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DISSERTATION

THE SUCCESSFUL ATTAINMENT OF
EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR WOMEN
BASED ON LEADERSHIP STYLE

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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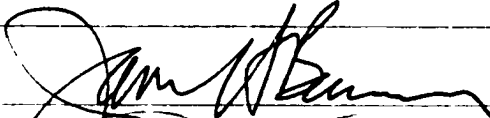
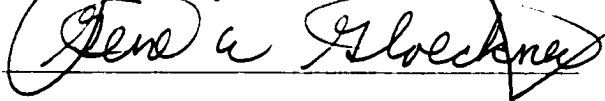
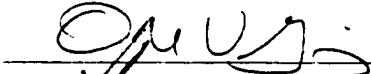
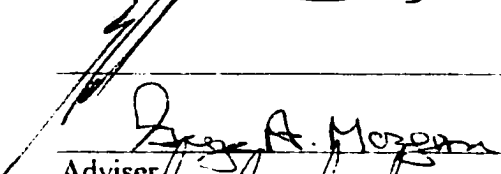
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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

November 2, 1999

WE HEREBY RECOMMENDED THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED
UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY CATHERINE JANE SEES ENTITLED THE
SUCCESSFUL ATTAINMENT OF EXECUTIVE POSITIONS FOR WOMEN BASED
ON LEADERSHIP STYLE BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY.

Committee on Graduate Work





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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
THE SUCCESSFUL ATTAINMENT
OF EXECUTIVE POSITIONS
FOR WOMEN BASED ON LEADERSHIP STYLE

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine if there was a relationship between the self-reported leadership style of women and the successful attainment of an executive position within a Fortune 500 company. The five research questions involved in this study were (a) are there relationships between prior leadership styles of the participant and the perceived helpfulness in attaining an executive position, (b) are there relationships between the leadership styles of the executive management of the company and whether there was a prescribed leadership style at the company, (c) is there a change in the extent that the participant used each leadership style before they received their first executive position and its current use, (d) how did women receiving executive positions say they adapted their leadership style to the company's norm, and (e) how did the new woman executive perceive that the company adapted to her style?

The review of the literature suggested that women did have to fit into the predominantly male environment at the top levels of corporations. This research provided several factors that assisted women in being promoted to top-level management positions. Leadership style, one of the factors, was the topic of interest for this dissertation.

Forty women holding top positions at Fortune 500 companies responded to a survey, indicating that the leadership style of the woman was not significant in attaining an executive position. Responses indicated that there was not a common leadership style amongst the companies that these women worked for and there was not a prescribed leadership style of these companies. However, what the data did show was that the women changed their leadership styles to become more delegating and participative.

Interviews were conducted with twelve of the women receiving surveys. This qualitative data resulted in discovering perceived success factors. They were being themselves, producing results, having skills and knowledge, maintaining strong beliefs, being flexible and making adjustments, having a participative style, using good communication skills, and striving to achieve personal goals. These factors were felt to contribute more to the success of these women than their leadership styles.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Today's work environment is constantly evolving with new issues and concerns as technology advances and new methods and studies reveal innovative and creative avenues of doing business. The 1980's brought about new management changes. Empowerment was on the rise. Teams and work groups were formed to increase productivity and develop cohesive units of people within the work environment. The 1990's brought the technological boom, making electronic communication the preferred vehicle for exchanging data. This era also brought with it the movement of workers from the office at work to the office at home – or to the virtual office, which can exist anywhere. Throughout all these changes, theories and philosophies have been developed, educating the work environment on how to incorporate these changes into their culture and continue to thrive in the business world.

While all these changes have been occurring and the work place has been adjusting to its new environment, there continues to be an old issue that consistently comes to the forefront. This issue is one of gender representation and equity in the work place. While the breaking of the glass ceiling has been a much-discussed topic, the ceiling itself is still in existence in many work environments and women continue to struggle to reach their career goals of obtaining executive or top-level managerial positions.

Need for the Study

Research has identified that women are under-represented in executive positions within business organizations. As of 1995, women held less than five percent of executive positions (Federal Glass Ceiling commission, 1995). Ragins, Townsend, and Mattis (1998) validated this figure stating that the proportion of top level positions in Fortune 1000 companies held by women increased from .5 percent in 1979 to only 2.9 percent in 1989 (Korn/Ferry International, 1990). Women held only four of the Fortune 1000 CEO positions. A 1995 census revealed that while women accounted for 10 percent of corporate officers, they represented just 2.4 percent of the highest ranks of corporate leadership and held 1.9 percent of the most highly compensated officer positions in Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 1996). In 1998, women were still holding only 11% of board seats.

These statistics showed that the under-representation of women holding top positions in companies is not limited to the United States. One-half of small and mid-size companies in the European Union and only three percent of large companies have women in management positions, according to the spring 1996 European Business Survey report by Grant Thornton International Business Strategies (Chapman, 1997). In the U.K., the Institute of Management estimates that only about three percent of senior managers are women.

The results of the growing pressure on the glass ceiling are becoming increasingly apparent, both in the corporate sector and in the nonprofit association sector (Shaiko, 1997). Although women are becoming an increasing presence in the entry-level

managerial ranks, the same aggressive entry into the top-level managerial positions by women has not been realized. Entry into top-level positions by women has been stymied.

Additional statistics have been gathered by government agencies. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (1996), women currently constitute nearly half of the U.S. labor force and occupy a significant and growing proportion of entry and mid-level managerial positions. In 1972 women held 17 percent of managerial positions, and this percentage increased to 42.7 percent in 1995, which shows a positive increase in women attaining entry and mid-level management positions. On average, a 1997 survey showed that men earn 30% more than women, up from a 26% difference in 1995 (Fabris, 1998).

The story is much the same in Asia. Despite China's two decades of formal commitment to sexual equality, there are no female business leaders of note. In Japan, the rigidity of the corporate culture keeps women out of the executive suite (Guyon, 1998).

The lack of increasing advancement by women into top-level positions within the organization has been attributed to the glass ceiling, an invisible barrier to advancement based on attitudinal or organizational bias. Although women have been battling against the glass ceiling for a few decades, these numbers show that only a fractional measure of improvement has evolved, which continues to paint a dismal picture for aspiring women who want to be top leaders in today's environment. Ninety-two percent of executive women report its existence (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1988). Many women filling the ranks of lower management are likely to encounter the glass ceiling without even advancing into middle management (Kleiman, 1992).

In addition to the glass ceiling being a frustrating barrier to the career advancement of many women, it is also very costly. The costs of the glass ceiling being a presence in organizations is illustrated in lost productivity among workers who feel blocked in their careers, in turnover costs, lost quality, and in not mobilizing the best people at the top (Burke & Davidson, 1994). Schwartz (1989) estimated that top performing female managers have turnover rates that are 2.5 times those of their male counterparts due to dismal opportunities to advance within the company. This invisible barrier based on gender appears to serve little economic value.

Numerous leadership styles among workers have emerged over the years. Bennis (1997) states that these differences may follow along gender lines. The styles typical of women and men have very different consequences in the workplace. According to Tannen (1995), those making decisions about promotions into leadership positions look for leader-like behavior, but many women do not exhibit leader-like behavior unless they have been granted the leadership position.

Carole Wallace (1994) states that certain factors relate to women attaining senior executive positions.

1. Having opportunities to be participating, valued family members and to compete in activities while young
2. Education, credential building experiences, certain competencies and being willing to take risks are necessary for success
3. Having positive attitudes and philosophies are crucial factors in success
4. Mentors, network involvement and relationships with peers
5. Having a career plan

6. Having a supportive political structure at work
7. Understanding, accepting and adapting to societal culture
8. Savvy at expressing, affirming, and communicating their culture
9. Amount of prejudice a woman encountered.

While these factors certainly influence advancement into executive positions within a company, it begs the question as to what factor is the most important and in what areas a woman should place her concentration when trying to advance in a company. With so many areas to focus on during career advancement and little time to devote to all aspects, where should energy be used to get the most impact in obtaining work goals?

Problem Statement

Several factors were identified in the literature as affecting the success of women in moving up the levels of management in the work environment. While each plays a role, it is difficult to determine which factors are truly significant in a woman's pursuit of an executive level position. If women have to focus on a few factors for career success, what factors would make a significant difference in the attainment of career goals? This study will address this question.

A survey conducted by Ragins et al. (1998) provides much-needed insight into the strategies that successful women have used to enter into the executive levels of companies. Twelve hundred and fifty-one executive women were surveyed who held titles of vice president or above in Fortune 1000 companies. The response rates for the female executive and CEO samples were 36.8 percent and 33 percent. On average, the female executives were 45 years old, earned an annual salary of \$248,000, and were highly educated: almost two-thirds had postgraduate degrees. Seventy-two percent of the

women were married, and almost two-thirds (64 percent) had children. Only nine percent had identified themselves as other than Caucasian, and these women of color earned an average annual salary of \$229,000. Eighty-one percent of the women were within two reporting levels of the CEO, and 44 percent reported directly to the CEO or were only one level from the CEO. More than 60 percent held staff positions. The largest number held the title of vice president (54 percent) or senior vice president (19 percent).

The female executives in this large national study were presented with a list of thirteen possible career strategies that could contribute to the advancement of women to senior management and were asked to rate the importance of each strategy to their own career advancement. Nine career strategies emerged as central to the advancement of these successful female executives. In particular, four of these strategies were indicated as key to career success. They were (a) consistently exceeding performance expectations (rated critical by 77 percent of the women surveyed), (b) developing a style with which male managers are comfortable (61 percent), (c) seeking out difficult or challenging assignments (50 percent), and (d) having influential mentors (37 percent) (Ragins et al., 1998).

The study addressed women's advancement from the perspective of women who have actually advanced to senior levels of leadership in the nation's largest companies. This research is an excellent document on identifying strategies that played a key role in making individual women successful. It poses suggestions to women and lists areas in which they can place their energy and focus in order to achieve managerial success.

In examining the four key strategies that the Ragins et al. (1998) survey discovered, this researcher will delve more deeply into the strategy that is perhaps the

most complex and variable area, developing a style with which male managers are comfortable. Out of the four strategies suggested by the Ragins et al. study, this one can be filled with emotions and stigma. It also is the strategy in which women may be the most opposed. Therefore, the key strategy to be examined in this study is the proposed statement that developing a style with which male managers are comfortable would benefit women trying to achieve top-level managerial positions.

Research Questions

It is important to determine if the leadership style of women and the attainment of executive positions or top-level management have a relationship with each other. This will be determined by the use of both quantitative questions in survey format and qualitative questions in an interview session to elicit specific and perhaps more in-depth information. There are five research questions in this study that will extract information regarding the relationship between leadership styles and executive position attainment.

Research Question 1: Are there relationships between prior leadership styles of the participant and the perceived helpfulness in attaining an executive position? Both affirmative and negative answers will be included in this study, allowing this researcher to determine if the respondents feel that their style played an important part in their achievement of a top-level managerial position. Assuming that the participant feels that her leadership style was a significant factor in her success in attaining an executive level position, then more specific information regarding her success needs to be obtained.

Research Question 2: Are there relationships between the leadership styles of the executive management of the company at the time of hiring the female executive and whether there was a prescribed leadership style at the company? This study also will

examine if the woman believed that she was hired because her leadership style matched the style of the culture in which she entered.

Research Question 3: Is there a change in the extent that the participant used each leadership style before they received their first executive position and the extent to which they currently use each leadership style? This question examines the leadership style that the woman executive uses today and compares that style to the style she identified using prior to attaining an executive level position, noting any changes. In the qualitative portion of this study, the types of changes to style will be identified and information regarding why the changes were made will be analyzed.

Research Question 4: How did women receiving executive positions adapt their leadership style to the company's norm for leadership? This question is asked in qualitative format in both the survey and the interview to gather insightful data regarding the changes that women may have made in order to adapt to their new position and culture.

Research Question 5: How did the company adapt to the leadership style of the newly hired woman executive according to the perceptions of the woman? This question is asked in qualitative format on both the survey and in the interview. This question will gather information regarding any changes made by the organization to adjust to a woman being at a top-level management position. The information to this question will be according to the woman's perception or reality.

The theme of the qualitative inquiry is to gather data using direct quotations and capturing the women's perspective, experiences, beliefs, and thoughts. The interviews will be used to gather a wider knowledge base of how women may have had to change

their style and how their emersion into the organization at an executive level was accomplished. The purpose of the interview will be to gain additional details that will add a greater understanding and depth of information to this study.

Research questions four and five are important to the qualitative portion of the study in that they detail additional information about how the individual experienced change either in herself or in her environment. This researcher wants to understand how the executive adapted to change, the amount of change, and to document any changes in the work culture.

Definition of terms

Barriers – obstacles that interfere with attainment of goals. Can be intrinsic (self-limiting) or extrinsic (environmentally imposed).

Corporate Culture – system of shared values and beliefs with interact with an organization's people, structure, and systems to produce behavioral norms.

Culture – a system of attitudes, actions, and artifacts that endure over time and that operates to produce among its members a relatively unique common psychology.

Delegating – turning over responsibility for decisions and implementation.

Executive – executive and top-level manager are used interchangeably to mean those individuals who have achieved a position of Executive Vice President, Senior Vice President, President, or CEO.

Glass Ceiling – the phenomenon that women seemingly cannot go any higher than middle management.

Leader – one who guides, directs, conducts

Leadership – position, function, or ability to influence or lead others

Manager – responsible for the activities of a group or team and assists them in achieving organizational and personal goals.

Mentoring – those persons in the organization who have the power and access to information vital to career advancement and are willing to be a role model, teacher, guide, counselor, sponsor, coach, or someone who is especially helpful to another's career.

Micro-manager – supervising group members too closely and second-guessing their decisions.

Network – an information system to provide and receive the assistance, support and help to find the resources needed.

Participating – sharing ideas and facilitating in decision-making, leadership behavior.

Selling – explaining decisions and providing opportunities for clarification/

Telling – providing specific instructions and closely supervising performance.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to this area of research, as many of the influential factors enabling women to advance to top positions within a company are buried in a long list of other factors. This study will specifically look at the leadership style of women and how it relates to their successful attainment of an executive position. It is this researcher's hypothesis that this may be the most difficult strategy for women in the workplace to understand, embrace, and to incorporate into one's personal style in an attempt to achieve upper status in their company. Because of the different interpretations of styles, different cultures and norms, and ability for women to identify and change their style to fit the

environment, changing a leadership style to fit one that men are comfortable with is probably the most ambiguous strategies in moving upward in the corporation. This study will examine the situations regarding the culture and style and also determine if change was necessary for the fit between the new executive and the existing organization. It will also identify what changes women in these new positions made.

This study will have far-reaching effects in that it will assist women in understanding what made other women successful, clarify what changes can be anticipated in the culture, and examine what changes can be made to themselves in order to achieve career goals. Not only will this study provide information on styles and culture, it will allow women to take an internal look at themselves and examine if their career goal of obtaining an executive or top-level management job is truly worth pursuing.

Researcher Perspective

Being raised in an era where women and minorities are continuing to struggle for equality has instilled in me a desire for a sense of fairness and equality. I am not a feminist, but I am a strong supporter for doing what is right and seeking what is fair in a world that is often not fair and just. I have a strong desire for efficiency, desiring for resources to be used to their fullest, wasting little time or money. This includes using the best talent available in all resources, especially in human resources. Stifling a minority or specific group from achieving greatness due to some outward characteristic is not using resources to their full potential, causing inefficiency.

My background is with a Fortune 500 company where I worked as a software technician providing technical support to customers. I was also an instructor and course

developer for this company. I worked thirteen years in this company where I saw many male employees advance greatly in their careers, but only witnessed one woman make the leap into top-level management. This raised my intrigue and curiosity about why companies choose some people over others when a better choice, from my perspective, could often be made. From this interest, I started my research into what makes women successful in attaining an executive position in an environment where they are still very much an underrepresented class of the population of workers.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Process

Information from many indexes, such as ERIC, CARL, and ABIINFORM was obtained for the literature review of this dissertation. Descriptors included leadership style, women executives, mentoring, CEO's, and successful women. The review initially started with gathering supporting documentation detailing what enabled women to be successful at the executive level of business. This phase of the research uncovered a surprisingly consistent set of themes detailing the reasons for successful advancement within the work environment for women. The following sections will discuss leadership, women in leadership, and the success factors instrumental in women attaining executive positions.

Leadership

To lead comes from the Latin verb *agere*, meaning to set into motion. The Anglo-Saxon origins of the verb to lead come from *laedere*, meaning people on a journey. In the 1950's leadership was thought of as a personality trait, or several personality traits combined (Fleishman, 1973). Some people had these traits others did not. Fleishman (1973) states that there has been a shift in emphasis from thinking about leadership in terms of traits to the conceptualization of leadership as a form of activity that individuals engage in. Leadership is far more than simply a mechanism for controlling human behavior; it is most importantly a source of values and a means of human uplift (Slater, Bolman, Crow, Goldring, & Thurston, 1994).

Decades of academic analysis have given us more than 350 definitions of leadership. Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders and, perhaps more important, what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders (Adler, 1998).

Today's meaning of the word leader, therefore, has the sense of someone who sets ideas, people, organizations, and societies in motion; someone who takes the worlds of ideas, people, organizations, and society on a journey. To lead such a journey requires vision, courage, and influence (Adler, 1998). The end result of such a journey will be different for each leader, depending on skills, experience, and attitude. A true leader is viewed as a person whose vision, courage, and influence set ideas, people, organizations, and society in motion toward the betterment of the world (Wheatley, 1992). To become leaders, do women need to be fit into the predominantly male history of leadership theory? The answer is a resounding no; women do not fit and they do not have to fit (Adler, 1998).

Carlzon (1987) states that a leader is a person who is oriented toward results more than power or social relations. Leadership is change, not control, and the change is the movement toward excellence (Foster, 1994). Covey (1992) expands the definition of a leader by stating that the leader's role is to provide direction through modeling and vision, to motivate through love and inspiration, to build a complementary team based on mutual respect, to be effectiveness-minded and focused on results rather than on methods, systems, and procedures.

Today's successful business leaders must define success as both producing financial strength and generating a team of people who support and nurture each other (Chapman, 1997). Chapman goes on to say that the emphasis must be on human relationships and the obligation of the organization to its individual members and its customers. Using the best skills of all people will result in huge cost savings as it mobilizes the best people at the top and utilizes the best talents at the top of the organization (Davidson & Burke, 1994).

Popcorn and Marigold (1996) state that tomorrow's leaders will spend much time nurturing other leaders. To prepare for the challenges of tomorrow, leaders today must enroll people in an exciting and significant vision. Leaders have to realize that people would much rather live lives dedicated to an idea or a cause that they believe in, than lead lives of aimless diversion (Bennis, 1997). Effective leaders are all about creative collaboration, about creating a shared sense of purpose. People need meaningful purpose (Wheatley, 1992). The power of an organization will be that shared sense of purpose. With a shared purpose you can achieve anything (Bennis, 1997).

CEO's can no longer tap their company's full potential using a command and control style. With words like integration, consensus, collaboration, and teamwork being tossed around, the model for great leadership is undergoing a sea change. To be a good leader you have to be able to be a person who can quickly perceive things and deal with the, or who have a quick grasp of the situation (Bolles, 1996). The next generation of leaders will be those who can build a vision based on awareness of economic change, and then help their partners and staff fulfill that vision. Leaders in the next century will lead

from the center, gleaning the best ideas from those around them, not from the top (Wachs, 1998).

Societal change has never come without powerful symbols of change. Effective leaders symbolize change. But societal change does not come through symbols alone. To achieve the type of society that we might envision, the women and men leaders of the 21st century must be vision-driven, globally inclusive, multi-culturally persuasive and fluent, courageous, and humble (Adler, 1998). Change requires adaptability and a willingness to improve upon oneself and the environment.

Leadership Style

Leadership style is the typical pattern of behavior that a leader uses to influence employees to achieve organizational goals (Dubrin, 1997). Most of the descriptions involving leadership styles involve how much authority and control the leader turns over to the group.

Early management or leadership styles were categorized into two classes – theory X type and Theory Y type (Clark & Clark, 1996). Theory X type believes that people prefer to be told exactly what to do and that people are motivated only by money, benefits, or threats of punishment. These managers emphasize structure and control. Theory Y type views people as able to enjoy work and be self-directive, responsible, and creative. These managers give freedom and resources to their subordinates. There are several models depicting leadership style and their success when used in organizational settings. Blake and Mouton (1964) established five types of leadership or management styles and mapped them to a concern for production and a concern for people.

1. Team management – high concern for production, high concern for people
2. Country club management – low concern for production, high concern for people
3. Middle of the road management – medium concern for both production and people
4. Authority obedience management – high concern for production, low concern for people
5. Impoverished management – low concern for production and people

This theory suggested that these orientations are not personality characteristics or fixed traits and that they could be affected by training (Bowditch & Buono, 1994). This model also explains that the most effective form of leadership for all situations is team management.

Structural differences for gender differences generally reject the notion of a feminine style of leadership, or a masculine style of leadership, arguing instead for situational forms of leadership that adapt to the demands of the situation (Parker & Fagenson, 1994). Hersey and Blanchard (1988) developed a similar pattern to leadership styles in their Situational Leadership model, stating that the most effective style of leadership depended on the task readiness of the worker. Readiness is defined by workers level of achievement motivation, willingness and ability to assume responsibility, and task relevant education and experience.

The Situational Leadership approach illustrates that most appropriate style of leadership depends on the three factors: (1) the amount of task-oriented direction a leader gives, (2) the amount of relationship-oriented behavior a leader provides, and (3) the

readiness level that organizational members exhibit in performing specific tasks or functions (Bowditch & Buono, 1994).

Hersey and Blanchard's (1988) leadership model contains 4 styles of leadership (a) delegating, (b) participating, (c) selling, and (d) telling. Each of these styles will be most effective when matched correctly with the readiness level of the worker (Gilley & Maycunich, 1998). A delegating style will be more effective when the worker is able and willing to do the work. A participating style is best for workers that are able to do the work but unwilling to do it. A selling style is used for a person who wants to do the work but is unable to do it and a telling style is best for a worker who is both unable and unwilling to do the work (Dubrin, 1997). These four styles were used as a basis for determining personal leadership styles and also the style of the culture. Success depends on good leadership (Green, 1994).

