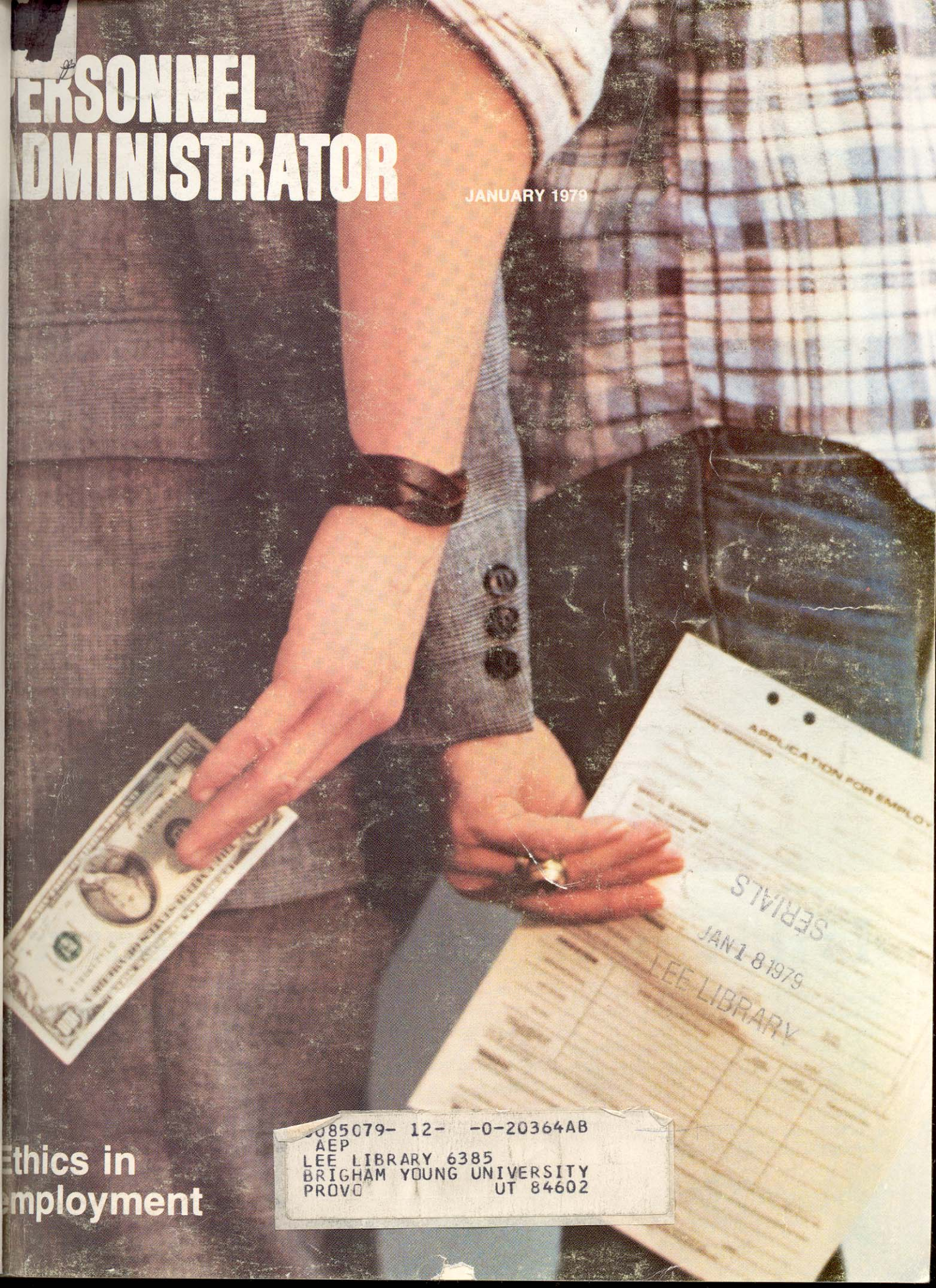


# PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR

JANUARY 1979



Ethics in  
employment

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# THE PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATOR

JANUARY 1979

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*by Margaret Woodworth and Warner Woodworth*

