



A One-Word-A-Day Survey - September 2003

“Through the Glass Ceiling”

*Promotion Barriers in Business...
and How to Break Through Them.*

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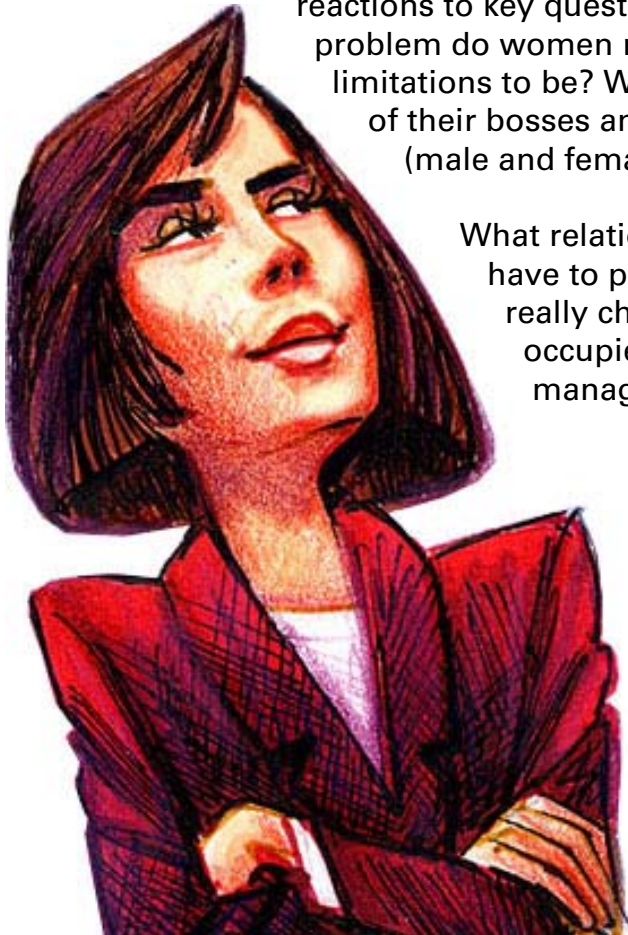
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Career Opportunities for Women

This report is aimed at women in organizations both large and small - women who do a good job, and who apart from their working day may support a family. Women who want to get on, and who perhaps want to make it to the top of the career ladder.

Clearly there are many barriers along the way, particularly for women. It is the purpose of this study to document womens' reactions to key questions: How much of a problem do women really feel career limitations to be? What do women think of their bosses and colleagues (male and female)?

What relation do women have to power and would things really change if they finally occupied 50% of top management positions?



The competition for national and international top management positions has always been intense. How far have women got? A current survey of Hoppenstedt economic research offers some interesting facts.

Data from some 80,000 of the largest German companies revealed that in 2002 only 9.4% of all top positions was held by women. That is according to Hoppenstedt 27,728 out of a total of nearly 295,000 management positions. That represents only a slight improvement on seven years ago, in 1995 the percentage was 8.2%. In middle and lower management positions the proportion of women is considerably higher.

The situation is changing. But is this change fast enough for women? Are enough women really motivated to take over half of the top-power management positions? And if so, how? These points will be covered in this report; together with some methods and tactics used by successful men and women.

SOURCE:

This report is based on data received from 5,797 OWAD subscribers who took part in the internet survey "Through the Glass Ceiling - Promotion Barriers in Business"

Clear Limits for Career Women

"The higher the position, the thicker is the glass ceiling"

"They would do everything to keep us away from key positions"

"You can count the number of women at the top on the fingers of one hand"

Equal opportunity for women - there is not one single corporation that does not claim to practise this. But the reality looks different: nearly three quarters (74%) of all respondents said that they had experienced the glass ceiling phenomenon in their organization.

Of these 16%, that is almost one in six, feel the situation is totally hopeless. Promotion in the company is seen as virtually impossible. There is a lack of female role models, as well as active support

"In the whole of our corporation with as many as 2,300 employees there are only two women in leading positions."

It is the technically oriented sectors - in jobs like mechanical engineering - which produce the lowest number of female managers. This fact is perceived as logical but still frustrating as this quote from the defense industry suggests:

"Not surprising but still annoying"

For every third person questioned (34%) the glass ceiling phenomenon is still somewhat in evidence. Above all the path to the highest positions is felt by women to be steeper than for their male colleagues. This is experienced especially at universities.

"Although I am still a student,... I still believe that clear limitations exist in moving up the corporate ladder. One of the best examples of this is in the German academic world which is still strongly dominated by men."

Nevertheless the picture is not seen by everyone as gloomy. Some 20 % of the women polled see no barriers to women carving out a career in the companies where they work.

"In our firm there are a lot of women in higher positions, there is even a women in the very top position."

Even so the female managers do not find it easy to hold their own against their male counterparts:

"Women may have the same chances as men but they have to work harder in order to realise them."

The Future is Male...

...as long as job and family is not reconciled

"Women will never occupy half of management positions"

"Power sharing at the top...? Perhaps this will be on the agenda of the younger generation - those who are gradually advancing through the management ranks."

"Most women want to have children rather than having a career at any price."

Half men and half women at the top of corporations – "That we won't live to see!" is the sober opinion of many women in answer to the question: "When do you expect half of the management positions will be in the hands of women." 37% answered plain and simply "Never!" Only a minority see the chance of a male-female job balance within the foreseeable future. This could be as soon as the year 2010 thought one in ten of those women questioned. Wait for the next generation to occupy the top jobs and then equality might become a reality. This was the hope of 16% of the women polled.

"Perhaps in the year 2020 - when the current management are retired."

Many respondents emphasize a problem that clearly appears to be insoluble in Germany: The reconciliation of career with the desire to have a family.

"Here it is always the women whose job it is to take care of the children's upbringing. And how many companies offer a full-time child-minding?"

Many people think that women must decide for one or the other. Men and women can share power at the top when

"women decide to do without children."

"On their way up the corporate ladder many women leave... kids, family, marriage... and never return to their jobs."

However there is another perception that was voiced:

"There are just not enough women who want to take up a management position."

Many feel that the general willingness to put everything into career development, the motivation to make tough sacrifices is often stronger in the case of men.

Ambitious? – Yes! Career at any price? – No!

"I am not the career type"

"I already have a management position which means really hard work"

"I love challenges"

What if... your company were to offer you a management position? Would you be interested? Many respondents seemed to have a problem with this hypothetical question - the question was left completely unanswered. However, more than a third (36%) were extremely or quite interested in being promoted within their own company - they are ambitious and goal oriented:

"I am working on it. The chances don't look so bad."