The leader who delegates is one who will allow others to have the responsibility for decisions and implementation (Dubrin, 1997). This style is very effective when dealing with workers that are able to do the job, willing to do the work, and confident that it can be done. The secret of successful leadership is discovering what people do naturally and then figuring out how to adapt the organization to take advantage of natural behavior (Blanchard & Bowles, 1998).

Quality leadership focuses on creating a workplace that encourages everyone to contribute to the company (Scholtes, 1991). The participating leader will share ideas and facilitate the decision making process. They encourage group discussion about an issue and make a decision that reflects the consensus of the group members (Harvey & Brown, 1992). Leaders who practice this style find satisfaction in empowering others and being

part of an organization that produces results that people truly care about (Senge, 1990). This style is largely successful with employees that are able to do the job, but unwilling and insecure about doing it (Dubrin, 1997).

The selling leader is one who explains decisions and provides an opportunity for clarification (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988). Leadership involves selling of the idea that more can be done, that what is being done is worthwhile, and that each individual will benefit if more is done (Clark & Clark, 1996). The person who leads uses a selling style explains decisions and provides an opportunity for clarification. Workers who are unable to do the job but are willing and confident do well under this leadership style (Dubrin, 1997).

The telling leader will provide specific instructions and closely supervise performance. They make decisions and assume that group members will comply. These leaders will tell people what to do, assert themselves, and serve as models for group members (Dubrin, 1997). Their followers are generally people who are unable to do the job and unwilling and insecure about the job itself.

The Situational Leadership model assumes that no one style is best and that leadership behavior should be appropriate for the circumstances. Leadership defies generalizability and predictability. No one best style of leadership exists anymore than on best conception of beauty does (Duke, 1994). Leaders need to be flexible in behavior and be able to make an accurate diagnosis of the situation in order to change behavior in the appropriate direction (Fiedler, 1973). The situational leadership model instructs the manager on how to deal with a given set of problems as conditions vary.

Executive Leadership

Those who find satisfaction in executive roles sometimes also discover the pain they will have to endure as their actions are criticized or even as they have to make choices about whom to befriend and whom to shun (Clark & Clark, 1996). The trend toward decentralized organizational forms, loose structures, and generally less hierarchical designs has increased the pressure at the top. Top executives are more comfortable with hierarchy and structure, a framework that reduces the high information loads on them as decision-makers and obviates the necessity to process highly specific information. With less structure, the complexity of decision making increases immeasurably (Clark & Clark, 1996).

Components of executive success can be identified. Predictable components of success include effective leadership, assured independence, intellectual and administrative functioning, effectiveness as a representative of the organization, and competitive drive to improve business (Clark & Clark, 1996).

Top leaders in the company need to be more concerned with determining the future than specifying how to get there (Burke, 1992). An executive is a decision maker and an order giver. The rest of the organization exists to carry out his or her wishes (Hammer, 1996). Senior managers have a responsibility to demonstrate what values they believe are important to the organization (Senge, 1994).

Wellington (1999) reports that women succeed by consistently exceeding performance and by finding a style with which male managers are comfortable. She states that there is a game to be learned while climbing the corporate ladder. Often that game is literally golf. Women need to adapt to their culture and survive with little sleep.

The research also discovered an identical study to the researchers original dissertation topic. The title of the journal article detailing this study was “Gender gap in the executive suite: CEOs and Female executives report on breaking the glass ceiling” and was written by Ragins et al., (1998). That study found that there were four major strategies in which successful women found helpful in climbing the management ladder. The strategies and the percentage of how often that strategy was found amongst the top three strategies. The strategies were the leadership style (48%), the use of mentoring (39%), the use of networking (36%), and exceeding performance expectations (74%).

Four Major Success Factors

The contributing factors, those documented most by research, found to play a role in the success of top level female executives include: (a) having a good mentor, (b) the utilization of networking, (c) exceeding performance expectations, and (d) developing a style in which male managers are comfortable. Each of these strategies were researched and examined for their impact on success. The following pages detail the results of the research and the data that was discovered.

Mentoring

Mentoring is a key factor in the successful advancement of a career as it moves to executive level positions. It is a factor that is continually identified with obtaining high-level positions within a company and it is gaining more attention as females are entering into executive positions typically occupied by men.

Survey data, gathered in 1996, indicated that more than a third of large corporations were initiating formal mentoring programs (Seligman, 1998). This survey found that most enterprises claim to be deeply involved in mentoring and that almost all

of the larger companies have some form of mentoring program. Because mentoring is a perfect way to weave continuous learning into the fabric of corporate life, more and more companies are expecting managers to develop mentoring skills (Chase, 1998). Mentoring is believed to build loyalty to the company and decrease turnover rates among younger employees.

The survey conducted by Ragins et al. (1998), found that 91% of the female executives surveyed reported having a mentor sometime in the course of their careers, and 81% saw their mentor as being either critical or fairly important in their career advancement. Without the use or access to a mentor, these women would not have achieved the position they currently hold.

Benefits of Having a Mentor. Bell (1996), a senior partner, Performance Research Associates, Dallas, TX, states that mentoring is that part of the leader's or coach's job that has learning as its primary outcome. It is a crucial part of the work environment and one that is instrumental to the success of the business. Profitable businesses foster learning and continual growth is part of its competitive advantage. In a healthy work environment, each employee has the capacity to mentor and must strive to make this an excellent skill (Bell, 1996).

Nearly all of the 20 female executives who were personally interviewed in the above mentioned survey identified at least one senior man who was instrumental in their development and advancement (Ragins et al., 1998). While having a mentor has documented benefits, many women would prefer a female mentor, rather than a male mentor. While a few women executives had female mentors, as the scarcity of women in senior management limited their supply. Yet those who were fortunate enough to have

both male and female mentors point out the differential strengths associated with each of these key relationships. While male mentors are more influential in organizations and can provide greater access to inner power circles, female mentors were better able to identify and empathize with the barriers faced by women in organizations.

To develop the best attributes of both sexes, male and female leaders should take on mentors or coaches of the opposite sex (Smith, 1997). Sometimes a male mentor can adopt a more uncompromising stance with a woman than another female, and the same works in reverse. It is only in a confidential setting, away from the rugby-scrum mentality and power struggles of the male group, that many women will feel able to consider the possibility of being wrong (Smith, 1997). According to Jacobs (1998), many people are not willing or brave enough to take on a mentor from the opposite gender.

Brooks and Brooks (1997) explain the importance of having a mentor who can play a crucial role in career development. They say that having a mentor may be even more important for women than for men. Men on the fast track have received informal coaching for much of their lives, whereas many women may not experience the same advantages until they enter the workplace.

Mentoring has taken on a new look in the last several years. The new mentoring model focuses on exchange of knowledge, rather than corporate hierarchy. Today, the mentoring relationship is like a peer relationship (Bell, 1996). People are resistant to getting mentored by authority figures. They do not take as many risks when mentored by someone who is in a much higher power position, particularly when it is a boss/subordinate relationship (Bell, 1996). Mentoring from a position of partnership develops a more harmonious relationship than mentoring from a position of power. The

partnership environment encourages learning together and eliminates the 'expert' position that gets in the way of risk-taking (Bell, 1996).

The rewards of mentoring amount to more than just a warm, fuzzy feeling from helping our fellow worker (Chase, 1998). The help provided to fellow workers could have phenomenal effects. Mentors can have long-lasting effects on an employee's career. The use of a mentor, keeps both the organization and its employees learning new things. Bell (1996) states that:

"If you keep people in a constant state of learning, you have far less turnover. They have higher self-esteem, and that folds into their productivity and performance. You're more competitive in the marketplace, because your people are more innovative. Therefore your products are more innovative. It spills over into the discoveries that you make, the patents that you have, the brand-new things you design, because you have people who are learning and are therefore more creative" (p.43).

Mentoring keeps revitalizing the organization. It keeps it alive and new. It influences the quality of what the organization does in the marketplace, increasing the value of the company (Chase, 1998).

Mentors for Women. The importance of mentoring has been documented in other studies. Individuals with mentors receive more promotions, have more career mobility, and advance at a faster rate than those lacking mentors (Ragins et al., 1998). While mentors are important for everyone, they are particularly critical for women seeking to break through the glass ceiling. Influential male mentors, with pre-established networks and credibility, can sponsor their female protégés into senior management circles, and provide inside information usually obtained in the old boy networks (Ragins et al., 1998). Andorka (1998) states that one of the keys to get ahead is to align yourself with the best

and the brightest as quickly as you can. An effective mentoring relationship can provide men and women this opportunity.

Women need mentors, someone they can establish a long-term working relationship with and someone with whom they can exchange ideas. The larger the network of people, the better off they are (Andorka, 1998). Larger networks also provide a source of diversity for a well-rounded source of information.

Mentors also can buffer women from adverse forces in the organization, and help them navigate through the challenging and changing political terrain. Andorka (1998) notes this comment of an executive Vice President of an insurance company:

“I think mentoring is very important for career advancement because you have somebody who is there for you, will defend you, will reinforce the decisions that you make with others. (Mentors) help you understand the organization, to understand the players, to understand the personalities. And they did that for me, but more importantly, whenever I had a problem, they’d stand up for me because they believed in me, and that’s invaluable. It’s something I could not have done for myself, and if I hadn’t had that, I don’t think that I could have made it because I do think women have different issues in that regard, at least women who were starting their careers 20 years ago” (p. 54).

Challenges and concerning times at work can be made much easier with the support of a good mentor.

Part of the problem with entering into an “ol’ boys network” is that there are few, if any, mentors or role models for women aspiring to reach the top (Ligos, 1998). Brenda Scott, the country’s first female African-American CVB head, who has been president of the Mobile Convention & Visitors Corporation in Alabama for two years, moved across the country for her job, from a position as vice president of community and member relations for the Metro Tucson CVB in Arizona. When Scott joined the industry seven years ago, after being in the banking industry for 18 years, she immediately set her sights on a CEO position. She was unable to find a female mentor. Luckily, her boss at the time,

Tucson CVB president Patrick Tierney, ended up taking her under his wing, giving her the opportunity to learn everything there was to learn about the operation of a CVB (Ligos, 1998).

A key function of mentors is that they build their protégé's self-confidence and professional identity. These functions are critical for women, as many women report lack of support and isolation depleted their self-esteem and self-confidence (Reardon, 1995). Having a mentor to assist and provide support in times such as these would renew the executive and have a significant impact on the work environment.

Mentoring programs have been beneficial to women in advancing positions because it gives them the opportunity to have candid discussions with peers in their segments. Female role models will help women move up into upper levels of management within the organization (Zuber, 1998).

There are many benefits to having a mentor for teaching, supporting, and illustrating the culture of an organization. The literature espousing the benefits of mentoring within an organization is abundant. A good mentoring relationship can give access to power circles, provide a support structure, substantially increase a better information channel, and implement a map with which to navigate through the company.

Networking

Networks are often regarded as a key factor in business success. Although women are doing well, research suggests that only about half of them belong to business networks. Access to such networks is particularly important for the 47 percent of women running home-based small businesses (Anonymous, 1998a). Clayton, cited by Anonymous (1998d) notes that if women's involvement in mentoring programs and

business networks is bolstered, then they may be able to improve the growth statistic for small businesses even further.

All good performance starts with clear goals (Blanchard, 1999). Effective leaders invest a good deal of their time in networking with people both inside and outside their organizations to generate trust and consensus for their visions. With the use of networking, leaders discover and exploit common interests that can be consistently served by the organization with its new sense of direction (Nanus, 1992).

Wellington (1999) states that the biggest barriers to the advancement of women, the highly successful ones, were male stereotyping and exclusion from informal networks. She describes informal exclusion and stereotypes as unexamined assumptions, outdated practices, and undone programs and policies that are shrinking our nation's talent pool by not allowing the skills and talents of people to come forth.

Establishing an effective network is critical to one's success strategy (Brooks & Brooks, 1998). Relationship-based networks are important now more than ever because in the changing workplace, the next job or lead will probably be through a network (Fitzenz, 1995). Technology such as email, fax, and the Internet should be utilized to build networks (Brooks & Brooks, 1997).

Many Internet web sites are being built specially for women to network with each other. Women's Connection Online (WCO), a MacLean, Virginia based Web community for professional women and women business owners, now offers a free interactive career center (American Society of Association Executives, 1998). Services offer valuable tools and resources for women, providing for an exchange of information among job seekers, employers and agencies. There are many online resources for

networking women that describe general news and networking, career centers for location jobs in various industries, and job postings on a subscription basis (WomenConnect.com, 1999). Networking is an essential element for executive level women in the organization. Staying informed of local and global events can position women for career advancement.

Women have to network within industry associations and user groups. Internally, they have to form alliances with businesspeople inside your company. Who do you trust? Do they trust you? (Didio, 1998). Didio asks these questions in his article, accentuating the need to form trusting relationships to accomplish work goals. Alliances will not be formed demonstrating that a job well done. Trust has to be built between each member of the organization

Women in industry do not rely on each other to get ahead the way some men might. Women in the industry might have a network, but some have not thought to use each other the way men have (Ligos, 1997). Women do not articulate their goals to each other or help each other obtain their goals. The opportunities that top executive women have to network are few, and they do in fact do very little networking (Anonymous, 1998e).

Male counterparts may be tapped for an executive position because they know how to play the corporate game of moving into top management. White (1992) notes that men may socialize with other male colleagues that women are typically left out of because of the perceived appearance of a deeper than collegial relationship. Many women find acquiring male friends is impossible in the work place. In the corporate environment, being politically astute and being able to play the game is perceived as far more important skills than being able to do the job (White, 1992).

ASCPA Small Business Adviser, Kerrie Clayton, as cited by Anonymous (1998d) said that almost two-thirds of female-run small businesses have been established in the past five years. She also noted that although the growth of female-run small businesses has been rapid and has surpassed that of males, women are less likely to be involved in committees and other traditional networking opportunities, partly because of family commitments. This is also partly due to women wanting to be their own boss and use the leadership style of their choice. They want the freedom to be creative and to be themselves.

Even though networking has been under utilized, membership in women's networking groups has increased dramatically. One group, the International Women's Forum, selects high-ranking female executives from around the world for leadership training and personal mentoring (Minehan, 1998). This not only allows experience and knowledge to be passed on to other women, it allows both executives and participants in the training an opportunity to form new friendships and alliance to foster their career and personal growth.

Many resorts are implementing programs that teach women not only how to play golf, but also how to use the game as a sales and networking tool (Anonymous, 1998c). Lack of information networks with their peers may also leave working women vulnerable. White (1992) states that even when women do get together they're not as apt to talk shop as men are. They have fewer reference points (Seaman & Lorimer, 1979). Women need to utilize networking more efficiently and in many different aspects to advance in their careers.

Networking is an important key to the success of women entering the executive ranks. Web sites are now becoming available to assist women in becoming connected with each other and with the pulse of businesses. Informal networks and relations are critical for women to develop to receive information and support. Women have typically been reluctant to trust and rely on each other, which is a key element in the support system that men rely on (Minehan, 1998). Building a strong network of resources and support is critical for today's executives to be successful.

Performance

Superior performance is expected of all executives, but it may be particularly important for women. Consistently exceeding performance expectations was the top-ranking strategy used by 74% of the female executives in the study done by Ragins et al., (1998), and an overwhelming 99% percent of the respondents reported that this strategy was critical or fairly important. These women reported that they had to prove their ability repeatedly and needed to over-perform in order to counter negative assumptions in a predominantly male business environment. These successful female executives also reported that they were often not viewed as credible, and they had to prove themselves and reestablish their credibility in each new work situation. The interviews indicated that while hard work was important, the performance bar might be placed higher for women than for men. One survey respondent advised: "Be willing to work much harder than male peers." (Ragins et al., 1998, p. 38). Most women earn their stripes the same way – by working twice as hard as their male colleagues (White, 1992), although many top women love their jobs and the hard work it took to get there. They are not afraid to take

risks. They ask for challenging assignments and they are totally committed (Wellington, 1999).

Brooks and Brooks (1998), state that in order for performance to be noticed, workers need to speak up and communicate this message to management. Hard work is demonstrated by asking to be included in key meetings, projects, and committees. Asking for more responsibility shows ambition. Improving skills requires thought first, then action. Women that move up in the executive levels by positioning their performance so that it gets noticed use these tactics.

Women need to understand the business they are in and have a broad knowledge of the workings of that area. They need to develop experience in core business areas so that they can transfer this skill to any position (Anonymous, 1995) thus furthering their circle of influence and career.

Besides sheer hard work, developing specialized expertise is another effective means for women to become known as high performers. They need to obtain "line" or profit-related experience in operations, production or sales (Anonymous, 1995) and any other area of business that they are working in. Chapman (1997) points out that some successful women executives made a point of developing unique skills so as to become indispensable; others built their expertise by gaining external recognition: "I think you have to have a specialty. . . and you have to do it better than anybody else can conceivably know how to do it. –Corporate Controller, Consumer Products Company." (p. 43). Leaders will develop unique strategies and skills that enable them to create opportunities from challenges (Waitley, 1995). By maintaining a position of 'expert',

women can become a sole entity to an organization and prepare for promotion into the top leadership ranks.

Unique assignments can draw attention to performance. Women wanting to enter into the executive levels of an organization by exceeding performance objectives seek out stretch assignments, or those that are just beyond the comfort zone. These assignments provide professional growth and learning challenges. They also serve as grooming exercises for career tracks leading to executive positions (Ragins et al., 1998). Highly visible assignments provide critical access to key decision-makers and influential mentors in the company (Royal, 1997).

DiDio (1998) suggests that women need to develop a 'Seize the opportunity' philosophy. Taking on some risky opportunities illustrates commitment and passion in the work environment. It also demonstrates a desire to achieve top performance.

Performance for women can show up in a variety of forms. Women can be aware on many different levels, which often enables them to sense what is wrong in a situation or to pick up on the atmosphere. Chapman (1997) states that women have the capacity to see things the way they are, envision how they want them to be, and come up with a way to bridge the gap - that's one of the strengths women bring to leadership position.

Adrienne Mendell's research suggests that women emphasize relationships over winning, a trait that may enhance their ability to work with staff members rather than in opposition to them (Chapman, 1997), increasing their productivity at work. According to Mendell, young women learn to interact with each other by developing and maintaining relationships. Their games stress the importance of cooperation and the development of noncompetitive skills. Young women compliment each other for the improvement in

their skills, regardless of who wins. They learn the importance of putting others first and to be caring, giving, empathetic, and sometimes compliant. Their world centers on people and relationships enabling a cohesive productive environment in the work place.

Another business strength that many researchers ascribe to women is the ability to engage and empower others. According to Judy Rosener, as cited by Chapman (1997), faculty member at the University of California's Graduate School of Management and author of *Workforce America*, women tend to achieve their ends by encouraging participation and by persuading others to align their self-interests with the broader interests of the group. In a study published in the November/December 1990 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, Rosener found that women encourage participation, share power and information, enhance other people's self-worth, and get others excited about their work. All these things reflect their belief that allowing employees to contribute and to feel powerful and important is a win-win situation - good for the employees and the organization. These leaders believe that people perform best when they feel good about themselves and their work, and they try to create situations that contribute to that feeling.

According to White (1992) notes that in addition to work performance, successful women in business need to be self-centered. They need to insist on the job, the boss, the company, and the respect they deserve. White also states that women need to cultivate allies, scheme for promotions, and be aggressive, perhaps do other 'unladylike' things. Women executives tend to discount experience as a factor and attach far more importance to "inhospitable and exclusionary" social attitudes and patterns (Wah, 1998).

Performance is one key element that the literature states will accelerate women who aspire to attain an executive level position. Hard work, positioning performance to

be noticed, building relationships that will foster and enhance performance, empowering co-workers and subordinates to achieve objectives, and taking risks are all components in performance. Performing in an exemplary manner is critical for career advancement. Ensuring that key decision makers notice the quality of work and output is equally important.

Style Comfortable With Men

The literature suggests that developing a style with which men are comfortable is important to success in attaining an executive position. In the study done by Ragins et al. (1998) the authors found that a key career strategy used by successful female executives was the development of a managerial style that made male co-workers comfortable. Women identified a playing field that was not level in their work environment and that this field represented an obstacle course for women. Ragins also stated that it was unlikely that the male CEO's in the study had to develop an adaptive style in order to make their female coworkers comfortable. Under this culture perspective, the problem does not lie with the individual women, but with attitudes and subtle barriers in the organization, which fosters an inhospitable corporate culture. Women who succeed in this environment are those that develop techniques to effectively deal with this culture.

While research shows that women must exhibit a leadership style that is comfortable with men (O'Shea, 1997), there is disagreement that women should have to adjust to a mold to fit into top-level management. One of the competitive advantages of women in executive positions is the utilization of full deployment of the talent of women in our workforce. First, full deployment saves money (Davidson & Burke, 1994), and second, it forces a foreign characteristic onto women. The myth that the only way for a

woman to succeed is to act like a man must be dispelled (Bennis, 1997). The skills that women bring to the workplace should be embraced and fostered, not cloned into a male oriented managerial model.

DiDio (1997) cited several women who gave advice on how to make men feel comfortable with a woman's leadership style. Although this may not actually happen, but the perception of what happens that makes the difference. Framing events in a positive light and dealing with adverse situations can exhibit a quality necessary in an executive. Vision is important and that executives must believe that anything is possible (DiDio, 1997). Women must challenge themselves and others to push through to the edge of their level of comfort and beyond to create advancement opportunities for themselves.

