

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Businesswomen's Views on Occupational/Work Success in the Early 21st Century

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By

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Approval Page

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Abstract:

Women have made tremendous strides in the workforce over the past thirty years. More women than ever are receiving college business degrees and are entering the workforce at a ample rate. However, women only hold a small percentage of top-level positions in business. For example, women run only two of the Fortune 500 companies. This project looks to examine and possibly explain why definitions of success may be one of the possible reasons women are not reaching top executive positions. Many people today assume, sometimes unknowingly, that success is based upon money, position, or status. However, upon closer examination it appears that women and men may define success differently, which may help explain the lack of women in top executive positions. This study compares the results of a questionnaire sent out to approximately 2,000 businesswomen and other articles previously published that address this issue. Many companies are now questioning why extremely talented, top-level businesswomen are leaving their company. In the past, women withdrawing from the corporate race have been assumed to lack ambition and simply desire to have a family. This study suggests another reason- women do not necessarily strive for or define success simply by money or position.

Rather they look to factors such as self-fulfillment, social contributions and family/work balance to define their success.

Businesswomen's Views of Occupational/Work Success in the Early 21st Century

Introduction

The business world is constantly changing. Firms are in an unending race to top one another by getting the competitive edge. One of the most influential changes that the late 20th and early 21st century has seen is the role of women in the workplace. Women have come a long way since World War II's Rosie the Riveter, who provided the idea that women can do just as much as men. The strides and accomplishments are tremendous. Women are proving to the world that they can have what they want. They are succeeding.

However, no one has stopped to determine what women actually want. What exactly is success? Webster's dictionary defines success as, "attaining a desired object or end." (Webster 1163). While this definition is quite generic and personal definitions can vary greatly from one professional to the next, the business world has defined success more specifically to suit its needs. If asked about their success, most people in the business world would look at the amount of salary they make, their position in the company, or simply their title. This definition of success has become accepted and used throughout the years in corporate America. A definition started by men because they essentially were the only persons who engaged in business for much of history. As time has progressed, women have made some immense strides in the business world. Women have moved into positions and fields that were once thought unreachable to women. Today, more females are graduating college with business degrees than ever- often outnumbering male graduates.

Yet, few make it to the top executive positions. According to Megan Rowe, author of *When Will Women Hit the Top*, “only two Fortune 500 companies are headed by women” (Rowe 39). At a significant majority of business firms, the largest percentage of partners and members are men. One may wonder where women are falling short. Do they not have the knowledge? Do they lack the necessary skills? Yet one of the most obvious issues and possible solutions is rarely raised or considered. It is highly possible that women are not becoming partner, CEO or president because they simply do not aspire to accomplish those types of goals. The corporate world has assumed that women look at their careers as men do. Women are expected to define success by power, position and salary like their counterparts, yet it is becoming apparent that they might not.

Defining success can be a complex and subjective topic that essentially is a very personal matter. The notion of success has been around a long time, but not much research has been completed on specific views from different types of people. As has been the case in many past issues, the male experience is assumed to be the universal experience. Thus it is expected that women want to obtain success by moving to the top of their company and that they go about it in a similar manner to men. This study suggests that there is more than the male encounter by focusing on women in today’s business world. By exploring what women view as success, companies may better understand what their female employees want and need from their careers.

Review of Literature

While women have recently become the focus of many studies in today’s society, there is still a limited amount of information on what women want, what success is to them, how they go about achieving their goals, and how these goals differ from men. Most of the available

information gives suggestions as to the best way women can move to the top of their company, or in effect obtain success. However, the literature does not question what success is or whether women actually strive towards the top positions in their company. While there is virtually no literature on women's definitions of success and goals, it is apparent that women commonly leave their firm before reaching top positions. According to Carol Gallagher, author of Going to the Top, some "30 percent of women will drop out of the corporate race in order to pursue entrepreneurial avenues or to work part-time" (Gallagher 3). Firms are now beginning to take notice and question why. However, one of the largest mistakes that firms make is to assume that women leave the work force simply to have a family. This phenomenon of women leaving the business world after making great strides is nothing new.

One interesting study was performed at Deloitte & Touche in the early 1990's when executives at the public accounting firm began to notice the decline in top women. Deloitte & Touche was troubled that an increasing amount of women were receiving accounting degrees and being hired by the firm, yet the amount of top women executives was decreasing. To determine why this was happening, the CEO of Deloitte & Touche organized the Task Force on the Retention and Advancement of Women. After extensive investigation and interviewing, Deloitte & Touche found that women were leaving because they were unhappy with the environment, they did not see enough room for advancement, the firm lacked female role models, and that women needed better networking and mentoring opportunities. Deloitte & Touche, a company that initially believed women were leaving simply to have children, took this information and transformed their firm to better meet the needs of women. Deloitte & Touche was successful. However, many firms still do not understand what women want or need from

their company. An increasing amount of women are still leaving corporate business despite their advancements in position and power.

Virginia O'Brien, a woman on the cutting edge of this topic, states in her book Success on Our Own Terms, "women bring different definitions of success to the workplace. Traditional mileposts- climbing the corporate ladder and building wealth- are less important [to women] than achieving goals, balancing work and family, and contributing value to society." (O'Brien)

There are still a lot of women who choose to stay in the race, though, according to Gallagher- nearly 70 percent. However, as previously stated, Gallagher is assuming that by continuing to work at larger, male-dominated firms, women are attempting to overtake the top positions. In reality, they may actually be content with their position. As O'Brien indicates bigger is not necessarily better when it comes to women and their success.

Angel Kwolek-Folland in an anonymous article from Worldbusiness states that, "If you can name a business, women have done it, but [success] is an area where almost no history has been done. Women have been invisible" (Anonymous 21). It is unfortunate that everyone is not only ignoring what women want, but they are also not looking at what women have accomplished. This limitation makes it even harder for women to acknowledge that their goals are possible.

Methodology

The research hypothesis for this study is that women define success and the means to obtain success differently than the traditional definitions of success, which are thought to be defined according to men's terms. A study was conducted in order to obtain data about women's goals and view of success in today's workplace.

Data were collected via an email questionnaire, which was sent to roughly 2,000 businesswomen across the United States. The names and addresses were acquired through Liz Ryan, the founder of www.worldwit.org, a community of businesswomen throughout the world. Worldwit.com is a resource that allows women to network with other women based on their field or location.

The survey inquired if the participating women were successful, how they defined success, what it takes for women to get ahead and what can hinder a woman from obtaining success. The survey contained yes/no questions, Likert Scale questions, and open-ended questions. Answers to the Likert Scale questions could be 1(strongly agree), 2(moderately agree), 3(neutral), 4(moderately disagree), or 5(strongly disagree). The two-page survey took approximately fifteen minutes to complete, but its contents covered much material. A copy of the survey is attached to this report in Appendix A. The principal focus of the research was to clearly determine several factors:

1. What is occupational success?
2. What criteria/assets does one need to become successful?
3. What internal and external barriers prevent one from becoming successful?

Results

The results of the success questionnaire were compiled after the surveys were returned. A total of 80 professionals responded out of the 2,000 women that received the survey, for a four- percent return rate.

