



SCHWEIZERISCHER ARBEITGEBERVERBAND
UNION PATRONALE SUISSE
UNIONE SVIZZERA DEGLI IMPRENDITORI

Code of Conduct
for
Personnel Consulting Agencies
on
Increasing the Percentage
of
Women in Boards of Directors

Zurich, 8 November 2016

Preamble

The Swiss Code of Best Practice for Corporate Governance 2014 ("Swiss Code") advises companies to ensure the representation of both genders and proper diversity for their boards of directors.

The Swiss Code is applied for the recruitment of new board members. If personnel consulting agencies (executive search agencies) are involved in this recruitment process, they play an important role in the implementation of the Swiss Code.

The Swiss Employers Confederation and its project partners therefore invited personnel consulting agencies to sign a corresponding Code of Conduct.

By signing this Code of Conduct, personnel consulting agencies agree to abide by the following principles:

1. Succession planning

The circle of candidates can be strongly expanded if the board of directors adopts a medium-term plan (early succession planning) and makes suitable preparations (e.g. changes in function). Personnel consulting agencies who help boards of directors to prepare their medium-term plans should point out the importance of systematic BoD planning and the possible benefits and impact of diversity in such bodies.

2. Diversity objectives

When personnel consulting agencies accept a mandate to recruit a board member, they should first analyse the composition of the board of directors and discuss the board's diversity objectives (including gender diversity). The priority given to the recruitment of female board members should also be established.

3. Profile and selection criteria

When determining the criteria for selecting a successor board member, personnel consulting agencies should make sure that the profile gives sufficient weight to the different skills of women and men. Specifically, these profiles and selection criteria should not focus exclusively on males with a typical career as board member.

4. Long list

When presenting a long list to a client, personnel consulting agencies should endeavour to propose a suitable number of female candidates. If a suitable number of female candidates cannot be found, personnel consulting agencies are required to explain to their client why they could not find enough qualified women.

5. Short list

The short list should again contain a suitable selection of male and female candidates. During the recruitment process, personnel consulting agencies should endeavour to propose at least one female candidate for a personal recruitment interview with their client.



6. Support for candidates

During the selection process, personnel consulting agencies should support candidates (in particular less-experienced candidates) by preparing the candidates for the recruitment interviews and counselling them during the different stages of the recruitment process.

7. Support for the selection process

During the selection process, personnel consulting agencies should make sure that the candidates are assessed as comprehensively and neutrally as possible. This also includes honouring the specific strengths and experiences of women. In this regard, personnel consulting agencies support their clients, when necessary, by ensuring a professional and correct recruitment interview or pointing out the aspects that were neglected when a specific candidate is assessed.

8. On-boarding

Personnel consulting agencies give their clients best-practice recommendations such as how new board members can be quickly and efficiently inducted into their new roles on the board of directors.

9. Establishment of recruitment best practices

Personnel consulting agencies should document their best practice examples in increasing the number of women sitting on boards of directors. They should be able to prove their compliance with the Code of Conduct. The results must be disclosed to interested circles upon request.

10. Active marketing

Personnel consulting agencies should advertise their commitment to gender diversity in boards of directors and their compliance with this Code on their websites, in their marketing materials and/or during client interviews.

11. Expansion of the circle of candidates

Personnel consulting agencies endeavour to constantly update and expand their circle of candidates. They should in particular establish contact with a sufficient number of potential female candidates.



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