

/BALANCE/

## Mother Leads Best

Raising a family turns a good leader into a great one

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

MOTHERHOOD is a better leadership training program than any that could be artificially devised, says Moe Grzelakowski. She speaks partly from personal experience working as one of the top-ranking women at Bell Laboratories, Motorola, and Dell; partly from evidence gathered running CEO retreats in a side business; and partly from time spent interviewing 50 mothers who are CEOs or senior executives at Fortune 100 companies.

In *Mother Leads Best: 50 Women Who are Changing the Way Organizations Define Leadership*, Grzelakowski says that women who reach top executive positions exhibit traits similar to those shown by top male leaders: ambition, competitiveness, toughness, and drive. Many of these women are workaholics, as Grzelakowski was. Yet, while those qualities are seen as positive for male leaders, women who exhibit them are often viewed as “dragon ladies” or “ice maidens.” On the other hand, women who focus on relationships at work are seen as too weak for power positions.

But, Grzelakowski postulates, there’s a development process that can help a woman strike the ideal balance: becoming a mother. Mothers learn how to blend toughness with support when raising their children, the author says. They are trained in patience, compassion, and negotiating skills, and cultivate flexibility, a trait that makes them excellent situational leaders. In fact, says the author, maternal instinct is very similar to leadership

instinct. That explains why senior-level men and women consistently told her that mothers were the most skillful leaders on their teams.

But what about the men, you might ask. Isn’t Grzelakowski being sexist? Shouldn’t she write that *parenthood* is the best leadership training program?

The author hedges a bit by saying that you don’t have to be a mother to be a maternal leader. Men or women without children can still acquire the traits needed to be a balanced executive, by being aware and practicing them regularly. But motherhood, she says, is the most “natural” way to achieve them.

Grzelakowski’s research showed her that men don’t go through the same level of transformation women do when they have children. Even when a father helps with the caregiving, she says, the heaviest load still rests on the mother’s shoulders, forcing her to juggle and adapt and causing the aforementioned change. (This may be shifting slowly, according to research presented in two T+D articles, “The Changing Workforce,” January 2005, and “Father Friendly,” July 2004.)

Grzelakowski admits that her findings are controversial—“categorizing gender issues has become taboo,” she says—but she thinks her discovery is “tremendously important.”

“If mother does in fact lead best, then companies certainly should make a greater effort to recruit, retain, and develop high-potential moms,” she writes. Companies who do so could have a competitive advantage.

In addition, better understanding the

relationship between motherhood and leadership could help young people—many of whom think the two goals conflict—make different choices, she says.

Finally, the mother leads best idea could revolutionize the glass ceiling, Grzelakowski asserts. She asks the radical question, “Should we establish new CEO selection criteria that make parenthood one of the job specs?”

The author doesn’t pretend to have all of the answers. She raises the issues simply to “start a long overdue discussion.”

### Five Tips for Working Women (and Men)

Careerwomen.com, an online career center, surveyed women across the United States to generate these tips on dealing with workplace stress. Hint: They work for men, too.

- 1. De-clutter your office.** A messy office can make you feel more stressed.
- 2. Seize the weekend.** Use your downtime to recharge, exercise, and connect with family and friends.
- 3. Drink more water, less caffeine.** Keeping hydrated makes you feel better and helps you relax.
- 4. Get more sleep.** Being well-rested helps with coping. Try to get seven to eight hours per night.
- 5. Talk about your stress.** Find a friend who can be supportive and sympathetic.

## Learning Execs Strive to Show Business Results

DEMONSTRATING THE EFFECTIVENESS of learning in business terms is the No. 1 challenge for learning executives, found Accenture's 2004 Survey of Learning Executives.

Specifically, chief learning officers, HR vice presidents, and training directors struggle to align their activities with critical business needs, measure their impact on the performance of the business, communicate their value to stakeholders, and earn acceptance of the learning function across the enterprise.

According to Accenture, most learning executives still measure effectiveness in terms of inputs—course completion rates, learning budgets, or learner satisfaction rates—rather than business results, such as increased revenue or decreased costs.