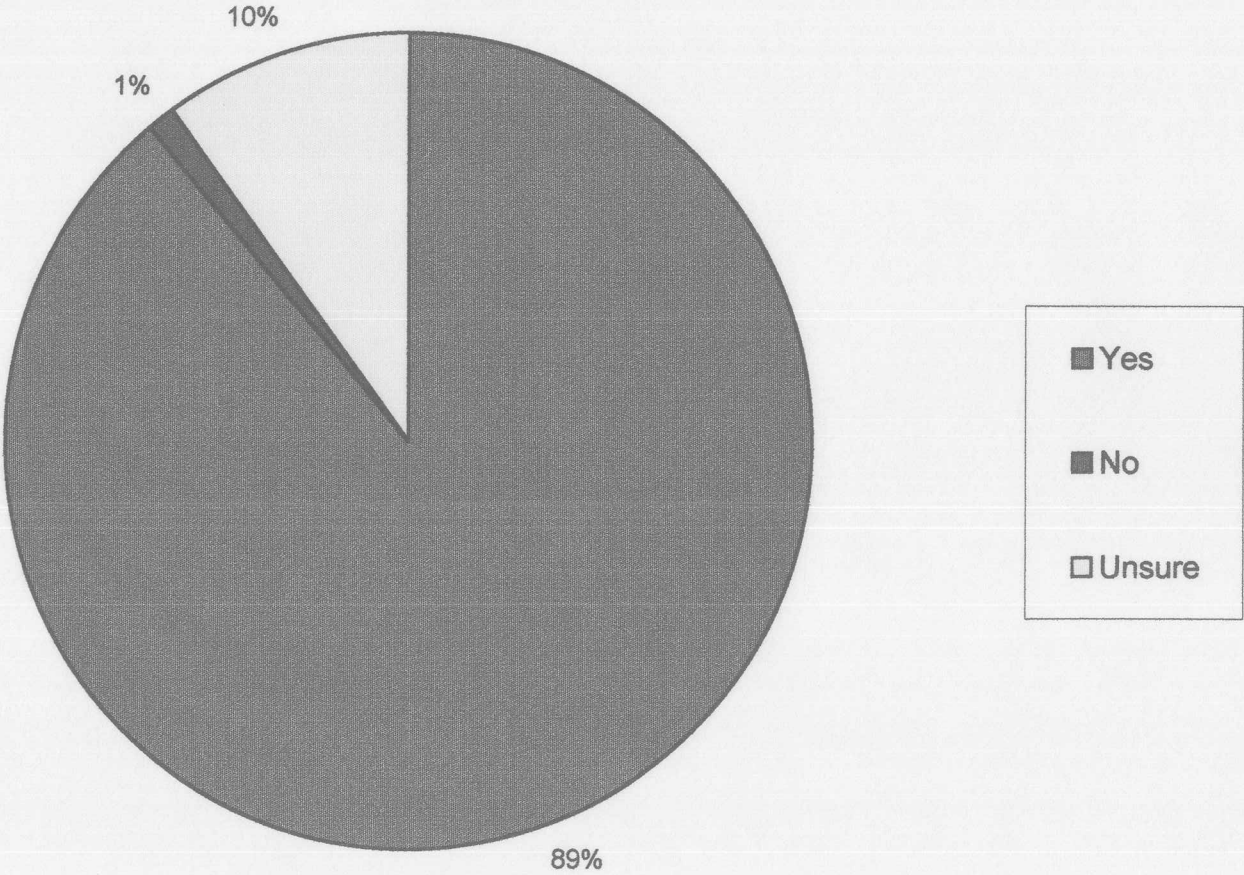
Are you successful?

The first section of the success questionnaire consisted of a yes/no/not sure question that inquired whether each woman thought she was successful. This question was asked first as to not make the women second-guess or reevaluate their definition of success. An amazing number of the women (89 percent) feel that they are successful based upon their definition of success. 1 percent said that they are not successful and 10 percent said that they are not sure whether they are successful. These results were not unfounded, as it was expected that most people would classify themselves as successful. See graph one entitled Are You Successful on page seven.

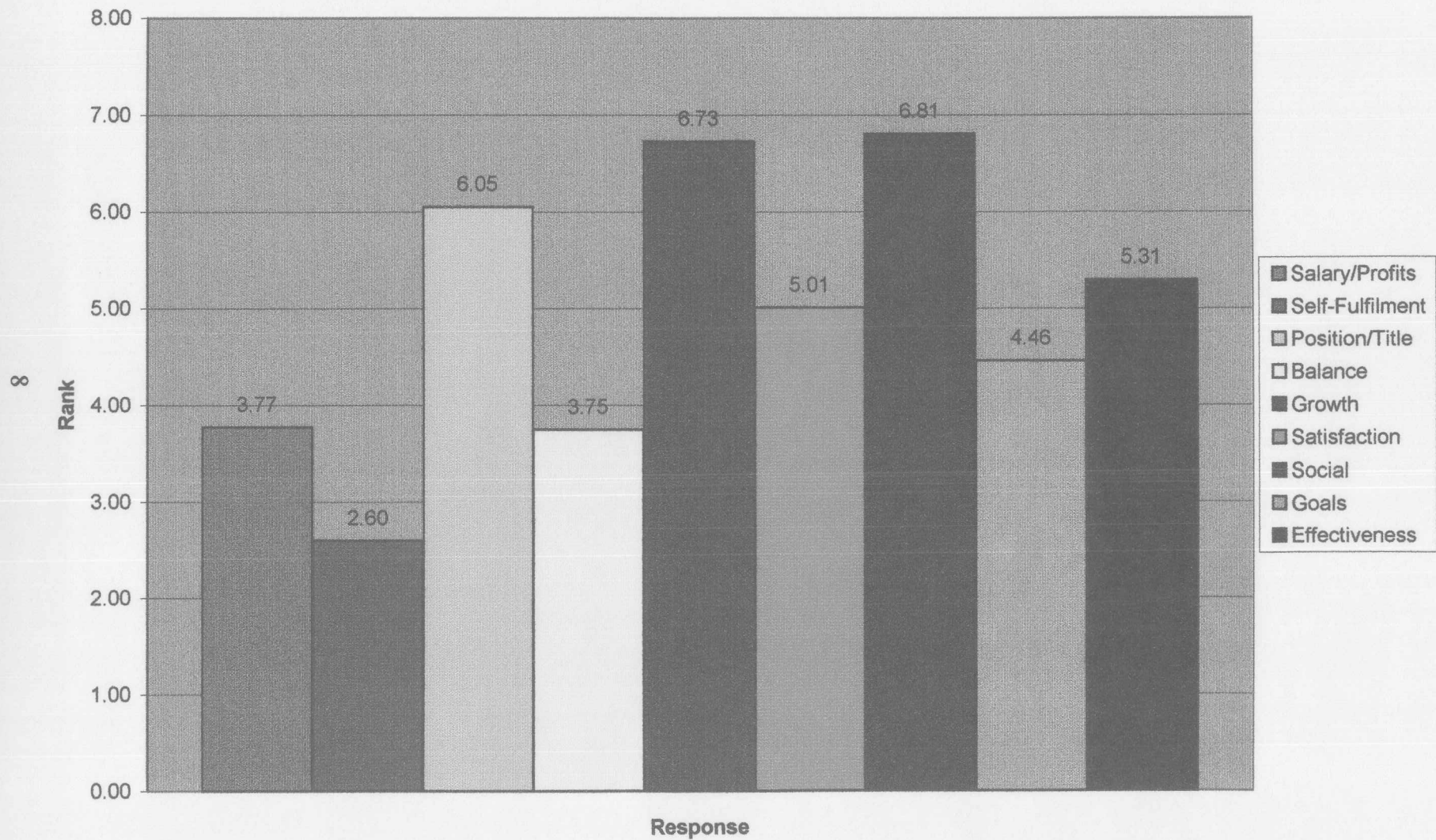
Rank Success Measures

Next, the women were asked to rank what were the most important components of success, based on nine aspects listed. These measures of success included salary/profits, self-fulfillment, job position/title, a balance between home and work, growth and expansion of the company, customer satisfaction, social contributions, goal achievement, effectiveness, or any other aspect that they supplied. See graph two entitled Average Definition of Success on page eight for full results. On average, self-fulfillment was ranked highest. It received a 2.6 rating, where one is most important. It is quite obvious that women in general choose their personal fulfillment over the traditional definition of success, which points to profits/salary first. Balancing work and family, which received a 3.75 rating, follows self-fulfillment. Additional ranking in the order of selected importance includes salary/profits (3.77), goal achievement (4.46), personal satisfaction (5.01), effectiveness (5.31), position/title (6.05), company growth (6.73), and social contribution (6.81). Overall, women choose to place a higher level of importance on items such as self-fulfillment and balancing work and family rather than on salary

Are You Successful?