"That was promised to me when I was hired, otherwise I would not have taken on the job."

"Not at the moment but certainly in the next three to five years"

Not a no but not a clear yes either - 14% would at least consider an offer. They do see a lot of the handicaps which would accompany a promotion of this kind, or they don't believe that the conditions are quite right:

"There are no part-time positions or job-sharing for managers."

"Only if it were possible on the same terms as it would be for men."

"Women have to deliver at least four times as much as men to gain the same acceptance. I am not sure I want to have that kind of stress."

Ambitious or not, women clearly do not see a career challenge as something to be taken lightly. They carefully consider the cost-benefit of climbing the corporate ladder.

"I occupy a management position, but I do not want further promotion – I believe that women are less inclined to put career interests above quality of life."

Only five percent said they would have absolutely no interest in such an offer. Some are quite satisfied with what they have achieved so far, others say they would be intimidated by the prospect of working alone with a group of men.

"I prefer to work in the background."

"I do not only want to work with men in leadership positions."

Others maintain that age for women is a disqualification, claiming that for men this is not the case.

"As I am already 47 a position like this is out of the question."

"I am 45 so in the company where I work the subject is no longer relevant. Earlier I would have been immediately accepted."

Fit for a Career

"Learn, learn, learn"

"With children plus housework I have a 14-hour day. Not much time is left for personal development."

"In addition to my work, I study every Friday evening and all day Saturday. That's incredibly stressful."

Time for Training - how many women would invest to get on in their jobs? Between 6 and 20 hours was the answer given by 35% of those people asked. Every third woman claims to be prepared to sacrifice a considerable amount of time in addition to her job. Quite a large number would do this for more than two to three years (15%) or even longer (13%). Many women are actually doing this and are studying business administration or are preparing for an MBA in parallel to their jobs. Surprisingly, some of these are not investing their time in order to get promotion - is this because of lack of career prospects - or are they without clear career goals?

"I study on the side but not in order to get a higher position but rather to understand my job better."

"I am currently doing a distance training programme but it has nothing to do with my job. Rather I do it because I am personally interested in the topic."

"I have invested 20 hours a week for a long period of time but it has not helped me much."

Or is it simply that some companies do not put much value on supporting their female (or male) staff? Only one respondent in ten felt that their boss is really supportive in their aiming for a higher position. 16% say they receive average support, while more than 10% say their bosses don't care one way or the other - that their boss is neutral in this respect. One in twenty says that they are blocked by their superiors.

"For this reason I did not even tell him that I am doing my diploma. Perhaps that was a mistake."

"Which boss really wants to lose his secretary?"

Those who have little or no time for development are either overworked or so involved in balancing job with family that there is no time left over for personal learning.

"At the moment it is hard enough to have a full-time job and to be a mother ... as soon as my son goes his own way I will have time for studying."

Women need goals - and support

"A brand new generation of manager is required"

"We require more women with qualifications and the motivation to succeed"

"As long as women have to stay at home to look after the kids they will always be the weaker sex."

What has to change so that womens' career chances in improve?
According to many respondents,... society has to change first.

"It is not enough to have a few successful women. We need a fundamental change in thinking."

"First of all, old-fashioned attitudes which connect 'women and kids' must stop".

"Prejudices about women somehow ned to be eliminated."

What are the perceived barriers?
And how can they be overcome?

"Get rid of the old boys' networks: men's clubs work against equality for the sexes."

"Targeted personnel policies: corporations should be more active in supporting women's advancement."

"Help to balance job and family: facilities to have children looked after at work. Part-time work, job sharing-for men as well!"

"More fairness: better pay for women, stronger support and acknowledgement."

"Women need to be more ambitious, goal-oriented and more assertive."

"More women in technology. Our country needs female engineers"

Women also want to work on themselves. To show more courage, be less fearful when working in unknown territory, to have bigger goals!

"The biggest barrier are ourselves. We complain but we do not do anything to change the situation."

"In our situation it is not so much the problem that women are not supported. Rather they do not want to get on! I only know one who really wants to succeed and she is on her way up."

Everything is OK . Things are moving ahead - this is the opinion of 4% of those who completed the survey. Or they just need to be patient because they know that "Good things take time".

"You can't just throw a switch and then expect everything to be rosy. It is more a question of education and this requires a few generations before it is established as part of our society."

I Can Manage Too...

"I could easily take over 90% of the managerial tasks of my boss."

"I would never do it like my boss. I would do it better."

"What I lack is the specialist background, but leadership qualities I have had for a long time."

Put yourself in the bosses' shoes ... how well could you fulfill his tasks? (bosses look away!) -- Nearly one in five women (19%) claimed to feel capable of doing at least 70% of her bosses' job. Almost half felt they could adequately fulfill half of his tasks. And six percent went so far as to say they could take over 90% or 100% of her boss's responsibilities.

"As far as the organisation is concerned I can stand in for him completely. What I don't have, of course, is neither his specialised knowledge nor his experience in his field of work."

"I would need some time to get to know the business, but after that I am sure there would be no problem."

"Organisationally and from a business perspective up to 80%; from a specialised point of view, not at all."

Probably this has nothing to do with overestimating one's own abilities. Rather it speaks for a realistic estimation of what makes a good manager, whether male or female. A small amount of specialised know-how, and a lot of the soft skills: leadership talent, people skills and organisational ability. The answers also show that it is exactly this specialised knowledge that is so highly valued by the women polled - and often also his attitude of total commitment.

"He really works very hard. I am not sure I could maintain the pace as long as he does."

"My boss is a real authority in his field. I couldn't do anywhere near what he does. As far as soft skills is concerned and managing people I am sure I wouldn't be any worse than him."

"My boss could sell a refrigerator to an eskimo. This is a very important skill - Unfortunately, I am not so talented in this respect."

Leading with feeling

"Creative atmosphere = more effective communication."

"Sticks to the point, lays less stress on questions of power."

"For men as well as women... leadership style is oriented to company policy."

If most leadership positions were held by women how would company workstyle change? This was a question that elicited a large response and very diverse opinions. "Fairer, more effective, more constructive" - summarizes the positive changes expressed by 53% of all the women (more than half of all women answered this question).

"Cooperative work, team-oriented, with strong emphasis on solving problems and setting clear goals."

"More social skills in the management of personnel."

"Hierarchies will be reduced thereby allowing greater individual responsibility."

"More flexible working hours, equal salary, more social working conditions."

