

# THE FIRST REPORT

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*Top male and female corporate executives view women as less skilled than men at problem solving, which is a key quality associated with effective leadership and a hallmark trait of a CEO*



## ORGANIZATIONS MUST COMBAT STEREOTYPING OF WOMEN

U.S. companies still have miles to go to create environments that will lead to the promotion of more women to top leadership. Specifically, they need to address gender-based stereotyping, which is keeping women from reaching senior levels.

**Catalyst, a New York research group,** says stereotyping is a main reason why the glass ceiling is still firmly in place throughout corporate America. Even though women hold 50.3% of all U.S. management and professional jobs, they comprise only 7.9% of Fortune 500 top earners and 1.4% of Fortune 500 CEOs, the organization says in a new report.

The study, "Women 'Take Care,' Men 'Take Charge': Stereotyping of U.S. Business Leaders Exposed," indicates that top corporate executives view women as less skilled than men at problem solving, which is a key quality associated with effective leadership and a hallmark trait of a CEO. Catalyst surveyed 296 corporate leaders - 128 men and 168 women - for its report, asking them to rate the effectiveness of women and then men leaders on 10 key leadership behaviors.

**Respondents were asked** their perceptions about women's and men's leadership behavior, not about style. Both surveyed men and women stereotyped senior leaders, according to the report. Women and men consider more women to be superior to men at "take care" behaviors such as supporting and rewarding. And women and men consider significantly more men superior to women at "take charge" behaviors such as delegating and influencing upward.

But respondents differed on the issue of problem solving. Women said more women were better at problem solving than men, and men said men were superior to women in problem-solving effectiveness.

Since men far outnumber women in top management roles, the male-held stereotype dominates current corporate thinking and may be the reason why women aren't advancing in proportion to their numbers at lower levels.

**Exposure to women leaders** doesn't lessen the stereotyping and can sometimes reinforce it, Catalyst reports. The result is that women's leadership skills

may be judged more harshly by colleagues, particularly in traditionally masculine occupations. And it means that some women leaders have to rely on their position or status to influence behavior instead of using their credibility or expertise.

Catalyst recommends that companies take steps beyond hiring more women or instituting more gender-diversity programs to eliminate this bias. These include:

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- initiating more rigorous and transparent performance-evaluation processes;
- safeguarding against stereotyping with a system of checks and balances;
- educating managers and executives about the influence of stereotyping and ways to overcome the automatic tendency to use stereotyping; and
- showcasing the achievements of women leaders, particularly those in male-dominated fields.



## FIRST<sup>1</sup> TRANSITIONS

### CAREER TRANSITION PROGRAMS FOR:

*Executives*

*Senior Managers*

*Directors*

*Managers/Supervisors*

*Exempt and Nonexempt  
Group Workshops*

## FIRST<sup>1</sup> STRATEGIES

*Executive coaching*

*Career assessment*

*Organizational career  
development programs*

*Leadership programs*

*Succession planning*

*Retention strategies*

*360-degree performance appraisals*



## TRENDS WE EXPECT (OR WOULD LIKE TO SEE) IN 2006

This is the time when we make predictions about employment and career trends for the next 12 months. Barring major unforeseen world events, here are our best forecasts:

**The job market will stay strong or get stronger.** Despite a disastrous hurricane season that displaced many employees, the national unemployment rate has stayed at about 5%. This means that more employers are creating jobs than are eliminating them. In some sectors, a lack of skilled workers is causing shortages.

**Older candidates will find a better reception when seeking new positions.** The number of workers 55 and older is growing four times faster than the workforce as a whole and will account for 19% of all U.S. workers by 2012. Meanwhile, the prime age group, employees aged 25 to 44, will shrink, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employers are realizing that mature professionals offer a deep repository of knowledge, good work habits, strong relationships with suppliers and customers and the ability to train younger employees. They're creating more flexible schedules to attract or retain older professionals beyond typical retirement age. One reason: customers are getting older as well.

**Startups and smaller companies will rev up job creation.** Small employers always drive job creation in the U.S. but 2006 could see even more action. Total venture capital investing in 2005 was on target in the fourth quarter to exceed the \$21.7 billion invested in 2002, which was the highest amount in recent years. Investors are putting funds into biotech, medical devices, telecommunications, wireless and networking ventures, many with Internet components, reports the National Venture Capital Association. Look for wiser investing and more sustained growth now than in the heady late 1990s.

**More executives will change jobs in 2006, creating vacancies.** One indicator is a recent ExecuNet survey, which showed that 67% of 147 employed executives aren't satisfied with their current jobs, up from 55% in July 2005. Of those, 78% plan to change companies in the next six months. Employed executives are unhappy for a variety of reasons, including lack of challenge or growth opportunities or a bad boss. But pent-up demand among executives who stayed put because of economic uncertainty may also be a factor. The surveyed executives have been in their jobs an average of six years and earned an average of about \$172,000.

**Companies will look for new solutions to keep employees from jumping ship.** Although benefit plans aren't likely to become more generous, employers will likely seek other ways to sweeten the environment for valued workers. Work-at-home and virtual job arrangements may increase, since neither costs companies. Offering more flexible hours and deep employee discounts on products are other ways to keep employees happy, especially younger workers who often are more motivated by lifestyle issues than pay.



