

Joanne Lipman Has Lots to Say

Keynote speaker, former Chief Content Officer of Gannett, and author to address business leaders on advancing the benefits of women leadership

Joanne Lipman is the bestselling author of "That's What She Said: What Men Need to Know (and Women Need to Tell Them) About Working Together."

One of the nation's most prominent journalists, Lipman most recently was Chief Content Officer of Gannett, and Editor in Chief of USA TODAY and the USA TODAY NETWORK, comprising the flagship title and 109 other news organizations including the Detroit Free Press, the Cincinnati Enquirer, and the Arizona Republic.

In that role, Lipman oversaw more than 3,000 journalists and led the organization to three Pulitzer Prizes, plus an additional three Pulitzer finalists.

Lipman began her career as a reporter at The Wall Street Journal, ultimately rising to deputy managing editor, creating

The Weekend Journal and Personal Journal, and supervising coverage that earned three Pulitzer Prizes.

New York Times media columnist David Carr described her as the Journal's "innovator-in-chief." She subsequently was founding Editor-in-Chief of Conde Nast Portfolio and Portfolio.com, which won National Magazine and Loeb Awards.

Lipman is a frequent television commentator, seen on CNN, NBC, CNBC, and CBS, among others, and her work has appeared in publications including The New York Times, Time, Newsweek and Harvard Business Review. She is also co-author of the critically acclaimed musical memoir, *Strings Attached*.

The acclaimed author and media executive provided responses to questions posed before her scheduled appearance at The Individual. The Business, to be held at Rowan University on September 20, 2018.



Q&A

with Joanne Lipman

Q WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF WRITING THIS BOOK?

A Women have been talking to each other for years about the issues we face at work - not just the extremes of sexual harassment and assault, but the everyday issues of being marginalized, interrupted, overlooked, underpaid, and simply not taken as seriously as the man in the next cubicle. But women speaking with one another is at best half a conversation, which at best can solve 50 percent of the problem. We need men to join us.

I wrote "That's What She Said" with male readers in mind, to invite them into this conversation. We all need to understand this isn't a "female problem" it is an "all of us" problem, that we need to work together to solve.

Q HOW HAVE MISCONCEPTIONS OF HOW WOMEN COMMUNICATE IMPACTED COMPANY CULTURES? AND HOW DO YOU THINK THAT IS IMPACTING THEIR OVERALL BRAND IMAGE IN THE MARKETPLACE?

A Stereotypes about women and unconscious bias have prevented women from reaching their potential and effectively barred them from senior level jobs.

There are communication differences between men and women that exacerbate these issues. For example, many men I interviewed, when asked about what perplexes them about female colleagues, answered "I'm afraid she'll cry." These men, who are in positions of authority, are afraid they will inadvertently hurt a female subordinate's feelings. But in fact, when women do cry at work, it isn't because their feelings are hurt; it's because they are angry! They're frustrated! A woman crying is the same thing as a man yelling. But men don't understand it in that way.

This kind of disconnect is extremely damaging for women. Men still hold most

positions of authority, and 79 percent of male supervisors in one survey said they are afraid to give candid feedback to female employees. That means male subordinates are getting the feedback they need to succeed and progress - but women aren't.

In fact, studies have shown that in employee performance reviews, women are much more likely to get personality critiques, such as they are "emotional," "abrasive," or "pushy," while men very rarely get such critiques and instead get useful, metrics-based feedback.

Q IN YOUR RESEARCH, HOW HAVE YOU SEEN STEREOTYPES, PERCEPTIONS AND LANGUAGE IMPACT PROFIT OUTCOMES OF THOSE BUSINESSES?

A Every piece of research shows us that adding women to male-dominated workplaces improves financial performance. Companies with female chief financial officers make fewer, better acquisitions than those with male CFO's.

Firms with the most female board members outperform those with the least by almost every financial measure. Companies whose top management is at least half female post returns on equity that are 19 percent higher than average. And female-led funds outperform those run by men by a large margin.

The same is true at home; in a study of 38,000 households, researchers found that men traded more frequently - and as a result earned lower returns - than women.

Having a gender-balanced workforce isn't a luxury, or a "nice-to-have." It is a business imperative, essential for optimal profit and business success.

Q HOW HAS THE REACTION BEEN TO YOUR BOOK FROM LEADERS OF COMPANIES, BOTH WOMEN AND MEN?

A The reaction has been tremendously positive, from both men





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and women. Companies have embraced the book and its precepts, with many of them featuring it in book discussion groups.

The World Economic Forum recently started a new book club, and featured, "That's What She Said" as its inaugural selection. Several companies have told me they are starting to implement the book's recommendations, including returnships geared to women who have been out of the workplace for several years, and affinity groups for men who want to be allies.

Male-dominated organizations have hosted me in conversations about the book, from the Council on Foreign Relations, to the Milken Institute's global finance conference.

Q WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SUCCESSES YOU'VE SEEN THAT HAVE HELPED COMPANIES DITCH PRE-CONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT THE TALENTS OF WOMEN AND THE DYNAMICS BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN THAT HAVE LED TO STRONGER OUTCOMES FOR THOSE COMPANIES?

A In addition to the examples mentioned above, male leaders have told me they changed the way they run meetings, to make sure that the voices of women and other underrepresented groups are heard.

In addition, some women's employee resource groups are now inviting men to meetings, to increase dialogue and understanding. One company is even changing up the framed photos on the walls of its headquarters to showcase diverse employees; the current photos are mostly portraits of previous CEO's, all of whom are white men.

Most encouraging, some companies are now taking a hard look at the gender wage gap and at promotion percentages of men vs women at every level, starting at the entry level. The key issue for all of these initiatives is ownership by the company's leadership - the CEO and the CFO. These top leaders consider diversity to be a business imperative.

When corporate leaders simply offload diversity to the HR department, but do not walk the walk and talk the talk themselves, the initiatives cannot take root and the culture will not change. ■