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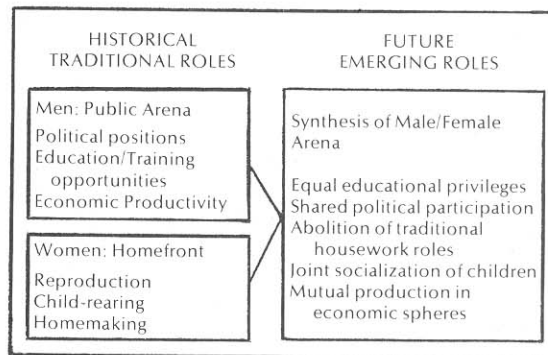
Fully two-fifths of U.S. "manpower" is womenpower. The facts are indisputable: women are part and parcel of the labor force.

# The female takeover: threat or opportunity

MARGARET WOODWORTH and WARNER WOODWORTH

The historical roots out of which today's women are surging into the marketplace run deep and powerful. We see four major factors contributing to this influx. They include contradictions between a political ideology of equality for all and the systematic exclusion of women from political office. Discrepancies are also manifest in an economic logic which has classified together slaves, cattle, women and other property. Another root of the movement is public education which heightened women's awareness and created rising expectations about the quality of female life in America. Technology is an additional force contributing to the emancipation of women, as today's home appliances create a predicament: what to do after the kids are off to school, the vacuuming done, the dishwasher loaded?

In understanding the dilemmas of female role loss and the search for new meaning, it may be useful to consider the model below which suggests the historical differentiation between men and women and what we see as the emerging synthesis of the two spheres in an egalitarian society:



What we see occurring in the United States is a moving away from adherence to the sexual straitjackets which assumed women's natural place was at home while men's was out seeking fame and glory, to a broader participation of both parties.

Let us examine this shift in terms of quantity alone, as revealed by Department of Labor Statistics. At the turn of the century some 20 percent of all U.S. women were in the workforce, a figure that rose to 29 percent by

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### EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

1940. On the whole they tended to consist of single, white, middle-class women whose jobs served an interim function until marriage occurred. The number of working women increased dramatically during World War II and has continued to an astonishing 46 percent of all women 16 years and over employed by 1975. Even more remarkable is the composition of this increase. The data suggest only a minimal increase due to single women, 1.7 million since 1940. A higher category is that of divorced, separated and widowed women who work as heads of households because of financial necessity (from 14 percent in 1950 to almost 30 percent now). Even more telling is the number of married women with husbands present — from 15 percent in 1940 to 30 percent in 1960 and 44 percent by 1975. And of these, the most remarkable jump in percentages is that of mothers of pre-school children.

However, while inroads have been made into the firm, the resulting compensation picture is not so bright. In fact, the picture gets more bleak as time goes on — the gap between higher paid males and lower paid females continues to enlarge. For instance, in 1956 the average female wage-earner received \$2,827 annually. By 1975 the figure was \$7,719. Yet as a share of men's earnings, the percent of income earned by women declined over the same period, 63 percent to 59 percent! With respect to job category, the closest relation of female to male income is that of women professionals, while the lowest proportion is that of salespersons.

In another vein, the data reveal that family income is significantly affected by type of family. Working husbands and wives had a joint median income of \$17,237 in 1975, 35 percent higher than that of male heads of family where the wife is not in the labor force. At the other end of the ladder, families headed by a woman earn less than half of the above, \$6,844. Some 26 percent of white women who manage a family alone are below the poverty level, while among black women in similar circumstances, the total is 50 percent. And the category at the lower echelon of society, the female head of the family, is increasing dramatically. Whether due to divorce, widowhood, single parenting choices or whatever, the number has nearly doubled since 1960 (up to 7.5 million) so that today in America roughly 13 percent of all families are headed by and economically dependent on a woman.

The resulting configuration which emerges is that fully two-fifths of U.S. "manpower" is now womanpower. Whether working for ego motives, spurred by higher educational training, increasing expectations about their standard of living, inflationary economics, or the absolute

need to work because of one's family situation, the facts are indisputable: women are part and parcel of the labor force.