Average Definiton of Success



or position within a company. As for additional write-in answers, there were several. The comments included the potential for continued growth, learning, influence, freedom, fun, and relationships with colleagues. While these comments were included, none were repeated more than once in this section and most were ranked fourth or fifth in the line of importance for rating success definitions. Therefore, little can be concluded about these write-in opinions based solely on this section due to the lack of consensus.

Define Success

Third, the women were asked to define success in their own words. This question provided the women an opportunity to speak more freely about success. It also served as a self-check against question two. There was a possibility that the answers may not match up; therefore, creating an inconsistency in their answers. If, for example, a respondent ranked salary very low in question two, but then listed it as her only definition of success in question three, then there would be an inconsistency. Upon examination there were no irregularities noted. Several types of answers were clearly important to many of the women, who noted the importance in both sections.

First, it is apparent that success involves making a difference by adding value or contributing. One woman simply stated that success was, "making a positive difference in your own life and in the lives of others." While this was one of the most popular answers in question three, it was not a possible measure that was suggested in question two, which gives additional insight into what women believe.

Second, women said that success was receiving recognition, whether monetary in nature or simply verbal/nonverbal acknowledgement. Women expressed that they felt more validated

and important when they received recognition for their work within the company. One good response asserted that success is, “knowing I am doing my best and being recognized for it.”

Third, success was defined as choosing a career that one is good at and enjoys. Again, the respondents chose a definition that was not included in question two. One woman stated it rather simply with, “[success is] doing what you love and doing well at it.” Another said, “I have to love my job. You have to ask yourself if you’d pay to have your job, if the tables were turned.”

Fourth, success is finding the perfect mix in order to balance work and family. One response indicated success was, “balancing my home and professional lives to achieve fulfillment on both fronts.” Another asserted, “I need to have that perfect balance between home and work, where I know that I am giving 100% to my children and also giving 100% to my job—no easy task!”

Fifth, success is meeting goals. One woman explained success as, “meeting goals set to measure performance, whether it be client satisfaction, sales goals, or some other criteria.” Another respondent posed her answer in a more personal matter than the former. She said success is, “becoming comfortable and satisfied with the person you are in work and in life, setting realistic goals and achieving them, and changing personal and professional goals as you change in life.”

Sixth, success is being treated with respect. One response affirmed that success is, “being treated with respect and admired for your contributions.” Another defined it as, “reaching a level such that people that interact with you both internally and at the customer-level respect and value your input.” One woman really promoted the importance of being treated with respect, by examining how women in her company often are not treated with the proper amount

of respect. In one example she stated that, “the only woman on the executive staff here is the VP of HR- a typically ‘female’ field. Since she has no staff and no managers reporting to her, the VP title is rather empty and smacks of tokenism.” Another participant relayed one of her experiences that indicated the lack of respect she has received in the past. After making a business suggestion to her male client, the client looked to her other male colleagues and said, “doesn’t that sound so cute?” Through this experience and others this woman indicated the trouble that she faces while trying to earn respect and also not appearing too harsh or rude to others in the process.

Additionally, there were superb responses that were given, yet less frequently. For example, success was also defined as:

- Overall Happiness
- Ability to Grow and Change
- Confidence
- Challenge/Stimulation
- Comfortable Work Surroundings
- Learning
- Creating Good Work
- Flexibility
- Freedom
- Authority
- Advancement

Tools for Success

The most recognized tool/factor that enables women to get ahead is a commitment to the job and to the client. The women in the survey identified this sense of dedication to be extremely important in their ability to advance. While most responses said that a woman needs to determine through trial and error the best amount of time and dedication to put into her job, there were other women who said that in order to be successful one must devote themselves solely to their job.

Second, they identified that one must have the skills and education to make it. Many signaled that it was extremely difficult or impossible to “fake it” in business when you are a woman and still advance or become promoted. It is absolutely essential that you produce results. One woman said, “be consistent and don’t be afraid to let others know what you are capable of handling.” Another said that a woman must, “be dependable and trustworthy and possess the skills needed to perform her job well.” Yet another said, “you need to pay for education/training and spend time and money honing the skills you already have. You need to demonstrate your skills by doing good work and volunteering for projects you can excel at.”

Third, it is essential that you can prove your worth and get things done. If you are not contributing to the company, then you really are adding them no value. Many responses indicated that it is necessary to possess the “get it done” kind of attitude.

Fourth, one should put their focus on the customer. One respondent said that she knows she is successful only when her client is completely content with the job that she has provided them. Many other responses indicated that one must “focus on the customer,” “know what your customer wants,” and “work on relationships with your customers.”

Fifth, it is in everyone's best interest to network. While many women indicated that networking was extremely important to success, they also noted that it was also one of the most challenging aspects of getting ahead. One response indicated, "networking is crucial, and not just among women." A 2000 study from Cheskin Research, Santa Clara University, and The Center for New Futures regarding women entrepreneurs found that

"women don't network as effectively as men. They haven't developed 'old girl networks' that function as safety nets. Thus, men are less afraid to fail than are women because they know someone will be there to catch them if they fall. This tends to make women feel they have to do everything perfectly because they don't believe they'll get a second chance" (Cheskin).

However, women are working on the process. According to an article from Crain's Chicago Business entitled *Women aided by networking*, "in the Chicago area, women are forming women-only forums, networking groups and professional associations to help members meet their goals" (Tokarski SB 16).

Finally, while the above tools/factors were the most important and present in the survey, there were also a large number of miscellaneous answers. Nearly all of the answers are extremely good, but they simply were not mentioned as much as the answers above. These additional factors show that one should have:

- Aggressiveness
- Honesty/Integrity
- Good Communication Skills
- Put Business Relationships First
- Creativity
- "Can-Do" Attitude
- Motivation

- Leadership
- Give and Earn Respect
- Be Yourself
- Ignore “Feminine Qualities”
- Be a Male
- Potential for Growth
- Generate New Business
- Have a Mentor
- Be a Risk Taker
- Remove Obstacles Before You
- Compassion
- Ability to Say “No” or Walk Away
- Organizational Skills
- Luck
- Experience
- Play Golf
- Own Your Own Company
- Keen Attention to Detail
- Confidence
- Ability to Stand Up for Oneself
- Think Outside the Box
- Do Not Whine

Barriers to Success

As women move ahead in today's business world, there are often many struggles or barriers that they face. First, businesswomen do not make it to the top because the lack of frontline experience, according to Lea Soupta, senior vice president of human resources for UPS, in her 1999 executive speech entitled Businesswomen: Portraits in Progress. Soupta asserts that women simply do not understand how their company is run on a functional basis. While this limitation factor is really important, few women in the research group listed it.

According to the survey conducted, the largest obstacle by far faced by women is the "old" way of thinking. This type of thinking mostly encompasses the idea that men are more capable than women and have more of a right to be in business than women. Additionally, it includes many negative stereotypes women face, such as women should not be allowed in power roles and women in business cannot be taken seriously. According to Charlene Marmer Solomon, author of *Women Are Still Undervalued: Bridging the Parity Gap*,

"Other barriers are stereotypes and biases such as: Women won't relocate; Women are risk-averse; women get pregnant and lack commitment to jobs; and women won't put in the time for client responsiveness" (Solomon 79).

One woman in the research group shared her concerns about her workplace. "I have limits here just because I am a woman. There are no female VP's and there never have been. The problem is the proverbial glass ceiling. As a woman I am never considered, literally the name never comes up." Another commented that, "It is difficult for others to see women in powerful roles. A woman's image is critical to her success." Unfortunately, these types of responses were included in more questionnaires than was expected. Women today are still challenged on a daily basis to prove that they are good enough.

Also included in this area, is the “Old-Boys Network,” which is based around the idea that men can network through recreational circles, such as golf and other sports, while women are left out. One woman stated, “the guys go out drinking and socializing and the women are left out of that circle.” As women have advanced in many areas one may have suspected that this way of thinking was becoming extinct. Yet the women in this survey confirm that it still exists and in no way is it close to disappearance. The results show that these obstacles are still very present in today’s workforce.

