency, which the Dutch lodging industry should also follow as it ensures accountability (Markarian, Parbonetti and Previts, 2007).

The way business is being conducted right now in the Dutch lodging industry has been designed as a rigid work environment solely rewarding constant availability, having a strong attitude and preserving the status quo designed by a group of men. This has led to talented women being pushed out from the career path which could have brought them to become an executive director. Considering these elements, the lack of transparency and the ineffectiveness of the comply or explain principle (Lückerath-Rovers, 2020), this explains the slow to no progress, and the deadlock situation we now face in terms of progress for gender equality. From the barriers identified (lack of trust, no flexibility in work, no desire for change), the lodging industry has been designed by men without desire to change the rules of how business is run to

be more inclusive. From this problem, it would fit the definition of individual/organisation relationship according to the socialist feminism/gendered organisation with “*Organizations as ‘inequality regimes’ reproducing and exploiting inequalities*” (Grosser and Moon, 2019, p.37). Considering this, the solution to combat these problems would not be policy changes but the “*focus on changing organizations. Identify how organizational processes are gendered, produced and reproduced*” (Grosser and Moon, 2019, p.37). The judgement may be harsh, as part of this also includes the idea of organisations being “*inequality regimes*” (Acker, 2006, p.443), but the reality is that looking at the figures and the distribution, the lodging industry currently maintains a strong gender inequality system. This is where our findings bring a new perspective to the debate and suggest there needs to be a paradigm change in the way business is done in the lodging industry. From our research, one such paradigm change could come from some of the pillars of the feminist stakeholder theory. Indeed, the four elements of collaboration between stakeholders, management focused on communication, embracing change and radical empowerment appeared to be highly relevant to overcome the main barriers the interviewees mentioned.

Our findings on the fact that collaboration with stakeholders contributed to having more women in executive boards was in line with what was expected. They also build on from Machold et al. (2008), who argued for a new governance model based on this web of care between firm relationships. Our research highlights that many women also made sure to care for internal stakeholders, and that was important to them but not necessarily always there. However, we can make a link between the collaboration with internal stakeholders and the management style as many codes overlapped between the two in terms of collaboration and communication.

Regarding the management style within the company, most women described their own style as being about cooperation and communication, which is in line with the findings from Liao et al. (2018). Indeed, they reported more communication and transparency when women joined

boards. However, women on executive boards also described their boards as being very open and willing to have discussions, which was rarely the case for others who did not discuss their options or there was simply no room for discussion. This is in line with the literature from Segovia-Pérez et al (2019), describing the management style as very aggressive, but it also shows that focusing on communication and collaboration opens opportunities for women in their career progression. It gives them an opportunity to be heard, and together with the organisation find a working method that fits both parties and enables women to grow instead of taking the male counterpart, who does not bare children for instance, as the standard.

In line with the literature as well was the idea that embracing change was beneficial and builds creativity (Darvishmotevali et al., 2020). Mostly the respondents described reacting to changes in the external environment and not trying to control it. However, internally, women who left felt that there was a desire to control changes in emotions and needs after having had children. For executive board members, management was flexible in their work methods and in the organisation without judgement as they built their careers. To facilitate women's access to boards, embracing change also needs to be done internally, and this would also facilitate having more communication when change is expected. Furthermore, the combination of embracing change and the management style focused on communication could lead to more voluntary transparency of the gender balance numbers at management and executive level.

Surprisingly, when it came to the hierarchy, all interviewees described their organisation as flat, unlike the predictions made. However, the notion of empowerment and decentralisation is yet to be completely embraced. As expected, executive board members were part of companies which seemed to have more decentralisation and empowerment. This feeds into the notion of creating flexibility, but for it to be present, there is a need for trust and open communication (Jena, Bhattacharyya and Pradhan, 2019).

A surprising finding however was that the strategy formulation was not drastically different between respondents and they were all focusing on the rational and objective approach to strategy. There was no real consideration of the behavioural strategy by anyone, as was initially expected (Powell et al., 2011). However, it must be noted that upon reflection, it may have been that the question was not asked in the right way to get the most relevant answers for it. It would have benefited from having follow-up question to understand the content of the strategy as well, not just the process. Had this been done, the findings may have been different, as the current ones are more inferring and interpreting the answers given.

To answer the research questions “*How can feminist stakeholder theory help women gain access to executive boards in the lodging industry*”, four of the elements identified by the feminist reading of the stakeholder theory by Wicks et al. (1994) could provide an adequate framework for a paradigm change in the way business is conducted in the lodging industry. Indeed, it needs to create trust and support from within and implement more care for its stakeholders to attract talent and retain them. This is one of the fundamentals in the hospitality industry for guests, but could also be turned inwards. Furthermore, it seems to be the most fitting approach to the socialist feminism/gender organisation reading of the issues at hand (Grosser and Moon, 2019). These could be deciding factors in bridging the gap between women who were forced to leave the industry and the ones who made it to the top positions.

Considering the devastating effects of COVID19, the lodging industry cannot afford to lose talent to the fact that organisations perpetuate inequality in the way they are run. The key principles to implement are transparency, radical empowerment, management based on communication, embracing internal change and collaboration. In the lodging industry this will create an environment of interdependence, flexibility, trust and psychological safety (Frazier,

Fainschmidt, Klinger, Pezeshkan and Vracheva, 2017). For there to be a real change, lodging companies would benefit from a culture and paradigm change especially since all the elements are strongly interrelated and feed off each other to make the environment work as a whole. Creating this virtuous cycle would not only benefit women, but any person who wishes to combine their work and family life yet still progress in their career to gain access to executive positions.

Theoretical Implications

As a result of this research, a framework is proposed to consider how the feminist stakeholder theory tackles the main barriers and issues women have experienced and how it could be of theoretical use for organisations and for the industry at large to create a paradigm change (figure 4). From Wicks et al (1994)'s initial model, four of the five pillars appeared as most relevant and were further detailed, and the emergent finding of the lack of transparency was also added as a key element to making changes in the industry.

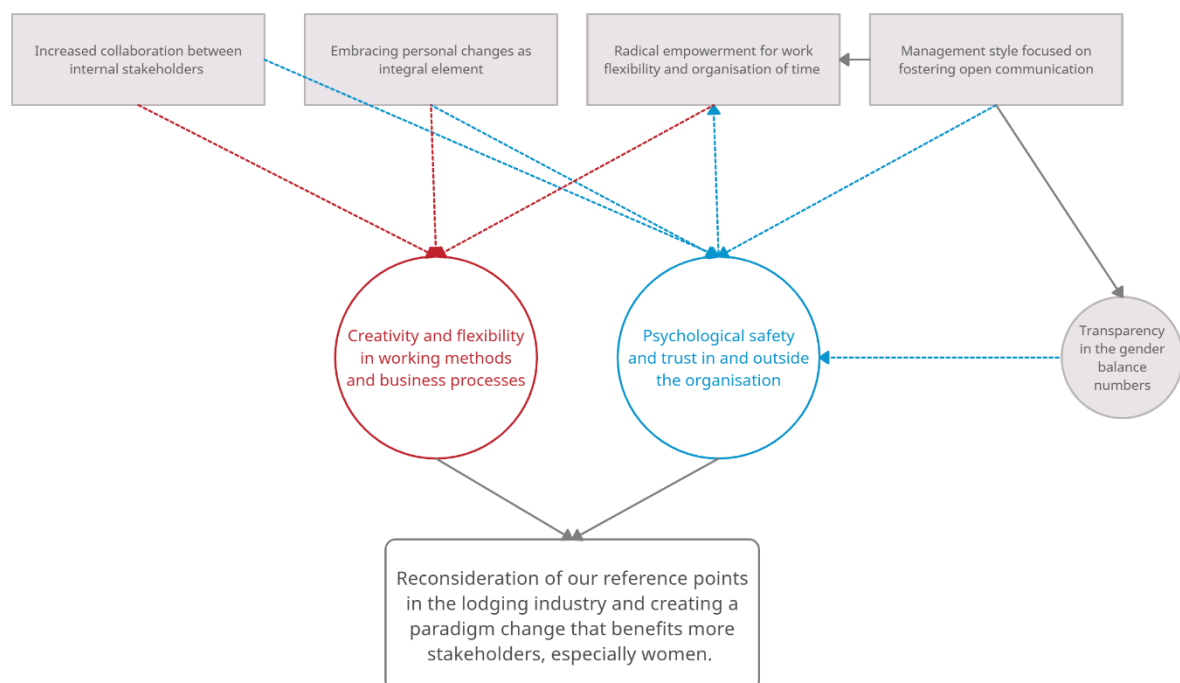


Figure 4: The Role of the Feminist Stakeholder Theory in Creating a Paradigm Change

Limitations and Future Research

Despite the precautions and thorough approach to designing the research limitations were identified. In terms of sampling, no sample frame is available, therefore coverage errors have been committed, and more suitable candidates may have been missed, which could mean valuable data is not collected (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). It was found after data collection, that some female executives had not been identified, and were left out of the population. This impact the results, especially considering the small population size, as an additional insight could change the outcomes. It would be interesting to conduct research on the underlying reasons behind this lack of disclosure and transparency.

Then, it appeared that some literature may have been overlooked in the domain of the feminist stakeholder theory and the different feminist visions of organisations (Grosser and Moon, 2019). It could be that these readings would have led to a different approach to the research, based on the angle of feminism identified. As such, to gain a more holistic idea of the problem at hand, the use of different methodologies such as case studies or structured observations may be interesting to research. Furthermore, it appeared in hindsight that there were different understandings of the term executive position, which may have led to different answers than expected. This may be due to the language barrier since the interviews were all in English and the interviewees were Dutch. Upon reconducting a similar research, it would be advised to give a definition of the term at the beginning of the interview to ensure both interviewer and interviewee have a common understanding.

Finally, the interpretation of the data is a subjective process, and errors in interpretation may be made during the data analysis (Flick, 2014). As a woman with my own experiences, the interpretation of certain experiences or descriptions may have been skewed, and should another person undertake the analysis, the outcomes may be different.

Only women have been interviewed in this research, but it would be beneficial to conduct the same with male executives to compare the answers and draw additional conclusions. It could be that it is not just women who are being pushed out, but also men who do not fit the rigid hospitality industry.

This research is one of the few combining business ethics theories with gender equality in executive positions, so more research should be done combining these two elements. Likewise, the number of journal articles relating ethics and the hospitality industry is limited to 62 articles between 2006 and 2015 (Myung, 2018), so this domain is yet to be developed. Therefore, we recommend further research looking at hospitality through an ethical perspective, and specifically having qualitative research on the matter of gender equality to gain deeper understanding.

The question of gender equality is context dependent, and factors in several variables such as culture and norms. This research was conducted in a Dutch specific context, so it would be enlightening to recreate it in other countries to gain more holistic insights. Furthermore, the framework has been proposed through exploratory research and it would be worth testing it through a quantitative approach.

Conclusion

The current study proposes a new outlook on how to help women gain access to executive boards in the lodging industry. Based on the barriers identified, it appeared that the problem resides in the running of the organisations, which perpetuates one single view, therefore maintaining systems of inequality. To counter this, organisations should change their culture internally to incorporate some of the pillars of the feminist stakeholder theory as defined by Wicks et al. (1994) such as collaboration between all stakeholders, embracing internal change, management focused on open communication and embracing radical empowerment. On top of this, another factor which could be beneficial is disclosure and transparency on the current numbers and board compositions. This calls for a deeply rooted culture change to ensure it benefits everyone who currently does not fit the rigid requirements the lodging industry imposes. The feminist stakeholder theory perspective goes beyond the question of financial or non-financial gains and justifies the need to have more women by exposing the flaws of the current system. There is a strong need to reconsider our reference points within the hospitality industry, and challenge the status quo of forcing all workers, regardless of any difference to adapt to one archetype or leave.

DESIGNING A PRACTICAL SOLUTION

This far, the focus has been placed on the theoretical implications of the research, however translating it into a practical solution will make it more actionable for companies to change the status quo. From the research, the barriers exposed fell within socialist feminism/gender organisation reading, and that to tackle this problem the most adequate solution was changing organisations and identifying where the processes are gendered. To put this into action, organisations need to undergo an organisational transformation to rethink the current organisational practices, and redesign them.

Considering that every organisation is unique, for an intervention to be effective it needs to be relevant to that organisation specifically (Cummings and Worley, 2014). However, three criteria need to be fulfilled for the intervention to be successful: valid information, knowledge of outcomes and extent to which it enhances the organisation's capacity for change. As such, the first step is the measurement of the current proportions of women at all levels: non-executive board, executive board, senior management team, middle management, and operations. This will paint a clear picture of the situation and show the inequalities to become aware. Then based on this, organisations should formulate where they wish to be. In terms of capacity for change, this will already be tackled since one of the elements of the feminist stakeholder theory is embracing change (Wicks et al., 1994).

However, from Acker (2006)'s analysis, most organisational equality projects have failed due to the interest of the few privileged being compromised. Considering that they also hold the positions of power, the change process is complicated. But with values in society shifting, and an increased focus on the notions of fairness and equality, the environment is becoming more welcoming to these ideas. As such, the four elements of the feminist stakeholder theory elements could be the starting point to change management in terms of equality projects. The findings showed that these could be key in increasing the number of women in the lodging

industry. The solution should present organisations with the focus points of what will yield the best sustainable change to create equality. As such, based on the research it should include creating a decentralised organisation, fostering a management style focused on communication instead of control, having a web of care with all stakeholders (specifically internal) and embracing all changes (especially personal ones).

This is an issue which is by no means limited to the lodging industry. Therefore, BR-ND People, as a consultancy firm would be interested in providing tools to their clients to have more inclusive boards. BR-ND People is a boutique brand culture consultancy firm based in Amsterdam. It is part of the B Corp community, dedicated to using business as a force for good, and the creator of the 23plusone friends community, with 53 practitioners using the 23plusone method in their profession. Through collaborative processes, they support organisations with brand and culture development and build happier organisations. The solution was designed for their company, and a declaration of confidentiality was signed at the beginning to ensure the gathering of company data was done in an ethical way (appendix 7).

As such, from the findings with industry professionals, and from the scientific literature, some elements were already translated to possible changes companies could implement. To make it more specific to BR-ND People, a panel discussion was organised to get additional insights on the matter from the organisation's perspective and their stakeholders (appendix 8). The panel was composed of Kim Cramer (owner BR-ND People), Rumaizon Abdul Malik (representing 23plusone friends) and Veerle Donders (representing B Corp community). From this, it became apparent some organisations also sought practical tools. Then, a few brainstorming sessions were done with BR-ND to get insights on their thoughts and expectations. From the different perspectives, the solution which seemed most adequate was a playbook (appendix 9). Indeed, this fits the needs perfectly since a playbook *“helps business leaders set out a mission statement, with specific goals and priorities, followed by deliberate tactics (the “plays”) to achieve them.”*

(Côté, Eidelman and Fenn, 2020, p.4). Since this is a problem relative to governance, as an intern it is not possible for me to directly influence it. However, I can raise awareness and provide the tools to create a change within organisations. The playbook can be used by BR-ND People, their licensed friends, their clients and the B Corp community. Not only is this solution feasible regarding time, but it is also in line with the company culture of BR-ND People, which focuses on knowledge sharing and spreading ideas of system change and rethinking the models in our society. Considering the current hardships of the company, it is also a cheap solution with an acceptable risk.

The playbook itself represents the change plan which clients, companies and partners can use in their daily operations to attract and promote more women to get to the executive board positions. BR-ND People is used to sharing thought pieces and white papers on their company website and social media, and use Issuu for this. On the platform, the average read time was 8min45 so I focused on having easy to read content, and even by scanning it would be possible to gain some understanding and create curiosity. They are also a company focused on being edgy and fun, while maintaining the solid scientific background. As such, I chose a tone of voice which matches these requirements and could integrate both elements. During our brainstorm with Kim, and the first feedback moment with Michael, the main point was making sure the playbook had a straight-forward actionable aspect to it.

To create it, elements of the 23plusone method were used to make it attractive in presentation and in implementation process of the advice given. It considered all human drives must be touched to make a product as attractive as possible, and therefore people will want to make use of it. Therefore, the groups basic need, self-development, ambition, vitality, and attraction were all incorporated (figure 5). The basic needs of caring, safety and connected are at the heart of the playbook and the brave spaces facilitation. Then, for self-development it is tackled in the understanding of individuality and recognising each other's differences in the discussion

process to embrace change. The ambition element was in the accountability aspect to ensure the company has recognition. Then, the vitality was integrated by highlighting that employees' stress, which can be caused by lack of open conversations, can have very negative effects on health and therefore performance. As such, one of the outcomes is increased overall health in the company. Finally, the attraction elements were in the design, ensuring it was aesthetically pleasing. Moreover, a chapter was written for 23plusone since it is a facilitator of open communication and psychological safety. Furthermore, the housestyle of BR-ND People was used, with the logo, the colours and the fonts to ensure a design consistency.



Figure 5: 24 Human Drives of 23Plusone (Cramer and Koene, 2010)

In terms of content, there are four elements: creating awareness, hiring process, rethinking reporting lines and implementing brave spaces interventions. The first three elements emerged based on the barriers and struggles mentioned in the interviews and in the panel discussion, and their solutions were found in best practices (Mercer, 2020; Sodexo, 2021; Women Empowerment Principles, 2021). Then, the idea of brave spaces emerged from a webinar on diversity and inclusion for whistleblowing policies, in the search on how to make the culture shift more tangible (Aaker, 2021). Through this, brave spaces are a steppingstone to psychological safety, which is a very noble ideal, but out of reach for most companies since every person has their own background and experiences (Arao and Clemens, 2013). However, it does foster an open environment for sharing on a more personal level and is key in embracing change since you cannot adapt and make the necessary changes if you do not know what people are experiencing. Through the openness of the discussion and the ground rules established at the beginning of the intervention, empathy should naturally be created as well (Wasserman and Browne, 2021). This intervention tackles multiples aspects from the research: creating open communication, embracing personal changes, and focusing on collaboration. It is in combination with the changes in reporting lines to shift towards more empowered teams as the two work in symbiosis to make the work environment more flexible and make teams feel closer to one another.

IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION

The playbook was presented to BR-ND People and the implementation process was discussed. The interventions have been based off the eight-step Kotter model to provide a guide which can be executed without the presence of the researcher (Kotter, 2012). Then, since it is aimed at their future clients, the B Corp Community and the 23plusone Friends, the implementation processes varied per target group.

Future Clients

The playbook will be posted on the BR-ND People website so clients could ask about its usage, as part of the brand culture and the current services offered. It can be used as a toolkit that companies can use independently with no guidance, since it should be self-explanatory. This is intended to benefit the wider community as an open access document.

Since it is part of the brand-led culture, gender inequality may be one of the outcomes following internal audit of the companies wanting to improve their culture. This tool can then help BR-ND People with clients in the types of culture changes they might need and how to facilitate it. That depends on the company culture evaluated, and is not a one-size-fits-all but could be helpful. It also fits the method of BR-ND People since they involve everyone in the company in culture changes or strategy formulations. Furthermore, since BR-ND People is not specialised in the operationalisation of the culture formulation, this playbook adds value to their proposition.

B Corp Community

For the B Corp Community, it intended as a self-guiding document which can be used independently. As such, it will simply be posted on the B Hive, their platform for knowledge sharing, with the basic instructions in the description. The way the playbook has been written should make it so that there would be no need for further directions so that the wider community

can benefit. Furthermore, the concepts of stakeholder capitalism are already engrained in the B Corp ideology, so this playbook builds on from this. Considering that the B Corp community is international, a note will also be made in the description that it is based on research carried out in the Netherlands and would perhaps not be as relevant for other countries but could give pointers. The intended outcomes are that this will help organisations take steps towards becoming more inclusive through culture change but also put forward the 23plusone method.

23plusone Friends

The same idea applies to the 23plusone friends. Given the intercultural aspect, this playbook is not guaranteed to be as relevant in South Africa or Malaysia, but could also just give some ideas. Likewise, 23plusone friends can then use it should they wish with their own clients, as HR and culture professionals or for coaches. Since they already use 23plusone as a method, this is another way of diversifying its use.

EVALUATION

The primary measurement should be a before/after assessment once the playbook is put into practice. Its first goal is to improve gender equality in executive positions, and it can only be considered successful if that goal is reached. The playbook has been designed to be carried out in a live setting, so until the government regulations in the Netherlands allow workers to go back to the office, this is not directly implementable, but once it is this assessment would be most appropriate. It is also easy for BR-ND People to carry out, and takes minimal time and resources.

For the playbook itself, other means of assessment are necessary. Throughout the process, and as per design-based research, different evaluation moments were put into place: formative and summative assessments (Easterday, Lewis and Gerber, 2014). The formative assessments were carried out twice before the summative assessment and the final product. They were conducted verbally with my company coach with a review of the first prototype, leading to feedback to implement and improve the product. From this, the playbook was made more practical with tick boxes, more colours were integrated, the 23plusone method was further built upon as a separate chapter and he expressed a need for more tangible ways of creating open communication and embracing change. In the second, the new prototype was reviewed once more to check those elements, see how the tick boxes were integrated, and he encouraged a more reader-friendly way of implementing it, and the actionability of the brave spaces for the open communication and change was also reviewed. Thanks to this process, it evolved and was refined as a collaborative process between the researcher and the practitioner (Anderson and Shattuck, 2012).

Then, the summative assessment was carried out. Considering that *“design-based research views a successful innovation as a joint product of the designed intervention and the context.”* (The Design-Based Research Collective, 2003, p.7), a list of criteria was built based on the

context of BR-ND People and of the desired outcome. For a full overview of the evaluation criteria, please see appendix 10. Then, I created a survey via the platform Typeform, used by BR-ND People, with a five-point likert scale to assess each of those criteria. The last question was formulated as an open-ended question to enable any further remarks I may have overlooked to be mentioned and ensure constant improvement of the product. From this, Michael then also completed the client evaluation form (appendix 11) considering the different reactions to the product and could assess the elements holistically.

PROCESS REFLECTION

Upon reflection regarding the design-based research approach, the ideal solution would have been to implement the recommended interventions from the playbook and perform a before/after assessment. However, given the time restrictions and the question of actionability with budget considerations, the current solution offers a steppingstone to that solution.

Looking back on the elements relevant to dissemination, the framework was indeed created to build on existing literature relating to the topic of ethics and gender in the context of the hospitality industry. This was disseminated through a published journal article to be further built upon. Furthermore, the research was disseminated with students from Hotelschool the Hague also looking into the same topic, through the means of an online presentation and to continue the research which has been started. Both the theoretical research and practical result were presented, followed by a questions round to expand on any relevant topic. Reflecting on the intention for it to be disseminated to professional women, this has been refined and seems most applicable to professional women with children. However, the dissemination should not simply target women, it should target men as well since gender equality is not just a woman's issue and for there to be a culture change, all genders need to be allies. Likewise, it should not only offer girls role models, but it should also set the norm for young boys. To improve on this, it would be useful to disseminate this to targeted organisations. For an overview of the disseminations, please see appendix 12.

Looking at the deliverable created for BR-ND People, it adds value to their stakeholder groups and themselves. The value it provides is first and foremost in terms of improvement of the community and the business world, but there is also a potential for growing their credibility in terms of their behavioural proposal. Based on the feedback received, the playbook could have been further built upon by having a chapter explaining why it is important to have gender diversity on boards. This will be adjusted and the revised playbook will be reuploaded. Should

any new elements appear in academia or the political realm, the toolkit should also be adapted accordingly.

In terms of research topic, the relevance of exploring a new outlook on the way businesses is conducted to bring about systemic change in terms of gender diversity in boards is clear. It became more important while looking for potential interviewees for the research as problems of accessibility to the data and to the board compositions were encountered. The limited population, the mentions of harassment and the judgement highlighted the importance and showed the real need for this research, especially in the Netherlands, considered to be progressive. This cycle is only the beginning of the research process, and as per the design based research principles, merely the beginning of a new cycle to bring us one step closer to gender equality.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Guide

Research Question: *How can feminist stakeholder theory help women gain access to executive boards in the lodging industry?*

Proposition 1: When an organisation is interwoven with its stakeholders, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 2: When the changing external environment is seen as an opportunity for creativity, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 3: When the management style of the organisation is focused on collective action and communication, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 4: When the strategy is formulated with solidarity in mind, this will help women gain access to executive boards.

Proposition 5: When the hierarchy is decentralised and focused on empowerment, this will help women gain access to executive boards

Introduction:

- Thank interviewee for making the time to take part in the interview
- Small presentation of myself
- Ask if it is possible to record, in line with the consent form issued
- Start the recording
- Restate the consent to record the interview
- Explain the topic at hand
 - The current state of research
 - Focus on executive boards (within the two-tier board system)
 - Feminist stakeholder theory
- Outline the structure of the interview which should take about 40 minutes
 - Barriers
 - Experience in the board (if applicable)
(if not, experience in lodging industry)
 - Vision on the stakeholder theory within the company
 - Personal path

- Future perspectives

Topic	Questions for board members	Questions for non-board members
Introduction	How long have you worked in the lodging industry?	
	Could you briefly explain your professional background?	
	Do you relate to the difficulties women have in climbing the career ladder?	
Barriers to Executive Positions	Did you encounter any barriers in reaching the position you currently hold?	
	Which barriers were they?	
	How did you overcome them?	
Experience (adapt slightly based on interviewee's position)	What is the board composition?	
	How long have you been sitting on this board?	Would you ever consider taking up a position on an executive board?
	Are you or have you been on other executive boards?	How do you see the evolution of your career as it stands?
	(if yes) Are there any notable differences between those boards?	How do you perceive your executive board?
	How heard do you feel on the board you sit on?	What are their strengths and weaknesses?

	Are there differences in performance/participation in the contribution of the other board members?	
	What do you feel you bring to the board in terms of skills and competencies?	
Feminist/Masculinist Perspective on Stakeholder Theory	Can you describe the <u>relationship between your organisation and its stakeholder?</u>	
	How does your organisation <u>respond to a changing external environment?</u>	
	Can you outline the <u>management style</u> of your organisation with regards to decision-making and communication?	
	Can you outline how your company goes about <u>formulating its strategy?</u>	
	Can you outline the <u>hierarchy within the organisation?</u>	
	Have you seen any evolution in any of these over the years?	
Personal Path (optional to answer)	Did you have to make any choices regarding your personal life to get to where you are?	
	Did you receive personal support in your career path from friends, family or partners?	

	How do you balance between your personal life and professional life?
Future Perspective	Why do you think there are so few women currently holding executive positions in corporate boards?
	What changes do you think are needed to increase the number of women in executive positions?
	At which level is change most needed?

Round-off

- Are there any questions I have not asked which I should have asked?
- Would you like to come back to any point we mentioned previously?
- Can I improve anything from this interview?
- Thank you again for your time
- I will send you a transcript of the interview so that you can check if there are any incoherence or elements you would like to revise

Appendix 2. Steps to Transcription and Analysis

1. Audio recording of the interview
2. Labelling of individual interview transcripts

Interviewee Code	
Date	
Time	
Duration of interview	
Platform	

3. Software assisted transcription
4. Review of transcription for accuracy of data and readability
5. Sending transcript to participant for review
6. Making necessary changes based on participant's review

With the use of NVivo

1. Upload transcripts to the software
2. Create nodes based on literature review
3. Code based on these nodes
4. Regroup in themes
5. Analysis for emerging themes

Appendix 3 Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The topic of research is Female Executives in the Dutch Lodging Industry: an Ethical Perspective. Preliminary secondary research has revealed that most of the research this far consists of financial (bottom-line) and non-financial (CSR Reporting) as basis of justifying more women in executive positions. However, through this research, we are trying to find if there is any ground for ethical reasoning. Considering the lack of research, the methodology is based on grounded theory, meaning that from the interviews conducted a framework will be devised which will confirm or infirm the ethical reasoning.

Furthermore, when analysing the lodging industry in the Netherlands, it appeared that the number of women currently holding executive positions is very limited. The research will be kept anonymous, but we do ask if you would or would not like your position to be revealed within the results. We would like you to consider this question as it would be possible to trace back based on positions who is being interviewed and we want to respect the fact that you would want to preserve privacy and complete anonymity.

Finally, once the interview has been recorded and transcribed, the transcript will be sent to you so that you can check the content of the interview and approve it. If there is anything within the

transcript you do not recognise or would like to revise, you are free to let the researcher know, and changes will be made in accordance.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to be interviewed for the research on female executives in the Dutch lodging industry, which is being produced by Diane LereculeyPéran from Hotelschool the Hague.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters; that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice; and that I may choose to not answer any questions which I am not comfortable with sharing information about.

I agree to participate in one electronically recorded interview for this project. I understand that the results of this study may be published in an academic journal or book. I understand that some people may have access to my data, and that my details may be kept for further analysis (if applicable) for a maximum of 15 years after this research project has ended.

I understand that the interview material will be kept anonymous, but that parts of the interview may be cited within the research. Considering the limited number of participants and anticipated traceability, the interviewer would kindly ask whether positions may be used within the citation.

- ☐ I give consent to use my position to cite parts of the interview in the research
- ☐ I do not give consent to use my position to cite parts of the interview in the research

Signature of Interviewee

Date

If you cannot obtain satisfactory answers to your questions or have comments or complaints about your treatment in this study, contact Diane Lereculey-Péran at 671559@hotelschool.nl

I, the researcher, confirm that I have fully informed this participant about the above research project. If any new information arises in the duration of the research project that could potentially influence the participant's consent, I will inform the research participant.

Appendix 4. Data Management

File Upload Notification

N

noreply <noreply@hotelschool.nl>(noreply via deb-az-05.hdh.nl)
To Diane Lereculey-Péran

↩ Reply

↩ Reply All

➡ Forward

⋮

jeu. 06/05/2021 14:03

ⓘ

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Appendix 5. Transcripts

Interview Code	Interviewee A
Date	21 st December 2020
Time	14:30
Duration of interview	30min
Platform	Zoom

Interviewer: So I started the recording now. And so as I was saying in the current stage of the research, there's a real lack in terms of the ethical perspective on maybe it's the right thing to do. And I'm looking at specifically from a stakeholder theory angle and framework. And so for this interview in terms of structure, it will last about half an hour to 40 minutes. And we'll look at, for example, the barriers that still prevail or still prevailed for you, your own experience within the nudging industry. Perhaps as well, some more insights on the stakeholder theory within your own company your personal path, which I would like to mention is also optional for you to answer. If you wish to not answer the question, did the more personal questions that's also fine. And then the future perspectives that you might have on where change can happen. Do you have any questions before we start the interview, perhaps?

Interviewee A: No, that's perfect.

Interviewer: Well I guess maybe we can start with more of an introduction about yourself, maybe how long you've been working in the lodging industry?

Interviewee A: Since 1982. So for a long time.

Interviewer: And maybe, could you briefly explain then your professional backgrounds?

Interviewee A: I've been attending the hotel management school in Maastricht in Holland, and then afterwards I joined as a management trainee, and at the time they had a hotel in Amsterdam and I stayed there until 1994 and I left as an executive assistant director. So I was the second in charge. And then I thought, okay, when I can be the second, I can be the first as well. And at the time I was offered a position as general manager in the Hotel A in Amsterdam. And I took the job because I thought it was very good for me to have this. And at the time I was a young lady with one child. So I thought it was quite okay for me to be offered the job. And I was one of the few female general managers.

Interviewer: It's actually quite interesting. And you think, so for you, the management training program, you did was that a decisive step that you took

Interviewee A: Could be because at the time I was offered to do almost everything in that hotel I've fulfilled in 12 years, about 12 functions, 12 jobs. So I had an enormous chance to see everything and do everything. And that hotel taught me a lot.

Interviewer: That's very interesting. And would you say then you can relate to the difficulties we can often hear and read about in terms of women climbing the career ladder?

Interviewee A: I have some difficulties with that because I have never had difficulties. And I think you can make the problems larger or smaller yourself. When I first started my first job as executive assistant director, I was married and had one child. And then my general manager said, "Oh, do you come back? Then you will have to come back full time." And luckily my husband said, "Oh, of course you do that. We will arrange it." So, by being flexible yourself, you offer the company flexibility as well, when you're too stiff and too rigid, of course the other side is going to be stiff and rigid as well.

That's the past. And nowadays we are far more flexible in offering temporary labor jobs to working mothers or working fathers who want to work for four days instead of five. But at that time it was not really a possibility, but I've never had problems. I have never had difficulties along the way, but that's maybe because I was flexible.

Interviewer: That makes sense. Also, because when I was doing my research, I saw that the proportion of women who work part-time in the Netherlands is very high compared to the average and other countries, for instance. So I'm guessing having a woman who's ready to work full-time and really dedicated means in the end that you get the same.

Interviewee A: I must say that you'll have to see this in the perspective of childcare in Holland. Like for instance, in France, that childcare is something taken care of by the state. That is not the case in Holland. You will have to arrange that everything yourself. So that's quite a difference also in Belgium and in the UK, I believe it's something childcare is organized by the society. And in Holland, it's not, so that's a part of an explanation where there's a difference.

Interviewer: Well I had a few questions that are about barriers, but from what I hear you didn't really encounter any barriers in achieving the position you now hold.

Interviewee A: No, but you can ask me the questions. Maybe I know some answers.

Interviewer: Well that was basically more about like barriers in terms of if that were related to you being a woman, but from what I hear is in the sense it was not the case for you.

Interviewee A: No

Interviewer: Well then since my research focuses more than on also on executive boards, for instance, I was wondering if you maybe could enlighten me about for the executive board and if you know the composition, if it's solely males or if it's also got a diversity, or if you see more diversity in top management of hotels themselves.

Interviewee A: Oh, I see much more diversity, but for instance, now in my present company I work for, the owner of the real estate. And there, I would say it's not half female, but it's a 40% something like that. But that's my guess. And when I look at my colleague general managers of Hotel chain A in Holland, I would say it's 50, 50, it's maybe even 60 40.

Interviewer: For women, female. Wow.

Interviewee A: The present new general managers are more often female.

Interviewer: That's very interesting. And do you think that's because of Hotel chain A is not Dutch but a French company, do you think that plays a role in, in the distribution?

Interviewee A: No, because it's very multinational now, but we've had a standard some years ago that it was mandatory for vacancies, higher vacancies, to also have female candidates. And when a vacancy was not fulfilled or when there was no female candidates brought in, they should look further until they found a female candidate. So that's not the case anymore, but that has helped, I think.

And it's too easy to say. No, we can't find a woman. I mean, that's easy, too easy.

Interviewer: And in your own career path, where did you see the evolution of your own career? You see yourself staying as GM, or would you also be interested in positions within boards for instance?

Interviewee A: Oh, yes. I would like to.

Interviewer: What would you say are the current strengths and weaknesses are of your current executive board?

Interviewee A: You mean the board in my hotel or the board of Hotel chain A? Well we had eight management team members and two of them have left due to the Corona crisis and we cannot open up the positions anymore because we are in a crisis now those two were male. Then we have left, I think three. So now we're six and it's half male, half female. So it's equal.

Interviewer: And within the management from your board of directors towards you as GM how do you see their communication for instance, how would you describe their communication?

Interviewee A: Easy on a low level. We are not in our ivory tower or in our glass office. We try to have a heavily on a lower level. We also, I also want short lines within the company, especially now because we're in a crisis. We should not be far away, not literally but also not in our ways of thinking, we should be close to one another.

Interviewer: So I'm interested in what you were saying about the crisis? Because I've been reading a lot about having maybe like flats or organizations within times of crisis and everything. Do you think that's changed for you because of COVID-19?

Interviewee A: Yes, but in all crisis it would have changed, not because of COVID-19, but because of our financial situation at the moment, because then you should be close to one another and I just cannot afford to have too many staff members it's too costly, and having a smaller organization, everything should be more liquid. You should be able to do things faster, and then you should be close.

Interviewer: So it's also a matter of survival in this case. And I think we can move on to more of the stakeholder theory that has been looking into specifically. So in opposition to what used to be the traditional shareholder theory, kind of looking at other parties that are involved within the company. And so I have a few questions in this regard, and I guess the first one is how would you describe the relationship between your organization and your stakeholders?

Interviewee A: It should be a close one. And with the stakeholders we could mean in this case, our owners, the managing company, because our owner is A invest and the managing company is Hotel chain A. So we should be very close with these two, but also a stakeholder is the municipality, the neighborhood, the staff, the unions. And especially now because we are all in deep trouble, we should be very close to each other and as open as possible.

Interviewer: So if I understand correctly, then it's more about not necessarily just managing each other's expectations to get the best deal, but also about making sure that everyone is helping each other out in, in their own area of expertise.

Interviewee A: And especially the municipality is lacking a lot of income because we do not have tourists, so they do not have any tourist tax, so we can be like enemies, opposing each other, but we have the same problem. So it's easier to help each other at the same for the neighborhood when they think we are too noisy or whatever, we should never be defensive because we need each other same for unions or owners, et cetera.

Interviewer: I guess that links back then to duty of care and caring for one another and, especially within the situations that we now know. And so I guess this is very actual for us right now in terms of changing external environments, because we've just been in constant change for the last year, but how does your organization respond to a change in external environments?

Interviewee A: Yes, it depends a bit who, and to what, because our owners are far away, the managing company is far away. So in some situations they exit quickly and in others, they're very slowly, but take, take, for instance. Now the COVID situation, our headquarters of Hotel chain A is in London and the head office of our investor is Amsterdam, Brussels, or a bit all over. The managing company had many people who are in furlough. So of course they cannot react quickly because they are in furlough. They are not even in their offices. They have no access to their mails because they are not allowed to work. So that's now slowly, but normally we are very quickly in the modern world with the internet and zoom and Microsoft teams, et cetera.

Interviewer: And would you say it's more of reacting to, and trying to make the best out of the external environment? Or is it about trying to manage the risks within your environments itself?

Interviewee A: I'll also take the COVID crisis now as an example being in furlough means that only the top management in Paris is doing something and the rest is all in furlough. So the top management is managing but that's, I think maximum 20, 30 people and the others are all in furlough, so they are reacting.

Interviewer: Yep. So if we take this out of the, of, let's say COVID-19 context, you mentioned for example, technology, when there was the huge increase in the use of technology and the fast fast-paced change of the environment in that sense, would you say that hotel A used it to differentiate itself or try and react and limit?

Interviewee A: No, the, the first differentiate it, I think it fastened the plans they already have.

I think it gives them a chance and opportunity to react more quickly.

Interviewer: That makes sense. I have some questions about your communication style, but I think we've already covered that in a previous question. In terms of strategy what would you say the process of strategy creation is or could you maybe describe like the process that you go through in terms of strategy?

Interviewee A: Well, normally the strategy is being thought of by ourselves in the hotel and we'll make a yearly sales and marketing plan and that's based on the strategy. And that has to be validated of course, by our owners and our managing company. But then this used to be more like a possibility, a plan like, okay, this is the market situation. We have done this. We could improve ourselves by doing that. Now, it's a very different situation. We have to see, this is what the market has changed into. How can we take our share out of it by changing? Because my hotel is a meeting and convention hotel, of course, how can you do meetings and conventions at the moment? So we have to rethink our image and to come up with something else to be able to survive. So it's a constant process. You have to adapt to reality and rethink your strategy.

Interviewer: So strategy, as you used to know, it is being transformed and is being changed. And in the future, it will probably also be something very different ones hopefully.

Interviewee A: Well, it will change again. And we know people who say we will get back to the old normal, I don't believe so there will not be an old normal, there will be a new normal, and we have to react quickly to that.

Interviewer: Alright. And the last question I had about this stick theme of stakeholder theory, it was about hierarchy within the organization, but I think we touched upon it as well. When you said that becoming a flatter also, because you've had to let a lot of stuff go and also creating more transparent communication in that regard. So I also have few questions about your personal paths to getting to where you are today. And so the first one is if you had to make any choices regarding your personal life to get to where you are, but I think that's also what you mentioned at the beginning. Your personal support, if I understood correctly from your partner to also continue with your career.

Interviewee A: Yup.

Interviewer: So nowadays, would, would you say that still prevails, you're still able to have a good balance between then your like your own personal life and professional life?

Interviewee A: Yes. So there, of course in this business, there's always times in which it's very, very busy when you have many events in your hotel. And then of course that prevails a bit, but the balance is okay for me.

Interviewer: I guess for the last few minutes that we have, I also wanted to hear if you have any future perspectives on the, the situation, because from what I hear, you've had your path that hasn't been written with ambushes, or that you have had struggles that you felt were linked to you being a woman or anything like that. But obviously there's maybe some women who encounter more barriers. And I was wondering why you thought there were so few women in the top positions within the lodging hospitality industry.

Interviewee A: Partly because of the childcare system and you have to arrange your own childcare. There was no state childcare. So I had a nightmare at home because there was a, it was difficult to do something else. And after a few years, at the time I had one daughter, she

went to a kindergarten and when the second daughter was born we brought her also to the kindergarten, so then the problem was over. So that's, that's one thing. And also at that time the word part-time work was not really existing. So it was either yes or no, there was nothing in between. And when the part-time was possible, there were many companies who said, okay, when you work, part-time, you cannot be a management team member or a head of department. And that has changed happily because now you can be also managing or a management team member when you're working four days instead of five. So that's a very good change in that respect. And something else as well, but that's something very Dutch, I think. Ladies are gossiping amongst each other. Oh, do you work five times? So then you will not have time for your children. But this is something I think you only see in Holland, I do not hear this from English or French or Belgium colleagues in their countries. It's quite normal. Which other difficulties? No, I don't think I see other difficulties.

Interviewer: Very good. A good overview. And so in these aspects, where do you think change is most needed to increase that proportion of women?

Interviewee A: Like what they did with Hotel A, impose when there's a vacancy that there should also be female candidates and when there's no female candidates, you have to look further because of course they are there. And don't be too old-fashioned in the sense of, you can only do this job when you have had that studies, there's more ways to go to the destination. There's also, we've had a time when we were more looking for the person than for the CV, because the person should fit the job and that might help women as well.

What else? Well, the digital equipment we now have will help women as well, because then they can do things from their homes in the past. This was not really possible. So this might be helpful for not only women, but also men working part-time and something, I do not know whether it helps or not is a quota in Holland, they are discussing for years and years already, where whether we should have a quote in for female board members yes. Or no, one half of the country says, yes, we want it because it will help. And the other half says, I don't want it, especially women because then I'm put into that company not because they want me, but because they should have me. So I'm not sure whether this is a solution, but people, especially female managers in the Scandinavian countries, they say in our country, this was a solution and it has helped.

Interviewer: Maybe in the very short term, it will be hard to have the token women or to be the token woman, but maybe it will bring about change in mentalities and also in approaches afterwards and within the recruitment.

Interviewee A: But the thing we now have, which is now a very, very hot topic everywhere in the world, I believe is diversity and inclusivity that will help as well, because it's not only male, female, but it's also color of the skin, religion, sex, et cetera. So that might help, then it takes away the pressure of the women. It's everything.

Interviewer: Well, I think that was the last of my questions that I had. But of course, maybe you have any questions, questions that you think I maybe should have asked, and I have not asked you in this topic.

Coding	Interviewee B
Date	23rd December 2020
Time	8:30
Duration of interview	37 min
Platform	Zoom

Interviewee B: Well maybe in the beginning you should know that I'm only working for this position two months and before that I wasn't in the hospitality industry at all.

Interviewer: Well actually then that also kicks off the interview because I guess the first part is maybe if you could give us a small introduction of yourself and your professional background, perhaps.

Interviewee B: I started my work after I finished my economic study in Amsterdam and I started at the a department store. And then I went to airline in-flight service there. I worked a lot for in-flight service for the crew on board and for the whole product on board, so the F&B and my target was the experienced or the satisfaction of the passengers and then I moved to cargo and there I did several jobs and the last one was I was director of the customer service organization of Europe. So we had for cargo. We had, well it's getting less and less, but we have 10 markets, like France, Italy and Germany.

So in every local position there, we had a customer service organization and I steered from central point of view at the head office. And then I think it was just before Corona I was asked to have an interview for this position I have now, and I always had the feeling, I have to do something else. I want to do something where I can make more impact. So the airline of course it's a very big company. And it was a really nice experience. I worked there 14 years. But I always felt like, well, the airline is still flying and everybody's doing what they do. Then a friend of mine came with this new position. It's also a new position, so I'm new in the business, but also a new position.