In many respects, we would argue that the women's revolution is over. It is over in an ideological sense. U.S. society has largely accepted the ideal that women are people, that as citizens they ought to have certain rights and that there is a legitimate place for them in the economic structure of our society. In this sense feminists have won the war and in doing so have changed the economic system forever. What remains, however, is for many existing cultural processes, institutions and assumptions to yet be altered, to adjust to the transformation wrought by the movement.

### Implications

**T**he challenge of a soon-to-be corporate majority of women gets at the very heart of traditional management practice. It tests the rhetoric that the "best person will get the job" by asking if that also holds when the best person is wearing a skirt. Such a challenge points to the tension between freedom on the one hand and equality on the other, suggesting that corporations ought not to have license to hire and preserve throughout all perpetuity their essential character as male-dominated bastions. We would argue that the aftershocks of the women's revolution will also open up new frontiers, new vistas of a broader and deeper nature than our historic models of economics and organizational life. While the period of transition will be painful and threatening to both males and females as cherished assumptions are stretched and torn, as precious myths of inferiority are exposed for what they are, we envision more creative and humane organizational processes being designed into the corporate structure.

What are some of the implications resulting from women in the marketplace? In what ways can male managers cope with the dilemmas and difficulties this new labor force present? More importantly, instead of a defensive stance which resists and/or continues to discriminate and maintain the system as status quo, what are the offensive possibilities? How might innovative executives and adaptive enterprises see this change for what it is — an opportunity.

To begin with, our prediction is that the influx of women in business is going to alter the very conception of work itself. For the man, the Great American Way of Life has been to sacrifice his all — time, energy, talents, family,

etc. on the alter of career achievement. It is the rising to the top that is important, never mind what is at the top. Too little concern is given to whether a man's dream ends up a hollow victory which he celebrates alone in an empty mansion, bereft of wife and children, without friends and broken in health. Humanist philosophers and psychiatrists have long argued that work and people may be natural enemies, that when work subjects the worker to his task, it demeans the person and robs him of his humanity. Yet it may not be philosophy, but women, that translate theory into reality as they enter business with an orientation that declares the pathway to be as important as the end, that a person becomes what he or she does, that a major challenge of life is to not to be corrupted by false values and that while professional commitment is important, other values are equally valid — children, love, beauty and self-realization.

The pressing needs of large numbers of women at work will also force from management the reallocation of resources and test the rhetoric that the corporation has the interest of its employees at heart. For instance, we would argue that it will be in the interests of not only women, but men and corporations too, to create more part-time options as legitimate forms of employment. Rather than being a defective substitute for a regular full-time job, we would anticipate that, as new research data suggest, the payoffs of part-time are extremely attractive in terms of productive output and employee satisfaction. Those women who choose to supplement their husbands' income, or those who want part-time careers primarily for psychological reasons, would have opportunities that they could not avail themselves of if only full-time work were available.

A more rare and recent variation is that of job sharing in which a full-time job is split by two people, friends or a married couple. An example might be a regular academic appointment in a university which is divided 50/50 by husband and wife, allowing each the freedom to be home with the family the other half of the day. Massachusetts Mutual's evolution of part-time and job-sharing practices among its 2,300 office employees is illustrative of potential payoffs for creative companies. The company found that employees working six-tenths of a full day (4.8 hours) actually produced as much work as those in traditional eight hour shifts and they seemed to have a greater attention span and take on more difficult jobs than full-timers. Management reported less turnover and fewer "problem employees" among part-time workers. High quality personnel, easier recruitment and other advantages were seen to far outweigh additional administrative costs at

Massachusetts Life.

Beyond the need to generate more part-time opportunities, we would also advocate more creative alternatives to the traditional 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. concept of scheduling. While this historic pattern may have been adequate under stable conditions of the past, today's mobile society requires more flexible possibilities. Women and younger workers especially have multiple interests such as being home with children, or the freedom to stop by for a college class in the morning before beginning the job. Large cities have been the major setting for staggered hours, growing out of such problems as the traffic congestion that occurs in Chicago or L.A. when everyone arrives and leaves work at the same time. A 1974 survey of 100 firms in Manhattan suggests that employees in companies with staggered schedules are more punctual (fewer train, traffic and elevator delays), that shifting the starting time involves very few costs, that subordinates and managers adapt to staggering very quickly and morale is reported to be considerably higher.