The second largest obstacle women face is the problem associated with trying to balance work and family. As indicated before, not all women will leave the workforce to have a family, which means that those who choose to have a family and continue to work, must determine how to balance the two together. In a study by Cheskin Research, Santa Clara University, and The Center for New Futures regarding women entrepreneurs they found that,

“women see themselves as having to have a more difficult time balancing personal life and work than men do. This may be because women still carry more of the burden of raising and providing emotional support for the family. This means that women often shoulder more responsibilities overall than men and, in some cases, may force them to opt out of advancement opportunities in management” (Cheskin).

Next, women indicated that the lack of female role models and mentors was particularly harmful to their positions and status. The women pointed out that it is difficult to know what to do when there are few or no woman in your company who have accomplished certain goals or positions before. One answer stated, “there are so few of us. Only three [women] out of 50 professionals.” As a solution, it is possible to look to some of the men as role models, but this often turns to a complex situation if the men cannot understand the difficulties a female is

having. The lack of role models points to the need for women in top positions to stand up and show the lower ranked women the way, although it is not always apparent to them that they need to do so. One respondent pointed out that, "some men at the top are not used to dealing with women as equals. Women don't always willingly embrace the fact that they have some teaching and modeling to do in that respect." Valerie Perlowitz, president of Reliable Systems Integration, Inc. in Dun Loring, Virginia believes, "we need to mentor the young women coming out to the field...to show these young women the path, how to get up the ladder and build their own network" (Prencipe 46). She maintains possibly then more women will be leading their own billion-dollar companies.

While most companies have problems in this area, whether they know it or not, few address it or try to correct it. However, there are some managers who do understand exactly what women are going through. Ed Doherty, president of Reading Restaurants, which operates the Perkins chain of restaurants, is a boss that understands exactly what is going on. Doherty created *Starting With Women*, a program designed to make life and work easier for women. It focuses on enabling women to advance in the company, cope with trying to balance work and family, eliminate their lack of confidence, and deal with male resentment in the workforce. The group brings in women from outside companies to lecture and share their stories of how they "made-it." Ed Doherty is a top model of how bosses need to focus on everyone's needs in the company.

Finally, there was a group of women who clearly indicated that they felt there were no barriers or obstacles in their path to success. These women possibly eliminate their barriers as they advance in life, they may simply ignore the negative signals given to them, or they may have an extremely positive attitude that allows them to succeed at anything they put their mind

to. One woman who indicated that there were no barriers to her success also suggested that one of the most important factors to getting ahead is to “remove obstacles”.

Similar to question four, there were a great number of miscellaneous items listed as obstacles. While all of the answers were extremely good, there was little consensus throughout all of the surveys. Some of these answers included as barriers:

- Glass Ceiling
- Being Female
- Self-Imposed Limitations
- Lack of Experience
- Lack of Support
- Difficulty in Receiving the Same Quality/Quantity of Work as Male Counterparts
- Having a Poor Attitude
- Lack of Interest in Sports
- Having Womanly Qualities
- Not Current with Today’s Topics
- Lack of Networking Skills

Women’s Positions

In question six, respondents were asked to identify, by estimation if necessary, what percentage of women held certain positions in their company, which included board of directors, top management (executives), middle management, and supervisory management. If a given category was not applicable or if they were completely unsure, they were asked to simply mark the response line with an ‘X’.

The results indicated that, on average, women held 12% on board of director's positions in their companies and that 23% of top management in their company was women. Additionally, 33% of middle management is women and 35% of supervisory management is female. If we were to assume that these percentages were fairly accurate, then we can conclude that on every level women are still quite far from equaling the men at every position level. It must be noted, however, that these numbers, especially those for the board of directors and top management, may actually be high. These numbers may be elevated due to a group of responses provided by entrepreneurs. Nearly every entrepreneurial respondent indicated that 100% of the above mentioned positions in their company were held by women, which indicated a significant variance from non-women owned companies. It is fascinating that women-owned businesses, at least in this study, have a much greater tendency to focus employment on other women, especially in the top positions.

Level of Agreement

Next, the women were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eight statements, where one equals total agreement and five equals total disagreement. Several of the questions dealt with how to achieve success and several others dealt with possible obstacles to acquiring success.

The first statement said, "All employees are treated equally in my company." 25% strongly agreed that all persons are treated equally in their company. 22% moderately agreed, 19% were neutral, 13% moderately disagreed and 22% strongly agreed with the statement. Technically, more persons than not felt that everyone is treated equally. However, the results,

which are shown on page 21, were not overwhelmingly on that side. Overall, it appears that this issue is split pretty close with each side receiving about half of the votes.

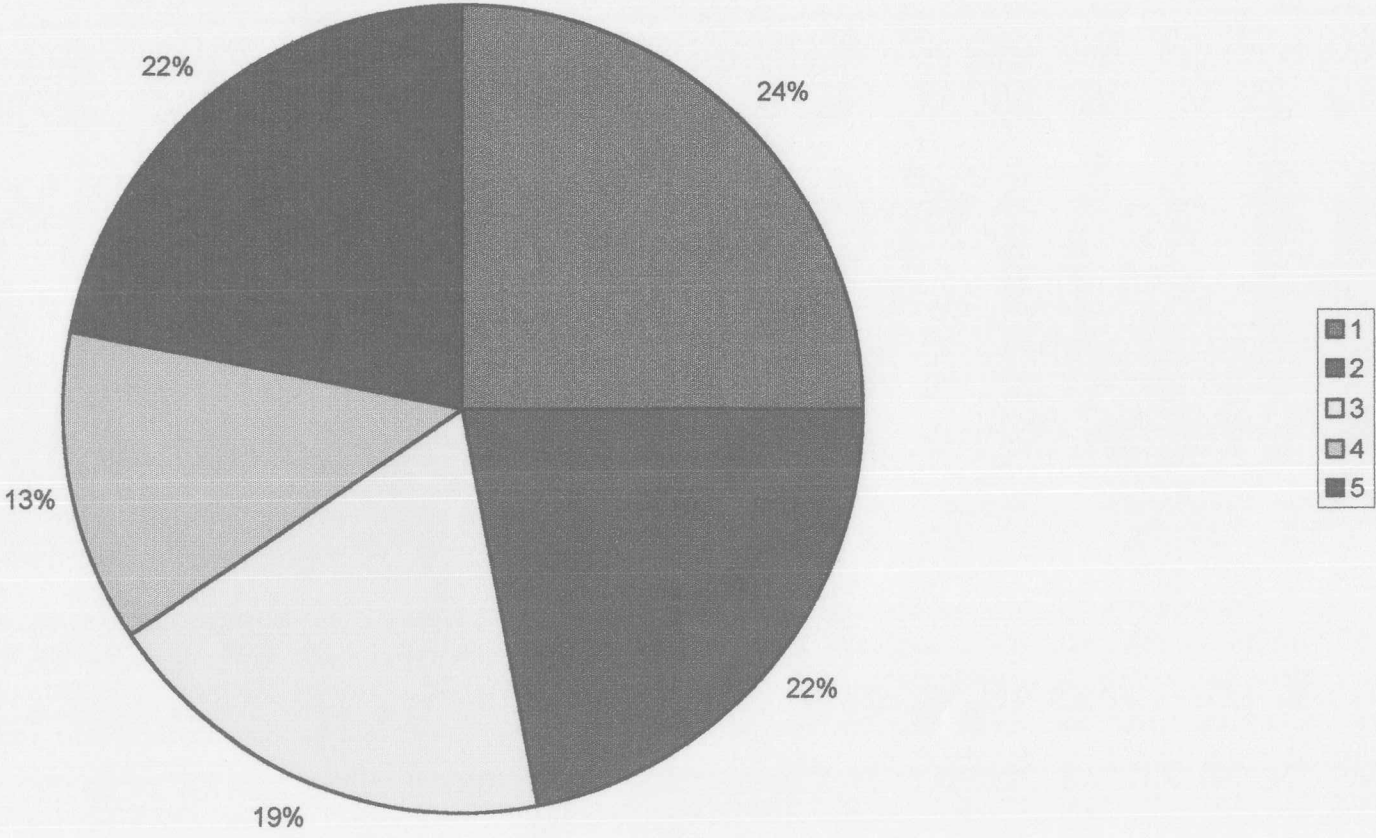
The second statement asserted, "Success depends on being a team player." 45% of the respondents completely agreed with this statement. 16% moderately agreed, 19% were neutral, and 19% moderately disagreed this the statement. No one completely disagreed. Overall, most of the responses indicated that the statement was favorable. It should be noted that this assertion and the next were commented on by several of those questioned. Those who commented indicated that while they agreed with the statement, they also believe that it is not the only factor necessary for success. See graph on page 22 for percentages.