And there's just this where I work now, hotel A is a family-owned company and there is the owner or the family owner. And they have a board with a CEO and the CFO, and now there's also COO in it and that's what I'm doing now. So I started having the interviews and the talk and it was really nice, but then Corona came, so it was put on hold then before Summer, they said well we want to continue with the interviews and with the assessments. So I said, I'm happy to do that also because of the situation of the airline company, of course. That eventually worked out. So now I started half October officially, but in summertime I already had my confirmation that I could start. So I went visiting all the hotels and the general managers. So I'm already a bit around, but for me a lot is new also not.

Interviewer: That must be very exciting times for you as well.

Interviewee B: Yes, it is in these times. So changing a job and then it's a really exciting new job. There's a lot of impact actually, and lots of people in the company. And I didn't do any hotelschool or whatever. And all the people who work, almost all the people, they did. They did like you did, they did hotelschool. So I really didn't do that. But maybe that was part of with, maybe this comes later in your interview was part of the reason they choose me because they want to have some fresh outside point of view.

Interviewer: So, from what I've understood, then you didn't really apply for that position. They came.

Interviewee B: Yes. They came because I told a friend one time, I said, this year or coming two years and my children getting older and I wanted to do something where I can have more impact and a bit smaller company where the political issues are not as high and where the hierarchical lines are short. And he remembered that and they discussed this position with the board, he was their consultant. So he said, well, I know somebody, so there were a few more candidates like me. So it's more like in a chit chat they came for me.

Interviewer: Well I have a few, I still have a few questions because about when we read in literature, there's a lot about the barriers that women encounter and face in climbing the career ladder. And you have obviously also within your career, and now today with your COO position, climbed that career ladder, did you encounter any of those difficulties we usually hear about?

Interviewee B: But not now, but because I'm also in a COO position, and I'm in one, there are two men and one woman, but in the airline company, yes, I did. I also did some interviews for that at that time, because in the board of the airline company also diversity is a sort of issue. And it's a big problem now for Pieter Elbers and the AirFrance guy, because there is no, there are some women, but it's always mostly men. And especially when I was in the cargo business, at one point I was in the board and more as a sort of secretary but I was the only woman.

Interviewer: All right. And how many other, how many people were sitting on that board?

Interviewee B: Oh, there were like ten.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. So it's not like it was just two.

Interviewee B: No, no, no. Maybe it's also related to the cargo business. It's a bit of a man's world, but there are also lots of women there, but I did feel some resistance. Always, if you, as a woman, you have a bit of a step back if you understand what I mean?

Interviewer: And so in, obviously when you said now you've been recruited, you were kind of selected for who you were. So I imagine for your current position, those barriers were not as strong for you to get to this positions.

Interviewee B: But I think it even helped in this position because I know I still don't know who to ask, but I know there was another candidate as far as I was and he was a guy and he was also coming from hotel business. I was not. And I think because of the dynamics in the board with the two guys there, and they're really different, then really looked at the teaming and insights of the people. And I think it was in my benefit that I was a woman because the balance was better.

Interviewer: And so within the board that you currently sit on, you feel like you have, you feel very heard and they value your opinion.

Interviewee B: Yes.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that in the past board then with the cargo business it was solely men. Do you see any difference in dynamics within the board you currently sit on and the passport?

Interviewee B: I do see it. It was also the type of men of the cargo business. And I think that is also in the passenger business, but it is more a man cave, really direct, sometimes it's not on the content, but more behaving like who's in charge. It is different also, I think that men, what happens there, I guess, is that they clone. So every time there was a vacancy for somewhere high, then I could feel that the people who could choose to candidates, they really prefer to candidates who looks like them. So it must've been the same types. Of course we did sometimes do sort of the insights: roles, color, you know, that, all those things. And then you also saw that it was almost the same colors every time.

Interviewer: So there was not very much diversity in way of thinking, I guess.

Interviewee B: No, no. And also a bit of resistance to hire somebody from outside the area, so from, for example, cargo, there were also people wanted to make a step like I'm doing now from engineering and maintenance to cargo or vice versa. And then they preferred to go safe. And choose somebody from the area and maybe internally, it's better that you have your own people first, but on the other hand sometimes I think it's good to take a risk to have some more dynamics and outside view on things.

Interviewer: Definitely. Then you also coming from a different industry than just the lodging industry, what do you feel you bring to the board then in terms of maybe skills or competencies to the current board you sit on?

Interviewee B: Well, it's a bit of both. I think it's my view on things. Maybe I learned it from the sort of corporate, but also really the skills, like what system we use and internal communication system, like USPs, like loyalty program. In the airline company we are really strong in that and where I am now, they don't have that at all. And you know, now maybe from the hotel business is really, really strange actually. And I find it a shame, I think when you want to attract customers or, or guests, you will have to do something like that. So that's where I could come in. And then I can learn or talk about this, how we can do it. My experience is more also in branding. I did a lot of marketing, so also there hotel A is going through rough times also we had franchised hotels and there were about 60 hotels, and about three years ago, they sold it again. So we are now only with 14 hotels back to the old roots. So we have relaunched our branding and proposition. So there, I know a lot, so that's my really factual experience.

And I think that I can help a bit in the dynamic in the board. I know the CFO is really like a controller, finance guy. The CEO is a family guy he's really introvert and a bit quiet, but there it helps that I ask some questions.

Interviewer: Perfect. Well I think, then I have quite a good idea then about like your current experience and also your past experience. I'd like to move on to more of the stakeholder theory, which I'm focusing on for my research. So they're kind of broader questions about the way hotel A's hotels are being run. And it's also a nice contrast as well, to see how maybe other industries operates.

So I guess the first part is about, obviously stakeholders. And if you could maybe describe the way the relationship is between your organization and its stakeholders.

Interviewee B: But you, you mean the internal stakeholders are also like competition or...

Interviewer: It can be both internal and external.

Interviewee B: Well, internal I think what I said the lines are short. And also I am the manager of HR, marketing, sales revenue, procurement and quality. So almost everything actually so it's quite important, and all the GM's of the hotels also. So there is somebody also who is director of operations and he's also in my line, but he takes care of all the operational stuff with the GM's. But I think it's very, especially now, in my beginning, it's very important to see my stakeholders frequently because there are of course, you know hotels, but I go there and with the new beginning, I think I tried to listen and know what they're doing. And sometimes I try to steer but that is more on the marketing point of view or HR that from my experience: what I have learned, how can I help? And for me the other stakeholders, like more external there, I don't know the business at all. So sometimes there are people like also from the hotel, or hotelotop that is so new for me that I just think okay. I just do my introduction, try to listen to what they do. And I think it's important to maintain that also, and I free up time for it.

Interviewer: So it was much more about having an active communication, making sure that there's a common understanding, listening to one another?

Interviewee B: But internal because I'm also the manager, I try to find a sort of balance between being a boss and being a sort of partner in crime, like a sparring partner.

Interviewer: Perfect. Then I guess that leads me to the next question, which I think you've kind of answered already, which is about the hierarchy within the organization. So you've mentioned a much more flat organization. So without many levels, you communicate directly with the GM's of the hotels, I'm guessing.

Interviewee B: Yes, I do that. And actually not much more in the hotel with others because that's their responsibility. Of course, when I'm there, in the hotels especially in Amsterdam where I live, I see the people more so I try to remember them and to know their names, because I think that's really important. It's also what hotel A stands for: personal, open. So I try to do that. And with the others, like marketing, there is somebody like the director of marketing and then under there, there are more people, so I don't communicate much directly, sometimes I do, but I do know them.

Interviewer: And in that same topic then in terms of decision-making, because you mentioned that sometimes they make their decisions on their own how would you say then the management style is in terms of decision-making within hotel A, and the management style.

Interviewee B: They can give input on all kinds of things, but there was always a CFO and that has been changed. He was also taking care of if you want to show money for I don't know... And now I had to approve a booklet for something for the quality manual. And

normally he takes a look at it at every penny, like okay. Why is it a hundred there and not eighty?

I'm less in control like that. I mean, I think I trust all my people but they do ask for approval yes, that's also within the system. And sometimes I want to know more. Sometimes because I'm interested, sometimes I really trust that they did the right thing.

Interviewer: Great. And in terms of more of a strategy level, so I guess maybe more of a board level, how would you describe the process of creating the strategy?

Interviewee B: Well that is really open here. I mean that was really different in the airline company. So that's also why I wanted to make more impact here. If I have an idea or if I think you really have to do it like this or that, or last week we were looking at a hotel which was for sale, and then I don't have a really good feeling, and I can tell what I think, and they listened to it and they agreed actually. So, it is open and I can support it. And actually the CEO is now more looking at all the strategy of having more hotels in a future. So he's doing more than that, and he really says, you can do what you want actually, you don't have to ask me about it.

This is just an example. We are hiring a new GM in Maastricht. And we offered her a certain salary, but it was too low. And then he said, you can decide yourself if you want to increase that. So in the end I did it and there was a bit like, okay, could I have done this? You know, but he said, it's your turn. It is really open.

Interviewer: So already within the few months that you've been in the company, you already have that well established trust. That's great. And I guess the last question about this stuff is more on, how hotel A perceives a changing external environment. So in that sense, maybe not necessarily just COVID, but we're obviously plunged into this at the moment, but if it's more seeing it as having to control the external environment or just making the best out of whatever happens and just finding the right decisions?

Interviewee B: They are really innovative also so they're not really controlling. I think that's really what I like. Also, we are really trying to make the best out of it and looking for new things they can do now. Having nice chefs in the hotels, also the restaurants are also closed here in the hotels but you know they're really trying to make something out of it and not sitting back waiting and said, okay, what can we do? But they're really trying to look from new selling points. It's really, and also a time that we say, okay, well, it could be, we do other things if you have more time to do so like cleaning, now for example the brand positioning a proposition that we've launched which we said let's try to have it done before they open again. And I think, I guess, especially in the beginning that everybody works as hard as they ever did. But also that was the case for the airline company and especially for cargo because cargo is really now hot, but the business was really going on there. So people work really hard.

Interviewer: Well, it's really interesting. And you already touched upon maybe how it was different in terms of hierarchy and everything. Is there any other big difference that strikes you in this essence?

Interviewee B: Well, lots of decisions, so I can say what I could say what I want, but in the end politics could stop your whole ideas or whatever. And second I guess...I forgot. No, I forgot. Sorry. No, maybe I'll come back.

Interviewer: Of course. No problem. Then I guess we can move on to maybe more of your personal path to get to where you are today. If there's any questions you don't want to answer, that's also fine. So first of all, I would, it was more about if you had to make any choices regarding your personal life to get to where you are today. I guess also more like climbing the career ladder.

Interviewee B: Well I have children. So in the beginning, I didn't want to work full-time so at the Hema it was even less it was like four days. And I left, I find sort of stupid now, but I, till now I have a full-time contract, it's the first time, and I always worked like 36 hours and four days. But every time I was off on Wednesday, then if there are phone calls or urgent matters, or I had to go to the office, I did do that. It was like I did a full-time job. So then I wanted to have my freedom on Wednesday. It was not that I didn't work, but otherwise I felt guilty.

So I always asked for that contract of less hours but in the end, you did do a job full-time. So that's always what I find that women are always a bit of a "thief of their own wallet". What I mean is if you do the job you can also be flexible. And that it is important that you do the job and that you achieve your goals as you have been asked. And if you do that, it shouldn't matter how you do it. That is my point that sometimes in my past positions and where I started (And it's also a reason why I left), it was sort of, you had to sit like always eight hours or nine hours. And I don't like people if you leave sometimes at five, saying "Oh, you have the afternoon off" the stupid joke. That's mostly I think with women, but that's also what I think that sometimes women are a bit behind from men who are used to working full time but I think women do it more efficiently sometimes. And even work harder maybe. I don't know how they do it, but I think that's the sort of pre-judgment people have about us. So children were a point that I wanted to be also at home, but I also wanted to make a career. And now in the end when they're older, now I can do my full-time, but I want to have the freedom to be at home at Wednesday and work. And then my new boss said perfectly fine, as long as you make your KPIs and then it's fine with me and that was already from the start it was a feeling. I thought "Okay. I'm flexible. I can do how I want it, as long as I do it".

Interviewer: And you don't feel like you're making a sacrifice on one side or another.

Interviewee B: And for the airline company that was kind of different. There was always a sort of feeling or dynamics going around. It's I don't know, they would say oh you're working part-time? And I would say I'm working 36 hours, is that part time anyway?

Interviewer: Definitely. And throughout your career path, did you receive support from friends or family or partners to reach that career that you've achieved.

Interviewee B: And in the beginning my husband and I we split the caring of the children so we changed a bit in sometimes in the times where I was less busy and I wanted to focus more on home. And then I had sometimes had a position at cargo or in-flight where it was easy for

me. And now I have another position where I need to invest more. And at home they know that and it's okay.

Interviewer: Perfect. And so you've already touched upon it, maybe, the barriers that still exist for women. But in your opinion, why do you think there are so few women currently holding positions that you're currently in right now and top executives?

Interviewee B: I do think there are quite some but I think really they are too modest. They are not really like shouting what they can do and that's what I mean. So we are always a bit in the back. Also when there is a sort of conference or something, I don't see lots of women always putting up their hands and asking questions, always the guys, we are a bit more sitting back and trying to look at what's happening and analyzing more. And I think we always, we are not that opportunistic, like guys. That's also something when I was in the airline company I was one of like the top hundred women because diversity was a hot topic, they asked these hundred women to join a sort of training or whatever to increase diversity.

And I didn't do that. And my manager asked why? I said, I think we have to really change in the essence: how we hire people and how we do that and it's not, that it is our fault that this is happening. So I find that it is stupid that I had to do a sort of training, but in the meantime, the culture, it's not like that we have better chance after. Yes we are less opportunistic.

Interviewer: And so in that regard, what changes do you think we need to see in the future to change that around, I guess one, you already mentioned that is changing company culture?

Interviewee B: And that's really difficult. We had big discussions about it because the airline company said at one point, okay for every vacancy, we want three candidates and at least one of the three should be a woman. And then we have a sort of last decision making but that is every time. And that's also, I think you have to look for the best candidate. It shouldn't be a woman or a man, that doesn't matter, it should be the best candidate. But maybe to go to this new culture, you maybe should start doing these kinds of things because otherwise it never changes. I don't know if that's the right path to walk, but I guess you should in airline, you should take some actions to start changing the culture and as soon as it's more integrated, then it comes by itself.

I guess, for this company, it really should help for example that you have targets. That was also at one point a guy who has a target, the highest manager of cargo that he hires at least I don't know... but when you hear this as a woman, then you really think it's stupid because then you actually are really discriminating or whatever. So then, then we are sort of special or sort of weak. And that's also not the case but I could also see, I changed my mind a bit about it because of the airline, it was so tough, then I could see that some targets should be made to help this improve.

Interviewer: It's a fine line between, no one wants to be the token woman or wants to be there because of a quota, but maybe it's also where we need to start.

Interviewee B: Because then you get things like "Oh, you're hired now for this new, very nice vacancy, oh, wow. It's because you're a woman" and that's also not what should be done.

Interviewer: No, because you also have your skills and your competencies and you're still just as capable as anyone else. It's a big question. I'm also, even everywhere, I've looked, you hope to find one answer that would just solve everything, but obviously it's all too complex. Well, I guess that's most of my interview then I'm wondering if maybe there's anything that I could have improved for my interview and your questions that you feel maybe I should have asked or any other,

Interviewee B: Well, I'm just really wondering, you said about lodging industry in Holland there are very few women on board, right? But also because you have those big multinationals, but being like NH hotels, I don't know. But there are some more, just more in always like American or English. Do you see more differences in a UK, America, because I can, I can imagine that's true. And that in Holland, it is actually quite better maybe?

Interviewer: Well, the thing is when I looked, cause I did look at, for example, Accor and NH and everything, but since they're also for example, NH is Spanish, they have like a different, different laws as well in terms of how their board composition should be in U S boards as well. So in the US system, they have to have, they have a very strong parity where they have they have to have 50, 50 or certain amounts. Whereas in the Dutch system, although there were some laws that were being passed about non-executive boards, but also for bigger companies in terms of smaller hotel chains and in executive boards, especially there's no real law in place, it's more compliant explain, which is you have to either have like I think it was 33% of women, or you have to explain it within your yearly reporting why you don't have that parity or that proportion within your board.

Interviewee B: Okay. Very interesting. What I see now in Hotel A that it is now with me quite in balance, but I see for the rest like the GM's for example. That is really like 50, 50.

Interviewer: That's the thing. Cause at first I was thinking of also looking at GM's but then when I talked with with Dr. Lombarts she also mentioned yes, within GMs, there's a very strong parity is a, there's a lot of women who gets to GM positions, but then never cross that line into executive boards. And it's really there that the cutoff is kind of being made at the moment.

Interviewee B: I think it was in my favor actually that I was never a GM. And then you always have like a stamp on your head, like you are more operational. And now I came in as a, more of a corporate and visionaire, strategic who had also experienced business of hospitality, but not too much in the operation. I think that helped me. I actually it's right.

Interviewer: That could definitely be it. Well thank you so much for your time. I don't know if there's anything else you'd like to add for that.

Interviewee B: I tried to remember what I want to say about cargo, but maybe I email you again, I forgot.

Interviewer: That's perfectly fine. And thank you so much again for your time. I'll also be sending you once I've transcribed the interview itself, I'll send it to you so you can also double check if there's any in coherences or anything that maybe I've misunderstood and you'd like to review so that then you can check all of that.

Interviewee B: Okay. Thank you so much. And good luck with your study.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. Happy holidays. Bye-Bye

Interview Code	Interviewee C
Date	23rd December 2020
Time	9:30
Duration of interview	34 min
Platform	Zoom

Interviewer: All right. So I've just started the recording then. And so before the start, then maybe I can shortly explain my research so far and also how the interview will look like and its content. So I'm studying, especially the ethical perspective of women in executive positions. So from a stakeholder theory point of view so I'll be asking you some questions about your own experience within the lodging industry. Maybe some barriers you've encountered throughout your career. Some questions, a bit broader on stakeholder theory and how it relates to your own experience. There's also some questions about your own personal path, which I leave up to you, whether you would like to answer or not. And then some future perspectives on a change that we can see within the industry and where that change needs to happen. Do you maybe have any questions for me before we started the interview?

Interviewee C: What is your nationality because you told me that you are living in France and you're studying hotel management in The Hague.

Interviewer: In Amsterdam campus, though.

Interviewee C: Did you interview many other women already?

Interviewer: I've interviewed two women already and in total I have 12 interviews scheduled, so there'll be a nice panel of insights.

Interviewee C: Okay. Well let's get started and I'm just going to answer. One thing that's maybe for you to know. We sold, our company hotel conference center last year. So at this moment I'm not working in the hotel industry.

Interviewer: All right. Perfect. Then maybe you can also tell me about your past experience.

Interviewee C: It was good experiences from the past, and it's quite a recent past.

Interviewer: Of course. But that's also absolutely fine. Then maybe, I guess then that's a good place to start. Maybe you can tell me a bit about your own professional background, how long you've worked in the lodging industry and so on and so forth.

Interviewee C: Well as a matter of fact, lodging industry was not my base. Well I studied hotel management, in Maastricht. And after that, I ended up in the event industry. So events and entertainment. That's basically my background and my husband did own a conference center and right after the recession when things went a bit slow in lodging industry, and I was doing another freelance jobs for big companies, he asked me to, to step in our own company to broaden the client base and a perspective on how where the hotel could go to. So that's when I stepped in and that was about eight years ago. And when already, I think for three

years or so, but then when it's your own company that's different. So in the end I stayed and was doing other freelance things beside that.

Interviewer: And so I guess, well, it's a little different since it was your husband owning the company, but did you ever face any difficulties as a woman climbing, like making your way within your career?

Interviewee C: Well, for me it was different because I didn't have to make a career in hotel industry. We had a company and I stepped in and I joined a management, it was as easy as that. And so there were no problems in getting a career. The only thing is that in groups for networking or Utrecht, all the hotels in it, in the area of Utrecht were all joined with all the hotel managers, owners, directors or CEOs, and, well, then it struck me. There are hardly any women, but I think, wow, at most one third of them, were women for the whole new city and area around Utrecht.

Interviewer: And why do you think that is, why do you think there's so few women? Is it cultural or is it, where do you think that stems?

Interviewee C: I don't know, because I think there are more women now maybe as much as, or more women studying and studying better when they do hotel management and after that... I don't know. I think it's also, it's partly the women themselves because they, well, they don't have to drive to be the CEO of a hotel. That's they want to have a broader perspective on everything and they change more in jobs also. Because the men I met, they mostly, started as a trainee and they then grew into the highest position quite fast, last couple of years, because there was not enough staff to be found. So last couple of years before Covid, I saw men getting in management of hotels, I thought they were not capable at all. And that's the difference you see, when you see the difference of men running hotels or women, the women who do it now, mostly they are capable of doing it. And men, it is well about 50% from my point of view. So they get a chance easier, even though they don't have to prove their competence. I think of their capability.

Interviewer: So the tests for women are stronger, people are a lot more critical than for women before hiring them to be in those positions.

Interviewee C: But I think that's because a lot of men they have a quite dominant way of doing things. And even when they don't know how to do it, they act like they do it. And that works because people believe them and I think that men are believed too soon. There are not many people who go into discussion when a man (a certain type of man but a bit of a dominant man), and those men, they grow into careers very fast and it doesn't work in the end, but then a lot of damage has been done.

Interviewer: And so I'm guessing then it would be more about being just as critical towards men as people are towards women when hiring or promoting within the hotel industry.

Interviewee C: I think it's because women are not placing themselves in the spotlight as many times as men and they're doing their things and they're doing their things well, well, the girls who have the capability of having a career, but I think that's one of the things they think. That when you're good, people see that your good and that, that should be the way to grow

into higher positions. But men they, they're not busy only doing things well, then they're also busy with manifesting themselves,

Interviewer: Putting themselves out there.

Interviewee C: And I think that's the big difference and when not, especially men, see those side-effects and focus on them when they have the possibility to give people great opportunities.

Interviewer: That makes sense. Could you maybe give me a bit, a bit more insight into what your daily position looks like when you were in the, in the lodging business

Interviewee C: Everything which was marketing communication and HRM.

Interviewer: And so that was at an overseeing level from more of an executive level. And next to you, it was just your husband?

Interviewee C: We had 70 people of staff. So it was some middle sized hotel conference centre. The two of us were running it and then we had a management team which was an F&B manager with a couple of assistants, front office manager, housekeeping manager, facility and surfaces.

Interviewer: All right. And so you said during eight years you were managing that hotel, is that correct? And before that it was just your husband, if I understand correctly?

Interviewee C: But then it was focusing on less different markets. So I broke that up. And so in fact, we were doing conferences, we were doing events, business and public events we were business hotel, and leisure hotel with product market combinations different on both sides. And we also had 70 rooms, 14 conference rooms a grand café. So we did events also, we had a restaurant and an outdoor terrain.

Interviewer: And so you brought in like, I guess, a different, you broadened the market, as you said, what other skills maybe like soft skills and hard skills, did you bring when you started working in the company?

Interviewee C: I think mostly my knowledge of the leisure markets and events. So that's what I brought in the company and also when you talk about softer skills, I think the way to approach employees to learn more from them and connect them with everything you're doing.

Interviewer: Perfect. Well, I guess that leads me very nicely onto the topic of stakeholder theory. And my first question was actually about communication style within the hotel, how you communicate. So maybe you can describe that a bit more what you just mentioned.

Interviewee C: Well that's what I started up also, more the internal communication, you have the external communication and internal communication was sort of top-down and well, I changed that the other way around to also inform people more in all the parts of the processes and I think with great success. So people were more involved with everything and they gave me better ideas. They were more self-directive.

Interviewer: And so that's both in in decision-making communication. So in terms of strategy, when you were formulating maybe the strategy for the year or the coming five years

how, how was the process of creating the strategy? Was it just you creating it with your husband and, or was it also a very...

Interviewee C: Yes, I created the basics and then I asked the members of the MT to make their part and I helped with, but because they were not used to doing it they found it very difficult, so I had to help them, but then I also involved younger, more people on the work floor in creating the part in their area. So it was done by not only the manager, but it's also to people who have ideas. And so every department ends with their strategy and we put it all together into one strategy.

Interviewer: So it's very, a very collaborative way of creating the strategy then. And would you say your hierarchy within hotel was very tall hierarchy or was it more of a flat organization?

Interviewee C: It was both. I think they were used to a top down and we tried to make it flat and well that didn't come easy because some people were not used to it and other people wanted to, and well, we tried to get it more to one point which worked in some departments better than others.

Interviewer: So also based on if people are attached to their positions or attached to what used to be the norm.

Interviewee C: There are departments where everybody has been working there for like 15 years and they are with five people and they like it the way it is, and it's very difficult to have them all change and it also then that you wanted them and when they don't see the benefits, so we didn't force people on that ground.

Interviewer: And so we've talked a lot about internal stakeholders, your employees, your management team. And so from what I'm hearing, it's a very collaborative culture and relationship that you have. What about with your external stakeholders? Maybe? What was the relationship with them?

Interviewee C: How do you mean?

Interviewer: Like competition, municipalities and suppliers as well. How would you describe that relationship?

Interviewee C: As very good on all perspective because we worked a lot, we worked together and with the competition the different levels in the area, in a broader area, leisure different from business. And then with clients, everything worked well in a hotel, so we have high occupancy on all levels. So then it's easy because we had a high satisfaction rate and also so the clients were ambassadors as well. Ended up making marketing easier, of course. And with the competition, we were all doing fairly good the last couple of years, so that's easy also then. So when you're full you send it to another via different alliances of cooperation in the area of Utrecht, we were working together with a lot of competitors and also with the public services and the Province to attract people to the area. And then one time they come to you and the other time they go to your competitor.

Interviewer: And so would you say that that changed when you started working in the company? Was that already established before?

Interviewee C: Part of it was established part of it was what I did, because I always believe in cooperation and working together on all levels with your competitors, well, all the potential partners in the area you can make each other stronger because one is doing this and the other that, and then you have nature in our case. So you create things and then it makes everybody stronger.

Interviewer: Definitely. And so my last question regarding this this stakeholder theory is a bit broader, but more about the changing environment changing external environment. So I guess right now, the biggest change that we've seen is COVID, but when you were an owner, maybe it was more about the change in technology or those kinds of external factors. How would you say you responded to those changes in the external environments?

Interviewee C: Mostly it was environmental and everything that has to do with us being sustainable because that's, well, I think you are obliged to, but it's also one of the things people are looking more and more to when they search for accommodation or events room. Well, we were located in the national park so I found it my duty and also governments, they think you have to rise to a level that is quite high level to get your government's clients. So it's critical from both sides. And I think we worked a lot on that and then when you work on it, it's also important people know that you are being very sustainable. And so that was one of the biggest challenges. And the other one last couple of years, I don't think sustainability was a challenge, but that is what we liked doing and seeing how far we could come and going quite far. And it's was very fulfilling. And the other side is personnel. That was the biggest financial pool the last couple of years, hard to imagine that COVID that. But when we stopped a company last year, well, I was most glad because I didn't have to look for good personnel because that was a very big challenge.

Interviewer: I, before COVID in every report that we wrote, so one of the biggest threats was indeed a talent management.

Interviewee C: And it was not only management. It's all levels. Also when you have the people work as a side job because they go to school and in a hotel you have very low educated people who do such work. So at a certain point I don't think there should have been unemployment anymore in the Netherlands, because there were jobs everywhere that also meant that people were forced to work who didn't want to work. And that became quite a problem because people didn't show up or they came late, and you didn't even have a possibility to correct them because if you did, they went to the neighbor and they acted the same way, and then they left. And of course you tried to make something with those people as well, which was a challenge, but it's, also very fulfilling when it works. And I think it works in half of the cases but that made it, especially in the end, quite heavy because you want to do everything perfect. And most of your staff want, they want it also, and it doesn't work always because it's when you don't have to right personnel or employees.

Interviewer: That makes sense. And, well, that's a very nice overview of the elements that I was looking at for the stakeholder theory. I guess the next part is more about your own personal path. And as I mentioned since these are personal questions, if there's any question you don't want to answer, then that's completely fine as well. So I guess the first one is about whether you had to make any choices regarding your personal life and within your career and to make your career, but I guess it's quite different for you since it wasn't about climbing up the ladder?

Interviewee C: For me, it was a sidestep. So my career lies in event management, I used to organize all events, all public events and was responsible for that job at Utrecht, the big venue in the centre of the Netherlands and then I started my own company doing big festivals and events and then there is the company I still own for interim management jobs for companies who are mainly in entertainment and event industry. A lot marketing communication. And that's also the way I stepped into our own company to do it as an interim job to make communication and marketing better.

Interviewer: And do you feel like just in general, within the industry, within the lodging industry, how compatible regarding working hours and holidays and everything, how compatible is it between personal life and professional life?

Interviewee C: Well, you work a lot, especially when you have your own company, it's like always there, but then on the other hand you're used to it. So I never saw it as a problem or something interfering, I was and he was used to it ever since he was a kid, because before we were both managing companies, we are managing in bigger other organizations but that made us also our own boss of our own time. In a way you are not. And in a way you are, so you have to set your priorities and, well, I think we succeeded in the end.

Interviewer: Perfect. and I think we already touched upon it at the beginning of the interview in terms of why there are so few women in executive positions. And so I'm intrigued as well as to see, to hear your perspective on, because you already mentioned when you were looking around in your class, most of the people that were holding the higher positions were men. Why, where do you think change is most needed? In the future, let's say to have more of a balance in that, in that area. And is it needed?

Interviewee C: No, I think it's needed. But I think that the people who are the highest up they should look more to capability, I think that well people on the top should look more to talent and capability than only to the people who have the biggest mouth.

Interviewer: That's already a good step.

Interviewee C: I think that would help because then more talented women would have a chance to rise in better jobs also.

Interviewer: Right. So then the change should be more at the recruitment level and the promotion level.

Interviewee C: Yes.

Interviewer: Perfect, well I think that rounds off all the questions that I had, maybe you have something that you'd like to add, or maybe a question that I haven't asked that you think maybe I should ask during the interview.

Interviewee C: No, it's great. But what you're doing this for, for your study for hotel management or also for the industry, is that

Interviewer: So it's, it's part of my so bachelor thesis and in essence afterwards I hope to have interventions in order and make a framework based on this and for my defense, so when I'll be presenting this, we have also a part that's about dissemination and involving the industry and academics of that area in the findings or the research let's say Hopefully it contributes in some way. We'll see.

Interviewee C: Well that's good because I think more women are needed because when they are, when they're running a company that mostly you they're using more tools and looking more to the more human part of the employees.

Interviewer: Exactly. That's also. One of the parts that I'm looking at is kind of the skillsets and that would benefit from having more women. And also, I guess also from my perspective, like as an international, I also always saw the Netherlands as very progressive and a very like forward country. But then when I looked into the amount of women that were holding such positions, I was quite baffled at the fact that there was very, very few women who were, who achieved those top positions. So I think it's also very interesting from that perspective.

Interviewee C: I think so too, because Netherlands as well is not very forward in that area, not at all, it's not only in lodging it's in the whole management of all industries.

Interviewer: So I'll see. I still have a few interviews to go. So afterwards hopefully I'll find some, some nice perspective and like holistic framework from it. So we'll see. Well, thank you so much. I'll send you the once I've transcribed the interview, I'll send it to you as well. So you can review it, see if maybe there's anything that I've misunderstood or misinterpreted. And then, you can also check everything that's if she wants to review anything else, grant, grant, thank you so much. Thank you. And happy holidays. Bye-Bye bye.

Interview Code	Interviewee D
Date	23rd December 2020
Time	10:30
Duration of interview	33 min
Platform	Zoom

Interviewer: All right, so I've just started recording. Like I said, then this is more of a perspective from a stakeholder theory and looking at it as well from also feminist stakeholder theory point of view. So I'll add a little bit more the interview itself, which should last about half an hour to 40 minutes. And we'll look into your own experience within the lodging industry, that may be the barriers that still prevail. As a more general questions as well, about the stakeholder theory, and your own personal path, which is also optional to answer since it's more of a personal stance, and also the future perspectives that you might have, where change can happen within the industry. And before we start, maybe you have some more questions for me about the research or about the interview?

Interviewee D: No, just Where do you come from?

Interviewer: I'm from France

Interviewee D: From France. Why did you choose hotelschool?

Interviewer: Mainly because of the ranking there? Because when we look at it from abroad, usually the ones that we find are the Swiss schools, but obviously, it's not the same price tag attached to education. And Hotelschool the Hague was still really well ranked. But obviously, with a with a very much more affordable tuition.

Interviewee D: Okay. Did you do not have a really French accent?

Interviewer: No, because I have more of an international background. So it helps! And so maybe before we start with more technical questions, maybe you can introduce yourself as well. Maybe your background, your professional background in the industry.

Interviewee D: Okay. I will still something about my career, my study. I studied management school in Groningen. So no education in hospitality. And I was in the detergent business as Product Manager. Then I went to the travel industry and to the business of my father. And I was on the other side of hotel industry, because we contracted hotels as operator to sell them to our clients. So after we sold to a group, we kept our hotel in Gran Canaria, we kept a piece of land in the south of Spain. And later on, we built a five star property on it. And we bought two hotels in the Netherlands. So the last one in 2016, or 15? 16, I think, it's not important. Okay, so I'm not a real hotel manager. So I'm more the owner. I never acted as hotel manager myself.

Interviewer: And so in terms of day to day, maybe you can describe it in your day to day job as well as owner.

Interviewee D: My day-to-day job is what I'm doing of course is together with the hotel directors, we are making the strategies. And I am looking at the investments and approving the investments or not approving the investments. And I also like to be completely involved in the decoration of the hotel. Because for me, it's important, hotel managers they pass by and

they change, you know, in the end. We want to have hotels that we like ourselves with character, quality and eye for detail. So I am involved in Strategy, investments, controlling, of course and decoration.

Interviewer: Perfect. And you relate to maybe the difficulties that are often described for women to climb the career ladder.

Interviewee D: I don't see them too much. But because I think during these times, you have even an advantage as a woman to climb the career ladder. What is a little bit more difficult maybe for women than for men that when they catch children, they're maybe a little bit more involved with their own children than men are? So I see when I look at the children of my husband, they managed very well. And it's changing. And also, the men involved, and some of them working one day less, or at least are involved with the children as they are. So the combination of a full job, and children is not always easy. But possible.

Interviewer: And so you within your own career, let's say, you didn't feel like you encountered any particular barriers, within your profession.

Interviewee D: Not at all. I also have a lot of experience in supervisory boards. And in that sense, you do have an advantage as a woman because people like to have more diversity. But we should be careful, we should be elected because of our qualities and not because we are a woman. But that's different. I didn't see them. I was always in a surrounding with less women than men. But that was no problem at all.

Interviewer: So you are used to that kind of environment as well. And so currently, you said, you were the owner, if I understand correctly, are you the sole owner? Or are there other people.

Interviewee D: To be to be precise, my father, who has dementia is still the owner. But I'm doing the business. So I am representing him.

Interviewer: Perfect. And so beneath the ownership level, I'm guessing you have also an executive board? Or are you taking care of all the strategy yourself?

Interviewee D: All have our hotels have a director or a couple that are managing the hotels. And in Spain, we work together with the hotel group A organization. One with a management contract. And the other one was franchise contracts.

Interviewer: And, and so you mentioned that you were also within a supervisory boards. And within those, you said that they look for a good representation of women within those boards.

Interviewee D: It's not in a hotel business, it's more in the care and cure, but there they like to have a more divers team which means also more women in the boards. So if you're a woman, you're right, you have an advantage.

Interviewer: And you feel that, also, you bring something else to the table as a woman sitting on boards, or how do you perceive that?

Interviewee D: How do I perceive that? I'm not sure about that? Because there are men with women characteristics and women with men. So maybe we have a little bit more sense for the human being, for the relations.

Interviewer: And also within the hotels, do you also feel like when you're making the decisions and everything, do you also perceive that within your own hotels?

Interviewee D: What do I perceive?

Interviewer: That you perhaps have more of the human aspects within them.

Interviewee D: No, no, I don't feel that in my own hotels. In the Dutch hotels, we have two people, couple, so men and women in both hotels, and I think even in those hotels, the men are as well regarding relationships as the two women.

Interviewer: All right, that's interesting. And within your own communication style then with the management team, how would you describe your management style in the communication and in the, let's say, decision making with these hotel managers?

Interviewee D: Normally, I get their proposals, to get their ideas and to value their ideas. And maybe the decision-making what we're doing is more or less together. I'm not pushing my decisions to them. Normally we decide upon consensus. It is more or less like the Dutch Polder-model

Interviewer: So more of like a collaboration between you and them

Interviewee D: For sure, of course, because they have to do the day to day business. And if they are not convinced, and they don't feel that it's the right decision, it will not work.

Interviewer: Of course. And so that's for also daily operations. And I'm guessing when it comes to strategy, is that also the same for strategy?

Interviewee D: Yes, for sure for strategy. For the day to day business I'm not involved. So it's their job. Sometimes you see, I have some small tips, and they don't like that always. If I see there is something wrong, but normally I don't, I'm not involved in day to day basis, what's important for me is that I enjoy some relationship with the employees. Because as I said before, as I expect them just to be there a couple of years, and after that, they should know that at least for whom they're working.

Interviewer: And in that same regard, then would you say that the hierarchy within your hotels, are they flatter organizations? Or are they tall organizations?

Interviewee D: I think they are quite flat. What I noticed in hotel, which there is normally it's quite tall, quite hierarchical. But I think our hotels are not that hierarchical.

Interviewer: So you also have contacts, as you said, with workers who are more on the floor, and not just...

Interviewee D: Yes, but that contact is not work related, it's more just building the relationship.

Interviewer: That makes sense. And so that's within also the more the employees and the internal stakeholders. And as you said, you also have hotels outside of the Netherlands. But how would you? How would you say your relationship is with the external stakeholders? So let's say suppliers, competition, even governments?

Interviewee D: I almost don't have them. No, I don't work with suppliers except sometimes for decoration. The only supplier I think, if you can call it supplier is a hotel group A organization, who's doing the management in the south of Spain and with whom we have a franchise contract in Gran Canaria. That's the main stakeholder I think we have, we are not financed by banks. Almost nothing. So there's no relationship with suppliers, that's what I said. For competitors, no, I do not have direct relationship with competitors. Of course, I see them in the Netherlands when they are around but that's it. Who else did you say?

Interviewer: Maybe like governments, municipalities?

Interviewee D: No, no, almost none.

Interviewer: And so the main external stakeholder then is hotel group A, and how would you describe your relationship with hotel group A as franchise?

Interviewee D: It's a real good relationship. It's built on friendship from my father to the CEO or the president of hotel group A organization who is also 82 or 84, my father's 92. So it's a friendly and good relationship. Sharp when necessary. We have not always the same goals, but most of the times we do have. So it is sharp and friendly.

Interviewer: Yep. So it was built as a friendship more than as a as just a partnership. It was build as a partnership, but at the end both CEO's had a lot of respect for each other and became business friends.

Interviewee D: It was built a friendship, but now my father is not still in the business and from the other side, it's getting more business partners like friends. Changing overtime. But still the respect and the good relationship is there.

Interviewer: All right yes understandable. and over time is there any aspects when, for example, you took over or became more of the owner? Did you see any real changes between your dad's way of taking care of the business and your own? Leadership style, let's say?

Interviewee D: I think, what in a relationship with hotel group A here you mean?

Interviewer: Hotel group A or maybe in the way you also decide to run your own operations.

Interviewee D: There is a difference. But it's also different in time. Because when my father worked, he expected from the workers to work 50 60 80 hours a week. I think that you cannot ask that anymore. But everyone adored him. So he was a really very charismatic person. And everyone did it very good. I am a little bit more business-like. He also was as well, but then, maybe in a different way. He also thought the relation was also very important. So that's what we do have the same. And he built up his own company. So that's, that's also different.

Interviewer: Yes of course. So that was more regarding, then your own experience and your relationship with stakeholders. And within that same topic, there's also the question of changing external environment, I guess. Now, the biggest change obviously, is with COVID-19. But maybe in the past it was technology, sustainability, those topics? And how would you say you respond to those changes in the external environments?

Interviewee D: Yes, of course, we do respond, we have to respond and we want to respond. So in the Netherlands, with Green Key goals if you're talking about environmental issues, also in hotels in Spain, we have the certificates for environment. Technology, we are not the

first I think we do follow. Because, you know, in the Netherlands, we are too small. And sometimes hotel group A is too big for us. But of course, we are aware about it, and we follow them. And we try to be as less as independent from the OTAs as possible.

Interviewer: Alright. And in that in that regard, with OTAs, why those strategic choice from your side?

Interviewee D: It's a strategic choice, of course, because I'm not so against them as other hoteliers are because in fact, the OTAs is the same as I was, in the past as a tour operator. You'll get a commission from the from the work you do to sell. So that's not too bad. Because of them, people know you and they buy you. And once you have the client in your house, okay, you try to keep them, let them booking next time directly. So I think it's great and you just pay if they book you don't pay in advance for advertising or whatever, so and you do not know what's coming. So it's not too bad to pay commission for it. On the other hand, you should not be too dependent. So what hotel group A is doing they have a very, very strong website, and they do a lot of bookings for their own website also. So, of course, it's really important. So what I try in Spain is a good mix between direct bookings, and tour operator bookings.

Interviewer: So not being like you said too dependent on one or the other, just having a good balance.

Interviewee D: And in Spain, not too dependent on one country and try to divide between different countries. And in the Netherlands, we're on the eastern part of Holland. So 90% are Dutch clients. So this year, we were lucky with that. In the south of Spain, we have 80% Spanish clients. So this year, we were lucky with that. So and in Gran Canaria, we are doing our renovation.

Interviewer: Also, strategic choice right now to be making the most of the situation

Interviewee D: Exactly. Otherwise, we would have done it in three years time. Now we pushed it before. So it was a clever, clever decision, but it was a tough time because preparation was as fast as possible with a lot of uncertainty. Faster than normal

Interviewer: And the decisions have to be made a lot faster, you don't have that decision time.

Interviewee D: And from a distance, of course, you know, it was not possible. I did not want to travel in the first half year for covid. So most of it was Zoom or Microsoft Teams or whatever.

Interviewer: Especially like you said, you like having that overview, have it at your image as well, and what you'd like to have within the hotels, as the owner.

Interviewee D: But the renovation we're doing now in Gran Canaria is almost pure technical renovation.

Interviewer: Well, that gives me a nice overview then of your own experience. As I said, I also have some more personal questions. So if there's any of them that you wish to not answer, that's also completely fine. And the first one is more about if you have to make any, any choices regarding your personal life, within your career progression? Maybe it's like different as a family owned business. But what your personal experience was with it? Have

you had to make any choices regarding your personal life? To get to have your career progression that you had?

Interviewee D: No, I did not have.

Interviewer: And you got support, then from your family friends, to be the responsible for the family business and to pursue your career?

Interviewee D: What's the question, exactly?

Interviewer: If you got the personal support within your family to...

Interviewee D: It was quite logical. Before I was in the board of our company. My sisters were also working in the company but not in the board, and they didn't want to. And now we have the hotel business. And it was quite natural that I was the one who took over the business.. Now, they really value me now for what I'm doing and they have confidence in me.

Interviewer: And like you said that in terms of hospitality, hotels, it's obviously a very time consuming business with long hours. And how compatible do you feel that is with personal life? And if that ever was a question for you? Or if it just happened naturally?

Interviewee D: As I said before, I'm not in an operational part of the business. So I make a lot of hours, I think, but I also have some supervisory boards, as well. What helps is I don't have children. So that helps, that probably helps to work more. So it's different, if you have children, maybe you have to make all the choices?

Interviewer: Of course. And so I think that leads us very nicely on to like, few, like the perspective on the current and future states of women holding executive positions. And when you look around you, you feel like, in top positions, there are not enough women, or how do you perceive the current situation in that regard?

Interviewee D: My opinion, is that what is enough? What is enough? I don't know, I always think that the best person should be in an executive position, whether it's a woman or a man, it doesn't matter. It should be the best of course, I believe in a diversified team. But it's more all the characteristics not only between men and women. I think as long as the women in the Netherlands don't work four or five days a week, we will never get to the level that a government is wanting. So we have a very luxurious position in the Netherlands, where most of the women don't work four days or more. But that also means that you cannot have the positions. Or maybe they don't even want what the government wants you to have.

Interviewer: That's very interesting, because it was indeed one of the I think that that I found that shocked me most is the amount of women who work part time in the Netherlands is over 70%. And what we saw was a very progressive country with a lot of advancements in society. And then when I saw that, and also the relationship with the amount of women in top positions, it was quite impressive numbers that you saw. And so where do you think the changes are most needed? And I guess one of them is more full time would help. Is there any other changes that you think are necessary to have more women or to maybe not have more women but give them more opportunities?