"More sensitivity - women are better at sensing how others think and feel."

Every tenth women was of a rather different opinion.

"When women get together there is much more competition. My place of work wouldn't be so harmonious."

"The atmosphere would become more aggressive. Women are better suited as diplomats, but understand little about leadership as they are too emotional."

"From my own experience I have to say that it is easier to work with men than with women. The competitive instinct is more strongly developed in women than in men. This can cause difficulties when cooperation is required."

Almost nothing would change. This is the feeling of about a quarter (24%) of the women who commented on this question. Leadership has less to do with being male or female, but rather more with having a strong personality.

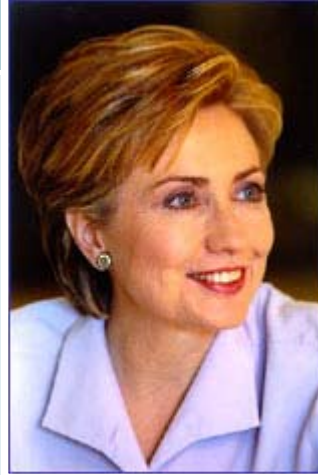
"How many women are in the company and in management. I recognised no large differences."

"Being a good boss has more to do with personality rather than with gender."

"There is little difference because if there are only women in management position it would be just as bad as having only men. A healthy mixture would be the best solution."

Courageous, determined... feminine

1 | Hillary Clinton



With her husband, US President Bill Clinton, Hillary survived a number of political and personal crises. Since then she has gone on to build up a successful independent political career. Today, as Senator of New York, she is treated like the first female US president. Her recent biography has become a best-seller in record time.

Staying power, clever, charming, diplomatic.

She is intelligent and she does not try to repress her femininity.

Because of her pragmatism.

Because even though she has made a career she has still remained a woman and a mother.

Self-confident, able to carry through and maintain high degree of self-control.

Because she doesn't behave like a dumb female.

Because she has proved that she is more than just the wife of the president...and that she has built her own career.

Because she is professional without trying to be like a man.

2 | Madonna



This American pop icon has maintained her position and a consistent success at the top of the charts since the start of the 80s. Frequent image changes have maintained her position in the world wide pop business.

Always a good looking, adaptable and market-oriented.

Because she lives as she wants to live.

Because she seems to have it all...

Because she continually reinvents and re- markets the Madonna brand.

Courageous, determined... feminine

3 | Angela Merkel



Born and grew up in East Germany. When the border was opened the physicist with a doctorate started a fast-track career in the CDU. She has been CDU Party President since April 2000. In 2002 she withdrew her candidature for chancellor allowing Edmund Stoiber to get the position.

She has worked her way to the top of the party, something only men usually achieve.

Because she is intelligent, authentic in her role and true to herself.

She does not allow other politicians to deflect her from her chosen course. She goes her own way.

She fights party power struggles and still maintains her image.

Because she is a fighter and stands up for what she believes in.

4 | Margaret Thatcher



Born in 1925, she studied chemistry and got deeply involved in politics as a student. In 1979 she became the first ever female British Prime Minister as member of the Conservative Party. Her politics later became known as Thatcherism with its emphasis on a very restrictive economic policy. Her Falkland Islands campaign led to deep divisions in British politics.

Although her politics were bad, she remained consistent

Because she won through against strong opposition

Because she was the first female Prime Minister

Because she changed the economic situation in England

She really solved extremely big problems

Because she belonged to a generation of women that largely stayed at home and looked after the kids, which she also did at the beginning

Courageous, determined... feminine

5 | Carleton (Carly) S. Fiorina

The American has been heading the Computer giant HP since 1999 and in 2001 was responsible for the merger of HP and Compaq.

She has managed to be successful in an absolute world of men

Because she is at the top of a very large corporation

She has asserted herself in a male environment without taking on the typical male leadership qualities

Tough, successful and still remained a woman

She took a great risk in going for the merger. She is ambitious and courageous.



That men and women live in different cultures is underlined by the titles of bestsellers like "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" (John Gray) or "Why Men Can't Iron, and Why Women Can't Read Maps" (Allan Pease). Whether we believe that male-female cultures are primarily the result of pre-programmed biology or environmental conditioning, it is indisputable that women live in a man's world.

The August issue of Fortune Magazine featured "The 25 Most Powerful People in Business in the U.S." 1. Warren Buffett (Berkshire Hathaway), 2. Bill Gates (Microsoft), 3. Lee Scott (Wal-Mart)... and all the way to number 19. where finally a woman, Carly Fiorina (Hewlett-Packard) makes an appearance. Globally the situation is even worse -- Fortune's list of the 25 most powerful business leaders outside the U.S. contains not a single woman!

During the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s some women were claiming "To succeed in a man's world it's necessary to be twice as good, fortunately this is not difficult." Thirty years later experience shows this attitude to be gravely mistaken - the senior management echelons of virtually all corporations, including governments are massively male dominated. We even have a special phrase to describe the invisible barriers erected by men to stop the advancement of women: "glass ceiling".

It seems that many men are still blind to the intellectual and commercial potential of half the population. The jock strap (*Sportbandage zum Schutz der männlichen Genitalien*) was invented in 1874, the jog bra in... 1977! By 1996 U.S. annual sales of sportsbras were topping 42 million units. According to Tom Peters 65% of car-buying decisions are made by women, but only 7% of car salesMEN are salesWOMEN. Have you wondered why women are smarter than men? The bell-shaped distribution for I.Q. is more tightly concentrated for women, less tightly concentrated for men. Which implies that more men are "geniuses" ... and far more are idiots!

Should women just wait patiently wait for a few enlightened men to democratize their institutions? A 1990's U.S. Army slogan read "Some of our best men,... are women", but how many women officers are in the U.S. army? and who ever heard of a female general?

If we do business with Japan or China, we consider ourselves wise to familiarise ourselves with the culture, mentality and behaviour of our Asian partners. Similarly, female culture is as foreign to men as Asia is to Europe -- "He... simply wants the transaction to take place. She's interested in creating a relationship. Men focus on separation... getting away from authority/family/whatever. Women focus on connection. Men focus on self. Women focus on others." (Carol Gilligan - In a Different Voice).

There are a few cracks in the glass ceiling but unfortunately, business is still a man's game. Women who understand and play by those rules will eventually be able to change them.

Helga & Paul Smith

Here are 7 success strategies we often discuss with clients and seminar participants:

1. Brand Yourself Distinctively

The master of advertising David Ogilvy once said "Other people will sum you up in a few words, the least you can do is try to do it for them."