The third statement posed, "Success depends on being a leader." As the graph on page 23 indicates, 39% completely agreed with the statement. 42% moderately agreed, 13% were neutral, and 6% moderately agreed. As above, none of the responses completely disagreed with the statement.

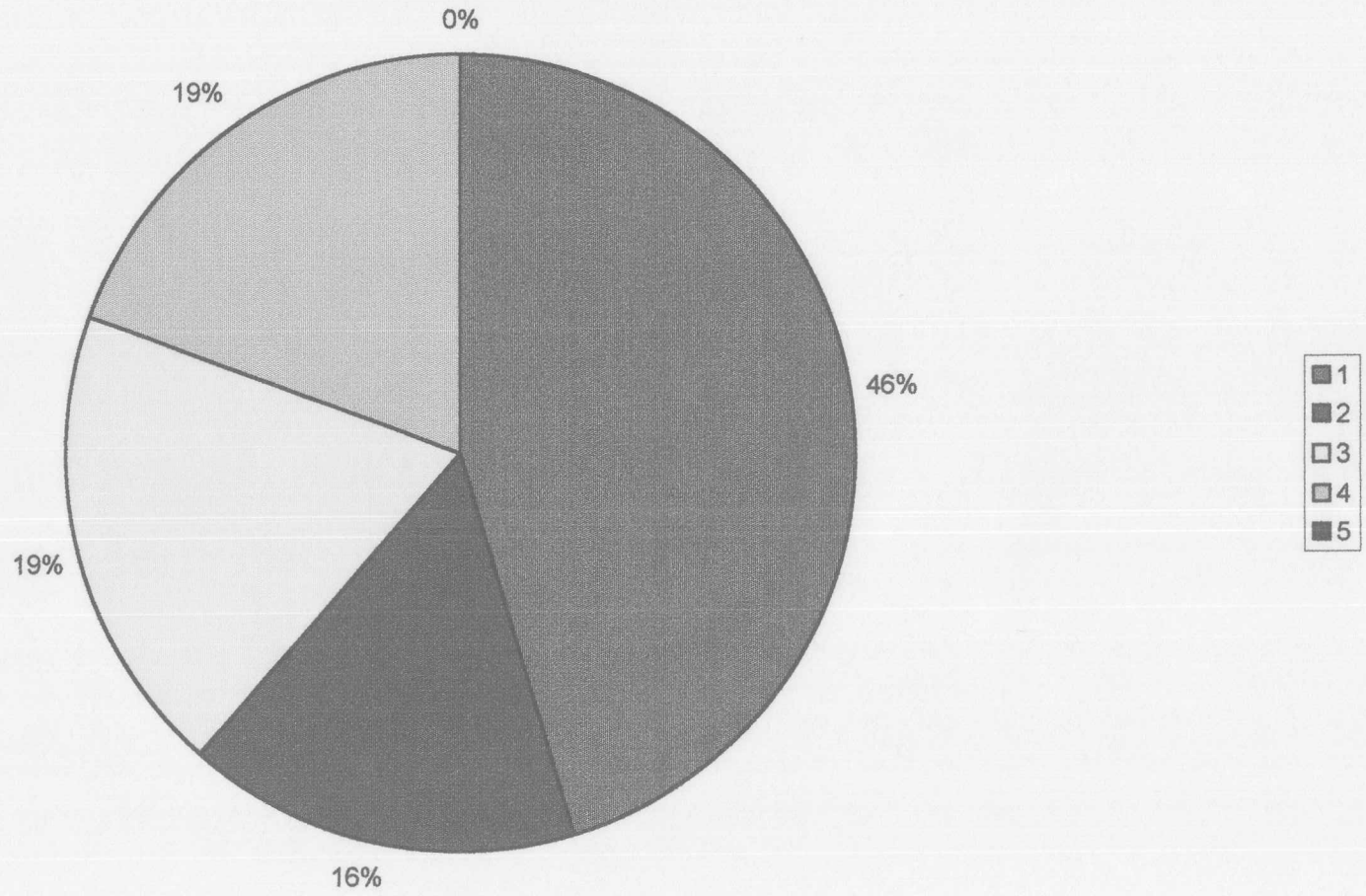
The fourth statement said, "Men receive preferential treatment in my company." 20% of the responses indicated that the women strongly believe men receive preferred treatment. 23% moderately agree, 17% were neutral, 13% moderately disagree and 27% strongly disagreed, which is depicted on page 24. Technically, more women than not believe that men obtain preferred treatment, but only by a small margin. Overall, this issue also appears to be split rather equally.

The fifth statement posed, "Women receive preferential treatment in my company." 3% strongly agreed the women are preferred in their company. No one moderately agreed. 14% were neutral, 24% moderately disagreed, and 59% strongly disagreed with the allegation. This