Interviewee D: I think the change is in the women themselves. I think that it is very important that women are independent from men. If you look at the number of divorces there are, and still there are women need to care for themselves. We are in an economic back

position, so it's good I think that they feel they have to do their own business and earn their own money. But you can also say, if people don't want it, let it be, that's their own choice, so don't press them. You can support and help them with a good care for their children, but don't press them to do what they don't want. But I think it's important to support them and tell them that they should be independent. And if they do that and they are going to work 4 days or more, more women will come to executive positions. But it will take time because first you need the women who are working more than 4 days a week. And maybe four days is already not enough, but what I am always saying is that it would be best if the work week of four days would be more common. For women and men. If four day work week is common then it becomes normal that you are working one day less, so that would be the best I think to get more women in executive positions

Interviewer: Since you also have some hotels in Spain, do you see any difference between the two countries in terms of culture in that regard or is it similar?

Interviewee D: I think in Spain women work more. Yes, and in executive positions women are there, but also not 50%, no

Interviewer: and do you think the bigger proportion is a cultural aspect, or where do you think that difference is made?

Interviewee D: I think in Spain it's necessary to work more because our economy is better than in Spain. Women need to work that's the difference. And it's also that the grandparents are looking more after the children, that's more natural the family. They are looking after each other, and that is more natural than in the Netherlands.

Interviewer: I think that's most of the questions that I had. Maybe there is also something you would like to add, something I didn't ask.

Interviewee D: I think I mentioned what I think is important. If I think of something more, I will write you an email. And I am looking forward to receiving your report at the end, and I think you were a good interviewer in the end.

Coding	Interviewee E
Date	5th January 2021
Time	10 :00
Duration of interview	37 min
Conditions	Zoom

Interviewer: And so I have just start the recording. And then maybe you can start with a small introduction about yourself maybe your own career path, where you went to school, just a little background about your own story.

Interviewee E: Okay, just quickly. I went to the Hotelschool in The Hague, and then went to work in Antwerp for hotel B, and I think they don't exist anymore. And then went to Boston to work in an exchange program Netherlands/ United States and that was in Boston for two years and then came back to Brussels. And then eventually I moved to the Hotel A in 81. And I worked there from 1981 until 2009, I think. So that's 28 years. Would you like to know more?

Interviewer: And well, maybe you can tell us about the positions that you held?

Interviewee E: First, I was a management trainee obviously. In Brussels, I was coffee shop manager and then assistant banqueting manager. And in Hotel A, I started this management assistant kind of position, slash secretary type of thing. And moved up from assistant to the manager and then assistant manager and eventually director.

Interviewer: So you've had basically most of your career in the in the lodging industry, then? And in 2009 then you left the industry?

Interviewee E: No, then I worked for another two years in Amsterdam, in a training institute until well, that's difficult. 2013, I think, a little bit longer than two years. And I quit altogether.

Interviewer: So you have had quite a long running in the lodging industry?

Interviewee E: Yes, I worked for forty years.

Interviewer: And do you maybe relate to the difficulties we often hear about, for women climbing up the career ladder? Did you also encounter that?

Interviewee E: Well, I was one of the first female general managers. And at the time we had a small group of them. I'm not really sure, to be honest. It was kind of a novelty, which made obviously a difference. I don't think they've taken me very seriously my male colleagues, kind of just kind of okay, within the group. I'm not sure they thought about me behind my back, of course, it was okay. I've never really had any problems with it. Maybe, you know when I left Hotel A, I got a new job. Somebody from the Heineken the brewery and the guy who wanted more female managers? But in the beginning, I don't really think so maybe they didn't take me very seriously but eventually, I think they saw that I could do a job and was one of them. It was okay. And even from my staff, I never had any problems.

Interviewer: I think it's better that way. And so you wouldn't say that you encountered any barriers during your career?

Interviewee E: Not really, no. On the contrary, maybe.

Interviewer: So it was, it was such a new thing to have women in these positions such as GM. It was maybe like an advantage, would you say?

Interviewee E: I would think it was a novelty. At that time, it was new. So they didn't really think about it that much. And there were just a few, I think it was at the Hilton, she was, I think, the first female General Manager in Holland. So it was a novelty and well, to like, kind of used to it. And imagine that is more re for problem a bit later on saying the 80s or 90s or beginning of this century. At the beginning no, it was just a natural thing,

Interviewer: And so you said that you eventually became director of hotel A?

Interviewee E: General Manager.

Interviewer: I guess then you had the executive board just above you?

Interviewee E: No, it is owned by Heineken. Somebody, one of the Heineken was in charge of the hotel. So I met with him I think four times a year. And that was it. And made, obviously, management reports every month, but I saw him think about four times a year, spoke to him maybe six times a year. That's it. So there was no board of directors.

Interviewer: Right. And within your own management team, would you say there were also a lot of females surrounding you, or were you very much on your own.

Interviewee E: We had a small management team of sales, accounting, an assistant or two females one male, so we're a total of three females and one male. And then we had a bigger management team. And then we have more, obviously, more men like the chef, maintenance and another. The small management teams consist of four people.

Interviewer: Okay, of which three of women? Did you see any evolution of that over the years? Or was it roughly this?

Interviewee E: Funnily enough, I think I always had more female top managers than male managers, at least at a small management team, because I think I trust women more than men, I think that's probably the reasons why. I think they do a better job. They give you more than men.

Interviewer: It's actually very interesting. Maybe you can expand on that. Maybe how you perceive that difference between men and women is?

Interviewee E: I always have the feeling that to first of all, what I just said is I trust women more than I do men. And I think they are more involved and they're not out to do something for themselves, but they work more as a group. And to be honest with you, I've always had the feeling that I was right about that point. Even now, I think in the committees and the things I do, I prefer to work with women. Not only women. And there are of course a few men I like and respect very much but in principle, I'd rather work with women than men.

Interviewer: And so you also sit on other committees. Also relating to hospitality?

Interviewee E: I am in the board of directors for hotel B, which is a small conference hotel. This is the only thing I do in hospitality industry now. I'm at development director of a property in east of Holland consisting of 100 hectares of land with houses and farms and

farmers and wood and that kind of thing. So I work there for two days a week. And I have some, and I'm also the project directors of a school for tailors. And I do chair two committees for the Amsterdam golf club.

Interviewer: That's quite a busy schedule then I imagine! And so do you see perhaps any difference for example, in the composition or the dynamics within the different boards, for example, the one from the conference hotel or for the school?

Interviewee E: Well, funnily enough, the conference hotel we have a board of directors consisting of four right now, we have one vacancy. There's one man and three females. I'm the oldest, and there's chair person. And it's a male General Manager. And for some reason, it doesn't work between the male General Manager and the one who runs the Executive Board of Directors, the president. I think she's beginning of 30s, maybe. And she has a problem with the male General Manager. One of the other female Board of Directors left because of this. So it's kind of right now. It's an issue. And we were two older persons. And of course, myself and my male colleague, who is, I think, also beginning 60s, we've decided to have professionals work with this problem, see if it can be solved, because there is no trust between the presidents of directors and the general manager. And that's because of well, male female issue. Right?

Interviewer: So you think it's purely based on this discord like, that lies on the fact that they're men and women, not personal?

Interviewee E: I don't know why either. To be honest with you. Again, I never had that problem. And it's also how you act yourself, how you react, and how you do your work and how you think about it. But I was really amazed. First time. They told me that it was a problem. I was really amazed. I couldn't believe that it was still happening. And I couldn't believe that these females couldn't solve it with this male colleague, which in principle, I mean, the female is higher in the hierarchy than the male person. So I mean, I didn't think it was a real problem, but it persists a bit. And we don't want to lose either one of them. So we need to get counselling there. But it's a funny problem in 2021. And I think that's probably it's, to be honest with you, I think it's more the females that make a problem than a male person. That's maybe easy when you're a bit older.

Interviewer: Maybe you can tell me a bit more about the board itself, maybe about your own position within that board, what kind of skills you bring, what kind of competencies are in that board.

Interviewee E: I'm the only person who has background in the industry, which is kind of nice, actually. It's also I think, for the general manager is good. It's a small company, we have 3 million, we do about 3 million and a bit so it's not really complicated, but the revenues go to a to the castle. It's an old castle near Oegstgeest So the money that we earn goes to the castle to renovate and everything. We meet about, I think, six times a year, and sometimes in between. We have a bit of a problem with the board of directors of the castle who need to renovate the castle and need the money. And as always, you know, we want to have a new restaurants and they want to have a new bridge restored, for instance, problem. So we spend a lot of time on the maintenance and program for the coming years how to do that. And that is solved now. We're doing quite well, we used to start with, I think a revenue about not even 1,000,000, 800,000 I think. And now we're making 3 million so it seems to be doing well.

But it's still complicated because it's small. And well, there's always the question, what to do with the money? Where do we spend it? Because it's funny, and the funny thing is that we have a we used to have four females and one female left, obviously, because of the problems with the General Manager. Three females now and one male. And that goes very well. I think I think that the male person on the board of directors is doing a good job. And he really sees the potential in the young president of the board of directors who is a Russian girl, beginning of 30s and that works well. And we're being very protective of each other. You know, it works well. For the time being at least.

There is one who does the legal part, one is a personnel department. I'm the industry and there's one communication expert.

Interviewer: Alright, so everyone has really that domain of expertise within that board. Well, that's really super interesting information about the board, so thank you. And may I ask how long you've been sitting on that board yourself?

Interviewee E: Oh, I think I need to go after eight years, I think I leave in 21 or 22. So six or seven years now. So I've seen everything from the beginning. I guess it must be six years now.

Interviewer: Okay, perfect. Well, that gives me a really nice overview of your own experience within that board. I now I have a few questions about stakeholder theory, which I'm focusing on for my research. So there's a few questions about that. If there's anything that's not clear, just let me know. And I guess we've talked about this a little bit regarding the other product director, but maybe a bit broader, can you describe the relationship that you have with stakeholders in general, so it can be internal and external stakeholders.

Interviewee E: Well, we have somebody in the board of directors who is a communication expert. So she's really focusing only on the stakeholders to keep them informed and keep them with us. And it's difficult to see to my present work, you know, the two days in east of Holland, I mean, it's difficult really to give all the stakeholders what they need, or what you think they need. Because you're right in the middle of the whole thing, and they need to communicate with the different groups, keep them informed, keep them up to date, talk to them ask their opinion, sometimes. And it's difficult because you know everything, I think that's always been a problem, how to work with stakeholders. But it's good to define them, you know, define your stakeholders. And make sure you have a little calendar that says, okay, every two months, I need to talk to this or that guy or woman. And it's difficult, because it's always a bit. I mean, I'm going to talk to you, I want your advice, but I'm not sure if I'm going to take your advice. That's a difficult point. Also, what do you do with it? Like, can you share that's always a bit of a problem also. But you really have to think about and really make a little list, you know, and review the list frequently, because stakeholders change, groups change.

Interviewer: And I guess, depending on the moment you're in, for example, now with COVID, your stakeholders also changed quite a lot in those periods.

Interviewee E: Exactly. I mean, a whole different problem. Well, there's so much to address. I mean, at hotel B we're okay, we got the NOW thing, we're not paying rent at the moment, we had a little fat on our bones. So we obviously have less staff than we used to have. And that's one of our advantages is that we're not for profit, well, we are for profit, but for profit to

invest in the castle. So if we say one year we don't have money to the owners, or the people we rent this far for, it's okay. You know, we just do don't do anything for a year. So we're probably in a lucky position. But it's hard. It's hard. It's especially hard also for the GM because he's kind alone in this situation. And that's difficult to follow the new rules what can be done, I need you to make revenue, what can we cut on? That's something down to you. Hotel A standalone also like hotel B. And so there's no head office that says you need to do this or that or so you just need to do it yourself. And that's a different ballgame. Probably.

Interviewer: Definitely. And actually, that leads me to my next question, which is about the hierarchy within hotel B. Is it like you said, you don't have like a top office and everything. How would you describe the hierarchy within it?

Interviewee E: I think we don't really have one. No, it's always majority. And it really works well. I don't know why, but it's really it depends obviously, on the group. The group says, okay, we go for the majority, we trust each other. And if one of us says, No, we just go along with it, because the others say, you know, majority thing. Well, nobody says, I really want this or that. That makes it very open and more trust, we have a little quarrels sometimes. And we need to do that too. Of course, it's part of it.

Interviewer: And in that same regard, because you said it's a very open environment. And so I'm guessing as well, in terms of decision making and communication? How would you describe that kind of management style that you have? Also, with a GM, for instance?

Interviewee E: Well, I'm always one for consensus, you know, and I need to talk, majority is important. I think that everybody is behind decisions or routes or whatever. But sometimes, you need to take a decision. And if you're the highest, you need to make a decision because they always look at you, which is difficult, which I thought was difficult, especially at Hotel A, with all the people that worked for us. For me. They always said, okay, you tell me what to do, you know, and that's always difficult. But now, in the type of work I'm doing now, it's more like group things. We discuss it. And obviously, I'm often the one that says we go this or that way. And I take the consequences, too. So that's alright. I'm not afraid of angry people, or whatever people say or mistakes. I make mistakes.

Interviewer: Human, I think it's just about accepting it. And in terms of strategy formulation, is that your responsibility? Or is that more for the GM to take care of?

Interviewee E: It's the GM and then it's reviewed by us. And in principle, it's his job. So we may help or suggest but it's his job. And that's always difficult to what do you do? Or what do you know, GM is the boss. So we have to support him but not overrule him.

Interviewer: Alright. Nice philosophy. Well, that rounds off the more stakeholder questions I have. The next part is more about personal questions. So there's anything that you don't wish to answer, that's completely fine by me. And we can just move on to the next part. And so the first question is whether you have to make any choices within your personal life to get the career you had.

Interviewee E: If I made choices, yes. The only choice which is not really a choice is the question, did I want children or not, for me, wasn't really a choice, because I never wanted children. So for me, it's not a problem. But I think it's the only issue that might have been a problem.

Interviewer: That's usually the one that's come up the most to be honest.

Interviewee E: I'm sure it is. You know, but I never wanted them for me it was easy. And I was always said, I really want a career. I really do want a career. So that was a choice. So it has nothing to do with the children.

Interviewer: And in that regard, and did you always feel supported by people that surrounded you like your family, your friends? Did you always feel that support for your career?

Interviewee E: Yes. But also sometimes career always well, not always but usually that was the most important thing, and sometimes for my social life it didn't always work. And people don't understand. Some friends don't understand that your career would be above your friends.

Interviewer: So, in terms of balance between personal and professional life, for you wasn't very hard for others to understand it was?

Interviewee E: Yes, and I really never felt bad. I thought, well, I have a job, I work 80 hours a week, so don't bother me, you know, I'll call you when I have time and not the other way round. You know, especially friends that didn't work, or have different types of jobs. And I know I cancelled sometimes the very last moment because something happened in the hotel. I guess most of my friends understood that.

Interviewer: I have a few last questions, maybe your perspectives for the future in terms of women in executive positions, or women gaining access to top positions? If you have any thoughts on that?

Interviewee E: Well, you know, I was never worried. I am still not worried because I think we're doing very well. I know the numbers don't show that. But still, I think we're, you see the number of females in high positions, in the country and outside of the country, even with a new vice president in the US, we're really doing good. I think the new generation of men are different than the men who are 60, 70 I think we're doing good. It's a pity to hear that the salaries are still unequal. And there's also always the issue of children. I think, for some reason, well it's the most important problems in people, although you have a lot of women that have four or five, look at Mrs. van Leyen in the European community. I mean, she has I think six children, and so as long as you have help. And that's maybe something the government should work a bit better childcare. But we'll get there and it's also the females themselves. I mean, don't let you be put down, be upfront, keep up your head, hold up your head and just go ahead on your way in the way you think it should be done. And don't let older people tell you what to do. It's your life. Just do what you want to do. And if you make enemies you make enemies, that's too bad. Just hold up your head and go on.

Interviewer: Perfect, very inspirational way of ending this.

Oh, that's kind of rounds of my interview. there anything maybe you think I can improve from it? Anything? Any feedback from your side?

Interviewee E: No, I don't think I hope you have a good How many people do you interview? Do you know already? I mean, yet the final number.

Interviewer: Right now I have 12. I've interviewed five so far.

Thank you so much for everything. I'll send you a transcript as well so you can check if there's anything that I misinterpreted or anything of the sorts.

Interviewee E: Okay, good luck. I look forward to your transcript.

Interviewer: Thank you so much.

Interviewee Code	Interviewee F
Date	06/01/2021
Time	16:00
Duration of interview	52 mins
Platform	Teams

Interviewer: Do you maybe have any questions for me before we start?

Interviewee F: No, I'll just let it roll. And then we'll see.

Interviewer:. I'll give you a bit of an outline, so kind of what we'll be talking about. And so we'll talk about your own experience within the lodging industry. Maybe there were any barriers that you experienced, your personal path as well, which is, since it's more personal questions, if you don't wish to answer them, then that's fine as well. That's not a mandatory part. I have a few questions about the stakeholder theory. So there'll be some specific parts on that theory. And then more about, like, your future outlook on what changes are needed and how you see the future evolving?

Interviewee F: Okay. Related to this topic, obviously, right?

Interviewer: Yes, yes. Maybe we can start with a small introduction of yourself, and you can share with us your own professional background and career.

Interviewee F: Okay. Um, well, I am an alumna of Hotelschool, the Hague. And I graduated a long time ago. But I started immediately in the hotel industry. So I was really one of those, I think, 20% people or 40%, people, I'm not sure who really focused on the hotel industry, because I loved it from the beginning. And my first job was as a guest Relations Officer working in Hong Kong in a five star property. I also did my internships there. And I was really caught by the level of hospitality by, wanting to make the difference in guest experience. But also connecting to colleagues, those were my main, let's say, the drivers of why I wanted to be in the business, I really wanted to make that difference, making people feel comfortable and happy in what they were doing.

I noticed, however, that after about I think about eight months or so being in guest relations, it started to bore me, because I was always waiting for things to happen. So I was sitting in standing in the lobby, and I had to be very proactive in, approaching guests and making sure that they were comfortable. But I also wanted to have a job whereby I would be busy. Because I have a lot of energy, and I like to be busy organizing. And I noticed that people from the sales department were always running around. So I applied in Hong Kong for a position in sales, and I became one of the sales managers, their sales executives. And so my commitment to the commercial side of the hotel industry actually started, I think, within the first year after I graduated, so I've always been into sales and marketing. I was PR manager for a hotel, different hotel in Hong Kong, I moved to Taipei in Taiwan, became PR manager at a local hotel there. And then I moved back to Amsterdam. And I worked for the Hotel A

for a long time, also in a position for sales. So I worked my way up to director of sales for that hotel.

And, I found in those days, that to me, especially when I returned to the Netherlands. I mean, in Asia, it's a little bit different. I think I experienced positive discrimination, because of my background, and because maybe my race and maybe my I don't know, being a woman, maybe in those days, for those positions. Returning to the Netherlands, I did not feel any type of limitation in achieving my ambitions. absolutely zero in those days. I was about I was in my 20s, when I returned to the Netherlands. I was uncommitted. So I was a very free bird, and I felt that the world was my oyster and that I could achieve anything that I possibly would want in the hospitality industry. Because I was really climbing the ladder and people were also, I mean, they were knocking on my door and asking me if I wanted to work for them, etc. In those days, also, my leadership skills started to develop and I was also given, my first tasks as being of being a leader, leading a small team of three people.

And then I spent six years with Hotel A. And I decided to join a board. So I became a department manager, led about nine people in a very marketing oriented job. And then I was headhunted to work for Hotel B, which is what I did for seven years. But what happened during my Hotel B time, and this is how things started shifting. And that's why I'm so interested in this topic.

I worked for Hotel B and I started working in 1998, just to be specific in that, still with the world at my feet, completely being able to achieve my own ambitions, but also still being unbound. So, I mean, I had a partner, but I had no children. And myself, life was still at the service of my employer. So basically, because I was so flexible, and I had been flexible throughout my whole career, I never looked at the clock, I was always available.

It was easy to focus and to get my ambitions in place. A year later, however, I became a mother of two girls, so I became the mother of a twin, a twin daughters. And for me, even though I thought nothing would change, I thought I would go on pregnancy leave, because I was pregnant. And I still worked the way I used to work, despite having a twin pregnancy. And I thought, the minute my children are born, I will return after 16 weeks of maternity leave, and things will be back the way they were.

No, but that wasn't the case, because I had changed. I had changed in that sense that I was still as committed as I was, but I suddenly had two babies to look after. And that had an impact on my time, on the time referral that I had, but also in my commitment also to them. So at a certain stage, what happened was that my life had completely turned upside down. But my employer still viewed me as the person with that same, time commitment, which was often , 60 hours or 80 hours, whatever, you knew, you work weekends, you did stuff, because our hotel industry is a 24/7 job. And also to, add to that, a position at Hotel B, I was the director of sales and marketing, and I was a member of the executive team. And I was also the first woman in an executive team for Hotel B in Europe to become a mother. So we're talking like about 20, 22 years ago, or something like that.

In so in that sense, I remember also that at a certain stage, I asked to be able to balance my life, better, my private life with my business life. So I said, Well, I'd like to see if I can work one day less for me to be able to manage my life at home, so that I can be a better employee. And the answer I received at that stage was, well, you are part of the executive team, you

cannot work less hours, because that would give a wrong impression of your position. So stuff like that started happening. And, and that happened throughout. So the minute I became a mother, things started changing, and not because of my career opportunities, but I was often asked questions, if people saw that I had children on a CV, because I was I was headhunted once as well. And the minute that I have children on my CV, I wasn't interesting anymore, as I was less interesting to certain employers

Interviewer: Could you see that directly from their interaction or like, how they approached you?

Interviewee F: Well, they would ask me questions such as so you have children? How do you make the combination of being a mother and having a career where as they did not ask, the father, or male candidates with a similar background.

I remember, I also, at a certain stage in my career, I decided to, I wanted to become an independent because I wasn't able to make the combination between my private life at home, and the commitments that my employer asked for me. So I decided I want to have my own company, so that I can determine myself when I'm going to be often when I'm going to work because my working ethics were not bound by nine to five I mean, I was willing to work in the evening or in the weekends, etc. But I also wanted to secure time to be with my family. So I didn't want to have an 80 hour work week, I still wanted to have the 40 Hour workweek, or the 32 Hour workweek, but when it was reasonable to me so that I could still see my children, you see what I mean? So if you wanted me to work in the evening, that'd be fine. But then I would want to be off in the afternoon, so that I would still be able to see them. And I wanted to manage my own time. So I was I had my own company for about four years.

And when I was doing a project, some other project emerged, and one of the people that bought that commissioned that project, he saw me, I when I was coming for the interview, he saw me come by bike, and on my bike, I had this children's seat on the bike. And he wasn't going to be my boss. He was just the commissioner of the project. And he said to me, he goes, so I see you have a child seat on your bike. That means you have children, I said, yes, and he said, Are you going to manage that?

So it was something that kept reoccurring, and I'm talking about 15 years ago, or 10-15 years ago, I'm not talking like 50 years ago, it's very recent. So, in that sense, I never experienced differences, because you hear a lot that women do not get paid the same as men. Well, I never experienced stuff like that. But I experienced a lot of pressure when I became a mother. And, I found that extremely disturbing, extremely disturbing. And I found that my employers did not pave the way to keep women on board, in particular leadership roles.

And I've also experienced situations from other women. And I believe, I did a I did a recent defense with one of Dr. Brannon's students, Laura, I'm sure you've maybe you've read her report as well?

Interviewer: I have not, but I will definitely ask him for it.

Interviewee F: You should, she had this topic called the queen bee syndrome, whereby women can be extremely tough on other women in the situation. And that's situations that I've experienced as well. In particular situations whereby women who are in leadership roles, they feel this added pressure also from other women. And somewhere along the line, I think

certain things need to change other from the employer side, whereby you say, okay, women who have young families should be maybe taken out of the process for a year, so that they could focus on that family, but they should have the guaranteed to return after a year. Like that first, very intense period of motherhood, whereby women are trying to juggle and trying to balance this new life with that old life.

Or if they're given assistance, or by duality of jobs or something like that, because there's nothing wrong with the brain, actually, in a lot of times, women are even more committed in that sense, but because they can't make that balance, you're losing a lot of very good potential employees as well, in that sense. So that was quite, I mean, I always went against it.

I must say that working for, because I've also worked for a national museum, and that was in an environment of governance and government. And in governmental rules, there is more space in a non commercial environment, there is more space to make that balance between home and work.

Interviewer: Because you don't have that competition. pressure from your competitors?

Interviewee F: Yes but no, also, revenues. That's the big thing. And I mean, I can understand it, from a perspective from the employer, don't get me wrong, but I think we should approach it differently, because women are as eligible to work in certain positions as men, and particularly in our business. But we are the ones who have the babies, right, I mean, our bodies are built for that, it is part of life. So if in the first year of the child's existence, there's always a virus, or there's always something happening, or there's always something funky or whatever, that takes away the attention of the woman because, obviously, the baby is in need. There's such a need for that child to be to be part of that, but the point is that I'm trying to make is that we just pretend that there's nothing happening, but there's everything is happening, everything is changed. And we're just continuing as if nothing's changed. So, somewhere along the line, someone needs to make that, accept that or acknowledge that so that you can make that difference and make it work so that you can contain the talent that you have in the women. And in particularly in our business, our business is very well suited for women very well suited for women. Because we have the skills, that you require, as a host or hostess or whatever. And host or hostess means to your stakeholders, etc. And not just being good or saying welcome to my hotel, whatever, but it's also your whole attitude and in your whole way you perceive others, etc.

Interviewer: Well, that's a great introduction. And it's also covered a few of the other questions I had regarding maybe barrier difficulties that you had. So I think we've have like a really nice overview of that. And I just want to go back to the point that you were making about employers needing to pave the way to keep women on board, and making that changes that they're kind of ignoring, like you said, like, as if everything was normal, but like, well, not normal, but like, everything was as it was before. But obviously, things have changed. And perhaps also the question of society within this of responsibility being solely placed on the mother more than distribution of kind of the parental role between the mother and the father. So does that also play a part?

Interviewee F: And, my husband was very, very supportive of the career that I had. And I was lucky in that sense. But the point is, is that it's not necessarily the tasks, but it's also the feeling, because your feelings have changed. I remember when my son had to go, my son was

born two years after my girls, and I remember that, at four months old, I had to deliver him to the daycare center, and I was, it was completely alien to me to do that. Because, everything, my whole instinct was, no, I have to keep my son here, he needs to be with me.

And, and that really affects you, and in my leadership role at that stage, I could not sit and cry for my kid. Because you have to man up, you have to man up, see that word? And is that fair is that against your instincts? It's all against every type of instinct. And so all these blockages that are being built in so that you are surviving all the time? And therefore, to answer your question, I think often what I'm hearing is that, I think if the employer were to encourage the male, the men to that it's okay for them to loosen up, and to provide more of that care in order to take away that feeling that the woman has to want to be sure that everything is okay with her kid, then the father will maybe be more encouraged to do so. But I think they feel maybe that it's a sign of weakness to one time that and I think it's the role also of the employer to encourage that. And to say, it is cool to do that. It is cool.

But I'm hopeful, though, that the generation that's coming up that that, because it's still not happening a lot, I think now. I mean, it's only that I think, since last year, that men are allowed, I think a month off after the baby's born. They have paternity leave now, and it's about a month.

Interviewer: So I was quite shocked by the little amount that they had to be honest, to begin with. And so I think it's a very nice perspective to say that it should come instead of blaming it on parents themselves, or on maybe even sometimes women saying like, they're not taking it, they're not one thing. It's from really from the employer side. So that's a nice perspective.

Interviewee F: And it's a societal as well, right. So in that sense, from that perspective, in your work environment, social part of your society, right. So you want to create a win-win situation in the long run, I think.

Interviewer: That gives me a very nice overview of your own career path. And if you don't mind, I'd like to go back to when you were working for Hotel B, because you said you were part of the executive team. And that's very much what I'm focusing on. Because I've heard a lot as well from other interviews that there's a lot of women in GM positions, and that's not really the problem. The problem is more bridging that gap between within the executive team where there's a lot less women from my research. And so I was wondering if you remember the for example, how many would the board composition was within that team if it was mostly male dominated or if it was quite equal.

Interviewee F: In Hotel B, it was quite equal. And we had, I think three men, the GM, the Director of Engineering and the director of I think f&b, they were male. And then the women were myself as the marketing and sales, operations, female and the HR was female. And I also was an executive director for a museum. I was on the board of directors there. And there, we had three people, me being one of them. And I was in charge of the hospitality and the hospitality product. I was in charge of enterprise, let's put it that way, the commercial side of the museum. And the males were the general director and the director of the collection like the internal one more or less.

So just to give you an idea about that, as well, so the direction, but in that sense, I guess, Hotel B was quite diverse in its allowance for women to be part of the executive team. And that was not the problem. That was really not the problem. It was, and I'm talking way back,

and I'm sure things have improved. But it was like I said, I was the first woman in an executive team position to become a mother that says, that says in other things. It's a bit shocking. If you if you think about it, and also the HR director, she decided to also take the leap. And she became the second woman to become a member of the executive team, who became a mom.

Interviewer: That's interesting, because you say, take a leap as if it's dangerous...

Interviewee F: Yes, yes. And the GM that follows, because, I think, every two years, the GM changes, , at least in those days, when I was working for the hotel, and in the Hotel B.

I had, I think my third GM, might not was my last GM, actually, he, when he was in his introduction phase, he invited me to his office one evening, and to me, the evenings were very tough. Because my children are very young. And, they need to have the food, the bath the bed, and it's like, you have to just do it. And it's very time based because, kids when they're under the under two years old day they, the routine is very strenuous at that state. So, he insisted that I stay in evening, and he kind of took me into his office. And he told me, and he'd closed the door, so it was just me and him. And he told me, he said, I need you to commit to me whenever I need you. He said, and that means 24/7. So if I need you at 8pm, you need to be at 8pm. If I need you at 1am to do stuff, you need to be at 1am. And I said, But that's impossible. And he goes back. Why is that? Impossible? I said, because I have family, I have other stuff to do, which is also a bit weird, because if I had not had a family, I would have said, sure, whatever, but because I had that family, I suddenly realized that it was weird to be able to do that.

Interviewer: So it was that pressure of saying, because you are not available to me whenever I need you. And because you have children, you are actually becoming a nuisance to me. And there could be someone who would say yes to being there at one in the morning, if need be.

Interviewee F: Thankfully, I've never had that again, in my career. But it was very, very shocking. It was very intimidating. And it was very shocking. And it also made me realize that things had forever changed also, on my behalf. And that's also when I made that call, that I wanted to become an independent, because I said, I don't want anyone to manage my time. My time, the time is the most precious variant in the situation. So that's kind of how that progressed, in that sense.

I think four years later, that's when I joined the Museum. Let's say the challenges I encountered there were that I was not always taken very seriously by two men.

Interviewer: That was going to be my next question is like because of the different dynamics because in one there was parity you in the other, your minority in there. What were the differences, were there any notable differences. So you really felt that you weren't taken seriously yet, within that project?

Interviewee F: No, I was taken seriously, definitely. But no, for sure I was taken seriously, but you could tell that there was always some type of competition, if, for instance, if I delivered something, if I had an achievement or something that one of, especially one of them would kind of take the credits instead of you. And they didn't do that between each other. So

it was more like, hey, but, that type of thing I want you, I'm your guy on the other end of the rock type of thing.

And you just kind of let it go. But that was the situation where you really had to balance your position, you knew what you have to be careful in how you manoeuvre yourself around that. And it had to do with a man woman thing that was the man woman thing. Definitely. So that had nothing to do with the family, the children, etc. But it was really, the wanting to be above the woman thing, that was that feeling.

But then again I negotiated very good salary, and negotiated very good conditions. So, I was definitely not in the league of being a woman having less salary even, I actually earned more than the other director that was in the team as well. So I was the second best earner, and it during that period of time.

So there was no problem there. Maybe I negotiated? Well, I don't know. But the feeling was that you must not get into firm discussions with the other guy, because he wants to win, and not because he wants to win from the other guy, but he went to inform me and because I was the woman, you see. And that, to me was very apparent.

Interviewer: That kind of feeling of superiority, I guess.

Interviewee F: Yes.

Interviewer: And like you said you still felt heard on that, on that board? You didn't feel like, your ideas were not valued for what they are, what they were no, definitely heard?

Interviewee F: Yes, I've definitely felt heard. And I was able to achieve a lot of goals. And I was able to, also achieve good leadership development and a good team, etc. So but it was there was always that invisible competition, what I mean, and I didn't play the competition, I just let it happen. Right but it was definitely present. And also, and I also experienced that queen bee syndrome that I just mentioned earlier, also there with the Board of Trustees, there are women in the board of trustees who are at a very high social societal position. And they were, they could be extremely intimidating, towards me as one of the board members who was a woman, and that I thought was very interesting, that, because you would expect that women support each other in that sense, but in this case, they were worse than the men. Oh, they were worse than the men in their dominance, and in their feedback, and in their wanting to achieve certain things. So there was no discussion possible at all, so and that also made me realize that we are role models also to each other, and you need to have a firm foundation where, whereby you can support each other, you have to support each other.

Interviewer: Definitely, and so that that kind of intimidation was solely targeted towards you, or was it just their character as having "manned up" in a way, like you mentioned before, that made them that way? Also, towards the other directors? Or was it really solely directed towards you because you were a woman?

Interviewee F: And that's a good question. I think it was more strongly towards me, but they were also not very sweet to the to the other men. But, she, I was invited to her office once and she tried to cajole information out of me trying to make me bad mouth, the other two stuff like that. So she had a very, let's say, a very non transparent way of trying to achieve her goals.

But I think it was also because she was Manning up in her role, you see what I mean? So she was trying to use maybe, I say it but that's just my own perception, or maybe I'm wrong, but , like male tactics in certain things because those are definitely I don't think those are female tactics. Because normally I think in general, females try to go for the cooperation and not all, I've never met women before, who would try to push down women, you see what I mean, in a professional environment. And so this was my first encounter with such a situation.

And to me, it felt as if, she, because I think maybe she had a very high position in the financial sector. So maybe it was her way of also surviving the financial sector, which is male dominant by needing to do that, and she was also applying it to other women, which to me was very well, it was intimidating, was quite intimidating to be frank.

Interviewer: And I think I want to pick up on you were mentioning kind of like, cooperation was more of like a female tactic. And I have a question about like, skills, both hard and soft skills. And if you felt like you brought a different set of skills to the boardroom, when you were sitting on the boards, whether it was in Hotel B, the executive team, or in the Museum.

Interviewee F: Well, I always try to also bring the situation of the employees to the table, like personal situations, or take into account what was going on in people's lives. And, in Dutch we say, the men silica marks, which refers to the human touch, the fact that we are all human beings and things affect us, and if things affect us, then we may not be able to, to function as well as we should. So that was always kind of, my five cents on the table, that's always what I try to bring to the table. And not to only be cognitive, but to get the EQ in a bit, and to, to kind of allow for the space whereby people could, if there were concerns that they that we would also spend attention to the concerns of people, if there were concerns in their personal lives, blah, blah, blah, and to also see people see them as they are, that was very important to me remember.

When I was working at the Museum, we had a lovely cleaning lady, and every morning, she would come in and clean our desks, etc. And she was from a Moroccan background. And, her name is Fatima. So she said, I'm Fatima, we started talking, so I mean, she knew about me, and I knew about her, etc. And one day, she took me aside and she said, my name is not Fatima, my name is Mina. I said to her, but how come I'm calling you Fatima? She goes, I don't know. They all call me Fatima here. That's, that's what they call me. I said what she was trying to say that my name is Mina. I said, but that's ridiculous.

So I talked to the facilities manager, and I said, What's going on, she's pretty upset Fatima, I can see what's going. So because of her background, people assumed that her name was Fatima. And this is just an example. But that's basically, that's what I wanted to change. I wanted to be sure that we could provide for those changes, whereby people would be seen as for who they are, and not just some type of employer or employee or whatever, but to put in that human touch. And again, I'm a strong, firm believer in you're comfortable and when you're at ease that you bring out the best in yourself, and you also bring out the authentic part of yourself, and I think that's always a win that sense. So to me, that was really weird. It was really weird, that she was not seen. And that's, to me, that's very damaging. I find that absolutely unacceptable.

Interviewer: And very condescending. Because they're not willing to get to know the person understand who they are. It's very sad.

Interviewee F: You think because I have, because I come from Morocco where Fatima is a common name or maybe you think I'm Turkish, whatever. But first of all, I'm from Morocco. Second of all, it's not my name. So what do you do? It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous.

So stuff like that. I think, obviously, you have quite a few responsibilities in such a position. But where I could make that difference? I tried to make a difference in that sense.

Interviewer: Well, I think that's a very nice example to finish kind of your experience on the board. Then I have a few questions that are more oriented towards the stakeholder theory.

And but for this one, as well as you can give examples from Hotel B, from the Museum, I'm happy for both. Also see the contrast maybe between the two and how it was? Um, so I guess the first question, obviously, since it's stakeholder theory is, if you can maybe describe the relationship that your organization had with, with its stakeholders, both internal and external?

Interviewee F: Well, that's a pretty broad question. I think, in both cases, as transparent as possible, and very hospitably driven in both cases, whereby we were very customer centric. In any case, to the external world.

In Hotel B, it was very interesting that everything that was not manager related, people were also they weren't called personnel or employees, but they were called associates. So people in operational departments were very, very well, well maintained, well addressed, with great respect, etc.

And it was again, that the slogan of Hotel B was when you're comfortable, you can do anything and that is really its effect. When you're comfortable, you can do anything. And that is also how stakeholders in that sense internally, were often addressed most of the time. Once you hit the role of manager things changed a bit, so the stakeholder management was, it was a different league, and expectations were very high. And there was no time for nonsense.

Within my other job as a board member I guess, there was a huge awareness of stakeholders, a huge awareness. Also, there are multiple stakeholders of all different levels, governmental, national, governmental, local, governmental, the external but sponsors, clients, everything, and they were all, that that external field, I guess also, I would use the word customer centricism, as again, always from the customer centric systems. So who is that external? customer? And what are their designs? And how do we address them? How do we address them? You would have to adjust your way of addressing depending on what that external customer was.

From an internal perspective, we spent a lot of time communicating, we really had a very high level of communicating internally. And that that was also demanded of the people working for a museum because people working in the museum are highly educated. So that's the difference between a hotel industry and the museum fields, people have higher education, and they are very demanding in that sense. So they are insistent on being involved in what's going on. So you have to comply to that. People working in the hotel field are more appreciative when they are given things or informed about things. It's not a demand. It's not a norm from the industry.

Interviewer: That's great. And then this question is more about like, the external environment. So, for example, let's say in the hospitality industry, when there was a huge

development and technology or maybe in focus on sustainability, those kind of changes, and how did you feel like Hotel B responded to those changes?

Interviewee F: Sustainability was not on the agenda to be frank. I don't know how they are now. Responding to change, I think Hotel B was ahead of the game as compared to other hotels, definitely already in those days. It was very focused externally, but also from the head office perspective, so head office played a very major role in that. And we would add on to that locally, and then you grow larger.

But they've always been ahead of the game, that also shows their success. And probably, I think Europe was lagging behind. So I think nowadays Hotel B is also seen determined as probably one of the best employers for women. And but I don't know if that also comes from women in leadership roles. That's what I'm not sure about.

Interviewer: And so would you say like they made the most out of anything that came up in the external environments, they just grabbed the opportunity? That's what put them ahead of the game

Interviewee F: Well, technically, they were very much ahead of the game. Not necessarily in, going back to your stakeholder theory, they were a little close minded to their nearby environment. They would not really reach out to the partners that were alongside so kind of like an independent individual in that sense. Not snobby or anything like that but like the quiet kid in the classroom so if someone would approach you, you would not say bugger off, but you would not be the one to approach them.

Technically, from our business perspective they were ahead of the game: ensure that your distribution was up and running, that you were able to capitalise on your successes, that you were able to involve your teams, or using a P&L, no one else did that! They were not only focusing on revenues, they were also focusing on cost, and in those days that was really not the case. They were so ahead of the game. Now it's normal, we teach that in school, we teach you about contribution margin but back in those days it wasn't like that, hotels would only focus on sales. Hotel B has always been the organisation that takes costs into account. That is one of their success factors, absolutely, that's how they're surviving.

Interviewer: how would you outline the hierarchy that Hotel B had?

Interviewee F: I reported to the GM and the sales and marketing department reported to me and in that department one was sales manager, revenue manager and event manager so that was the tree structure. And so our business is very much with the forks, so there are quite some level, but it was all quite transparent and very clear: who was in the report structure and who was empowered to do things. That was very clear in that structure. Same goes for the museum, I actually used the hotel industry's organisation chart, to also actually build the enterprise that I had. Because we had an operational team who also had to look after our hospitality company and as the margins are quite small within food and beverage. So we really had to manage those costs very strongly. I also used the model of empowerment and ensuring that the reporting was top-down but the encouragement to go from bottom-up was very much encouraged. There was involvement, informalities in how you approach people. So everybody was on a first name basis etc. stuff like that in both organisations, was that true? No, I think in Hotel B, the GM was called mister, and the executive team was all on

first name. I don't remember if Hotel B was first name basis or not with the GM. But in the museum, it was all first name basis no one was Mr or Ms or whatever.

Interviewer: So it was quite ease, it also made that barrier a lot easier to cross. And how would you describe, I guess it is quite related to what you were saying about transparency and communication, how would you describe then the management style when it came to decision making and communication with the associates.

Interviewee F: In both, decisions were democratic, definitely on both parts. You, as the leader or manager of your own department, you are responsible for the results of your department and you reported that back. You were also the one to write out your strategy, to share that strategy, so that was approved by your fellow managers, and director or whatever and you would role it out. And any effects or anything that happened and whatever, you would have to report that back. But you were responsible for your tasks and your commitments to that. So definitely, I never saw any issue in that to be frank, because there was equality in that for sure, in both situations.

Interviewer: My next question was going to be about formulating strategy, but then you have already answered that part. So those were all my questions about stakeholder theory, and I have also a lot of notes about your own personal path, with personal life and professional life and your future perspectives. I guess the last question I have is if there is anything I can improve on in this interview, or anything you think might be missing,

Interviewee F: I think I said quite a lot, in particular my concerns for the future because I do feel like it is our industry that is fairly old fashioned. I think if we don't work at it from the core, from the root cause, then it will never change. Then we're going to be losing women the moment they enter motherhood. Because, they're not willing to understand that there is a need to change that pattern, that system. And there are so many ways you can do it by again looking at dual, putting two women in one position, or job sharing, or building the playschool nearby so you can pop over during lunch time or something, have it professionally oriented to ease the anxiousness of the mother. And another thing is breastfeeding, essential for the baby, women are often put into cubicles to detract breast milk. It is so humiliating. It is as if it is not important, it is very important! It feels inferior, and it's hugely important. And they have to have by law, in the Netherlands, you have to have facilities for that. But the facilities are ridiculous. Really ridiculous. Especially in the hospitality industry, every square meter counts because it can bring you revenues. So that is why they will say, that meeting room, or office space, you can't use that because it's a room that I can sell. It's off!

Interviewer: I think that is a very good example, that we don't hear very often, and I would also personally not think of, until you have really experienced it first-hand.

Interviewee F: Hopefully this will contribute to some change in the future.

Interviewer: Hopefully, that is the aim!

Interviewee F: Especially for our industry, our industry needs women, really.

Interviewee Code	Interviewee G
Date	13/01/2021
Time	10 :00
Duration of interview	56 min
Platform	Teams

Interviewer: I've just started the recording. And then maybe I can give you a bit of background on the research and also like on the interview before we start. So from what I've researched so far, and from my literature review, the main findings I have is that most of the research regarding female executives and female in high positions is kind of looking at how they impact the financial position, the non financial positions of the company. So increasing the profit that's been made, or improving the CSR reporting those kind of things. And I was intrigued in looking at more of the ethical side of the question, looking at it from maybe it's just like, morally right to do. And what the barriers and the conditions right now, that makes the disparity so large, both sides to certain angles, I'm looking at the feminist stakeholder theory in particular.