The communication of USPs (Unique Selling Propositions) is as important for your personal reputation as it is for commercial products and services.

Your ability to competently present yourself, also publicly... will prove to those in power that you can also represent them.

TIP: Identify what makes you different and especially qualified for a higher position, and make then make sure you are visible to those who can influence your promotion.

2. Play the Foreigner Card

Although we may not stand out as being special in our own cultural environment, we are suddenly very exotic in a foreign one.

Maybe a change of scene could give your career a welcome boost - for instance a temporary placement in a team or location where you are "the foreigner".

Foreigners may be the subject of an occasional joke, but they are also perceived differently and given more freedom to make mistakes than nationals. There is even sometimes a "positive discrimination" in which the foreigner is accorded more respect than national colleagues - after all, (s)he is a guest in "our country".

Another bonus is that suddenly your "not quite perfect" language skills attract sympathy and support from your foreign colleagues.

TIP: Choose to work in teams or locations where you are different from the rest.

3. Use Your Natural Charm

In his American bestseller "What They Don't Teach You At Harvard Business School" Mark McCormack explains business success in two words:

"Make Friends" -

his thesis is that:

"If things are equal, people buy from friends, but,... if things are unequal, people STILL buy from friends."

We all know that there is capital in relationships - many deals may be formally negotiated, but far more are decided away from the boardroom,... over dinner, on the golf course, at the country club. A business(wo)man's ability to network, relationship-build, and create emotional capital is a key business success factor.

The ability of many women to accurately sense atmospheres, moods, emotions and relationships confers an important advantage.

TIP: Develop your intuitive and social skills, and learn to cultivate quality relationships with well-connected people.

4. Humour is Serious

Skilled negotiators realise that conflict situations and disputes are almost never resolved through confrontation tactics. The use of authority or superior "firepower" may win the battle, but not necessarily the war.

The great American actress Mae West understood exactly how to use humour and irony to disarm her (male) opponents - but without being overly nasty or sarcastic -- she could say things like "When you were born, your mother should have thrown away the baby and kept the stork" -- and still be loved for it.

Humour can be a powerful weapon - used properly, it can resolve conflicts, soften criticism, trigger new ideas, and make you fun to be with.

TIP: Identify the humour that is natural to you and develop ways to use it constructively.

5. Weak is Sometimes Strong

In our folk memory of sinking ships -- women and children are first in the lifeboats and the (male) captain traditionally goes down with his ship. But the so-called "weaker sex" represents a force that is often the real power behind the throne.

If indirect power is the type of influence you enjoy, then a senior advisory position in the background may be right for you. While others may take the credit for success, they must also take the consequences for failure.

At the beginning of a career it is natural to make mistakes - being honest about one's weaknesses and open to feedback is a quality that will win you much respect.

TIP: Oscar Wilde said - "Experience is the sum of all our mistakes" - demonstrate to those in power that you have learned from your own mistakes and those of others.

6. Less is More

Business success is all about using human and material resources better than the competition.

Good managers create and support environments that enable OTHERS to work smarter.

A lot of of what your boss does is not necessarily what (s)he should be doing - it's easy but misleading to add up the things you think you could do.

If you really want to make a career, find out the 20 - 30% of your boss's job which are really essential for his (her) boss and the company; and then learn to do those tasks even better.

TIP: Constantly be aware of how to get more with less and then prove that you can make it happen better than your internal competition - be it male, or female.

7. Minority Advantage

We can argue about what organizations should do to create a 50:50 male-female representation... but until gender equality becomes reality, those women who do decide to make a management career can still benefit from being in a minority.

A female in a predominantly male environment attracts attention, and those women who can demonstrate real competence will be publicly supported by those elements anxious to project a stance of "political correctness".

Gender discrimination has become a political and legal "hot potato" – almost all managers pay lip service to gender equality, and more and more are coming to slowly believe it.

TIP: If you are female and good, enjoy being 1 in 10 or 20 or 100 - it will not last forever, start to strengthen your relationships to those who genuinely believe in credit for merit.

The survey questions

1. Most companies profess "equal opportunity for women" do you believe "glass ceilings" really exist in your organization?

- Yes, glass ceilings exist throughout my organisation
- Yes, glass ceilings exist in some parts of my organisation
- Yes, but glass ceilings exist in only a few parts of my organisation
- No, glass ceilings do not exist in my organisation

2. When do you think women will occupy 50% of management positions in your own organization?

- by the year 2010
- by the year 2020
- by the year 2030
- by the year 2040
- by the year 2050
- never

3. How interested would you be to move into a management position - if your company were to give you the opportunity?

- I would be highly interested, I would accept immediately
- I would be quite interested, I would seriously consider it
- I would be somewhat interested, I would think about it
- I would be not interested at all

4. How much of your free-time would you be willing to invest for private study, in order that you would be able to move into a management position?

- over 20 hours per week
- between 16 and 20 hours per week
- between 11 and 15 hours per week
- between 6 and 10 hours per week
- up to 5 hours per week
- no time

The survey questions

5. I would be prepared to do this for a period of:

- over 5 years
- 4 to 5 years
- 3 to 4 years
- 2 to 3 years
- 1 to 2 years
- less than 1 year

6. To what extent do you believe that your boss would support your development into a higher position?

- My boss would be highly supportive of my development
- My boss would be reasonably supportive of my development
- My boss would be neutral about my development
- My boss would be resistant to my development
- I am not sure how supportive my boss would be
- What changes would have to happen in your organization, in order that women's promotion chances be improved?

7. Fantasy Question:

If you had to step into your boss's shoes tomorrow, ... to what degree do you believe you could do his/her job?

0% ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ 100%

8. Fantasy Question:

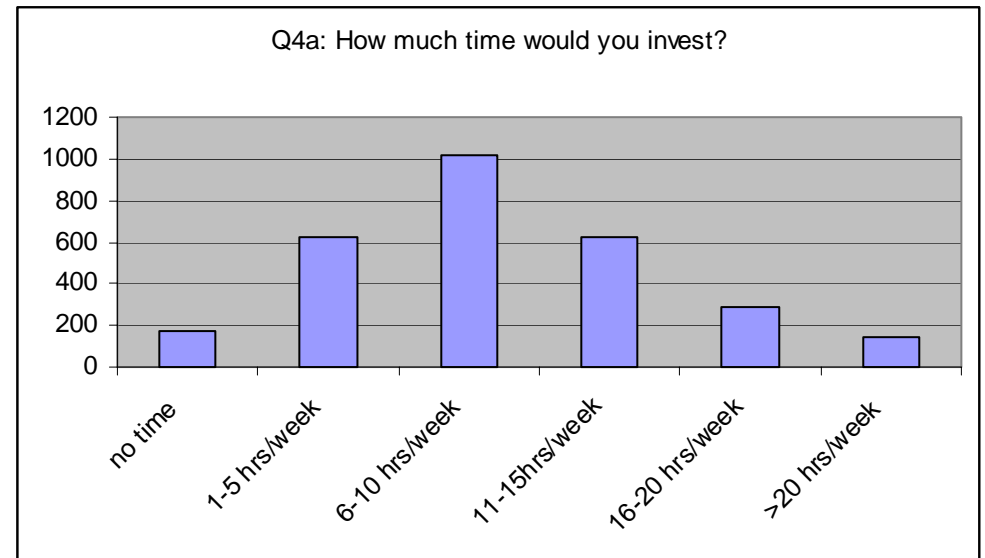
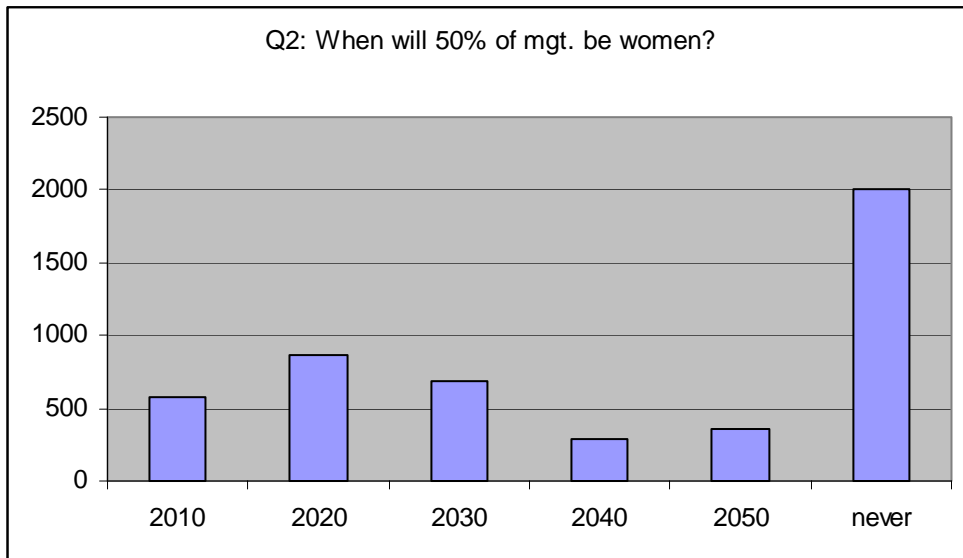
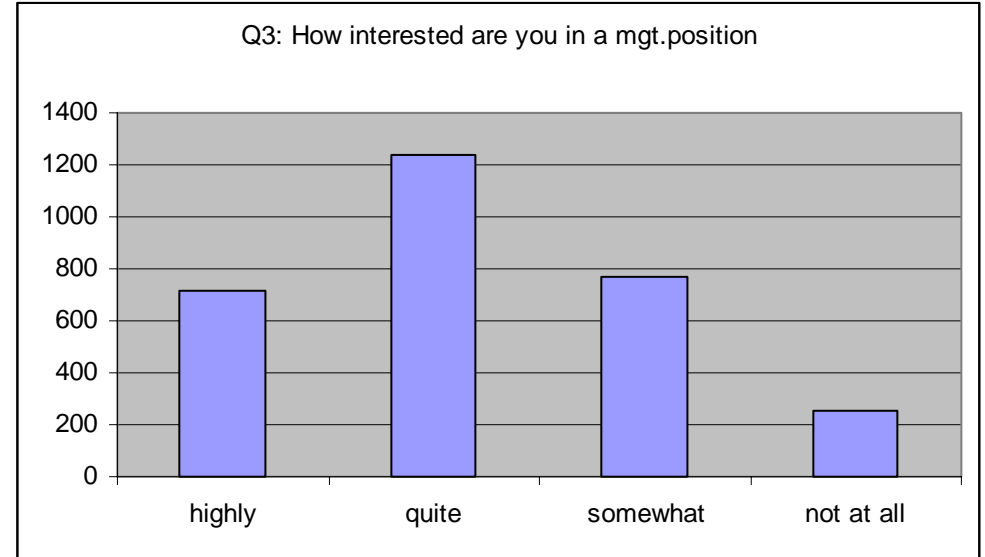
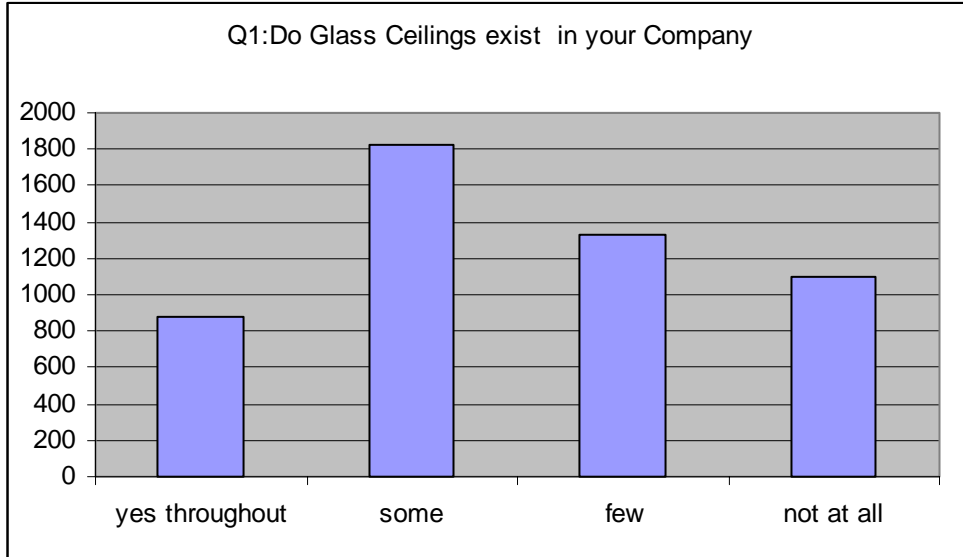
Imagine that in a few years most of the senior management positions of your organization were to be occupied by women. In what way would work be different?