Similarly the "flexitime" concept is rapidly coming into use as a practical management strategy for coping with new employee work values and commitments. It involves a core period in which all employee must be present, but it allows an extension of either early or late hours to fill our a full eight hour period. For instance, while all employees must work from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., some could opt to begin at 8:00 and leave at 4:00, while others

**'It tests the rhetoric that the best person will get the job by asking if that also holds when the best person is wearing a skirt.'**

### Truth Or Fantasy?

#### Myth

A woman's place is in the home.

#### Reality

Homemaking in itself is no longer a full-time job for most people. Goods and services formerly produced in the home are now commercially available; laborsaving devices have lightened or eliminated much work around the home.

Today more than half of all women between 18 and 64 years of age are in the labor force, where they are making a substantial contribution to the Nation's economy. Studies show that nine out of 10 women will work outside the home at some time in their lives.

Women aren't seriously attached to the labor force; they work only for extra pocket money.

Of the nearly 34 million women in the labor force in March 1973, nearly half were working because of pressing economy need. They were either single, widowed, divorced, or separated or had husbands whose incomes were less than \$3,000 a year. Another 4.7 million had husbands with incomes between \$3,000 and \$7,000.

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might prefer to arrive at 10:00 and work until 6:00 p.m. The benefits of such programs for women and men include more control over their time and increased participation in non-work activities during daylight hours — education, family, community and recreation. The company also reaps certain payoffs: fewer absences, increased service to customers with longer hours, elimination of tardiness problems and more cross-fertilization of job skills among employees as they fill in for one another.

Alternative schedules are one kind of organizational response to the needs of multi-worker families and the required accommodation of the dual roles of many women, as mothers and employees (as well as the dual roles of men as fathers). Another critical restructuring of organizations we would argue for is that of establishing day care facilities on the company site. Major pressures facing working women are those of child-care for preschool children. The

figures have shot up dramatically, from 12 percent in 1950 of women who work having children under six, to nearly 40 percent currently. While the participation of women has changed considerably in this instance, social institutions have not yet begun to respond adequately to this condition. Much of the debate over this problem has been misdirected in that it has centered on government funded day care facilities which are often poorly financed, sloppily managed and so on. The focus ought to shift from government intervention to demands that corporations provide on-premise facilities for preschool children of both men and women employees.

If children really are seen in our society as the resource of tomorrow, if they are truly valued as having certain rights to a clean, healthy environment and creative educational experiences, it is our contention that industry can best provide the kind of program that is needed. While this would certainly require an investment to establish initially, it might be considerably less than average company expenditures for new equipment, anti-pollution devices, or participation in employee dental plans. And with employee financial participation we would hypothesize that such centers could reach a break even point within a relatively short time. In sum, on-site day care could respond to one of the most fundamental, yet neglected, needs of the present U.S. labor force, namely a support system for the most precious and valued possessions we have, our children.

A need related to the care and feeding of children is that of bearing them. The past has been a period of injustice and discrimination to pregnant women who are laid off, lose salaries and/or jobs. While the use of birth control technologies and the declining birth rate imply pregnancy is less of a problem than previously, it is important to consider more helpful and effective corporate responses to this dilemma. Estimates are that up to 85 percent of working women become pregnant during their careers, with some 60 percent of those returning to the job. Recently the U.S. Senate voted for legislation that would require employers to include pregnancy benefits in all worker disability plans. The Supreme Court ruled that excluding pregnancy in disability programs is not discriminatory, yet the Senate and House may alter such a conclusion. We would advocate that business ultimately take the initiative in providing not only maternity leaves for expectant working women, but to go beyond, as have some innovative firms in both the U.S. and Scandinavia, in providing paternity leaves so that new fathers can spend the first important weeks of the new child's life in the home.

