



## Blog – Silent Leadership

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The important potential of Silent Leaders within organizations is still insufficiently recognized.

**We, Claudia en Marjo from Global Women Leadership, like to highlight the importance of Silent Leaders in organizations. Many organizations still operate on a traditional basis where boards, leaders and managers are appointed and they decide. People with leadership qualities in the workplace are often overlooked, even though they have an essential role within the organization. These are silent leaders and every organization has them. Before you can tap into the potential of these leaders, you need to understand which characteristics they have and what organizational change is needed to recognize and acknowledge their positions. Because silent leaders do not just show themselves.**

### **Why Silent Leadership is really necessary**

Silent Leadership is not new, it has always been there, but is less known within Western leadership. We see Silent Leadership in anthropology and African leadership. We at Global Women Leadership are changing this by creating awareness about this often still hidden business capital.

Because organizational structures of companies today are changing more towards an Agile way-of-working, the silent leaders become more visible and needed. Organizations work with (self-managing) teams and project owners. The people within these teams work independently on goals, often led by a silent leader who takes that position naturally (and often unconsciously).

In more and more organizations you see that employees do not simply accept what is said from above. People want to be more involved and the silent leaders are the key to that.

**How do you recognize a silent leader?** A silent leader builds bridges and believes in the common goals. The silent leader dares to let go, so that the other is given the space to take a position and grow in the role and work. He or she finds himself less important and always looks at the bigger picture. The pleasure of participating is more important than the title or the position. But be aware, silent leaders are not softies. They are the people with a clear voice and the people who stand up, but who always speak for the entire group. See the silent leaders therefore as the linking pin that forms the connection between the workplace and the board or



management. They are “the voice of the people” to get the message and ideas to the higher level within the organization.

## **Discover the silent leaders within your organization**

Every organization has a (formal) organizational structure. Without perhaps being aware of it, there is also an informal organizational structure. Think of employees who initially go to someone else within the organization with their question or idea than to the manager or designated person. Usually, employees first talk about their concerns or ideas with a colleague they trust. With our SL organization scan and GWL method we identify the informal structure and provide vital data about how the wheels really spin within an organization and who the key persons are. The latter are usually the silent leaders.

When these social hubs are researched within an organization and we know who hold the key positions, the silent leaders can also be recognized and acknowledged. Sometimes those individuals don't even know that they are a silent leader. They may not be aware of their influence and qualities. What do you think will happen if you make that potential visible, acknowledge it and leverage from it? They are “the voice of the people” in the workplace and can therefore offer important support to the board or management. On the one hand, by backing them more in the strategy and course setting with the input they receive from the work floor, but on the other hand by transferring information from management to the work floor and by getting management supported by the employees. Trust, safety and good communication are crucial in this. If you, as an organization, do not approach this with integrity, it can be disastrous and a silent leader will withdraw.

## **The motivation to make Silent Leadership known**

Silent Leadership is very recognizable for both Marjo and Claudia, each from their own role. For Marjo, who has fulfilled a Silent Leadership role for many years within her positions at organizations for which she (has) worked, to give more substance to this has been a dream that she has cherished for a long time. It feels like a mission to help other people in this important role they fulfill as Silent Leaders. The same applies to Claudia, she speaks from experience from the various leadership positions she has held, in which she has already motivated many people to do something they thought they could not do. That's really magical. People are going to work in a different way, there will be more clout and more “happiness” in the workplace.

Certainly in today's time it is of great importance to stimulate the hidden leadership potential within organizations. The current generation simply no longer accepts certain leadership styles. They want to be more involved in the how, what and why of an organization. Getting a job may not be that hard. But having a job in which you connect yourself with your heart and contribute to



the bigger picture, that makes you happy. People are then more flexible and therefore more committed, as long as they get the chance to put more of themselves into the function they fill.

## **We invite you; discover the Silent Leadership potential in your organization**

An organizational change in which Silent Leadership is tapped will always yield benefits for all involved. We are certainly aware that such a transition can be a barrier in letting go and trusting for the employer, the board and the manager. The only "risk" that you run is that you better connect with your employees. And that in itself provides fantastic recognition for good employership.

Do you want to tap into the Silent Leadership potential in your organization? Please contact us and we will explain everything about our GWL method.

Do you recognize yourself as a silent leader and do you want to exchange ideas about it? Feel free to get in touch with us.

Claudia Hopman  
Marjo van den Broek

[www.globalwomenleadership.nl](http://www.globalwomenleadership.nl)