

THE FIRST REPORT

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DO WOMEN CHOOSE CONTROL OVER CORPORATE LADDER?

In the U.S., women want to be top managers as much as men do, but gender stereotyping often keeps them from holding top management jobs, according to studies. Lately, book authors and the national media have suggested that women actually like staying beneath the so-called glass ceiling because their jobs allow them to achieve greater happiness in their lives as a whole.

If the definition of power is having control of your life, this is good news, because it indicates that women aren't succumbing to the illusion that money is power and are making conscious choices to benefit their lives. Still, for women who want to lead organizations, gender stereotyping is a discouraging obstacle because it's invisible, pervasive, untrue and unfair.

The fact is that women still don't hold top positions in business in proportion to their share of the managerial workforce. In 2006, for instance, only 15.6% of Fortune 500 corporate officers and 14.6% of Fortune 500 board directors were women, while women made up more than 50% of managerial, professional and related occupations, reports Catalyst, a nonprofit group that promotes women in business.

In a recent study, Catalyst notes that gender stereotypes lead organizations to routinely underestimate and underutilize women's leadership talent. Moreover, they perpetuate a "no-win" situation for women executives wherein they're wrong regardless of what they do, in three areas particularly:

Perception: Women leaders are perceived as "never just right." If female executives behave consistently with gender stereotypes, they are considered too soft. If they go against gender stereotypes, they are viewed as too tough.

Competence threshold: Women leaders face higher standards than men and are rewarded with

less. They often must work harder than men to achieve the same level of recognition and to prove they can lead. For instance, they may need to succeed repeatedly to prove they can achieve success, whereas a man might need to demonstrate success once or twice. As far as pay, the highest compensated U.S. women executive earned \$26.1 million in 2006, not even close to the \$48 million earned by the 10th highest paid male executive, reports Equilar Inc., a compensation research firm.

Likeability: Women who exhibit traditionally valued leadership behaviors such as assertiveness are seen as competent yet not personable or well liked, Catalyst reports. Those using a more stereotypical feminine style are liked but not considered as having key leadership skills.

Organizations must take steps to overcome the damaging impact of gender stereotyping and use the expanding pool of female leadership talent to the fullest. Such steps might involve assessing the workplace to determine in what ways women are at risk of being stereotyped; creating workplace practices targeting and eliminating bias; training managers and employees to recognize bias and its consequences and to understand the inconsistencies between their values and actual behavior.

This issue doesn't belong on the back burner. Talented women are leaving organizations to start their own companies at a fast clip, and experts say the glass ceiling is a key cause. Between 1997 and 2006, the number of women-owned firms grew 42%, compared to a 23% growth rate for all new firms, reports the Center for Women's Business Research. In health care, the growth rate for women-owned firms was 130% between 1997 and 2006, the second highest by industry, the center reports.

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DIVERSITY RECRUITING LAGS IN HEALTHCARE

Although healthcare executives believe that diversity leadership is important to their organizations' success, few believe much progress has been made to close the diversity leadership gap in the past five years, reports Witt/Kieffer, a healthcare executive recruiting firm in Oak Brook, Ill.

More than two-thirds of minority executives and 40% of majority executives don't agree with the statement that healthcare organizations have made strides in adding diversity leaders in the last five years, its survey shows. Half of minority executives and one-third of majority executives disagree that their own employer has achieved success in closing the gap since 2001.

Almost 700 vice presidents and higher-level executives responded to the survey, with two-thirds of majority and nearly 80% of minority managers saying internal diversity programs are strategic to organizational success. But 67% of majority and only 30% of minority leaders agree there are more opportunities in health care for diversity leaders than five years ago. Almost 90% of minorities say the top barrier to diversity recruiting and retention is a lack of commitment by top management, while 81% of majority executives say the top obstacle is too few diversity candidates to promote from within.

INTERESTING JOBS, BALANCE RETAIN EMPLOYEES

Job stability once ranked high on the list of factors sought by new hires. In 2007, it's at the bottom. Nowadays, job seekers' priorities are interesting or meaningful work and work/life balance, according to a survey of 976 employees by Princeton, N.J., consultants Blessing White.

Here's what employees said matters most in their next job: interesting work (29%); meaningful work (18%); work/life balance (18%); financial reward (14%); opportunity for promotion (8%); cultural fit (6%); a boss I trust (4%); and job stability (2%).