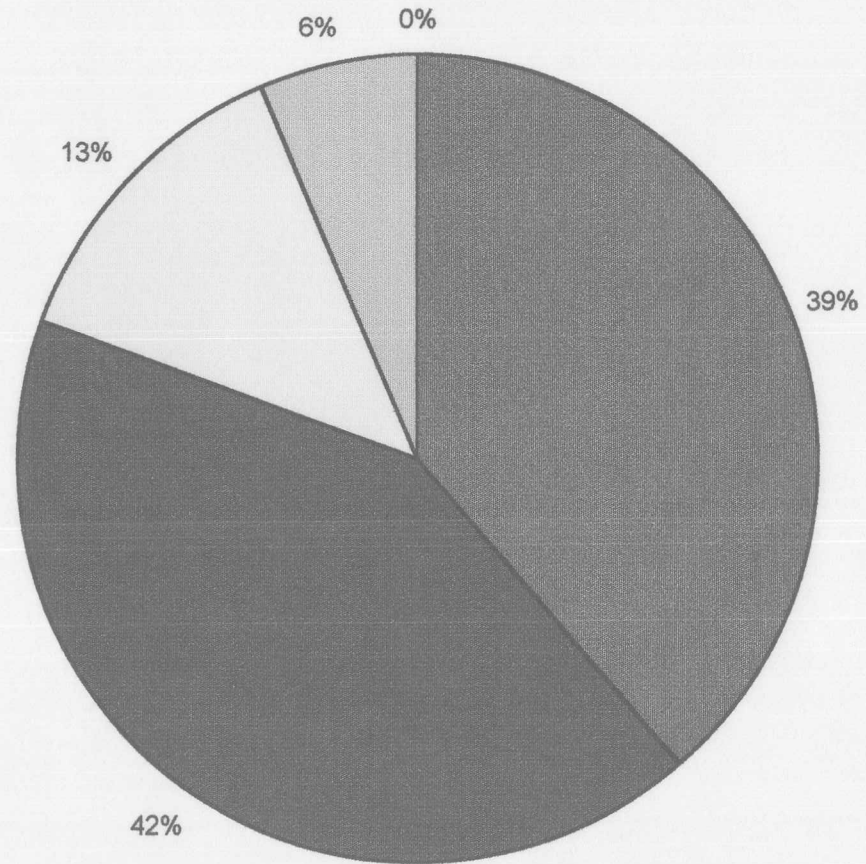
Level of Agreement - All Equal



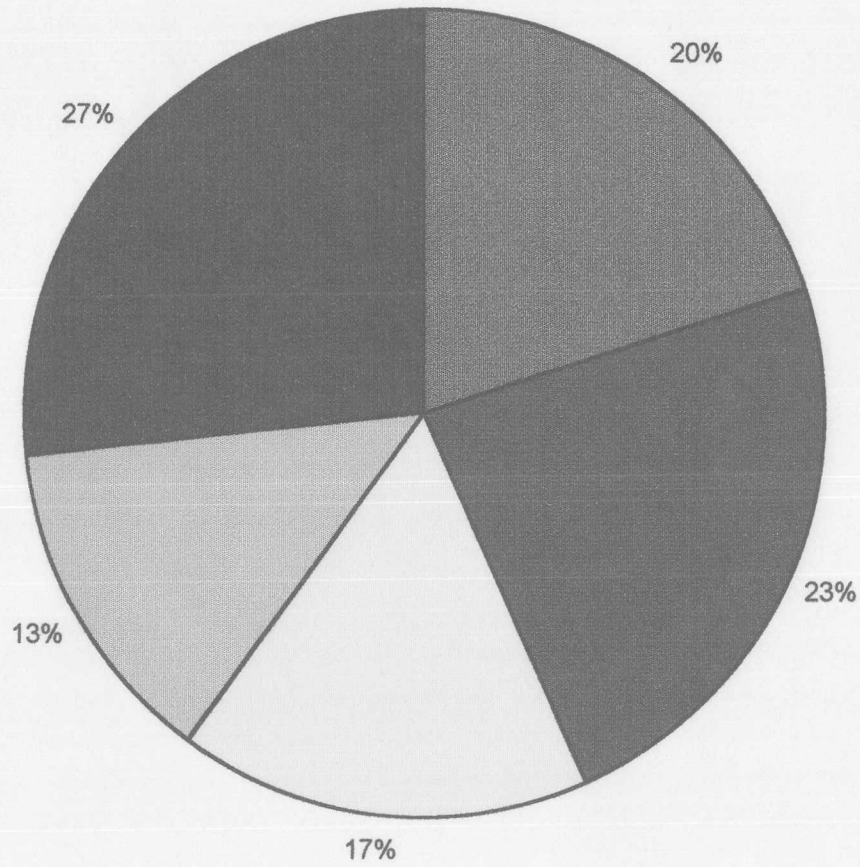
Level of Agreement - Team Player



Level of Agreement - Leader



Level of Agreement - Men



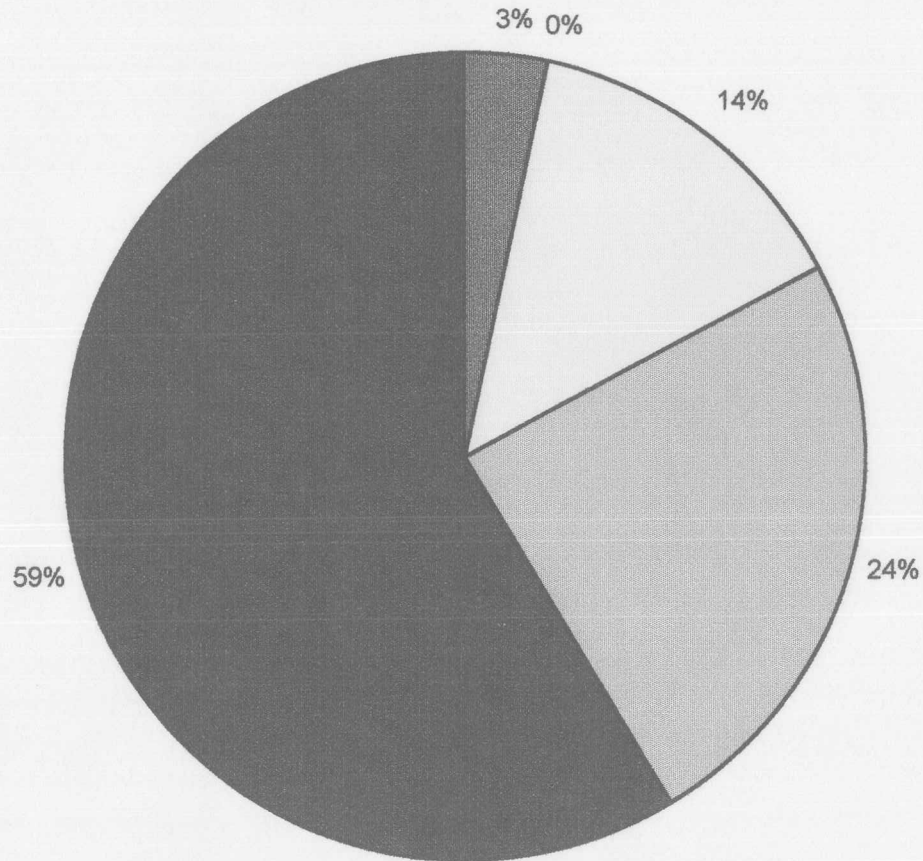
was the most conclusive of all statements. As portrayed on page 26, it is overwhelmingly agreed that women are not receiving special treatment at work.

The sixth statement claimed, "Regardless of sex, advancement is political." 29% were in complete agreement with the statement. 23% moderately agreed, 19% were neutral, 10% moderately disagreed, and 19% completely disagreed, which is shown on page 27. This statement also provided responses that were consistent across all levels. Little can be concluded from this because each side received roughly half of the votes.

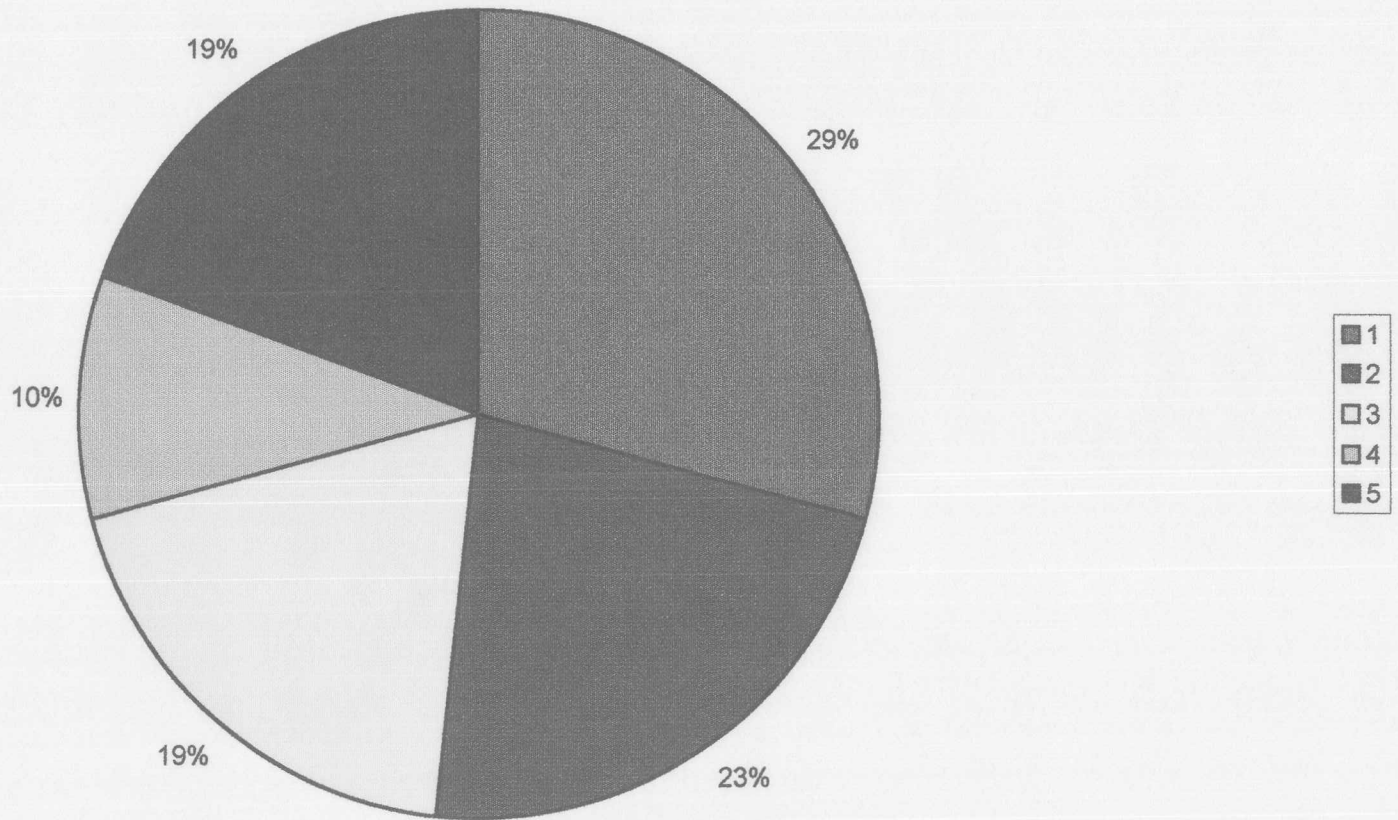
The seventh statement declared, "My significant other supports me in my career." As the graph on page 28 shows, an overwhelming 71% say that their significant other is supportive to them and their career. 3% moderately agreed, 6% were neutral, and no one moderately disagreed. There was, however, a group of women, which composed 20% of the responses that strongly believed that their significant other was *not* supportive in their career.

