

# “Women as Leaders”

## Results of the 2001 Athena Survey: *A Report on the Progress of San Diego Women Executives*

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# Athena Survey Objective

To create a measurement tool to determine the progress of women executives in San Diego based technology and technology-aligned companies

# Athena Survey Goals

To obtain information to assist women in San Diego to succeed in executive ranks in organizations, obtain positions on corporate boards, and develop programs to advance women in organizations

The plan is to eventually compare Athena survey results in San Diego with other high-technology areas of the country

# Athena Survey Outcomes

Athena is the only local organization creating and disseminating a survey which reveals the Status of San Diego Executive Women in Technology

The data can be used to help women's career advancement, as well as attract and retain executive women in the San Diego technology business community

# Survey Design

The survey contained thirty-seven items which focused on respondents' *perceptions* about their own careers as well as their companies' policies/practices

All data gathered about companies is *perceptual*, no actual data from companies was obtained as a part of this survey

# Survey Demographics

There were 127 total respondents

13% were male

87% were female

## Industries

57% were from technology-aligned firms

43% were from technology companies

- **10% biotech or biopharmaceutical**
- **11% software**
- **15% accounting**
- **14% PR**
- **The rest of the industries were varied**

# Additional Demographics

Eighty-two percent of Athena survey respondents were Caucasian

Almost 75% were age 31-49

Nearly 60% had graduate academic degrees (Masters, J.D., Ph.D.)

Respondents had a variety of job titles

- 27% Director or Manager

- 18% VP or SVP

- 17% President or CEO

- 7% Partner

- 4% COO or CFO

# Personal Status

Eighty-nine percent of Athena survey respondents were married, while only 35% have children under the age of 18 living with them

None of the respondents had parents living with them as dependents

# Where They Are

Nearly 60% of the respondents were not the **only** female at that job level in their organization

Forty-four percent were the highest female executive in their company

**Forty-nine percent were officers or members of executive committees in their companies**

Nearly 80% of respondents reported having a male boss

- **Respondents with a higher education were also more likely to have a male boss**

Seventy-five percent of the respondents were in a line position in their organizations (a revenue generating or profit and loss responsibility)

# Implications

Athena survey respondents had well above average representation as Corporate Officers of their companies

- Nearly 50% of Athena survey respondents were officers or members of the executive committees in their companies

In 2001, Catalyst reported that women represented only 12.5% of the Corporate Officers among U.S. companies

# What This Means

There is progress being made in San Diego...women in senior levels of their companies have other female peers at those levels

- Sixty percent of Athena survey respondents were not the only female at that level in their companies

At the highest executive levels of San Diego organizations there is still room to improve

- Only forty-four percent of Athena survey respondents were the highest female executives in their companies

# Status of Women on Corporate Boards

Over 40% of the Athena survey respondents indicated that there are **no** women on their Companies' Board of Directors

Nearly 80% of Athena survey respondents indicated that the number of women on their Companies' Board of Directors has **stayed the same** in the past 2 years

# Implications

Catalyst reported that 12.4% of Fortune 500 corporate board seats, and nearly 11% in the Fortune 1000, are held by women (Catalyst Census, 2001)

According to Athena survey respondents, San Diego technology and technology-aligned companies are well below the national average with respect to representation of women on corporate boards

As a community we need to proactively increase female representation on San Diego company corporate boards

- **Catalyst has a Corporate Board Placement Service to help companies identify female board members, and also provides information about how to become a corporate board member**

# Progress of Women in Executive Management

More than fifty percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that progress of women in executive management has ***stayed the same*** in the past 2 years

Forty-five percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that progress of women in executive management has ***increased*** in the past 2 years

# The Future Looks Bright...

More than half of Athena survey respondents indicated that the number of women holding senior leadership positions by the year 2002 would **increase**, while 42% indicated that they believed it would **stay the same**

# Implications for Women in Executive Management

Among Athena survey respondents there is a positive perception that change is coming soon

There are no indications, from the Athena survey data, that company strategies for executive women are changing...so the question remains...