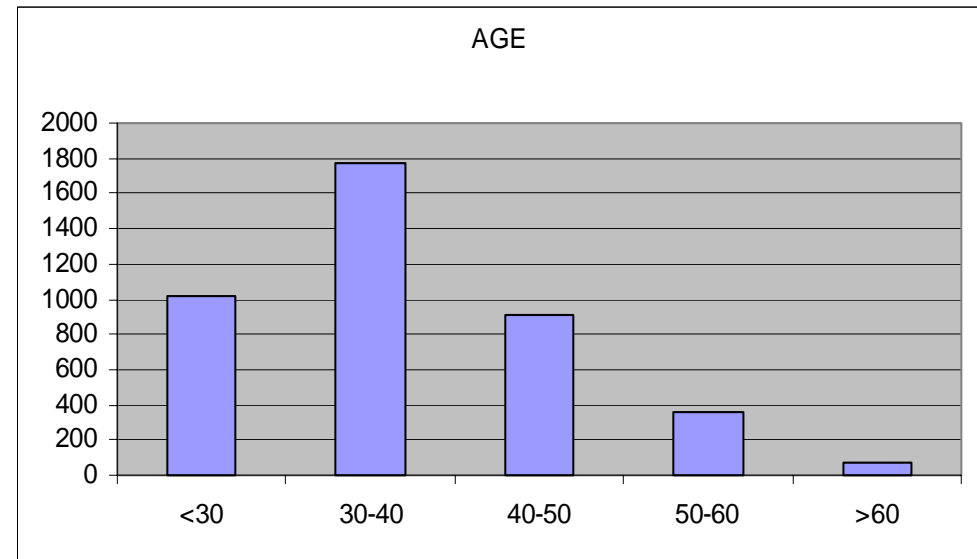
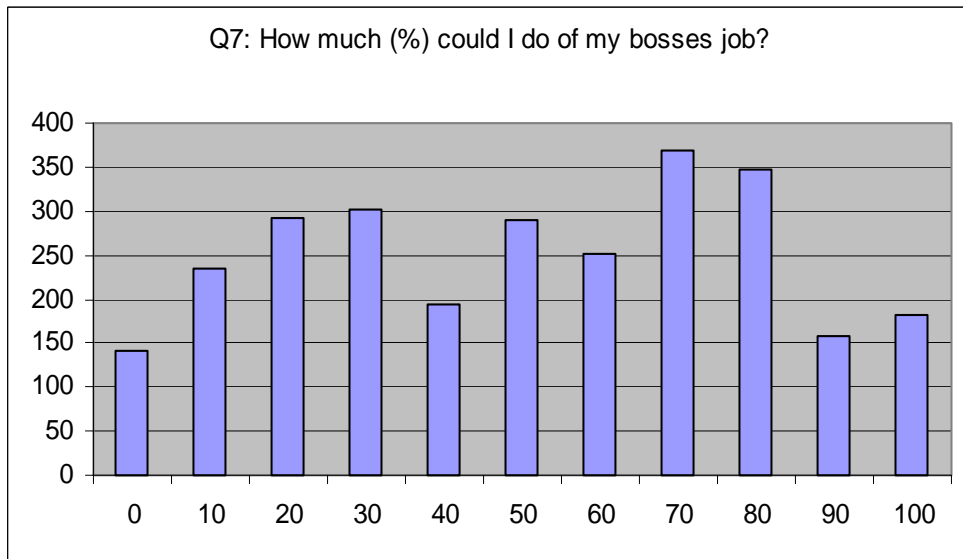
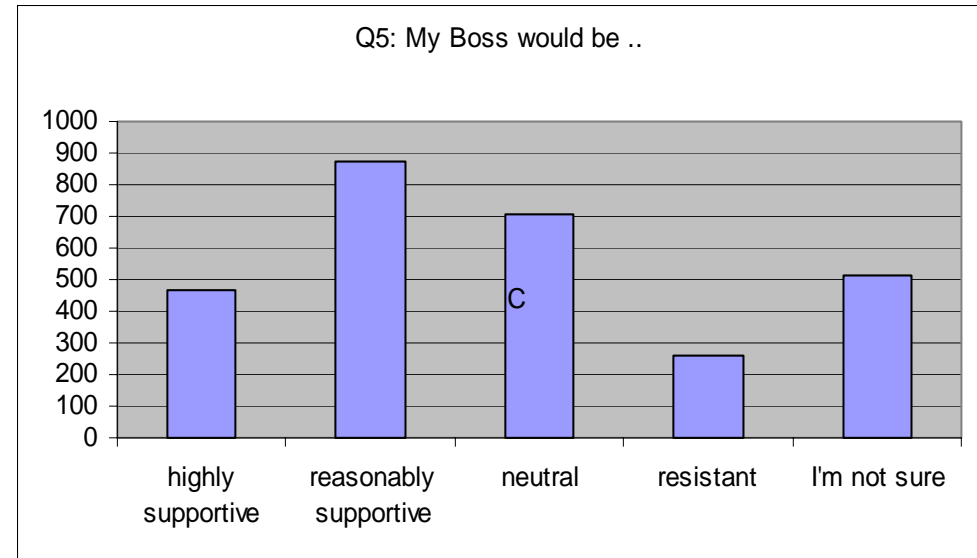
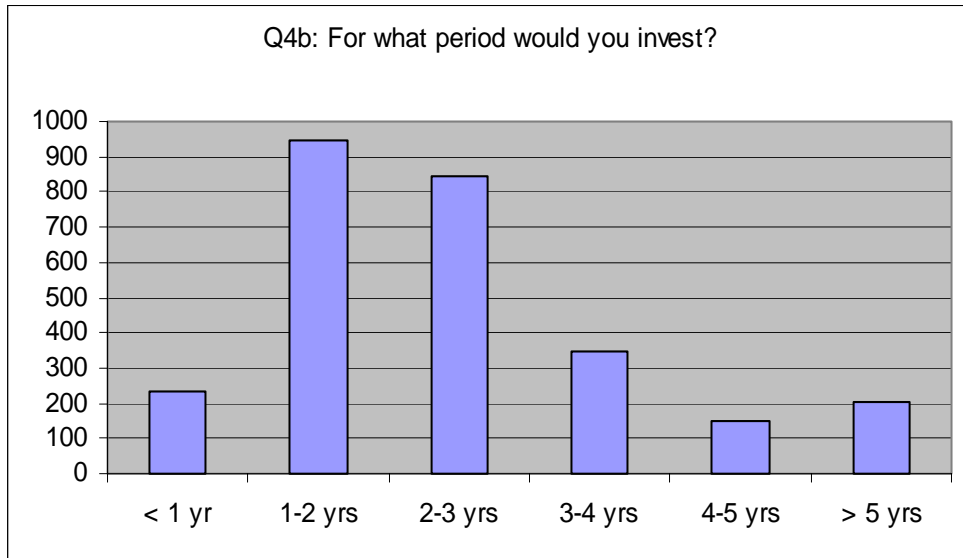
9. Which successful woman do you admire? Why?