#### Truth Or Fantasy?

##### Myth

Women are out ill more than male workers; they cost the company more.

Women don't work as long or as regularly as their male coworkers; their training is costly — and largely wasted.

Married women take jobs away from men; in fact, they ought to quit those jobs they now hold.

##### Reality

A recent Public Health Service study shows little difference in the absentee rate due to illness or injury: 5.6 days a year for women compared with 5.2 for men.

A declining number of women leave work for marriage and children. But even among those who do leave, a majority return when their children are in school. Even with a break in employment, the average woman worker has a worklife expectancy of 25 years as compared with 43 years for the average male worker. The single woman averages 45 years in the labor force.

Studies on labor turnover indicate that net differences for men and women are generally small. In manufacturing industries the 1968 rates of accessions per 100 employees were 4.4 for men and 5.3 for women; the respective separation rates were 4.4 and 5.2.

There are 19.8 million married women (husbands present) in the labor force in March 1973; the number of unemployed men was 2.5 million. If all the married women stayed home and unemployed men were placed in their jobs, there would be 17.3 million unfilled jobs.

Moreover, most unemployed men do not have the education or the skill to qualify for many of the jobs held by women.

Another important problem women face within the company on a day to day basis is the arena of personal relations — the sexist attitudes and behavior of male associates.

Thus, in recent years training groups or consciousness-raising women's groups have moved inside the business where skilled facilitators help explore what it means to be a woman, how to cope with the male world and the unique challenges a female faces in her own corporation. The upshot of this type of experience has been useful in clarifying issues and feelings for women and in generating new modes of interaction, particularly more assertive behavior. However, what is lacking, in many cases, is a complementary experience for men. Thus, while women change, men still cling to traditional syndromes. We would advocate programs designed for men which would encourage the exploration of what it means to be male in our society. This, in our view, is a necessary prelude to an awareness by men as to what it is like to be female and to becoming more sensitive to chauvinistic attitudes. Ultimately, what is needed is a consciousness of and confrontation with one's own sexual myths that will allow one to move beyond restrictive role typologies of male/female to a more basic emphasis on personhood. It is our hypothesis that expanded training activities which deal with concepts of male/femaleness in powerful ways are a major way to move towards interpersonal equality.

**F**inally, the last set of implications about women and organizations we would like to discuss is the issue of hierarchy. As the statistical picture reveals, females tend to be clustered together in several configurations. One is at the very bottom rung of the blue collar jobs ladder working for U.S. minimum wages. With respect to white collar jobs, women hold 78 percent of all clerical positions, 91 percent of all bank teller slots and 87 percent of all bookkeeper jobs. Furthermore, those who hold administrative positions tend to occupy staff jobs, often with an accompanying lack of clout or longevity. With respect to management jobs, *Business Week* reports that women comprise only 15 percent of entry level positions, five percent of middle-level positions and barely one percent of the top level jobs. Yet educational data indicate that a wave is on the way to alter this picture. A decade ago less than three percent of all college women selected business as a likely field of study, while this year some 11 percent did so. At business schools such as Berkeley 30 percent of the undergraduates are female, as well as 25 percent of the MBA class.

In our view, the implications of this potential influx of professional women will be profound for the organization. The very essence of the women's movement is that of power. This becomes a major dilemma for management: how to rectify inequities of the past, reallocate resources and redistribute organizational power to increase the genuine participation of women in managerial decision-making.

The successful induction of women into management cannot be accomplished by edict alone. There are complex dimensions of a social and psychological character that must be addressed. Obviously, EEO demands can result in token actions which eventually fail and the organization attempts a return to the status quo. But this is extremely costly in terms of company dollars and time invested in such failures. What is needed are more carefully designed corporate activities which will ensure the attainment of affirmative objectives. Some components of an affective organizational strategy to deal with women in management we see as critical include the following:

- **Recruitment:** A more aggressive seeking of competent women outside the organization, as well as a more careful analysis of potential female managers already within the firm who could break out of the existing caste system and rise. Rather than the subtle discrimination of neglect, organizations need to actively pursue women as a priority. We are not talking of quotas here, but rather of goals. To announce a rigid hiring policy in which 15 percent of all new employees must be females is an exclusionary quota and illegal as well as bad business. But that is quite different from an objective of attempting to relocate and promote 12 qualified women into management positions in the coming year. To us the latter is truly affirmative action while the former is more of a defensive reaction.
- **Staff vs. line:** In order for women to genuinely participate in organizational power, they ought to be encouraged to seek and to be offered line management jobs. A study of 130 cities revealed that women are more likely than men to be offered management level jobs in staff roles of public relations, personnel, accounting and data processing. Yet the big career opportunities are in sales, finance and production. These are the more weighty areas where decisions can impact corporate profitability and growth. Titles, nice offices and inconsequential assignments are only cosmetic in nature and will do little to respond to the demand for power. We would hypothesize that management's commitment to eliminate institutional sexism is most

**'We would argue that it will be in the interests of not only women, but men and corporations too, to create more part-time options as legitimate forms of employment.'**



**THE  
FEMALE  
TAKEOVER**

**EMPLOYMENT  
PRACTICES**

- clearly evidenced by the number of women holding significant line positions.
- *Getting into the old boy's club:* Women need to understand the realities of the executive boardroom, its essential "maleness" and the resulting implications of territoriality and men's games of competition and dominance. The successful movement of women into management will require corporate effort to help in the socialization process of learning the expectations, attitudes and role-taking behaviors appropriate to one's location in the social structure. The male transactions

which occur in restrooms, country clubs, golf courses and the business lunch make it hard for women to compete. Management's initiative in facilitating the building of more effective social ties between women and male counterparts will be critical to success.

- *Mentor relationships:* Major conclusions of several recent studies of women who have achieved in management positions seems to be that a vital factor in their upward acceleration was their relationship with a boss who supported them. Research of career stages among males tends to confirm this fact. Yet for women, having a mentor/mentee relationship may be more difficult than it is for men. We are not suggesting more male patronization of women. What we would emphasize is organizational efforts which ensure that women in new management positions be provided the necessary supports for success. These include a boss who performs four essential activities: 1) provides an effective role model for women to emulate; 2) helps women subordinates identify alternative ladders to success and designs with them a program of career development; 3) knows the importance of identifying concrete goals and can facilitate action plans for their achievement; and 4) evaluates and provides systematic, valid, on-going feedback with respect to one's efforts. We are convinced that a successful protege relationship between a woman and her supervisor is critical to preventing fall-out casualties. More importantly, it is vital to career growth, to her moving from an apprenticeship stage to becoming a mentor in her own right and making a significant contribution to the company.

What we have attempted to do in this article is outline possible managerial responses to sexism, actions which would somewhat alter institutional forms of male dominance. Our position is that all companies have an underlying ideology with respect to women. We would articulate the need to make that ideology explicit, examine its basic assumptions and to assess the costs associated with a particular organizational posture. We are advocating the importance of rooting out contradictions between an organization's official position and its actual practices. Such a task is not simple, nor is it inexpensive to accomplish. Recruiting, training and promoting women become a heavy corporate investment of resources. This underlies the essential point that such efforts require clear objectives and effective planning strategies. Corporate handling of women's issues should be by design, not by default. The

(Continued on page 28)