- What is prompting this perceived change by 2002?

# Progress...and Room to Grow

Sixty percent of Athena survey respondents had more than 10 years of professional work experience (prior to their current role)

Thirty-four percent of Athena survey respondents have held their current job title for less than 1 year

Only 15% have held their current job titles for five or more years

Seventy-three percent of Athena survey respondents contribute 51% or more to their annual household income

- **Those participants with more children under the age of 18 living with them contributed less to their annual household income**

# Implications

While more than half of the Athena survey respondents had more than 10 years of work experience, only 15% have been in their current job for five or more years and 1/3 have been in their current titles for less than 1 year

The pipeline is filling fast, and hopefully can keep momentum...

That's consistent with Athena survey respondents perceptions that progress of executive women has increased in the past 2 years

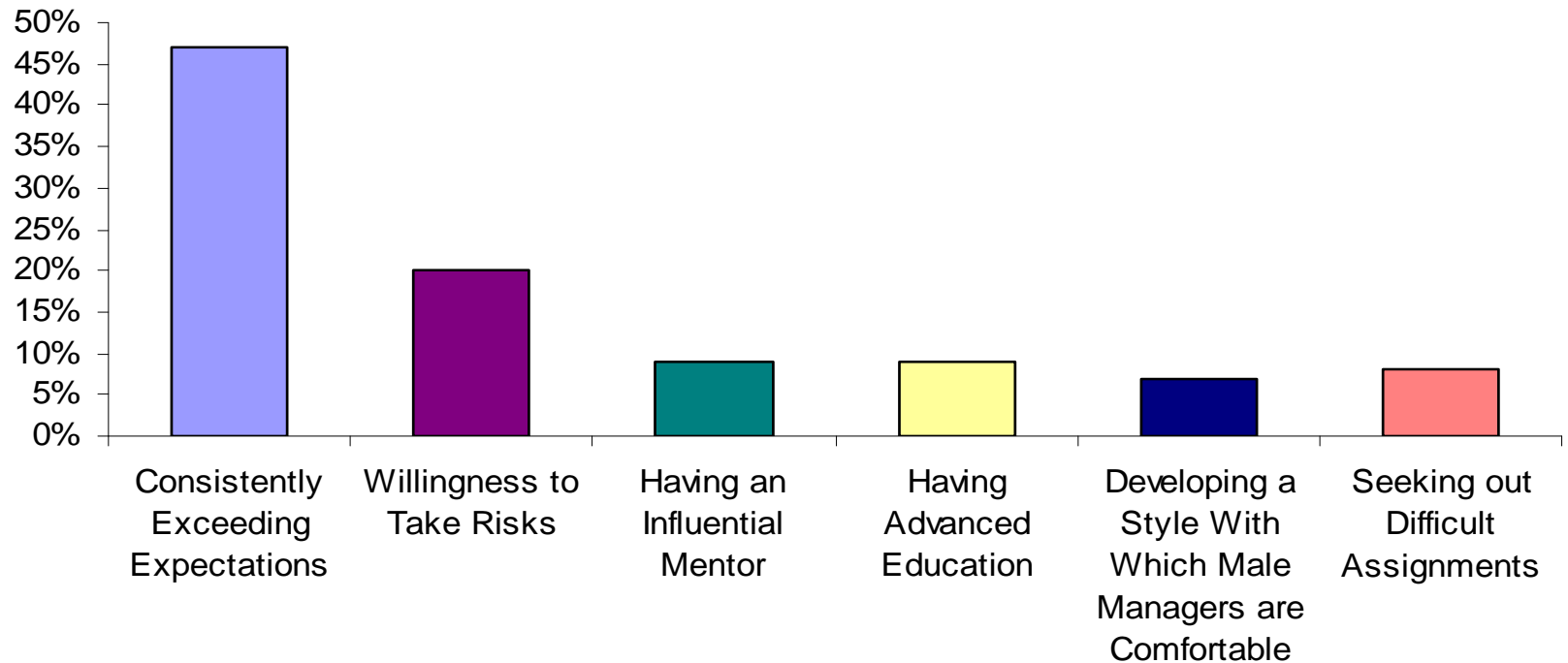
That may also be a driver of the perception by more than half the Athena survey respondents that women in senior leadership positions will increase by 2002