A quarter of the organizations responding to the survey don't measure the financial return of learning in any way, Accenture found, and only 2 percent of learning executives are evaluated on their success in aligning the learning function to corporate goals.

However, a small percentage of organizations do demonstrate the measurable business impact of their learning functions. These companies, just 10 percent of those surveyed, Accenture terms High Performance Learning Organizations. They show mastery of these key capabilities:

- aligning learning initiatives to the organization's business goals
- measuring the overall business impact of the learning function
- moving learning outside the organization to include customers and channel partners
- focusing competency development of the organization's most critical job families
- integrating learning with other functions such as knowledge management, performance support, and talent management
- blending delivery approaches to combine classroom training with asynchronous and synchronous e-learning
- mature designing and delivering of leadership development courses.

HPLOs that demonstrated those capabilities reported measurable gains over their peers, including higher productivity, revenue growth, and profit growth, as well as increased customer and employee retention and improved safety.

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## Do you have what it takes for the top job?

Accenture's 2004 Survey of Learning Executives identified these three critical competencies:

- business acumen
- strategic planning
- ability to market and communicate the benefits of the learning function.

Other important competencies include skills in financial, project, and account management.

/SURVEY SAYS/

# Training Shown to Increase Workforce Engagement

“The numbers are quite staggering,” says Marc Drizin, director of surveys and workforce research for the Performance Assessment Network. The organization recently completed analysis of results in its 2004 [U.S.] Study on Workforce Engagement, and found a significant difference in engagement reported by employees who had participated in training and higher education opportunities and those who had not.

Fifty-four percent of employees who had participated in training or higher education reported that they were “fully engaged.” Only 35 percent of workers who hadn’t completed training or higher education reported their engagement at that level.

(PAN defines “fully engaged” as having a strong personal connection to the organization and acting in ways that create and enhance customer loyalty.)

Drizin says companies that focus on drivers of workplace engagement, such as development, gain a competitive advantage. “Employers need to look at training and learning programs ... as investments ... that pay themselves back very quickly,” he says. “Employees who participate in opportunities for development stay longer, work harder for customers, and recommend the organization as a good place to work.”

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## Smart Link: SalaryClock

Want to know how much you’re making per hour—or minute or second? Type in your annual wages, hit Calculate, and you can watch the pennies add up.

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/HOW TO/

# F O C U S

Having trouble concentrating at work? These F.O.C.U.S. tips from *Tongue Fu!* author Sam Horn can help.

**Five more rule.** If you’re in the middle of a task and want to give up, just do five more: Write five more paragraphs, read five more pages, work five more minutes. Working past the point of frustration helps build mental stamina, just as not giving up when your body gets tired helps build physical stamina.

**One think at a time.** Feeling scatterbrained? Instead of telling your mind not to think about something, which will immediately cause it to disobey you, tell yourself that you’ll think about the distraction later at a prescribed time. Then tell your mind what it should focus on now and give yourself a starting and stopping time.

**Conquer procrastination.** If you feel like putting something off, ask yourself three questions: “Do I have to do this? Do I want it done so it’s not constantly on my conscience? Will it be any easier to do this later?” The answers can help give you the incentive to get it done.

**Use your hands as blinders.** Cup your hands around your eyes so you create tunnel vision, like a telephoto lens. That action symbolizes that you’re looking at and thinking about just one thing. And actually placing your hands like that each time you need to concentrate can create a Pavlovian response and train your brain to focus when you tell it to.

**See as if for the first or last time.** Next time your mind is on something different than what you’re doing, step back and really see what’s around you as if you’ve never seen it before, or you won’t ever see it again. That can help you be fully present.

**/COMING SOON/**

# New Wave of Mergers Expected

THE CURRENT WAVE of mergers and acquisitions in the United States is about to include more companies engaged in training outsourcing services, according to Thomas A. Barocci, a Boston-based management consultant. He predicts the consolidation will occur within a two-year window, after which time “most of the big deals will be done.”