## ATTENTION eBAY SHOPPERS: DOLLS, ANTIQUES... AND RESUMES?

*It had to happen, folks. Now you can buy your own professionally-written resume on eBay. In the "specialty services" area of the mammoth auction Web site, about a half dozen resume writers have put up professional resume makeovers for sale.*

*Starting bids range from \$19.99 to \$39 for the service, which typically includes phone consultation with the resume writer; a first draft, followed by revisions; and a final draft. Bidders also can request cover letters or a second resume for an additional fee or buy the service instantly at a higher price than the initial bid.*

*Job seekers may doubt the writers' quality or expertise, but some of the resume professionals advertising their services have worked for career-counseling firms or as recruiters and the feedback they receive from customers is surprisingly positive.*

*Typical executive-resume writers charge \$500 or more for a resume makeover and cover-letter package. Most of them work by e-mail and phone with clients. If the winning bid for an eBay resume makeover is close to the initial bid price, this service may be a good value for job hunters who lack outplacement counseling and can't afford more.*



**FIRST TRANSITIONS HELPS KATRINA VICTIMS  
MAKE A NEW START**

Last fall, when the greater Chicago area became home to many people displaced by Hurricane Katrina, we at First Transitions wondered if there was anything we could do to help. With our job-coaching expertise, we thought surely the firm could provide assistance to those seeking new jobs in our area.

When a few of our human-resources contacts told us they had been hearing from some of these displaced people, we came up with a plan. While we wanted to help, the challenge was locating Katrina victims seeking new jobs. Most were still living with relatives in other temporary facilities and there was no central resource. Most also didn't have local phone numbers or transportation.

Craig Eberts, a consultant who joined us a few years ago, took the lead by sending an e-mail to our friends and colleagues and some of the relief agencies working with displaced Katrina victims. His note described our mission and asked for names to be sent our way. We also created a contact form for the agencies helping Katrina refugees, which requested basic information about job seekers and how we could reach them.

*To date, we have assisted about a dozen people seeking new careers here as a result of Katrina. They include a chef, sales and customer service professionals, a warehouse person, an after-school program aide, a truck driver, printing and production assembly workers and others.*

These efforts have born fruit. To date, we have assisted about a dozen people seeking new careers here as a result of Katrina. They include a chef, sales and customer service professionals, a warehouse person, an after-school program aide, a truck driver, printing and production assembly workers and others. The group consists of both men and women ranging in age from their 20s to their 50s. Besides Craig, consultants Bob Lautner and Julie Sheehan have been involved in the project.

We don't always know the results of our assistance, which ranges from helping with resumes to providing information about the community. This group has so many overwhelming needs, like just securing basic housing, and in some cases, the promised government assistance hasn't come through.

Our assistance is voluntary, part of our commitment to give back to the community. If you know of a Katrina victim who needs such aid, please call Craig at the Oak Brook office, 630-571-3311

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL PROFILES ONE  
OF OUR SUCCESSES**

Last year, when The Wall Street Journal was looking for a successful jobseeker to profile, it chose John Short, a former client of First Transitions. John had chosen to work with us after parting ways with his previous employer, a 500-bed community hospital in suburban Chicago, where he had been a vice president of professional services.

He arrived here with a great attitude. He wasn't bitter or angry about his job loss. Instead, he was humble and ready to reach out for help from networking contacts, he told the Journal. "You need to get past holding grudges or being angry or it will come out in interviews," he told the paper.

In the end, networking led to John's new position as chief operating officer at St. John's Hospital in Springfield, Ill. Two-and-a-half months after he started job hunting, a friend recommended him to a recruiter seeking to fill the opening. He interviewed for the role and was hired. John had a good list of contacts before his search, but he networks more than ever now. Congratulations, John!



*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.*





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*fraud. She decides to*

*find a job in public*

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*assuming no one*

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*Perhaps that's why*

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*work she wants.*



### A BOOK THAT DOESN'T HELP JOB SEEKERS

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Much has been written and said about Barbara Ehrenreich's new book "Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream" (2005, Metropolitan Books). Some people view her as a modern-day heroine because she exposes deep-seated problems through her poverty writing. For instance, for "Nickel and Dimed," her account about low-wage workers, she took a series of minimum-wage jobs to show how hard it is to survive on them.

But when Ms. E tried to find a white-collar job in 2003, she clearly disliked what she found. Her book ends up being an indictment of the career-counseling and job-search assistance industry. But for someone so smart, her efforts are clumsy and uninformed, resulting in a book that does a disservice to job hunters and the career industry in general for several reasons. First, Ms. E is a fraud. She decides to find a job in public relations and makes up her background, assuming no one could tell otherwise. Perhaps that's why she never finds a job she likes. At late middle-age, she clearly isn't qualified.

Seeking a job as book research and legitimately seeking work aren't the same. One key difference is motivation. Those who legitimately want work are bound to go about it harder and smarter than someone who's researching. Moreover, Ms. E doesn't use personal networking as a job-search technique, even though it's generally considered the best way to locate and land good positions. This could be because the people she knows personally aren't about to recommend her for something she's trying to secure by fraud.

Some of this book's reviewers say it reveals that the career industry takes advantage of unsuspecting job seekers who are desperate for assistance. By Ms. E's account, charlatans are everywhere. But don't unqualified people abound in every industry and don't consumers have a choice? Nagging at me as I read this book was the question, "Why didn't she seek better help; why these people?" Most likely because it made for better reading.

Many excellent and caring people are currently helping job seekers. Many of them do it for little pay. Ms. E's negative attitude resounds through her pages. Fortunately, most of the people we help are far more positive and motivated than she. No wonder they succeed and she didn't.

Russ Jones



## FIRST TRANSITIONS

*First Transitions, Inc. has been a provider of career-transition services since 1981. We have completed consulting assignments for more than 400 organizations in 35 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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