# Why They Are There

***Consistently exceeding expectations*** was cited by nearly half the Athena survey respondents as the most important factor in their career success

- ***Willingness to take risks*** was cited by only 20% of the respondents
- ***Having an influential mentor*** and ***having advanced education*** were also mentioned by less than 10% of the respondents

# The *Most Influential* Factor in Their Career Success



# Athena Survey Results are Consistent With Catalyst Research

From research conducted between 1994-2000, Catalyst found similar results to those of the Athena survey (2001)

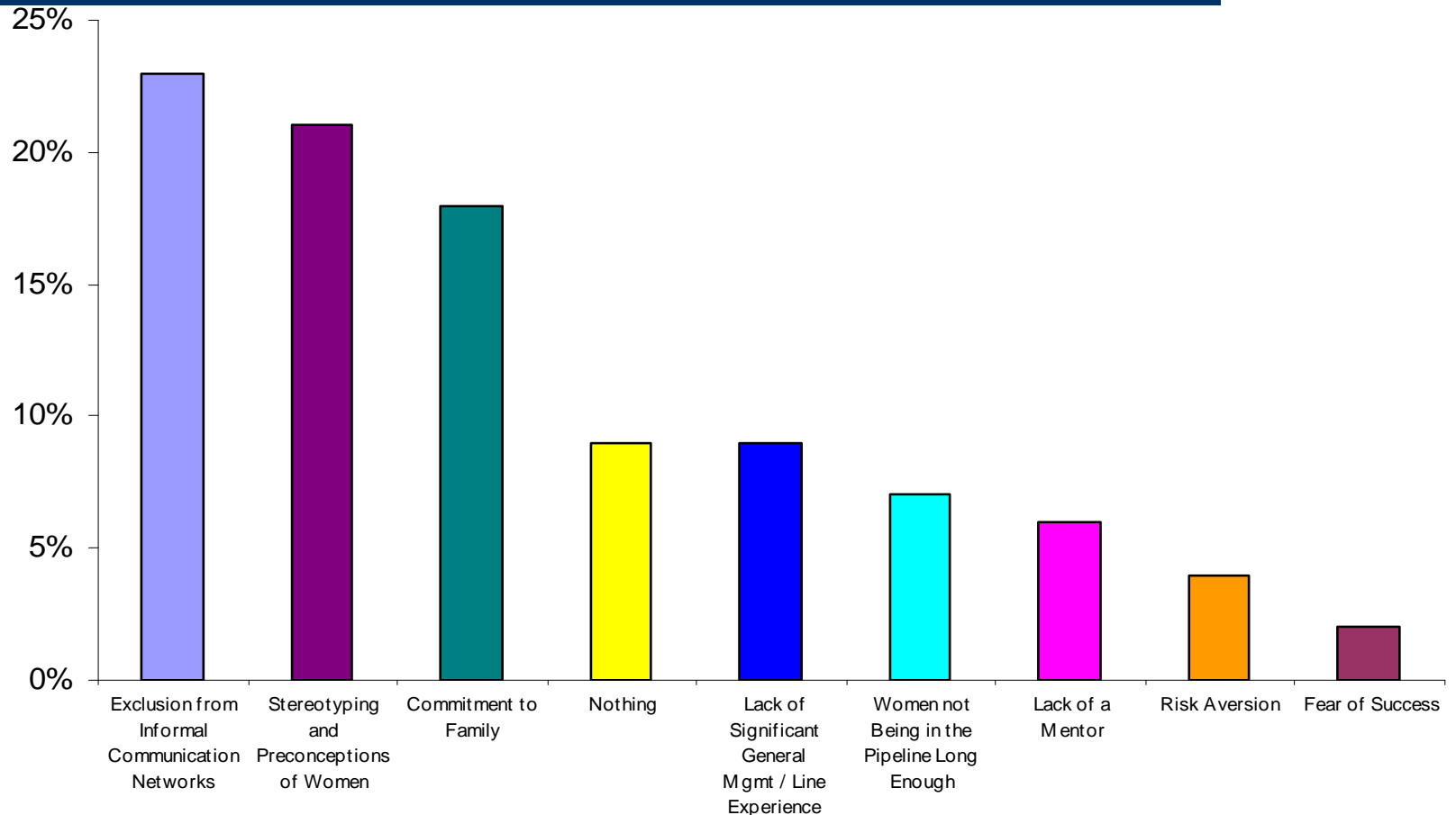
- Seventy-seven percent of women Catalyst surveyed believed ***exceeding expectations*** was the most influential factor in their career success
- Over 60% indicated that ***developing a style that men are comfortable with*** was the most influential factor in their career success
- Fifty percent indicated that ***high visibility assignments*** was most influential for their career success