Barocci, founder and principal of T.A.B. Associates, a strategy and organizational consulting firm for mergers and acquisitions, is excited about the training outsourcing field’s expected minimum 15 percent year-over-year growth rate, and strong revenue and profit potential. He says the field is drawing keen interest from equity players, the investment banking community, and large companies eager to enter the space or to expand their positions in it.

“The time is right for many companies to begin to outsource the learning and training function in a significant way, be it within HR or, more significantly, other parts of the organization,” Barocci told participants at the Training Outsourcing Executive Summit recently in Durham, N.C. Sponsored by The Exceleration Group, a Cary, N.C.-based training outsourcing consulting firm, the meeting drew representatives from more than 22 companies who had gathered to discuss the future of the training and learning industry segment.

Barocci estimates that the entire training outsourcing field is only a US\$3 billion per-year slice of the \$230 billion learning and training total available market—one that promises to expand rapidly just like its HR outsourcing cousin.

He points to several large acquisitions in business process outsourcing last year, including Hewitt Associates’ merger with Exult Inc. in September 2004, creating a \$3 billion company that claims a 30 percent share of the HR

outsourcing market. In March 2004, BPO firm Convergys acquired training company DigitalThink, a move that instantly propelled Convergys to the top tier of training outsourcing firms.

According to Barocci, certain training outsourcing suppliers are takeover candidates as outside companies seek avenues of entry. Members of the cash-rich investment banking community appreciate the strategic value of workforce training as more corporations seek

“As much as these large content players might want to become sole sources of training, they will likely stop short of entering the BPO market.”

to closely align learning with business goals and require business metric-based measurements. Another reason: “Learning is expanding along the value chain—it’s not just for employees anymore.”

At the executive summit, Barocci pointed to the growth in customer training outsourcing along with the increased need for scalable training to meet certification requirements. He also highlighted the emerging trend of learning and training at the boundaries with suppliers and subcontractors who must,

in order to be efficient and effective, be cognizant of the operation processes of customers.

Barocci also offered advice to the training outsourcing executives on how to prepare their companies for a merger or acquisition. His assessment is echoed by other industry observers, including analyst Trace Urdan with Robert W. Baird & Co.

“The first wave of consolidation included custom content players, and there are probably more Indian operators left to acquire,” says Urdan. “The question going forward remains whether outsourcers will feel compelled to add technology and content to their mix.”

Urdan continues: “We think the likely answer is ‘yes’ to technology and ‘no’ to content. Despite the best efforts of vendors, both are commoditizing. As technology becomes a commodity, and as the BPO market grows and players gain real scale, they’ll find it more useful to simply own the delivery platform/LMS rather than to be required to interact with a host of smaller vendors.”

Urdan says that as the content market commoditizes, it will consolidate as well, led by content savvy firms such as The Washington Post’s Kaplan, and Thomson. “As much as these large content players might want to become sole sources of training, they will likely stop short of entering the BPO market,” he predicts. “Likewise BPO players, satisfied to be dealing with larger vendors, will feel no need to own off-the-shelf content.”

The net effect, believes Urdan, will be two different paths of consolidation: 1) of content, which will likely happen soon (0 to 18 months), and 2) of technology, which will occur after training BPO is more established (18 to 36 months). “What seems very clear now with Oracle’s successful purchase of PeopleSoft is that the hopes of LMS players to be bought by large enterprise software entities looks very unlikely,” he says.

—Paul Harris

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/Q&A/

## In Young Company



**X-men:** Younger leaders step in.

MANAGERS ACROSS COMPANY LEVELS are growing younger, and seasoned workers often find themselves reporting to a youthful generation of leaders who lack seniority.

That scenario was portrayed in the recent movie “In Good Company,” starring Dennis Quaid, Topher Grace, and Scarlett Johansson. The movie follows a veteran executive who is demoted and finds that his new boss is half his age.

Bill Byham, co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Development Dimensions International, talked to T+D about the perils and positives of promoting younger executives.