And so for this interview, I think we'll start with a small introduction about yourself, your own path, how you perceived the barriers, if you perceived any, to be honest, and your own experience within the industry. As well as that, I have some questions about the stakeholder theory, but just very large questions to kind of get an understanding, and then there's also a part about your own personal path, which is optional for you to answer you can choose if you want to answer it or not. And then kind of your future perspectives on where the changes are needed. Where we need to make those, those changes at what level they're needed. So that's an overview. Do you have any question perhaps before we start?

Interviewee G: No.

Interviewer: Perfect. And then maybe we can start with a small introduction about yourself, how long you've been working in the industry and maybe your professional background?

Interviewee G: Okay, so it takes me a long time back. I was also a student of the Hotelschool. But I graduated in 1983, so long time ago. Then I did my internship, my management internship at Hotel A. And after that I stayed during quite some time to do food and beverage career, let's say. I started, as it was normal at that time, at the dishwashing machine running the stewarding department. And when I left, I was director of food and beverage and I did everything in between. And then I went to Amsterdam, I became executive assistant manager of Hotel B. So this hotel, and hotel C. And I was in charge of F&B, at that time. And afterwards, I did that very shortly. Then I became hotel manager of hotel C for a few years, three years, and then I did the renovation of it, which was big. And then like, I always say, I started the most difficult job in my life because I became a mother. And then, you know, it was tough because I was, unfortunately, very unlucky. during my pregnancy, my partner found somebody else. So he left me. And then I was not only a hotel

manager, but also going to be a single mother. And then to be honest, I thought, Okay, how am I going to do this, right? Hotel manager is a very hectic job. Being a mother is quite a job. And combining both of them, I don't know if I can, if I am capable of doing that. And at that time, we had a meeting with all the hotel managers and general managers of Europe, at that time, under the mother company. They had 150 hotels. At that time. We were invited to Italy for the meeting. And from the 150 how many women you think were hotel managers or general managers talking about around 2000.

Interviewer: Maybe like 30?

Interviewee G: Seven.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee G: So I was one of them. There were six other women. So I thought, Okay, I'm going to talk to those six other women and see how they did it. So two of them, they were single, and never became a mother were definitely workaholics. And so they said that for them this has never been an issue. They never wanted children and they stayed single anyhow. So for them this was not an issue.

Then there were four left and was one who said I did it the other way around, I first got my children. And then I started my career in the hospitality industry. So when I became a GM, my children were already grown up.

Then there was one who said, I'm very unlucky, because I have a disabled child who needs 24 hours care every day. So I have a nurse in-house and the nurse takes care of my child.

And then I think two more, and they had a partner, and they had children, and they had put the children on the boarding school. And then I thought, okay, I was so happy to become a mother. But I was not intending to become a mother and put my child in a boarding school. So then I thought, Okay, this is going to be tough to combine it, that's for sure. Because in the company, nobody does it at the moment. So then, during that conference, there was a presentation of Six Sigma, you know, and that they wanted to launch that for the whole company. And of course, that was never done before, because Six Sigma was really a program for production companies. But they said, Okay, it works for production companies, why wouldn't it work for service companies? So they were the first to launch Six Sigma, and they were looking for experienced people who could run the program. And then I had a few sleepless nights. And I thought, Okay, this train is passing now. And I think I have to get on it. Because how am I going to be a single mother and a hotel manager, I don't know how to do it. And I have nobody who showed me that is possible. So it might be wise to change. And step on the train of Six Sigma. So I did. So I applied for the job of black belt. Hired, I did the whole training. So I became a certified black belt. And then I got my baby son. And, and then when I came back after the maternity leave, I started as a black belt. So I left Hotel Management, behind. And I did the black belt position for hotel B, and for hotel C, and for hotel D in Rotterdam and Hotel E in the Hague at that time. So four hotels, which was an amazing period, because, you know, you had to go to all the hotels and look at bottlenecks in the organization and then try to fix it with the Six Sigma method. Very interesting, I learned a lot. And of course, a big advantage was that it's a project kind of work. So I could, I could combine it with the single motherhood, so okay, my son was at day-care, five days a week, okay, that was the consequences. But at least when I had to go and get him, I could go and

get him. And then I would work in the evenings or very early in the morning, or whenever it was necessary, I could combine it, which was great, which was really great. I've done that for about seven years, and then I was really fed up. Because every time you start, you know, you start a project, everybody is very enthusiastic, you have to get the data, everybody starts thinking that's not that fun. And then you know.... so it's always the same curves that you follow. And after seven years, I thought, okay, now I had it, it's enough. And at that time, the HR person from the hotel B left and the area manager at that time said now I want to make area HR position out of it because I think there's a lot that we can combine and do together and now everybody does it individually so I'm looking for an area person and I said, Well, you know that might be something for me because I'm looking for a new challenge. And in the meantime, so I had been for almost 38 years in the hospitality industry, I knew that whatever you have, whatever the property is, how it looks, if it's amazing or not, in the end, it's the people who make the difference. And the guests will never recall what the room looked like. But they will recall if they were being helped by somebody the right way. So I said, Well, you know, if you're looking for an area HR, I'm very interested to do that, let me. So I applied, and I got the job, which was a little bit amazing, because I had no idea what the tasks of HR were, you know, and I had no clue. But then the area manager at that time said, Listen, I said, afterwards, when I got the job, I said, Why did you take me? I don't know anything about HR. And then he said, you know, if I would have taken the others who have done HR for many, many years, I would have gotten what I already have. And when you are going to look from a different angle, and with your black belt experience, you're going to wonder if it's really added value or not. And then you will do it differently. So that's why he hired me. So then I started. But it was quite a political issue, because not all the owners are the same. So the owner from the hotel B and the owners from hotel C were the same owners, but from the other two properties, they were different owners. And then the owners didn't agree that somebody else would mingle in that HR thing. So officially, I was just for the hotel B and C. But unofficially, I took the other two hotels together, and we did everything together. So we did all the HR processes, and we aligned, which was a nice experience as well. But then we lost them afterwards, we lost hotel D, afterwards the Hotel E. And in the end, we also lost the hotel C. So now I'm back running only the hotel B which a lot of people ask me, isn't that boring? Well, it's the contrary because the good thing about one property is that you can really go in that you know, all the people you know, all the stories. If you have four hotels, you go around and it's only looking at the problems and so I'm very happy in the current role. I love what I do. Of course, last year has been the nightmare for HR and for the job. But I still like what I do, right? So that's a little bit my career path.

Interviewer: Very impressive roles and also doing it all this as a single mother as well. I think it's very impressive. Well, I have a question that's a bit broader is if you relate to the difficulties women having climbing the career ladder, did you feel that it was it was a struggle for you?

Interviewee G: It was, I didn't feel it, like a struggle, but I felt that I had to stand up for myself. It was not the war, but you had to talk and stand up for yourself on the right moment. I give you a few examples. So for instance, Hotelschool Okay, you cannot imagine but in 1983 we didn't go abroad for internships. And I wanted to go to Brussels well, process was already "Oh, abroad? You go abroad?" Please think about nothing but that. And then there was one internship possibility in Brussels. And there was another boy who wants to go there.

And the school said he can go. And then I said, Why can he go, Why can I not go? No, he can go, and I didn't agree. So I spoke up. I said, No, that's not the way, that's not correct. Why would he be able, so no. I'm going also for an interview. And then may the best get it, when you see so it's not fight, but it is stand up and say no, I don't agree. So I went to Brussels. We went together the boy and we had both the interview and in the end, we were both hired. And then the school says, No, it's not possible to go in the same hotel, that's not possible. Okay. And then they thought that I would give up my place. So I said, No, no, no, no, we are going to do a separate way. Not in the same department, blah, blah, blah. So I in the end, I convinced them and I could do my internship there. So that's, you know, you have to stand up.

Another example, which it's a little bit silly, but okay. Is I did an F&B management training. And my French was not that good. Right. So I had school French and French from Hotelschool, it was not that I was very fluent. And then I found out that every time when I was in the restaurant, and that French people were laughing when they looked at my badge it said le trainee. So I thought, why do they laugh? Why do they laugh? Must be something, right? So I went home, and I took my French dictionary. And I looked up in trainee in France. With the next accent. Do you speak French?

Interviewer: I'm French.

Interviewee G: You know what it means, right. So I thought, Oh, my God. So for French people, they see my name and they think, trainée, that's not the way I want to be presented. So I went to the HR manager at the time and said, Can you change my badge, please? Because I'm going to the room service. And if I go to room service, and they find a see this, then they might think so... and I don't want to be known like that. And what happened was quite the discussion and the general manager came along, but he heard discussions that was going on here. So I told him the story. I said, Can you please change it and have stagiaire or whatever. And the HR manager that was really very cross at me, and he said, No, I'm not going to change. But in the afternoon, all the female trainees had to go to the HR office and all their badges were changed. So small victory for me. And again, it's not a fight, it's not a struggle, but it's to speak up and say no. Then from this story, the general manager knew who I was. So at the end of my internship, I knew I wanted to do F&B. And I knew at that time, it was normal, everybody had to go through stewarding, which in the end is the best experience in my life. But okay, that's a different story, especially about leadership. So I wanted to do stewarding and then again, the HR manager. He didn't agree because that was not for women, women, 'real women'. I remember that. He told me 'real women don't do stewarding.' And I said, Well, this is bullshit. I'm willing to do it for three months. You let me do it for three months. And if you don't like it, then you fire me. That's fine. But you cannot say that I cannot try. And then again, I was cleaning in the kitchen or I don't know what I was doing. And then the GM came along, said, Hey, how are you doing? Well, almost my internship is almost finished. And he said, Oh, that's nice. Are you going to stay? I said, No, I'm not going to stay. Because what I want is not possible here. And then he said, What do you mean? It's not possible? I said, Well, I want to do stewarding, but the HR manager, (who by the way, was an Italian old fashioned Italian) and doesn't allow women to go into stewarding so I proposed in three months, but he does agree. So you know, then I'm going to look somewhere else. So he said, Okay, okay, okay, this is okay, let me check. Let me check. The afternoon, I had to come to the HR office, and I got the job. And I said, Okay, brilliant. I

signed for three months, and I did, and that was Assistant Chief steward. And I was below the chief steward. And after three months, they fired the chief steward. And I became chief steward. So you see, once again, was it a fight? No. For me, it was not a fight. Stand up for yourself and be a little bit lucky as well. Right? You have to have a little bit luck that people notice you and, and that they are willing to give you a chance. But that's same for boys or for men. That is no different. You have somebody who believes in you and says, Go and do it. Right.

Interviewer: Only differences that then they would have hired a man without a question to be working in stewarding.

Interviewee G: Yes. So that's, I think the two, that's when I think about it, really two remarkable moments that have really influenced my life. Very much. So otherwise, it would not have given me the chance, then, I would not be where I am now.

Interviewer: That's for sure. Definitely. So I had a few questions about barriers. But I think the examples that you gave, give me a good overview of kind of the barriers that you encountered. And how did you overcome them? I guess it's just about speaking up for yourself.

Interviewee G: Speaking up for yourself. And don't take no for an answer, right. If you really want it, then you have to go and get it.

Interviewer: That's great. And from, like, all the experiences that you've had, and your career progression, where do you see the next steps in your career?

Interviewee G:

Well, I'm getting an old lady. You know, at a certain moment in life, it's not about getting a higher position or getting more money, it's more about getting a balance, a kind of a balance. And I have been a workaholic as well, that's for sure. When I became a mother, I really learned that there is more in life. And what I have now is okay, I'm almost 60. So officially I'm allowed to do another eight years, let's say, I would rather look for more interesting things around me. Then say, Okay, I want to do another step. I want more hotels. Oh, no, that's finished. I want to broaden my horizon. I want to learn more about things that I am interested in. So when the company gave me the opportunity to do MBTI, have you heard about MBTI? That's a psychological module. Then I said, Oh, that's interesting that I want to learn about when they asked me to do leadership, to do facilitated leadership courses. I said, good, this is really what I want to do. So it's more about finding that than about saying I still have to progress and get on the higher on the ladder. No, I would rather help other women to get there, but me it's okay like this.

Interviewer: Well, that's great. So in that, in that essence, for example, like executive boards, Board of Directors, those kind of positions would not be your next step in your career.

Interviewee G: No.

Interviewer: And I have a few questions then about your because above you have the executive board, if I understand correctly afterwards? And I have a few questions about that board if you if you know, so for example, do you know what the board composition is like? Is it also quite male dominated is pretty equal in terms of male/female?

Interviewee G: In the hotel itself, the management team or the executive team or however you want to call it, consists of 9 people and there are three women. I know that the mother company is really striving to get more women into Board of Directors positions in general manager positions. And I know that they are striving for that. But now if you really, really want figures, I don't have them. So you'd have to ask somebody or see how I can find the hotel.

Interviewer: Perfect. And how'd you perceive the dynamics then within that management team?

Interviewee G: I'm not sure if you know, every kind of job has a kind of person. So financial controller is somebody who is very focused on, of course, numbers. And revenue manager focused on numbers, but then on the other way of how do we get them in sales manager is focused on getting business. And I'm not sure if this has anything to do with gender, right? It's just the type of job request the type of person to do the job. So when we see in a management meeting, I think you rather see the focus of somebody then, if he is male or female. I don't know if I make myself clear?

Interviewer: That makes perfect sense.

Interviewee G: So of course, me as a female and in HR, I feel that it's important that we have the balance that women are different in a meeting than men. But to be honest, I cannot say that. Professionals are so focused on their outcome output successes, that it's more the job than the gender.

Interviewer: Yep. And that makes perfect sense. It doesn't always have to be about gender or anything. Well, that gives me a nice overview as well. I have a few questions about certain principles of the stakeholder theory, but they're quite broad questions. And the first one is regarding like, the stakeholders, and if you can maybe describe the relationship hotel B has with the stakeholders, so maybe like also employees, guests, but also like suppliers or competition, for instance?

Interviewee G: Okay. Well, of course, for HR, all of the associates are the most important because in the end, the associates are our guest. They are happy. And then what do you want to know the relationship?

Interviewer: How the relationship goes.

Interviewee G: Because I'm women or...

Interviewer: Just in general.

Interviewee G: Okay. So that's my main concern is the associates, that's for sure. That of course, we have our owners, because we're a management company. And all the contacts with the owners are handled by General Manager. We had, I have to say, procurement manager, so purchasing manager, who handled all the suppliers, of course, and then then all of us handle guests, right. So the front office, and all the operational departments, they are involved with the guests. And then competition wise, we all have our own field of expertise. So for instance, we have a monthly meeting with all the HR people from the mother company managed hotels, and once a quarter with all the franchise HR people, there is a meeting with all the luxury hotels of Amsterdam every quarter. So that's a little bit how it is in HR. And the

same counts, in fact, for all the different disciplines and that we forget somebody so the associates, the guests, the suppliers, the owners, and then the competition, that's it.

Interviewer: That gives a nice overview. So it's quite there's always an ongoing discussion with everyone. Every quarter or obviously with associates and guests is more like it's on a daily basis.

Interviewee G: We help each other, even in competition. When we have a discussion, there is a new law and somebody knows a little bit more about it than that goes really very, very friendly, very helpful. Of course, the Director of Sales will not share contracts with the competition, But if, for instance, they have to represent Amsterdam as a destination, then again, they will work together, because there is more. But in HR, also vacancies or I'm looking for an assistant front office manager, and then they say, Oh, I have somebody who's ready, you know, and, it goes really well. Because in the end, of course, people in HR want to make sure that the associates progress, and then they move on. But financially then it's a different story, of course, and revenue manager will not share what the price strategies for the corporate account for next year. No. But they will talk about the market and what makes it hard, etc. So it's a little different perspective.

Interviewer: Of course. Also, like you said, before, we're talking about the differences within the management team, everyone has their own discipline, and they will have their specific characteristics. And then I have a question about the changing environment, like how hotel B responds to changing external environment. So that can be for example, changes, like sustainability. COVID, obviously, technology.

Interviewee G: maybe COVID. So, of course, in the beginning, we had no idea what was happening, right. So, but then, we saw Oh, this is not going well. And then of course, you sit together with the director of finance and with the general manager and say, Okay, how are we going to do this? Besides all the restrictions that we have from the government and the one and a half meters and, and the hand washing and sanitizers and etc, etc, okay, that's not that difficult. You organize it, you buy it, you make it happen, and that's okay. But a little bit more difficult of course, is staff. So we took inventory of all the departments and of all the contracts, what kind of contracts we had. And then, well, which was very unfortunate, but of course, people from whom the contract ended was not renewed. And we thought, okay, we will manage until we thought, September, we will get back to normal, we hope to, and then it didn't happen. So then not ending the temporary contracts was not enough. And then we made a redundancy plan. And which has been executed in the meantime. So just to give you an idea in January, we still had 227. associates. And now we have only 100 left.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee G: 2020 was the toughest year ever. Because you know that all those people, they have to pay their mortgage, or they have to pay the rent, and sometimes they have a family and so has been terrible. Terrible. But how do you react? Well, if it would have been, we have a kind of contingency plan in different stages. So if the business drops with this, then these are the actions we take, very easy and low hanging fruit as they say. But then as it continues to go into level two, then it gets more difficult. And then level three is even more difficult. So this year, we were really in the contingency plan number three, the worst. And we are still in there, right? So it doesn't look very promising for the moment. So let's hope

everyone gets a vaccine soon. And then that will go back to normal, I don't think we will ever get back to normal. But the world has changed. Definitely. But that at least we can start making some money again. Yes, that's, again, what we do for our owners, right? We manage the hotel for our owners. And, we want to make sure that they want to make some that we can make some money for them.

Interviewer: Of course. And, then I'm curious because traditionally, the hospitality industry seems quite tall. Obviously, you've had to reduce the number of staff in the past year. But how would you describe the hierarchy?

Interviewee G: Well, it's in fact quite flat. So we have, of course, we don't have that many layers, in fact. And, of course, we stick to the CAO and the function levels for the payment, of course, but it's not that the hierarchy is very high. No. And also, I think that the management team is very approachable here. And this has even improved this year, of course, because we all have to stick together to make sure that that we get positive so that we stay positive. And it's an open door policy, everybody can come in. And now I'm not saying that everybody walks in the Office of the General Manager, there is always a natural distance. Let's face it. But I think with the others, it's quite okay.

Interviewer: And in terms of departments themselves, would you say it's kind of all centralized or coming from the top or kind of decentralized where each department organizes their own department?

Interviewee G: Everybody organizes their own department? Of course, there are rules. Of course, there are programs in HR, we have different programs that we have to use, which is kind of mandatory from the company. But the way you do it, that's up to you. They give you the tools, but it's up to you, you make it work for yourself. That's how I feel it.

Interviewer: That makes sense. And so I want to go back to what you said about now as COVID. Like the management team is very approachable and everything. How would you describe the kind of the communication style and decision making?

Interviewee G: Well, to be honest, the decision making in the last period was, was not a very democratic decision process, of course, and I can tell you, I was there in the crisis of 2008. And then I remember that we had a meeting with the area manager, and we said, okay, it's not going well, we have to cut jobs. Let's try to do this together. And then if everybody thinks for his or her department and say what you can do, and then we will come up with a plan, I still have a nightmare on that meeting. Because what happened in that meeting was, of course, that everybody said, you know, I cannot really do without my team member. And I cannot do without this person. But then they started pointing but you could do without this person. And you could do you know that at the end of the meeting, or at some point in the meeting, the area manager said, You know what, forget it. I'm going to take you, and we'll take the financial controller, and myself, and we will decide for you because, you know, everybody protects his own department, right? So you don't say okay, you can take my assistant or you can take my staff or you don't so, so that's what I learned in 2008. And then when this year it happened again, I asked him, How do you want to approach it? Are we going to discuss and he said that that doesn't work discussing I think we have to take the decision. And then when the decision has been taken, presented, to the to the to the team, this is the plan, and that's what we've done.

Of course, some of the management team members wondered Why weren't we involved, but then it would never have happened.

Interviewer: You would have seen the whole scenario again.

Interviewee G: I think normally, cause this was really a crisis situation, and then in the crisis you need somebody who takes it and owns and says this is the plan, and this is the way forward. This is how are going to do it. In a normal situation, of course, then we have a more democratic situation of how we will do this, what is the best way...and taking the input from everybody. But this year was really a crisis, so it didn't work really that way.

Interviewer: I think it is also what you said, it's about having someone own the situation. And with your past experience obviously from 2008, it made all the more sense

Interviewee G: For me it was clear.

Interviewer: My last question then about this stakeholder theory is about the hotel goes about formulating its strategy for the year or upcoming five years.

Interviewee G: So, this is kind of top-down exercise. So the mother company says what their vision and strategy is for the coming years, and then it narrows down to the world, the different parts in the world. And then, the area managers come and say, listen this is what we want to achieve, and this is what I want to achieve in my area; GMs what can you give me? How can you help me achieve those goals? Then the GM gets the goals, then the GM of course goes down into the organisation to the management teams, and says okay, these are my goals, what can you do to help me to achieve the goals?

So that is in fact the way it works. Now on a departmental level, so if an F&B manager, he gets goals on revenue, cost goals, or guest satisfaction goals, engagement goals, and they all get their part. And then of course, they go to their teams, listen guys, the room service, this is my goal for the guest experience. So, what can we do to make this happen, and what do you need from me? So that is the way it goes a little bit. Not a little bit, just how it goes. It is narrowed down according to the departments.

Interviewer: That makes sense. Have you seen any evolution over the years in this regard, or has it always been done in the same way?

Interviewee G: As far as I remember, that has always been the way it went. Cause in the end, of course, you want also that all the associates know what we are aiming for as a company, so we have to translate the strategy of the company into the strategy of your hotel and into the one of your department. And everyone knows this is my part of what I can do to get the company where it wants to be.

Interviewer: That rounds of the questions I had about the stakeholder theory. And now I have a few questions about your own personal path. I think we have touched upon most of them, in your introduction as well. Did you get support from friends, families, partners, in your career? How was that for you?

Interviewee G: Like I said, business wise you have to be lucky. You need to be lucky that the GM knows you, that you cross him/her at the moment you need them. Of course, friends and family are very important, as a single mother, if I would not have had my mother, who would, when I had to travel, who would say, listen, bring your son home and I will take care

of him so you can go and do your stuff, it would be difficult. So you need people who are willing to help you. And I had that fortunately. Not in Amsterdam in the beginning. That was tough. I came and especially in the beginning, I still had to make friends, I did not know so many people in Amsterdam. Everybody was working. So I remember that finding a babysitter was a nightmare! In the end, I managed and if you speak up then again there is always somebody willing to help you.

Interviewer: I think what is quite interesting in this is that this, finding a babysitter, it is very much something we hear mothers talk about, not necessarily fathers, who are still the fathers of their children. So that is very much present.

Interviewee G: I hear, now, with the schooling, now the children are not going to school, and I hear it here in the staff canteen, fortunately my wife is there, and she takes care of this. And I also think, but why don't you? Why should your wife do it? But that is true, it is still the traditional role of the mother.

Interviewer: My last question in this regard is how you balance your private and professional life. and I think you mentioned at one point it was more about work than personal life, and now you found more balance in this regard.

Interviewee G: And that is what the young people taught me, also because I've got my son, and I was a single mother, and of course, you have to keep all the sticks running. But also what I learned from the younger generation is that, okay, I am a baby boomer, so I have been brought up by parents who were still there in the war, so there were shortages, and I am really brought up 'work hard, work hard, work hard and save'. That was a little bit the way I am brought up. And then, of course, now, I remember the first time I had an interview with a young man, and that he said I am willing to do the job but I only want to work four days a week, because I want a day a week for myself. And I remember being like, what do you mean a day a week for yourself? That would never have come up in my mind! But now, I think you are right, the young people, the generation, you are right. It is not only about work, it is not only about career, or advancing, it's about personal development, about things and if you need an extra day for that, take an extra day for it. So I learned that from you.

Interviewer: Glad we can contribute something good.

Interviewee G: You do a lot of things well, it's all about respecting and embracing the differences. I am very happy with Bryan, my younger assistant, who is very good with the computer. He helps me out many times. But when it is about experience or how to handle a situation, he comes to me, and asks how we are going to handle this.

Interviewer: I think HR right now must be so interesting because you have different generations within the same company, so definitely! Well I think I am getting to the end of the interview, with some questions about the future. So, I guess, right now, why do you think there are so few women holding such positions? You mentioned in the 2000s, it was 7 out of the 150, do you see any progress, or why not?

Interviewee G: It is much better now. I do not know the exact numbers, but I know there are many more female leaders. So we have progressed, we have progressed, and I do not believe in the glass ceiling, that I honestly believe it is all in your personal approach, but the thing is this motherhood is still...and we don't facilitate, we don't make it easier for women, right?

So if I think back now, if at that time there would have been, they would have said, listen, we really want you to stay hotel manager, what can we do to make it happen. Then, at least there would have been a discussion, and the burden would not only be on my shoulders. Because I thought, I cannot make it happen. But there was not even the discussion on how, and I think that is changing it a little bit now. That you see companies thinking about: what can we do for those women to make their choices easier? Because that is it in the end. If they had said, listen, I don't know, I remember that in the old days the GM would still live in the hotel, that you would live in the hotel. I am not staying that is ideal, but that could be a solution, that your house is also in the hotel, it would be easier and you could say okay, I can quickly go down or whatever. So there are possibilities, but they were just not discussed.

Interviewer: And do you think that is quite specific to the hospitality industry? Or is that also generally nowhere?

Interviewee G: I think in the hospitality industry it would be easier, not easy but easier, if you work for an insurance company, then they probably will compensate with money and that you take an au-pair or whatever. But the possibilities within the hospitality industry are there. You can create a house in a hotel, so it is possible, but it was never discussed, and I think that that is perhaps changing. What can we do to make it happen?

Interviewer: And so, you mentioned maybe housing within the hotel, do you have any other changes you think would be useful to increase the number of women in executive positions.

Interviewee G: You need role models. You need people, but then I don't know, when you look at TV programs and role models, they don't tell how they did it. It's not pragmatic enough. I think there could be more practical advice on how to do things differently instead of just theory and the bigger picture, so what can you practically do. I think that could help. But we need role models, that is for sure.

Interviewer: I think that is very interesting, I have also noticed that talking to so many women holding very good positions in the industry, I realise I have never heard about these women, all their stories are so fascinating with so many...everyone has faced different struggles, everyone has overcome them in different ways. Every time I come out of an interview, I think wow, this is what we would need in essence.

That was my last question. And maybe, is there anything else maybe I have not asked, which you would like to mention? Or anything I could improve from my interview.

Interviewee G: No, I think you did really well. So I hope it was helpful. Let me know if you need more, and good luck!

Interviewee Code	Interviewee H
Date	18-01-2021
Time	15:00
Duration of interview	36min
Platform	Zoom

Interviewer: I have just started the recording then maybe we can start with a small introduction of yourself and your own professional career, professional background?

Interviewee H: I worked in the hospitality industry since I was little because my parents had a small hotel and a restaurant. I graduated from Hotelschool the Hague in 1986, and I have a master's degree in business administration since I was 40. I started to work for hotel A, I worked for a private company in the hotel industry, and after that for hotel B where I'm the CEO in the Netherlands.

Interviewer: All right, perfect. And how long have you been sitting as a CEO?

Interviewee H: Almost 13 years now.

Interviewer: And as you progressed through your career, did you encounter any difficulties in climbing the career ladder?

Interviewee H: Of course, I did. And that's mostly personal, not really the company itself. All the companies gave me good opportunities, but it's more personal challenges you have, because you develop as a professional. You constantly learn how to be a manager, how to be a coach, how to deal with problems, and in every job, the problems are different. Then, of course, you mature and you grow up. So of course, I have had problems: bigger and smaller ones, but not from a company perspective.

Interviewer: So more personally, in your personal growth? As anyone in essence would in their own development?

Interviewee H: Yes

Interviewer: I guess, that could be seen as a barrier for some people in terms of personal development, if it's too hard.

Interviewee H: Of course! Or you will have to work with people you don't get along with, you cannot work with, or you don't know how to manage them, so it's a personal growth.

Interviewer: And how did you personally, overcome that, take on those challenges and overcome them in your different jobs?

Interviewee H: Sometimes you just have to accept that not all people will be like you, but they have to respect you. That's more important. When people like you and don't respect what

you're doing, you have a problem. If people respect you and don't like you, then that is a fair deal, that's what it is. So you have to deal with that.

When the personal development became more serious, I had personal coaching. That helps a lot because your friends and family, they can listen, but they're not professionals. They always look at when you were young, or they say, "Yeah, but you've always been that way" and that doesn't help.

It's always good to have somebody to talk to and that can be a professional, or that can be a colleague, or somebody else. So I think you always find someone who you can share with and they have to be a good listener. I don't need somebody who says what to do. To me it helps when I can talk to somebody about the problems I encounter. While talking, I give the answers as well, so I need a good listener. Sometimes when I had problems with people, I had to talk to them. Sometimes I have to accept that that's my character, and that's the way I am. These problems I recognize, and it helps not to try to solve it right away, but take some time, because when you don't touch the problem for a few days, it's sometimes different. So that's what I do.

Interviewer: So very much about communication, discussing openly and also finding yourself, self-discovery, as well, a bit and learning who you are.

Interviewee H: Yes!

Interviewer: And then I guess, we can maybe talk a bit about your own experience in hotel A. Because I'm focusing specifically on executive boards. And I'm wondering if you can tell me maybe what the board composition is like in hotel A?

Interviewee H: We have a management team. And we have an advisory board. I meet them four times, five times a year and it's a non-executive board. I have to make reports on a variety of things, we make a dashboard, it can be human capital, financial... It's about investments, it's about liquidity, it's about ratios, strategy... The non-executive board consists of two women and three men. And then my management team is six people, four women and two men. Within it, we have a finance and ICT manager, human resources manager, commercial manage and operations manager and a manager who is in charge of the real estate.

That's the team, and they all have their own responsibilities, and we meet now via Microsoft Teams, once every other week. We have a management team meeting for three hours and an agenda. Some topics on the agenda are fixed, and some are flexible, depending on what we have to discuss or decide on. We have a Works Council, and we have 20 hostels and each hostel has a hostel manager. A lot of what we do is centralized, so we have a centralized financial administration, the accounting and marketing and sales and regional managers for operations. Lots of work has been centralized in the head office, and there we have around 35 people.

Interviewer: So in the end, I guess, with that head office and the management team that you just explained about that would constitute kind of the executive board and then underneath that you have the hostel managers and they manage their property.

Interviewee H: So the executive board or team is the management team.

Interviewer: That makes sense. And in terms of the constitution, within that board, I have a few questions, in terms of skills and competencies, do you see any differences in terms of skills and competencies?

Interviewee H: I don't see them as male or female because the typical man and woman issues are not very notable in our team. So it's very funny, because when you read reports about what the male management style is like, sometimes the women have more of the male management style or the other way around, depending on the person and what is going on. So in my team, we don't experience this male and female.

Interviewer: That makes perfect sense as well. I guess it's also very much about the personality and the role that you have, whether you're HR, or finance.

Interviewee H: Yes, exactly, and it's about who you choose in your team. Of course, it's nice to have a mixture of men and women, because that's how people look at you. If we only have a male board or only have a female board, then people mention "Oh, there should be more male or there should be more females.", so it's good to have a mix, but I realize it doesn't make any difference to me.

Interviewer: And that's also perfectly fine. And I've also heard in other interviews, it's more about the roles and the tasks at hand. Then I guess we can maybe talk about the stakeholder theory perspective, which I'm looking more into for my research.

Then the first question I had is, if you could describe the relationship that hotel A has with its stakeholders?

Interviewee H: And then any stakeholders inside or outside the organisation you mean?

Interviewer: Exactly.

Interviewee H: We like to have stakeholder relationship in partnerships, with any stakeholder we have or choose. It can be purchasing, so when we purchase materials or products from a company, we like to be a partner. We think about what we can do more together than only buy the product. For instance, environmental progressive processes or corporate social responsibility is always something we talk about with our partners and with all our stakeholders. That's very important. We like to communicate in a very open and easy way. I'm very direct in communication and I think we do that with all our stakeholders. It's really a partnership for the long term.

Interviewer: So it's not just like a business exchange, with I need this, you need that. That gives me a nice overview, and how does your organization respond to a changing external environment? So let's say for example, changes in technology, you also mentioned, for example, the environment, also lately COVID. How does hotel A deal with these changes?

Interviewee H: Well, corporate social responsibility, that's in our DNA, so that's on our agenda every day. And it's not because of what is happening in the world now, we are established in 1929. We are a very social organization, and we don't have any shareholders, so there's no problems with shareholder values, and dividend or those challenges. And actually, we are a social enterprise, so that's very important to us. We really deal with corporate social responsibility.

COVID 19 is another topic. Every year, we make a risk analysis and report this. And we use it to see if we have to change our way of working, or we have to make plans with any high risks involving. But Covis 19 was not foreseen of course. . . In the risk analysis, there was a kind of pandemic danger, but never as big as this one, all your employees can have the flu, or you forecast a closure for one or two months. But not as long as this crisis. So that was really hard. But because we have this open communication and partnerships, it's easy to talk to your stakeholders and see if we can team up and share our experiences.

Interviewer: Well, that makes perfect sense. I mean, in these times of when no one knows what's happening, and everything it's important to keep that communication.

Interviewee H: And I think it's good to have a good relationships also in the good times, because then you don't need to introduce yourself in the difficult times.

Interviewer: And I think we've touched upon this. Well, you mentioned, communication is very open very easy, with all your stakeholders, and I guess that's also internally with your employees. But how would you describe maybe the management style within the organization, in that regard?

Interviewee H: The hierarchy we have is only functional, so when it needs to be there it is, but it I don't think people feel it really. The working environment is very open, we are easily accessible, it's a bottom-up organization. For some topics, you need to have some top-down views and action, especially when you have to react very fast, like in COVID times, but most of the time, we try to involve everybody to find out what's best for the organization. In the end, I think when everybody is involved, it stays longer.

Interviewer: And so you've already touched upon in the hierarchy within the organization, as very functional? And I'm curious, because you said at the beginning that it's quite centralized in the head office. In terms of organization, like daily organizations, is it more decentralized in terms of hostels? Or how does that work?

Interviewee H: Well, we centralize for example, bookkeeping, sales, but we see ourselves as a service office, not as a real head office, So we listen to the hostel managers, we have employment surveys, and every second year, we ask the hostel managers what they think about the departments in head office. and they give point of improvement. So, of course, there's a head office, but I we have lots of working groups, where people can attend and share their ideas. For communication purposes e.g. we use an app where everyone can give their ideas or opinion and where we can talk to each other. So we try to communicate on an easy level. We don't have big folders with policies and procedures, but of course, we need to have some agreements on common ground for common things to guarantee a minimum standard and quality.

Interviewer: That gives me a good idea of the hierarchy and also the role of the head office. One task, that's usually, I guess, given to head office or to the hostel manager is formulating the strategy. I'm curious as to how hotel A, goes about formulating their strategy?

Interviewee H: How we do that?

Interviewer: Yes

Interviewee H: We have a strategic plan, and we review that once every three, four years. The strategic plan is made by the management team. Depending on the topics, we have working groups, and ask them for their opinion. Only in strategy, I realize it's always hard, because people in the hostels are more operational. The feedback is mostly operational, but in the end, you can have a good feeling of where we have to work on. Of course, we have to look at our competitors, and our financial situation, where we would like to grow, how we can improve, improve our quality, and how we can work internationally with Hostelling International. Those topics are in the plan.

Interviewer: Perfect. I think that rounds of the questions I have on stakeholder theory. And perhaps one last one is, because you've been there for 13 years now, did you see any evolution? In terms of the way things were run in hotel A. Or were they always since it was a social enterprise has always been run in this fashion?

Interviewee H: No, it has been changed, because I was the first CEO with a hotel background, and a more business-like background. I started in an economic crisis, so we had to change the way of working anyway, like we have to do now again. But because there was increasing competition, starting in that period in 2008, with more competitors, we had to improve our quality of food and beverage, the quality of the property, so different restaurants, different rooms and more upgrades of everything. Before that, we were with all the hostels with Hostelling International, the first and only player in the field. So with all the competitors, and there are so many now so we needed to improve our properties, and that's what we have been doing the past 10 years. And it also became more financially driven to become more financially sustainable.

Interviewer: And terms of size, you've always had the same amount of hostels within.

Interviewee H: No, we had many more. When I started, we had 30, but there were some franchised, and we sold properties. Because of the quality we had to invest in those properties. And we made a business case and thought that we never could win back the investment we put into that property. Or locations weren't really interesting, but they were historic locations in the sense that they had always been there. At the time it made a loss and we thought after renovation, it will still have a loss, we decide to sell it.

Interviewer: That makes sense. And then there is that was the last question then in terms of stakeholder theory. Then, I guess the next part is more your personal path, which as is more optional and isn't intended in like the very stereotypical idea like those typical questions and interviews of how women manage the personal and professional life is more intended to understand kind you still feel like those barriers, those stereotypes prevail in terms of personal professional life.

So first question is, if you had to make any choices regarding your personal life to get to where you are today?

Interviewee H: Did I have to make choices, is that your question? What kind of choices do you mean?

Interviewer: in terms of like, having to maybe miss out on a like social life? Or if you had to prioritize your work over being with family, for instance?

Interviewee H: No, not more or less than any other person?

Interviewer: And you also mentioned at the beginning, which I thought was quite interesting, like getting support from your family or friends like talking to them? That's not the same as talking to a professional or talking to a colleague. Did you still have like that support from families and friends in terms of...

Interviewee H: Sure. And it changes as well, because in the beginning, when I started in the hotel industry, my mom and my dad, as hotel owners, could help me. But when you are in problems, e.g. you have to get a bank loan, it is becoming more complicated. So now for example I have a lot of support from my non-executive board.

It also depends on the topic, I try to find somebody who can help me in my field. And, you know, when you have a tough period because of anything, then an external coach can really help. Because they are not personally involved, so once in a while, it's really interesting to talk to somebody.

When you go to a professional coach, they just listen to you and they don't know anything about your youth or whatever. Your friends and family see it differently. But sometimes it's more about talking to the coach, the coach asks questions, you give an answer. And by answering those questions, the solution comes up. It's also about sometimes accepting who you are.

Interviewer: That makes perfect sense. And then I guess the last questions are in the future perspective, I don't want to spend too much time on why there's so few women but maybe where you see the changes happening, where do you see like the progress being made?

Interviewee H: In men and women you mean?

Interviewer: In terms of representation.

Interviewee H: Well, there's a huge discussion going on that there should be more women in boards. I think you always have to hire the best person. Of course, when you have a vacancy in a board you have to look at the competencies you need, what skills do you need in the board and then people apply to the job, I think you should hire the best person for the job and not look at men or women or culture or whatever. And when men and women are equal qualified and your board is fully male, of course female is good for the balance. I think I would feel very offended if they choose me because I'm a woman. I want them to choose me because I have the right skills. There's a percentage, a law, multinationals should hire at least one third of their boards, for non-executives, one third should be female. I have a little problem with that, because you have to hire the best person. But if that doesn't work, because in the company itself there is a different culture and, the non-executive board is really male, and they don't like females or they have the stereotyping, then, of course, you can help the women by having this law.

But I think stereotyping in boards is less and less going on, because the world is changing. On the other hand, when you have vacancies for a non-executive board, and you have 10, perfect candidates, and there are nine men and one woman, the chance is that the vacancy will be filled with a man because there were nine men and only one woman applying. So if the women don't apply to these jobs, because they for example, like to work be part time, then it's the women who should change to more full time work. .

Interviewer: So maybe it's also a question of pipeline of having the women get to the position where they apply for executive and non-executive boards through their career or through having worked full-time...?

Interviewee H: Yes, they should apply more, that's it. And of course, the culture in the organizations should be open to both men and women, but the number of women applying to those jobs are still very few.

Interviewer: Do you think that's mainly because no one's full time job?

Interviewee H: In non-executive boards, no. In executive boards, yes. But being a member of a non-executive board is not a full time job. So for the non-executives, they will apply.

Interviewer: And for executives, the barrier is...?

Interviewee H: That's a matter of, I think, working at least four days a week, otherwise, in three days a week, you cannot hold an executive position.

Interviewer: You think, for example, having four day workweeks for men and women, that would be...

Interviewee H: That helps, that will help, yes.

Interviewer: Perfect. Well, I think those are very interesting answers, in terms of the quotas, because we hear a lot about them, and I feel like I've interviewed a lot of women who, and I totally agree with it. You don't want to be the token woman who isn't there for the skills that it's very, very degrading for the work that you've put in. So I think they're all really good points. Also the four day work week.

Interviewee H: But Diane, I hear women from your age, they finalize a University study, and decide, as soon as they are graduated, to work part time. And for women, it's not a wise decision to my opinion, because then you never can have a nice executive job. It is always wise, to my opinion, to be independent and most of the times this means to work full time.

Interviewer: Already, when at the exit of university, is that kind of shooting ourselves in the foot from the get go in terms of choosing the working days? Well, I'll make sure to start with five days.

Interviewee H: Do it and working is really nice.

Interviewee Code	Interviewee I
Date	19/01/2021
Time	16:00
Duration of interview	45min
Platform	Zoom

Interviewer: I've just started the recording then. So for the interview itself, it will be about your own experience, how you've experienced the hospitality industry, your experience also within the boards. Also some questions about the stakeholder theory kind of general questions about that within your position. And there's also some personal questions which I leave optional for you to answer or not answer based on what you are comfortable with. And then kind of the future perspectives that you feel are important for the hospitality industry. Do you maybe have any questions before we start?

Interviewee I: Nothing really, let's go!

Interviewer: And then maybe we can start with a small introduction of yourself as well of your professional background?

Interviewee I: My professional background. I started at Hotelschool, the same as yours. But of course, it was a little bit different back then. I went there because I wanted to go into the hospitals, but it ended up completely different. And I went abroad, I wanted to go abroad, at least during one traineeship, but my languages were not good enough. So I ended up in Aruba, which is the Dutch Antilles. And when I came off the plane, I had to speak English because I had to work with the consultants, Canadian consultant, English speaking. And so I had to learn English. And I learned English in three months, so I was at a hotel opening for 400 rooms for Hotel A at that time, and they did a lot of openings. So I became more or less in a task force team, the housekeeper to open hotels a little bit everywhere in the world. So I went to France, I went to Ghana, I went to Amsterdam, and opened a lot of hotels, and then I stayed in Paris. Then I went to hotel B in Paris for the opening in 92. And in fact, that was that's funny, because they took me because I spoke fluently French and English, maybe not fluently, but at least better than most of the people. Because the French didn't speak English. And the English didn't speak French. They looked for a lot of people who did both. And my languages were bad at first, but in fact, with those hotel openings, I improved them significantly. So that's my first lesson in life is that whatever they say at school, it cannot be always true. You know, it's possibly not true, because it can just be the methods which are not aligned with how you work. So you can do much more than you think, that's the lesson learned. And I stayed, did a lot of different things started this executive housekeeper, did security, did HR, did development, optimization of staff. And bit by bit I went up also, because there was a leader who was keen on me and trusted me. So he took me each time he got a promotion, he took me up with him.

And then I left in 2006. And I could work for hotel C, that was apartment hotels, and it was a joint venture between two groups. And they looked for somebody who spoke languages again, and who worked internationally. So I represented in the joint venture hotel group A, and the goal was that there were a lot of apartment hotels in France, but not in Europe yet, so they wanted to open 30 in all big cities. So during the time I was there for two years, we opened a lot in Vienna, Berlin, Brussels. Rome. So that was for me very nice experience because I got to travel in Europe. And I also realized all the things I've learned in hotel B in fact. So then in 2010, the hotel group asked me to become the first female country manager in the Netherlands, very small country, but big money for them. So of course, I took this on me. It got bigger and bigger and then I got Benelux. And then, four years ago, I think, four years ago, they asked me to come to Paris to work on the worldwide transformation, because I got known as a person who dared to change things, and knew a lot about leadership and those kind of things. So then I went there, and that's where I am, till October. And, you know I told them already that I wanted to leave. And then, of course, due to the current situation, they asked me to leave sooner than I wanted. But I'm completely fine with that, because I wanted you to leave anyway. So there I am.

Interviewer: So a whole career in hospitality.

Interviewee I: Yes, I never went to hospitals. That's the funny part. You look at all my other colleagues from the class, you know. They're all out of hospitality. And that's pretty funny.

Interviewer: Why do you think you would be one of the only ones perhaps to still be in hospitality?