# What Holds Women Back

Nearly 25% of the Athena survey respondents indicated that ***exclusion from informal networks of communication*** is the most important factor holding women back from advancement into corporate leadership

- Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that ***stereotyping and preconceptions of women*** was the most important factor
- Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that ***commitment to family*** was the most important factor
- Nearly 9% of respondents cited that ***nothing*** holds women back from advancement into corporate leadership

# The Most Important Factor Holding Women Back From Advancement Into Corporate Leadership



# Attracting and Retaining Executive Women

Over 50% of Athena survey respondents agreed that their company is effective at **attracting** women executives

Nearly 60% of respondents agreed that their company is effective at **retaining** women executives

- However, the most educated respondents (those with a Ph.D. or J.D.) believed that their companies did a significantly worse job at attracting and retaining women executives than did those respondents with less education
- Additionally, compared to respondents with a male boss, respondents with a female boss felt that their companies were better at attracting and retaining female executives

# Respondents Identified the Top 5 Reasons San Diego Companies are Effective at *Attracting* Executive Women

- Corporate culture/values/good work environment
- Opportunities for advancement
- Other female management
- Work flexibility
- Interesting technology/positions

# Respondents Identified the Top 3 Reasons San Diego Companies are Effective at *Retaining* Executive Women

Corporate culture/values/good work environment  
Other female management  
Opportunities for career development

Respondents Also Cited Some Retention Concerns:

- Lack of work flexibility
- Preferential treatment of men for promotions and job assignments
- Male oriented work environment

# Company Initiated Strategies Important for Women's Career Advancement

Nearly half the Athena survey respondents indicated that obtaining **high visibility assignments** has been the most important factor in their own career advancement

Nearly 27% said **programs that identify high potential employees** were most important for their career advancement

Nearly 17% indicated that **executive development opportunities** were important for their career advancement

Nearly 17% indicated **cross functional rotations** were important for their career advancement

## Many Company-Initiated Strategies Were Perceived as Less Important for Career Advancement

Only 4% indicated that *formal mentoring programs* were important

Only 5% indicated that *career planning* programs were important

Only 4% indicated that *improving the recruiting of women leaders* was important

Only 2% indicated that *diversity in succession planning* was important

# Implications

To advance women's careers, companies need to focus on providing high visibility assignments to female employees

While programs identifying high potentials have some effect on women's careers, they are not obtaining optimum results

Executive development and cross functional rotation programs may be helpful for advancing women's careers, however, work is needed for them to have a more desirable result

Formal mentoring programs\*, career planning, diversity in succession planning and recruiting more women leaders is showing little impact on women's career advancement