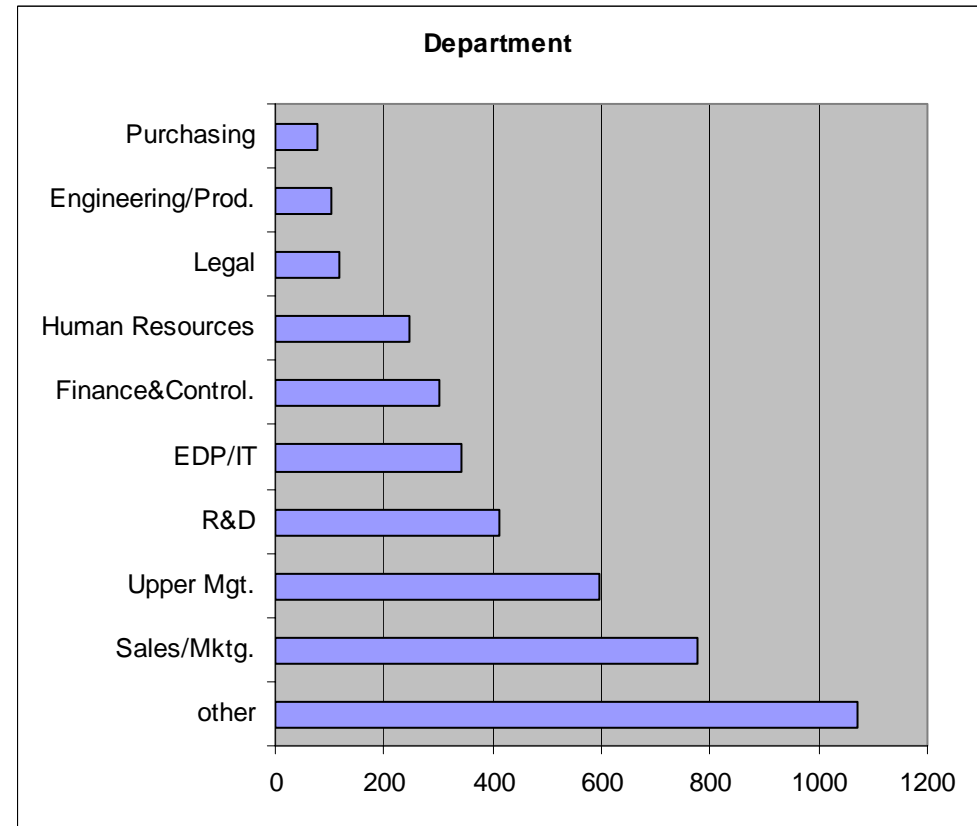
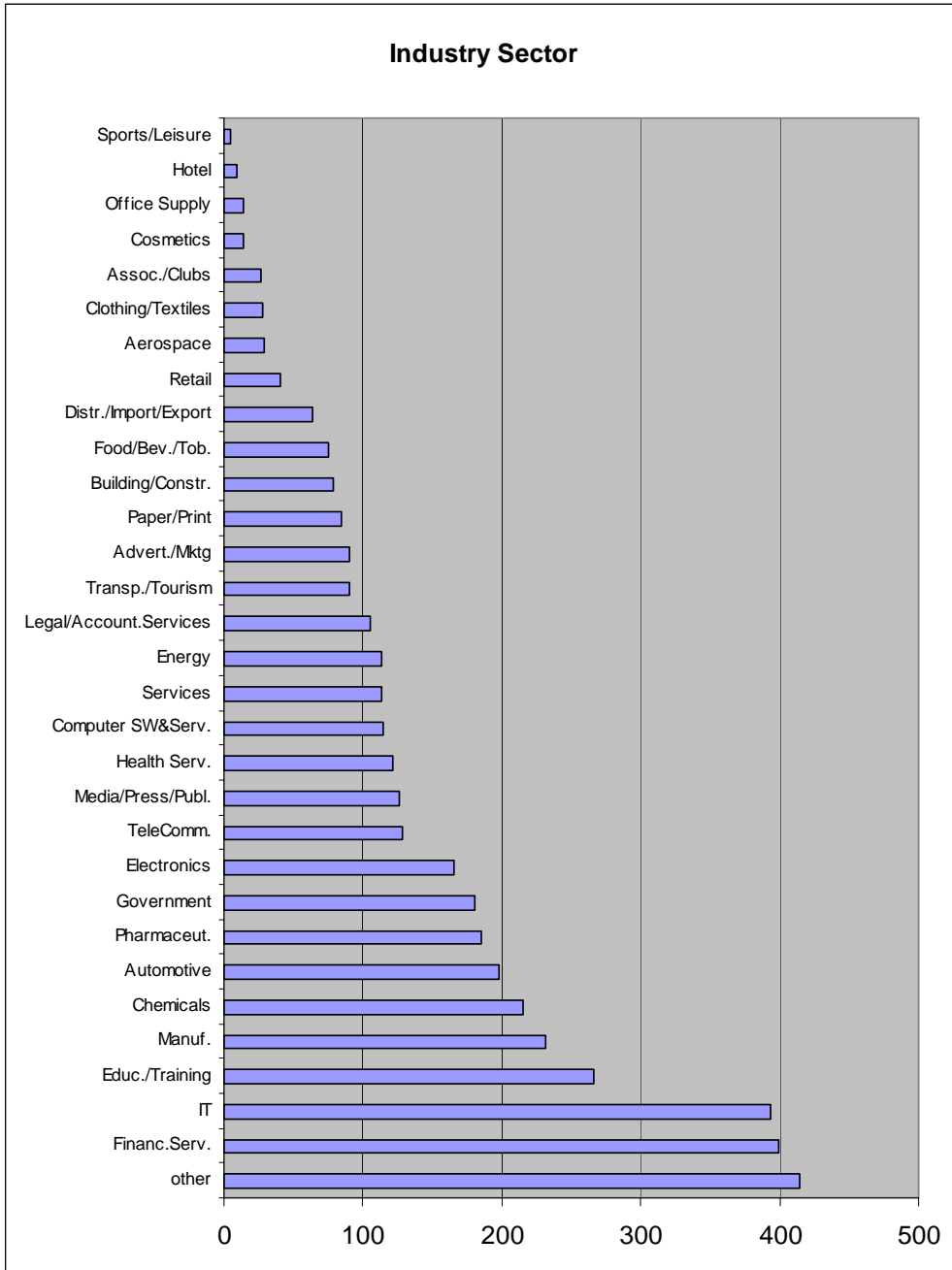
10. Statistical Questions

