

Why Women Don't Rule

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

The good news: Women are making definite strides in the world of business. The bad news: Women still number far fewer than men in the high-powered positions. In the United States, the number of women holding corporate officer positions at large public companies has almost doubled since 1995—up to 15.7

percent from 8.7 percent. But women make up only 5 percent of all top-earning U.S. executives.

Internationally, the story is much the same. A recent *Fortune* article cites a study of British managers: Twenty-five percent are now women, up from 9 percent a decade ago. That rise, like the one in the

United States, is a good start. But when will the figures reflect population ratios, and what's stopping that from happening? New research proposes some answers.

Making a difference. A recent study examined work attitudes of boys and girls in middle and high schools in the United States. Ninety-

Men still far outnumber women in corporate management and executive positions. New research proposes why.

Battles of the Sexes

This year's versions of CBS's *Survivor* and MTV's *Real World/Road Rules Challenge* change formats to pit men against women. As of this writing, the women on MTV have won four of six mental and physical competitions. *Survivor* launched a week before press, but it will be interesting to see whether the results mirror the studies cited here.

seven percent of girls surveyed expect to work to help support their families, but only 10 percent plan a business career. What's at issue? Work values, it seems. Two-thirds of the girls ranked helping others in their career as "extremely or very important," and only half ranked making money as a top priority. Among the boys, the numbers were almost exactly reversed.

Researchers believe that the girls in the study—and

their peers in general—have a perception that they can't help others in a business career. What's needed is more women as role models to show girls that business and service to others can mix, says an associate dean of the all-female Simmons School of Management.

Competitive spirit. Two economists at U.S. universities have determined that men are more competitive than women—if you agree with their interpretation of


the data, that is.

One study at the University of Chicago had boys and girls run races alone and together. When the children ran alone, they had similar speeds. But when a boy was paired together with a girl, he ran significantly faster than when he ran alone. However, the girl showed no increase in speed.

The second study, by an economist at the University of Minnesota, paid Israeli students money for completing mazes. When the students were all paid per maze, men and women did equally well. But when only the top performer was paid, male performance increased by 50 percent, while female performance remained the same.

The studies' authors conclude that women are much less responsive to competition than men, which may hurt them in competitive job markets and hinder promotions.

Training obstacles. In the United Kingdom, a survey conducted by training supplier Cambridge Online Learning found that twice as many women as men are missing out on training because of domestic responsibilities or because they work part-time. Lack of child care and needing to care for a relative interfered with the training of working mothers

 "Generation Sandwich," (Intelligence, February T+D) and women working part-time felt less entitled to training than full-time staff.

What can the training function do to help women achieve top positions? Write to me ekaplan@astd.org and tell me what these studies mean—or don't mean—to you. I'll run a selection of comments in an upcoming column.

 Sources/ the Washington Post, Business Week, personnel-today.com

E-News

How many people are learning online? That's what a new study by Babson College and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation will attempt to measure. Babson associate professor I. Elaine Allen says the question may seem simplistic but because the field is so new, there is no "comprehensive data source at the federal or private levels that measures trends and patterns."

A major goal of the study is to determine where online learning is being used successfully and where improvements can be made. Babson College, in Wellesley, Massachusetts, is known for its entrepreneurial management program.

 Source/ boston.com

Training Course of the Month

Loyalty Factor, a training and consulting firm in New Hampshire, offers a Teaching Techies to Talk training course for tech-support workers at such companies as IBM and Eastman Software. Techies take personality tests, practice listening skills, and assess their communication

habits by listening to taped tech-support sessions. Training is customized for each company, takes place over three half-day sessions, and costs about US\$15,000.

We not-so-technical people are grateful.

↳ Source/Fortune

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PolicyNews

A snapshot of U.S. federal legislation and policy affecting workforce development and the HRD profession.

New Legislation Provides Training Dollars to Unemployed

A top job-training initiative included in President Bush's economic stimulus package was introduced as the *Back to Work Incentive Act* (HR 444) by Representative Jon Porter (R-NV). Under the act, Personal Reemployment Accounts would be created to provide up to US\$3000 for unemployed workers to use for job training, child care, transportation, and relocation expenses.

The Personal Reemployment Accounts would be administered through local One-Stop Career Centers that would integrate employment, education, and training programs into a one-stop service for job seekers. The centers would also be responsible for the evaluation and tracking of the accounts.