

By Marisa Rivera



It is our time! It is time for women to take ownership of our future, our destiny, our education, our careers, our businesses, our government and our countries! For decades, women's labor forces in the United States and throughout the world have experienced many changes. Women are no longer restricted to stay at home or follow the traditional careers such as secretaries, teachers or nurses. Women have been prominently involved in all aspects of the growth and development of this nation, with very little recognition.

It Is Our Time!

Throughout history, women have fought persistently to come out of the shadows, organize for change and make their voices heard. It is our time to demand our place in the labor force, not only as the largest pool of incoming talent nationally but also globally. We must demand leadership positions and a seat at the decision making table and must also demand our right for equal pay for equal work!

Today, the women's labor force participation is 50 percent in the United States and women represent 51 percent of the U.S. and global populations. This makes women the largest growing market! In order to compete in a Global market, we must be diverse, multi-lingual, educated, inclusive and able to multi-task and work with diverse and culturally different people. These are all qualities that Latinas and many women already bring to the table. Investing in the enormous untapped potential of women in the labor force is a business and innovation imperative!

In order for the private and public sector to survive and thrive, they must include and pay attention to the largest pool of incoming talent, the largest emerging consumer market, and the largest voting market nationally and globally.¹ Without a clear understanding of this emerging market, companies are likely to lose out on big opportunities.

Organizations, companies and countries that fail to develop inclusive cultures and fail to include half of their human potential at their leadership, managerial and labor force levels are risking missing out on innovative ideas that allow them to effectively tap into this new market.

Companies can use their innate diversity of their labor force, Women and Latinas, and provide them with the visibility, support, advocacy, and leadership development so they can share their market-grabbing and innovative ideas. This will in turn increase business and profit. Women are responsible for 85 percent of all consumer purchases in America today, making it a \$7 trillion dollars spending power!² Globally, women influence 65 percent of the World's annual consumer spending-about \$12 Trillion dollars.³ Women don't only buy shoes and purses, women buy homes, cars, electronics, insurance and businesses. Just ask us what we want and we will tell you!

It is important to note that the engine of the U.S economy is small businesses, and Women are the fastest growing business segment in America today. Even more exciting, of those women, Latinas are the fastest growing. According to the National Women's Business Council, one in 10 (10.2 percent) of all women-owned firms across the country are owned by Hispanic women, a 45.7 percent increase since 2002 with a total receipts of over \$55.7 billion. It is our time- to increase the number of women owned businesses and truly experience the American dream.

Lastly, politically, it's our time! Globally, there are currently only 20 women serving as Presidents or Prime Ministers out of over 195 countries. Four of those women, are Latina. The United States has never had a woman President and women represent only 17 percent of the

U.S. Congress. It is our time! We must cease the moment and not only lean in, but step in, and demand our full participation in politics, in business and in the future of the world. As Latinas and as women, we must own our leadership, lead with conviction, and be prepared with the knowledge, education, experience and business savvy to build our networks as we prepare for leadership our way! -- It's our time - Are you ready? **Is**



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Want to comment or have any questions on this article? Email us at info@latinastyle.com

Notes

¹ Silverstein & Sayre, How to Capture Your Share of the World's Largest, fastest Growing Market

² She-Economy, 7 Powerful Insights for Marketing to Women, Anderson & Howland

³ The Boston Consulting Group & Harvard Business Review, 2009