Interviewee I: Oh, that is probably due to... First of all, I think a lot of them went straight away out after six months. Because at that time, and I don't know if it's still the case, but sometimes if I say it was like that people say yes, it's still like that. And I think there's still a lot of traditional shit going on. But I know that you had to wait so long for a promotion. So then they start in the dishwashing. And then we will tell you when you are ready to get a promotion. So people got fed up, you know, because you did your four years of study. So that's one reason. I went to housekeeping and nobody wants to do housekeeping. So I went so fast. Within six months, I was already the assistant of an executive housekeeper. And then a year later I was executive housekeeper. It went fast after.

Interviewer: So you mentioned, like the difficulty of getting promotions. Also, we hear a lot about maybe difficulties women face in climbing the career ladder, do you also experience that in your own growth?

Interviewee I: Now, probably, if I would have chosen F&B, that would have been the case. Perhaps, but first of all, I didn't really think about making a career. But what I did differently than most people in hotels is that they go for the easy or the most common, most recognized way to get promotion. So you are a team leader, and then you become an assistant manager, then you are manager, then you become the department head, then you become something else, etc, etc. I did that a little bit differently. Now, first of all, nobody wants to do housekeeping. So that's an easy one. So at 24 years old, already I was an executive housekeeper of 400 room hotel. So that's fast. Because nobody else wanted to do it. And that was one part. But after that, I was willing to do anything. I wanted to change every two years and take projects on where I felt I liked them ethically, people wise and that for projects

nobody wanted to do or because they were political complicated or there was this or there was that? So within hotel B, for example, I got the name like okay, if nobody can do it, give it to Caro and she can do it. Because I know operation so nobody can tell me anything. I can talk with all levels. So I can talk with room attendants. But I also can talk to people high in the sky so I think that's what I dared to do. And that that's why I went up in fact. And but going up was not the target on itself.

Interviewer: So you didn't face like any need barriers in your growth?

Interviewee I: Of course, of course. Also because, especially in hotel B it was a lot of politics and if I spoke up, the men didn't like it. No, no, I saw harassment, I felt harassment. I saw things, if you didn't do what the men expected, then you had a problem. And if you don't have a backup, then you get killed as well. So you have to have your sponsor around. And if the sponsor is gone then it's rough. That is rough.

Interviewer: So in essence, you would say like, the way to overcome those barriers is having a mentor or sponsor?

Interviewee I: Not a mentor, because a mentor helps. No, you need somebody who is backing you up. Not anymore, by the way, now that's much less but at that time, I really needed somebody, because otherwise people wouldn't respect what I say whatsoever. So if you don't have anybody who says what she says is right, or what she said, you have to listen to at least, then you are just a low, small little girl suddenly, you know, and then everything you say is nonsense. And it has always been like that, but he backs you up, but I don't give a shit about you, you know, that I've seen.

But I also have seen the other parts. I saw the change coming. Like everything I said people listened to and I thought: Hey, that's weird! So that also has changed. So that's what I mean.

Interviewer: And in that sense afterwards, from hotel to hotel group A to also becoming country director. And how was it within hotel group A? Do you see any difference there in terms of barriers maybe?

Interviewee I: The Netherlands was a very small country, they were proud that there finally were women. So that helped. They saw it like, we will see if she can manage let's try a woman, you know, that was in that time the message. It was like, Okay, let's give her a chance. And then, of course, myself, also, I had my own struggles a little bit, because I had something like, oh, okay, now I'm number one of the country. So how should I behave? And I didn't know. And I got so tired of myself that I said to myself, hey Caro, you are the first woman, so you can invent everything, that you are supposed to do and be yourself. And that was there was a relief? Because I had to deal with development of hotels, I was negotiating on big amounts. And I sometimes thought like I cannot do this, I cannot do this. But then at the time, or how am I supposed to do it, because there was nobody to guide me. And then I just decided I'd be myself. And sometimes I just say I don't know, you know, be more vulnerable, and just be yourself, then you function much better effect.

Interviewer: That make perfect sense. And then I think that leads on very nicely to maybe your experience within that board and being the head of that country. So if you can maybe

explain a bit more in terms of because you were then, head of the country, but was there like a board surrounding you? How did that work?

Interviewee I: I had the board of the country, and then the board of the Benelux yes.

Interviewer: Can you perhaps maybe explain the composition within that board? How was it? Did you have any other women with you on that board?

Interviewee I: Oh yes, because it was my board, so within a year, I had already because there were only men in the beginning and I think one woman and then within a year, I had already three, four women. And not particularly because of the fact that, of course, I was more open to hiring women, but women who presented themselves for the jobs were better than the men so clearly, because they have much more emotional intelligence. I wanted to change a lot of things. So that's how it turned out that there were a lot of women coming in.

Interviewer: And that was the board then for Netherlands and then expanded to Benelux? And so was that a different board?

Interviewee I: That was a different board because we have to rationalize the country. So we wanted to combine so yes, we had two offices from the past that we had to make one, although they were in two different areas. So we traveled a lot, or the whole board traveled a lot between Brussels and Amsterdam. And I, of course, I put the weight in there 50% Belgian and 50% Dutch that nobody felt bad about the choices I made. I made it very conscious.

Interviewer: Within that board, I imagine you also got women along with you. And did you feel a difference, let's say between when there was only you, like at the beginning, when it was only you and one woman in terms of balance within the board discussions, and afterwards, when there were more women?

Interviewee I: Oh, yeah. Okay, now you're talking about the hierarchy above me, you mean?

Interviewer: I mean more like when you were, let's say, having a board meeting, when there was only you and one other woman at the very beginning, and when there were more women?

Interviewee I: But you are the boss, you don't really have to feel it like that. That's why I asked you, I participated, of course, also in a part of Europe, okay, when I was a long time, the only women so then if you are only one woman, and that I've been a lot, then they don't really take you completely seriously. Because then you have to adapt to the men, right? They always say at the 30% points there it switches, because then you have three women when you have 10 people, and then you are really accepted. But as soon as you are less, or as long as you are less you have to adapt to the men's world more or less to, to function.

Interviewer: Kind of man up?

Interviewee I: Exactly.

Interviewer: Then, in essence, I think it was very interesting what you said, also, to go back in terms of like when you had to think, Okay, I need to do this my way. And now like, I may not feel like I'm up to standard, but no, I'm the number one so I do things how I think they should be done. Which skills maybe like hard and soft skills, do you think you brought maybe to the boardroom in that sense?

Interviewee I: What I brought to the Netherlands is accountability to everybody. Be ready to change because hotel group A was very dusty, I didn't want to work there, in fact, it was boring. It was boring. And people were more like managers than leaders. So that's the mentality I tried to change. So I think I brought a lot of vulnerability I brought a lot of it is okay to dare, it is okay to make mistakes. So I opened the space up, and of course, not everybody followed, but I did a lot of clean-up as well, because there were a lot of, you know, those general managers, who thought they were God. So I changed that mentality as well, I set up leadership courses, which were a little bit different than what they had before. So people who thought they were God, they had to come down a little bit and start to be normal again, you know.

Interviewer: Back in touch with reality. Well, that's great. I think that gives you a very nice overview then of your experience. I have some more general questions about the stakeholder theory. And my first question is, like how you would describe the relationship hotel group A had with its stakeholders, and that can be both internal and external stakeholders.

Interviewer: And then you talk about the hotel group A Netherlands. Okay. When I came, for example, our franchise hotels were not important, but I had the mission to improve the number of franchise hotels, increase them. So but for them, it was not interesting, you know, those franchise because we had our own hotels. So that's the first thing I did. I took them all for lunch, and it was the first time that it happened. So that was a very, very important point, I think, which I changed. What I changed is to put franchise hotels in the center of what we were doing, because I said the franchise hotels are happy with what we are doing. We understand why we are here for him because running own hotels is easy, but franchise is more difficult. So that's one thing. So then also, we got more and more franchise contracts. Danny deadtime, you've wanted to become asset-light. So we sold a lot of a lot of franchise back or sales management back or those kind of constructions. So I think we were known as a reliant partner who discussed real and, I think open, fair negotiations.

Then for procurements, there were also some issues because our procurement image was really a little bit like Ahold in the Netherlands with the supermarket that we squeezed people out, you know, I really created Win-Win situations. And long term partnerships, instead of always being on the penny. We looked at other things than only money, price, cheaper, cheaper. But we looked for quality, we looked for sustainability, for example, we looked really for Win-Win situations. Then, the employees, of course, we did a lot to get better engagement. So then we did that through leadership, also through a different way of recruitment. So we'd much more looked for other profiles than only technical skills. Is that a little bit what you were looking for.

Interviewer: That's really interesting. I also like the idea of having like partnerships, rather than just like an exchange like you give me this, I give you that kind of mentality.

Interviewer: Also in innovation, we did a lot. So we tried also with our partners to innovate, to find new ways of working, for example, we were so inefficient and I am a housekeeper. So I knew a little bit about it. But then when I visited the hotels, I saw a linen room. And they still somebody took the sheets from a trolley, and then put them from the trolley on the shelf in the linen room. Instead of counting what should be in the trolley and put the trolley in the room, you know, instead of having somebody who's back hurts all the time. So then we figured out with the linen company if they couldn't roll the whole thing already in the linen

room, you know. So that's kind of things we work together, like how can we make the work more fun? And find ways to optimize the way we work? So that's not always that makes it cheaper, but it makes it healthier in a way, you know, sustainable, more sustainable for everybody.

Interviewer: Definitely. And then, I guess, in kind of the same regard, how would you describe maybe the manager's management style in terms of decision making and communication? Because it seems like there was a lot involved with the employees with their well being as well, from what you described.

Interviewee I: You're talking about my management style

Interviewer: Within hotel group A let's say.

Interviewee I: When I came, it was very old fashioned. So I think what I did was really role-modeling, that you could always talk to everybody. So there was a shock, because when I visited the hotels, a lot of people were only use that you talk to the general manager, and perhaps a head of departments, but addressing yourself to people who are working really on the floor wasn't normal. So that was a little bit like, Hey, what's happening here?

And there was some mismanagement. But in general, what we did is say that if our employees are happy, it's the only way the guests can be happy, or can become happy with the service. So and that was quite new, I must say.

Interviewer: That outlines it pretty well. And then, in terms of, because we have talked about, GMs, heads of departments in terms of hierarchy within hotel group A. So would you say it was quite a centralized kind of hierarchy or decentralized?

Interviewee I: There was a lot of centralized but in countries we did what we wanted, and I was rebel, so I did what I wanted. Although when something was good, we took it of course. But for example, the company was organized by brands. And I of course had seven different brands in the Netherlands. So when the digitalization came up every brand was thinking yeah what do we do with online check-in? What do we do with online check-in, while the online check-in was already there. So we couldn't wait till Paris finally came to their programs to decide whether to do with online check-in. And that was the whole thing that was so stupid, instead of putting the brands together and asking, like, what do we do with online check-in, they all were figuring it out? And when they came with the final solution, we were already done with it. So that was a little bit silly. But the world became faster and faster. So that's why I went later on to Paris to make things more agile and come up with more kind of things, solutions for the countries than only doing this like, okay, let's think about it. And then we got to test it. And then we got to send. It didn't work at all anymore. It was good in the past, but not anymore.

Interviewer: This the speed of things was just way too fast for that.

Interviewee I: And also stupid because they thought that when you work for Novotel, you always would work for Novotel. But we know in a small country. It's not the case. You prefer to work in the office next to the Novotel than work in a Novotel in a completely other city, you know? So it was stupid.

Interviewer: And you've already stated the technological advancements? I guess right now the I think about COVID. But how did hotel group A Netherlands respond to changes in the external environment?

Interviewee I: When I came to the Netherlands, it was in 2008, we had the big financial crisis with those banks. So I arrived when the RevPAR in the Netherlands was minus 30%, or something, which is nothing in comparison with now, but anyway, we thought then, we would never get over it, but we got over it. So when it happens, you just have to see how you can not only decrease the cost side, but how you can be creative and how you can make the difference with your competitor, right. And that's it, and trusting people and give them the let them do initiatives, tests, and try. Try everything you can to make a difference with your competitor.

Interviewer: Yep. And then the last question I have regarding the stakeholder theory is how you went about formulating the strategy?

Interviewee I: First of all, there is of course, a big vision from Paris. And then you have a look in your country. Like what's happening here? The strategy, that is one of my strengths. I think I'm visionary at a certain point, when I have little dots everywhere, then suddenly I see it, then I'm going to talk to people like what do you think? What do you think? And also with stakeholders, I mean, not only with because the partnerships, of course, don't happen alone. I'm not going to say I want a partnership. No you are talking to them, you are sharing a vision.

A strategy is very important to share as well. And you have to make sure that it is everywhere in your organization. Because I remember we had a lot of outside trainers, for example, team builders for each hotel, and I don't know what. And that was the biggest stupid thing we could do. Because those team builders, it was always somebody who knows somebody and he came in, but he even didn't know the hotel group A strategy. So yes, they do a team building, but you don't do it towards the strategy we've chosen for you? So that's something we changed as well to make sure that the people who trained were aware of what the message should be which they were selling in their training.

Interviewer: That makes sense. That gives me a nice overview then, of the stakeholder theory. And then I have some more personal questions, which I said are optional for you to answer. So you can choose as I go. My first question is if you had to make the choices regarding your personal life to hold the positions that you had.

Interviewee I: So if I refused a job because my personal life, is that the question?

Interviewer: or if you had to if you weren't accepting a job, you had to make any decisions, like one way or the other if you refused a job because of your personal life, or if you had to make choices in your life to accept a job.

Interviewee I: The only one, of course, when I came back to the Netherlands, because we lived 19 years in France. I was alone with my two kids, my two daughters. And then of course, I discussed with them when the person asked me, Do you want to become country manager, I said, I would love to, but now I have two kids, so I have to ask them. And they both agreed after a little bit of discussion. So then we went. But for the rest, I always accepted everything. And of course, in the long run or when you get more experience, you

also say to conditions more or less, like, Okay, I'm doing this, but I also have to take care of my two kids. But you know what it is? I mean, oh, it's a very demanding job. But the higher you come, the more you choose when you work.

Interviewer: Because if they want you then they'll accept the conditions

Interviewee I: Exactly. But I never think that you cannot do a job because there are too many constraints. It's all about organising your day to day job. Because of course, when I came back to the Netherlands, I had a big problem, because people were looking at me like, Oh, that must be a bad mother, you know, to have a job like that. And then having two kids at home. That was a shock to me, because in France, you don't have those.

Interviewer: I was just about to ask if there was if you saw any notable differences, maybe between France and the Netherlands in that regard.

Interviewee I: Definitely. Definitely. So this is one that you are not supposed to work full time, with two kids, alone. That's not done. And I think still, it's an issue. Then the second thing is, of course, you don't work full time. As a mother, you cannot work full time. It's a whole thing in the Netherlands.

And then you have the whole social system. So when you go to the doctor, you feel that the doctor has a problem with it. When you go to schools as well, they don't understand that you're not always there or available for all their meetings, you know. So that kind of thing. You have, of course, the whole organization around the schools, in France, the kids ate at school for lunch, warm food, and in the Netherlands that's just not possible because you eat bread, and then in the evening, you have to cook. For me, it was much easier when they had already their warm meal, but there are little things and then you could leave them at seven o'clock in the morning and pick them up at seven at night. And in the Netherlands, you can bring them at nine. But if you have seen so many mothers stress at work, because they look at the watch and the meeting is taking too long, because otherwise they get punished by the organization where the children are, so it's so different.

Interviewer: It's also very interesting. Also the reason were focusing on the Netherlands because it is always seen as a progressive country.

Interviewee I: Not in this case, it's definitely not. You are not allowed to work and have children. In fact, as a mother, as a father not, but as a mother. That's weird. And I stimulated a lot of women to continue working. There were a lot of women who want to work five days but they felt obliged. And then I said okay, then you work one day home, I think due to COVID that is changed forever, because you can do a lot of things from home, now. But in that time and I said you work home, and they would say no, but I don't work from home because then my kid perhaps... I said, but if I call you or somebody else calls you do you pick up the phone? Or do you call back when your kid is in bed? And she said, Yes, I said it's working. So don't say you work part time, take your five day money, and make sure you're always available. Because you are always available.

Interviewer: And you can still get the job done, regardless of whether you're in the office or not.

Interviewee I: Exactly when the kids go to bed, you can still work an hour, etc, etc. So I don't see any problem.

Interviewer: And then you also mentioned that you got the support from your daughters when moving to the Netherlands? Do you feel that personal support, like in the people that support you? So friends, family, and...

Interviewee I: In France, I had my whole system because I didn't have family there. So I had a complete whole system. But that was easy. And when we came here, it was pretty clear from the beginning that they were big enough, because of course, they were used to the fact that I was working. So they were at that age that they could stay alone. My eldest could cook, you know, so that was okay. But still, I had a support system for emergencies or whatsoever, of course.

Interviewer: And then to round off interview, I have some questions about your perspective for the future, maybe? I think the first question was, Why do you think there are so few women currently holding these positions? But I think we already talked about those with the stigma of full time working full time, maybe. And anything else that you can think of maybe?

Interviewee I: I set up a network also in within Accor. And then I realized that a lot of people think already that they can never become a general manager, because there's something in their head, which is saying that no, I cannot do that. So we as women who succeeded or almost succeeded, we have to scream Yes, yes, you can do it, I can do it, you can do it. And that's where the whole thing is. Women don't talk enough with other women. And we don't see it as Okay, let's take youngsters and make sure that they believe in themselves, and that they can make it work. And so I think all the judgments which are there, but then you'll have to work 24 hours and you have to be available. It's not true! With your leadership style, you can delegate you can empower others too in the hotel, it's not up to you, the general manager to do everything, especially nowadays, you know. So it is all those kinds of stories around it all those kinds of misunderstandings, which we have to take away.

Interviewer: That's a very interesting point. Because I'm doing all these interviews as well myself. I was also thinking this is what we would need, in essence, like, people having these discussions and hearing stories from people who have done hotelschool and have done the same thing and see what you can achieve, basically.

Interviewee I: Exactly. That's why I'm going to call because now I really want to inspire more again. But it's also in other sectors, you know. It is really like because I was the same in the beginning. I always said something when I was When I was starting at hotel B is something like oh, people up there, they must have something really, really very, very special. And when I went up there they didn't have anything very, very special or at least not more special than me or you are whatsoever. So they came there because also by some of course, they had planned to be there. So they were, I don't know how they became but you know, they are normal people. They don't have something special or something. Not at all. Not at all. And that's what we have to scream everywhere to those women like, because it's great. Look at me, it's great, I have done only fun stuff and look where I am. It's fun.

Interviewer: There is definitely still this idea of you have to work 24/7 and you'll never have time for anything else, so it's important to hear it's not the case.

Interviewee I: And if you're working with purpose, makes you work sometimes a lot, but if it's not necessary you run and do your thing. If you do it with purpose it doesn't feel like you have to work. And working to work doesn't have any sense to me.

Interviewer: Where do you think change is most needed? Inspiring younger generations, changing mentalities, changing organisation around school...

Interviewee I: In hospitality, we have to become less traditional, we have to empower people. The guests want today an experience, and that you can only get if the front office is empowered to connect with the guest. Because it is only the personal experience which makes it unique. You cannot teach that. You have to make sure it can be created. That's why you need those personalities in the front line to connect really with this guest. But often they think that the processes are more important than the guest. Like the check-in check-out, did I fill out the computer well etc etc... it is true it has to be corrected, but the main difference you make with another hotel is not how you do the check-in check-out in the computer, it is about how the guests think and feel when they leave. And that should be a central part. We're always talking about it, but we never really do it, because it is actually really hard to do that. If you come into a hotel, what do you see? They are all on their computer right? the system is not that important. Everyone should drop what they're doing when a guest comes in. Even at your hotelschool front guest it is always the same. I've said so many times, already you cannot fix that, when it is the thing that should happen. And if you know in school, then you do it after.

Interviewee Code	Interviewee J
Date	21/01/2021
Time	10:00
Duration of interview	58 min
Platform	Phone

Interviewer: So maybe we can start with a small introduction of yourself and your own professional background?

Interviewee J: I started in front office. And I met my husband, who was the owner of the hotel where I started, and that was when I was twenty, twenty two years old, and I never left.

In the company there are a few shareholders, but we have 68% of our own company. And at first we started off very small, with one hotel and we did not want to grow, but it is also about taking the opportunities. Sometimes, you have good opportunities and you don't want to stand still, you and to take them. So then we grew, but not because that was our ambition, it just happened.

Interviewer: And so, if I understand correctly, then you are the owners of hotel chain A, do you have board of directors? Or is that you and your husband.

Interviewee J: No, that is us, me and my husband. We have an advisory board we are the board of directors. And of course we have a management team in the headquarters. And we have general managers in the hotels, and me and my husband we call it "directie", the two of us we direct hotel chain A.

Interviewer: Perfect. And so perhaps for you it was a little different, but that also makes it interesting do you relate to any barriers or difficulties in the workplace, because you're a woman?

Interviewee J: Well in our own business, I did not encounter any barriers because I am a woman. Because for us it was very natural. With my husband, it was done in a very natural way, in our path of growing, we both did everything that was needed. And of course you have your own things that you like most, and things that you don't like to do, but together we split all the things that have to be done. During those years, he took care of finding new opportunities, building new hotels and refurbishing. I focused on the sales and marketing, internal organisation and ICT. In a natural way we did all that had to be done. My husband never held me back, it was more that we needed each other a lot to do all the things that needed to be done. And we respect each other's skills to do the job. This seems like a fairy tale but it is not because sometimes you struggle or discuss but somehow you find a way. And it is necessary to struggle and have that to be equal to each other in this corporation and do this for 33 years. If you cannot do that, you will not manage to get to a place like this. And

if my husband didn't appreciate me for my skills and my work, then I think I would have gone to work somewhere else.

Interviewer: What about, like you mentioned your management team and the advisory board, did you perceive any differences in your interaction, or was it also a smooth integration.

Interviewee J: Within the company no, outside the company where people didn't know me or less, I had to do more to be accepted and appreciated for my skills and knowledge. I experienced, maybe what you're referring to, there for a woman in this position, I don't want to say it was more difficult, but you have to do more to be accepted. You have to be skilled, be prepared, have to have good knowledge to be accepted as equal. And for men it is easier. For me, I don't know how I did it but I did. First prepare well, and know what I am talking about based on my education and experience. And if you are able to do that, in a business-like way, put aside the emotional part, then you will be accepted. They have to be able to see you as an equal sparring partner to make business with. But once you overcome it, then there are no barriers.

Interviewer: That is interesting what you say, about doing things in a business-like way, and less emotions, did you feel like you have to man-up in a way?

Interviewee J: Maybe, maybe, men like environments where there is not too much emotion. But I think emotions and the female intuition are add-ons in business, but you have to be very wise to put that in. if you are too emotional, you are not taken seriously. So it is very important to do it in a smart way. What I experienced, and my husband also saw that and also used it, when a woman comes into a meeting, it doesn't matter which kind of meeting, the atmosphere differs. A lot of times, only because of you are a woman, the atmosphere in the meeting is different, and better. So it is better to have even one or two women because the atmosphere is different and in the way of talking to each other is different. I think it is a big advantage to have women in executive positions to be able to have that skills in the decision making process. And maybe men aren't always aware of it, so that's something female can do better.

Interviewer: I was actually going to ask you about skills and competencies, so that already gives me a nice indication in terms of atmosphere, ways of talking to one another, and that it doesn't take half of the board to be female for things to change, already just a few women.

Interviewee J: No, no, and you have to be prepared, and be strong. Because when you come in such an environment, you have to prove yourself. And when men enter that environment they will more easily be accepted as a professional, and women still need to prove themselves to be a professional. Strange, but that's how it is.

Interviewer: Have you seen an evolution when you have started and now in those attitudes?

Interviewee J: No, I grew in my position, that's what happened. I was very young, I was 22 when I started, and the old grey people, men for example, they don't take you seriously because of age. So age helps you get accepted as a professional for women. Of course my skills and knowledge evolved during those years, and I became an equal sparring partner. So of course it is not only men, it is also women. How I evolved in all those years to be accepted.

Interviewer: So also your own experience and knowing what to accept when walking in those rooms?

Interviewee J: I think when you have confidence, the skills, you have to be smart to communicate in a manly environment. You don't have to be too pushy or too shy, you have to find a smart way to do things as women. If you do so, men will accept you. They have to. Most men are happy with women in executive positions and the Netherlands has a very open attitude for women in executive positions. So if this is your ambition, you have to find your path and take your place. I don't blame men, if I want to do this, it is my responsibility to find my way to do my thing.

Interviewer: And you kind of learn how to navigate that kind of environment?

Interviewee J: And experience helps. And there is also something, it's small, but it's your appearance too. So, don't be too sexy, but also have to be accepted for the way you look. Men look at you, so you don't have to be beautiful, but you have to be well prepared. And a small trick, what I always use, I'm not the tallest, 1m68, so when have important meeting I wear high heels. And not because it's sexy but because I am bigger and I am taller, so I am on the same level to talk to men. So it is important to think about your appearance, if you want to be taken seriously, your appearance is very important.

Interviewer: That makes sense, in terms of power, what you were saying, in terms of the space you're taking up in the room and speaking as an equal.

Interviewee J: So high heels are not about being more feminine, for me it is a small trick to be on the same level and no be overseen in practical way. And it's subconscious but it's very important in terms of subconscious. You have to think about your appearance, and you can do that in a lot of ways. And you have to think about what you want to achieve with it, and if you want to be taken seriously, your appearance, the first time people look at you is so important.

Interviewer: That first impression, definitely. Although it might seem like a small detail, it is a very interesting one and one we don't often hear, so thank you. Now I have a few questions about the stakeholder theory, and I guess that the first one is how would you describe the relationship between hotel chain A and its stakeholders, so both internal and external?

Interviewee J: Well with our internal stakeholders we have a very common relationship but it evolved over the years when we were a very small company. Of course at the beginning with only one hotel there was a close cooperation but during the last years and being a big company, they are more on a distance and that is also very natural way of evolving for a company.

Externally, like I explained in the first question banks, colleagues, the competition, our accountants, the government, local and national government, it also evolved over the years. If you start as a small company, you have to prove yourself. And if you do then you are seen. We started on a small island, and we worked there, and didn't put a lot of time in networking. So we just worked and did our own thing. And it takes more time to be seen as a company, you have to prove yourself, as a professional, as a reliable, as financially healthy. And if you are able to do well on these three things, then you will be seen. If you are networking, the process will be much faster, but we didn't do it, we did it our own way. When the company is

evolving and you stay on these three important pillars, then you get the confidence of your stakeholders and it is much easier to evolve. If you have trust with stakeholders it is easier to grow, do your thing, get help. Especially now of course, it helps us a lot that we are professional, reliable and financially healthy. So it is very important.

Interviewer: And I think what you mentioned as well, having trust with stakeholders, it is not just about having a business exchange, it is about building over the years networks and a relationship with the stakeholders.

Interviewee J: You don't see it, but you have the trust in your environment, people will stand up for you. Because you have proved yourself, and they allow themselves to stand up for you because it is financially healthy, reliable and professional, and it has skilled people. And they don't take steps they don't think about. So if stakeholders have trust in your, they will stand up. That will help you in positions. And that is what we have worked on all those years, and that point you reach if you are reliable entrepreneur.

Interviewer: How would you say hotel chain A responds to a changing environment? Obviously now we think of Covid, it can also be changes like technology or sustainability for instance.

Interviewee J: Yes, we have always evolved in the way we work. How did we do that? We did that by building new hotels. That was our way. Most of our hotels we build ourselves from scratch, and if you are building your hotels you are evolving. Because you will encounter new things, technology, building methods, able to invest in new opportunities. So by building one new hotel, we learned a lot of new things we could use in our other hotels to. That was our way to grow.

For example sustainability, we embraced sustainability ten years ago or so. And all our hotels went on a gold level of green key, and that was only the beginning for us, it was a starting point to a more sustainable way of entrepreneurship, and in that way we started to develop with the building of Hotel A, the most sustainable hotel in the Netherlands. That was a huge step for us because we hadn't done that before, but by doing so, not only was Hotel A more sustainable, all our hotels went more sustainable because we learned in building Hotel A. How were we able to do it? My husband and I are very flexible and in the lead. We are not over a few different countries, that doesn't make you very flexible all the time, that is our advantage. The way we grow is our advantage, because we have taken over someone else but most hotels we built. That gave us the opportunity to invest into new things.

With the growing of the company, my husband and I grow too, because then you can meet people with new knowledge, and young people, and all those things kept us modern and flexible. I don't think we are in front, but I think we are the first follower. We are very open for new things, but we don't always want to be the first ones because it is very costly. We want our company, as small as we are in the international environment, to adapt to technology and so on.

Interviewer: So I guess more seeing what is out there, how they work, learning new things continuously.

Interviewee J: Yes and being open for new things. Not getting stuck in old ways. That's not something you want to do, otherwise you'd be put aside in the evolving economy, because it is always changing.

Interviewer: And, so we have already talked a bit about how you grew and you had more distance with internal stakeholders. How would you decide management in terms of decision-making and communication in that sense?

Interviewee J: We have a very flat organisation, and we have a very small head quarter because we think that the match has to be played in the hotels themselves. So we give our general managers a lot of freedom to do their thing to their image. That is why we are able to have a very small headquarter, able to sleep at night because we are very decentralised, and to attract skilled people. So if you don't give them the opportunity to get the best skills, and their way of doing, they will hate the organisation. We give them freedom, under only one condition and that is finance. So we are financially very strictly organised, with every day the financial results of the hotels. And if they prepare for the financial budgets and all the things we agreed on, then they have a lot of freedom on how to run the hotel. We are very decentralised, and having small HQ, there is a lot of discussion possible in making final decisions. Me and my husband, of course there has to be a captain of the ship, and if it is difficult we make the final decision, but usually there is a lot space for discussion and skills and knowledge to get to the right decision. We have to because me and my husband would not have been able to do it ourselves all these years.

Interviewer: Yes, so being able to delegate, make the most of everyone's skills, knowledge, trusting the GM

Interviewee J: We have a very competent and reliable team, we love to work with them. We think they have all the skills. And being happy, because being happy in your job is so important, maybe more important than skills. Then if you're in a safe environment, and you go to work everyday with a happy face, you do better.

Interviewer: The last question I had in this topic is about how hotel chain A goes about formulating the strategy. Does it come down to you, or the MT?

Interviewee J: We do it together the strategy, and the strategy is not stuck, but what we have learned in the last year is that we have to be flexible. In times of corona, that is very important. The circumstances differ every month, with the press conferences it can be totally different. So we have a strategy, have followed it all those years, but we have to be very flexible to change and adapt to circumstances if they ask us to. And the strategy of course evolves and maybe nice to know if our eldest son is now for three years in our company. And he is aimed to be then in our position, and so he brought a lot of new insights on how to do business, and we give all the space to put in all these new types of entrepreneurship. And he taught us a lot.

Interviewer: So in the same way you were saying before, about building hotels, taking on younger people to keep that flexibility?

Interviewee J: What you didn't ask me is how I could combine my work and personal life.

Interviewer: I was just about to get to that, so please, go ahead!

Interviewee J: And I think it is very important for the role of a woman in my position. I did see a lot of women struggle, if they want to grow in a consistent career and also have a family, that is a struggle. I experienced it too, and in a kind of period where you are children and you want to do your business, that is a very difficult time. You can overcome it, but you have to look at the way you want to go and you have to take measures to make it possible. Combining a family with young children with a very demanding job, you have to organise it well, because otherwise either your family is the victim or your company is the victim. So you have to take wise decisions, think about it, and find a way how to do it. What I did was having help for my children, for my household, and being there for my children as much as possible. As a working mother, you cannot be there all the time, but you have to be there in certain times. And you have to realise what those times have to be. When the children were small, I worked mostly at home, I could do food, have lunch with them, be home at five and cook dinner. And I did my job in those times outside. I think it is very important as a working mother to think about how you will manage not only your work, also your household, to have healthy children with enough love, and attention. You have to think about it as a working mother. Otherwise you will fail at your job, or as a mother, so you have to take care of those two very important jobs in that period of your life.

I did it my way, that was my way, and I'm not saying it was the best way, but as a working mother you have to think about how, for you and for your children and your relationship, you have to make a plan for it.

Interviewer: So that opportunity to work from home for you was a big plus?

Interviewee J: Yes and it was very special because we lived in one of our hotels, and that helped me a lot in my work.

Interviewer: Then you could be present for both, your job and family.

Interviewee J: Yes, and you can be there in five minutes.

Interviewer: That is not something you hear about a lot, being able to live in the hotel.

Interviewee J: For me it was necessary, and a big advantage, and it helped me to combine those two. And when my sons went out of home at eighteen, it opened new opportunities for me. It was not like freedom, because my family was the most important thing in my life, but it brought me new things. I could do other things, new things, that I wasn't able to do before, it was about taking opportunity in the new circumstances.

Interviewer: So being able to explore new elements...

Interviewee J: Yes, being more out of the company, being more visible outside, being able to travel more, and do other things.

Interviewer: Then I guess you get to explore different parts of work based on what stage of life you are at.

Interviewee J: Yes, and you cannot ignore your home situation. You have to realise and think about your family, how can I combine both in the best way, not only for your job, not only for your children, but also for yourself. You have to think about yourself too.

Interviewer: Of course, also when you mentioned having happy employees come into work, that also applies for yourself. I had maybe the last few questions: why do you think there are so few women currently holding such positions.

Interviewee J: I don't know! If it is your ambition and you are willing to work and you are self confident and you have the skills, at least in the Netherlands, I don't think there are barriers. Of course in my personal life there were barriers, but it is my responsibility to overcome them, to organise it, so that was my responsibility. I don't make it anyone else's responsibility. I was able to do the things I do today, I prepared and I learned and I set myself open for others, and I don't think that another cannot achieve the same I did. So I don't know why there are so few women on my position. I see it in my daily work, mostly I work with men and especially in the Netherlands it is an open environment and there is a positive attitude for having more women in boards, and in executive positions. Maybe women are not taking the opportunities because I think they are there. Maybe we are not bold enough, and not self-confident enough to get to that position but it can be done.

Interviewer: I think it is very interesting what you said because one of the premise of the research about the Netherlands being very open, forward thinking country in general, and that is also something I am trying to comprehend in term of very low number of women, and that mismatch with the Dutch culture.

Interviewee J: Yes I see it too, and of course that might have to do with taking an extra step to be where I am. But I am prepared to take that extra step to be there. I think it's don't let yourself down for taking that extra step. If you realise you have to do that, take that step, and don't argue about it, and don't be angry about it or think it's not fair. There are a lot of things in life that are not fair. Take your future in your own hands, and if there is something or someone blocking your way, take a detour, and try another way to become. There are several ways to get where you want and don't let yourself down, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Go for it, and if you go for it there is always a way. Be creative and be strong!

Interviewer: That is a very inspirational way of ending this interview. I have then a few questions for my own interview. Is there anything I have not asked you, anything I can improve?

Interviewee J: Looking back at the way we discussed, your questions gave enough room to get to the point you are researching.

Coding	Interviewee K
Date	19th March 2021
Time	10:30
Duration of interview	52 Min
Conditions	Teams

Interviewer: So maybe I can start with a small presentation of the research that I'm doing. And then if you have any questions before we start the interview, then please feel free to ask.

So basically, I'm looking at more of the ethical perspective of the question of women on executive boards, especially in the Dutch lodging industry, because most of the arguments I found in my research was more focused on the business case. So the idea that we should have women because it brings more profits or improves the bottom line. And my stance is that there's something else that should motivate not just profit generation.

So I'm looking at it from a very specific part, because obviously, business ethics is very broad. So it's called feminist stakeholder theory. But that's a big concept, and I'll be asking you more specific questions that are very related to obviously the firm.

And I've interviewed 10 women so far. It's been very tricky, because obviously, there's no official database or anything like that. So it's been a bit snowball effects, trying to find women. And there's also not that many in the Netherlands. But also had very, very valuable insights. Do you maybe have any questions about research?

Interviewee K: No, it's all fine.

Interviewer: To give you some outline, we'll talk about a bit about the barriers, your own experience within the board. And then also your personal path and future perspectives on how you see it evolving in the future. Maybe before we start, then would you like to introduce yourself a bit about your background?

Interviewee K: Well, I'm relatively new to the hospitality industry, so on that perspective I'm not sure if I can really add a lot to it. My career basically started about 20 years ago, when it was still a start-up company, and I was the fifth employee and we built in 18 years to really like a multinational global brand, huge company. So that is where my experience was from. And I started in marketing for eight years, I moved into commercial roles and ecommerce and digital and CRM system and customer service and later on HR, and I kind of grew with the company, took a broader perspective and ended up in the board with four people, which was quite a journey.

So I've never had the ambition to become a board member or I don't know whatsoever, but it kind of naturally happened to me. 50% percent in the board was women, and 50% were men. Two women and two men so that was well balanced. That has changed over time. But that in the last five years it was two women, two men. I think also that the population was quite balanced between women and men. And then I left the group, I really thought "What do I want?" I wanted something super informal, super dynamic, a lot of passionate people, eager to grow, huge ambition and like never had two days that were the same and that's when I said to myself. That's what I always want from a company so I looked for a company that was based in the Netherlands, headquarters in the Netherlands, where I really want to have

influence on strategy, I don't want to run Nike office in the Netherlands but you have to execute a US strategy for example. It should be Dutch based but also International, so acting on a global scale. Also with a lot of different cultures because I do love different cultures. I want it to be super informal, so I want to be able to wear my flip flops to work, if I also am want to wear my gym clothes or whatsoever. I wanted it to be young and dynamic, without too much corporate structure, so really informal, flat layers, no hierarchy, no politics. So that was kind of my list.

And then hotel A came on my path. And we had some conversations, many conversations over year and I saw some projects there. And somehow I joined them as chief people officer. And that's because I mentioned I like working with people, I always loved growing, or building high performing teams, diverse teams, and develop those teams in high performing organization. So my interest was there. And for hotel A, they were looking for somebody, or at least I convinced them that they needed people in the board because I said hospitality is all about people, and you're at the start of an hypergrowth base, the plans for hotel A were to grow really, really rapidly all over the world. And I said if you are in such a position, and you are in hospitality, then you need to have people on board. That's how I convinced them. And that's when I joined. And when I joined that was two years ago almost, there were 11 men on the executive team, and myself, so just one female.

Interviewer: And also because you basically created that position of chief people officer, it didn't exist before.

Interviewee K: It didn't exist before, no. So when I joined, that was September 2019. First of all, you have to get to know the company, you have to understand the structure behind it. And we have very complex structure because we build real estate, we build our properties, so we have investment teams, real estate developers, architects, etc. We have sales, marketing, reservations, all those departments, and then we have the operations team. So it's quite diverse, and you really have to get it all so that took a bit of time. And before I even had visited all our locations in Europe COVID arrived, early 2020 and instantly I became a crisis manager and not a person that would facilitate for hyper growth. So my role also changed. The reason why we thought people needed to sit on board is because we were heading into a transformation phase of hyper growth. And the reason why I'm still on the board, I'm doing pretty well is because we ended up in a crisis and crisis management, communication, empathy, engagement, working from all the elements that are super relevant today and slightly less growth. When I joined on the board, that was quite challenging, to get to know everyone to understand and also of these eleven, there were five or six already who had worked for hotel A from day one, so very, very entrepreneurial, very close friends when they started basically, in the building. And there were five or six relatively new so there was not only men/women there was also old vs new. And very owner driven, very founder driven and also culture where if you're close to the founder then you have influence. That needed really to balance out, so over the years, we have restructured the governance and leadership team. So currently we have an executive board of four people and a management team of only six. Now that already is more balanced. So now I am one of six instead of one of eleven, so that helps with the percentages on diversity. We are currently recruiting for a new member in the board and that will be a woman. So that will make at least one woman board and two in the management team so two out of six. So that's progressing. On the leadership team so the direct report, we are 50% women so that really helps. We're getting there.

Interviewer: That is so interesting, especially like all the changes in dynamics with COVID. Very interesting, especially in a very short amount of time, because like you said, you've been there for a year two years, so, also adapting to all these changes is quite the journey, like you said.

Interviewee K: Yes, it's quite a journey.

Interviewer: All really interesting.

Interviewee K: An interesting journey and I really like it. And in my role as people officer, I spent quite a bit of time on like normal stuff: HR, learning and development, recruitment, all those kinds of topics, but I think I spent 50% of my time on the executive board, 25% of that time, I would say, probably coaching the board, bringing topics to the table that need attention, and I think that's where my value sits, and that is more the feminine touch, like, how do we communicate? How do we engage people? How can we be more empathic? And should we look at it from this point of view, or a different point of view, have you consider this? Can we do it differently? Are we empowering our people? Those kinds of conversations, I continue to challenge and facilitate.

Interviewer: And that's great. Was that easy to do, as well, when you were sitting among 11 men, they kind of bring me that different point of view across? Or how did you experience that?

Interviewee K: I don't find that challenging, because I must say all eleven are and were and still are super open for my input if I can help and they truly see the added value of it, in their DNA, in a natural way. So they're super happy that I joined and that I contribute to the conversation, with maybe a different skill set or characteristics, but also not that different. I'm pretty much a male woman, not a girly kind, and I've never been, so maybe that helps, and I can talk their language, I can joke their jokes, probably sometimes even worse than them, but I also bring something new or different, which they really appreciate. What I thought was the most challenging was having eleven in the board itself, which is too much regardless of men/women, it is too much and conversations go all over the place. And what was most challenging for me was in the first year was really to understand them all, and see how they all act and operate and how I could work with them in the best way with. So it really took me a full year to fully grasp the system and now I feel comfortable, and I feel that I have their trust. And I understand their ways of working now it's so much easier. But that took me quite a bit.

Interviewer: I don't think I've ever heard of such a big board, most women who I've interviewed, the board was very small, like four or five people but not eleven. Eleven is a very big board!

Interviewee K: Way too much and that was also my impression. So we have to find a different way of working. The core decisions need to be taken with fewer people, because it's just a waste of time. And they all kind of felt the same. So it was nothing that I came up with, they felt the same that this is not working, we have to kind of adjust the way we operate. So I think that has been a huge transition itself.

Interviewer: Definitely. Well, from your story as well, like you said, or you it was more of a journey more than, you know, your goal to end up in a board. So did you still experience any barriers? or how was that in your career progress?

Interviewee K: I think for me, what really helped I was relatively young when I got children so I was 27 when I had my first and nowadays that is relatively young, and 29 when I had my second and during those days I was a wreck and I couldn't work full time or I didn't want to work full time, I didn't know what I wanted for my career and I just had to be mother and I was a mother. So I worked part time and I did some more systems roles or coordinating roles, nothing really special. Then I realized when my youngest went to school, so when he was four, and at that time I was 32, 33, that was the moment that I got my life structure with the school and after care after school. So then I really started to exercise, go out and to also focus on my career again. And so that really helped me because I was still relatively young starting my career and Bugaboo came on my paths somehow, some way. And when I started I started with working only two or three days, so relatively nothing, especially for French people. But because it was such a cool company, and I was such a true believer and passionate about everything I did, that went from two days, three days, four to five to seven to whatever my whole life. But I immediately started to work with Madeleine. And she started as CMO, and we had a very good connection. And she became my friend for life. I spend so much time with her. And we were super complimentary to each other. So she kind of became my role model. And in the first years, I reported to her, and later on, we became peers in the board. So she was the second female board members. So for her because we were so complimentary, she could not work without me. I couldn't work without her. But that also gave me an enormous flexibility in working hours, because she fully accepted it. And it was a period that labour resources were rather scarce, or they were afraid to lose me because I had another job from day one. And at that time, there was not all the technology, there was a modem that you put your phone on the modem, dial in, a long time, many years ago. And then I could get the emails into my big computer at home and I could work from home. So I was super flexible. And I was allowed to, like work from home on Wednesdays and Saturdays and I worked in the beginning in the evenings. But I also was picking up my children from school at three. I was on Wednesdays and Fridays I worked from home and I could go with them to tennis, hockey, wherever they needed to go to. I was the first, I was one of the first women in the Netherlands that was allowed to work from home and super flexible and just plan your own time.

Interviewer: With the technology as well at that time it must have been something, now it's a lot easier with what we have and everything. But I haven't heard of anyone working from home, already two days a week. That's very impressive.

Interviewee K: I'm an early adapter, and that really helped me, but probably the other way around, I worked like crazy though, I got paid for maybe three days, but I worked seven days, then got paid for four days and I still worked seven finally in the end I got paid five days but still worked seven. So it's also the balance that you get trust but you are also super committed to make it happen. So for me, it never felt like work. I really I only have one hobby and it's work so that maybe not so healthy. But that is how it is. so that was in those days really great.

