

Women Achievers spl: Ms Myra Eskes: Improving lives in moments that matter

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Myra Eskes is President & CEO at GE Healthcare Southeast Asia. She is a senior executive with over twenty years of global and leadership experience in the medical devices and life sciences industry. She has expertise in building high performing sales and service teams to deliver innovative and cost-effective healthcare solutions in emerging markets. Prior to her current role, Myra led the GEHC Life Sciences business for the Eastern & African Growth markets, covering Turkey, the Middle East, Africa and Russia/CIS countries.

Myra considers the healthcare entrepreneurs in emerging markets as her role models, as their drive, courage, risk-appetite

and focus to make an impact on their communities is a real source of inspiration for her. She noted, “When I started in the medical devices industry with GE in the US, I thought my career was going to be in supply chain, driving productivity and lean manufacturing. Fifteen years later, I found myself leading the GE Life Sciences business in Turkey, the Middle East and Russia, working with pharma start-ups, selling biopharmaceutical factories. Things are very different again today as I lead the GE Healthcare business in Southeast Asia.”

A common thread in her career at GE, which has spanned across continents and divisions, is the opportunity she has had to be pivotal in “Improving Lives in Moments That Matter”. It is also what she says makes her job meaningful, and gives her the confidence and motivation in overcoming challenges. Through the GE teams in Sustainable Healthcare Solutions, Myra’s business focus is on developing disruptive, low-cost technologies and healthcare delivery solutions relevant to multiple care settings and non-traditional users in the emerging markets.

With a lot of clarity and focus towards her professional goals, Myra has always believed in GE’s equality-at-work approach. While discussing the challenges of navigating gender norms as a woman leader, she says proudly, “I can say I have never paid much attention to how male-dominated my environment is, nor have I seen it as a special challenge. I have had the advantage that I have always worked for a company – GE – where equal opportunity and meritocracy are not just talk, but actually put in practice. If you are capable and up for the challenge of the job, you can go do it.”

Also, as a woman leader herself, she is cognizant of the potential of nurturing & mentoring women to positions where they can help shape the future of health worldwide, and this is another of her focus areas in the organization. However, she admits that women do have some self-imposed pressures, “First, women are less likely than men to raise their hand for a job without being asked to apply. Or to ask for a raise for that matter! Second, when women have children, there can be a slowdown in career progress, because it may temporarily impact how they decide on a next career step.” She understands the need to help recognize, develop and grow women leadership and believes that overcoming these impediments will make a positive contribution to change the face of global health for the future.

Myra Eskes has a piece of advice for budding women entrepreneurs. “Don’t feel intimidated about being the ‘only woman’ in the room, or the odd one out in terms of experience, background or nationality for that matter. You are there, and you should stay, because you have something to offer”, she reckons.