Culture is learned and inherited and passed from one generation to another (Rabe, 1997). As the competitive environment becomes more complex and variegated, the need for greater genetic variety – a broader range of managerial beliefs and a greater repertoire of managerial actions – grows apace (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). As more women enter into top-level positions, their presence will create change in the culture of the organization, in peer relationships, in subordinate relations, and in themselves. One of the results of this change will be new leadership styles and ideas. Veronica Grigg, principal consultant at DDI Asia Pacific, a human resources consultancy feels that organizations are moving away from authoritative or power-based behavior (O'Shea, 1997). A recent DDI survey of 1,332 people employed by large manufacturing and service organizations in Asia - half of whom were men - found that women were regarded as 'naturally empowered leaders', far better than their male counterparts at inspiring staff, encouraging efficiency and recognizing good work. What the

management and the feminist literature recognize as empowerment is truly power-with rather than power-over (Adler, 1998). The change brought about by the infiltration of women into executive levels has changed the status quo of organizational environments.

While this group of successful female executives adapted to inhospitable corporate cultures, this approach is definitely at odds with current perspectives on diversity in organizations and does not represent an effective, long-term solution to the problem. The corporate environment is more difficult and stressful for women than it is for men (Schwartz, 1992). Diversity experts observe that organizations are most effective when active measures are taken to adapt corporate cultures to the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce, rather than placing the entire burden of change on the minority employee. Increasingly, it is recognized that by expecting minorities to adapt to the dominant culture, organizations fail to capitalize on the innovative and creative outcomes of a diverse workforce (Ragins et al., 1998).

While change is good and fosters new growth, relationships at work with people must be kept on an even keel. New female faces into the work place can alter the balance of a previously male environment. Understanding the roles and aspirations of each of the people involved is important. Lau Doris, senior vice-president of HSBC International Trustee, a unit of Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation states that it takes a lot more in-depth management skill or a special kind of management skill in order to maintain a very harmonious working relationship with a male (O'Shea, 1997). Understanding how to fit into the executive level that is predominantly male is no easy task.

Women were more than twice as likely as men to consider factors in the work environment - in the culture of the job itself - as barriers to advancement. They have not been in the pipeline long enough to advance quickly in organizations (Wellington, 1999). There's still a glass ceiling, but equally important, this census documents the existence of glass walls. These are the invisible barriers in the corporate culture itself that keep women from obtaining the jobs with line responsibility that lead to the executive suite (Marmer, 1998). Glass walls help support glass ceilings. They are invisible; they are subtle. They are also mostly unintentional, like the mistaken assumptions that women will not take risks, or customers and clients will not accept women (Wellington, 1999). Glass walls cause concern because they constrain capability for everybody.

Warren Bennis (1997) believes that competitive advantage will be the leadership of women. He states that by the year 2005, about 50 percent of the vice presidents for finance will be women and that women will appear much more often in top management positions. Because it has been documented by studies that women are not appearing more often in top management position, a 50% ratio in the vice president ranks for women would be a drastic increase over today's statistics on that value.

Feminine and Masculine Traits. When the organization has a history of dominance by white males, especially in its highest levels of management, a statement of new policy directives that recognizes talent among women and minorities will not be enough. Training programs, challenging assignments, and promotional opportunities must support new policies that promise equal opportunity (Clark & Clark, 1996). When management picks somebody for a top executive position, much of their judgment is

influenced by their image of the people who would be successful there – and you usually picture a successful white male (White, 1992).

One irony is that male leaders have been trying to shed the same macho character traits that women have been encouraged to imitate (Wah, 1998). Dr. Helen Tartakoff, a Harvard psychoanalyst, is quoted by Bennis (1997), saying that, generally, women have exactly the opposite character traits, and that these feminine traits “contain the potential for improving the human condition” (p. 2).

Smith (1997) states that women were seen as more successful bosses than men because their feminine approach was better suited to the modern team-based office. They also worked harder than men did. She also states that women managers were more likely to encourage new ideas and ways of doing things, and they were better at praising their staff. This information is based on a study that included 1332 employees and managers in Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Canada. As part of the survey, respondents were asked to rate their leaders. Women, as a group scored better than men in eight of the eleven categories rated. Women were found to be more capable at such things as finding new and better ways of doing things, inspiring staff to achieve higher goals and being open about unpleasant facts. They were equal to men in three others: helping to mediate conflicts; letting employees make their own decisions; and expressing confidence in employees and not blaming them (Smith, 1997). Although this survey does not suggest men were ineffective as empowering leaders. Rather it helped discredit the myth that women were unsuited to leadership positions and suggested men might have something to learn from the opposite sex. Based on this information, the strategy for success by developing a style in which male managers are comfortable seems counter-

productive. Why would an organization encourage women to develop a style that is not as well liked as an alternative style that is readily available? Styles of both men and women should be embraced and utilized in situations where they can have the most successful results.

Smith (1997) also states that women have a head start in adopting the new empowering style of business leadership because of the social roles they have traditionally been expected to fill. They have a natural affinity with the more supportive, coaching behavior expected of today's managers than with the authoritarian, power-based style of the past. Men can be trained to take a more feminine approach to leadership (Popcorn & Marigold, 1996).

Gender stereotypes can affect cultural rules. Women may engage in behavior that seems culturally acceptable, but discover it is not acceptable from women. Willingness to engage in overt combat may make women a threat (Marshall, 1995). Caution must be exercised that thought processes based on pre-judgment are simply not allowed to replace one set of stereotypes with another. It is no more enlightened to say women are better suited to today's leadership roles than it was to argue they were unsuited to the power structures of the past (Smith, 1997).

Bennis (1997) argues that the differences between male and female leaders have been grossly oversimplified because the best of both sexes display the same attributes. However, both are capable of behaving in extreme ways. Bennis goes on to say that the best male leaders are perfectly good men, but they have all the feminine virtues intact—intuitive, sensitive and compassionate. The best female leaders are not only terrific females; they are also tough, resourceful and competitive. The problem for these women

on their rise to the top of organizations is that they are almost required to be worse than the worst man on the way up. The professional manager in organizations today must possess a combination of communication skills and the ability to work in a variety of teams in order to be truly successful (Wojcik, 1997). Communication skills and the ability to work are skills that can be acquired by all managers.

Women must be very careful not to underestimate themselves. That's the single biggest mistake women make (Popcorn & Marigold, 1996). Finally, DiDio (1997) cites one more example of positive thinking for executive advancement. She suggests that women who move into top-level positions see the glass ceiling as just another obstacle, to pay no attention to it, and to keep pushing ahead to achieve and obtain goals.

Neither sex has a monopoly on behaving poorly. Men at their worst can be boorish, stupid or arrogant, emotionally frigid and mindlessly competitive (Popcorn & Marigold, 1996). Popcorn and Marigold also state that women, often outnumbered at the top by such men, can be neurotically timid, envious or resentful and self-defeatingly dogmatic. Where the man says, "I'm stronger so I'm going to win", the woman says, "If I can't be strong I'm going to be right" (Bennis, 1997, p. 4). Bennis (1997) argues this is the main blind spot among powerful women because it leads to a failure to learn - if you know you are right, it automatically follows you have nothing to learn. Women need to keep the organization's goals in mind and continue to focus on what is right for the company.

According to DiDio (1998) women need to show self-confidence to fit in to the male environment. Women tend to look at an opportunity and not feel they have the qualifications to accomplish or to handle it. Yet men will jump in and take on the tasks

for which women are more qualified. Women need to demonstrate their abilities and show self-confidence to be promoted into the executive levels of organizations. Some male CEOs attributed women's lack of experience in line management functions to women's self-selection or lack of understanding of the importance of these experiences; others see company practices as in part responsible.

Adapting to an Alternate Role. Diversity among leadership styles should be embraced and looked upon as a creative avenue for new growth and activity for an organization (Harris & Moran, 1991). The strongest evidence for a gender-based difference in leadership style is in women leaders' tendencies to adopt more democratic, participative styles, whereas men tend to use more autocratic, directive styles. In more than 90% of the almost 400 studies comparing male and female leaders' behaviors, women exhibit more democratic behavior than do men (Adler, 1997).

Economic and political factors, sparked by technology, have created a need for re-engineering and flatter organizational structures (Joss, 1995). With flattening, autocratic managers are less effective due to limited span of control.

An alternate view to women needing to change to fit into a male corporate environment is that it is the corporate culture that should under go change -- not change the character traits of women. Women find it difficult to work with men who are not comfortable with women (White, 1992). Most corporations have been playing male chauvinist games for too long and the power structures and avenues of opportunity have excluded women for years (Bennis, 1997). Andorka (1998) states that his interview with Marilyn Carlson Nelson, who is the vice-chair, president and CEO of Minneapolis-based Carlson Cos. which owns the Radisson, Regent and Country Inns & Suites, found that

that her work environment does not make a distinction about her gender, nor that of the male environment in which she works. This is a healthy sign that things have changed for the better.

It has been observed that one of the major problems with world leadership, whether political or corporate is it's male domain; that key decision makers tend to be chauvinistic and skewed toward the male perception of problem solving (Harris & Moran, 1991). Today, a leader needs to be a facilitator, a champion and a supporter. Women are tending to demonstrate that such behavior will pay off in hard returns (O'Shea, 1997). Women do not reach senior positions by being soft and cuddly, although that may be one of the characteristics that helped them to get things done. Instead, women are now looked on as having softer leadership skills that encourage cooperation and participation.

Changing a personality trait to fit into a corporate gender model is not efficiently using talent (Popcorn & Marigold, 1996). Successful leadership does not depend on masculinity or femininity. It is not about being tough or soft, assertive or sensitive. It's about having a particular set of attributes that all leaders, both male and female, seem to share (Bennis, 1997). Allowing individuals the freedom to do what they do best will propel the organization ahead in the future (Peters, 1997).

Persons in leadership positions see no need to change their own behaviors or to change their style. Their qualities got them where they are (Clark & Clark, 1996). Top persons in an organization are inundated with all kinds of reports but almost no suggestions by anyone that a change in their behavior would make a difference. Persons

in powerful positions seldom listen to bad news about their own behaviors (Clark & Clark, 1996).

According to Ragins et al. (1998), successful executives adapt to a predominantly male culture and environment. They deal with the phenomenon often referred to as the male managerial model, in which models for successful managers incorporate masculine styles and characteristics. This male managerial model places women in a double bind: if their managerial styles are feminine, they run the risk of not being viewed as effective managers, but if they adopt masculine styles viewed as appropriate for managerial roles, they may be criticized for not being feminine. Women recognize that if they become too demanding, too assertive or ask for change and promotion, they will lose the friendly 'gentlemanly' boss and instead, he will become difficult and they will become outsiders (Maddock & Parkin, 1994). This culture relies on women understanding what they have to lose if they seek to challenge common practice.

Adapting to the male managerial model in which the management style that accompanies that model is neither masculine nor feminine may be an overwhelming, if even achievable, task. This daunting challenge, that women encounter daily, is not faced by their male counterparts (Wah, 1998). The difficulty with mastering this skill is compounded by the reasoning and logic behind why the skill is needed, which is to make a woman's managerial style acceptable to male colleagues, supervisors and subordinates (Ragins et al., 1998). In order to produce an effective and productive work environment, a woman executive needs the support of top management and the freedom to develop her own management style if she is to have the chance to succeed anywhere (Wah, 1998).

As with any successful venture, there is much benefit in speaking another's language and understanding the culture in which work will be accomplished. Women and men alike will be able to adapt to their environment if they are willing to adjust to and complement another environment (Voelker, 1998). Additionally, this will enable workers to develop partnerships and networking channels within the new environment to enhance success.

According to Royal (1998), women are mediators and problem solvers. They are collegial and laugh easily and heartily in conversation. They lead horizontally and place an emphasis on education (Popcorn & Marigold, 1996). These traits should not be suppressed to enhance the comfort of a specific gender group. If the talents and skills possessed by members of the organization are beneficial, then those skills should be utilized.

Top female managers are quitting corporations in growing numbers to become entrepreneurs. One concept women entrepreneurs stress when discussing their reasons for leaving corporate life in favor of a small company is a need to create something (Royal, 1998). Not only do they need to create something, but they also need to be themselves and do what they do best.

Much of the literature cited above states how women do have a place in the upper levels of management in organization where their leadership style will fit in with the existing culture. Nevertheless, studies have shown that a large percentage of women feel they need to change their leadership style in order to be successful at the executive levels of management (Ragins et al., 1998). This study will examine this aspect of the influence

that changing a leadership style has on the success of obtaining a top-level managerial position.

Summary

This literature discovered many different facets in attaining an executive position for women. Having good mentors, male and female, can provide a learning, supportive and informational environment for the woman. Networking is key to gain access to the intricacies of the business. Excellent performance and results are critical to catch the attention of upper level management. Identifying the culture and adapting to its leadership style fosters success.

While all four strategies covered in this literature section are instrumental in the success of executive women, this study will examine the influence of the leadership style on the successful attainment of top-level managerial positions. It is in this area that this researcher feels that both the person and the organization have to adjust the most so that there is a fit between the leadership style of the woman and the leadership style of the culture.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines how the study was conducted. It contains the research approaches and rationale used to gather data. It also contains a section on the participants, the procedure and data analysis measures, and the quality and verification measures.

Mixed Methodologies of Research

The purpose of this study was to determine if leadership style and the attainment of top-level managerial positions had a relationship with each other. It was also the purpose of this study to discover if the leadership style of women who have obtained top-level positions was changed or altered in some way to fit into the culture of the organization at its top managerial level. This study utilized a mixed methodology of research, combining the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches. It was a parallel study where both approaches were conducted simultaneously - the data were collected at the same time and analyzed in a complementary manner (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Quantitative data are derived from assessment methods that normally involve numerical tabulation and computation. Qualitative data usually take the form of a statement in which respondents are asked to provide input in their own words (McClelland, 1995).

The combination of the methodologies (survey and interview) allowed for the expansion of a prior study done by Ragins et al., (1998). This study narrowed and focused the scope of the research on women's advancement into executive positions by

concentrating on the leadership style of these women. This study provided information rich details regarding specific changes in leadership styles of the women and also examined the leadership style of the organization's culture.

To answer the research questions, this study was conducted in two parts. A quantitative approach in the form of a survey was used to gather information from women holding top-level managerial positions in organizations. The survey allowed for many women to be contacted within a specific time frame.

The second part of this study was accomplished by qualitative inquiry using the grounded theory method. As this portion of the data gathering is centered on the perceptions and experiences of the participant, it is categorized as qualitative research (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1993), using the grounded theory tradition of qualitative inquiry. Grounded theory is important as it takes the data from the real world and extracts the theory from that information. This theory depends on methods that take the researcher into the real world so that the results and findings are grounded in the empirical world (Patton, 1990). The resultant theories from the analyzed data of this study will be grounded in real-world patterns (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Using grounded theory, this researcher generated or discovered a theory about leadership style and the successful attainment of an executive position by women in Fortune 500 companies. As part of the survey, women executives were asked if they could be interviewed for additional data gathering. The interview produced more detail to obtain a deeper knowledge base of how women may have changed their style and how their fit into the organization was accomplished. It was also used to gain additional details and document unique experiences that added a greater understanding of this

phenomena and depth of information to this study (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1993). Grounded theory is a 'zigzag process' that includes the gathering of information, analyzing the data, back to the field to gather more information, analyzing the data, continuing in a repeated pattern until the category is saturated (Creswell, 1998). This step, constant comparative analysis, in the grounded theory process was not conducted due to the time constraints of the executives. This study only gathered information once and performed analysis on the data without returning to the field to gather additional data.

Sample

The target sample of this study was executive women, i.e., women officers in Fortune 500 companies. A report published by Catalyst (1998) indicated that there were 296 women in the Fortune 500 companies holding senior officer titles or were top earners of their companies. This report contained the titles only of the women, not their names. This sample was limited to senior vice presidents, executive vice presidents, presidents, and CEO's.

The Internet was used as a source of information to gather the addresses and names of the executive women in the Fortune 500 companies. Phone calls were made to the companies to locate names not listed on the Internet. Two hundred and eighty names were found matching the positions published in the report. Sixteen names could not be found, so surveys were not sent to the women holding those positions. A total of 280 names of executive women were found and surveys were sent to each of them.

Two hundred and eighty surveys were sent, with thirteen returned unanswered. Of these thirteen, seven companies did not participate in surveys; three of the companies had more than one person returning the unopened survey accounting for eleven surveys.

One secretary called and said that her boss, a woman executive, would probably not find the time to complete the survey and return it. One person receiving the survey was actually a man and not eligible to participate.

Forty completed surveys were received, providing a return rate of 14.6% of the mailed surveys. Survey respondents included senior executives, holding titles of president, executive vice president, chief financial officer, and general counsel. As change is constant in most environments, some of the targeted sample may have retired, moved on to other positions, or were no longer available for contact.

It was projected that 28 participants out of the 280 survey participants would volunteer to be interviewed for the qualitative inquiry portion of this study. Patton (1990) states that there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry and that the size depends on the purpose of the inquiry, what is useful, and the availability of time and resources. From these interviews, in-depth knowledge regarding the participant's perceptions and experiences was obtained. It was anticipated that unique data would be produced by this information and perhaps new light on what propelled women to success at top-level managerial positions within organizations.

Procedure

To examine if and how leadership style had an influence in attaining an executive position within an organization, a letter was sent to each person in the sample. This letter was attached to the survey, introduced the study, and stated its reasons and purpose. See Appendix A for a copy of the cover letter.

The survey was only one-page. There were two main reasons for its brevity. First, executives of either gender are very busy and are not likely to fill out a lengthy

survey (Dougherty, 1990). Second, a follow-on interview was desired and it was hoped that the survey would intensify the participant's interest in the topic area. This researcher presumed that if these women were either interested in being part of a survey or in assisting other women successfully obtain top-level positions, they might be been willing to participate in a brief interview. A self-addressed stamped envelope was included for sending the survey back to the researcher.

The survey asked questions regarding the leadership styles used most by the executives at the time that they were hired into their first executive position, if they felt this style had an influence on being hired, the leadership style embraced by the organization, and the current leadership style of the executive. See Appendix B for a copy of the survey.

Included in the envelope in which the survey was sent was a self-addressed stamped post card asking if the participant would be willing to participate in an interview to gather additional information regarding their leadership style and position. The participant could send this back with the survey, mail it separately, or disregard it. A copy of the postcard is contained in Appendix C. If the participant agreed to a follow-on interview, open-ended questions were asked to gather detail-rich information on both the experiences and perceptions of the participant. A copy of these questions is contained in Appendix D.

Once the post cards were received, the researcher contacted the participant and set up an interview appointment. These interviews were taped with permission of the interviewee. The data from the interviews were then typed into a text file on a personal

computer and were categorized and analyzed using a software program called HyperResearch.

The Quantitative Approach

The data received from the surveys were statistically analyzed using the methods described under the heading “Analysis” in this chapter. Several statistics were used to numerically quantify the findings of the study.

Survey Participants

Participants in this study were women in executive level positions. Women employed by Fortune 500 companies that had attained a senior or top-level managerial position were eligible to be included in the sample. The titles of these executives were president, executive vice president, chief financial officer and general counsel. Two hundred and eighty names of these women were located and surveys were sent to each of them.

Instrumentation – the Survey

Obtaining answers from a representative group of people is the heart of survey research. Surveys have three major characteristics: (a) information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics, (b) answers to the questions by the members of the group constitute the data of the study, and (c) information is collected from a sample rather than from every member of the population research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). For the above reasons, a survey was the appropriate instrument for this study.

If the sample population is scattered among the fifty states and perhaps even foreign countries, the researcher only has one instrument choice – the mail questionnaire

(Dillman, 1978). As the participants in this study were located across the nation, a mailed survey was the most effective way to collect information regarding leadership styles of executive women. The time requirement for this study was not urgent, as the sample was not anticipated to change. However, this researcher conducted the surveys within a two-month time frame to ensure that all participants were still executives and remained available for contact, ensuring consistency of the study. This researcher also strived to conduct the interviews during a consistent economical market time frame.

As discussed in Chapter 2 of this paper, Hersey and Blanchard (1988) developed common leadership styles or behaviors that have been accepted as valid benchmarks or common styles. These two authors define these styles in their situation leadership model, which contains 4 styles of leadership (a) delegating, (b) participating, (c) selling, and (d) telling. The survey used these styles and provided a definition within each question that used them for clarity. While it is understood that there are numerous categories of leadership styles, this study chose the styles of the Situational Leadership model due to their ability to be easily defined and understood by the participants in this study. The survey was limiting in that it only provided the participant four styles to choose from, although it did give the participant a six-point scale on which to rate the use of each style.

The survey instrument used for this study contained seven questions regarding leadership style and the successful attainment of an executive position in an organization. A copy of this instrument is contained in Appendix B. The first question in this survey asked the executive to indicate what her leadership style was prior to obtaining an executive position. This question asked the executive to rate each of the four styles, based on the extent to which she used that particular style, on a scale of one through six.

A rating of one indicated little use and a rating of six indicated heavy usage of that style. An answer of six on only one style would indicate that particular style to be the one most preferred by the executive prior to receiving a top-managerial position. As each of the styles provided the participant an opportunity to indicate usage, similar answers on each style would indicate that the executive used a combination of styles.

The second question in the survey asked the participant to rate how helpful their most used prior leadership style was in obtaining an executive level position. The scale of rating was from one to six, with one indicating that the prior leadership style was of little help. A rating of six indicated that the style was very helpful.

The third question asked the participant to rate the leadership style of the culture that the female executive entered. Again, the participant could rate this on the same interval scale and could also indicate a combination of leadership styles based on several similar levels of ratings. The answer only reflected the perception of the participant and was not validated by an objective party.

The fourth question asked if the culture prescribed the leadership style for the new executive, based on her perceptions of the environment. This was asked to discover if there was a mixture of leadership styles within the organization or perhaps an attempt to hire only leaders who fit into the company style.

The fifth question asked the participant to rate her current leadership style. This question was used to track changes from the prior leadership style used by the participant.

The survey contained two open-ended questions soliciting information regarding change to the participant's style or to the culture of the organization because of the participant's presence. Although open-ended questions have drawbacks such as yielding

few mentions of any one topic, it was anticipated that they would allow respondents a chance to state strong opinions or ideas not included on the survey (Salant & Dillman, 1994). The sixth question asked the participant to describe any changes or adaptations that she might have made to her leadership style to fit into the culture of the organization. The seventh question was similar in that it asked about the perceived changes that the culture made in adapting to the participant. These two questions allowed the participants to choose their own wording for their answers as any adaptations or changes that may have been made would not easily be categorized prior to the survey being sent out and suggested answers were not provided within the closed-end question format.