**\*NOTE: While company-initiated, *formal* mentoring programs are reported as having a minimal effect on women's career advancement, having influential mentors is an important factor for women's career success**

# Workplace Policies

More than 60% of Athena survey respondents indicated that Affirmative Action/EEO Policies have had a ***negative*** or ***no effect*** on their careers

## ***Implication:***

Since AA/EEO policy enforcement was perceived by Athena survey respondents as having a negative or no effect on women's careers, we suggest spending time, effort and commitment to supporting women's career development and career opportunities based on contributions, capabilities, merit and performance, not on gender

# Flexible Work Arrangements

Sixty-five percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that their companies did not have **any** formal policies or guidelines for flexible work arrangements

However, 57% of respondents indicated that they have used flexible work arrangements at some point in their career

- 93% did not have **job sharing**
- 80% did not have **part-time telecommuting**, and 62% did not have **telecommuting**
- 78% did not have **flexible work weeks**
- 75% did not have **full time flexible options**
- 67% did not have **part-time work arrangements**
- 65% did not have **flextime**
- 62% did not have **telecommuting**

# Implications

**According to Athena survey respondents, flexible work schedules and flexible work policies are rare among San Diego technology and technology-aligned companies**

**San Diego companies fall well below national averages for flexible work schedules**

- A Catalyst study in 1993 found that 62% of companies surveyed had formal policies or guidelines for flexible work schedules
- According to a Hewitt Associates study in 1994, more than 71% of over 681 national employers offered flextime to their employees
- **In the Athena Survey (2001), less than 35% of the respondents indicated that their companies have flextime**

**A Watson Wyatt study in 1997 of 614 national employers ranked flexible schedules as their most effective retention tool**

**Progress in the area of flexible work schedules is imperative for San Diego organizations to retain valuable employees**

# Company-Supported Childcare Resources are Scarce

Ninety-five percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that they have not used any childcare programs in their companies

That was not surprising given that seventy-five percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that they do not have **any** childcare programs available in their companies

Almost all respondents indicated that they did not have in-house childcare (paid by their companies or self-paid)

Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that they did not have a childcare referral program in their companies

Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated that their companies did not have a pre-tax spending account for childcare expenses

# Implications

According to results of this Athena survey, childcare resources are virtually unavailable in San Diego technology and technology-aligned companies

According to a Catalyst survey in 1998, nearly 60% of executive women who have children would be attracted to companies that offered company-supported childcare over those that did not

Attracting and retaining female talent in organizations depends on having a positive corporate culture and a positive work environment

With the increasing number of women in leadership positions in local companies, it is imperative that child care resources and flexible schedules become more widely available in San Diego technology and technology-aligned companies

# A Call to Action for San Diego's Technology and Technology-Aligned *Employers*

**Commit resources to provide executive women with a depth and breath of work experience**

- Invest in preparing women for general management and line positions
- Implement cross functional job rotations

**Support informal mentoring relationships for women executives**

**Include executive women in informal networks of communication**

**Provide executive women within your companies with high visibility jobs and assignments**

**Continue to identify and cultivate female “high potentials” in your companies**

**Increase the number of women on yours and other San Diego company corporate boards**

**Celebrate the progress San Diego women have made thus far, and continue to focus on improving the status of San Diego women executives beyond 2002**

# **A Call to Action for San Diego Technology and Technology-Aligned Companies'** *Female Executives*

**Participate in a Corporate Board Network to enhance your opportunity for filling Corporate Board seats**

**Participate in company social events and other non-work activities to increase your exposure to informal networks of communication**

**Seek high visibility assignments throughout your career**

**Find influential mentors to support your career growth**

**Move from staff positions to line positions to obtain P & L responsibility**

**Take advantage of your companies programs and initiatives to enhance your career development and progression (i.e., executive development, job rotations)**

**Celebrate the progress you have made thus far, and continue to focus on improving the status of San Diego women executives beyond 2002**

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