RECRUITERS RESPOND TO UNSOLICITED EMAIL

Executive search consultants are more likely to respond to unsolicited resumes now than 15 years ago, with a 2007 survey showing that 75% might choose to reply vs. 45% in 1992, according to ExecuNet, an executive networking organization. About 8% answer all inquires, compared to 24% in 1992, and about 3% don't respond at all, compared to 21% 15 years ago.

But while some recruiters believe they might find a pearl among the hundreds of resumes that arrive daily in their email boxes, "plenty consistently ignore such inquiries, [believing] that it's still far better for a transition-minded or unemployed executive to network their way to a search consultant," ExecuNet reports.

BEING SORRY MEANS HIGHER PAY?

Saying sorry to your spouse could boost your income or earning more may mean you're more willing to say "sorry, dear." A Zogby International survey indicates that 92% of those earning more than \$100,000 annually would apologize at home if they felt themselves completely to blame, vs. 52% of those earning under \$25,000 a year. Reasons for the link between apologizing and income aren't clear, with some experts saying that higher-paid people tend to ask for forgiveness rather than permission. The poll was conducted for The Pearl Outlet, an online pearl retailer.



THE BEST AND WORST CITIES FOR RELOCATING FAMILIES

It's terrific if the metro area where your organization is based ranks high on a top-cities-to-live-in list. Potential new hires are likely to want to move there, making recruitment easier. Young companies also may relocate to your city, which means future economic growth. But what if your metro area ranks at the bottom? For employers in those cities, incentives to attract new hires may be necessary.

This year, employers in Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas; Knoxville, Tenn.; and Provo-Orem, Utah, have likely benefited since they rank No. 1 on the list of best large, medium and small markets for relocating families respectively, reports the Employee Relocation Council, a relocation assistance organization based in Washington, D.C.

ERC bases its annual list on nearly 50 factors that are important to relocating families, including home prices, home affordability, appreciation rates, property taxes, rent costs, recreation and leisure, arts and culture, air quality, unemployment rates, job growth and area educational levels.

Here are the lowest ranked cities on the list: large market, Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall, Fla.; medium market, Stockton, Calif.; small market, York-Hanover, Pa.



FIRST STRATEGIES' CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS CREATE MEASURABLE RESULTS, SAYS JASON WHEELER



If your organization is facing critical staffing shortages, improving your candidate sourcing and assessment may be the answer, says Jason Wheeler, Managing Director of First Strategies, a division of First

Transitions. Further, improving hiring processes will translate into gains in organizational performance, he says.

Studies indicate that while a majority of companies report critical staffing issues, very few have processes in place to improve them. Jason, who joined First Strategies this summer, can help companies identify staffing issues and design tools and procedures to address them.

Most organizations have traditional hiring and staffing procedures in place, whereby a human resources staffer screens candidates to see if their background matches the role's stated qualifications. After that, a hiring manager typically interviews pre-screened candidates. But many hiring managers lack training to determine if potential hires fit the culture, are competent in critical skill requirements or have future potential. "In some cases, the hiring managers go off gut feel and aren't asking the behavioral type questions needed to hire the best candidates," says Jason.

Many employers would benefit significantly if they determined the required "competencies" or qualifications candidates should have to drive success in the organization now and later on. First Strategies identifies and provides assessment tools that can determine these requirements and also provides training to help managers identify new hires with potential.

According to a recent survey, more than half of organizations (53%) report critical shortages among line manager positions, 48% have critical shortages in engineering and other technical professions, such as nurses, and 39% report critical shortages in sales professionals. In its survey, Bersin & Associates, an Oakland, Calif., research company, found that the most urgent talent shortages are in healthcare, government, utilities, oil and gas, and telecommunications sectors.

Among initiatives that can improve business results, the greatest gains come from performance management (34% improvement), competency management (31% improvement), and sourcing and recruiting (27% improvement), according to Bersin. Only 21% of responding organizations currently have some talent management strategy in place, the company reports.

First Strategies' services range from hiring and assessment to performance management to leadership and executive coaching. Employee selection and improvement processes include staffing audits, candidate evaluation tools, and behavioral and other interview training. Post-hire assistance includes new hire orientation and on-boarding programs. FS consultants also design career-path management, change management, career-counseling and assessment, performance-review and succession planning programs to help with talent retention. At the executive level, FS consultants are skilled in leadership development and

coaching managers to ensure organizational success.