Analysis

The data gathered from the first five questions on the survey was analyzed quantitatively. These five questions answered the first three research questions of this study as defined in Chapter 1. There were three sets of quantitative tests applied to the data obtained from the survey. The first test applied was a correlation, which shows the extent to which change in one variable is associated with change in another variable (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, 1990). Four Pearson r correlations were performed on questions one and two to determine if there was a significant relationship between the prior leadership styles of the participant and the perceived helpfulness in attaining an executive position. As both variables are interval in nature, the Pearson correlation was the parametric statistic to use with this data (Morgan & Griego, 1998). Another set of four Pearson r correlations was applied to questions three and four to determine if there was a significant relationship between the leadership styles of top management and the extent to which there was a prescribed leadership style at the company. Four paired t -tests were run using

the data from questions one and five to determine if there was a change in the extent that each leadership style was used by the participant before they received their first executive position and the extent to which they currently used each leadership style. The following paragraphs describe these statistics in-depth.

Prior Style and Helpfulness. Research question one asked if there was a relationship between each of the leadership styles of the participant and the perceived helpfulness in attaining an executive position. To answer this question, the data from question one and two on the survey were correlated. Leadership style was the independent variable and there were four of these, each style being an independent variable and measured on an interval scale. These styles were delegating, participating, selling, and telling. Each of these four independent variables had six levels, with the levels being the self-rating of the usage extent of each style on a low to high interval scale. The levels corresponded with the responses on the survey, which had a value from one to six. If the participant circled “one” as an answer on the survey, this indicated that the participant strongly disagreed with the definitional statement provided for that style. Therefore, they made little or no use of that style. An answer of “two” indicated that the participant moderately disagreed. This pattern continued up to “six”, with “six” indicating that the participant strongly agreed with the definitional statement, indicating that this leadership style was used often in the participant’s leadership activities. The dependent variable was the helpfulness of that style in obtaining an executive position, which was indicated in the data provided by the answers to question two on the survey. Correlating the answer to question two with each of the leadership styles in question one produced an r numeric value indicating if there was a positive, negative, or non-existing

correlation. A significant positive correlation would demonstrate a relationship between a particular leadership style and its value to executive women in obtaining their first high-level position. A negative correlation, on the other hand, would suggest the use of a leadership style prior to receiving an executive position was a detriment to obtaining the job and that factors other than a leadership style were more influential in initial hiring.

Culture and Prescription of Leadership Style. Research question two asked if there was a relationship between the leadership style of top management and whether there was a prescribed leadership style at the company. Data was utilized from survey questions three and four. Again, leadership style, this time of the culture of the company, was the independent variable, having four independent leadership styles self-rated on a low to high continuum of six levels. This variable was measured on an interval scale. The dependent variable was the extent to which the leadership style was prescribed, which is indicated in the answers provided by survey question four. Correlating the answer to question four with each of the leadership styles in question three produced an r numeric value indicating if there was a positive, negative, or no correlation. A positive correlation would suggest that the company had a prescribed leadership style that specifically supported the particular style being examined.

Prior and Current Leadership Style. Research question three asked that if there was a change in the extent that the participant used each leadership style before they received their first executive position and the extent to which they currently used each leadership style. Leadership style was measured as before. Since this question examined the difference and the direction of change from the prior style to the current style, the appropriate test to apply is the paired-difference test (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Since the

dependent samples were from the same set of subjects, this could be construed as an example of repeated measurement data. For this data, the difference between the means of the two groups then equals the mean of the difference scores. A two-tailed test was appropriate since there is nothing to indicate an assumption of direction. A paired *t*-test was run with the data gathered from survey questions one and five to see if there was a significant change from the prior leadership style to the current leadership style. The results of this test indicated if there had been an increase or decrease in the amount that the participants used each leadership style.

The Qualitative Approach

One of the reasons that researchers choose qualitative inquiry for gathering data is because the topic needs to be explored - the variables cannot be identified and theories are not available to explain the behavior of the participants (Creswell, 1998). It was the intent of this researcher to gain a holistic overview of this area of study by using a grounded theory method. Creswell (1998) defines grounded theory research as the “development or generation of a theory closely related to the context of the phenomenon being studied” (p. 56). This research captured data on the perceptions of the participants through the use of interviews. The theme of this qualitative inquiry was to gather data using direct quotations and capture the women’s perspective, experiences, beliefs, and thoughts. The interviews were used to gather a wider knowledge base of how women may have had to change their style to successfully fit into their organization.

Interview Participants

These participants were women in executive level positions employed by Fortune 500 companies. Participants in this portion of the study first had the opportunity to

participate in the survey section that was analyzed with quantitative methods. In their survey packet was a “volunteer” postcard form they could return to indicate their willingness to be personally interviewed. This post card is included in Appendix C. This was a self-selection criterion on the part of the chosen pool of executive level women.

This group of participants was self-selected from the surveys that were mailed. They may or may not have sent back the survey as the postcards could be mailed separately. Three of the postcards were returned with surveys, which were then separated to maintain the anonymity of the survey data.

Every woman who returned a postcard was eligible for an interview. Fourteen postcards were received. Two of these women could not be contacted, leaving only twelve to be interviewed for this project. Each of these interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes and was conducted over an eight-week period.

All were executive women; none of them were in their first job as an executive. The industries that these women represented were airline, insurance, computers, financial institutions, utilities, college universities, and health care organizations. Included in the interview population were an attorney, computer technician, marketing representative, health care person, financial analyst, college instructor, and a sales person. Seven of the interviewees were the first women in their current position. The other five had held executive positions prior to their current job. All executives had been line managers, although several also had staff backgrounds. They were all over 45 years of age.

Instrumentation: the Interview

Interviews play a central role in the data collection in a grounded theory study (Creswell, 1998). They allow in-depth and detailed data to be collected and then

categorized for a deep understanding of the topic of study, which was the purpose of these interviews in support of this mixed methodology of this study. The data from the interviews greatly added to the data collected by the surveys and provided a clearer understanding of this study.

The questions used in the interview were open-ended questions. They were designed to draw out comments from the participants and to encourage them to express themselves freely and to use different words and terminology from that which was suggested by the survey. A list of these questions is contained in Appendix D.

These questions are important in that the answers detailed additional information as to how the individual experienced change either in herself or in her environment. They provided information on how the executive adapted to change and the amount of change that she made. The answers to the questions also added detailed information about the culture that the woman was entering and how that culture adapted to her presence.

Probing questions should be asked during an interview to elicit further and detail-rich information from the participants (Dillman, 1978). The probing questions that were asked in these interviews were “Is there anything else you would like to add ” or “Is there something I should have asked you?” These gave the participants the option to add more information to what was already said.

The interviews provided in-depth data to answer research questions four and five of this study. Research question four asked how the woman receiving the executive position adapted her leadership style to the company’s norm for leadership. Research question five asked how the company adapted to the leadership style of the newly hired

woman executive. Both of these questions were answered thoroughly by the information given in the interviews.

By asking these questions in an open-ended format, the participant was allowed to select from her full repertoire of possible responses. In using qualitative interviewing, the researcher was trying to determine what dimensions, themes, images or words people use to describe their feelings thoughts and experiences (Patton, 1987). This does not suggest that the results of the interview questions cannot be quantitatively measured, but that the interview technique with open-ended questions is a very common methodology in qualitative studies.

Data Analysis and Measures

There are three steps in analyzing data in grounded theory research. Those are (a) open coding, (b) axial coding, and (c) selective coding (Creswell, 1998). During the open coding segment of this study, this researcher analyzed each sentence or phrase in the raw data for ideas, beliefs, and opinions and coded this data into a category. The data gathered from the interviews was typed into a file on a personal computer and was categorized and analyzed using a software program called HyperResearch. This program allowed this researcher to place a category on each sentence with the use of specific codes. This researcher determined the codes that were used as the categorizing process was taking place. The code names were not pre-determined. Code names could have several entries of data from different participants in the study. In several cases, a sub-category or sub-code was created to show that a category or code could have different characteristics. See Appendix E for a list of the code names. Each of the codes was

analyzed for frequency. The frequency of each of the codes by participant is illustrated in Appendix F. An example of open coding is contained in Appendix G.

Axial coding allows the investigator to assemble the data in new ways (Creswell, 1998). It allows strategies to be identified and content and intervening conditions to be analyzed. The data were also analyzed for commonalities among the participants. In using axial coding, this researcher reviewed the content of the text under similar codes. These similar codes were then grouped together in like categories to search for common themes or conditions. By using axial coding, this researcher was able to categorize various codes and identify a specific theme or intervening condition. This is referred to as clustering and sets the stage for drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). An example of axial coding is contained in Appendix H.

Selective coding allows the researcher to identify a story line from the data (Creswell, 1998). Using the axial coding, this researcher was able to analyze the data or codes that occurred very frequently and were common among many participants. With the use of these codes, HyperResearch allowed the researcher to look for dominant themes and trends in the data. This researcher examined the data for how often something was said, how many women said it, and the major points common among the women. The data was quantified by code name, allowing for it to be dissected into specific portions and examined for relevance and importance to this study. This portion of the analysis process allowed a hypothesis or conclusion to be drawn regarding successful attainment of executive positions for women based on leadership style.

Quality and Verification Measures

Validity refers to the degree to which evidence supports inferences a researcher makes based on the data collected. The inferences about the use of an instrument, not the instrument itself, are validated (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Verification refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collect (Patton, 1990). Four types of verification evidence for were used in this study: (a) clarifying researcher bias, (b) peer review, (c) using more than one data collection approach, and (d) having a consistent interviewer.

Clarifying researcher bias is important to the study to ensure that the interpretation may be shaped by the experiences or biases of the researcher (Creswell, 1998). The researchers perspective in Chapter 1 contains information regarding the researcher, outlining what those biases or experiences might be.

Conducting a peer review on the research process is one way to check the verification of the study. They are people who will ask questions about means, interpretations, and methods of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). As this survey was developed for the purpose of this study only, this researcher needs to obtain content-related evidence of verification to ensure its worthiness. This was accomplished by having competent persons analyze the instrument and judge whether or not it was appropriate (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). The persons or peers who looked at the instrument and judged its contents were:

- Lois Hart – president and founder of Leadership Dynamics. Specializes in leadership consulting
- Stephanie Allen – founder of the Women's Vision Foundation

- Doctoral committee for this dissertation
- Five women managers at IBM who are at entry or middle level management

The need for the study and methods of gathering and interpreting data were discussed with these people. Copies of the survey and an explanation of the process were also reviewed with the peer group. Two of the business people wanted to expand the scope of the project to include more data. The peer group, indicating that the survey was clear, concise, and understandable, gave approval for the survey.

Using a combination of data types increases the quality and verification of the study as the strengths of one approach can compensate for the weaknesses of another approach. Using more than one data collection approach permits the researcher to combine strengths and correct possible deficiencies of any one source of data (Patton, 1987). To ensure consistency, this researcher used both a survey and an interview process to ensure this balance. It allowed the answers to questions using one methodology to be verified or validated by the other data.

The researcher is the instrument when doing a qualitative study. This instrument is validated by the researcher's skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing the fieldwork (Patton, 1990). Changes in the researcher can cause variations in the results of the data. Guba and Lincoln (1981) state that the variations resulting from changes in the researcher are offset by the "flexibility, insight, and ability to build on tacit knowledge that is the peculiar province of the human instrument" (p. 113).

Consistency was increased for the study by having only one researcher conduct the interviews. This allowed the questions to be asked in the same way and fashion, creating a process that is systematic and comprehensive, adding consistency (Patton,

1987). The interview questions were written in advance and were be asked in the same way and order during each interview. Variation among the answers received from the participants caused a slight variation to this process, but the questions were asked in a consistent order and wording for each participant. Patton (1990) states that the weakness to this approach is that it restricts the pursuit of topics or issues that were not anticipated when the interview was written. Having only one researcher conduct the interviewing with each participant minimized this weakness as it allowed the interpretation on the part of the person asking the questions to be consistent without the variability of personal biases and experiences. This created a consistent receiving environment for each participant such that any follow-on probing or clarifying questions were similar. Because the interview is systematic, interviewer variability judgment during the interview is reduced (Patton, 1987).

The purpose of interviewing was to allow the researcher to enter the other person's perspective, to uncover feelings, thoughts, and intentions. This interview process also captured the experiences of the participants, as that data was rich with information regarding the success of these women. It is the responsibility of the interviewer to provide a framework within which people can respond comfortably, accurately, and honestly to open-ended questions (Patton, 1987). In order to keep the interview process consistent and reliable among all participants in this study, this researcher used a standardized open-ended interview approach. This approach consisted of a set of carefully worded questions arranged for the purpose of taking each participant through the same sequence and asking each participant the same questions with essentially the same words (Patton, 1987). Using the standardized, open-ended interview

reduced bias that could occur with having different interview questions or the wording of questions different for different people. This method allowed a systemic process to gathering information.

The reliability of a study can be measured by an audit trail. The process of the study must be consistent, reasonably stable over time and across researchers and methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The same questions were asked of each participant in the interview process. The same researcher asked the questions, using the same method to document the conversations that took place. Audiotapes of the interviews, typed transcripts of those conversations, and additional notes taken by the researcher during the interviews are available to illustrate the trail this researcher took in gathering the data. These items make it easy for another researcher to duplicate to re-trace the trail that this researcher took in gathering data for this study.

The coding and categorizing process is critical to the analysis process of the content of the data. This researcher is skilled in the use of HyperResearch and in performing constant internal checks to ensure consistent coding of the data. As the quality and verification of this data will depend on this researcher's methodological skill, sensitivity, and integrity, it was imperative that the researcher understood that consistent analysis must be performed on the data from every participant.

By using a mixed methods design with survey instruments and interviews, this researcher discovered if there was a relationship between leadership styles and women obtaining executive level positions in organizations. Additionally, this investigation discovered what types of change had been made to the leadership style, the culture into

which the specific leadership style was placed, and the perceptions and experiences of the participants relating to this topic of study.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This study was conducted to determine if the leadership styles of women had an influence on their attainment of executive level jobs. The findings from the obtained data produced more information than anticipated and also highlighted specific details on obtaining a goal of an executive or top-level management position.

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative approaches supported each other in their conclusions. The quantitative reports will be presented first, followed by the qualitative data and quotations. The quotes in the interview findings are the exact statements made by the executives. The women were assigned a letter from A to L to differentiate them from each other without identifying them by name.

Correlations and Difference Tests

There were two correlation tests and one difference test applied to the data received on the surveys. These tests are discussed in detail below.

Correlation Between Prior Leadership Style and Helpfulness

The first question in the survey asked the participants to rate the leadership style they most often used on a scale of one to six. Table 1 shows the frequencies of each response to the particular leadership style. All forty participants circled an answer for each of the styles.

As this table illustrates, the majority of the answers provided were in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories for the participative and selling styles.

This indicates that the participant used these styles regularly but probably not as her sole method of leadership or that she did not specifically identify with the definitional categories as a complete definition of her personal style. This table also implies that a definite combination of leadership style is the norm for these executive women, with many indicating that they use more than one style often.

Table 1

Prior Leadership Styles and Ratings of Usage

Leadership Style	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
Delegating	7	8	7	6	6	6
Participative	0	0	4	5	13	18
Selling	1	3	1	5	17	13
Telling	7	12	8	8	4	1

A Pearson r statistic was run to determine if there was a correlation between the prior leadership style of the executive and the helpfulness of that leadership style in attaining an executive position. The helpfulness of the leadership style was determined by the answer to question two in the survey. Table 2 shows the results of this statistic.

The only statistic that resulted in being significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) was the negative correlation of a prior leadership style of telling and the helpfulness of this style in attaining an executive level position. This style indicates that the leader provided instruction and close supervision. The statistic suggested that the women who used this style found that it was not helpful to their promotion into top-levels of management. The

more helpful they indicated that their leadership style was, the less often the telling style was used. Delegating, participative and selling styles show no significant correlation, either positive or negative, to helpfulness of obtaining an executive position.

Table 2

Correlation of Leadership Styles and Helpfulness of that Style in Obtaining an Executive Position (N=40)

Leadership Style	Correlation to Helpful	Significance Level (p)
Delegating	-.051	.753
Participative	.068	.678
Selling	.110	.501
Telling	-.364*	.021

Correlation Between Culture and Prescribed Leadership Style

The third question on the survey asked the participants about the leadership style of the culture. The responses to this question indicate the extent that the company used and practiced with this style when the executive first received her position. Table 3 indicates the frequency of the ratings that each of the leadership styles were indicated.

Overall, the largest number of the women indicated a response of mildly agree when they selected the extent of a particular style used in their organization. The responses to this question as a whole and for each of the four styles, are fairly close to the shape of a bell curve. This indicated that the company might moderately support several

styles. It also implies that there was no identified leadership style of the culture so that a middle response may have been selected.

Table 3

Number of Company Cultures Using Each Leadership Style

Leadership Style	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
Delegating	1	9	8	6	9	7
Participative	1	7	6	11	9	6
Selling	1	7	8	10	10	4
Telling	3	8	10	11	6	2

This information was correlated with the responses to question four on the survey that asked if there was a prescribed leadership style at the company. Table 4 indicates the responses to question four.

Table 4

Number of Companies Embracing a Prescribed Leadership Style

Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Mildly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
7	4	10	6	8	5

In examining the leadership style of the culture, Pearson r statistics were run to see if there was a relationship between the styles of the culture and having a specific prescribed leadership style in that same organization. Table 5 shows the results of this correlation.

Table 5

Culture and Prescribed Leadership Styles (N=40)

Culture Leadership Style	Correlation to a Prescribed Style	Significance Level (p)
Delegating	.235	.144
Participative	.256	.111
Selling	.190	.241
Telling	.095	.554

The statistics from this test show that there is no significant correlation between the perceived cultures of the organization and a prescribed leadership style. Had the numbers shown a positive correlation, the results would have suggested that as the indication of a prescribed style went up, the more prevalent that particular style of leadership would have been in the organization. Likewise, a negative correlation would have shown a decrease in a specific leadership style as the extent of a favored style became obvious. In summary, there was no relationship between the leadership style or styles identified in the organization and a specific style that was encouraged or dictated by the company.

Difference Between Prior and Current Leadership Styles

The final quantitative measure that was examined by this study was to determine if there was a significant difference in the prior leadership style practiced by the executive and the style she used most currently. Table 6 shows the means for the leadership styles, both prior and current use, and the results of the t -test.

Table 6

Comparison of the Means of the Prior and Current Leadership Styles (N=40)

Leadership Style	Mean of Prior Style	Mean of Current Style	t	Significance of Measurement
Delegating	3.35	4.80	6.040	.001
Participating	5.13	5.48	3.009	.005
Selling	4.83	4.97	.734	.467
Telling	2.83	3.15	1.505	.140

This difference was determined by running a paired t -test using both sets of data collected by questions one and five on the survey. Two statistics resulted in being significant. The results of the t -test for the difference in the delegating style showed a significance level of less than .001 (2-tailed). This indicates that there is a 1 chance out of 1000 that this difference occurred due to chance (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 1994).

The same is true with the difference in the participating style, but with a different significance level. The results for the t -test for the difference in the participating style

showed a significance level of .005 (2 tailed), also indicating that this change was not due to chance.

Figure 1 illustrates how the women rated the extent of their use of the delegating style. It allows a pictorial comparison of the changes in the leadership delegating style from prior to being hired into an executive position to their current employment.

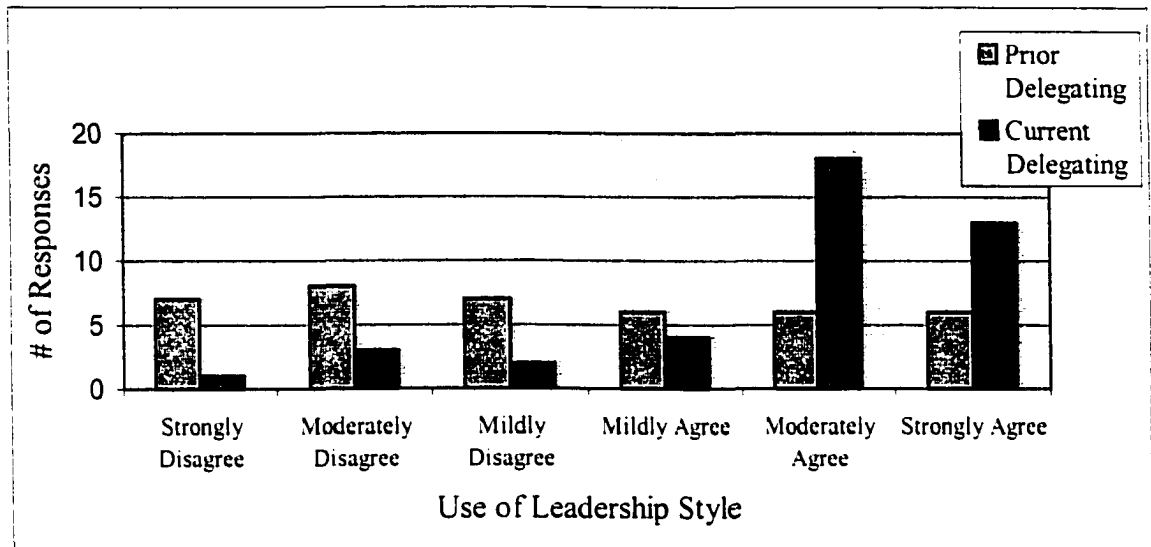


Figure 1. Changes in the delegating style.

Responses regarding the use of this style prior to executive level is fairly evenly spread from strongly disagree to strongly agree, but the use of this style after becoming an executive increases dramatically. This suggests that far more women were turning over responsibility for decisions and implementation of job factors in their new position. The t -test statistic is used to calculate the probability that the prior and current leadership styles are the same. The smaller this probability value is, the more likely that the means of the two variables are different (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Again, the results of the t -test showed a significance level of .000 (2 tailed). Therefore, there was a significant increase

in the extent of use of the delegating style of the executive prior to becoming an executive to now.