**Truth Or Fantasy?**

Myth	Reality
<p>Women should stick to "women's jobs" and shouldn't compete for "men's jobs".</p> <p>14 — 6 2</p>	<p>Job requirements, with extremely rare exceptions, are unrelated to sex. Tradition rather than job content has led to labeling certain jobs as women's and others as men's. In measuring 22 inherent aptitudes and knowledge areas, a research laboratory found that there is no sex difference in 14, women excell in six and men excell in two.</p>
<p>Women don't want responsibility on the job; they don't want promotions or job changes which add to their load.</p>	<p>Relatively few women have been offered positions of responsibility. But when given these opportunities, women, like men, do cope with job responsibilities in addition to personal or family responsibilities. In 1973, 4.7 million women held professional and technical jobs, another 1.6 million worked as nonfarm managers and administrators. Many others held supervisory jobs at all levels in offices and factories.</p>
<p>The employment of mothers leads to juvenile delinquency.</p>	<p>Studies show that many factors must be considered when seeking the causes of juvenile delinquency. Whether or not a mother is employed does not appear to be a determining factor.</p> <p>These studies indicate that it is the quality of a mother's care rather than the time consumed in such care which is of major significance.</p>
<p>Men don't like to work for women supervisors.</p>	<p>Most men who complain about women supervisors have never worked for a woman.</p>
<p>In another survey of which 41 percent of the reporting firms indicated that they hired women executives, none rated their performance as unsatisfactory; 50 percent rated them adequate; 42 percent rated them the same as their predecessors; and eight percent rated them better than their predecessors.</p>	<p>In one study where at least three-fourths of both the male and female respondents (all executives) had worked with women managers, their evaluation of women in management was favorable. On the other hand, the study showed a traditional/cultural bias among those who reacted unfavorably to women as managers.</p>

## PINPOINTING PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

## EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

5. Get copy of organizational charts, broken down by department if possible. Review them to know how to handle problems through proper channels.
6. Are the OSHA Logs and reports current and accurate?
7. EEO posters, safety posters and wage and hour posters up and current?
8. How is accident investigation handled? Who is responsible?

### *Miscellaneous*

1. Any government sponsored training programs? If so, get name, phone number and address of contact.
2. Who handles advertisements for openings? Do you use agencies? Pay the fees?
3. Are job descriptions up-to-date?
4. Is there a good job evaluation program?
5. What about a wage and salary administration plan?
6. Any management development courses going on?
7. What educational levels, background, etc., do the supervisors have?
8. Is there a company picnic, Christmas party, or other activity scheduled? Who's in charge? How does personnel fit in?
9. When was last attitude survey? What action was taken?
10. When was last union problems?
11. Any company-sponsored recreational activities?
12. Any pre-retirement counseling? If so, who does it?

As mentioned earlier, this list is by no means complete; it is a memory jogger. You might find it helpful to keep pad and pencil handy as you go through the list.

After you have identified the areas needing attention, your work has just begun. There are several good sources of reference material for solving some of the problem areas you've listed. These are not all of the sources available, but they are the more common sources for quick reference: the ASPA PAIR Handbooks, Bureau of National Affairs (BNA), Prentice-Hall (PH) and Commerce Clearing House (CCH). You might also make use of the various

ASPA functional committees in researching a particular questions. □

## THE FEMALE TAKEOVER

*(Continued from page 24)*

approach must be systematic in order to succeed. Failures will be costly.

The costs are presently born by both society and the corporation. At the societal level, what we have been losing are the untapped skills of half the entire population. In terms of professional workers alone, for instance, there are currently 5.5 million women in this country with B.A. degrees or higher. Peter Drucker estimates we will need 14 percent more brain power over the next decade (and that does not mean male intelligence only). How can we rise to the challenges of the future? We believe that America cannot cope with the complex tasks facing us without first mobilizing the resources, creativity and energy of its significant reservoir of female talent. And it is our conviction that ultimately, in attempting to achieve freedom and justice for women, we will see the same process leading to the liberation of men too.

Finally, we see a heavy cost in neglecting this issue on the more micro level of society, the organization that does not respond. Or even more typically today, we see companies which react only to federal regulation, fear of feminist attacks and lawsuits. We would encourage a move beyond this defensive stance, beyond mere compromise, to seeing the influx of women into the economy as a chance to increase organizational excellence while addressing perhaps the major social phenomenon of our time.

As we argued at the outset, in our view the revolution is over. The feminist movement has succeeded. The question is no longer *if* a business will respond, but *when*. It is more a question of timing and insightful managerial decision-making and, in our opinion, the timing has never been better than now. As we see it, corporate response to the dramatic entry of women into the market place is no longer a matter of social responsibility, of hiring out of a sense of community need or to comply with federal mandates. Rather the issue is one of maximizing the utilization of women's abilities in pursuit of business excellence. In the end, such a practice is just good capitalism. □