I also have my... because I saw that was one of your questions like did you get any support. When the children were still young, I had my parents, especially my mother, she was always

supportive. So they did babysitting for a day a week or so. But if I had to travel because I often travelled quite a bit, they always came for a full week they cared for the children. Now, at home, everything was always organized and structured and prepared. I'm also extremely planning person. So I would have like food in the fridge for two weeks, all frozen and prepared. Everything was scheduled and planned out and organised well. My mother was always there to step in and take care. And later on when I really started, that was after the financial crisis. My former husband, he decided to start his own business and work from home. And at that moment, I decided to work full time and that my career would be focused. That also tremendously helped because from that moment on, and that was in 2011 or 2007/2008 I really started to travel the world like weeks on and off so one week I'd be in Amsterdam, in the office in Amsterdam. The other week I would travel to Los Angeles or to Shanghai or Japan, or Korea, Australia was where I was always like, on and off, on and off, one week in the Netherlands, one week traveling. And later on even like sometimes three or four weeks on the road, like, then I will do a whole world trip, traveling around and my husband was then able to take care of children with the support of my mother. So yes, I had support around me to make that happen. But it's now my ex husband. So in the end, it didn't work.

And he is claiming, "I facilitated or I let you to make your career." And I'm like, No, you were just too lousy to make your own company work. And if you would not have been home, I would have organized in another way. So it's just a matter of whether it's your family or your husband, you just make sure that you have a good caregiver, you have to organize it. Because if you're organized, it's doable.

Interviewer: It's all about managing, I guess, the different parts.

Interviewee K: Yes, And I must say what helped me tremendously is that I was in a position because I was always in a leadership position. Still, when it was small, but also when it grew bigger, I could schedule my own calendar and agenda. So if we would have to organize, let's say, an international sales and marketing meeting, and we would fly in 200 people, then I pick the date. And that date was based on my calendar. So it'd never be on one of the birthdays of my children and never be if I had the conversations at school or musicals at school, I would get everything around what was needed in my private life.

So that is, of course, if you have to reduce to other people's agendas, then it becomes sometimes tense, but I could completely schedule my own calendar. So I've never missed a birthday of my children. And I made sure when I travelled around the world that I always would be back on either Friday night late or Saturday morning, very early so I could immediately go to the sport fields. So I never missed any competitions, I even was the coach of sport teams. So it is a matter of are you able to plan it yourself.

Interviewer: That's very impressive to be able to manage all these different stakes. But like you said, I think it's very interesting. And then maybe there's a nice transition as well to make more of the questions on the stakeholders, the idea that you can schedule your own time and everything and that you're able to make your own calendar and that you're able to have it work for you.

And in that sense, maybe I can start off then with a question as well about the hierarchy within your organization within hotel A now. And you already explained like that those were

also criteria that you were looking for when you were looking for a company, being young, empowerment... So maybe you can maybe share a bit more about like the culture of hotel A when it comes to the hierarchy.

Interviewee K: It's interesting, because we are very open young and dynamic company, but we were managed quite centrally. So we have a central headquarters in Amsterdam, for example, all marketing, all sales, partnerships, reservations, real estate. That's all managed from the headquarters in Amsterdam. And then we have our hotels all over Europe. And basically what they do there is they run the hotels, but they do not do any sales and marketing whatsoever, that makes it relatively hard for them to own their full p&l. So currently, we started with the transition in the board. So from 11 back to six people in the management team.

Now we have a dedicated management team for all our hotels in Europe still sitting in headquarters, but they provide the framework and guidelines on the brands or on HR or marketing or reservations. And we're now in the middle of a transition of moving a lot of the people in HQ to the local teams, so that they can work with a general manager in the hotel and can manage their own p&l. So we're in the middle of, they often call it from central to decentral I call it more to local empowerment or an ecosystem of collaborative teams, but much closer to the to the guests and the consumer. So that is a change. And that also means that everybody needs to be upskilled, needs to be trained. In the past the hotel managers were never responsible for sales. And now they will be responsible. So they also have to understand how it works. What is it to also run sales so a super interesting phase. And it's a huge transformation. So a lot of effort is put into that. But it's all about empowering those teams that are close to your guests.

Interviewer: And I guess that idea of empowerment is also very important as well, when it comes to like what you were saying before, like organizing your own time and being very independent in those elements.

Interviewee K: Yes

Interviewer: And would you say that was something that you had in previous jobs, but then that was lacking at hotel A when you joined and needed to be implemented more that empowerment and decentralization?

Interviewee K: I think hotel A, we only exist seven years, seven, eight years. So it's a relatively young company. And because it started out from Amsterdam, and we're still exploring how things work and how we can best run everything. It is learning by doing and kind of naturally, because we grew so fast, it happened that we got the huge headquarters in Amsterdam. And now that we are kind of at a pause due to COVID, we have started to really look at ourselves and see how are we organized, we have 200 people in headquarters in Amsterdam, is that the smartest way to run hotel A operations. So because we have corona, and we had to really stand still, pause and look at ourselves, we can now see that we have to organize differently for the future so that the moment growth will pick up again, we can immediately rapidly scale.

Interviewer: I think that's really interesting. You're saying about, like, you know, seizing that opportunity, not just, we're at a standstill, okay, it is what it is. Things are out of hotel A's control, or just anyone's control, be creative. And like, really think about the changes.

Interviewee K: I think if you're in a crisis, whether it's a financial crisis or a pandemic, you always have to look beyond that, and how can we stay relevant? How will the future look like? And how do we now need to prepare for that? And, of course, that's challenging and difficult, but looking at where do we now need to invest to be ready for the future, because there will be a momentum and whether that will be autumn this year, or spring next year, then the business will pick up again. And we will end up in this high speed train again, and there's no time to look back. So now that we do have the time, you really have to organize for future growth.

Interviewer: Very exciting times ahead then!

Interviewee K: Absolutely, yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: And then of course, since I'm looking at the stakeholder theory, I wanted to also kind of hear how hotel A, what the relationship is with a stakeholder. So that can be like internal, external stakeholders, whether it's suppliers, governments, competition, how would you say the standard interacts with them?

Interviewee K: This is hard for me to say, because I, of course, mainly focus on internal stakeholders. But I would say also in kind of a similar way, so based on our values, that's always what drives you but yes with governments, institutions and investors might be a little bit more formal I can imagine.

But also when we seek for suppliers or people to work with or whatsoever you seek for like-minded people who are also passionate, out of the box, innovative, creative. We are currently looking at a provider for training and development programs. It's not a off the shelf, standard user training, should be something totally cool and exciting and different than knowledge. So, I think, is that what you're looking for?

Interviewer: Yes, and well, also in that regard, would you say it is kind of a web of relations, or would you say it's more of a like a business exchange when it comes to suppliers, like you were talking about training and development? Is it more of like a partnership kind of relationship? Or is it more like, strictly business focused?

Interviewee K: We do a lot of different things of course, there is a lot that is really purely business focus and lawyers, advisors, consultants, and you have them everywhere, banks... But we also do a lot of partnerships. And that's then more on events that we host in our hotels, we host a lot of events, not only for our students, but also for our hotel guests and our co lab members. And those events we often do with partnerships.

Interviewer: And I think as well, you know, from my own perspective of hotel A, just the idea of trying to incorporate all these different stakeholders: students, hotel guests, like in that sense it's also very collaborative.

Interviewee K: Always sort of what we call the completely connected community, like make sure that everybody feels part of hotel A and it's a community that you can really join and that special kind of experience with a lot of added value because of all the events that we organize.

Interviewer: Then I guess we already touched upon like, kind of the external environment with Corona and like making the most of the situation, being creative, not being at a

standstill. So I think it was really interesting. And it's kind of related, I guess, to the hierarchy, but when it comes to management style, and within hotel A, how would you describe the decision making and the communication in general between associates.

Interviewee K: So we're still, we're still working on this, basically, I started to work on that. There was not so much on communication, setup official communication within hotel A when I joined. And that's because it was a relatively young company, everybody knew each other, we had Friday drinks, every Friday, lots of beer and alcohol in one of our hotels and a big party. And then during the Friday drinks, there was always an update from the GM so an informal talk, with everything that was going on.

When I joined, I realized this is not the best way, because by far, not everybody is watching it on a Friday. And there are a lot of people in the hotels that are on shift and cannot join. It's way too chaotic, it's really hard to hear it's just not working. So we have to set up kind of more formal and more frequent flows of communication.

So I started with monthly updates from the management team, to leadership team to managers, we've implemented a newsletter, we've developed a learning and development platform that's also used for communication. So where everything that's happening, you can find all the new people that join, people that would leave, people that got a promotion, they're all there. So that's all a bit more structured, we still have Thursday drinks, we change that to Thursday, that's a better time. We do that now virtually with shows and things like that. But we've also introduced TSH talks where the CEO gives a monthly update on how the business is doing. We have corona team update. So it's all more set in stone. And we've organized for the first time last summer, and now in January a Summer and a Winter Festival, where we have a full week of inspiration and trainings and workshops, and everyone, every day starts with the keynote. And that's either a CEO, and then external partners. That's super exciting keynote talks about certain topics. And then we will have all the workshops and panels and development sessions spread over the week, everyone who wants can join. So that was two times that was super successful, a lot of engagement. I think that we posted over 35 sessions or so maybe even more where over three hundred people joined during the week. So that was that was quite engaging and incredible. And you have to continuously communicate in a transparent and open way. And especially that now everybody works from home.

Interviewer: I think that's also changed very much the communication with people working from home, decreases the communication but I think there's also been developed effort put into it because everyone realised how important it is. So I think these are also great examples of very genuine communication, with very different formats as well, like more formal, more informal, that are very much there.

Interviewee K: And it's also continuously improving, like, try things out if it works we continue, how can we make it better? If it doesn't work then stop it again, because then it's not valuable. I'm not a person that knows it all. So I would be like Okay, let's try it and see if it works.

Interviewer: My final question, specific to this topic is more of the strategy formulation. And if you can maybe like outline a bit the process of how TSH has gone about formulating a strategy over the past few years.

Interviewee K: That's still a work in progress, I would say, because it was in the past, before I joined, it was not done in a very structured way. It was basically, the shareholders together with the board, kind of set the high level steering direction. It also kind of happened, strategy just happened because we were growing so rapidly.

There was a budget process that was owned by the CFO. And just before COVID started, we were on the verge of starting to review the business planning process where you really have like your overarching company objectives, and then the themes will contribute to that with the team objectives. It all should come together. But then, of course, COVID hit us hard, we had to change our strategy almost on a daily basis. So that kind of started again. So our financial year starts in September, so as we speak, this week, we started again, to prepare for strategic planning process for September. If you ask me it should start with overarching objectives, and then the team should contribute to that to really be a part of it. And that is something that within hotel A, we're not yet fully there, but we're getting there.

Interviewer: And I think that was basically the question I was about to ask, like the involvement of teams within the strategy as well. And I'm very intrigued, because like you said, you don't really have a hotel background. When you compare sitting on a board not in a hotel and in a hotel. What have you seen really striking differences or anything that you can think of?

Interviewee K: No, that's the one thing that I'm really surprised about, because I thought it would be 100% different and I would learn a lot of that. And of course, I learned a lot about hospitality now. But in the basics, I would say most companies or businesses are the same. It is about products. It's about services, it's about people, how you organize how you do your planning process, you have to create budgets, it's all pretty similar. And even if I look in the hotel industry, the real estate roadmap, how do you look at a roadmap for the future? Let's say for 10 years, that's exactly the same process as at Bugaboo, how do you look at product development? How do you develop a product? How do you design a hotel with the requirements and all specs? It's exactly the same as how do you design a product? How do you do product, brand marketing, sales, pricing strategies, target group setting, communications, PR, social media, it's basically the same. It's all about people and building brands and experiences.

Interviewer: And in the interactions within the boards also, you would say they were quite, you had similar experiences with the both?

Interviewee K: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: And then I also wanted to, so I think, throughout the conversation you answered a lot of the questions regarding the board, regarding your personal path. And it was very, very interesting. And also I'm very curious, in your future perspective, as well like the developments, how do you perceive this imbalance or, you know, in the male female ratio, let's say within board, do you think that's something that should be worked on actively or will come naturally in the years to come?

Interviewee K: I would tend to say, the quotas, that the governments are putting, I've never been a fan of that, I don't think that works. I think it should come naturally, but on the other hand I think you need to work on that. If we hadn't said now, for the position in our board, we will find a woman no matter what, it probably would have been a man again. And you are

able to find women, so yes you have to put effort and you cannot get away with I have tried and I didn't find them. Bullshit, they are out there, you have to try harder. It will come naturally if we all work hard, that will be my take.

Interviewer: and I wanted to come back to something you talked about, you spoke the same language as the men on the board, you got to know every person on that board, do you think for example that the old boys network, the fact that people get hired because they know, do you think that happens?

Interviewee K: I think that happens a lot in companies still, but not in companies where I would feel comfortable working with. I choose to work with certain companies, and I choose to work for start ups, scale ups, companies with high drive, high energy, high ambition and passion, so on my checklist there is informal, dynamic, energised, so I think in younger companies that have been started in the past ten years that is not the case anymore. At least I hope. I think so, but with the establishment it is still the case, absolutely.

Interviewer: Would you say that looking for those things in a company: high drive, high ambition, dynamic, do you think that makes the environment more welcoming. Like for you when you joined the board, they were open to hear your perspective, your opinion, does that play a role in your criteria when you were looking for a company?

Interviewee K: Yes, I think so. I think what is most important is that you have an environment within your company, within your team, where there is trust and a feeling of safety. If you can establish that whether it is with men or women, I think it will come naturally, everyone will speak up and people will find ways to grow. If that is not the case, if you do not feel safe, that can be a reason because there is way too many men, then you have no relation. I think trust and psychological safety, that is fundamental.

Interviewer: I love my research topic, but sometimes it is hard to make the male/female distinction because the idea is to make equal ground for everyone, and that idea of trust goes beyond gender.

Interviewee K: And I think that what helps a lot is the power of vulnerability and I always refer to the Ted Talk of Brown, which is one of my favourites. And I think if men and women, they are more vulnerable, then you create that open and inviting environment where people feel safe and then the magic will happen. The moment people tend to be more vulnerable and say I don't know the answer, sometimes I also don't know the answer and make mistake, it will create an open culture and everything in it.

Interviewer: Great, I think that gives me a good overview of your own path, TSH and also nice perspectives for the future to encourage more women. One thing that I did want to ask that has not come up, the idea of judgement of women working full time and having children, did you also encounter that?

Interviewee K: Yes, absolutely, not so much in my work, but in private settings, in meetings at school I was there but not in the way other women would be there. Sometimes I had judgement, and felt guilt, if I would be at the football and my phone would be ringing and that was before everybody had a mobile phone, people would look at me and judge, and I was like whatever, it is important. So there is absolutely judgement for that, yes.

Interviewer: So if I understand currently, it is being able to make the decision to go past the judgement or making it a norm to so there is no more judgement, and also making the effort to look beyond the obvious of hiring a man for the board, and taking that extra step.

Interviewee K: Absolutely

Interviewer: That was all the questions I had, the last one was if there is anything you would like to add, or anything I should ask but have not asked.

Interviewee K: What is your opinion?

Interviewer: Yes, good question! I really believe in the idea of creating more welcoming business environment, where you can be more vulnerable, focus on emotions side of business, not just the rational. I think the business world was created by men, for men, and should focus on the elements of communication, taking care of the people in the company, outside the company, because then it will be more welcoming for men and women, because I think there are also men who do not align with very aggressive business ways. So changing business in that direction of being a more inclusive space in the way it is conducted.

Appendix 6. Coding tables

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
Barriers to executive positions		0	0
Absence of barriers	<p>have some difficulties with that because I have never had difficulties. And I think you can make the problems larger or smaller yourself. (A)</p> <p>I did not encounter any barriers because I am a woman. Because for us it was very natural. (J)</p> <p>If it is your ambition and you are willing to work and you are self confident and you have the skills, at least in the Netherlands, I don't think there are barriers. (J)</p> <p>mostly I work with men and especially in the Netherlands it is an open environment and there is a positive attitude for having more women in boards, and in executive positions. (J)</p>	2	4
Barriers in the lodging industry	<p>I do feel like it is our industry that is fairly old fashioned. I think if we don't work at it from the core, from the root cause, then it will never change. Then we're going to be losing women the moment they enter motherhood. Because, they're not willing to understand that there is a need to change that pattern, that system (F)</p> <p>And another thing is breastfeeding, essential for the baby, women are often put into cubicles to detract breast milk. It is so humiliating. It is as if it is not important, it is very important! It feels inferior, and it's hugely important. (F)</p> <p>I think in the hospitality industry it would be easier, not easy but easier, if you work for an insurance company, then they probably will compensate with money and that you take an au-pair or whatever. But the possibilities within the hospitality industry are there. You can create a house in a hotel, so it is possible, but it was never discussed, and I think that that is perhaps changing. What can we do to make it happen? (G)</p> <p>And I think there's still a lot of traditional shit going on. But I know that you had to wait so long for a promotion. So then they start in the dishwashing. And then we will tell you when you are</p>	4	6

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>ready to get a promotion. So people got fed up, you know, because you did your four years of study. (I)</p> <p>In hospitality, we have to become less traditional, we have to empower people. (I)</p>		
Harassment	. No, no, I saw harassment, I felt harassment (I)	1	1
Hiring process	<p>I think that men, what happens there, I guess, is that they clone. So every time there was a vacancy for somewhere high, then I could feel that the people who could choose to candidates, they really prefer to candidates who looks like them. So it must've been the same types. Of course we did sometimes do sort of the insights: roles, color, you know, that, all those things. And then you also saw that it was almost the same colors every time. (B)</p> <p>On the other hand, when you have vacancies for a non-executive board, and you have 10, perfect candidates, and there are nine men and one woman, the chance is that the vacancy will be filled with a man because there were nine men and only one woman applying (H)</p>	2	2
It's a man's world	<p>But I think that's because a lot of men they have a quite dominant way of doing things. And even when they don't know how to do it, they act like they do it. And that works because people believe them and I think that men are believed too soon. There are not many people who go into discussion when a man (a certain type of man but a bit of a dominant man), and those men, they grow into careers very fast and it doesn't work in the end, but then a lot of damage has been done. (C)</p> <p>But men they, they're not busy only doing things well, then they're also busy with manifesting themselves (C)</p> <p>And I think that's the big difference and when not, especially men, see those side-effects and focus on them when they have the possibility to give people great opportunities. (C)</p> <p>And I think they are more involved and they're not out to do something for themselves, but they work more as a group. (E)</p>	5	13

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>but I felt that I had to stand up for myself. It was not the war, but you had to talk and stand up for yourself on the right moment (G)</p> <p>And I wanted to go to Brussels well, process was already “Oh, abroad? You go abroad?” Please think about nothing but that. And then there was one internship possibility in Brussels. And there was another boy who wants to go there. And the school said he can go. And then I said, Why can he go, Why can I not go? No, he can go, and I didn't agree. So I spoke up. I said, No, that's not the way, that's not correct. (G)</p> <p>So I wanted to do stewarding and then again, the HR manager. He didn't agree because that was not for women, women, ‘real women’. I remember that. He told me ‘real women don't do stewarding.’ And I said, Well, this is bullshit. I'm willing to do it for three months. You let me do it for three months. And if you don't like it, then you fire me. (G)</p> <p>but the thing is this motherhood is still...and we don't facilitate, we don't make it easier for women, right? (G)</p> <p>I saw things, if you didn't do what the men expected, then you had a problem. And if you don't have a backup, then you get killed as well. So you have to have your sponsor around. And if the sponsor is gone then it's rough. That is rough. (I)</p> <p>Not a mentor, because a mentor helps. No, you need somebody who is backing you up. Not anymore, by the way, now that's much less but at that time, I really needed somebody, because otherwise people wouldn't respect what I say whatsoever (I)</p> <p>I think when you have confidence, the skills, you have to be smart to communicate in a manly environment. You don't have to be too pushy or too shy, you have to find a smart way to do things as women. If you do so, men will accept you. They have to. (J)</p> <p>And a small trick, what I always use, I'm not the tallest, 1m68, so when have important meeting I wear high heels. And not because it's sexy but because I am bigger and I am taller, so I am on the same level to talk to men. So it is important to think about your appearance, if you want to be taken seriously, your appearance is very important. (J)</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>for me it is a small trick to be on the same level and no be overseen in practical way. And it's subconscious but it's very important in terms of subconscious. (J)</p> <p>but you have to be very wise to put that in. if you are too emotional, you are not taken seriously. So it is very important to do it in a smart way. (J)</p>		
Lack of trust in competencies	<p>Always, if you, as a woman, you have a bit of a step back if you understand what I mean? (B)</p> <p>Because the men I met, they mostly, started as a trainee and they then grew into the highest position quite fast, last couple of years, because there was not enough staff to be found. So last couple of years before Covid, I saw men getting in management of hotels, I thought they were not capable at all. And that's the difference you see, when you see the difference of men running hotels or women, the women who do it now, mostly they are capable of doing it. And men, it is well about 50% from my point of view. So they get a chance easier, even though they don't have to prove their competence. I think or their capability. (C)</p> <p>I don't think they've taken me very seriously my male colleagues, kind of just kind of okay, within the group. (E)</p> <p>But in the beginning, I don't really think so maybe they didn't take me very seriously but eventually, I think they saw that I could do a job and was one of them. (E)</p> <p>I think I always had more female top managers than male managers, at least at a small management team, because I think I trust women more than men, I think that's probably the reasons why. I think they do a better job. They give you more than men. (E)</p> <p>always have the feeling that to first of all, what I just said is I trust women more than I do men. (E)</p> <p>I'd rather work with women than men. (E)</p> <p>But I was really amazed. First time. They told me that it was a problem. I was really amazed. I couldn't believe that it was still happening. And I couldn't believe that these females couldn't solve it with this male colleague, which in principle, I mean, the female is higher in the hierarchy than the male person. So I mean, I didn't think it was a real problem, but it persists a bit. And we</p>	5	14

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>don't want to lose either one of them. So we need to get counselling there. But it's a funny problem in 2021. (E)</p> <p>otherwise people wouldn't respect what I say whatsoever. So if you don't have anybody who says what she says is right, or what she said, you have to listen to at least, then you are just a low, small little girl suddenly, you know, and then everything you say is nonsense. (I)</p> <p>if you are only one woman, and that I've been a lot, then they don't really take you completely seriously. (I)</p> <p>outside the company where people didn't know me or less, I had to do more to be accepted and appreciated for my skills and knowledge. I experienced, maybe what you're referring to, there for a woman in this position, I don't want to say it was more difficult, but you have to do more to be accepted. You have to be skilled, be prepared, have to have good knowledge to be accepted as equal. And for men it is easier. (J)</p> <p>First prepare well, and know what I am talking about based on my education and experience. And if you are able to do that, in a business-like way, put aside the emotional part, then you will be accepted. They have to be able to see you as an equal sparring partner to make business with. But once you overcome it, then there are no barriers. (J)</p> <p>you have to be prepared, and be strong. Because when you come in such an environment, you have to prove yourself. (J)</p>		
Parenthood	<p>So the combination of a full job, and children is not always easy. But possible. (D)</p> <p>What helps is I don't have children. So that helps, that probably helps to work more. So it's different, if you have children, maybe you have to make all the choices? (D)</p> <p>The only choice which is not really a choice is the question, did I want children or not, for me, wasn't really a choice, because I never wanted children. So for me, it's not a problem. But I think it's the only issue that might have been a problem. (E)</p> <p>No, but that wasn't the case, because I had changed. I had changed in that sense that I was still as committed as I was, but I suddenly</p>	6	10

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>had two babies to look after. And that had an impact on my time, on the time referral that I had, but also in my commitment also to them. So at a certain stage, what happened was that my life had completely turned upside down. But my employer still viewed me as the person with that same, time commitment, which was often 60 hours or 80 hours, whatever, you knew, you work weekends, you did stuff, because our hotel industry is a 24/7 job. And also to, add to that, a position at Hotel B, I was the director of sales and marketing, and I was a member of the executive team. And I was also the first woman in an executive team for Hotel B in Europe to become a mother. (F)</p> <p>my husband was very, very supportive of the career that I had. And I was lucky in that sense. But the point is, is that it's not necessarily the tasks, but it's also the feeling, because your feelings have changed. I remember when my son had to go, my son was born two years after my girls, and I remember that, at four months old, I had to deliver him to the daycare center, and I was, it was completely alien to me to do that. Because, everything, my whole instinct was, no, I have to keep my son here, he needs to be with me.(F)</p> <p>during my pregnancy, my partner found somebody else. So he left me. And then I was not only a hotel manager, but also going to be a single mother. And then to be honest, I thought, Okay, how am I going to do this, right? Hotel manager is a very hectic job. Being a mother is quite a job. And combining both of them, I don't know if I can, if I am capable of doing that. (G)</p> <p>And then I thought, okay, I was so happy to become a mother. But I was not intending to become a mother and put my child in a boarding school. So then I thought, Okay, this is going to be tough to combine it, that's for sure. Because in the company, nobody does it at the moment. (G)</p> <p>Because how am I going to be a single mother and a hotel manager, I don't know how to do it. And I have nobody who showed me that is possible. So it might be wise to change. (G)</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>it is very important for the role of a woman in my position. I did see a lot of women struggle, if they want to grow in a consistent career and also have a family, that is a struggle. (J)</p> <p>I think for me, what really helped I was relatively young when I got children (K)</p>		
Positive discrimination	<p>And I think because of the dynamics in the board with the two guys there, and they're really different, then really looked at the teaming and insights of the people. And I think it was in my benefit that I was a woman because the balance was better. (B)</p> <p>I don't see them too much. But because I think during these times, you have even an advantage as a woman to climb the career ladder. (D)</p> <p>I'm not really sure, to be honest. It was kind of a novelty, which made obviously a difference. (E)</p> <p>I mean, in Asia, it's a little bit different. I think I experienced positive discrimination, because of my background, and because maybe my race and maybe my I don't know, being a woman, maybe in those days, for those positions. (F)</p>	4	4
Self-inflicted barriers	<p>So I always asked for that contract of less hours but in the end, you did do a job full-time. So that's always what I find that women are always a bit of a “thief of their own wallet” (B)</p> <p>I think really they are too modest. They are not really like shouting what they can do and that's what I mean. So we are always a bit in the back. Also when there is a sort of conference or something, I don't see lots of women always putting up their hands and asking questions, always the guys, we are a bit more sitting back and trying to look at what's happening and analyzing more. And I think we always, we are not that opportunistic, like guys (B)</p> <p>I think it's also, it's partly the women themselves because they, well, they don't have to drive to be the CEO of a hotel. That's they want to have a broader perspective on everything and they change more in jobs also. (C)</p> <p>think it's because women are not placing themselves in the spotlight as many times as men and they're doing their things and they're doing their things well, well, the girls who have the</p>	4	7

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>capability of having a career, but I think that's one of the things they think. That when you're good, people see that your good and that, that should be the way to grow into higher positions. (C)</p> <p>it's also the females themselves. I mean, don't let you be put down, be upfront, keep up your head, hold up your head and just go ahead on your way in the way you think it should be done. And don't let older people tell you what to do. It's your life. Just do what you want to do. And if you make enemies you make enemies, that's too bad. Just hold up your head and go on. (E)</p> <p>Maybe we are not bold enough, and not self-confident enough to get to that position but it can be done. (J)</p> <p>that might have to do with taking an extra step to be where I am. But I am prepared to take that extra step to be there. I think it's don't let yourself down for taking that extra step. If you realise you have to do that, take that step, and don't argue about it, and don't be angry about it or think it's not fair. There are a lot of things in life that are not fair. (J)</p>		
System barriers		0	0
Childcare	<p>I must say that you'll have to see this in the perspective of childcare in Holland. Like for instance, in France, that childcare is something taken care of by the state. That is not the case in Holland. You will have to arrange that everything yourself. So that's quite a difference also in Belgium and in the UK, I believe it's something childcare is organized by the society. And in Holland, it's not, so that's a part of an explanation where there's a difference. (A)</p> <p>Partly because of the childcare system and you have to arrange your own childcare. There was no state childcare. So I had a nightmare at home because there was a, it was difficult to do something else. (A)</p> <p>And that's maybe something the government should work a bit better childcare. (E)</p>	2	3
Judgement working mothers	<p>And something else as well, but that's something very Dutch, I think. Ladies are gossiping amongst each other. Oh, do you work five times? So then you will not have time for your children. But this is something I think you only see in Holland, I do not hear this from English or French or Belgium colleagues in their countries. It's quite normal. (A)</p>	4	7

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>So then I wanted to have my freedom on Wednesday. It was not that I didn't work, but otherwise I felt guilty. (B)</p> <p>And that's situations that I've experienced as well. In particular situations whereby women who are in leadership roles, they feel this added pressure also from other women. (F)</p> <p>Because of course, when I came back to the Netherlands, I had a big problem, because people were looking at me like, Oh, that must be a bad mother, you know, to have a job like that. And then having two kids at home. That was a shock to me, because in France, you don't have those. (I)</p> <p>you are not supposed to work full time, with two kids, alone. That's not done. And I think still, it's an issue. Then the second thing is, of course, you don't work full time. As a mother, you cannot work full time. It's a whole thing in the Netherlands. (I)</p> <p>So when you go to the doctor, you feel that the doctor has a problem with it. When you go to schools as well, they don't understand that you're not always there or available for all their meetings, you know (I)</p> <p>Not in this case, it's definitely not. You are not allowed to work and have children. In fact, as a mother, as a father not, but as a mother. That's weird. (I)</p>		
Part-time work	<p>And also at that time the word part-time work was not really existing. So it was either yes or no, there was nothing in between. And when the part-time was possible, there were many companies who said, okay, when you work, part-time, you cannot be a management team member or a head of department. And that has changed happily because now you can be also managing or a management team member when you're working four days instead of five. So that's a very good change in that respect. (A)</p> <p>Well I have children. So in the beginning, I didn't want to work full-time so at the department store it was even less it was like four days. And I left, I find sort of stupid now, but I, till now I have a full-time contract, it's the first time, and I always worked like 36 hours and four days. But every time I was off on</p>	5	6

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>Wednesday, then if there are phone calls or urgent matters, or I had to go to the office, I did do that. It was like I did a full-time job (B)</p> <p>I think as long as the women in the Netherlands don't work four or five days a week, we will never get to the level that a government is wanting. So we have a very luxurious position in the Netherlands, where most of the women don't work four days or more. But that also means that you cannot have the positions. Or maybe they don't even want what the government wants you to have. (D)</p> <p>But I think it's important to support them and tell them that they should be independent. And if they do that and they are going to work 4 days or more, more women will come to executive positions. But it will take time because first you need the women who are working more than 4 days a week. And maybe four days is already not enough, but what I am always saying is that it would be best if the work week of four days would be more common. For women and men. If four day work week is common then it becomes normal that you are working one day less, so that would be the best I think to get more women in executive positions (D)</p> <p>So if the women don't apply to these jobs, because they for example , like to work be part time, then it's the women who should change to more full time work. (H)</p> <p>when I had my second and during those days I was a wreck and I couldn't work full time or I didn't want to work full time, I didn't know what I wanted for my career and I just had to be mother and I was a mother. So I worked part time and I did some more systems roles or coordinating roles (K)</p>		
How to have more women in executive positions		0	0
Discussion	<p>So if I think back now, if at that time there would have been, they would have said, listen, we really want you to stay hotel manager, what can we do to make it happen. Then, at least there would have been a discussion, and the burden would not only be on my shoulders. (G)</p>	1	2

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>Because I thought, I cannot make it happen. But there was not even the discussion on how, and I think that is changing it a little bit now. That you see companies thinking about: what can we do for those women to make their choices easier? Because that is it in the end. If they had said, listen, I don't know, I remember that in the old days the GM would still live in the hotel, that you would live in the hotel. I am not staying that is ideal, but that could be a solution, that your house is also in the hotel, it would be easier and you could say okay, I can quickly go down or whatever. So there are possibilities, but they were just not discussed. (G)</p>		
Hiring process	<p>okay for every vacancy, we want three candidates and at least one of the three should be a woman. And then we have a sort of last decision making but that is every time. And that's also, I think you have to look for the best candidate. It shouldn't be a woman or a man, that doesn't matter, it should be the best candidate. But maybe to go to this new culture, you maybe should start doing these kinds of things because otherwise it never changes. I don't know if that's the right path to walk, but I guess you should in airline, you should take some actions to start changing the culture and as soon as it's more integrated, then it comes by itself.</p> <p>I guess, for this company, it really should help for example that you have targets. That was also at one point a guy who has a target, the highest manager of cargo that he hires at least I don't know... but when you hear this as a woman, then you really think it's stupid because then you actually are really discriminating or whatever. So then, then we are sort of special or sort of weak. And that's also not the case but I could also see, I changed my mind a bit about it because of the airline, it was so tough, then I could see that some targets should be made to help this improve. (B)</p> <p>But I think that the people who are the highest up they should look more to capability, I think that well people on the top should look more to talent and capability than only to the people who have the biggest mouth. (C)</p> <p>If we hadn't said now, for the position in our board, we will find a woman no matter what, it probably would have been a man again. And you are able to find women, so yes you have to put effort and you cannot get away with I have tried and I didn't find them. Bullshit, they are out there, you have to try harder. It will come naturally if we all work hard, that will be my take.(K)</p>	3	3
Make it about diversity	<p>believe is diversity and inclusivity that will help as well, because it's not only male, female, but it's also color of the skin, religion,</p>	2	2

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>sex, et cetera. So that might help, then it takes away the pressure of the women. It's everything. (A)</p> <p>I'm not sure if you know, every kind of job has a kind of person. So financial controller is somebody who is very focused on, of course, numbers. And revenue manager focused on numbers, but then on the other way of how do we get them in sales manager is focused on getting business. And I'm not sure if this has anything to do with gender, right? It's just the type of job request the type of person to do the job. So when we see in a management meeting, I think you rather see the focus of somebody then, if he is male or female. (G)</p>		
Organisation of time	<p>Well, you work a lot, especially when you have your own company, it's like always there, but then on the other hand you're used to it. So I never saw it as a problem or something interfering, I was and he was used to it ever since he was a kid, because before we were both managing companies, we are managing in bigger other organizations but that made us also our own boss of our own time. In a way you are not. And in a way you are, so you have to set your priorities and, well, I think we succeeded in the end. ©</p> <p>was willing to work in the evening or in the weekends, etc. But I also wanted to secure time to be with my family. So I didn't want to have an 80 hour work week, I still wanted to have the 40 Hour workweek, or the 32 Hour workweek, but when it was reasonable to me so that I could still see my children, you see what I mean? So if you wanted me to work in the evening, that'd be fine. But then I would want to be off in the afternoon, so that I would still be able to see them. And I wanted to manage my own time. So I was I had my own company for about four years. (F)</p> <p>So I could, I could combine it with the single motherhood, so okay, my son was at day-care, five days a week, okay, that was the consequences. But at least when I had to go and get him, I could go and get him. And then I would work in the evenings or very early in the morning, or whenever it was necessary, I could combine it, which was great, which was really great. (G)</p> <p>And of course, in the long run or when you get more experience, you also say to conditions more or less, like, Okay, I'm doing this, but I also have to take care of my two kids. But you know what it</p>	6	11

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>is? I mean, oh, it's a very demanding job. But the higher you come, the more you choose when you work. (I)</p> <p>But I never think that you cannot do a job because there are too many constraints. It's all about organising your day to day job. (I)</p> <p>With your leadership style, you can delegate you can empower others too in the hotel, it's not up to you, the general manager to do everything, especially nowadays, you know. So it is all those kinds of stories around it all those kinds of misunderstandings, which we have to take away. (I)</p> <p>Combining a family with young children with a very demanding job, you have to organise it well, because otherwise or your family is the victim or your company is the victim. So you have to take wise decisions, think about it, and find a way how to do it. (J)</p> <p>When the children were small, I worked mostly at home, I could do food, have lunch with them, be home at five and cook dinner. And I did my job in those times outside. I think it is very important as a working mother to think about how you will manage not only your work, also your household, to have healthy children with enough love, and attention. You have to think about it as a working mother. (J)</p> <p>Now, at home, everything was always organized and structured and prepared. I'm also extremely planning person. So I would have like food in the fridge for two weeks, all frozen and prepared. Everything was scheduled and planned out and organised well. (K)</p> <p>if you would not have been home, I would have organized in another way. So it's just a matter of whether it's your family or your husband, you just make sure that you have a good caregiver, you have to organize it. Because if you're organized, it's doable (K)</p> <p>I must say what helped me tremendously is that I was in a position because I was always in a leadership position. Still, when it was small, but also when it grew bigger, I could schedule my own calendar and agenda. So if we would have to organize, let's say, an international sales and marketing meeting, and we would fly in 200 people, then I pick the date. And that date was based on my calendar. So it'd never be on one of the birthdays of my children</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>and never be if I had the conversations at school or musicals at school, I would get everything around what was needed in my private life. (K)</p> <p>So that is, of course, if you have to reduce to other people's agendas, then it becomes sometimes tense, but I could completely schedule my own calendar. So I've never missed a birthday of my children. And I made sure when I travelled around the world that I always would be back on either Friday night late or Saturday morning, very early so I could immediately go to the sport fields. So I never missed any competitions, I even was the coach of sport teams. So it is a matter of are you able to plan it yourself. (K)</p>		
Quotas	<p>we've had a standard some years ago that it was mandatory for vacancies, higher vacancies, to also have female candidates. And when a vacancy was not fulfilled or when there was no female candidates brought in, they should look further until they found a female candidate. So that's not the case anymore, but that has helped, I think. (A)</p> <p>something, I do not know whether it helps or not is a quota in Holland, they are discussing for years and years already, where whether we should have a quote in for female board members yes. Or no, one half of the country says, yes, we want it because it will help. And the other half says, I don't want it, especially women because then I'm put into that company not because they want me, but because they should have me. So I'm not sure whether this is a solution, but people, especially female managers in the Scandinavian countries, they say in our country, this was a solution and it has helped. (A)</p> <p>But we should be careful, we should be elected because of our qualities and not because we are a woman. (D)</p> <p>There's a percentage, a law, multinationals should hire at least one third of their boards, for non-executives, one third should be female. I have a little problem with that, because you have to hire the best person (H)</p> <p>I would tend to say, the quotas, that the governments are putting, I've never been a fan of that, I don't think that works. I think it should come naturally, but on the other hand I think you need to work on that. (K)</p>	4	5
Support	<p>So you see, once again, was it a fight? No. For me, it was not a fight. Yeah, stand up for yourself and be a little bit lucky as well.</p>	4	7

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>Right? You have to have a little bit luck that people notice you and, and that they are willing to give you a chance. (G)</p> <p>You need to be lucky that the GM knows you, that you cross him/her at the moment you need them. Of course, friends and family are very important, as a single mother, if I would not have had my mother, who would, when I had to travel, who would say, listen, bring your son home and I will take care of him so you can go and do your stuff, it would be difficult. So you need people who are willing to help you. And I had that fortunately. Not in Amsterdam in the beginning. That was tough. I came and especially in the beginning, I still had to make friends, I did not know so many people in Amsterdam. Everybody was working. So I remember that finding a babysitter was a nightmare! In the end, I managed and if you speak up then again there is always somebody willing to help you. (G)</p> <p>And it changes as well, because in the beginning, when I started in the hotel industry, my mom and my dad, as hotel owners, could help me. But when you are in problems, e.g. you have to get a bank loan, it is becoming more complicated . So now for example I have a lot of support from my non-executive board. (H)</p> <p>When you go to a professional coach, they just listen to you and they don't know anything about your youth or whatever. Your friends and family see it differently. But sometimes it's more about talking to the coach, the coach asks questions, you give an answer. And by answering those questions, the solution comes up. It's also about sometimes accepting who you are. (H)</p> <p>And bit by bit I went up also, because there was a leader who was keen on me and trusted me. So he took me each time he got a promotion, he took me up with him. (I)</p> <p>And when we came here, it was pretty clear from the beginning that they were big enough, because of course, they were used to the fact that I was working. So they were at that age that they could stay alone. My eldest could cook, you know, so that was okay. But still, I had a support system for emergencies or whatsoever, of course. (I)</p> <p>the children were still young, I had my parents, especially my mother, she was always supportive. So they did babysitting for a</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>day a week or so. But if I had to travel because I often travelled quite a bit, they always came for a full week they cared for the children. Now, at home, everything was always organized and structured and prepared. I'm also extremely planning person. So I would have like food in the fridge for two weeks, all frozen and prepared. Everything was scheduled and planned out and organised well. My mother was always there to step in and take care. (K)</p>		
Technology development	<p>Well, the digital equipment we now have will help women as well, because then they can do things from their homes in the past. (A)</p> <p>So I was super flexible. And I was allowed to, like work from home on Wednesdays and Saturdays and I worked in the beginning in the evenings. (K)</p>	2	2
Trainings	<p>That's also something when I was in the airline company I was one of like the top hundred women because diversity was a hot topic, they asked these hundred women to join a sort of training or whatever to increase diversity.</p> <p>And I didn't do that. And my manager asked why? I said, I think we have to really change in the essence: how we hire people and how we do that and it's not, that it is our fault that this is happening. So I find that it is stupid that I had to do a sort of training, but in the meantime, the culture, it's not like that we have better chance after. Yes we are less opportunistic. (B)</p>	1	1
Management style in the company		0	0
Communication and Trust Internally	<p>I see the people more so I try to remember them and to know their names, because I think that's really important. It's also what hotel A stands for: personal, open. So I try to do that. (B)</p> <p>I'm less in control like that. I mean, I think I trust all my people but they do ask for approval yes, that's also within the system. And sometimes I want to know more. Sometimes because I'm interested, sometimes I really trust that they did the right thing. (B)</p> <p>I think the way to approach employees to learn more from them and connect them with everything you're doing. (C)</p>	5	8

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>it's always majority. And it really works well. I don't know why, but it's really it depends obviously, on the group. The group says, okay, we go for the majority, we trust each other. And if one of us says, No, we just go along with it, because the others say, you know, majority thing. Well, nobody says, I really want this or that. That makes it very open and more trust, we have a little quarrels sometimes. And we need to do that too. Of course, it's part of it. (E)</p> <p>Well, I always try to also bring the situation of the employees to the table, like personal situations, or take into account what was going on in people's lives. And, in Dutch we say, the men silica marks, which refers to the human touch, the fact that we are all human beings and things affect us, and if things affect us, then we may not be able to, to function as well as we should. (F)</p> <p>How do we engage people? How can we be more empathic? And should we look at it from this point of view, or a different point of view, have you consider this? Can we do it differently? Are we empowering our people? (K)</p> <p>So it really took me a full year to fully grasp the system and now I feel comfortable, and I feel that I have their trust. (K)</p> <p>I think what is most important is that you have an environment within your company, within your team, where there is trust and a feeling of safety. If you can establish that whether it is with men or women, I think it will come naturally, everyone will speak up and people will find ways to grow. If that is not the case, if you do not feel safe, that can be a reason because there is way too many men, then you have no relation. I think trust and psychological safety, that is fundamental. (K)</p>		
Founder focused	And very owner driven, very founder driven and also culture where if you're close to the founder then you have influence. That needed really to balance out, so over the years, we have restructured the governance and leadership team (K)	1	1
Management focused on control	And then my general manager said, "Oh, do you come back? Then you will have to come back full time." (A)	2	5

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>And, and that really affects you, and in my leadership role at that stage, I could not sit and cry for my kid. Because you have to man up, you have to man up, see that word? And is that fair is that against your instincts? It's all against every type of instinct. And so all these blockages that are being built in so that you are surviving all the time? (F)</p> <p>. So, he insisted that I stay in evening, and he kind of took me into his office. And he told me, and he'd closed the door, so it was just me and him. And he told me, he said, I need you to commit to me whenever I need you. He said, and that means 24/7. So if I need you at 8pm, you need to be at 8pm. If I need you at 1am to do stuff, you need to be at 1am. (F)</p> <p>But it was very, very shocking. It was very intimidating. And it was very shocking. And it also made me realize that things had forever changed also, on my behalf. (F)</p> <p>Once you hit the role of manager things changed a bit, so the stakeholder management was, it was a different league, and expectations were very high. And there was no time for nonsense. (F)</p>		
Open communication	<p>If I have an idea or if I think you really have to do it like this or that, or last week we were looking at a hotel which was for sale, and then I don't have a really good feeling, and I can tell what I think, and they listened to it and they agreed actually. So, it is open and I can support it. (B)</p> <p>because I always believe in cooperation and working together (C)</p> <p>but that contact is not work related, it's more just building the relationship. (D)</p> <p>the people working for a museum because people working in the museum are highly educated. So that's the difference between a hotel industry and the museum fields, people have higher education, and they are very demanding in that sense. So they are insistent on being involved in what's going on. So you have to comply to that. People working in the hotel field are more appreciative when they are given things or informed about things. It's not a demand. It's not a norm from the industry. (F)</p>	7	11