(country, industry sector, size of company, departmental area, age group)

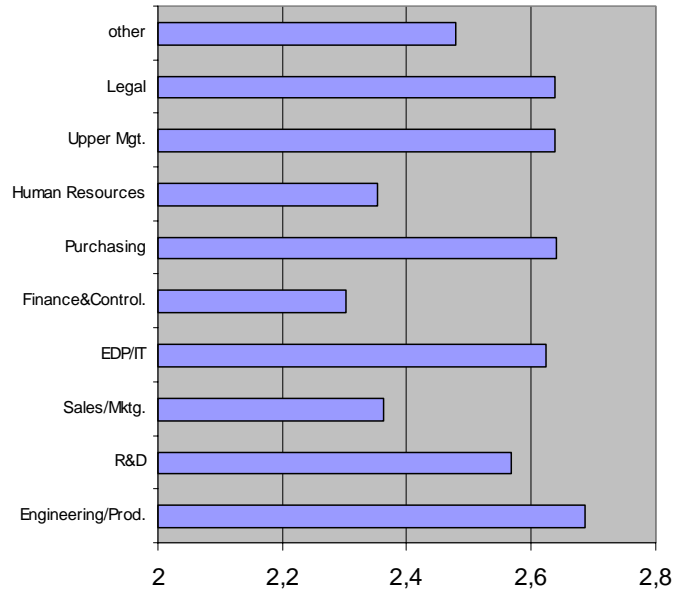
Charts



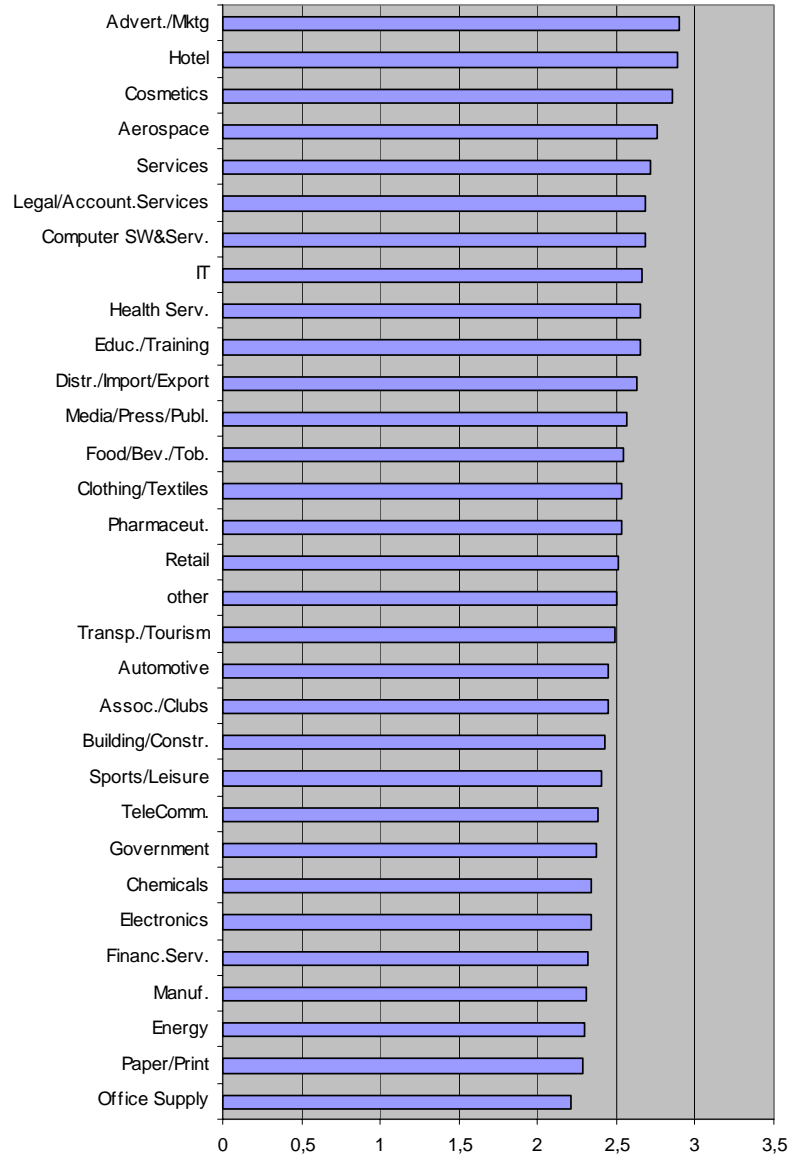




Glass Ceiling by Dept.



Glass Ceiling by Industry Sector



Contacts & Networks

Business and Professional Women BPW

www.bpw-germany.de, Mail: BPW-Germany@t-online.de
Tempelhofer Damm 2, 12101 Berlin,
Tel. 030/78 89 59 98, Fax 030/78 89 59 94

European Women's Management Development Network EWMD

www.ewmd.org, Mail: Germany@ewmd.org
Anklamer Str. 38, 10115 Berlin,
Mo-Fr von 9 - 14 Uhr,
Tel. 030/782 50 75, Fax 030/782 50 76

European Management Assistants

...is an international quality network of management support
professionals who focus on their personal development and on
the future of their profession.
www.euma.org

Karriereberatung:

Expertinnenberatungsnetz München
Fachfrauen (sog. "Expertinnen") mit langjähriger
Berufserfahrung in leitender Position beraten jüngere
Frauen in Situationen der beruflichen Weichenstellung.
Das bundesweite Netzwerk vermittelt in vielen Städten
Expertinnen.
www.frauenakademie.de,
Mail: Expertinnenberatungsnetz@frauenakademie.de
Auenstr. 31, 80469 München,
Tel: 089/72 51 848, Fax 089/ 72 13 8 30

In Munich:

Münchner Wirtschaftsforum e.V.

Supports professional women and organises
monthly meetings and other events.
www.mwf.ev.de

Infos & Adressen über Frauen-Netzwerke:

WOMAN - Frauenseiten im Internet

www.woman.de

Deutscher Frauenrat

www.frauenrat.de

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Training - Corporate Events