The responses about the use of the participative leadership styles were collected and illustrated in Figure 2. There were no responses for the strongly disagree and moderately disagree category.

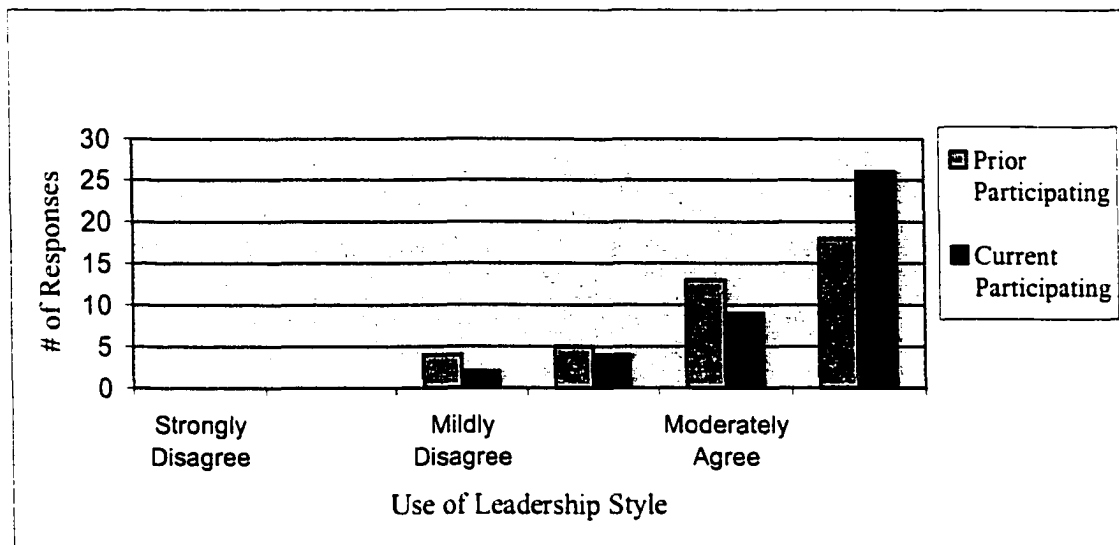


Figure 2. Changes in the participating style from prior to executive level attainment to current position.

The Participating style did increase along the agreement scale and increased sharply in the strongly agree category, showing that more women were sharing ideas and facilitating in the decision making process. The results of the t-test indicated that there was a significance value of .005, indicating that this change was probably not the result of chance. This statistic shows that once a woman became an executive, she increased her use of the participating style of leadership.

The statistical tests applied on the selling style did not produce significant results (see Table 6). The tests resulted in a significance level of .467. This low level of

significance indicates that there is a good probability that the change in the use of this leadership style was due to chance.

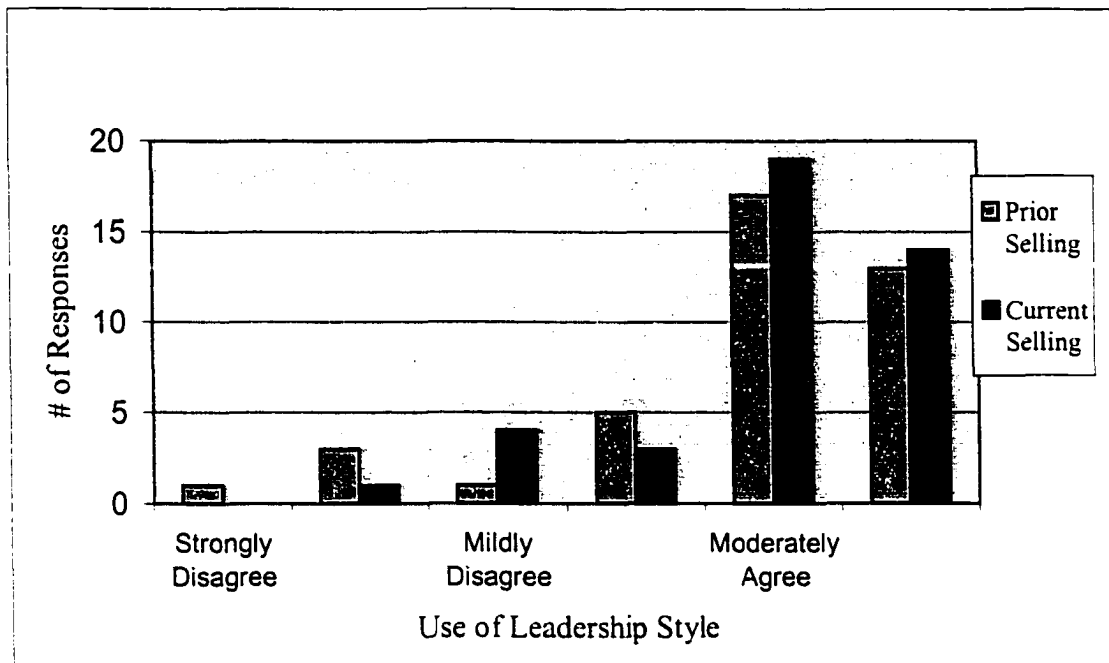


Figure 3. Changes in selling style shows the use of this leadership style in jobs prior to becoming an executive.

By using this style, the participant explains decisions and provides an opportunity for clarification of job tasks. According to Figure 3, either the participant used a form of telling or used it frequently, but did not use it prior to becoming an executive. As the use of this style increased in the moderate and strongly agree category and was roughly equal for both prior and current activities, the test results show that that there was no significant difference between the prior and current style.

The last significance test was applied on the telling style and did not produce significant results (see Table 6). The significance level of this test was .140, which indicates that the change in the use of this leadership style could be due to chance. Figure

4 shows that the extent of use of this style is fairly consistent in both prior and current positions. Only one person before and one after strongly agreed that it was the style they most used frequently.

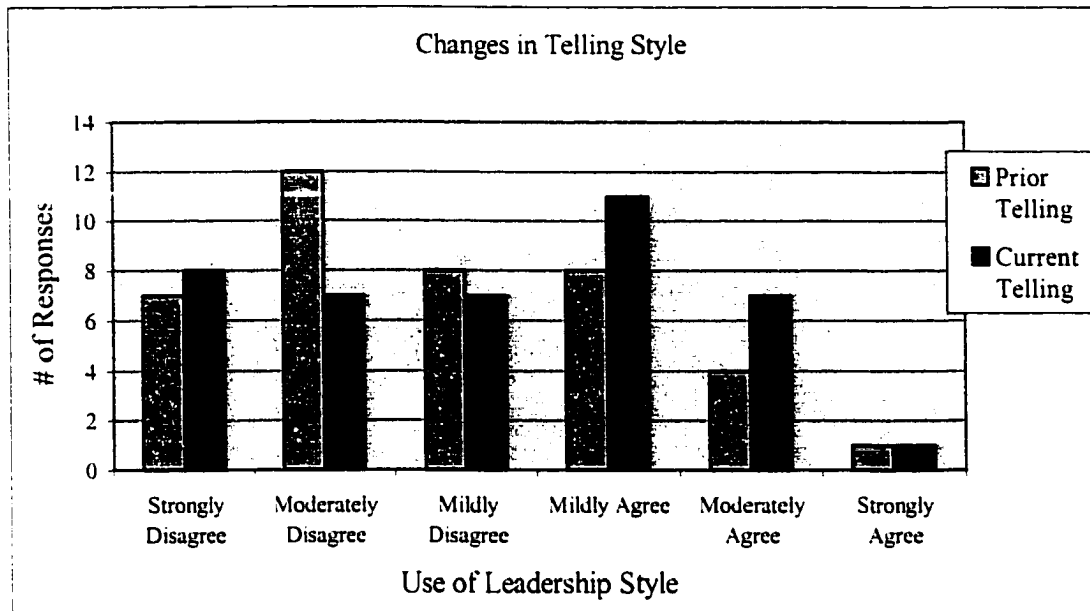


Figure 4. Changes in the Telling Style shows the use of this style pictorially.

In summary, the extent of the use of the delegating and participating styles changed significantly from the use of this style prior to attaining an executive position to the use of this style once becoming an executive. This indicates that the changes in the utilization of these styles were not due to chance. The opposite was true for the telling and selling styles. The change in the extent of the use of these styles from prior to executive level to current position was not significant, indicating that any change noticed could have been due to chance.

A count was made of how individual women changed on each of the leadership styles. The results detail the number of responses to each measurement of extent of use by leadership style is shown in table 7. This table provides the information regarding individual women's changes in leadership style.

Table 7

Change from Prior to Current Leadership Style

Leadership Style	Agree Less	No Change	Agree More
Delegating	2	10	28
Participative	1	26	13
Selling	10	17	13
Telling	11	15	14

The delegating style has many more respondents that agree to using it after becoming an executive, which made this change a significant one. The participative style was also significant as many more women (13) agreed more with it after becoming an executive; only one woman was less participative. There were no significant changes in the selling and telling styles.

Adaptations Made by Participant

Survey question six asked the executive how she adapted her leadership style to fit the company's norm for leadership. This question allowed the participant to write in comments on the changes that they had made. Four of the surveys contained no write-in comments to this question. The remaining 36 surveys contained information, which is detailed in table 8.

Several of the participants indicated that they made no adjustments to their style to fit into the culture of the organization, however twenty-four of the women who wrote in comments did mention that they had changed in some way. Ten comments

specifically stated the changes to their form of leadership, while the remaining comments pertained to specific philosophies of the participant or their ways of doing business.

Table 8

Adaptation Made to Individual Styles by the Women Executives

# of Responses	Adaptation Made
13	None
6	Became more of a situational leader
4	Became more of a delegator
1	Became more of a team player.
1	Developed more patience
1	Became more polite
1	Became less direct
1	Became more direct
1	Used less hands-on tactics
1	Developed more of a entrepreneurship style
1	Gathered more supporting data
1	Became more vision and task oriented
1	Produced more results

Not everyone that had a write-in comment provided an answer to this question.

Some comments were statements about the organization, not adaptations made.

Overall, these comments indicate that there is some change occurring in leadership style and that the change is not limited to the style, but encompasses much more details of what the women did or accomplished to be successful.

Culture Adaptations

The last question on the survey asked the executive how the culture adapted to her. Again four surveys did not contain a write in comment to this question. Table 9 shows the comments and how many women responded with these specific notations.

Table 9

Adaptations of Company Culture to the New Woman Executive

# of Responses	Adaptation Made
15	None
4	Became more open
1	Encouraged more situational leadership
1	Encouraged more participative leadership
1	Developed increased tolerance
1	Became more collaborative
1	Became more direct
1	Listened more
1	Encouraged more empowerment
1	Gave more feedback
1	Became more explicit

Most of the women who wrote in comments indicated that the culture had made no changes due to them (the executive) being at the organization. Four executives said that the culture became more open and only two participants indicated that the leadership style embraced by the organization had changed. These comments were from the 40 received surveys, questions six and seven. Again, these comments show that much more than leadership style plays a part in hired into an executive position.

The Importance of Leadership Styles

The main purpose of the interview data was to determine if the leadership style of the executive woman was a key factor in her success in obtaining an executive position.

The results of the interviews indicated that the leadership style was not a key factor.

Many women had a combined style of leadership and entered into a culture that expected situational leadership ability of the executive and for each of those styles to be used in specific situations.

Table 10 illustrates the type of leadership style and its use. The columns show the style most commonly embraced by the culture, the style used by the participant prior to obtaining an executive position, and the current style of the participant.

Table 10

Leadership Styles and Use Obtained in the Interviews

Leadership Style	Culture Style	Prior Style	Current Style
Delegating	4	0	2
Participative	1	6	0
Selling	1	0	0
Telling	2	4	0
Combination	4	2	10

The participative and telling styles were not used as the predominant current style as many women had not changed from using them but had incorporated other styles into their leadership skills. This is reflected in the combination style. Seventeen percent of the

executives currently use a delegating style frequently when they lead their group or organization, which is a marked change from no participant using this style prior to becoming an executive. Only two executives mentioned leading with a selling style, and its use was primarily noted when there was an issue of motivation, not one of preferred style.

Leadership Style of Culture

It was important to examine the culture that the participant was entering into to determine if it was a significant factor in attaining an executive position. Hiring a person into a top-level position or as an officer is a big step for a corporation and one that many organizations place much time and process into.

Table 10 illustrated the number of organizations that favored a particular leadership style. There was not a dominant or favored leadership style used across the board within the organizations of these twelve women. Thirty-three percent of the women said that the culture they entered into had a combination of leadership styles. Thirty-three percent also said that the culture they entered into supported the delegating style of leadership. Sixteen percent said their culture supported telling and eight percent said their culture supported the selling and participative styles. Although no predominant leadership style was consistent across all organizations, the two leadership styles that occurred most in the organizational setting were delegating and the combination of styles.

Culture - Combination of Styles

Of the executives interviewed, four indicated that the culture was a combination of leadership styles. This appeared to make it easier for these women to fit into their organizations, yet not all of the women used or indicated a strong use of this style.

What we had in common was that many of the management team used a combination of the styles that you've mentioned (L).

Maybe it's because in the corporate setting you have so many different levels of people with different skill sets and different backgrounds that you can actually have different styles that work (A).

Again, this style was not one of the options offered to the executives but one that they gave as the best style that fit the culture of the organization.

Culture – Delegating Style

Four of the interviewees indicated that the culture that they entered into was one that supported a delegating style of leadership. This style was one that none of the women interviewed indicated that they practiced, but they did note that their male counterparts using it.

My peers and the culture supports delegating and telling (K).

The leadership style as a whole consisted of a lot of delegating, although my peers are doing more delegating and telling. Most of the men were delegators. (J).

You have to assume that you have the right (to delegate), which maybe men find easier to do (G).

It was in this section of leadership styles that the comparisons between men and women became obvious and were noted. No other leadership style was mentioned as being used primarily by men.

Culture – Participative Style

Only two participants commented that their culture was participative, but six out of the twelve participants commented that they had a team environment, which is very similar to a participative environment.

My end of the canoe can't be up and yours is the swamp, it takes all of us to get the job done (C).

I think that what's working today is much less hierarchical and much more inclusive management (B).

Culture Different and Difficult

There were several comments made by the participants in the interviews that stated that the culture was different and at times difficult. Eighty-three percent of the interviewees said that the culture was different at the executive level. .

I had a different style from my peers. There were only a few of us (with this style) (H).

The rest of it was totally different because surfacely it was unacceptable to be anything other than what the culture that what he (CEO) was trying to create, which mean that it (style) was driven underground (C).

It's tougher to have, it's really tough to be a leader in a law firm, its like herding cats. They all think they should be the king of the road. So that's a very different setting (A).

There were also several comments about the culture being difficult. Five out of the twelve executives indicated that they had to work to fit in and that it was not an easy fit between them and the culture.

I couldn't have pretended to really understand how difficult it was. When I first got here, it was an eye opener (C).

I know at times in my career when I worked for a manager who kept all over me when I knew I was perfectly capable. Boy I tell you, it would get me ticked off. It was the most unpleasant time (H).

Some of the women had actually experienced unfair treatment and viciousness in their culture. Two women in particular had negative experiences in the culture, although both have moved onto new executive positions.

As far as adapting, I have seen a lot of people let me take the fall for stuff and it's either worked well or I've actually taken the fall for them just because to me, I'm not sure it's a gender or personality. Only males have let me take the fall. I've seen women not willing to share glory, but I've never seen them, not that I've worked with, let you take the fall. Yeah, I've never seen that happen with another woman (B).

So here I am in the northeast, a southern women who had academic credentials, but had 3 years of experience, and they treat me like I am zero (I).

Not all of the women felt this way regarding their culture. Almost all of them said it was different, but only two felt it was negative toward them as women.

Prior Leadership Styles

The prior leadership style of the participants refers to the style they most often used before they became an executive. Two of the styles suggested were used as a primary style of leadership before the participants became an executive. Those styles were participative and telling. This is shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Prior Leadership Styles of the Executive Women

Leadership Style	Number of Executives
Delegating	0
Participative	6
Selling	0
Telling	4
Combination	2

Fifty percent of the women in this study indicated that they preferred a participative leadership style when working with their subordinates. The telling style was also used often, as this is commonly a style used by new managers or those at the 1st or 2nd level of management.

Participative Style

Fifty percent of women in the interview process stated that they used a participation and consensus building in their leadership style most of the time. One executive used the participative style to work simultaneously with several groups.

Using a participative style, you end up being able to master across groups; you have mastering knowledge across working areas (D).

Some were restricted to the participative style in order to accomplish their work and to be successful and productive in their work.

So in the past, I used a participative style, particularly again in wide positions - in lower levels here you are dealing with mostly the people who are working for you and to a lesser extent, some of your peers (G).

I had to get down in the trenches to be accepted. (I).

Telling Style

One executive mentioned the use of the telling leadership style was predominantly used when being new to management. She said that this style was more commonly found in first level management.

Anybody new to management starts in telling. Everyone starts out by being in the telling mode. As you continue to grow into the company, you go through telling. In telling you think that I am God (D).

Although, the telling style was not the style most commonly used by most of these women prior to moving into an executive level, 33% of the women did use this style in past lower-level management positions.

Combination Style

Two participants said that they used a combination of styles. They went further to say that leading by participation was one of the styles they used in that combination.

Micro-Manager

Although the term 'micro-manager' was not suggested as a leadership style, it did come up several times when discussing the various styles.

You're more likely to be much more of a micro-manager to begin with until you learn that that's not going to be a certain way to get everything out of your team. I did quickly move from being a micro-manager and having to have control, too much control, too much detail to more of first a lead, I had people spread out all over because when you... you tend to micro-manage when your people are all where you are. You start that way (C).

Sometimes you are forced to work in a managing mode due to the environment. This impacts your leadership style, at least for that environment. If you are working for a very telling leader who feels like he or she has to be involved in everything you're doing and directing you constantly, then it may affect your style in terms of how you work with your own team and how much information you gather, you maintain or you get involved in (H).

This style was represented as an aggravated form of telling. As a leader, instead of just telling people what to do, the work is told or done by the leader down to the finest detail.

Only two women used this style at some point prior to becoming an executive.

The data gathered from the interviews of the twelve women in this portion of the study indicated that they predominantly used the participative and telling leadership

styles in their jobs prior to becoming an executive. The following section will address the current leadership styles used.

Current Leadership Style

The current leadership styles had changed from the indicated prior leadership style. While many used the participative and telling styles, far more had moved to adjusting their style to a combination of all of them.

Combination of Leadership Styles

The majority of the comments given by these women focused on identifying the needs of the situation and then utilizing their skills to create a successful work environment. They discussed their flexibility in using all of their skills to effectively manage the situation at hand.

My management style still changes depending on what I am working with (L).

I practice all leadership styles (J).

I am using still all four (leadership styles). It sometimes even depends on the employees I am working with or the other executives I'm working with. Honestly Cathy, I play that person-by-person (H).

When the team comes together, I am more than an equal member of the group. I like the way that I can bring teams together (D).

The tools that you use within your overall style is really what I was talking about when I was trying to deal with your leadership styles. I would be combinations of them. There are none that are close to what I do overall (E).

The use of a combination of styles is necessary as these executives deal with a variety of people, across teams and even across companies. They found that having a broad base of leadership skills to draw from enabled them to be effective and successful.

Delegating Leadership Style

The only other style that is currently used predominantly by executive women is the delegating leadership style. Only two women stated that they used this style most often in their daily activities.

Men have learned to delegate. I am absolutely a delegator and senior VP. I delegate down as a regular senior VP (D).

The delegation, I think, is part of the valuing and trusting and accountability that you bring into an organization or a team, managing that delegation that you give them and they do their job (H).

Prior, Culture, and Current Leadership Styles

Table 12 illustrates a side-by-side layout of the change process that the women went through. The first column identifies the participant's prior leadership style before being hired into an executive level position. The second column shows the style of the culture or the one that can be recognized in the culture most often. The third column portrays what style the executive uses today. The number of executives using a delegating style rose, as those using the participative and telling styles fell. These styles were not eliminated from use, just combined with other styles resulting in a blend that reportedly worked well for the participant. The number of participants using a combination of styles prior to receiving an executive position increased from two to ten, illustrating an increase of 500%.

The table shows that women with leadership styles entering a culture with a different style will predominantly create a combination of styles in the way she chooses to lead, resulting in more alignment between the culture style and current leadership style.

Table 12

Leadership Style Prior to Executive Level, Style of the Culture, and Style Currently Practiced

Participant	Prior	Culture	Current
A	Participative	Telling	Combination
B	Telling	Delegating	Combination
C	Telling	Delegating	Delegating
D	Combination	Delegating	Combination
E	Participative	Combination	Combination
F	Participative	Combination	Combination
G	Telling	Selling	Combination
H	Telling	Telling	Delegating
I	Participative	Combination	Combination
J	Combination	Combination	Combination
K	Participative	Participative	Combination
L	Participative	Delegating	Combination

Adjustments Made by Participants

From the results of the interviews, there were not a large number of adjustments made specifically to leadership styles. Many mentioned changes that they made to other facets of their life, such as personality traits or personal interests.

No change to Leadership Style

Even though Table 12 indicates that there was change going on, seven out of twelve women (58.3%) said they did not make changes to their leadership style. Many mentioned a prior style with minor adjustments to that style, but not an overall revamping of the style they had used prior to their entry into an executive position.

It was one very much equal to my style. It was an easy fit. I had big giant leap on everybody else because I really had that kind of style myself. The thing was, I really never saw myself as any different than any of them (C).

I have not changed my style. I would say that it really had not been a different style. Fundamentally, I never changed (E).

I could go forward with my own style (J).

We had several things in common. I saw a lot of things in common between my style and that of the management team. What we had in common was that many of the management team used a combination of the styles that you've mentioned (L).

There was one executive that was adamant about not changing the way she did business. She was comfortable with her style and vowed to keep it as it worked well for her.

I liked participation more so I took what the men said but I didn't change to be like them. I did not try to adapt the male style. I did not try to be just like the men who were doing the delegating (J).