**T+D:** *Why are younger managers being promoted more often to leadership roles in organizations?*

**Bill Byham:** There are more, younger managers in leadership roles because organizations are fast-tracking them for senior positions. As the baby boomers retire, there will be many more senior leadership positions open and companies will need leaders who are ready. That means providing individuals with experiences in different parts of the organization, with operations in different

countries and in diverse managerial challenges—such as dealing with a union operation.

Also, since organizations are flatter, there aren’t the same rungs for a leader to move up. Companies have had to create new paths to build leadership capability. By providing varied experiences, organizations will groom high-potential individuals both vertically and horizontally. People will be stretched to learn many aspects of a business, gain technical expertise, and manage a diverse group of people, including those who may be older than they are.

**T+D:** *How can an organization mitigate the negative reactions of senior managers who are passed over for promotion and find themselves reporting to much younger bosses?*

**BB:** First, the organization needs to show the people in the unit who will be managed by a younger person that the decision to place him or her will benefit them and the company. Management can talk about what the individual brings in terms of growth opportunities, new ideas, contacts, new projects, and so forth. They should also share that

this placement is part of an overall organizational strategy.

Second, in the first three to six months, an executive coach can interview each of the people on the team and work with the new leader on meeting the personal and business needs of each.

**T+D:** *What role does training play in preparing younger leaders to assume senior positions?*

**BB:** Training can prepare emerging leaders by strengthening their leadership and management skills, so they can win over their new subordinates, and involve and empower people who may know far more than they do at the start.

Also, we find that new leaders often don’t understand all the roles they play. Training can build awareness and understanding of these roles and the right skills.

**T+D:** *Why are hiring and promotion policies based solely on experience bad for an organization?*

**BB:** Experience is not the same as expertise, which should be part of the criteria for assessing leaders for promotions or hiring. An individual can be a salesperson for 20 years and still not be an expert. So, it’s important to look at whether the individual actually possesses the expertise you require.

Of course, expertise in terms of technical knowledge or skills is only part of what executives need. Not everyone has the critical thinking abilities, worldview, or analytical skills to deal with multiple issues simultaneously; these are just some of the competencies required for senior leadership positions.

And sometimes when you find an individual with the right competencies, he or she doesn’t possess the personal attributes—such as motivation.

One of the worst situations is to promote someone based on expertise and find out that he or she doesn’t have the skills to step up to operational or strategic leadership demands. That causes retention problems, decreases in organizational performance, and many other challenges that can be difficult to reverse.

—Rex Davenport



Cyndi Gaudet, director of the WLPC, introduces Jack and Patti Phillips at a press conference.

**/NEWS FLASH/**

## Evaluation Gurus Create Endowment, Extend Partnership

JACK AND PATTI PHILLIPS, experts in training measurement and evaluation and founders of the ROI Institute, recently donated US\$1.1 million to the Workplace Learning and Performance Center at the University of Southern Mississippi. The funds will create the Drs. Jack and Patti Phillips Workplace Learning and Performance Endowment and support graduate assistantships, a Guru Series, professional development, and activities for the WLPC Advisory Council. Says Patti Phillips, "It was the easiest check I've ever written."

The ROI Institute has partnered with the university since 2003 to help public sector organizations develop measurement and evaluation competencies using the institute's ROI methodology. Phillips says a "critical need exists within the public sector to build accountability processes."

To further that aim, the couple will help launch a Center for Public Sector Accountability centered around the ROI principles as well as the university's academic research; the center will help organizations apply and sustain the ROI methodology. The Phillipses and the university hope to eventually create a Center for Accountability and Performance Improvement that will have similar goals for the private sector.

Jack and Patti Phillips also sit on the WLPC Advisory Council, providing strategic advice on trends in training and development both in the United States and internationally.

Patti Phillips says the WLPC is a model for other centers across the United States in the way it brings t+d competencies to industry and government. In addition, she says the couple has been impressed with the foresight of the university's "innovative, collaborative leaders."

—EKL

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