Jason comes to First Strategies from Aurico Reports, a human-capital consulting firm, where he was a vice president. At Aurico, he built an Organizational Development/Assessment division from the ground floor. He assisted clients with selection, development and succession-planning processes through strategic planning and customized procedures.

Jason has owned his own HR consulting business and has served in leadership roles for Fortune 500 companies. He has over 12 years of successful business development and sales leadership experience. Jason is certified to conduct team-building and development workshops and is a certified competency-model architect. He's vice president of the Human Resources Association of Greater Oak Brook and a member of SHRM and the Human Resource Management Association of Chicago (HRMAC).

Married for 12 years, Jason and his wife Suzanne have one daughter, Isabella. They live in Downers Grove, Ill., and enjoy spending free time as a family outdoors or at the beach.

Many hiring managers lack training to determine if potential hires fit the culture.

This can hurt organizational performance, says Jason Wheeler



Our day-to-day activities, our dealings with each other and our relationships with customers/clients must be governed by a passionate and unwavering commitment to a set of values, which are:

QUALITY

Take time to do things right the first time.

SERVICE

Render intelligent, timely and considerate service to all.

CONCERN FOR PEOPLE

Treat clients, program participants and employees with honesty, trust, fairness and respect.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communicate with our clients, program participants and employees in ways which will assure mutual understanding.

CONSISTENCY

Insure that our behavior each and every day supports our values, goals, and standards.

SIMPLICITY

Conduct our business in an easily understood manner.

REALISM

Acknowledge that our success will come through intelligence, hard work, patience and experience.

RECOGNITION

That our clients and participants trust us with the most highly confidential information they have.

RESPONSIBILITY

Encourage individual responsibility and decision making.

FLEXIBILITY

Recognize the necessity to be open to change for the mutual benefit of our clients, program participants and our organization.

RESPECT FOR TRADITION

Understand what created past success.

INTEGRITY

Consistently practice the utmost modesty and integrity in serving our clients, our participants and ourselves.

COMMITMENT

Take the plunge - there is truth in the theory that there is "strength in numbers."

And finally, never sacrifice these precepts for the short-term.





*First Transitions stands
for quality in everything
we do. We believe that
the organizations and
individuals we serve
deserve no less. We want
our newsletter and how it
arrives on your desk to reflect
this commitment to quality.*



**WHY THIS NEWSLETTER
ISN'T SENT VIA E-MAIL**

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

People often ask me why we don't send out the First Report by e-mail. They point to all the other human resources organizations sending newsletters electronically, plus the bundle of money we'd save on the white envelopes we mail it in and the postage.

Yes, many groups are sending newsletters electronically, but we're not one of them for several reasons. First, we want people to read the First Report. One study of computer users shows that in 2006, only 19% of electronic newsletters were read, and even then, recipients only viewed them for an average of 51 seconds, so you can't really call that reading.

Second, we're actually saving recipients time and effort by providing them with a printed newsletter. People read text on paper faster than words on a computer monitor and typically only read a longer item like a newsletter after printing them out. We're just saving you that step. (Plus, with so many of us multitasking on our computers all day, who can or wants to take the screen time to read an emailed report!)

Sure, sending a newsletter via snail mail may seem old-fashioned. However, First Transitions stands for quality in everything we do. We believe that the organizations and individuals we serve deserve no less. We want our newsletter and how it arrives on your desk to reflect this commitment to quality.

Obviously, it costs more to print and mail the First Report than to attach it to an e-mail and press "send." We also pay more to slide it into an envelope than if we folded, stapled and sent it via bulk mail.

But it's worth it. Every time we mail out an issue, we reach people. I know because I hear back from former or current colleagues or individuals I haven't met before who have received a copy.

We will always prepare and send first-class information in a first-class way, because that's how we strive to do everything. Besides, if you really want to review the First Report electronically, just visit our Web site, www.firsttransitions.com.

Russ Jones



FIRST¹ TRANSITIONS

First Transitions, Inc. has been a provider of career-transition services since 1981. We have completed consulting assignments for more than 500 organizations in 38 states. Our uniqueness has been in the caring, nurturing approach we have taken in assisting individuals in attaining life goals, personal and professional.

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