The majority of the women interviewed stated that they did not change their leadership style. They indicated that they found commonalities with their style and their culture and no changes were needed.

Change in Leadership Style

Although the majority of women mentioned that they did not change their leadership style, 33% of the women stated that they changed. Four of the participants in this study made direct comments on how they specifically changed. As illustrated in Table 12, the participants continued to utilize their current leadership style, but all of the participants added to their original style or enhanced it in some way.

Both (influence and tricks of the trade). It had a definite influence on style and how I did things (A).

So I think those are the two key changes for me personally in leadership style, more attention to building consensus and recognizing that in this division I am supposed to use all the resources and capabilities of the company and not just some predefined set that's in the organization charts (G).

If you don't speak their language, if you don't follow their customs and do their norms, and policies and rules.... A lot of women drop out who go into the culture or the organization because they get discouraged because they never figure out how in the world they are supposed to act. Find a way to adapt (K).

Several of the women executives found that they had to change their style in order to be successful at their new top-level position. They made adjustments according to the culture that they entered.

Other Changes Made

Entering into an executive position was a big move for all of the women interviewed. Many had to continually check their positioning within the business and make the necessary changes both off and on the job.

I actually called in somebody that had been half way nice to me and said 'what can I do to connect with this group' and he goes 'down at the plant on Saturday we are pulling wire. Put on a pair of jeans, come down, bring donuts, and help up and it will turn the tide'. And I did it. And you know, things weren't 100% ok (I).

Many changes included the way the participants worked or performed certain tasks in their new positions. Some changes took the form of a more personality type of change or a behavior change.

I've also found that I'm more adaptable than some of my male counterparts. I'm more flexible – as you get smarter you may change. You have to be flexible (B).

I adjusted some, but not a great deal. I also have a "tell it like it is" style that I have had to adjust. I have had to work at being diplomatic. Sometimes "telling it like it is" is not the best way to communicate and get along. I have had to adjust my style and try to slow down when I am working closely with people here and have made the adjustments necessary to be successful in this environment. This is not a function of the management style but a function of the job. Sometimes the job dictates what style is appropriate. You need to do what the job needs, and sometimes I have to use whatever it takes to get the job done (L).

Still other women looked at the total environment and made overall changes to adjust to their new culture.

If you live in France, you need to learn the customs and the language and adopt a lot of the little nuances of life to what you do. The style doesn't make you French but it makes you adapt a little bit easier and people will be affronted if you don't adapt to them - if you don't speak their language, if you don't follow their customs and do their norms and policies and rules. A lot of women drop out who go into the culture or the organization because they get discouraged because they never figure out how in the world they are supposed to act. Find a way to adapt (K).

Women recognized that they needed to adjust themselves in certain ways to fit in with the culture. Their success relied on them being able to work effectively within the constraints of their environment. While these changes were not specifically directed to changing a leadership style, there were adjustments that women made to adapt to their new culture. Mary Kay Ash (1984) states that in business, everything is subject to change – people products, buildings, and machinery, everything except principles. She paraphrased Thomas Jefferson's words – in matters of principle, stand like a rock, in other matters, swim with the current.

Adapt Interests

Five of the participants said that they adapted their personal interests to fit in with the men. They felt that it gave them something in common; an interest other than work that they could share with their male counterparts.

You really do need to have something in common with them and share it. That's why women need to learn to do things that men like to do because they are predominately; it is predominantly men (C).

One company that I ran liked to take its clients on hunting trips. I had never done that. So I did that, I learned to do it. I didn't do it in exactly in the same way that they did because they were primarily men, almost exclusively men. I was there with them. I adapted in that sense. They liked the fact that I was there (E).

I went to golf school for 3 years in a row so I could play golf with them because it's a big thing here. I did it because it was a big thing. I'm not good and I can't do it but I did it, so I make an attempt to fit in my own way (I).

The women who adapted their interests felt that it greatly enhanced their ability to work with their male counterparts and felt that it included them in activities, both on and off the job. It gave them a way to fit in with their new environment.

Not Adapting Interests

One of the executives in this study was very opposed to adjusting personal interests or in socializing with her peers. She did not feel that this was good business practice and she stated that if the work was interesting enough, there was no need to have a common interests outside of the workplace.

I will go out and have a drink with a small group as long as it's all about the colleagues and not about being with the boys. I don't golf, I don't do sports, and I don't intend on being in that area. Women really need to understand is that you never start out your job with socialization. If you go in there with the mindset of going in there to work, then you will be looked at as an intellectual equal as opposed to someone who is there that just wants to socializing (K).

This executive did not feel there was an advantage to adapting interests outside of the workplace with her peers unless it involved some aspect of the job.

Adjustments Made by the Culture

The participants in this study did not make all of the changes. As with any change in the work environment, adaptation is necessary on the part of the organization to change as well.

Many of these executives were the first women in their position. Few had other women to pave the way to executive management, resulting in not only the participants in this survey changing, but the environment also changing to adapt to the women. Eight of the women interviewed said that they perceived their culture adapted to fit the participant's leadership style.

I have been effective in modeling that to the company because now I see some changes in that area. I see a little more openness and little bit more sharing of information, which has been very good (K).

My culture has adapted well to me. They are now more open since I've come here, but before, a lot of folks wouldn't have said something if they had a disagreement (L).

While only seven women said they had changed, eight women said that they felt their culture had changed in response to their influence at the organization. However, more comments were made about personal adjustments than about adjustments made by the culture.

Top 8 Success Factors

The influence of leadership styles on the attainment of an executive position seemed to have far less influence than other factors facing women who want to become a corporate officer or work at an executive level within an organization.

Table 13

Key Factors to Success in Obtaining an Executive Position for Women

Success Factor	Number of Executives
Be yourself	11
Produce Results	11
Skill Knowledge	9
Beliefs (integrity, doing what is right)	9
Being flexible and making adjustments	8
Participative Style	8
Communications	7
Personal goals	7

Far more important than leadership style were the key elements to success detailed by women when talking about why they received their executive position. All of the women were very experienced and had been in staff positions before becoming an executive. In understanding this similarity, several important key factors surfaced as attributing to propelling the careers of these women upward. Table 13 indicates the key factors to success.

As documented in Chapter 3, the information from the interviews was coded and categorized using HyperResearch. A list of these codes and how often the corresponding topic was mentioned is contained in Appendix E by descending order, with the most frequently talked about topic or code at the top of the list.

Each of these factors was important to the success of the executives interviewed. These factors emerged from the data, which consisted of how many times the factor was mentioned and by how many women. There were eighteen success factors (see Appendix H), whose composite number of times mentioned was 549. The eight key success factors made up 394 responses or 72% of the total. The following sections describe each of these success factors.

Be Yourself

The comment most frequently made in the interview regarding the successful attainment of an executive position pertained to how important it was for each of these women to remain consistent in their leadership styles, personality, and interests. Eighty-four comments were made about the importance of being yourself with eleven out of the twelve participants mentioning this concept. It was commented on 30% more than the next common success factor, producing results, which only received 62 comments.

Being yourself or remaining consistent with yourself was very important to this group of women. They felt that without this consistency, they would not have achieved the success that they had.

Examining that and listening to that gut voice in your stomach or your heart or where ever it is that it comes up, is probably really important. There's nothing that I'm doing that's not natural. It's mine and I'm not going to change it. I just did it because it works for me. I say to people, you've got to do what's right for youand be true to themselves, which is a hard thing to do in our culture, particularly hard when you've got a lot of peer pressure and other people telling you what they think you should do (A).

You need to learn your own styles and what you are good at. Don't try to put a square peg in a round hole (F).

I would say just be your own style, just use your own personal style (B).

I would tell women not to change their behavior. You can do what I just described without acting masculine (E)

I always say I've had to face myself at every stage of my career. I really am myself. I would say, yes I do think I've been true to myself, but I've given in on a lot of things (I).

Don't ever deny who you are and be true to yourself and go with that because once you start trying to be somebody else, it just doesn't work and it falls apart, whereas if you are true to yourself then you can always have yourself to rely back on and move forward to. Never give up on who you are. Stay true to yourself (K).

You need to just be yourself. You need to be who you are. If you try to be someone else, it won't work. If you have tried to make it work and you are still not successful, then you need to move on to another environment. If you are doing the right thing, you will be successful. If you are doing what you really want to do and strongly believe in it, then you will be successful. I wouldn't worry so much about style as that is not the only key to success. Maybe this is a commonality among women but I have found that the women who are the most successful are those who are doing what they really want to do (L).

The response to be yourself was amazingly consistent among these executive women.

Many of them commented on having a participative style and being open to their environment, but they all saw a great benefit in going where their heart took them and in being consistent with their personality in their actions at work.

Produce Results

The next key factor to success was the ability to produce results. Eleven out of the twelve participants surveyed also said that they had to show results to be successful. They were talking about results that were important and noticed. These included both measured results and performance in the normal course of business.

It happened to be after my style that got me there, but I think the reason that I was able to obtain my first executive position was because I am results oriented. You had to just buck it up to get the job done. I was able to get my team up and

running and be very efficient in giving tremendous results right off the bat. You have to be good at what you do. You have to deliver (B).

The other is, always do a good job, no matter what the job is. People who do a good job consistently get recognized. That means that they are consistent in what they do and how they do it and they are learning. I used to volunteer for lots of things, particularly if I thought I'd get the end result of that. In the end you end up with a lot more satisfaction because you get something resolved (F).

It's getting things done. It depends on how well you get things done. Your ability to get things done across that matrix of organizations or that matrix of people is sort of a indication of your effectiveness as a leader (G).

A couple of things, one that sticks in my memory may surprise you. Clearly my business accomplishments; that without a doubt, in terms of moving through a company; your business results are very important. I thought 'wow, this is great'. They value my capabilities and my performance, so I was getting promoted and doing well. Leadership style important also. I would say not as important as business results (H).

My advice to women is to be very good at what you do (J).

Performance was one of the critical factors to success as discussed in Chapter 2 in the literature review. These women also indicate that performing well and being able to produce noticeable results is a key factor in moving into top-level management.

Skill Knowledge

In addition to producing results, another key factor to success for these executive women was having the skills required not only to do the job but also to give credibility to themselves. In many cases they were the first woman in their position and having a background containing solid skills gave them authority and success in their new area.

I think I've worked in every kind of environment you can imagine. Marketing skills, analytical marketing skills not just kind of off the cuff totally right brained side, but the real analytical business marketing skills are very important these days. Technical analytical skills are very important. The ability to understand financial deals, analyze business positions, engineering, at least in terms of the discipline it provides to you. Those are really important skills. I would advise that they have some combination of those types of skills (E).

All of us, even though we don't admit it to ourselves, I think we all know where our strengths and weaknesses lie. I would look at that gap and say 'ok, I need more experience in sales or marketing so I need to take a job and go do that and then I'll be ready'. I've learned over the years to sort of fill those gaps with people who work for me who may have had those experiences or have those skills. I definitely looked at my strengths and weaknesses and then my desire. However, I also believe that I've been given certain abilities with the expectation that they'll be used (H).

I have more experience under my belt, at least more than people around me. That has some credibility that goes with it. It doesn't come across as a cocky attitude, like I can do it all. It's I have done all of these things. Let's talk about how we can use that experience to make this better. So what you do with your experience information is very important (F).

Coming into a new environment where the skills were important enabled these women to successfully attain a top-level management position. It gave them the extra edge and credibility they needed to become one of the few women in the executive level.

Beliefs

The beliefs that these women held were very similar to being themselves. These two categories could almost be combined to form one. The difference between them is that women were talking about what they believed in, it was not always how they did business.

I would tell them to do the right thing. They need to make sure that what they are doing is best for the company and best for the customer. If you are doing the right thing, you will be successful (L).

We believe in integrity. You can't be afraid to stand up for what you believe in. You always need to be able to look at yourself in the mirror and say 'I did what I needed to do'. I'd tell them to stand by what they believe in and just know that you have to look in the mirror and feel like what you've did is what you needed to do. If you stand by your commitment, your principals, your beliefs, whether it comes out the way you want it to or not, you have yourself. I'm very passionate about women succeeding. That's very important (B).

I have some really broad concepts and beliefs and standards that I apply all the time; that overall set of concepts and beliefs that I have. There are probably pieces of the some of the environments that I have worked in that are consistent with my belief structure, that they understand clearly what role they play in making that vision a reality and really causing the strategy to be implemented and to be successful. That's a very strong belief. Another belief that I have is that you really have to find people whose skills match the job that you have. This is unbelievably important. Then I really believe that you have got to provide people with the kind of environment where they can be successful, which includes a whole lot of things. Did I change any of the beliefs that I just described to you? Absolutely not. You can do that without changing what you believe in and in what you do. Some people go about everything the same way. You can go with things different ways without sacrificing any of your fundamental beliefs or style. I've never done that. I've never sacrificed those things (E).

Nine out of the twelve women interviewed specifically mentioned beliefs that they held or a belief system that they adhered to. Some of them tied their beliefs back to believing in themselves.

Being Flexible and Making Adjustments

The Other Changes Made section in this chapter outlined how women made adjustments to their leadership style and interests. It also was discovered as one of the top eight success factors. This category was discussed in the leadership section of this chapter regarding how women have had to make adjustments to fit into their new environment.

Communications

Communications play a key role in any work environment. This was very true to this group of executive women and over half of them mentioned it as a success factor in their careers.

In order to get to know the team because the team was in place and I wasn't hiring a lot of people, you really needed to communicate. Then I started to really

formalize that and communicating that and putting it out there. I was able to articulate that I was going to get the job done (C).

You not only constantly articulate, you articulate in different ways because people learn in different ways. (You need to make communications) real not only in terms of talking about it, educating them about it, making sure that both sides understand it. I have to rely on people to make things happen and talk about it. We were interacting. You need to communicate the expectations and direction, not just what you say but how you say it. How you communicate information and what you do with it is very important. I would guess that part of my success is picking up on different communications styles for different people (F).

Clear articulation of the message, its content and delivery, was important to these women in their daily communications. They placed a high importance on it and attributed it largely to their success.

Participative Style

As was discussed before in this chapter, many women utilize more than one form of leadership style, however the participative style of leadership still emerged as one of the key success factors in the interviews. Eight out of twelve women mentioned using this style specifically.

I am collaborative. I encourage brainstorming and group decision-making. I still use mainly the participative style (B).

I will make the decisions only if we don't have agreement consensus or if it's something that has to be done independently on behalf of everybody. So it's much more participatory than dictatorial, if you look at it from that perspective (F).

There is a lot of building consensus that in this organization, at this point in time, is required in my job. It is required in this particular job assignment that I am in at the current time so I get involved in a lot more of that than I had in prior times. So I think those are the two key changes for me personally in leadership style, more attention to building consensus. But what I do now in terms of consensus building is more coordinating across the organization, as much as my subordinates and closely related peers at my level (G).

My favorite styles are participating and selling. My change of participation has worked very well for me. I have a more collaborative approach. I link efforts together very well. I have shown more willingness and efforts to share (K).

I take what they say, adjust it to my particular style and go forward more with selling and participating. I liked participation more so I took what the men said but I didn't change to be like them (J).

Although 33% of the participants used a participation style before becoming an executive, most of the women mentioned using a form of it. Several women discussed how they had refined it and now use it across the organization, not just in their own department and areas of control.

Personal Goals

Seven out of the twelve women interviewed in this study mentioned having a clear understanding of their personal goals. They kept their goals in mind while pursuing business interests. They felt that matching these together was important for success.

Reaching for something that you want and trying to understand what you want. When this new opportunity or something happens in my personal life, I try to step back and say, "What do I really want?" And a lot of things change over time. The one thing I've basically learned for me anyway is having some balance, having a family, I have one son and husband and have a successful career. If I had just one or the other, I would certainly be poorer for the results. To some extent, that drives a lot of my choices (G).

That's what I want. The next thing I'm going to do, Catherine, is I'm going to run one of the Internet companies. That's the next thing I'm going to do. CEO, that's my goal (I).

Probably, first to really understand what your goals are. What is it you really want to achieve and that's not just your business goals? That's sort of your personal balancing in life that you have. So that when you have to make that decision on making a sacrifice, you know where you're going to make that sacrifice. Just understanding what your real goals are on a personal level and a professional level are really important. What I have found over the years is I've managed people and tried to manage myself, is that I'm most productive when my life's in good balance (H).

Knowing that my goal was key to my success. I looked at my goal, knew what it was. I had to make sure that this (job) matched my goals. My work goals and the environment were a very good match because where my goals were and what I wanted to pursue matched up with what the environment was willing to support (J).

The women in this study felt that having personal goals was important to their success in receiving an executive position. They felt that by having a personal goal gave them something additional to offer to their organization.

Other Success Factors

All of the women also mentioned being successful, as shown by this being mentioned 84 times in the interview. Although, there was a question regarding 'what advice would you give to other women to enable their success' many of the executives interviewed talked about their own personal success before giving advice. They all believed that they were a success and they felt that they should pass on information regarding how they managed to be successful.

I would tell women to do what they love, to be passionate, to be totally involved in what they enjoy doing and to go with that. You need to love what you do and with that they need to bring passion, motivation and freshness and intrigue to your job in order to be very, very successful (J).

Maybe this is a commonality among women but I have found that the women who are the most successful are those who are doing what they really want to do (L).

Once I put my mind into that thinking realm, then I can go forward and understand what that person is, understand the motivations and be able to move forward. I like to think like one of them so that I can go forward. I put my thoughts into their thought process. I had to learn how to succeed. I think my style is very effective (K).

I'm very successful. I have spent tremendous energy trying to figure out what it will take for me to navigate through an organization. In some ways I say that but then I see myself much more politically correct than some of the other women that I watch. I went to 11 different elementary schools. I kid and go 'I was used to going to the lunch room and having no one sitting by me'. That's a very critical

success factor. That was critical to find places where I could get ahead further. So I think the moves and the willingness to look at the environment and go, just like for me with (name of company), I could have sat there, when they didn't give me CIO the first time, they wouldn't have picked me ever. If you don't want to make a move, and you can't work long hours, then just be real honest with yourself about there's going to be a cap on what you can do (I).

I would look at that gap and say 'ok, I need more experience in sales or marketing so I need to take a job and go do that and then I'll be ready'. That was part of the process (H).

One of the reasons I got promoted into this particular role is because of what I've been doing and because of my style. I know men who have said 'I want to do this' aren't with the company any more. They limit themselves to a specialty area. They were frustrated and left or asked to leave. The more you say I want to do the right thing, I think the more opportunities you get because you don't limit yourself. If you're good at that and you like it you'll get recognition. The more you do that, the more successful you'll be and the more visible you'll be (F).

There's a book that says 'do what you want and the money will follow'. That is absolutely true (J).

All of the twelve women included in the interview process viewed themselves as a success. These comment add further depth to what the women were feeling and how they perceived themselves.

Summary

Neither the survey nor the interviews showed that the leadership style of women assisted them significantly in obtaining an executive or top-level management position in an organization. The survey specifically charted how the leadership style had evolved or changed, but did not have a great impact on influencing them or the people that hired them into getting a specific position. The survey also provided information showing that although the delegation and combinations of styles was used in most cultures, the culture itself did not prescribe a specific leadership style; therefore, not dictating which type of leader should be hired into that specific environment.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This final chapter will summarize the problem, compare and contrast the literature and findings, and discuss the influence that leadership and other factors have on the success of attaining an executive level position within an organization. This chapter will also link the findings of this study to the field of knowledge already existing in this area of research. Finally, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for future studies will be discussed.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if leadership style and the attainment of top-level managerial positions have a relationship with each other. It was also the purpose of this study to discover if the leadership style of women who have obtained top-level positions was changed or altered in some way to fit into the culture of the organization at its top managerial level. The literature indicates that there are several key factors that influence the success of women attaining a top-level management position. The four key elements that continue to come to the forefront are: (a) performance, (b) mentoring, (c) networking, and (d) developing a style comfortable with men (Ragins et al., 1998).

The literature review on performance revealed that women must produce results. Women need to be hardworking in order for their performance to be noticed (Chapman, 1997) and they need to love their work (Wellington, 1999). Mentoring assistance is

important in order to move upward in a company. Assistance from a good mentor or teacher will enable workers to achieve higher positions within a company (Nanus, 1992). Networking is necessary to enlist the resources at various levels in the company. Fostering career growth by making connections in business circles enables performance and skills to be noticed at both company and industry arenas (Minehan, 1998). While these three elements were important, the focus of this study was on the leadership styles of executive women and their influence in achieving high-level positions.

Men need to feel comfortable with women in the workplace. Women need to show confidence in a working environment (Didio, 1998). The strongest evidence for a gender-based difference in leadership style is in women leaders' tendencies to adopt more democratic, participative styles, whereas men tend to use more autocratic, directive styles (Adler, 1997). Knowing that styles between genders may be different, women need to understand the environment that they are entering.

Women aspiring to achieve a title of corporate officer or to advance to a top level position within a company continually ask women executives about the key to their success. Discovering what was successful to other women with comparable goals is important in trying to achieve a similar goal.

Methodology

This study was developed using mixed methodologies of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. Quantitative data are derived from assessment methods that normally involve numerical tabulation and computation. The qualitative approach of this study used the grounded theory approach, taking data from the real world and attempting to extract a theory from the obtained information (Creswell, 1995).

While this study gathered information from the field and analyzed it, there was no return to the field or repeat contact with the executives to gather additional information based on the analysis performed on previously received data. This step, constant comparative analysis, in the grounded theory process was not conducted due to the time constraints of the executives.

The target sample was the population of women holding executive positions in the Fortune 500 companies. These women held titles of Senior Vice President, Executive Vice President, President, or corporate officer. A survey was sent to each of these women, a total of 280; 40 self-selected women responded to the survey. The survey data provided the quantitative and a small portion of the qualitative information of this study. The respondents to the survey made up 14.6% of the total surveys sent. There could be several reasons why more surveys were not returned. Lack of time or interest on the part of the participants may have caused them to disregard the survey. Perhaps the person had moved on to another job or company and did not receive the survey. This researcher feels that the major reason for the lack of response was due to the busy schedules that executive women have.