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>And also, I think that the management team is very approachable here. And this has even improved this year, of course, because we all have to stick together to make sure that that we get positive so that we stay positive. And it's an open door policy, everybody can come in (G)</p> <p>. So I think we were known as a reliant partner who discussed real and, I think open, fair negotiations. (I)</p> <p>I don't find that challenging, because I must say all eleven are and were and still are super open for my input if I can help and they truly see the added value of it, in their DNA, in a natural way. (K)</p> <p>I started with monthly updates from the management team, to leadership team to managers, we've implemented a newsletter, we've developed a learning and development platform that's also used for communication. So where everything that's happening, you can find all the new people that join, people that would leave, people that got a promotion, they're all there. So that's all a bit more structured, we still have Thursday drinks, we change that to Thursday, that's a better time. (K)</p> <p>But we've also introduced TSH talks where the CEO gives a monthly update on how the business is doing. We have corona team update. So it's all more set in stone. And we've organized for the first time last summer, and now in January a Summer and a Winter Festival, where we have a full week of inspiration and trainings and workshops, and everyone (K)</p> <p>incredible. And you have to continuously communicate in a transparent and open way. And especially that now everybody works from home. (K)</p> <p>I think that what helps a lot is the power of vulnerability and I always refer to the Ted Talk of Brown, which is one of my favourites. And I think if men and women, they are more vulnerable, then you create that open and inviting environment where people feel safe and then the magic will happen. The moment people tend to be more vulnerable and say I don't know the answer, sometimes I also don't know the answer and make mistake, it will create an open culture and everything in it. (K)</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
Trust externally	<p>We like to communicate in a very open and easy way. I'm very direct in communication and I think we do that with all our stakeholders. (H)</p> <p>you have to prove yourself, as a professional, as a reliable, as financially healthy. And if you are able to do well on these three things, then you will be seen. If you are networking, the process will be much faster, but we didn't do it, we did it our own way. When the company is evolving and you stay on these three important pillars, then you get the confidence of your stakeholders and it is much easier to evolve. If you have trust with stakeholders it is easier to grow, do your thing, get help. (J)</p> <p>You don't see it, but you have the trust in your environment, people will stand up for you. Because you have proved yourself, and they allow themselves to stand up for you because it is financially healthy, reliable and professional, and it has skilled people. (J)</p>	2	3
Need to have the best person	<p>I think you have to look for the best candidate. It shouldn't be a woman or a man, that doesn't matter, it should be the best candidate. (B)</p> <p>I don't know, I always think that the best person should be in an executive position, whether it's a woman or a man, it doesn't matter. It should be the best of course, I believe in a diversified team. But it's more all the characteristics not only between men and women. (D)</p> <p>always have to hire the best person (H)</p> <p>you should hire the best person for the job (H)</p> <p>And not particularly because of the fact that, of course, I was more open to hiring women, but women who presented themselves for the jobs were better than the men so clearly, because they have much more emotional intelligence. I wanted to change a lot of things. So that's how it turned out that there were a lot of women coming in. (I)</p>	4	5
Reaction to changes in the external environment		0	0

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
Change as part of strategy	<p>And we use it to see if we have to change our way of working, or we have to make plans with any high risks involving. (H)</p> <p>For example sustainability, we embraced sustainability ten years ago or so. And all our hotels went on a gold level of green key, and that was only the beginning for us, it was a starting point to a more sustainable way of entrepreneurship, and in that way we started to develop with the building of Hotel A, the most sustainable hotel in the Netherlands. That was a huge step for us because we hadn't done that before, but by doing so, not only was Hotel A more sustainable, all our hotels went more sustainable because we learned in building Hotel A. (J)</p>	2	2
Denying changes	<p>So if in the first year of the child's existence, there's always a virus, or there's always something happening, or there's always something funky or whatever, that takes away the attention of the woman because, obviously, the baby is in need. There's such a need for that child to be to be part of that, but the point is that I'm trying to make is that we just pretend that there's nothing happening, but there's everything is happening, everything is changed. And we're just continuing as if nothing's changed. So, somewhere along the line, someone needs to make that, accept that or acknowledge that so that you can make that difference and make it work so that you can contain the talent that you have in the women. (F)</p>	1	1
Embracing different approaches	<p>And don't be too old-fashioned in the sense of, you can only do this job when you have had that studies, there's more ways to go to the destination. (A)</p> <p>And I didn't do any hotelschool or whatever. And all the people who work, almost all the people, they did. They did like you did, they did hotelschool. So I really didn't do that. But maybe that was part of with, maybe this comes later in your interview was part of the reason they choose me because they want to have some fresh outside point of view. (B)</p> <p>, I remember the first time I had an interview with a young man, and that he said, yeah I am willing to do the job but I only want to work four days a week, because I want a day a week for myself. And I remember being like, what do you mean a day a week for yourself? That would never have come up in my mind! (G)</p>	5	7

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>You do a lot of things well, it's all about respecting and embracing the differences. I am very happy with A, my younger assistant, who is very good with the computer. He helps me out many times. But when it is about experience or how to handle a situation, he comes to me, and asks how we are going to handle this. (G)</p> <p>we tried also with our partners to innovate, to find new ways of working (I)</p> <p>So that's kind of things we work together, like how can we make the work more fun? And find ways to optimize the way we work? So that's not always that makes it cheaper, but it makes it healthier in a way, you know, sustainable, more sustainable for everybody. (I)</p> <p>With the growing of the company, my husband and I grow too, because then you can meet people with new knowledge, and young people, and all those things kept us modern and flexible. I don't think we are in front, but I think we are the first follower. We are very open for new things, but we don't always want to be the first ones because it is very costly (J)</p>		
Embracing personal changes	<p>There are departments where everybody has been working there for like 15 years and they are with five people and they like it the way it is, and it's very difficult to have them all change and it also then that you wanted them and when they don't see the benefits, so we didn't force people on that ground. (C)</p> <p>to kind of allow for the space whereby people could, if there were concerns that they that we would also spend attention to the concerns of people, if there were concerns in their personal lives, blah, blah, blah, and to also see people see them as they are, that was very important for me to remember. (F)</p> <p>. When I became a mother, I really learned that there is more in life. (G)</p> <p>, I remember the first time I had an interview with a young man, and that he said, yeah I am willing to do the job but I only want to work four days a week, because I want a day a week for myself. And I remember being like, what do you mean a day a week for yourself? That would never have come up in my mind! (G)</p>	3	4

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
Reacting in a timely fashion	<p>normally we react very quickly in the modern world with the internet and zoom and Microsoft teams, et cetera. (A)</p> <p>we have to respond and we want to respond. So in the Netherlands, with Green Key goals if you're talking about environmental issues, also in hotels in Spain, we have the certificates for environment. Technology, we are not the first I think we do follow. Yeah, because, you know, in the Netherlands, we are too small. And sometimes hotel group A is too big for us. But of course, we are aware about it, and we follow them. And we try to be as less as independent from the OTAs as possible. (D)</p> <p>Otherwise, we would have done it in three years time. Now we pushed it before. So it was a clever, clever decision, but it was a tough time because preparation was as fast as possible with a lot of uncertainty. Faster than normal (d)</p> <p>Responding to change, I think Hotel B was ahead of the game as compared to other hotels, definitely already in those days. It was very focused externally, but also from the head office perspective, so head office played a very major role in that. And we would add on to that locally, and then you grow larger. (F)</p> <p>Most of our hotels we build ourselves from scratch, and if you are building your hotels you are evolving. Because you will encounter new things, technology, building methods, able to invest in new opportunities. So by building one new hotel, we learned a lot of new things we could use in our other hotels to. That was our way to grow. (J)</p> <p>now that we are kind of at a pause due to COVID, we have started to really look at ourselves and see how are we organized, we have 200 people in headquarters in Amsterdam, is that the smartest way to run hotel A operations. So because we have corona, and we had to really stand still, pause and look at ourselves, we can now see that we have to organize differently for the future so that the moment growth will pick up again, we can immediately rapidly scale. (K)</p>	5	6
Reluctant to change	<p>also a bit of resistance to hire somebody from outside the area, so from, for example, cargo, there were also people wanted to make a step like I'm doing now from engineering and maintenance to</p>	3	7

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>cargo or vice versa. And then they preferred to go safe. And choose somebody from the area and maybe internally, it's better that you have your own people first, but on the other hand sometimes I think it's good to take a risk to have some more dynamics and outside view on things. (B)</p> <p>asked to be able to balance my life, better, my private life with my business life. So I said, Well, I'd like to see if I can work one day less for me to be able to manage my life at home, so that I can be a better employee. And the answer I received at that stage was, well, you are part of the executive team, you cannot work less hours, because that would give a wrong impression of your position. (F)</p> <p>But I experienced a lot of pressure when I became a mother. And, I found that extremely disturbing, extremely disturbing. And I found that my employers did not pave the way to keep women on board, in particular leadership roles (F)</p> <p>And, and that really affects you, and in my leadership role at that stage, I could not sit and cry for my kid. Because you have to man up, you have to man up, see that word? And is that fair is that against your instincts? It's all against every type of instinct. And so all these blockages that are being built in so that you are surviving all the time? And therefore, to answer your question, I think often what I'm hearing is that, I think if the employer were to encourage the male, the men to that it's okay for them to loosen up, and to provide more of that care in order to take away that feeling that the woman has to want to be sure that everything is okay with her kid, then the father will maybe be more encouraged to do so. (F)</p> <p>And then I found out that every time when I was in the restaurant, and that French people were laughing when they looked at my badge it said le trainee. So I thought, why do they laugh? Why do they laugh? Must be something, right? So I went home, and I took my French dictionary. (G)</p> <p>that's not the way I want to be presented. So I went to the HR manager at the time and said, Can you change my badge, please? Because I'm going to the room service. And if I go to room service, and they find a see this, then they might think so... and I don't want to be known like that. And what happened was quite the discussion and the general manager came along, but he heard</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>discussions that was going on here. So I told him the story. I said, Can you please change it and have stagiaire or whatever. And the HR manager that was really very cross at me, and he said, No, I'm not going to change. But in the afternoon, all the female trainees had to go to the HR office and all their badges were changed. So small victory for me. (G)</p> <p>So I wanted to do stewarding and then again, the HR manager. He didn't agree because that was not for women, women, 'real women'. I remember that. He told me 'real women don't do stewarding.' And I said, Well, this is bullshit. I'm willing to do it for three months. You let me do it for three months. And if you don't like it, then you fire me. (G)</p>		
Stakeholder relationship		0	0
Close relation with external stakeholders	<p>It should be a close one. (A)</p> <p>And especially now because we are all in deep trouble, we should be very close to each other and as open as possible. (A)</p> <p>And especially the municipality is lacking a lot of income because we do not have tourists, so they do not have any tourist tax, so we can be like enemies, opposing each other, but we have the same problem. So it's easier to help each other at the same for the neighborhood when they think we are too noisy or whatever, we should never be defensive because we need each other same for unions or owners, et cetera. (A)</p> <p>As very good on all perspective because we worked a lot, we worked together and with the competition the different levels in the area, in a broader area, leisure different from business. And then with clients, everything worked well in a hotel, so we have high occupancy on all levels. So then it's easy because we had a high satisfaction rate and also so the clients were ambassadors as well. Ended up making marketing easier, of course. And with the competition, we were all doing fairly good the last couple of years, so that's easy also then. So when you're full you send it to another via different alliances of cooperation in the area of Utrecht, we were working together with a lot of competitors and also with the public services and the Province to attract people to the area. And then one time they come to you and the other time they go to your competitor. (C)</p>	6	12

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>because I always believe in cooperation and working together on all levels with your competitors (C)</p> <p>all the potential partners in the area you can make each other stronger because one is doing this and the other that, and then you have nature in our case. So you create things and then it makes everybody stronger. (C)</p> <p>We help each other, even in competition. When we have a discussion, there is a new law and somebody knows a little bit more about it than that goes really very, very friendly, very helpful. Of course, the Director of Sales will not share contracts with the competition, But if, for instance, they have to represent Amsterdam as a destination, then again, they will work together, because there is more. But in HR, also vacancies or I'm looking for an assistant front office manager, and then they say, Oh, I have somebody who's ready, you know, and yeah, it goes really well. Because in the end, of course, people in HR want to make sure that the associates progress, and then they move on. But financially then it's a different story, of course, and revenue manager will not share what the price strategies for the corporate account for next year. (G)</p> <p>We like to have stakeholder relationship in partnerships, with any stakeholder we have or choose. It can be purchasing, so when we purchase materials or products from a company, we like to be a partner. We think about what we can do more together than only buy the product. For instance, environmental progressive processes or corporate social responsibility is always something we talk about with our partners and with all our stakeholders. That's very important. (H)</p> <p>It's really a partnership for the long term. (H)</p> <p>. So I think we were known as a reliant partner who discussed real and, I think open, fair negotiations. (I)</p> <p>for procurements, there were also some issues because our procurement image was really a little bit like Ahold in the Netherlands with the supermarket that we squeezed people out, you know, I really created Win-Win situations. And long term partnerships, instead of always being on the penny. We looked at other things than only money, price, cheaper, cheaper. But we</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>looked for quality, we looked for sustainability, for example, we looked really for Win-Win situations (I)</p> <p>you have to prove yourself, as a professional, as a reliable, as financially healthy. And if you are able to do well on these three things, then you will be seen. If you are networking, the process will be much faster, but we didn't do it, we did it our own way. When the company is evolving and you stay on these three important pillars, then you get the confidence of your stakeholders and it is much easier to evolve. If you have trust with stakeholders it is easier to grow, do your thing, get help. (J)</p>		
Close relation with internal stakeholders	<p>it's very important to see my stakeholders frequently because there are of course, you know hotels, but I go there and with the new beginning, I think I tried to listen and know what they're doing. And sometimes I try to steer but that is more on the marketing point of view or HR that from my experience: what I have learned, how can I help? (B)</p> <p>But internal because I'm also the manager, I try to find a sort of balance between being a boss and being a sort of partner in crime, like a sparring partner. (B)</p> <p>to also see people see them as they are, that was very important for me to remember. (F)</p> <p>2020 was the toughest year ever. Because you know that all those people, they have to pay their mortgage, or they have to pay the rent, and sometimes they have a family and so has been terrible (G)</p> <p>And we're being very protective of each other. You know, it works well. For the time being at least. (E)</p> <p>for HR, all of the associates are the most important because in the end, the associates are our guest. They are happy. (G)</p> <p>And also, I think that the management team is very approachable here. And this has even improved this year, of course, because we all have to stick together to make sure that that we get positive so that we stay positive. And it's an open door policy, everybody can come in (G)</p>	5	9

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>I took them all for lunch, and it was the first time that it happened. So that was a very, very important point, I think, which I changed. What I changed is to put franchise hotels in the center of what we were doing, because I said the franchise hotels are happy with what we are doing (I)</p> <p>the employees, of course, we did a lot to get better engagement. So then we did that through leadership, also through a different way of recruitment. So we'd much more looked for other profiles than only technical skills. Is that a little bit what you were looking for.(I)</p> <p>When I came, it was very old fashioned. So I think what I did was really role-modeling, that you could always talk to everybody. So there was a shock, because when I visited the hotels, a lot of people were only use that you talk to the general manager, and perhaps a head of departments, but addressing yourself to people who are working really on the floor wasn't normal (I)</p> <p>Of course at the beginning with only one hotel there was a close cooperation but during the last years and being a big company (J)</p>		
Collaboration internally	<p>in the type of work I'm doing now, it's more like group things. We discuss it. And obviously, I'm often the one that says we go this or that way. And I take the consequences, too. So that's alright. I'm not afraid of angry people, or whatever people say or mistakes. I make mistakes. (E)</p> <p>I immediately started to work with A. And she started as CMO, and we had a very good connection. And she became my friend for life. I spend so much time with her. And we were super complimentary to each other. (K)</p> <p>and later on, we became peers in the board. So she was the second female board members. So for her because we were so complimentary, she could not work without me. I couldn't work without her. But that also gave me an enormous flexibility in working hours, because she fully accepted it. (K)</p>	2	3

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
Efforts in good relationship	<p>it's a real good relationship. It's built on friendship from my father to the CEO or the president of hotel group A organization who is also 82 or 84, my father's 92. So it's a friendly and good relationship. Sharp when necessary. We have not always the same goals, but most of the times we do have. So it is sharp and friendly. (D)</p> <p>was built a friendship, but now my father is not still in the business and from the other side, it's getting more business partners like friends. Changing overtime. But still the respect and the good relationship is there. (D)</p> <p>. So that was really hard. But because we have this open communication and partnerships, it's easy to talk to your stakeholders and see if we can team up and share our experiences. (H)</p> <p>And I think it's good to have a good relationships also in the good times, because then you don't need to introduce yourself in the difficult times. (H)</p> <p>I took them all for lunch, and it was the first time that it happened. So that was a very, very important point, I think, which I changed. What I changed is to put franchise hotels in the center of what we were doing, because I said the franchise hotels are happy with what we are doing (I)</p> <p>We have a very competent and reliable team, we love to work with them. We think they have all the skills. And being happy, because being happy in your job is so important, maybe more important than skills. Then if you're in a safe environment, and you go to work everyday with a happy face, you do better. (J)</p> <p>I, of course, mainly focus on internal stakeholders. But I would say also in kind of a similar way, so based on our values, that's always what drives you (K)</p> <p>when we seek for suppliers or people to work with or whatsoever you seek for like-minded people who are also passionate, out of the box, innovative, creative. We are currently looking at a provider for training and development programs. It's not a off the shelf, standard user training, should be something totally cool and</p>	5	9

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>exciting and different than knowledge. So yeah, I think, is that what you're looking for? (K)</p> <p>Always sort of what we call the completely connected community, like make sure that everybody feels part of hotel A and it's a community that you can really join and that special kind of experience with a lot of added value because of all the events that we organize. (K)</p>		
Expected flexibility	<p>I worked for Hotel B and I started working in 1998, just to be specific in that, still with the world at my feet, completely being able to achieve my own ambitions, but also still being unbound. So, I mean, I had a partner, but I had no children. And myself, life was still at the service of my employer. So basically, because I was so flexible, and I had been flexible throughout my whole career, I never looked at the clock, I was always available. (F)</p>	1	1
Rational approach to external stakeholders	<p>they need to communicate with the different groups, keep them informed, keep them up to date, talk to them ask their opinion, sometimes. And it's difficult because you know everything, I think that's always been a problem, how to work with stakeholders. But it's good to define them, you know, define your stakeholders. And make sure you have a little calendar that says, okay, every two months, I need to talk to this or that guy or woman. And it's difficult, because it's always a bit. I mean, I'm going to talk to you, I want your advice, but I'm not sure if I'm going to take your advice. Yeah, that's a difficult point. Also, what do you do with it? Like, can you share that's always a bit of a problem also. But you really have to think about and really make a little list, you know, and review the list frequently, because stakeholders change, groups change. (E)</p>	1	1
Stand-alone organisation	<p>almost don't have them. No, I don't work with suppliers except sometimes for decoration. (D)</p> <p>we have, we are not financed by banks. Almost nothing. So there's no relationship with suppliers. Yeah, that's what I said. For competitors, no, I do not have direct relationship with competitors. (D)</p> <p>they were a little close minded to their nearby environment. They would not really reach out to the partners that were alongside so kind of like an independent individual in that sense. Not snobby or anything like that but like the quiet kid in the classroom so if</p>	2	3

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	someone would approach you, you would not say bugger off, but you would not be the one to approach them. (F)		
Strategy formulation		0	0
From the top	<p>together with the hotel directors, we are making the strategies. (D)</p> <p>I get their proposals, to get their ideas and to value their ideas. And maybe the decision-making what we're doing is more or less together. I'm not pushing my decisions to them. Normally we decide upon consensus. It is more or less like the Dutch Polder-model (D)</p> <p>It's the GM and then it's reviewed by us. And in principle, it's his job. So we may help or suggest but it's his job. (E)</p> <p>So, this is kind of top-down exercise. So the mother company says what their vision and strategy is for the coming years, and then it narrows down to the world, the different parts in the world. And then, the area managers come and say, listen this is what we want to achieve, and this is what I want to achieve in my area; GMs what can you give me? How can you help me achieve those goals? Then the GM gets the goals, then the GM of course goes down into the organisation to the management teams, and says okay, these are my goals, what can you do to help me to achieve the goals? (G)</p> <p>of all, there is of course, a big vision from Paris (I)</p> <p>It was basically, the shareholders together with the board, kind of set the high level steering direction. It also kind of happened, strategy just happened because we were growing so rapidly. (K)</p>	5	6
Involving teams	I created the basics and then I asked the members of the MT to make their part and I helped with, but because they were not used to doing it they found it very difficult, so I had to help them, but then I also involved younger, more people on the work floor in creating the part in their area. So it was done by not only the manager, but it's also to people who have ideas. And so every department ends with their strategy and we put it all together into one strategy. (C)	7	8

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>You were also the one to write out your strategy, to share that strategy, so that was approved by your fellow managers, and director or whatever and you would role it out. (F)</p> <p>Cause in the end, of course, you want also that all the associates know what we are aiming for as a company, so we have to translate the strategy of the company into the strategy of your hotel and into the one of your department. And everyone knows this is my part of what I can do to get the company where it wants to be. (G)</p> <p>So we listen to the hostel managers, we have employment surveys, and every second year, we ask the hostel managers what they think about the departments in head office. and they give point of improvement. So, of course, there's a head office, but I we have lots of working groups, where people can attend and share their ideas. For communication purposes e.g. we use an app where everyone can give their ideas or opinion and where we can talk to each other. So we try to communicate on an easy level. We don't have big folders with policies and procedures, but of course, we need to have some agreements on common ground for common things to guarantee a minimum standard and quality. (H)</p> <p>Depending on the topics, we have working groups, and ask them for their opinion. Only in strategy, I realize it's always hard, because people in the hostels are more operational. The feedback is mostly operational, but in the end, you can have a good feeling of where we have to work on. (H)</p> <p>then suddenly I see it, then I'm going to talk to people like what do you think? What do you think? And also with stakeholders, I mean, not only with because the partnerships, of course, don't happen alone. I'm not going to say I want a partnership. No you are talking to them, you are sharing a vision. (I)</p> <p>A strategy is very important to share as well. And you have to make sure that it is everywhere in your organization. Because I remember we had a lot of outside trainers, for example, team builders for each hotel, and I don't know what. And that was the biggest stupid thing we could do. Because those team builders, it was always somebody who knows somebody and he came in, but he even didn't know the hotel group A strategy. So yes, they do a team building, but you don't do it towards the strategy we've</p>		

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>chosen for you? So that's something we changed as well to make sure that the people who trained were aware of what the message should be which they were selling in their training. (I)</p> <p>We do it together the strategy, and the strategy is not stuck, but what we have learned in the last year is that we have to be flexible. (J)</p> <p>If you ask me it should start with overarching objectives, and then the team should contribute to that to really be a part of it. And that is something that within hotel A, we're not yet fully there, but we're getting there (K)</p>		
Objective strategy formulation	<p>Well, normally the strategy is being thought of by ourselves in the hotel and we'll make a yearly sales and marketing plan and that's based on the strategy. And that has to be validated of course, by our owners and our managing company. (A)</p> <p>And any effects or anything that happened and whatever, you would have to report that back. But you were responsible for your tasks and your commitments to that. (F)</p> <p>So, this is kind of top-down exercise. So the mother company says what their vision and strategy is for the coming years, and then it narrows down to the world, the different parts in the world. And then, the area managers come and say, listen this is what we want to achieve, and this is what I want to achieve in my area; GMs what can you give me? How can you help me achieve those goals? Then the GM gets the goals, then the GM of course goes down into the organisation to the management teams, and says okay, these are my goals, what can you do to help me to achieve the goals? (G)</p> <p>Now on a departmental level, so if an F&B manager, he gets goals on revenue, cost goals, or guest satisfaction goals, engagement goals, and they all get their part. (G)</p> <p>Of course, we have to look at our competitors, and our financial situation, where we would like to grow, how we can improve, improve our quality, and how we can work internationally with Hostelling International. Those topics are in the plan. (H)</p>	6	9

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>I arrived when the RevPAR in the Netherlands was minus 30%, or something, which is nothing in comparison with now, but anyway, we thought then, we would never get over it, but we got over it. So when it happens, you just have to see how you can not only decrease the cost side, but how you can be creative and how you can make the difference with your competitor, right. (I)</p> <p>First of all, there is of course, a big vision from Paris. And then you have a look in your country. Like what's happening here? The strategy, that is one of my strengths. I think I'm visionary at a certain point, when I have little dots everywhere (I)</p> <p>set the high level steering direction. (K)</p> <p>There was a budget process that was owned by the CFO. And just before COVID started, we were on the verge of starting to review the business planning process where you really have like your overarching company objectives, and then the themes will contribute to that with the team objectives. It all should come together. (K)</p>		
Structure of the organisation		0	0
Centralised	<p>And so our business is very much with the forks, so there are quite some level, but it was all quite transparent and very clear: who was in the report structure and who was empowered to do things. That was very clear in that structure (F)</p> <p>A lot of what we do is centralized, so we have a centralized financial administration, the accounting and marketing and sales and regional managers for operations. Lots of work has been centralized in the head office, and there we have around 35 people. (H)</p> <p>Well, we centralize for example, bookkeeping, sales, but we see ourselves as a service office, not as a real head office (H)</p> <p>There was a lot of centralized (I)</p> <p>very open young and dynamic company, but we were managed quite centrally. So we have a central headquarters in Amsterdam,</p>	4	5

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	for example, all marketing, all sales, partnerships, reservations, real estate. That's all managed from the headquarters in Amsterdam. And then we have our hotels all over Europe. And basically what they do there is they run the hotels, but they do not do any sales and marketing whatsoever, that makes it relatively hard for them to own their full p&l. (K)		
Empowerment	<p>This is just an example. We are hiring a new GM in Maastricht. And we offered her a certain salary, but it was too low. And then he said, you can decide yourself if you want to increase that. So in the end I did it and there was a bit like, okay, could I have done this? You know, but he said, it's your turn. It is really open. (B)</p> <p>Yeah, well that's what I started up also, more the internal communication, you have the external communication and internal communication was sort of top-down and well, I changed that the other way around to also inform people more in all the parts of the processes and I think with great success. So people were more involved with everything and they gave me better ideas. They were more self-directive. (C)</p> <p>Everybody organizes their own department? Of course, there are rules. Of course, there are programs in HR, we have different programs that we have to use, which is kind of mandatory from the company. But the way you do it, that's up to you. They give you the tools, but it's up to you, you make it work for yourself. That's how I feel it. (G)</p> <p>The working environment is very open, we are easily accessible, it's a bottom-up organization. For some topics, you need to have some top-down views and action, especially when you have to react very fast, like in COVID times, but most of the time, we try to involve everybody to find out what's best for the organization. In the end, I think when everybody is involved, it stays longer. (H)</p> <p>in countries we did what we wanted, and I was rebel, so I did what I wanted. Although when something was good, we took it of course. (I)</p> <p>. And that's it, and trusting people and give them the let them do initiatives, tests, and try. Try everything you can to make a difference with your competitor. (I)</p>	7	11

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>In hospitality, we have to become less traditional, we have to empower people. (I)</p> <p>we have a very small head quarter because we think that the match has to be played in the hotels themselves. So we give our general managers a lot of freedom to do their thing to their image. That is why we are able to have a very small headquarter, able to sleep at night because we are very decentralised, and to attract skilled people. So if you don't give them the opportunity to get the best skills, and their way of doing, they will hate the organisation. We give them freedom, under only one condition and that is finance. (J)</p> <p>We are very decentralised, and having small HQ, there is a lot of discussion possible in making final decisions. Me and my husband, of course there has to be a captain of the ship, and if it is difficult we make the final decision, but usually there is a lot space for discussion and skills and knowledge to get to the right decision. We have to because me and my husband would not have been able to do it ourselves all these years. (J)</p> <p>Are we empowering our people? (K)</p> <p>And we're now in the middle of a transition of moving a lot of the people in HQ to the local teams, so that they can work with a general manager in the hotel and can manage their own p&l. So we're in the middle of, they often call it from central to decentral I call it more to local empowerment or an ecosystem of collaborative teams, but much closer to the to the guests and the consumer. So that is a change. (K)</p>		
Flat structure	<p>I think they were used to a top down and we tried to make it flat and well that didn't come easy because some people were not used to it and other people wanted to, and well, we tried to get it more to one point which worked in some departments better than others. (C)</p> <p>think they are quite flat. What I noticed in hotel, which there is normally it's quite tall, quite hierarchical. But I think our hotels are not that hierarchical. (D)</p> <p>Well, it's in fact quite flat. Yeah, it's quite flat. So we have, of course, we don't have that many layers, in fact. (G)</p>	6	6

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>but I did a lot of clean-up as well, because there were a lot of, you know, those general managers, who thought they were God. So I changed that mentality as well, I set up leadership courses, which were a little bit different than what they had before. So people who thought they were God, they had to come down a little bit and start to be normal again, you know. (I)</p> <p>We have a very flat organisation (J)</p> <p>I wanted it to be young and dynamic, without too much corporate structure, so really informal, flat layers, no hierarchy, no politics. (K)</p>		
Flexibility in work methods	<p>And nowadays we are far more flexible in offering temporary labor jobs to working mothers or working fathers who want to work for four days instead of five. (A)</p> <p>What I mean is if you do the job you can also be flexible. And that it is important that you do the job and that you achieve your goals as you have been asked. And if you do that, it shouldn't matter how you do it. (B)</p> <p>So children were a point that I wanted to be also at home, but I also wanted to make a career. And now in the end when they're older, now I can do my full-time, but I want to have the freedom to be at home at Wednesday and work. And then my new boss said perfectly fine, as long as you make your KPIs and then it's fine with me and that was already from the start it was a feeling. I thought "Okay. I'm flexible. I can do how I want it, as long as I do it". (B)</p> <p>Because, they're not willing to understand that there is a need to change that pattern, that system. And there are so many ways you can do it by again looking at dual, putting two women in one position, or job sharing, (F)</p> <p>, I remember the first time I had an interview with a young man, and that he said, yeah I am willing to do the job but I only want to work four days a week, because I want a day a week for myself. And I remember being like, what do you mean a day a week for yourself? That would never have come up in my mind! (G)</p> <p>And I stimulated a lot of women to continue working. There were a lot of women who want to work five days but they felt obliged. And then I said okay, then you work one day home, I think due to</p>	7	12

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>COVID that is changed forever, because you can do a lot of things from home, now. But in that time and I said you work home, and they would say no, but I don't work from home because then my kid perhaps... I said, Yeah, but if I call you or somebody else calls you do you pick up the phone? Or do you call back when your kid is in bed? And she said, Yes, I said it's working. So don't say you work part time, take your five day money, and make sure you're always available. Because you are always available. (I)</p> <p>With your leadership style, you can delegate you can empower others too in the hotel, it's not up to you, the general manager to do everything, especially nowadays, you know. So it is all those kinds of stories around it all those kinds of misunderstandings, which we have to take away. (I)</p> <p>My husband and I are very flexible and in the lead. (J)</p> <p>Yes and it was very special because we lived in one of our hotels, and that helped me a lot in my work. (J)</p> <p>For me it was necessary, and a big advantage, and it helped me to combine those two. (J)</p> <p>and later on, we became peers in the board. So she was the second female board members. So for her because we were so complimentary, she could not work without me. I couldn't work without her. But that also gave me an enormous flexibility in working hours, because she fully accepted it. (K)</p> <p>. And then I could get the emails into my big computer at home and I could work from home. So I was super flexible. And I was allowed to, like work from home on Wednesdays and Saturdays and I worked in the beginning in the evenings. But I also was picking up my children from school at three. I was on Wednesdays and Fridays I worked from home and I could go with them to tennis, hockey, wherever they needed to go to. I was the first, I was one of the first women in the Netherlands that was allowed to work from home and super flexible and just plan your own time. (K)</p>		
Short lines	<p>easy on a low level. We are not in our ivory tower or in our glass office. We try to have a heavily on a lower level. We also, I also want short lines within the company, especially now because we're in a crisis. We should not be far away, not literally but also</p>	2	4

Name	Quotes	Files	Ref
	<p>not in our ways of thinking, we should be close to one another. (A)</p> <p>you should be close to one another and I just cannot afford to have too many staff members it's too costly, and having a smaller organization, everything should be more liquid. You should be able to do things faster, and then you should be close. (A)</p> <p>I wanted to do something where I can have more impact and a bit smaller company where the political issues are not as high and where the hierarchical lines are short. (B)</p> <p>internal I think what I said the lines are short (B)</p>		

Appendix 7. Declaration of Confidentiality

Declaration relating to confidentiality concerning research data in Launching Your Career (LYCar) programme

The undersigned, Diane Lereculey-Péran
(hereinafter referred to as: the Student), residing in Amsterdam
Conducting a (research)project for the company BR-ND People
(hereinafter referred to as: the Client), residing in: Amsterdam

Whereas:

- the Student shall, in the context of his or her LYCAR research, gain access to confidential information;
- the Client shall, where appropriate, demand a signed declaration relating to secrecy and confidentiality concerning the information provided in this context;
- this non-disclosure agreement shall, in the event of any discrepancies, take precedence over other contracts or agreements which have been or will be concluded or made between the Student and the Client;

Declares as follows:

1. The Student shall keep confidential any information which the Client or any other party involved in the LYCAR research provides under this contract, and shall not further disclose such information in any way, except insofar as the Student is obliged to disclose it by virtue of any legal requirement or irrevocable decision of a judge.
2. Information, as referred to under 1, refers to all information, including written, verbal, graphic and digital information, or information in any other form, which comes to the knowledge of the Student during the research period and which the Student knows, or can reasonably be expected to know, is of a confidential nature.
3. The Student shall not, without the prior written consent of the Client, disclose any confidential information to third parties or contribute to the publication of confidential information. The Student shall submit the thesis to the supervisor for approval from

the Client in respect of confidential information, before making such information available to his examiner(s) at Hotelschool The Hague.

4. This non-disclosure agreement shall be in force for an indefinite period / The Student shall be bound to this obligation of secrecy for five (5) years after signing this declaration.

CHOOSE IN CONSULTATION WITH CLIENT)

Thus declared and signed by:


Name: Diane Lereculey-Péran Date: 01 - 02 - 2021

Place: Amsterdam Student number: 671559

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diane Lereculey-Péran', written over a horizontal line.

Signature:

Appendix 8. Panel Discussion



The Approaches to Gender Diversity on Executive Boards

A panel discussion past the business case and towards a new approach

March 30, 2021
11:30 - 13:00 CET

brnd Certified B

MAR 30

The Approaches to Gender Diversity on Executive Boards

Free

Details

Registrations Are Closed

Date and time

Registrations Are Closed

We are so excited to have you join us! See you on the 30th, and stay safe!

Practical approaches to gender equality in executive boards: panel discussion past the business case, and onto new approaches

About this event

Recently, the business case to promote gender equality in executive boards has flourished. However, could it be that there are other approaches? And what can companies do, practically, to have more gender diversity on their boards, and be more inclusive?

This event is part of the B Corp Month focused on #BetterBusiness, and part of the governance week!

Date and time

Tue, 30 March 2021
11:30 - 13:00 CEST
[Add to calendar](#)

Location

Online event

Appendix 9. Playbook for gender equality in executive positions



BR-ND PEOPLE

Diane Lereculey-Péran



INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! You want to create a more inclusive board, and you are in the right place for this.

Through interviews with industry professionals, extensive research and a panel discussion, this toolkit has been created. Its aim is to give companies a holistic idea of what they can do to have more gender-inclusive boards. Yes, it is true that gender norms are deeply rooted in cultures and societies, and that this toolkit cannot overcome all obstacles. However, it is a starting place and aims to give practical advice for companies who want to become more inclusive but wonder how or where to start. In this toolkit, you can find a gradual build-up that aims to change the way business is being done. The research found the four most beneficial pillars to get more women in top positions. They include open communication, collaboration, embracing change and radical empowerment. After reading this toolkit you should have the main elements to foster such a culture.

Keep in mind that this transition will be most effective if it is an intrinsic desire rather than one driven by money or because you feel forced to. Before starting this journey, think about why you are doing this, how this can be beneficial on a human and ethical level, and internalise this. Also consider the number of women you want on your board (hint: for a minority voice to be heard they need to make up 30% of the group).

Enjoy the read and good luck on this journey to improve the way we do business!



TOPICS

- 1.0 CREATE AWARENESS
- 2.0 HIRING PROCESS
- 3.0 RETHINK REPORTING LINES
- 4.0 IMPLEMENT BRAVE SPACES
- 4.1 PREPARATION OF THE INTERVENTION
- 4.2 CONDUCTING THE BRAVE SPACE
- 4.3 HELP? 23PLUSONE
- 4.4 KEEPING THE MOMENTUM



1. CREATE AWARENESS

Sometimes it is very hard to see what is in plain sight. That is perfectly normal and is one of the reasons why it is useful to either get an external perspective or to have self-imposed, scheduled check-ins. It is then the perfect opportunity to take that first step and become aware of your own top positions. The first step to change is being aware of the need to change.

MEASURE THE ACTUAL NUMBERS

One way to do that is to measure gender diversity at different levels within the organisation. The numbers are very hard to come by, and it is hard to create an action plan if you do not have an idea of the current state of things. We are also all prone to biases and measuring it objectively will allow you to see the picture as it is. So look at the different levels: employee, middle management, senior management, executive board and supervisory board. What proportion are men? What proportion are women? Where do you need to improve? Not only is this useful to get a clear picture, but you can also see whether there are possibilities for internal promotion, or if it is something you need to work on.

Is there a balanced pool of men and women to choose from when promoting internally? Is there a leak in the pipeline that needs mending?

GET AN EXTERNAL POINT OF VIEW

Otherwise, if your company is blinded to the phenomena, or if it needs an extra push, seek an external point of view. That could be from a client company or from a consultancy firm, but that external perspective might make you realise the reality of your company. Once this first step is done, you can get ahead with the rest, because if you are not aware of the need to change, then there is nothing you can do!

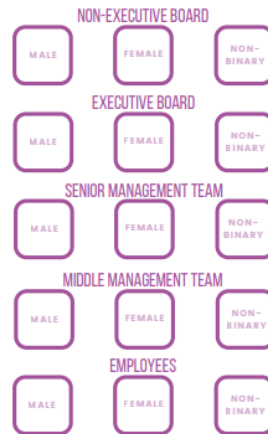
MAKE IT A PUBLIC COMMITMENT

Then once you have the starting point you can set goals and keep you and your team accountable. Want to really keep your company accountable? Make it a public commitment! This will make sure external parties also hold you accountable. It also ensures more transparency at a wider scale, which generates trust between all stakeholders.



WHAT GENDER DO YOUR EMPLOYEES IDENTIFY AS?

Department: Human Resources + heads of department
Barrier tackled: lack of awareness
Goal: having accurate figures to hold the organisation accountable



2. HIRING PROCESS

The most obvious answer to the question "how can we get more women in executive board positions" is usually "hire them!". From the panel discussion and interviews, that proved to be easier said than done. Here are some tips to help!

LOOK BEYOND THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE

First of all look beyond the obvious candidate. If you keep searching for candidates as you always have, it is likely that this person will be a man due to old boys club dynamics and the role of networking. So challenge yourself and your team to go beyond the obvious male candidate you have in your network and make an effort to diversity.

LOOK ACROSS INDUSTRIES

Look across industries, think about the soft and hard skills you want that person to have, get in touch with agencies specialised in recruiting underrepresented groups. It is easy to go for people in the same industry or domain, but it is more beneficial to get a different perspective. Try to have a balanced pool of candidates, and not stop at just one female candidate.

ADAPT THE LANGUAGE OF THE JOB POSTING TO FIT THE SKILLS

Take a critical look at the job postings you currently have and the language you use. Think about the tone of voice and terms, are they likely to attract masculine or feminine qualities? It is important that you look for the qualities you are missing and not just post any standard vacancy posting. If you need help with it, there are a number of agencies out there, such as xGen who can help create the write job postings and distribute them in the right networks.

TRAIN YOUR RECRUITERS ON UNCONSCIOUS BIASES

Do not stop at the first hurdle. If you really want a woman to fill your vacant board position it might be that you need to put in the effort but you will find one. There are so many capable women out there! Once you have found candidates, make sure your recruiters are trained on unconscious biases. We all have biases, but the important element is to be able to recognise them and put them aside to assess the candidate objectively. Think if LinkedIn learning courses for instance!



HOW TO IMPROVE THE HIRING PROCESS

Department: Human Resources - learning and development + recruitment
Barrier tackled: access to networks
Goal: help organisations develop inclusive hiring practices

Specialised agencies for diverse recruitment:
<https://www.talentboardtop.nl/>
<https://www.xer.nl/nl/thema/topvrouw>
<https://ten.nl/>

Companies to help with language:
The XGen: <https://thexgen.nl/>
Catalyst Consulting: <https://www.catalystconsulting.nl/>

Training on unconscious biases:
LinkedIn Learning
Occulus Agency: <https://occulus.nl/en/>
Ravilok: <https://www.ravilok.nl/>
Rose Stories: <http://www.rosestories.nl/>



3. RETHINK YOUR REPORTING LINES

Without empowerment and flexibility, it leaves people feeling unheard and trapped despite their past devotion to the company. Ultimately they leave the company or even the industry.

RETHINK THE REPORTING LINES

If an organisation wants to ensure their best talents climb up the career ladder without feeling discouraged and unwanted, the hierarchy structure should be reconsidered to be more inclusive. Having these elements gives more agility in working methods and possibilities in adapting to each employee's circumstances. There are no bureaucracies slowing down any process. Think about making shorter lines, create more self-steering teams and let go of the tall hierarchical organisation.

AUDIT THE INFORMATION FLOWS

For companies who already consider themselves flat, the idea is to rethink the authorisation and information flows. What do you need to report? Who do you need approval from? What is hindering your agility on a day-to-day basis?

By going over the authorisation flows you can reconsider what can still be useful to decentralise. Already creating flatter organisations is an excellent start. But by taking it one step further and focusing on radical empowerment companies can ensure desires of change can be put into action seamlessly. It can be faster, more personal and adaptive to any situation. This is great for employees, but also for companies as they become more able to adapt to unexpected changes both internally and externally.

MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

Thinking about your organisation and its structure is great. Acting on it is better. Now that you have seen how your company with its own challenges and opportunities can empower teams, act upon it. Perhaps this means redesigning the organisational chart, making some technological investments or having discussions between departments on best practices for empowerment.

AUDIT WORKSHEET

Department: Organisation wide
Barrier tackled: lack of flexibility in work organisation
Goal: create more agile work structures to embrace change effectively

Technology: aim for aligned, relevant interfaces and easy to access database

What IT interfaces are used?
Are the interfaces aligned?
How is the access to information organised?
Is it easy to access and up-to-date?

Processes: aim for efficient decision-making, experimentation and clearly defined processes to ensure agility

How is the decision-making process?
Is there room to fail in the company?
Are the processes clear and ensure speed?

Structure: aim for decentralisation and empowered, self-steering teams

Is there decentralised power?
Are the teams empowered?
Are there clear, accountable roles?
Is the structure transparent?



4.0 BRAVE SPACE INTERVENTION

Creating trust is the most important common denominator for getting to the final desired company culture to naturally promote women to top positions. Indeed, you cannot have openness, collaboration, empowerment or change without trust. For there to be trust you also need the idea of psychological safety. However, some practitioners note that this is an unreachable ideal. You, as an individual, cannot ensure everyone feels safe, regardless of your best efforts. Every person has a different journey, different experiences, and although it is great to aim towards psychological safety, it is also realistic to acknowledge the difficulty of it, especially in large organisations.

But do not lose hope! One stepping stone to this is creating **brave spaces**. The concept is a development from safe spaces and aims to create a better understanding of how to navigate potentially upsetting content. Our research showed that business is currently being conducted in a male-centric way, without reconsideration. As a response to this, it is important to tackle the problem at the bud and make it okay to talk about it rather than feeling forced to leave the workplace. brave spaces provide the space for learning about diversity. The aim is to create the right environment where support is provided to feel brave enough to speak our own truths.

