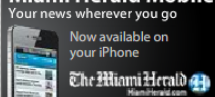


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Event highlights diversity efforts on corporate boards Like



Women Executive Leadership released its 2010 Florida Census of Women Directors at an event Friday at Signature Grand in Davie. A panel discussion included, from left, Yvonne Jackson, who is on the board of Winn-Dixie Stores and Spartan Stores; Roy Krause, chief executive of SFN Group; and Judy Schmeling, chief financial officer of HSN. HARVEY BILT

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MIAMI HERALD STAFF REPORT

For women to advance at public companies in Florida, they need to land high visibility assignments to showcase their skills across departments. Judy Schmeling, chief financial officer of HSN told more than 350 South Florida professionals Friday.

Schmeling participated in a panel discussion for Women Executive Leadership that included Roy Krause, chief executive CEO of SFN Group and Yvonne Jackson, a board member at Winn-Dixie Stores and Spartan Stores. The discussion, a candid dialogue on how women can obtain board seats and advance within their companies, followed a presentation of WEL's 2010 Florida Census of Women Directors and Executive Officers. Krause said women may have been stymied by the recession but that he believes women are heading operational divisions and positioning themselves to eventually reach the high levels at many companies, including his own.

Meanwhile, the WEL Census report shows nearly 75 percent of Florida's top 100 public companies have no female leaders in their executive suites. In the past two years, six public companies in Florida added women to their boards for the first time, but nearly 91 percent of the 864 board seats in Florida still are held by men. "We are committed to moving these numbers upward," said Cindy Kushner, founder of WEL, a nonprofit organization for women business leaders.

Jackson, who until recently also sat on the board of Best Buy, encouraged women to use nonprofit boards as a path to corporate board rooms and suggested they focus on what they are good at and showcase those skills whenever possible. Her expertise is in human resources.

Some of the companies receiving awards for having two or more women directors include Office Depot, SFN Group, Ryder System, Darden Restaurants, FPL Group and Winn-Dixie Stores.

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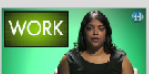
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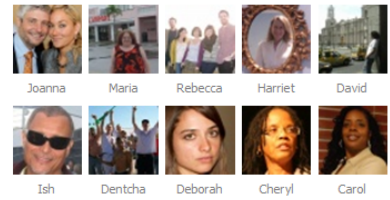
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