From this same sample of 280 potential participants, twelve of the women self-selected themselves to be interviewed. The interview data made up the majority of the qualitative information collected.

Data Analysis

Survey data were analyzed using a software statistics program named SPSS. Three statistical tests were applied to the data. One test was applied to determine if there was a correlation between the prior leadership style of the executive before she held that

title and the helpfulness of that style in attaining a top-level management position. Another test was applied to analyze if there was a dominant leadership style in the organization setting and if that style was prescriptive, meaning that the organization encouraged the team of managers to utilize that specific style. The third and final test was applied to determine if there was a difference between the prior style and the current style for the frequency of the utilization of that specific style.

Interview data were collected, coded and analyzed to generate patterns or meanings from the obtained information. The questions that were asked regarding the influence of leadership style on job attainment, the culture leadership style, and the changes that were made by either the participant or the organization provided the detail for drawing conclusions regarding what the women said.

Consistency and verification were addressed in several ways. The evidence of verification of the study was verified by the use of more than one data approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with the use of both survey and interview processes, clarifying researcher bias (Creswell, 1998), peer review (Lincoln & Guba, 1995), and consistent interviewer (Patton, 1990). The consistency of a study can be measured by an audit trail (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This audit trail includes audiotapes, typed documents of those tapes, and notes taken during the actual interviews.

The above summation of the study detailed the supporting and background literature surrounding this topic and how the study was conducted and carried out. The next section will discuss the findings and the interpretations of that data.

Discussion and Conclusion

This section will first discuss a summary of the findings regarding leadership style and attaining an executive position, including adaptations made by both the executive and the organization. This chapter includes the key factors of success according to the women who participated in the interview process of this survey. This will be followed by the implications this study has to the field and businesses. A new model will be introduced illustrating a continuum of leadership. Finally, the recommendations for further research will end this chapter.

Is Leadership Style Helpful?

Research question one was answered by the test statistic applied to the first two questions on the survey. The first question in the survey asked the participants to rate the leadership style they most often used on a scale of one to six. The answers to this question were correlated to the answers to question two on the survey, which asked if the leadership style used most at the time of receiving an executive position was instrumental in helping achieve that title. Delegating, participative and selling styles show no significant correlation, either positive or negative, to helpfulness of obtaining an executive position, thus indicating that the leadership style played no part in their promotion. The only correlation found was a negative one between the telling leadership style and the helpfulness of that style. This statistic suggests that the women who used this style did not find it helpful to them in receiving a promotion into top management. What the results of the test illustrated was that the delegating, participating, and selling styles had no significant relationship with being helpful in attaining an executive position and the telling style had a relationship with not being hired for an executive position.

There is literature supporting that leadership style does help women in executive position attainment and also literature supporting the opposite view point. According to Ragins et al. (1998) women who have been successful were those that used career strategies that involved outperforming their male peers and developing adaptive management styles that made their male peers comfortable. He went on further to say that the woman had to adapt to their new culture. Climbing a corporate ladder is a game to be played and to win women must make male managers feel comfortable (Wellington, 1999). O'Shea (1997) stated that women must exhibit a leadership style that is comfortable with men but also stated that there is disagreement that women should have to adjust to a mold to fit into top-level management. While a comfort level for all employees is best in the workplace, perhaps change of a women's style leadership is not necessarily the answer.

The participants in the interview did not indicate that their leadership style was instrumental in attaining their position. Many women entered into a culture that was predominantly delegating or a combination of styles as illustrated again in Table 12 in Chapter 4, while the half of the women participating in the interviews used a participatory style most of the time. This indicates that fifty percent of the women were hired into a culture that supported a leadership style different from the style they used most frequently. A substantial portion of the participants used the telling style, but the women did not mention this style as one of the key success factors.

The results of this study clearly illustrated that there were a variety of styles used prior to attaining an executive level job and none showed an influence in position attainment, thus suggesting that leadership style may not be a key factor in the success of

these women. There is also literature that supports this theory. The myth that the only way for a woman to succeed is to act like a man must be dispelled (Bennis, 1997). The skills that women bring to the workplace should be embraced and fostered, not cloned into a male oriented managerial model. Each individual brings skills and worth to the workplace (Blanchard, & Lorber, 1984). Skills are available in all genders and races. Using the best skills of all people will result in huge cost savings as it mobilizes the best people at the top and utilizes the best talents at the top of the organization (Davidson & Burke, 1994). Although prior studies have indicated that choosing a style that men are comfortable with is very important, the leadership style of women was not significant to position attainment in this study, nor was leadership style espoused as a major element to top level management positions.

Leadership Style of the Culture

Research question two asked if there was a relationship between the leadership style of top management and whether there was a prescribed leadership style at the company. Again, the statistical analysis from the survey data showed that there was no correlation between the dominant leadership style of the culture and a directorate given by the company to have leaders utilize a particular style.

Contrary to these findings, the literature states that there is a specific culture in different levels of organizations. The culture at the top levels of management represents a predominantly male environment. Models for successful managers incorporate masculine styles and characteristics (Ragins et al., 1998) leaving women striving to become effective managers according to this model while remaining true to their own individual characteristics. Many organizations picture a white male when they picture

the successful executive (White, 1992). Because of this, the culture can create leadership style change in a woman entering it and seemingly dictate the style in which she operates.

The findings from the survey indicate that the participants did not find that the culture dictated their leadership style. The results of the statistical test show that there is no relationship between the culture leadership style and a specific style that the organization was looking for in the hiring process. Additional literature also supports this opposing viewpoint. Organizations are moving away from authoritative or power-based behavior (O'Shea, 1997), which typically meant a male oriented environment. Changing the culture of an organization is difficult, as culture is learned and inherited (Rabe, 1997). As more women enter into top-level positions, their presence will create change in the culture of the organization, in peer relationships, in subordinate relations, and in themselves (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994). Therefore, it appears that women may be more likely to change the culture than the culture dictating the leadership style of the executive. The women who completed the survey in this study validated that they did not believe that their company had imposed a leadership style upon them.

The women in the interview process indicated their prior leadership style, the style of the culture, and their current style. The majority of the women indicated that the culture style was a delegating one or a combination of styles. None of the women used the delegation style prior to becoming an executive. Table 10 shows this along with the prior and current styles of the women. Again, while half of the women were practicing a participator style prior to receiving an executive position, only one company showed this style as its predominant style. Currently, none of the women used the participation style

as their dominant style, indicating that many of the women had incorporated other styles and used them as a combination, mostly as the situation called for specific needs.

The other style used currently was delegation. The women in this survey have changed their leadership style from a predominately participative style to either a delegating style or a combination. When the culture style is examined, as perceived by these women, it also reflects the delegating and combination styles. Therefore, these women have migrated their leadership styles over to the styles most commonly used in the cultures that they have entered. It can thereby be concluded that these women changed their style due to an existing need in their work environment or because the change in leadership style felt comfortable to them.

Additionally, the participants in this study indicated that there was not a prescribed leadership style within the culture they entered. What this suggests is that there is not a common type of leadership culture across the Fortune 500 companies at the executive level. Although the women did not state it as such, many talked about the combination of styles in a similar format to the Situational Leadership model that Hersey and Blanchard (1998) developed. Enlightened leadership is not doing things in consistent format; it is being aware of what is going on and making conscious choices about how to respond (Oakley & Krug, 1994). Even though there were opposing viewpoints in the literature, the majority of research found did not indicate that organizations were prescribing leadership styles to its executives. It is necessary for firms to understand the major differences in leadership styles and to accommodate those differences while holding on to their corporate structure (Briscoe, 1995). Therefore, from the literature and

the analysis of this study, the assumption could be made that the companies as a whole did not view the leadership style of the women as a key element in the hiring process.

Change in Leadership Style

Research question three asked if there was a difference or change in the leadership style of the woman from the style most used prior to becoming an executive to the style used most after attaining an executive level position. The final quantitative measure that was examined by this study was to determine if there was a significant change in the leadership style. The results of the statistic indicated that there was a significant increase in the use of the delegating and the participative style from prior to holding an executive position to what the participant currently uses today. The same difference statistic was applied to the selling and telling leadership styles, which did not produce significant results. What this suggests is that the use of the delegating and participating styles increase with receiving an executive position while those of the selling and telling styles do not significantly increase or decrease.

The literature reflects this change in style as a person advances into top management positions. This change is due in part to the characteristics of the workers changing. As the participants in this study are women in executive levels, their 'workers' are vice presidents, directors, or other high level managers. A high readiness level of this worker (able and willing to do the work) is expected from people in these positions. It would stand to reason that these people can be properly managed or lead by a delegation type of leadership style, creating more of a demand for this leadership style. Other styles are more effective in lower levels of management.

One very interesting aspect that came out of the interviews in this study was that although seven of the twelve women (58.3%) said they did not make changes to their leadership style, clearly the styles previously practiced by these women moved from the participative, selling, and telling styles to delegating and a combination of styles. This reluctance to admit change may be due to a variety of reasons. Fear of failure or being seen as anything less than totally competent are two of the reasons that women may not have admitted to changing (Mackay, 1993). They also may have added other styles to their prior leadership style, resulting in a combination of styles that may not have been viewed as change to these women. Overall, these women were very positive in their self-evaluation.

In summary, the statistics show that there was a significant change between the extent that the delegating and participating leadership style was practiced before becoming an executive and the extent that those styles are used currently. The increased use of these styles indicates that there is a change in leadership style as women enter executive levels but this does not show a relationship between leadership style and attaining an executive position

The qualitative portion of the study validated the quantitative data. While the interview questions did not provide a combination of leadership styles as an option for a description, several participants noted this categorization in the culture and in their own specific style. Many women stated that they had a combined style of leadership and entered into a culture that expected situational leadership ability of the executive, resulting in a good match between the executive and the organizational culture. While only two participants in the interview process stated a prior combination style, ten

participants acknowledged that they currently use a combination style, thus documenting that the women in this study made a significant change in their leadership style.

Research in the literature found that in order for leaders to make accurate diagnosis of situations, they needed to be flexible in their behavior in order to make the necessary change in the appropriate direction (Fiedler, 1973). The situational leadership model instructs the manager on how to deal with a given set of problems as conditions vary to produce effective results (Hersey & Blanchard, 1998).

The literature information is congruent with the findings of this study in that there appears to be change in leadership style occurring as women adapt to being an executive. The ability to practice a flexible leadership style when managing high-level workers was shown to be important to success.

Adapting Leadership Style to the Organization

Studies have shown that a large percentage of women feel they need to change their leadership style in order to be successful at the executive levels of management (Ragins et al., 1998). Research question four asked how women receiving executive positions adapted their leadership style to the company's norm for leadership. This question was asked in both the survey and the interview and responses to this question were obtained by using a qualitative approach. The write-in comments to this question verified the results of the statistical tests, showing that there were changes from prior leadership styles to the delegating style. Because of the open-ended question format, women responded to change in leadership by stating that they had incorporated a combination of styles or used situational leadership. They did not mention specifically changing to the participative style. This response differs slightly from the quantitative

data received. It is this researchers belief that women chose a combination style because they could express that in an open ended question more easily than they could on the closed format of the survey. Open-ended questions often stimulate free thought, solicit suggestions, probe people's memories, and clarify positions (Dillman, 1978).

Adapting to the male managerial model in which the management style that accompanies that model is neither masculine nor feminine may be an overwhelming, if even achievable, task. This challenge that women face daily is not one that is encountered by their male counterparts (Wah, 1998). The difficulty with mastering this skill is compounded by the reasoning and logic behind why the skill is needed, which is to make a woman's managerial style acceptable to male colleagues, supervisors and subordinates (Ragins et al., 1998). In order to produce an effective and productive work environment, a woman executive needs the support of top management and the freedom to develop her own management style if she is to have the chance to succeed anywhere (Wah, 1998).

The literature supports these findings of leadership style changing. Successful women executives will adapt to a predominantly male culture and environment. They deal with the phenomenon often referred to as the male managerial model, in which models for successful managers incorporate masculine styles and characteristics (Ragins et al., 1998). This male managerial model places women in a double bind: if their managerial styles are feminine, they run the risk of not being viewed as effective managers, but if they adopt masculine styles viewed as appropriate for managerial roles, they may be criticized for not being feminine (Hayes, 1999). In either case, the women participating in this study have acknowledged that they do indeed need to change and are making those changes to ensure their success.

Change in Company Culture

An alternate view to women needing to change to fit into a male corporate environment is that it is the corporate culture should undergo change -- not change the character traits of women (White, 1992). Research question five asked how the company adapted to the leadership style of the newly hired woman executive. The results from this inquiry showed that there were no significant changes made to the leadership style of the culture based on the woman's existence at the organization. Fifteen participants on the survey indicated that the culture had made no changes due to them (the executive) being at the organization. Four executives said that the culture became more open and only two participants indicated that the leadership style embraced by the organization had changed.

The literature in this area supported the lack of change in organizations. Most corporations have been playing male chauvinist games for too long and the power structures and avenues of opportunity have excluded women for years (Bennis, 1997). It is difficult to make changes when striving to maintain the status quo of the environment (Carr, Hard, & Trahan, 1996). The literature review information on culture change was consistent with the data obtained in the study regarding little to no culture change with the introduction of a woman executive into the company. What this means to the woman entering a new environment is that any adjustments made to ensure a good working relationship between the executive and the culture will be largely the responsibility of the woman.

Key Success Factors

The primary purpose of this study was to examine how leadership style played a role in success for women, however many other success factors emerged from the study

that propel women to attain an executive position. The following factors are those indicated by women to be highly influential in their receiving a promotion. While they were stated as unique entities, several of these factors could be an aspect of leadership style.

1. Be yourself
2. Produce results
3. Skill knowledge
4. Beliefs
5. Being flexible and making adjustments
6. Communications
7. Participative style
8. Personal goals

These success factors were those most commonly mentioned in the qualitative section or interviews of this study. Not only were these high in frequency in the number of times they were mentioned, but between 50-100 percent of the women interviewed mentioned these factors, indicating that they were key to success in the minds of the participants. None of the participants mentioned that leadership style as a entity was important other than to state that at some point in their career they had analyzed their style and had made adjustments to it in order to be successful with it in their specific situation.

Persons in leadership positions see no need to change their own behaviors or to change their style. Their qualities got them where they are (Clark & Clark, 1996). This belief was shared by all of the women interviewed in this study. The findings have shown that the women participating in both the survey and interview did not feel that

their leadership style influenced their success in being promoted into an executive position. They believed that by being themselves, they were able to advance to a top position in the company. These women were all very sure of themselves and appeared to have a healthy ego. They felt very strongly about being true to themselves and believed in following their heart.

That is important to be yourself. I am comfortable with my level of leadership. I was true to my own self and style. I maintained my own type of behaviors. The key factor is that I was myself (J).

If you are following your heart and doing what it is that you truly want to do and love to do, you'll be successful (J).

These comments are similar to the comments made by women about their beliefs. They felt that their beliefs were important to their success.

Some people go about everything the same way. You can go with things different ways without sacrificing any of your fundamental beliefs or style. I always have an agenda that I believe in (D).

When I believe in something, I am very bold (K).

Although the participants in this study would not contribute their success entirely to being true to themselves and faithful in their nature, they did feel that they were hired in to use their current skills and not to conform to a culture pattern of behaviors. Thus, they did not feel that their leadership style was instrumental in being hired for an executive position. They did, however, believe that along with being themselves, there were other contributing factors that channeled the success in their career. Leaders need to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and to seek out and do the kinds of things that are enjoyable (Boyett & Conn, 1991).

In addition to being themselves, the women all believed that they had to produce results and have skill knowledge. This was consistent with what was found in the literature. The study done by Ragins et al. (1998) included these two factors of success in their list of the top four strategies used in achieving an executive position. Chapman (1997) points out that some successful women executives made a point of developing unique skills so as to become indispensable. Working very hard with high results will be noticed (Wellington, 19998). Ragins et al. (1998) stated that consistently exceeding performance expectations was the top-ranking strategy used by 74% of the female executives involved and an overwhelming 99% percent of the respondents reported that this strategy was critical or fairly important. The women in this study confirmed the findings in the literature. They stated that superior performance was key to upward mobility in a company. Many said that their promotion was due to their work being recognized, plus the fact that they could produce results and quantify those same results propelled them upward in the company.

The women in this study also felt that they had to be flexible in their demeanor and make adjustments to their environment. This key to success was a research question in this study and discussed in detail in the prior section. Only one woman in the interview process said that she had done nothing to fit in with the culture, primarily with the men who were her peers. Other women said that they had participated in sports (golf and hunting) that they had never been active in prior to becoming an executive.

Communications played a key role in the success of these women. They stated that a clearly, articulated message was something that they did well. Leadership and success lie beyond the facts; they lie in the ability to communicate (Mackay, 1993).

The key to being successful in attaining an executive position was in having goals met – both career and personal goals. The women in this study all had personal goals, whether family or work, that meshed well with their executive job. Having this combination work and come together harmoniously was critical to their success in becoming an executive.

The literature suggests that networking and mentoring play a key role in climbing the management ladder but those items were only briefly touched upon by the women involved in this study. Although the literature documents the importance of these factors, the literature also details why women may not have the opportunity or chose not to use these factors of networking and mentoring.

Relationship-based networks are important now more than ever because in the changing workplace, the next job or lead will probably be through a network (Fitz-enz, 1995). Establishing an effective network is critical to one's success strategy (Brooks & Brooks, 1998). The literature also went further to explain why women do not mention networking as a key factor in their success. Women in industry do not rely on each other to get ahead the way some men might. Women in the industry might have a network, but some have not thought to use each other the way men have (Ligos, 1997). Women do not articulate their goals to each other or help each other obtain their goals.

In examining the literature in combination with this study, the interactions of these two sources of information do support each other. The results of this study show that networking was not a major success factor for women. While the women in the interviews did not articulate that networking was important, the literature states it is very important and also explains why women do not perceive it as important or why women

fail to use this a tool for success. Women do not utilize networking to its fullest because they do not rely on each other and make use of the networking circle. Because of this, networking for women is not very effective, causing them to use it even less. The less women use it, the more ineffective networking becomes.

The literature supported the use and importance of networking, but to be successful, it has to be used correctly. The same interaction exists between the findings of this study and the use of a mentor. Using a mentor was mentioned often by one person but was not mentioned by as many people the other success factors noted in this study, therefore not key to attaining an executive position. The literature review found that mentors can be very instrumental in achieving career goals. The study done by Ragins et al. (1998) found that nearly all of the twenty female executives who were personally interviewed identified at least one senior man who was instrumental in their development and advancement (Ragins et al., 1998). Today, the mentoring relationship is like a peer relationship (Bell, 1996). If the women in this study viewed the mentor as a peer, then this concept would explain why the literature espoused its benefits but few of the participants mentioned its use or importance.

The literature discussed the gender of the mentor. Female mentors can be instrumental in helping women move up into upper levels of management within the organization (Zuber, 1998). All of the women interviewed for this study were the first in their job and some were even the first executive at their company. The lack of women in the top ranks of organizations prevented them from using other women as mentors, either within their company or from other organizations. The literature went on to say that survey data, gathered in 1996, indicated that more than a third of large corporations were

initiating formal mentoring programs (Seligman, 1998). All of the women in this study were from Fortune 500 companies and not one mentioned a mentoring program at their company, however, they were not asked specifically if they had such a program. This researcher assumes that either the program did not exist in the woman's organization or it was not noteworthy. In either case, both the lack of other executive women available as mentors and lack of a mentoring program could have caused the women in this study to not value or use a mentor in achieving their success. Also, if they viewed their male counterparts more as peers than mentors, this would explain the difference between the importance of mentoring according to the literature and lack of importance this factor held for the success of women.

The results of this study were both confirmed and contrary to what the literature held. Prior studies indicated that the leadership style of a woman would greatly assist her in climbing the ladder into top management of an organization. Opposing literature stated that a woman had different skills and attitudes to bring to the work environment and that should be embraced and utilized. The literature also offered explanations as to why the women in the study omitted that networking and mentoring in her environment that could have led to her success in becoming an executive. Although, this study was intended to examine leadership styles with relation to executive position attainment, several additional factors were uncovered

Many factors contributed to the success of women attaining a top-level management job. While this study initially set out to examine the influence of leadership styles on promotion to an executive position, it uncovered several key factors of success

along this journey. It also uncovered the fact that the women participating in this study did not feel that their leadership style was one of the key factors to success.

Implications

The implications of this study can impact company policy, business practices, and leadership understandings. The impact that this study will have on company policy is on the value system of the cultures supported in the organizational climate. This study indicates that there is growth occurring in the field of leadership that will impact the culture of the organization. Today, if the culture is one that encourages a specific type of behavior, then that will be the dominant style utilized. While this provides continuity within the organization, it does not encourage new growth and the best use of talents available in the work environment.

Companies need to be open to new ideas and ways of managing. This study illustrates how a concept that makes sense and is logical (successful leadership style) may not be as influential in a work environment as originally thought. This study shows companies that what is assumed to be the best way of doing things may not truly be the ultimate way of accomplishing business.

With the rise in the delegating and participating leadership styles as shown by the executive women interviewed, businesses need to examine their culture to determine how this change is affecting their work environment. Twenty-five percent of the companies in which these women held positions, practice a combination of styles. The remaining 75% had cultures that the women had to adjust to in some fashion. Two of the companies had cultures that supported a telling style and one had a selling style of leadership in the culture. These three companies particularly require a greater level of adjustment as the

women moved away from using the telling style and towards a delegating or participating style, neither of which were practiced often in their cultures. These results tell businesses that they need to be more flexible in the leadership style of their cultures to enable women and other executives to have one less adjustment to make upon entering their environment. Making one less adjustment to a new job enables workers to concentrate more on important issues of the business. A combination leadership style embraced by the culture would enable the business to be very effective and prepared for a multitude of different situations (Lunneborg, 1990).

The impact that this study can have on business practice will affect all workers. CEO's of the future must know themselves, be courageous, be open to feedback, and be able to use it effectively (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993). Women bring these unique set of skills and behaviors to the leadership environment. Utilizing these talents and encouraging women of all ages to be themselves in the work environment can provide much growth and awakening of new spirit within the organization. It can also bring forth new ideas and creativity that may be lacking in a stagnant organization.