The final statement posed, "I have trouble balancing work and family." 19% of the respondents completely agreed with the statement. 31% moderately agreed, 16% were neutral, 9% moderately disagreed, and 25% strongly disagreed with the remark. See page 29 for the results. While the majority of the responses indicated that the women agree with the statement, it was expected that more would have agreed based on the responses from questions 2-5, which pertained to their specific views of success. Upon closer examination, however, many women indicated that balancing work and family was their definition of success. These same women indicated that they believe they were successful. Therefore, one can only conclude that they do have a grasp on balancing the two and why fewer women than expected are actually having trouble.

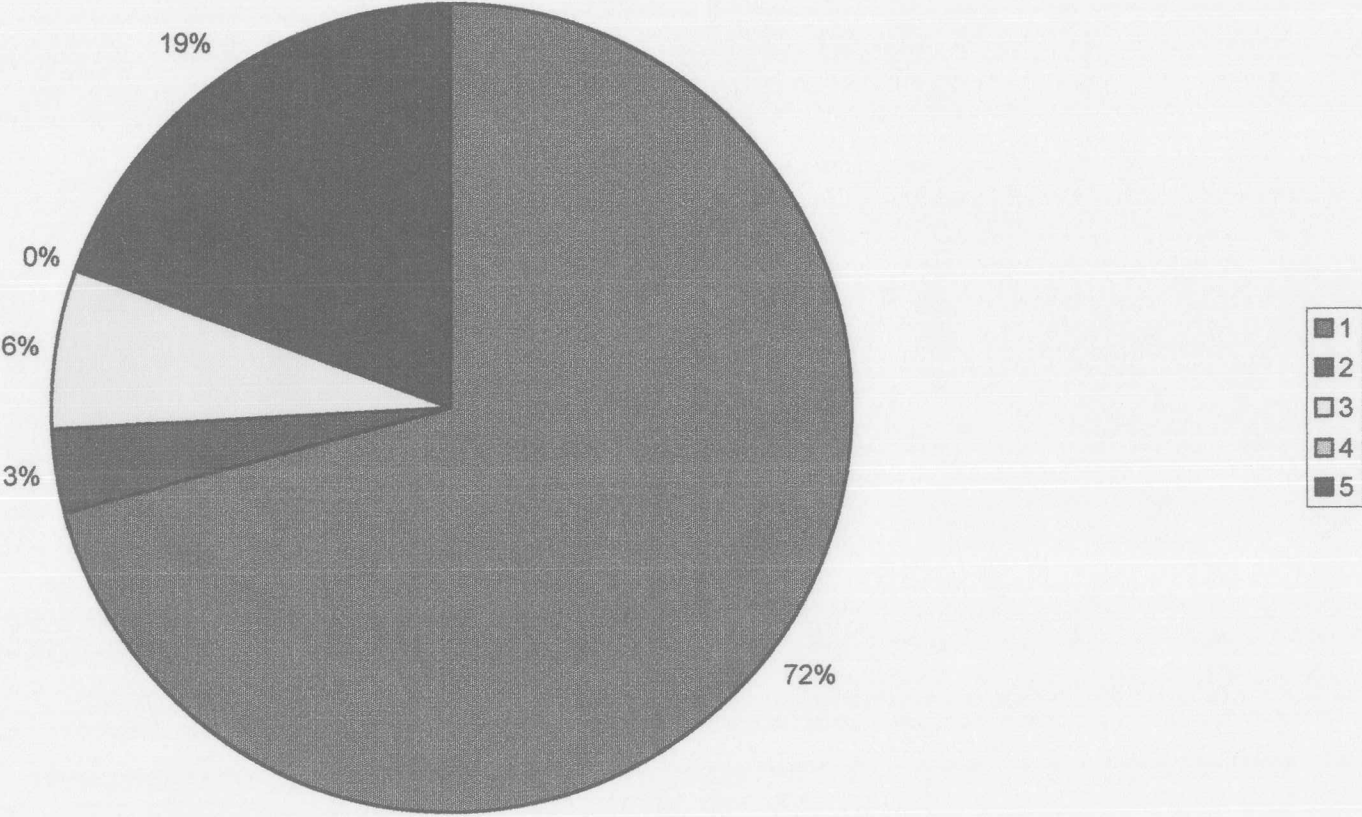
Level of Agreement - Women



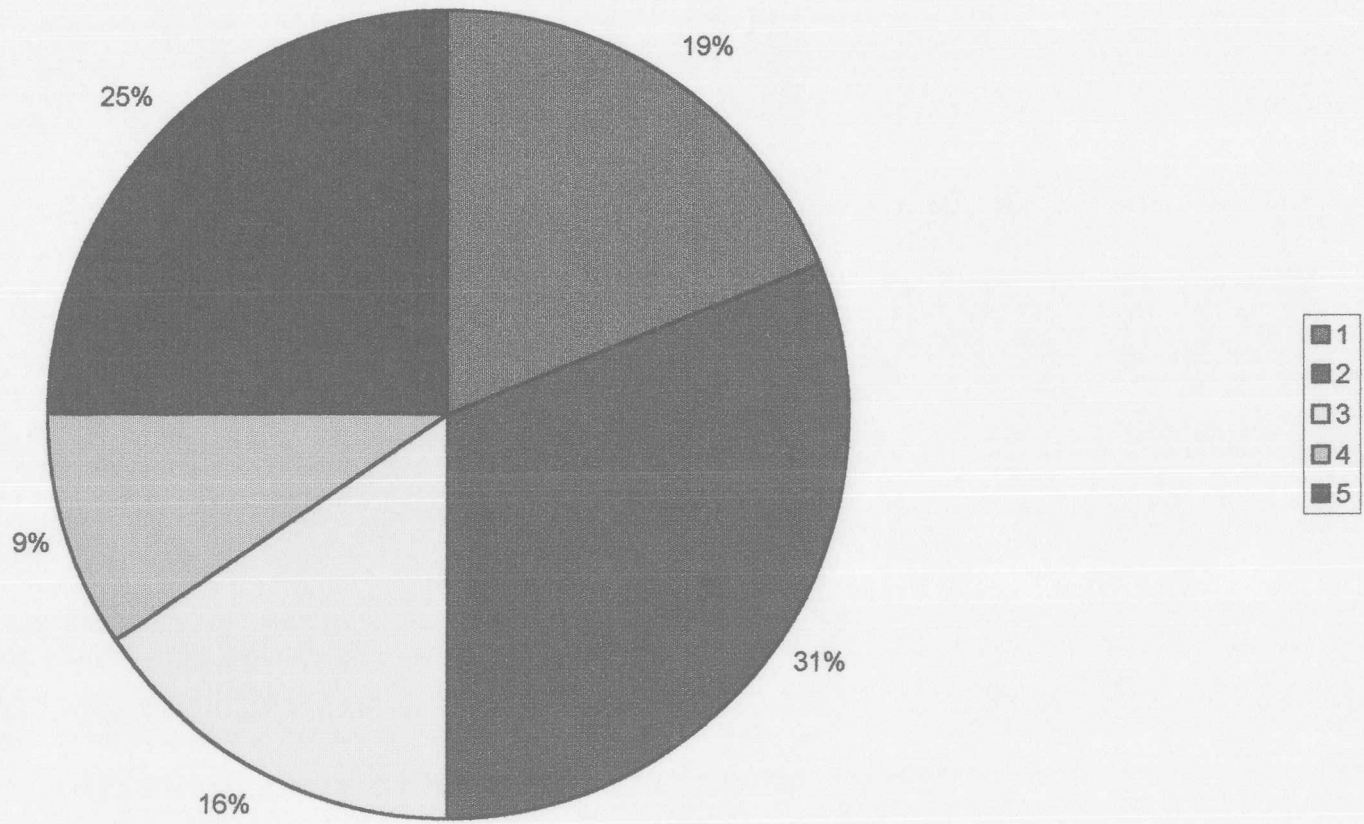
Level of Agreement - Political



Level of Agreement - Support Received



Level of Agreement - Balancing Difficulty



Profile

The remaining questions in the survey were asked in order to profile the respondents of the questionnaire. The women were asked of their age, marital status, children, education, business type, subordinates, company size and years of experience. All data was compiled and an "average" respondent was created. A typical respondent is 36.7 years old and is married. She has one child who is roughly 13 years old. She has completed her college degree and quite possibly a graduate degree. See graph three entitled Highest Degree Received in Appendix C for actual percentages of degrees received by participants. She does not currently own the business she works for and has five subordinates reporting to her. Her company employs less than 500 persons and she has been in the professional work force for nearly 16 years.

While the above is the "average" respondent, the profiles of all the women varied greatly. Responses were received from women who were scarcely out of school and from women who have been working for up to 30 years or more. There was a large group of women who do not have children and also several women who have more than five children. 99% of all women surveyed have at least completed high school and 5% have a doctoral degree. 15% of the participants are currently entrepreneurs. These are just a few of the profiles of the respondents. See Appendix B titled Profile of Respondents for a detailed description of respondents.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research, limitations and the potential for further research exist. This study is no different. First, this study could focus directly on specific segments of business. One could look at only women entrepreneurs or only women in marketing to determine if there are differences among women in various fields. The results from this study have been generalized to

include all women in business, regardless of their area of expertise or interest. From this additional research, one could compare the results to determine if women in various industries treat success similarly or differently. This limitation leads to immense opportunities for additional research. There is also the potential to look at women who work for governmental agencies, not-for-profits, profit-seeking firms, and so.

Second, there is also the potential to compare specific sized firms to one another. Are entrepreneurial women looking for something different than a woman working for a firm with 5,000 employees? It may be possible that women who seek out companies who employ large numbers of people are defining their occupational success differently than women who seek firms that hire only a handful of workers.

Third, the study was sent by email to the research subjects due to lack of resources. If repeated, the project would gain more responses and respect if it were included as an online survey. The online format would allow for total anonymity as opposed to email. Another option would be to physically mail questionnaires. While it is a fine option, it is likely that a web-based setup would reach more people.

Fourth, the emails used in the mailing were obtained through Liz Ryan, a businesswoman who created a database that focuses on women in tech companies. Therefore, a large number of the responses were from women working for technology-related companies. A researcher in the future may want to go beyond this limited scope of respondents to gain a better perspective of success. In order to obtain a higher rate of return, one may also want to utilize a follow-up letter, phone call or email.