This starts with facilitating a conversation in a group where there is respect, a promise of no attacks, a choice to challenge (or not), having individuals own their intentions and impacts, and controversy with civility. By having these brave spaces interventions, you know what challenges every individual is confronted with, and what is important to them. It is impossible to embrace change if you don't know what changes are going on. Through regular sessions, the organisation knows what they need to anticipate, have empathy and respect for the situation and acts accordingly. This may seem very daunting, having to adapt to every individual in the organisation, but the more you do it, the more normal it will be and ultimately will make you able to react very rapidly. It is also a healthy way of making everyone aware of the other's capabilities, skills and recognise them as an equal sparring partner.

As you can imagine, needs change over time. So the key is to carry out these interventions regularly so that they stay relevant. The scales can vary based on the needs of individuals and groups within the organisation.

4.1 PREPARATION OF BRAVE SPACES

This intervention repeated overtime should engender culture change in terms of open communication, embracing change and collaboration. As such, the preparation of a change plan is just as important as the intervention itself.

IDENTIFY THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEADERS

The first step once you have decided to conduct this intervention is to identify the formal and informal leaders. Let's pause here for a second. By leaders, we don't just understand formal leaders, but also informal ones. With this intervention, it is important to identify who the informal leaders are in your company. To do this rigorously, you can choose to make a sociogram. You can do this through online programs, by asking each employee to name two people they would like to work on a project with. From this, you can see who is excluded from the group and who is most sought after, potentially your informal leader. It is also important to recognise them at different levels, and based on the scale of the intervention you wish to conduct.

APPOINT A FACILITATOR

From the leaders identified per team choose one to be part of the coalition team as a facilitator. Since they already are recognised by others as leaders, this will then facilitate the adoption and minimise the risks of resistance. It is important to also, in combination with the next step, prepare them for the emotional load the brave spaces may create, and facilitator 'how-tos'.

GET LEADERS ON BOARD

Once that is done, try to get them on board and become allies in the brave spaces. You can do that by having on-on-one conversations with them. It is important that you share the vision of creating a company culture that promotes gender diversity with them and their contribution to the pressing issue. By having them share the urgency and the positive outcomes of the brave spaces, others will also be on board and the last preparation needed is:

HAVE EACH FACILITATOR SCHEDULE A BRAVE SPACE



4.2 CONDUCT THE INTERVENTION

Culture can be captured in employee handbooks, presentations, code of conducts... but in the end, how people act in a company is down to the actions of others. We, as humans, are very good at mimicking the ways others behave to feel part of the in-group: actions speak louder than words.

CREATE WITHIN EACH TEAM THE GROUND RULES

First and foremost, it is important that everyone agrees on ground rules for the session considering the potential intensity of stories that will be shared. This can be left up to the group itself, but here are a few pointers of the ground rules of brave spaces:

- Treat one another with respect
- Confidentiality
- It is okay to make mistakes
- A promise of no attacks
- Controversy with civility
- Own your impacts
- Listen with an open heart

The idea is not just for grievances to be expressed, but also for norms to be challenged constructively through dialogue. The facilitator should make sure they address everyone present to check what they would need to feel brave in that moment.

GET FACILITATORS TO LEAD THE WAY AND BE BRAVE THEMSELVES

Being willing to open up and be brave themselves will encourage others to do the same. They should also express thanks and gratefulness when others are also willing to share difficult moments. Through this first step, it also sets the tone of how deep you will be diving during the session, and what grievances will be shared. This can be very powerful!

However, it is important to also check yourself as a leader. You cannot know what everyone is going through or has gone through. But you can listen and you can strive to understand the viewpoints. Take a step back, listen actively and learn. It may be uncomfortable, but the idea is to be brave. As a leader, be an ally to marginalised groups, recognise where the privileges are and whose views are currently being disregarded. This is beneficial for creating a sense of belonging since it gives everyone the opportunity to express their opinions freely and can truly be themselves. Need some help to facilitate the conversation? Use 23PlusOne as a method to create conversations, and here is also a list of questions to help guide the conversation.

4.3 HELP? USE 23PLUSONE

23plusone as a method was created by PhD Kim Cramer and Alexander Koene to understand what makes a brand attractive. It incorporates the 24 human drives, which also happen to make people happy. These 24 elements were regrouped into five different groups: basic needs, self-development, ambition, vitality and attraction. Considering that all humans have these drives, and that gender equality is about...equality, the 23plusone method could be used as a tool to help companies discover their commonalities, create trust and open communication. Through this, it would be possible to create meaningful conversations between colleagues to get mutual respect of all and be able to have a shift in culture based on that.



Once we start understanding each other, our emotions, our needs, our background, it is hard to ignore the need to support each other, understand each other and be transparent. The idea would be to use the 23plusone method to facilitate the conversation and overcome certain barriers which may still be present. This can get individuals to already start connecting, making the brave spaces conversations easier. Facilitate the conversation by asking individuals who wish to speak up to choose a card their grievance connects to. Then use it as a starting point of the conversation, and as a way of communicating your individual needs. Guiding questions can be:

- What card represents a struggle for you right now?
- What card is most important for you in life right now?
- Which card are you missing in your life right now?



4.4 FOLLOW UP OF BRAVE SPACES

Well done! Organising such a widespread intervention of open-hearted communication through the brave space is quite a feat! Now it is a matter of acting upon it and making sure it becomes part of the common practices and that grievances are addressed.

BASED ON THE GRIEVANCES SHARED, COMMIT TO CHANGES

Each team will have gone through different grievances based on each individual's own background, family situation, journey in the company etc... the last step is committing to changes with empathy to enable all are able to grow and flourish within the organisation. Here is where we also see that gender diversity is not a woman's thing. The system as it stands rewards a specific group of men who benefit from it. The brave spaces will expose certain grievances men also encounter due to the lack of recognition of private lives in the work environment. Although this is initially intended to benefit women, in the end, most will reap the fruits of acknowledging and embracing personal changes to create the right work environment for all. Ultimately, the mental health of employees will improve to the benefit of employee engagement and performance.

MAKE THESE BRAVE SPACES A REGULAR MOMENT IN EACH TEAM

The aim is to make these open conversations a part of organisational culture, so although one intervention is good, more is better. We encourage hosting brave spaces every two months on average, to begin with, to make everyone more accustomed to them and feel more comfortable in being brave. Then they can be carried out at the discretion of the teams themselves based on their own needs. It is also encouraged to rotate the facilitators to make sure everyone feels heard, and that all topics are covered during the sessions. And remember to celebrate every small step in the right direction to making the company culture more open and brave!

TOOLBOX SUMMARY

BECOME AWARE

MEASURE THE ACTUAL NUMBERS

GET AN EXTERNAL POINT OF VIEW

MAKE IT A PUBLIC COMMITMENT

HIRING PROCESS

LOOK BEYOND THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE

LOOK ACROSS INDUSTRIES

ADAPT THE LANGUAGE OF THE JOB POSTINGS TO FIT THE SKILLS

TRAIN YOUR RECRUITERS ON UNCONSCIOUS BIASES

RADICAL EMPOWERMENT

AUDIT THE INFORMATION FLOWS

RETHINK THE REPORTING LINES

MAKE THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

BRAVE SPACE INTERVENTION

IDENTIFY THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEADERS

APPOINT A FACILITATOR

WORK ON GETTING LEADERS TO SUPPORT THE INTERVENTION

SCHEDULE BRAVE SPACES IN EACH TEAM

CREATE WITHIN EACH TEAM THE GROUND RULES

GET FACILITATORS TO LEAD THE WAY AND BE BRAVE THEMSELVES

NEED A STEPPING STONE? USE 23PLUSONE CARDS

BASED ON THE GRIEVANCES SHARED, COMMIT TO CHANGES

MAKE THESE BRAVE SPACES A REGULAR MOMENT IN EACH TEAM



CONCLUSION

By implementing these elements rigorously, a company culture change should happen. By having regular brave spaces interventions, and also ensuring that these practices are carried out by the leaders (formal and informal), communication should become the norm, with everyone feeling like they are heard.

The aim is to overcome the one-size-fits-all approach which we currently experience in business. Differences should be taken into account, and equity should be implemented. The current status quo may fit the ones in power, but also maintain the rest of the population in an inferior position, maintaining systems of inequality.

There is a need to get this system to change, one person at a time. It is hard work but by getting leaders to show the way and actively take part in the brave spaces and implement culture changes themselves, the momentum will grow naturally.

No one wants to feel like the token woman, no one wants to feel like they are there based on their gender over their skills. This toolkit offers an alternative, a way of embracing everyone's journey, recognising the skills they bring to the company, and being open to creating the changes everyone needs to flourish in their company. As a company, it also increases the overall health, by reducing the amount of stress employees may be experiencing in their personal lives.

Although this toolkit has been created with women in executive positions in mind, the elements can be transferable to different elements of diversity. It is also not only limited to women but can also benefit men who do not recognise themselves in the stereotypes the male leader need to embody. It

INTERESTING SOURCES

Creating Awareness

Markarian, G., Parbonetti, A. and Previts, G., 2007 The Convergence of Disclosure and Governance Practices in the World's Largest Firms. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*, 15, pp.294-310.

Virick, M. and Greer, C., 2012 Gender diversity in leadership succession: Preparing for the future. *Human Resource Management*, 51(4), pp.575-600

Hiring Processes

Consul, N., Strax, R., DeBenedictis, C.M. and Kagetsu, N.J., 2021 Mitigating Unconscious Bias in Recruitment and Hiring. *Journal of the American College of Radiology*

Ross, H.J., 2015 3 Ways to Make Less Biased Decisions. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2015/04/3-ways-to-make-less-biased-decisions>

Reporting Lines

Kristensen, S. S., & Shafiee, S. 2019. Rethinking organization design to enforce organizational agility. In 11th Symposium on Competence-Based Strategic Management.

Brave Spaces

Wasserman, J.A. and Browne, B.J., 2021 On Triggering and Being Triggered: Civil Society and Building Brave Spaces in Medical Education. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, pp.1-7.

Brave Space Guideline example: <https://ccc.ucsd.edu/files/brave-space-guidelines.pdf>

Obrenovic, B., Jianguo, D., Khudaykulov, A. and Khan, M.A.S., 2020 Work-Family Conflict Impact on Psychological Safety and Psychological Well-Being: A Job Performance Model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, pp.1-18

23Plusone

www.23plusone.org
www.br-ndpeople.com



BR-ND People.
Creating winning cultures.
Human to human.
Brand by brand.

BR-ND People | 23plusone
Vijzelstraat 68-78
1017 HL Amsterdam
The Netherlands
www.br-ndpeople.com
www.23plusone.org



Appendix 10. Summative Assessment

Criteria	Reasoning
Affordable for the company	In these times of corona, BR-ND People does not have the money to be investing in expensive projects or risky projects
Ethics is respected	As a B Corp that is part of their fundamentals
Backed up by research	Everything done at BR-ND People is science based, from their 23plusone method to their strategy building, so although the tone of voice can be casual, it still has to be science based
Adds value to the company	The solution should add something, whether that is monetary or not.
Solves a problem	Based on the panel discussion held and the brainstorm, it needs to fit what was talked about as main problems women encountered to get to executive positions.
Tailored to BR-ND People	Considering that the research has been carried out in a different context, it is important that the specificities of BR-ND People have been integrated into the design
Student works independently	
Different stakeholders are taken into account	As a B Corp that is part of their fundamentals
Solution benefits the wider society	As a B Corp that is part of their fundamentals

Appendix 11. Client Evaluation Form

Appendix 11.1. Research Report Deliverable



Evaluation Form Company Project/Research

(EVALUATION FORM OF ALL CLIENTS AND ON ALL DELIVERABLES IS COMPULSORY, FORMAT IS NOT)

Name of student:	Diane	Student number:	
Name of company:	HTH	Department:	Research Centre
Name of company tutor:	Dr. Angelique Lombarts	Position of company tutor:	Professor Hospitality, Happiness & Care
Project/Deliverable: (please specify)	Research report		
During the first evaluation the proposal for the project and end deliverable is discussed. For this final evaluation the project is evaluated. This is taken into consideration for the final assessment of the student.			
CATEGORY 1: EXPERTISE/KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD			
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement
	In-depth use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows excellent thinking capacity of the student (taking into account all significant factors and looking from all different perspectives).	Use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows mostly intellectual depth (taking into account significant factors and looking from different perspectives).	No or incorrect use of literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable lacks intellectual depth.
CATEGORY 2: KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION/SOLVING PROBLEMS			
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement
	The theories and models are skillfully applied and the student can translate this in a unique solution action. The student can relate situations to concepts that results into a solution that adds great value to the company's overall strategy. The creative solution is/ can be implemented and evaluated and is solving the problem.	The student uses theory and models and shows understanding of the issues at hand. The solution is realistic and implementable for the company. The solution is/ can be implemented and evaluated.	Mentioning theory and models, but not using them in the correct way. The student cannot convince of the possibilities to implement and evaluate. It is not solving the problem.
CATEGORY 3: INFORMED JUDGEMENTS			
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement
	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.
CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE			
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement
	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge.	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.
CATEGORY 5: INTERCULTURAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP			
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement
	Student is able to lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student is able to lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.
OVERALL COMMENTS:			
<p>This study explains why female board members are still under-represented. It does not start from the usual premises, namely the economic perspective, but from an ethical perspective. It uses a feminist stakeholder perspective to identify the gap between the 'is' and the 'should'. After all, a balanced representation of men and women in the board of directors would or <i>should</i> be obvious, especially since there is a balanced representation of men and women in the 'lower ranks', lower down the hierarchy of hotels. Moreover, the Dutch hotel management schools have had a reasonably equal representation of male and female students for years, which would also suggest that an equal representation in management positions should be visible, or at least that there is a tendency towards a more equal representation.</p> <p>The literature review is quite comprehensive, and therefore very applicable for the purpose of this research project, i.e., the preliminary research for an academic article. The findings are interesting to say the least ('shocking' would be a more appropriate expression...), offering a realistic but not fully satisfactory insight... It would have been interesting if a more pronounced difference between the executives on the one hand and the women in GM or other positions (those who, for whatever reason, did not make it to the executive level) on the other hand had been highlighted more explicitly. The results will be used in the article that we are preparing at this moment, assuring that this will be Diane's first academic article.</p> <p>To conclude, I want to thank Diane for very nice collaboration and this nice result. Her enthusiasm and professional stance, will assure a successful career. Wishing you all the best and once again, thank you very much.</p>			
STUDENTS' COMMENTS:			
Comments on evaluation:			

DATE & STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	COMPANY TUTOR'S SIGNATURE:
18/05/2021 	18-5-2021 

THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CAREER PORTFOLIO

Appendix 11.2. Company Deliverable

Evaluation Form Company Project/Research

(EVALUATION FORM OF ALL CLIENTS AND ON ALL DELIVERABLES IS COMPULSORY, FORMAT IS NOT)



Name of student:	Diane Lereculey-Peran	Student number:	671559
Name of company:	BR-ND People	Department:	NA
Name of company tutor:	Michael Cortino	Position of company tutor:	Emotive Transformer
Project/Deliverable: (please specify)	Toolkit		
During the first evaluation the proposal for the project and end deliverable is discussed. For this final evaluation the project is evaluated. This is taken into consideration for the final assessment of the student.			

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	In-depth use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows excellent thinking capacity of the student (taking into account all significant factors and looking from all different perspectives).	Use of relevant literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable shows mostly intellectual depth (taking into account significant factors and looking from different perspectives).	No or incorrect use of literature and knowledge of the field. The deliverable lacks intellectual depth.	

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	The theories and models are skillfully applied and the student can translate this in a unique solution action. The student can relate situations to concepts that results into a solution that adds great value to the company's overall strategy. The creative solution is/can be implemented and evaluated and is solving the problem.	The student uses theory and models and shows understanding of the issues at hand. The solution is realistic and implementable for the company. The solution is/can be implemented and evaluated.	Mentioning theory and models, but not using them in the correct way. The student cannot convince of the possibilities to implement and evaluate. It is not solving the problem.	

Page 1 of 2

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.	
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge.	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.	

Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	Student is able to lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student is able to lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.	
Comments on evaluation:	Excellent end result. From a process, content and relevance point of view. You are able to engage the team, facilitate the project, share the outcomes, ask for feedback and further develop the tool. Can't wait to see us applying it.			

THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CAREER PORTFOLIO

Page 2 of 2

Appendix 12. Dissemination

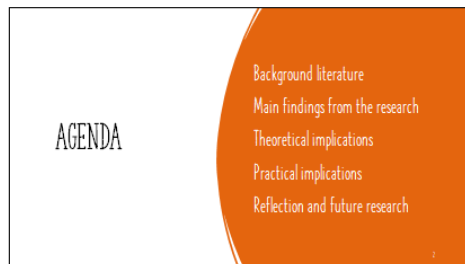
Appendix 12.1 PowerPoint Presentation to LYCar students



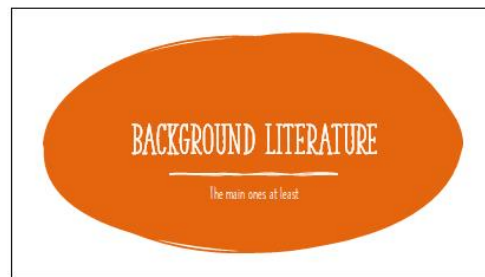
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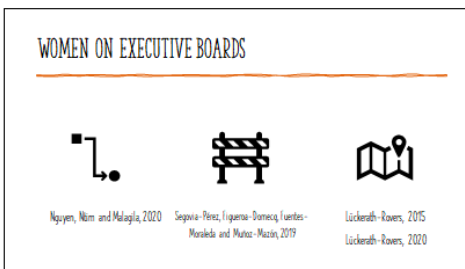
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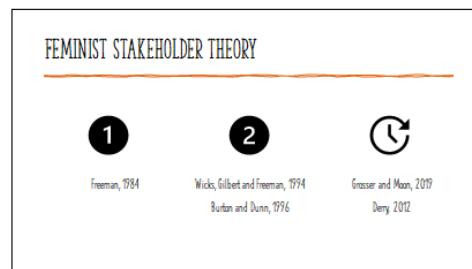
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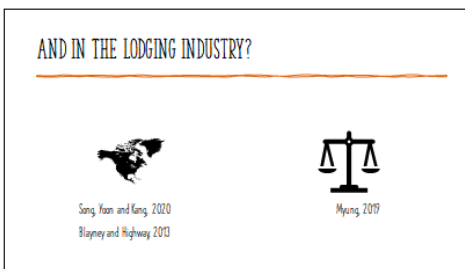
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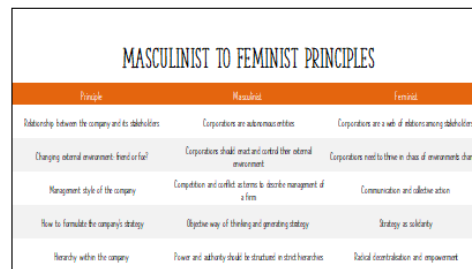
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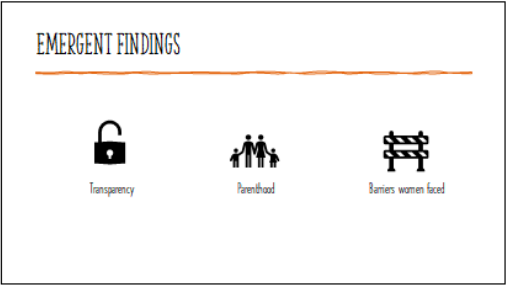
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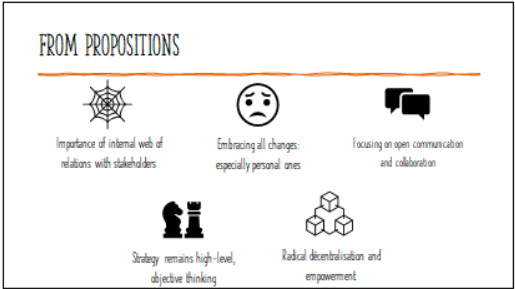
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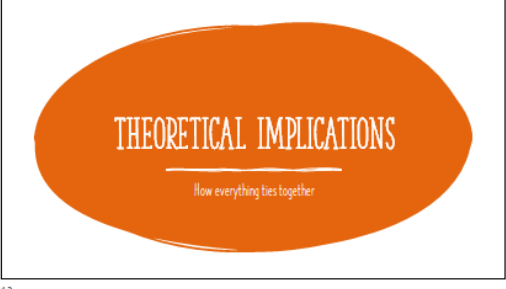
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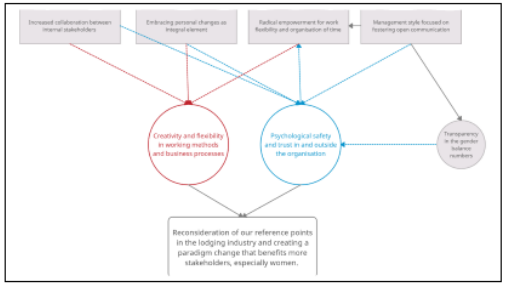
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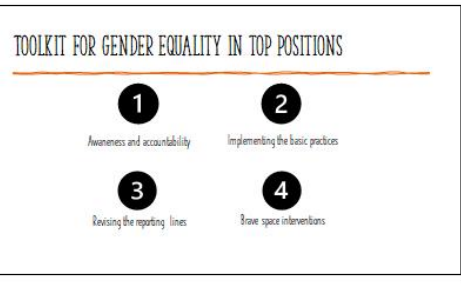
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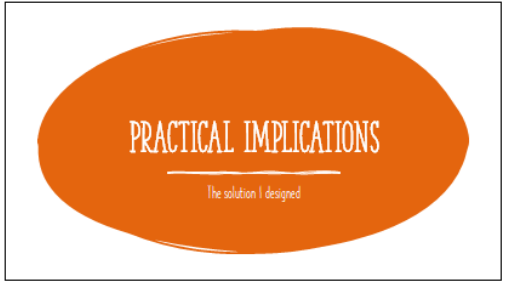
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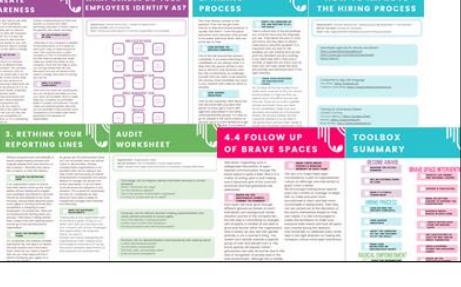
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16

REFLECTION AND FUTURE RESEARCH


The main ones at least

17


FUTURE RESEARCH ON FEMINIST STAKEHOLDER THEORY



Hear the male perspective on it




Explore who it could benefit




Its relevance in other countries

19


REFLECTION



Explore the different types of feminism




Coverage: errors



Define in clearer terms the five principles for better interview outcomes

18


THANK YOU



20

FEMINIST STAKEHOLDER THEORY: A SOLUTION TO THE OBSTACLES WOMEN FACE IN ACCESSING EXECUTIVE BOARDS IN THE LODGING INDUSTRY

Diane Lereculey-Péran



Appendix 12.2 Journal Article

Please find below the confirmation of the publication:

CATEGORY 3: INFORMED JUDGEMENTS				
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	The research process is done and explained in an excellent way. All statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the students and/or referencing. The analysis is very substantial.	The research process is done and explained well. Most statements, conclusions and recommendations are underpinned with the data collected by the student and/or referencing. The analysis is substantial.	Weak problem analysis, research question not clear enough. Data collection and/or methodology is insufficient. Weak analysis, use of data from one dimension and not backed up.	
CATEGORY 4: COMMUNICATION AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE				
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	Excellent ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to all stakeholders involved. The deliverable adds great value to the main stakeholders. Initial and creative channels have been actively used to share outputs and knowledge.	Good ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to stakeholders. The deliverable adds value to the company. Existing channels have been used to share knowledge.	The deliverable could have been better delivered to the stakeholders. The deliverable could have added more value, if better delivered. No active communication of outputs and knowledge.	
CATEGORY 5: INTERCULTURAL HOSPITALITY LEADERSHIP				
Rating	Excellent	Good	Room for improvement	Comments
	Student is able to lead the project by themselves. Student is self-critical towards improvement and takes feedback to heart. Student deals with a diversity of stakeholders in an intercultural competent way. Hospitality mindset is seen in project or work in a very distinct way.	Student is able to lead the project with little help. Student is critical towards improvement and listens to feedback. Student deals with different stakeholders. Hospitality mindset can be seen.	Tasks performed are described and not critically analyzed. Student is not too critical towards own learning and can listen better to feedback. Student does not know how to deal with differences in stakeholders. Hospitality can be improved.	
OVERALL COMMENTS: <p>This study explains why female board members are still under-represented. It does not start from the usual premises, namely the economic perspective, but from an ethical perspective. It uses a feminist stakeholder perspective to identify the gap between the 'ist' and the 'soil'. After all, a balanced representation of men and women in the board of directors would or <i>should</i> be obvious, especially since there is a balanced representation of men and women in the 'lower ranks', lower down the hierarchy of hotels. Moreover, the Dutch hotel management schools have had a reasonably equal representation of male and female students for years, which would also suggest that an equal representation in management positions should be visible, or at least that there is a tendency towards a more equal representation.</p> <p>The literature review is quite comprehensive, and therefore very applicable for the purpose of this research project, i.e., the preliminary research for an academic article. The findings are interesting to say the least ('shocking' would be a more appropriate expression...), offering a realistic but not fully satisfactory insight ... It would have been interesting if a more pronounced difference between the executives on the one hand and the women in GM or other positions (those who, for whatever reason, did not make it to the executive level) on the other hand had been highlighted more explicitly. The results will be used in the article that we are preparing at this moment, assuring that this will be Diane's first academic article.</p> <p>To conclude, I want to thank Diane for very nice collaboration and this nice result. Her enthusiasm and professional stance, will assure a successful career. Wishing you all the best and once again, thank you very much.</p>				
STUDENTS' COMMENTS: <div> <div>Comments on evaluation:</div> <div></div> </div>				

Page 2 of 3

DATE & STUDENT'S SIGNATURE:	COMPANY TUTOR'S SIGNATURE:
18/05/2021 	18-5-2021 

THE COMPLETED FORMS (ON ALL DELIVERABLES AND PERFORMANCE) NEED TO BE EMAILED TO THE LYCAR COACH AND PUT IN THE APPENDICES OF THE CAREER PORTFOLIO

Appendix 12.3 Sharing of the toolkit on BR-ND People website

[illegible]

Appendix 13. Proof of proposal assessment

LYCar Proposal Grading Rubric U.I.I (Version LYCar 2020; 25 November, 2020)			
Student Name:	Diane Lereucley-Péran	LYCar Coach:	Dr. Brannon
Student Number:	671559	Primary PLO:	9
Date Submitted:	06/02/2021	Secondary PLO(s):	8

Note: All boxes with red border to be filled by student

Preconditions (required for assessment)	Yes	No	Comments
Checks content and completeness			
Executive Summary is present, concise, can be read independently, contains information about process and content, focuses on results and outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LYCar Proposal meets formal reporting criteria (according to e.g., LYCar Reading & Writing Guide)			
LYCar Proposal is written in English and is professional, including common basic components such as Intro, ToC, Conclusion etc. – see Reading & Writing Guide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LYCar Proposal is max. 5.000 words (counting after Table of Content, incl. text in tables) – visual proof of wordcount is included in Appendices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

DD1: The student has demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that is supported by advanced textbooks			
	Excellent	Pass	No Go
1.1 Use of literature and knowledge of the field	Student uses in-depth literature and knowledge of the field throughout the report. The report contains no mistakes and factual inaccuracies.	Student uses in most cases literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains some mistakes and factual inaccuracies in a limited part of the report.	No sufficient or correct use of literature and knowledge of the field in the report. The report contains mistakes and factual inaccuracies.
1.2 Intellectual depth and abstract thinking	Student takes all significant factors into account and looks from different perspectives, also potential, and/or students to concepts in order to solve larger problems. The reports show excellent thinking capacity of the student. New unique insights presented in the topic and depth of understanding displayed. Students linking between the elements and the underlying issues within the case situation.	Student takes different perspectives into account. The report shows intellectual depth (depth and many viewpoints) in some parts of the report. Patterns are not sufficiently made clear.	The report lacks intellectual depth (depth and many viewpoints) in some parts of the report. Patterns are not sufficiently made clear.
Student Feedback:	Excellent <input checked="" type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Not Yet <input type="radio"/>	I have included scientific literature and have done my best to ensure there are no inaccuracies within my report but perhaps I have misinterpreted some elements, so I cannot say for certain that there are no mistakes at all.	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Yet <input type="radio"/>	Agreed	

DD3: the student has the ability to devise data gathering events, gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues			
	Excellent	Pass	No Go
3.1 The Design Based Research Process	Student sets the research process up in a systematic and well-organized way. Student makes a choice of a problem, makes a (complex) problem and formulates feasible solutions to using a design-based research approach, together with Problem Definition to Analysis to Solution Design. Methods are well chosen and motivated.	Student analyses the problem, and formulates possible solutions underpinned by literature using a design-based research approach. Methods motivated and mostly logically chosen.	Insufficient problem analysis and methodology. Research cycle not used.
3.2 Analysis and evaluation of data	Student plans analysis and evaluation of data/information well using appropriate (digital) tools and makes data-driven conclusions. All statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing. The appropriate tools are used in all steps. Analysis is sufficiently complex with use of information from more than one dimension (practitioner, scientific literature, the organization and stakeholders).	Student plans analysis and evaluation of data/information clearly, with some flaws or omissions. Some statements are underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing, some are not. Analysis is sufficiently complex using data from at least one dimension and sufficiently backed up with literature.	Plan of analysis and evaluation of data/information is not clear. Statements are mostly not underpinned with facts and figures and/or referencing, some are contradictory. No tools are used. Lacking or no analysis and not backed up with literature.
Student Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Not Yet <input checked="" type="radio"/>	My solutions are somewhat underpinned but very little research has so far focused on the ethics perspective, so perhaps not all statements are underpinned by literature, and the methodology gotten data from more than one source (interview, organization)	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Yet <input type="radio"/>	Agreed	

DD5: the student has developed those learning skills necessary to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy			
	Excellent	Pass	No Go
5.1 Plan on IQ development in PLO: Reflection on product(s)	Student has clear plans on what will be delivered and uses different relevant theory to underpin own work and reflect on it.	Student has a plan on what will be delivered and uses theory to underpin planned own work and reflect on it.	No clear deliverables mentioned and almost no theory to underpin own work and reflection.
5.2 Plan on AQ & EQ Self development	Student devises excellent ability to critically reflect on own developmental goals and demonstrates real growth mindset for the long learning. Student proposes a demonstration of being able to self-direct, taking initiative in understanding research approach, using different metrics that can demonstrate development in terms of their EQ/AQ.	Student shows developmental goals and demonstrates growth mindset. There is a plan on how to reflect on values, attitudes and behavior. Starting levels and desired end levels are clear and measurements are provided.	Developmental goals are not concrete, there is no demonstration of growth mindset. Plan on how to reflect is vague and does not give enough substantiation to show growth.
5.3 Plan on EQ Social development	Student provides a plan on how to construct a multitude of proof that shows development as an entrepreneurial Hospitality leader. Excellent ability to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Excellent analysis of diversity of people the student will deal with. Possible effective collaboration with all stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is key to the project or work the student does.	Student provides a plan on how to prove development as an entrepreneurial Hospitality leader. Plan on how to contribute to the global society/local community as a responsible citizen. Proposing ideas on how to collaborate with different stakeholders in different cultural settings. Hospitality is a differentiator in the student's project or work.	No clear plan on development as an entrepreneurial Hospitality leader. Plan on how to contribute to global society/local community is missing. Ideas proposed on collaboration or hospitality are not sufficient.
Student Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Not Yet <input checked="" type="radio"/>	I have addressed all parts of EQ/AQ/EQ and I have mentioned models to help the reflect and develop during my internship. I have provided the measurements for EQ and AQ and a plan on how to develop.	

Harvard Referencing Style is used consistently, referencing to primary sources only, List of References is well presented	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Check (technical) formalities and submissions			
Ephorus upload	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LYCar Proposal incl. Appendices are uploaded in Osiris	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ethics and data management			
Ethical, integrity and data management requirements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Entitled to assessment? (All yes above required):			
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

DD2: The student can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation, and has competences typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining feedback and solving problems within their field of study			
	Excellent	Pass	No Go
2.1 Application of theories/models to situations at hand	Student uses a range of theories/models and knowledge of the field in the case study and able to add their own unique perspective and insight. They own the model(s).	Student mentions a range of theories/models appropriate to the problems in the case and explains some of them in the correct way.	Mentioning models and theories but not using them in a correct way.
2.2 Possible impact and meaning of own work - dissemination of research	Student plans evaluation of impact and meaning of own work in relation to business and industry with sound understanding. Identification of all stakeholders and acts of dissemination. Plan on how to effectively disseminate knowledge through different channels fitted for a variety of audiences is also presented.	Student formulates criteria for evaluation. Student disseminates research findings and meaning of own work. Identification of stakeholders and acts of dissemination. Plan on how to effectively disseminate knowledge through different channels fitted for a variety of audiences is also presented.	Student fails to describe criteria how to evaluate impact. No identification of stakeholders or realistic plan on dissemination of knowledge through at least one valuable channel with an audience.
Student Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Yet <input type="radio"/>	I have provided in the appendices a detailed dissemination plan for a variety of stakeholders. I have also tried to use a range of models linked to my topic. I have identified the possible pitfalls of certain models and where I could contribute with this research	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Yet <input type="radio"/>	Agreed	

DD4: the student can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences			
	Excellent	Pass	No Go
4.1 Communication to audience making use of professional (business) English	Student divides information effectively in paragraphs/chapters. No noticeable errors in English usage and mechanics. Use of language enhances the argument and avoids abbreviations. Sentences are well written, and voice and tone are highly suitable for the specific audience. The style and content complement each other into an appealing, high quality story. Highly useful organizational strategy. The logical sequence of ideas increases the effectiveness of the argument and transitions between paragraphs are clear. Sub-headings are employed comprehensively and link between different sections are reinforced through linking expressions. Shows attention to detail in all parts of the report.	Student divides information in paragraphs/chapters. Errors in English usage and mechanics are present, but they rarely impede understanding. Use of language is basic, only somewhat clear and does not support the argument. Sentences are correct, and voice and tone are generally appropriate for the intended audience(s). Generally, a clear organizational strategy. The sequence of ideas in most cases supports the argument and transitions between paragraphs clarify the relationship between ideas. The report is fairly comprehensively written and lacks some attention to detail in some parts of the report.	Distracting errors in English usage are present and they impede understanding. Use of language is basic, only somewhat clear and does not support the argument. Sentences are correct, and voice and tone are not always appropriate for the intended audience(s). Basic organizational strategy, with most ideas logically grouped. Transitions between paragraphs sometimes clarify the relationship among ideas. The report is not comprehensively written and lacks attention to detail in most parts of the report.
Student Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Not Yet <input checked="" type="radio"/>	I have done my utmost for it to be written in a clear, structured way with the use of professional English. Perhaps there are still some areas which lack detail.	
Assessor Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input checked="" type="radio"/> Not Yet <input type="radio"/>	Agreed	

Assessor Feedback:	Excellent <input type="radio"/> Pass <input type="radio"/> Not Yet <input checked="" type="radio"/>	Agreed	
Overall Assessor Feedback			
LYCar Proposal Outcome			
Excellent	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	All qualitative criteria awarded a "Pass" and at least two qualitative criteria awarded a "Excellent"	
Pass	<input type="radio"/>	All qualitative criteria awarded a "Pass", "P" registered in Osiris. Student can continue with LYCar execution.	
No Go	<input type="radio"/>	One or more qualitative criteria graded as "Not Yet", "F" registered in Osiris. Student re-writes LYCar Proposal with incorporated feedback.	
Pre-Condition NY	<input type="radio"/>	Pre-conditions not met. Student resubmits LYCar Proposal. No grade or feedback provided to the student.	

Appendix 14. Mid-Term Appraisal Form

APPRAISAL FORM

Name of student:	Diane Lereculey-Péran	Student number:	671559
Name of company:	BR-ND People	Department:	NA
Name of company tutor:	Michael Cortino	Position of company tutor:	Emotive Transformer
Assessment no:	1	Date: 31 March 2021	

UNDERSTANDING					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards. Has insufficient job knowledge and technical skills to perform job responsibilities. Requires frequent supervision.	Has some job knowledge but often needs help to apply it.	Has sufficient job knowledge and applies this in practice. Requires minimum supervision.	Has a very good level of job knowledge, experience and insight and applies this in practice. Can work independently.	Has an exceptional level of job knowledge, experience and insight and applies this in practice. Works independently; can train others.	4
Comments:	Very independent and pro-actively asking for input to achieve desired results.				

PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS (PLEASE SPECIFY PER PRODUCT, IF POSSIBLE)					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, makes errors and does not perform according to the standards.	Standards are met, but work and deliverables are often lacking precision and consistency.	Sufficient, in general makes few errors, level of deliverables is good.	Very good, rarely makes mistakes, performs well and sometimes exceeds standard.	Excellent, hardly ever makes mistakes, quality of work is superb.	4
PRODUCT 1 (specify)	Content plan & execution				
PRODUCT 2 (specify)	Panel The Approaches to Gender Diversity on Executive Boards				
PRODUCT 3 (specify)	Article The Approaches to Gender Diversity on Executive Boards				

Page 1 of 4

CATEGORY 3: MAKING JUDGEMENTS & PROBLEM-SOLVING					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, only solves problems with guidance.	Occasionally solves problems but this could be better.	Sufficient, generally can solve problems independently.	Very good, solves most problems independently.	Excellent, always solves problems independently, does not require any guidance.	4
Comments:					

CATEGORY 4: LEARNING SKILLS					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, often forgets information.	Able to learn but this could be better.	Sufficient, generally understands and is able to apply new information.	Very good, understand and applies information easily.	Excellent, consistently learning, understanding and applying new knowledge and information.	4
Comments:					



CATEGORY 5: COMMUNICATION SKILLS TOWARDS CLIENTS (Guests, employees, etc.)					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, often forgets or does not share information.	Communicates in a sufficient manner but this could be better.	Sufficient, generally shares information.	Very good, shares information openly.	Excellent, consistently shares information openly.	4
Comments:					

CATEGORY 6: INTERACTION AND CO-OPERATION WITH COLLEAGUES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, is not involved in daily tasks, at work, shows limited interest in other department and the company in general	Show occasional interest but this could be better.	Shows interest in daily tasks, is interested and involved with other departments, co-operates sufficiently and knows what's going on within the company.	Clearly shows interest in other departments, is very social while interacting. Enjoys daily tasks and keep well informed of what is happening within the company	Excellent, is extremely dedicated, always knows what's going on; seeks out new information is always very interested and social to other departments. Shows great flexibility in assisting other depts.	4
Comments:					

CATEGORY 7: READINESS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, is not ready for a career in the international hospitality industry.	Sometimes shows not to be ready for a career in the hospitality industry	Acceptable readiness for a career in the Hospitality industry	Definitely ready for a career in the hospitality industry	Excellent readiness to start a career in the hospitality industry.	5
Comments:					

Total points	
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REVIEW OF LAST OBJECTIVES AND ANY ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:
TRAINEE'S STRENGTHS:
TRAINEE'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS:
TUTOR: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):
TRAINEE'S COMMENTS:
Comments on appraisal:
DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP MEETING AND / OR NEXT EVALUATION: It feels like you are working with us for years. From the start, you were able to blend in with the team. You come up with ideas, execute them and manage the process. We're happy to have you onboard, Diane. Thank you.

DATE TRAINEE'S SIGNATURE: 31/03/2021 	COMPANY TUTOR'S SIGNATURE: 31/03/2021 
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THE COMPLETED FORM NEEDS TO BE EMAILED BY THE STUDENT TO PLACEMENT OFFICE AND CAREER COACH

Appendix 15. Final Appraisal

APPRAISAL FORM

Name of student:	Diane Lereculey-Péran	Student number:	671559
Name of company:	BR-ND People	Department:	NA
Name of company tutor:	Michael Cortino	Position of company tutor:	Emotive Transformer
Assessment no:	2	Date:	17 May 2021

UNDERSTANDING					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards. Has insufficient job knowledge and technical skills to perform job responsibilities. Requires frequent supervision.	Has some job knowledge but often needs help to apply it.	Has sufficient job knowledge and applies this in practice. Requires minimum supervision.	Has a very good level of job knowledge, experience and insight and applies this in practice. Can work independently.	Has an exceptional level of job knowledge, experience and insight and applies this in practice. Works independently; can train others.	4
Comments:	Very independent and proactively asking for input to achieve desired results. Initiates and comes with ideas.				

PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS (PLEASE SPECIFY PER PRODUCT, IF POSSIBLE)					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, makes errors and does not perform according to the standards.	Standards are met, but work and deliverables are often lacking precision and consistency.	Sufficient, in general makes few errors, level of deliverables is good.	Very good, rarely makes mistakes, performs well and sometimes exceeds standard.	Excellent, hardly ever makes mistakes, quality of work is superb.	5
PRODUCT 1 (specify)	Content plan & execution				
PRODUCT 2 (specify)	Panel The Approaches to Gender Diversity on Executive Boards				
PRODUCT 3 (specify)	Article The Approaches to Gender Diversity on Executive Boards				

Page 1 of 4

CATEGORY 3: MAKING JUDGEMENTS & PROBLEM-SOLVING					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, only solves problems with guidance.	Occasionally solves problems but this could be better.	Sufficient, generally can solve problems independently.	Very good, solves most problems independently.	Excellent, always solves problems independently, does not require any guidance.	5
Comments:	Working on the BR-ND People displayed her ability to solve problems independently with little to no guidance.				
CATEGORY 4: LEARNING SKILLS					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, often forgets information.	Able to learn but this could be better.	Sufficient, generally understands and is able to apply new information.	Very good, understand and applies information easily.	Excellent, consistently learning, understanding and applying new knowledge and information.	5
Comments:	Proactively taking up responsibility for certain tasks and seeking knowledge to fulfill it				



CATEGORY 5: COMMUNICATION SKILLS TOWARDS CLIENTS (Guests, employees, etc.)					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, often forgets or does not share information.	Communicates in a sufficient manner but this could be better.	Sufficient, generally shares information.	Very good, shares information openly.	Excellent, consistently shares information openly.	5
Comments:	Constantly sharing ideas, thoughts, insights etc. Is engaged in discussions and aware about internal and external developments				

CATEGORY 6: INTERACTION AND CO-OPERATION WITH COLLEAGUES AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, is not involved in daily tasks, at work, shows limited interest in other department and the company in general	Show occasional interest but this could be better.	Shows interest in daily tasks, is interested and involved with other departments, co-operates sufficiently and knows what's going on within the company.	Clearly shows interest in other departments, is very social while interacting. Enjoys daily tasks and keep well informed of what is happening within the company	Excellent, is extremely dedicated, always knows what's going on; seeks out new information is always very interested and social to other departments. Shows great flexibility in assisting other depts.	5
Comments:	Collaborating with all team members, engaging in / facilitating sessions with external stakeholders (kids of the team, trainees, B Lab etc.)				

Page 2 of 4

CATEGORY 7: READINESS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY					
1: Clear area of weakness	2: Room for improvement	3: Sufficient	4: Very good	5: Excellent	Rating:
Below standards, is not ready for a career in the international hospitality industry.	Sometimes shows not to be ready for a career in the hospitality industry	Acceptable readiness for a career in the Hospitality industry	Definitely ready for a career in the hospitality industry	Excellent readiness to start a career in the hospitality industry.	5
Comments:					
					Total points
REVIEW OF LAST OBJECTIVES AND ANY ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS:					
TRAINEE'S STRENGTHS:					
TRAINEE'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS:					
TUTOR: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (OPTIONAL):					
TRAINEE'S COMMENTS:					
Comments on appraisal:					
DATE FOR FOLLOW-UP MEETING AND / OR NEXT EVALUATION:					

Page 3 of 4

DATE TRAINEE'S SIGNATURE:	COMPANY TUTOR'S SIGNATURE:
17/05/2021 	17/05/2021 

THE COMPLETED FORM NEEDS TO BE EMAILED BY THE STUDENT TO PLACEMENT OFFICE AND CAREER COACH

Appendix 16. Proof of Word Count