While women have strived to be more like their successful male counterparts by adopting masculine traits and an all-business attitude. Women need to be able to express a softer and nurturing side of their leadership style in the work environment. Enabling women and other workers to see that there is more to life than working hard to achieve a bottom-line goal is imperative.

The implications that this study has on leadership is to allow women, possibly even girls, to know that they can be themselves and still succeed at the top-levels of corporations. They do not have to fit a specific mold or model. They can be themselves,

work hard, maintain their belief and still succeed. Women will be successful if they are hard working and produce visible results.

A New Model

The women participating in this study did not perceive that their leadership style was instrumental in propelling them through the ranks of management, but they did indicate that they felt that a continuum existed in regard to leadership styles. The women in the interview process indicated that there is a growth that leaders go through at different levels of the organization. This growth can be thought of in terms of leadership styles and how each style is typically used at every level of management. Table 15 shows a representation of the continuum, using the leadership styles at specific management positions. Each style has its optimum effectiveness when used with a worker of a specific readiness level (Gilley & Maycunich, 1998). The level of readiness of the worker will respond differently with each leadership style. This concept is extremely important for this study.

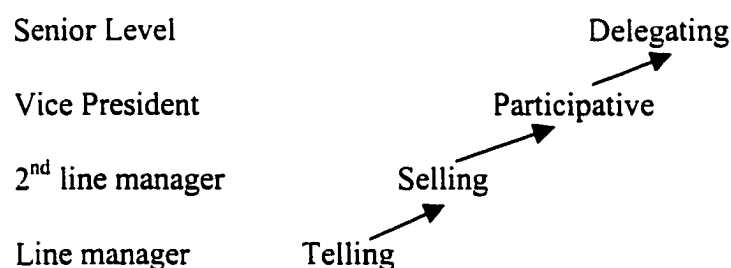


Figure 5. The Leadership Growth Model illustrates the management positions and their corresponding leadership style.

The women in this study were all line managers at one time in their career. Seven of the twelve women (58.3%) specifically stated that they practiced the telling leadership style while working as a line manager. The remaining five women did not mention which leadership style they used in their first management job. The task readiness of the workers reporting to a line manager may be people who are unable to do the job and unwilling and insecure about the job itself (Dubrin, 1997). One participant in this study stated that at this level of management, a manager feels like they are God and can tell everyone what to do, therefore using the telling style of leadership. For all of the women, this position in their career was not the job from which they were hired to become an executive.

As these women moved up the corporate ladder into 2nd line management positions, they stated that they adopted more of a selling leadership style. The women in 2nd line position endeavored to motivate their workers and enlist their support. At times they would still practice the telling leadership style in order to get things done quickly.

As the participants advanced through the company, they incorporated more of the participating style into their leadership activities. This generally occurred at the director level, which is generally a position between a 2nd line manager and a vice president. Using a participating style enables managers at this level to get everyone's input to solving problems effectively and efficiently.

The participants in this study were, even prior to current executive position, in a higher position than a line manager and few agreed with using the telling style prior to becoming an executive. For these women, their focus was probably on the style they were using immediately prior to becoming an executive, as this was the question asked

on the survey and in the interview. The number of responses in the moderately agree and strongly agree categories of the participative and selling styles is greater than those of the delegating and telling styles, showing that the participative and selling styles are the styles most used by 2nd line or director level managers. The responses to prior leadership styles taken from the completed surveys confirm the illustrated continuum on the Leadership Growth Model. Most leaders incorporate more than one style in their leadership activities and use each where they are most effective.

Again, the women answering this question are now Senior Vice Presidents, Executive Vice Presidents, or Presidents. As the findings indicate, there are more women now practicing the delegating and participative styles. The frequency of the use of the selling and telling styles has remained similar to their use in the participant's prior status.

The apparent shift of the numerical results from the telling style, to the selling and participating style, and finally to the delegating style confirms the continuum on the Leadership Growth Model. Managers reporting to a senior level manager will have a greater task readiness level than a worker reporting to a line manager. As the task readiness level of a worker or group changes, the style of leadership will also change.

You drop back to participative to see if you can't get things done. You go back to selling, go back to telling, back through the stages of management that you went through to become a delegator, if the delegation doesn't work (D).

The Leadership Growth Model illustrates the different leadership styles that people commonly use at specific levels of leadership, using a mixture of styles when most effective. It outlines what levels of leadership use a particular style most.

Recommendations

This study opened up some contrasting information regarding leadership style and the use of it in attaining an executive position. While it said that the leadership style was not a significant help in obtaining a promotion, it did uncover several key factors to the success of upward movement within an organization. These success factors were those perceived by the executive women involved in this study as being instrumental in their personal achievements.

Clark and Clark (1990) state that women's qualities assisted them in attaining their positions. All of the women in this study shared this belief. They believed that by being themselves, they were able to advance to a top position in the company. Future studies in this area should include the peers of these women and also the persons they report to. Peers and managers need to be interviewed or surveyed to obtain their opinion or perception regarding what factors were successful to the executive woman. Having more input and perceptions surrounding the environment in which the woman was successful may shed additional information to this body of research. Additional information may specify in more detail the components of success and include precise information on how other women may follow in the footsteps of these executive leaders.

A longitudinal study is also recommended to further the research in this area. A long-term study following women aspiring to be executives is needed to thoroughly document the stages of leadership that women go through in trying to attain an executive position. The utilization of these stages also needs to be analyzed and researched. A long-term study would also provide information on what the different factors to success

were over time, not just a snap-shot in time of the perception of what contributed to a woman's success in getting to the top-level of management.

Further leadership style studies should also be conducted. In the past decade, there is little information in the literature about specific leadership styles. Most of the literature today discusses a participative model or a situational leadership model. The literature is lacking details on the behaviors associated with each of the specific leadership styles examined in this study. It is this researcher's belief that the literature is largely biased toward the participative leadership style. Most readings in this area endorse group decision making and processes, empowerment, and leading from a grass roots or worker level. It was anticipated that literature would be available regarding the importance of a delegation style and on its use. This researcher believes that the reason for this is that there is probably little to say regarding identifying or being informed of what needs to be done and then assigning it to someone who works for you. It is far less difficult to tell someone to do something than to work cooperatively with people to accomplish the same goal.

This researcher found no literature supporting an autocratic or telling style of leadership even though there are environments that would do well under this style of leadership. More information is needed in this field of research to provide information to today's starved audience looking for something more than a blanket situational leadership solution. The same applies to the selling style. Other than environments dealing with direct sales and marketing, there is little literature on this style as a common leadership style.

Finally, more information is necessary for the leaders of tomorrow. They need to know how to invoke a combination of leadership styles to face the needs of the business at hand. They need to blend those styles with their personality and the culture of their environment to make their activities successful for the organization. Resources are needed to support, direct, and guide the endeavors of leadership of these people. The need for resources extend far beyond that of the business, they extent to the community at large and into the global environment. Effective use of all people in the work place is what is truly needed to operate cleanly and effectively for today's environment and for the environment of the future.

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APPENDIX A: COVER LETTER

Dear:

The purpose of this survey is to determine if and how women have changed their leadership styles upon receiving an executive-level position within a company. This research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Education and Human Resource Studies at Colorado State University. This survey is intended for women holding executive positions in order to research the relationship of the leadership styles of women and the blending of those leadership styles within the organization. Executive-level position refers to upper level managerial positions, such as directors, vice-presidents, presidents, and CEO's. Your company may have other positions that have different title names but qualify as upper-level management. The leadership styles practiced by such women are important to this study.

The research questions pertain to understanding the leadership style practiced by women upon receiving their first job at this level in an organization. We are particularly interested in: 1) was there a change in your leadership style, and 2) how you have adjusted or changed your leadership style in order to succeed at the top level of your business.

The following survey contains seven questions regarding your leadership style, the culture of the environment that you entered, and any changes you may have made to your style to be successful in your new position. It should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Your assistance in this survey would greatly assist us in understanding the barriers and changes made by women who successfully obtain high level positions within organizations. The results of this research will benefit women who would like to emulate the successes of female executives such as yourself. If you are uncomfortable answering any of the questions, you may leave them blank.

In order to protect your confidentiality, the questionnaire is anonymous. However, we would like to do a follow-on telephone interview to obtain additional information pertaining to what you felt added to your success and what experiences you felt were unique to your situation. The interview should take approximately 20 – 30 minutes.

Please answer the following questions and mail the survey back in the self-addressed envelope. If you are available for an interview, please fill out the enclosed postcard and mail it also.

Thank you so much for your time and assistance in this research.

Sincerely,

Dr. Orlango Griego
Principal Investigator, Assistant Professor

Catherine J. Sees
Co-investigator, Ph.D. Candidate
Education and Human Resource Studies

APPENDIX B: SURVEY

Leadership Style and Executive Success

The following questions are designed to determine your leadership style, the leadership style encouraged by the company you work for, and the match between the two. Please circle your answer using the following choices:

1 = strongly disagree 2 = moderately disagree 3 = mildly disagree
4 = mildly agree 5 = moderately agree 6 = strongly agree

1. **Please rate the following leadership styles in terms of the extent to which you used them before you received your first executive position.**

	SD		SA
a) Delegating – I turned over responsibility for decisions and implementation.	1	2	3 4 5 6
b) Participative – I shared ideas and facilitated in decision making.	1	2	3 4 5 6
c) Selling – I explained decisions and provided an opportunity for clarification.	1	2	3 4 5 6
d) Telling – I provided specific instructions and closely supervised for clarification.	1	2	3 4 5 6

2. **The leadership styles I most used at the time I received my first executive-level position were instrumental in helping me to obtain that position.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. **In terms of your company's top management, please indicate the extent to which each of the following styles was agreed with and used by your company at the time you obtained your executive position**

a) Delegating – top management turned over responsibility for decisions and implementation	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Participative – top management shared ideas and facilitated in decision making	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Selling – top management explained decisions and provided an opportunity for clarification	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Telling – top management provided specific instructions and closely supervised for clarification	1	2	3	4	5	6

4. **There was a prescribed leadership style at my company that managers at my level or above should subscribe to, at the time I received my executive position.**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

5. **Please rate the following leadership styles in terms of the extent to which you use them currently.**

a) Delegating – I turn over responsibility for decisions and implementation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
b) Participative – I share ideas and facilitate in decision making.	1	2	3	4	5	6
c) Selling – I explain decisions and provide an opportunity for clarification.	1	2	3	4	5	6
d) Telling – I provide specific instructions and closely supervise for clarification.	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. **How did you adapt your leadership style to the company's norm for leadership?**

7. **To what extent did the company adapt to you? Please explain.**

Please return this survey in the enclosed, pre-paid envelope. Thank you very much for your time and assistance in this survey. Please fill out the enclosed post card if I can contact you for additional in-depth information.

APPENDIX C: POSTCARD

Postcard

I am interested in conducting a 30 minute telephone interview to gather more information on changes that women executives make in adjusting their leadership style to top-level management. The data gathered in this interview will be used to document elements of success for executive women. Your name, position, and title will be kept confidential and will not be included in the findings. If I may call you for a short interview, please fill out the following information.

Name _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

Please suggest 2 or 3 dates and times that you are available for this interview.

Thank you for your assistance in this research.

Catherine J. Sees
Colorado State University
303-776-7420
cpenna@lamar.colostate.edu

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What would you like to tell me about your leadership style and your organization?
2. What was particularly helpful in your style or demeanor in assisting you in obtaining your position?
3. Describe your current leadership style or any adaptation you have made to your leadership style since receiving an executive position.
4. How did you adapt your leadership style to the company's norm for leadership?
5. Was there any aspect of your leadership style that was a hindrance to you or that you would change if you were to do it all over again?
6. Describe the leadership style commonly used at your organization.
7. Has the leadership style of your organization changed?
8. Has the culture changed since you have been part of your organization?

APPENDIX E: CODE NAMES

Acquire skills
Adapt interests
Adapt interests not
Adjustments made
Age
Apprehension
Assertive
Attitude
Be yourself
Beliefs
Business plan
Caretaker
Celebrate
Change leadership
Chaos
Client focused
Communicating
Confidence
Conflicts
Culture adaptation
Culture adapting not
Culture apolitical
Culture combination
Culture delegating
Culture different
Culture difficult
Culture direct
Culture equality
Culture ethical
Culture masculine
Culture open
Culture participation
Culture patient
Culture people important
Culture rules
Culture same
Culture selling
Culture supportive
Culture team
Culture telling
Culture visionary
Diversity
Ego
Emotion

Equality
Expectations
Expectations of manager
Facts
Failure
Fast
Fit
Focus
Friends
Fun
Future vision
Gender similarities
Goals setting
Guiding principals
Independent
Influence
Information
Instincts
Intuitive
Learn
Listening
Luck
Measurements
Men vs women style
Mentor
Myers Briggs
Network
Personal goals
Position
Position as woman
Prior bold
Prior combination
Prior delegating
Prior delegating not
Prior different
Prior direct
Prior micro manager
Prior no change
Prior participative
Prior selling
Prior Telling
Public relations
Reputation
Resources
Respect
Responsibility

Results
Rewards
Right people
Risks
Skill knowledge
Skills women
Spirituality
Status quo
Style abrasive
Style changing
Style coaching
Style combination
Style decision maker
Style delegating
Style direct
Style Empowering
Style feminine
Style general manager
Style Hands off
Style individual
Style masculine
Style not adopted man
Style not telling
Style participative
Style people focus
Style selling
Style situational
Style team leader
Style telling
Style visionary
Success
Take action
Uncompromising
Win win
Women not issue
Women to Women
Womens issues discrimination

APPENDIX F: CODE NAMES AND FREQUENCIES

Code NameLetter Assigned to ParticipantResponse Total

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total
Be yourself	17	11	2	1	6	4	2		8	14	8	11	84
Success	3	1	3	7	2	16	3	4	15	6	17	7	84
Results	3		8	1	2	21	3	6	1	7	5	5	62
Beliefs	1		7	2	11	15	1	1	2			6	46
Skill knowledge	1				9	7		16	5	1	2	5	46
Adjustments made	7	3				9	3	2	2	1	8	10	45
Assertive		12					5	11	15	1			44
Position as woman	2		6	11	6	6	4		1	4		4	44
Position	2	2	12		1	7	5	1	6		1	5	42
Communicating	3		3		6	20			3	3	1		39
Style participative	9	5		5		2	7	1		4	5		38
Men vs women style	2	2	2	11	1	9	5	5					37
Mentor	14	7				1	6	9					37
Culture adaptation	2	14		4			6	2		2	3	3	36
Personal goals	2		2		1		6	15	4	4			34
Public relations	1		2	22	1			4	3				33
Style team leader	2		4	4	4	8		3		1	7		33
Culture people important	4				19	7							30
Style delegating	2		2	6		2	3	11		4			30
Confidence	4	3	10				8	1	3				29
Culture different		2	7	1	2	1	1	5	3		1	5	28
Women's issues discrimination	4	2		2	3	1	1	14			1		28
Equality	16						6	5					27
Change leadership		8	6			7	1	2	1				25
Culture supportive		9						1		10	5		25
Adapt interests			5		10	1			4		4		24
Style direct	11	2						8	3				24
Learn						14	2	2	2	3			23
Prior no change	4		6		3	4	2			1		3	23
Culture difficult		14	2					3	1		1		21
Culture team			4	1	4	6		2				4	21
Style changing	1		7		5	4				4			21
Culture rules	1	2		7	1	2			1		1	5	20

Code NameLetter Assigned to ParticipantResponse Total

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total
Network			1		12		3	4					20
Fun	7					8		1		1	2		19
Style people focus		12				1		6					19
Goals setting			5		6	6			1				18
Fit	3		3		2				8		1		17
Style not adopted man		3	4	2						3	3	2	17
Guiding principals			8			8							16
Style combination		1			7	1	1	3	1	1		1	16
Prior participative				3			3	2	1	4		2	15
Acquire skills				1		10			2			1	14
Adapt interests not											14		14
Culture masculine		6					2		1	5			14
Respect			1		1	1	5	2	2		2		14
Expectations of manager			4					8	1				13
Facts		6	4			2			1				13
Measurements			6		2	3		2					13
Caretaker				9		3							12
Conflicts		8			4								12
Prior Telling		1	4	4			2			1			12
Attitude		2	1			2	1	4	1				11
Failure								7	4				11
Prior different	7	3										1	11
Style selling				1			2			4	1	3	11
Emotion											10		10
Future vision			3		6			1					10
Listening	3	1	4		2								10
Style feminine	3	3	2		1						1		10
Style individual		2	4						1	1	2		10
Information		1					1			3	4		9
Rewards			3		1	5							9
Skills women	4	1	1	2							1		9
Spirituality								9					9
Style decision maker	3	4				1			1				9
Age	2					6							8

Code NameLetter Assigned to ParticipantResponse Total

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total
Culture combination	2					1	3					2	8
Ego				8									8
Influence							5	3					8
Myers Briggs					8								8
Responsibility		2	1				2	2	1				8
Style masculine		2		3	3								8
Style situational					5	1		1				1	8
Women not issue		2		1		4	1						8
Women to Women	4							4					8
Business plan			3					2		2			7
Client focused											7		7
Culture delegating							3			3	1		7
Expectations	1		2			3			1				7
Instincts	4				2						1		7
Prior micro manager			4					3					7
Style telling	1			1				3		2			7
Culture same	3		2							1			6
Independent									6				6
Resources							6						6
Right people						1		5					6
Culture telling								1		2	2		5
Culture visionary			1			2	2						5
Fast						5							5
Friends				3				2					5
Prior selling				2						3			5
Reputation			2						1	2			5
Risks		3					2						5
Style Empowering			4		1								5
Take action			1			4							5
Apprehension			1						3				4
Gender similarities		2	1			1							4
Intuitive	4												4
Prior delegating			1	1						2			4
Style visionary		3					1						4
Culture adapting not							1		2				3

Code NameLetter Assigned to ParticipantResponse Total

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	Total
Culture apolitical			1		2								3
Culture direct			2					1					3
Culture equality			2			1							3
Culture ethical						3							3
Status quo		3											3
Chaos		1	1										2
Culture open			2										2
Culture participation	1										1		2
Focus						2							2
Prior combination								1				1	2
Style coaching			1					1					2
Style not telling					1			1					2
Win win										2			2
Celebrate						1							1
Culture patient												1	1
Culture selling										1			1
Luck								1					1
Prior bold									1				1
Prior delegating not							1						1
Prior direct								1					1
Style abrasive							1						1
Style general manager			1										1
Uncompromising			1										1

APPENDIX G: OPEN CODING

The actual report follows:
Case, Code, Frequency,

D Style delegating, 6,
Source Material: The right to delegate is equal to the right to follow-up.

D Style delegating, 6,
Source Material: If you get to the point that you are delegating but things aren't getting done, then you follow-up.

D, Style delegating, 6,
Source Material: Men have learned to delegate,

D, Style delegating, 6,
Source Material: I want to figure out when to delegate.

D, Style delegating, 6,
Source Material: I am absolutely a delegator and senior VP.

D, Style delegating, 6,
Source Material: I delegate down as a regular senior VP,

J, Style delegating, 3,
Source Material: I think in general senior management job require a lot more team building a

J, Style delegating, 3,
Source Material: I have largely professionals reporting to me that obviously I can tell what to do more or less

L Style delegating, 9,
Source Material: but definitely more delegating.

L, Style delegating, 9,
Source Material: I wouldn't survive if I didn't have some good skills in the form of delegation.

L, Style delegating, 9,
Source Material: Some of it is volume some of it is just setting the expectation and letting people know that they are going to be accountable.

L, Style delegating, 9,
Source Material: They were brought in to do a specific piece of work or a specific role and that you are going to count on them.

L, Style delegating, 9,

Source Material: If you go and stick your hands in it, then something's wrong.

L, Style delegating, 9,

Source Material: The delegation, I think, is part of the valuing and trusting and accountability that you bring into an organization or a team.

L1, Style delegating, 2,

Source Material: and managing that delegation that you give them and doing their job.

L1, Style delegating, 2,

Source Material: 2) Difficulty in either building or managing a team, it's that kind of building organizational capability I talked about, and then being able to manage that team. Being a poor delegator,

J, Style delegating, 4,

Source Material: I delegating when I have the time to do this (when the situation allows for it).

J, Style delegating, 4,

Source Material: I use the delegating most now.

J, Style delegating, 4,

Source Material: I do a lot of delegating in my current job.

J, Style delegating, 4,

Source Material: I did not try to be just like the men who were doing the delegating.

APPENDIX H: AXIAL CODING

Success factors

- Adjustments Made
- Be yourself
- Beliefs
- Communications
- Confidence
- Fast
- Facts
- Future vision
- Goals setting
- Guiding principals
- Independent
- Luck
- Mentor
- Participative style
- Personal goals
- Network
- Results
- Skill knowledge

Culture Styles

- Culture combination
- Culture delegating
- Culture masculine
- Culture participation
- Culture same
- Culture selling
- Culture team
- Culture telling

Culture Attributes

- Culture adaptation
- Culture adapting not
- Culture apolitical
- Culture different
- Culture difficult
- Culture direct
- Culture equality
- Culture ethical
- Culture open
- Culture patient
- Culture people important
- Culture rules
- Culture supportive
- Culture visionary

Prior leadership style

- Prior bold**
- Prior combination**
- Prior delegating**
- Prior delegating not**
- Prior different**
- Prior direct**
- Prior micro manager**
- Prior no change**
- Prior participative**
- Prior selling**
- Prior Telling**

Current leadership style

- Style abrasive**
- Style changing**
- Style coaching**
- Style combination**
- Style decision maker**
- Style delegating**
- Style direct**
- Style Empowering**
- Style feminine**
- Style general manager**
- Style Hands off**
- Style individual**
- Style masculine**
- Style not adopted man**
- Style not telling**
- Style participative**
- Style people focus**
- Style selling**
- Style situational**
- Style team leader**
- Style telling**
- Style visionary**

Changes participant made

- Acquire skills**
- Adapt interests**
- Adapt interests not**