Fifth, only women received the questionnaire. To obtain a more complete understanding of all success views, it would be best to survey men and women. After compiling the data, one could compare men's views to women's views more specifically.

Conclusion

Overall, the research conducted supports the limited research available. It appears that women have specific goals, tools, and obstacles to gaining success, some of which are quite different than men. More research needs to be conducted before making a definite statement. Possibly then, more companies will take notice of and begin to understand why women are leaving their companies. Additionally, it is possible that more companies need to be more proactive with this issue. Women in the workplace are not a new topic, nor is it an issue that is going to disappear. Firms that want to stay on the top must acknowledge that extremely qualified women are working and that they may require different items from their company due to their unique goals, which are likely to be different than males in the same business.

Women in business need to celebrate their accomplishments and aid others who want to pursue the same avenues as themselves. It is probable that women in similar types, sizes and areas of business are more likely to want similar things from their career and aspire to corresponding goals. In that case, those women must come together and learn to support one another.

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Appendix

**Success Questionnaire
Confidential**

It is *NOT* necessary to give your name or the title of your company

1. Are you successful? Yes
 No
 Not Sure

2. PLEASE RANK IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE (1=most important)

How I measure success:

Rank

- a) salary/profits
- b) self-fulfillment
- c) job position/title
- d) a balance between home and work
- e) growth and expansion in the company's size
- f) customer satisfaction
- g) social contributions
- h) goal achievement
- i) effectiveness
- j) other (please specify)

3. I would best define success as:

4. What I consider the most important factor(s) for a woman to get ahead/obtain success in my company:

5. What I consider the greatest obstacle(s) to a woman getting ahead/obtaining success in my company:

6. In your company, what (estimate) percentage of women hold the following positions: (if not applicable or unsure mark with an 'X')

Board of Directors _____ %
Top management (executives) _____ %
Middle Management _____ %
Supervisory Management _____ %

7. Please indicate the level (1-5) to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Agree=1

Disagree=5

1. All employees are treated equally in my company. _____
2. Success depends on being a team player. _____
3. Success depends on being a leader. _____
4. Men receive preferential treatment in my company. _____
5. Women receive preferential treatment in my company. _____
6. Regardless of sex, advancement is political. _____
7. My significant other supports me in my career. _____
8. I have trouble balancing work and home/family. _____

8. Age: _____

9. Marital Status: Married _____
Single _____
Widowed _____
Divorced _____

10. Children: _____ Ages: _____

11. Education Level: _____ Grade School
_____ High School/GED
_____ College
_____ Graduate
_____ Doctoral

Area of Concentration: _____

12. Business Type: _____

13. Do you own the business? _____ Yes _____ No

14. My Title: _____

15. My operational role in my company is:

16. Number of persons reporting to me or through my subordinates is: _____

17. Size of Company – Total number of employees (at all locations):

_____ Under 500 _____ 500-999 _____ 1,000 or more

18. I have been in the professional work force for _____ years

Appendix B

Profile of Respondents

Average Age: 36.7
Range of Ages: 24-56

Marital Status:

Married: 57.50%
Single: 23.75%
Widowed: 0.00%
Divorced: 17.50%
Other: 1.25%

Children:

None: 57.50%
One or Two: 35.00%
Three or Four: 5.00%
Five or more: 2.50%

Average Child's Age: 13 years

Education Level:

Grade School: 0.00%
High School/GED: 1.25%
College: 57.50%
Graduate: 36.25%
Doctoral: 5.00%

Do you own the business?

Yes: 15.00%
No: 85.00%

Average Number of Subordinates: 5

Size of Company:

Under 500: 63.75%
500-999: 11.25%
1000 or more: 25.00%

Average Number of Years in the Workforce: 15.65

Percentage of Highest Degrees Received

