



Julie Gilbert

A Catalyst for Womens' Leadership in Business

TOPICS:

Innovation; Organization and People; Business Strategy; Leadership and Management; Social Change

BIG IDEAS:

The Fuel to Power Performance: Leadership, Diversity, and Innovation.

Julie Gilbert's capacity to tap employees' passions to drive innovation and value has earned her a reputation as one of the fastest-rising leaders in corporate America. At Best Buy, Inc., she leads retail training, leadership development, and the company's innovation engine for the more than 140,000 Best Buy employees internationally. She also created and leads the Winning With Women strategy for the company, which is powered by WOLF

(Women's Leadership Forum). Under her leadership, Best Buy has achieved significant business outcomes in employee recruiting, retention, and customer market share. In this presentation, Julie shares the strategies she and her team utilize to mine new growth markets, identify unmet customer needs, and create value by leveraging diversity of thought inside and outside of Best Buy.

BIOGRAPHY

Julie Gilbert is a visionary business entrepreneur and motivator. She has spent her career creating strategies for new business growth and inspiring employees and customers. In her current role at Best Buy, she is senior vice president of the Winning with Women/WOLF business strategy movement, Retail Learning, and Innovation. She is best known for her progressive company transformation strategy called WOLF, an innovative approach directly engaging employees from the "bottoms' up" and consumers from the "outside in" to reinvent business growth. Through this WOLF movement, she led the mission to land Best Buy as THE place for women to work and shop.

An eight-year company veteran, Gilbert has demonstrated her visionary and inspirational leadership qualities and commitment to developing the business and people through many capacities. Founded on her belief that great business growth comes from creating environments that engage each person's passion and talents – inside and outside the company – Gilbert launched the WOLF business strategy. Through her leadership in WOLF, Best Buy has increased female market share by more than \$3.6 billion, reduced female employee turnover by more than 5% each year and increased representation of women at all levels in the organization. In addition to the outcomes of new customer business growth, WOLF has also simultaneously scaled capabilities of organic and skilled innovation, the build of a loyal, global network, the development of leadership skills at all levels, and an inherent commitment to community "give back."

Gilbert also works to unlock the leader in every single Best Buy employee by overseeing teams which develop and implement the training curriculum for the company's 150,000 employees. She recently applied her leadership to the creation and launch of the company's Learning Lounge learning/training program (2008). The Learning Lounge is a new methodology in retail training that enables each of the company's retail employees, regardless of geographic location, to contribute and learn the skills they need – when and how they wish to learn them – to be successful with engaging consumers. Her team is also helping enable innovation at the individual employee level by connecting employees with business ideas to networks of corporate support teams through a virtual web platform, The Loop.

Previously, Gilbert served as vice president of customer centricity for Best Buy where she led the creation, partnership, and U.S.-scale of Best

Buy's Magnolia Home Theatre store-within-a-store concept. In her time as director of alliance development, she created and implemented several strategic relationships with key partners, including Virgin Mobile, Microsoft, Hewlett Packard and Sony. Prior to her time at Best Buy, she worked for Deloitte and Touche where she created several new businesses, including one which she scaled nationally and built to become a top performance driver for the company.

Gilbert presents motivational business reinvention, innovation, and leadership workshops to tens of thousands of individuals internationally. She is on the board of directors for Harvard Business Kennedy School Women's Board, The White House Project Board, and SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise). She is also active with Girls Scouts, the world's preeminent organization dedicated to building girls' character and skills for success in the real world; Safe Horizons, the nation's largest non-profit domestic and workplace violence organization located in New York City; and the Grameen Foundation, a non-profit that helps women in the most poverty stricken areas of the world build new businesses based on their passions and talents.

In 2008, she was honored with the EPIC "Circle of 10 Award" from The White House Project, which recognizes exceptional work by women across sectors and honors the White House Project's anniversary. She was also named one of Minnesota's Women to Watch by Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal; 2008's Top 20 Business Leaders to watch by Twin Cities Business; Top 25 Business Leaders in Minnesota; and one of the 100 Most Successful Women in Business by Profiles in Diversity Journal magazine. Recently, she was also named as one of the top 15 Women in Business in the U.S. by PINK Magazine.

A South Dakota, United States native, Gilbert earned her master's degree in strategy and marketing and her bachelor's degree in accounting, both with highest distinction, from the University of Minnesota Carlson School of Business. She is an active teacher at New York University and the University of Minnesota. Gilbert is also a certified public accountant in the state of Minnesota. An avid writer, Gilbert also authors a monthly blog for PINK Magazine, and is a contributor to the Harvard Business School blog. She has also been published internationally and is in the process of writing a book about the WOLF business reinvention strategy.