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genderdax – Top Companies for Women with High Potentials

genderdax is a new information platform on the internet, offering a comprehensive overview of working conditions and specific opportunities to women with high potential to develop their careers in selected German companies. “Gender” refers to the issue of equal opportunities for women and men. As in case of the German stock exchange (Deutsche Börse), the word “dax” refers to an exclusive circle of top companies. *genderdax* is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ).

genderdax represents a select choice of innovative companies in Germany that are especially interested in promoting women professionals and experts: young women with high potential, established highly-qualified women managers, women returning to work and also dual career couples. The start of the project was in the summer of 2005 and as of November of the same year nine large companies had already been listed in the *genderdax*, among them four of the top ten German banks: Booz Allen Hamilton (Munich), Commerzbank AG (Frankfurt), Deutsche Bank AG (Frankfurt), Dresdner Bank AG (Frankfurt), Fraport AG (Frankfurt), Robert Bosch GmbH (Stuttgart), Volkswagen AG (Wolfsburg), WestLB AG (Düsseldorf) and ZMD AG (Dresden).

Women with high potential frequently have great expertise, a great deal of practical experience and generally are highly motivated. Most are very interested in international postings and, when given the opportunity to do so, tend to be highly successful. They display a high degree of loyalty to their company, and, if given appropriate support, they do not change jobs simply to further their careers. Many companies now recognize the value of such qualified women with great promise, and consequently provide coaching and systematic career development for such individuals.

For the registered companies *genderdax* provides various advantages:

- a unique opportunity to specifically target highly qualified women.
- equal opportunity companies registered in *genderdax* gain a clear competitive advantage in the labour market and improve their corporate image.
- *genderdax* companies benefit from an increased public awareness as well as increased media interest.
- *genderdax* offers companies the opportunity to publicize special programs to improve working conditions and to further personal development.

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- Upon request, the *genderdax* logo is made available to listed companies for advertising purposes.

The usual *genderdax* application form was developed especially for large companies. The *genderdax* for small and medium-sized companies looks for best practices. In this case the application form, however, is essentially a checklist. It is designed to offer any information companies consider relevant for providing on the information platform. This could include, for example, measures to support women with high potential in the following areas:

- Personnel recruitment
- Personnel development/career opportunities
- Networking
- Mentoring
- Training
- Flexible working conditions
- The opportunity to combine work and personal lives
- Special certificates, awards, etc.

The I.P.A. Institute for Human Resource and International Management at the Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg is responsible for developing and running the information platform (www.genderdax.de; info@genderdax.de). Prof. Dr. Michel E. Domsch and Prof. Dr. Désirée H. Ladwig (ipa@hsu-hh.de) are responsible for the project.