



CONFEDERACIÓN  
ESPAÑOLA DE  
**DIRECTIVOS  
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In collaboration with:

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## Leading in positive

Amparo Moraleda

February 2022

“A company’s ability to operate sustainably is going to be a decisive factor in its future”



**Amparo Moraleda** | Member of the Board of Directors of CaixaBank .

Amparo Moraleda is an independent director of several companies: Solvay, S.A. (since 2013), Airbus Group, S.E. (since 2015) and Vodafone Group (since 2017). She has also been a member of the governing council of the Spanish Higher Council for Scientific Research (CSIC) (since 2011), and a member of the Advisory Board of SAP Ibérica (since 2013) and of Spencer Stuart (since 2017).

In addition, she was the Chief Operating Officer for IBERDROLA’s International Division with responsibility for the United Kingdom and the United States and the executive chair of IBM for Spain and Portugal from July 2001 to January 2009 and expanded her area of responsibility to include Greece, Israel and Turkey from July 2005 and January 2009.

She is a trustee and member of various boards of trustees and committees of several different institutions and bodies, including the Academy of Social Sciences and Environment of Andalusia, the Board of Trustees of the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Madrid and the International Advisory Board of the Instituto de Empresa. In December 2015 Amparo was appointed a full member of the Spanish Royal Academy of Economic and Financial Sciences.

**Amparo, you are a full member of the Spanish Royal Academy of Economic and Financial Sciences, a member of Hall of Fame of the Women in Technology organisation and you have built an outstanding professional career in the field of business management. How would you define your leadership model? In your experience, what qualities must a good leader have?**

I like to be sure that teams have a clear vision and understand what direction you want to give to the business. Where a clear mission has been defined, uniting the team to achieve that goal is very easy. Besides having a shared vision, I consider myself to be someone with high expectations, and I believe that professionals with this quality are also highly self-critical. Nonetheless, I always ensure to convey a collaborative, respectful leadership style which puts people at their ease when they express their opinions and allows them to employ all their skills. Ultimately, it is about being able to create a work environment in which the collective talent can be channelled to achieve the goal defined.

**All the studies indicate that the corporate governance of Board of Directors with female participation is more efficient. However, the number of women in significant roles remains inadequate. How can women's leadership be fostered?**

Those circumstances in which female talent is able to advance arise because the organisations provide equal opportunities, talent is recognised and advancement is based on who brings and contributes most, irrespective of their gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or nationality. The success of those companies does not lie in fact that they have more female employees, but that they encourage and reward talent above all else.

Having said that, there are a large number of women in senior executive corporate positions that are in a position to provide experience in a broad range of fields, such as technology, the environment, energy, digital transformation, internationalisation, etc. Such skills are sorely needed by companies' boards of

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**The pandemic has revealed the digital divide, as well as the transformative role afforded by cloud-based technologies, artificial intelligence and remote working. What would you say to small and medium-sized companies that have not addressed digitalisation? How can business leaders incorporate technology in their strategy?**

We should see technology as an ally and an effective tool in the achievement of our business goals and in our role as managers. Technology has to be at the heart of innovation; however, there is a fundamental problem with respect to the competencies and skills required to exploit it to the full. I believe that the Next Generation European Funds are going to allow companies to approach this innovation and digitalisation process with considerable amount of assistance and financial support. It offers a unique opportunity which SMEs, in particular, cannot afford to miss.

directors and their effective provision does not require prior experience as a chief executive officer. I believe we are going to see more diversity and it is crucial that shareholders and stakeholders focus on ensuring that that diversity be encouraged in governing bodies. However, in order to be effective I think there needs to be a cascade effect within organisations and the presence of women in management positions needs to be fostered, as is seen in France, where it is mandatory for a certain percentage of senior executive positions to be held by women.

**Sustainability is another of the great challenges we face as a society. The efforts being made to reduce environmental impact are observed in the business arena. How can leaders transmit the importance of sustainability to their stakeholders?**

The various roles of a manager should include the ability to transform their own experience into knowledge that can be leveraged by their teams. They are also required to provide information about the business environment in which the entity operates and those variables, beyond the short-term, that are going to define an organisation's success and failure. A company's ability to operate sustainably is going to have a decisive influence over its future.

We are seeing how asset management funds are redirecting their investment strategies towards companies that not only have sustainability targets, but are also on target to achieving those goals within the established deadlines. We are also seeing how shareholders and activists alike are calling for this change by organisations and, what's more, if companies are unable to attract investors, or raise financing, their capacity for future investment and growth is going to be severely comprised.

**With respect to the issue of sustainability and future generations, we also see a lack of girls and young women in the STEM fields. How can technical vocations be encouraged among young women and girls? What can companies do to help in this regard?**

This is the greatest challenge facing organisations because we are talking about an age at which young women of 12 or 13 years of age decide whether to embark on an arts or science path in their studies; a decision which may ultimately define which degree course they enrol in at a later date. Although it is true that companies are faced by this issue when young women have already left university, the underlying decision is taken many years earlier. The question is how can companies achieve a greater presence at that stage of young women's lives.

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At IBM we had scheme called TryScience which organised in-company workshops to which we invited 12- and 13-year-old girls to attend to enable them to see the practical role the sciences have for themselves. Mathematics and physics are often taught without showing students their application. We organised laboratories, games and experiences to allow young women to see for themselves how these fields of study have a tangible impact on the world and their day to day lives. The take-up rates spoke for themselves, 70% of those young women who participated in the schemes then went on to choose science courses.

**Lastly, in terms of leadership, who have been your mentors? Which leaders or important people have inspired you?**

My role models have always been very close to me and my grandmother is probably one of the most important examples. Women who in our non-too distant past were able, with their values and practical intelligence, to carve out their own path and create a future for themselves. My grandmother was the person who told me very early on in life that the only way to women's independence was economic and professional independence. This saw the birth of a vocation for positions of influence and leadership. Of course, you subsequently learn how to be a good leader by being around good executives. You learn how to be a good director through contact with good directors, because this subject is not explained at university or in books.

## Contact

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