

“Women as Leaders”

Results of the 2002 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, to assist organizations in implementing programs to attract and retain executive women, and to assist Athena in developing programs to advance women in organizations

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 forty 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 153 total respondents

100% were female

Industries

56% were from technology companies

44% were from technology-aligned companies

- **25% biotech or biopharmaceutical**
- **14% legal services**
- **9% telecommunications**
- **The rest of the industries were varied**

Additional Demographics

Seventy-seven percent of Athena survey respondents were Caucasian

Sixty-one percent were age 31-49

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

Respondents had a variety of job titles

- 41% Director or Manager

- 20% VP or SVP

- 17% President or CEO

- 9% COO or CFO

- 8% Partner

- 7% Owner or Founder

Personal Status

Sixty-eight percent of Athena survey respondents were married, and 38% have children under the age of 18 living with them

Three of the respondents had parents living with them as dependents

Seventy-eight percent of Athena survey respondents contribute more than half of their annual household income

Where They Are

Sixty-one percent of the respondents were not the **only** female at that job level in their organization

Thirty-nine percent were the highest female executive in their company

Thirty-eight percent were officers or members of executive committees in their companies

Eighty-two percent of respondents reported having a male boss

Fifty-seven 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 above average representation as Corporate Officers of their companies

- Thirty-eight percent 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

Women in senior positions have other female peers at those levels

- Sixty-one 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 39% of Athena survey respondents were the highest level female executives in their companies

Status of Women on Corporate Boards

Almost 50% of the Athena survey respondents indicated that there are **no** women on their companies' Board of Directors

Seventy-five percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that the number of women on their companies' Board of Directors has **stayed the same or decreased** 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, at 8.9%, San Diego technology and technology-aligned companies are well below the national average with respect to representation of women on corporate boards, and that number is not improving

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

One-half of Athena survey respondents indicated that progress of women in executive management has ***increased*** in the past 2 years

One-half of Athena survey respondents indicated that progress of women in executive management has ***stayed the same or decreased*** in the past 2 years

Trouble Ahead?

Only 38% of Athena survey respondents indicated a belief the number of women holding senior leadership positions by the year 2003 would **increase**, while 62% indicated that they believed it would **stay the same or decrease**

Implications for Women in Executive Management

Among Athena survey respondents there is a perception that things are not improving

“Alarming rate of attrition of women role models . . .”

“Attracting, developing and maintaining women executives is not a priority . . .”

“It’s a good old-boys situation here . . .”

Experience Counts . . .

Over 64% of Athena survey respondents had more than 10 years of professional work experience (prior to their current role)

Only 9% of Athena survey respondents have held their current job title for less than 1 year

“Women make up the majority of the biotech industry . . . The number of women in high level executive positions is impressive.”

“Banking has historically had a lot of women . . . We have numerous women working at all levels of management.”

“There are a lot of successful women in our company . . .” (executive search/recruiting firm)

“Public Relations typically has lots of women . . .”

Implications

While more than half of the Athena survey respondents had more than 10 years of work experience, only 19% have been in their current job for five or more years

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

But there is also the perception by half the Athena survey respondents that women in senior leadership positions will decrease or stay the same in 2003

“Over the past twenty years, no women are in VP positions . . .”

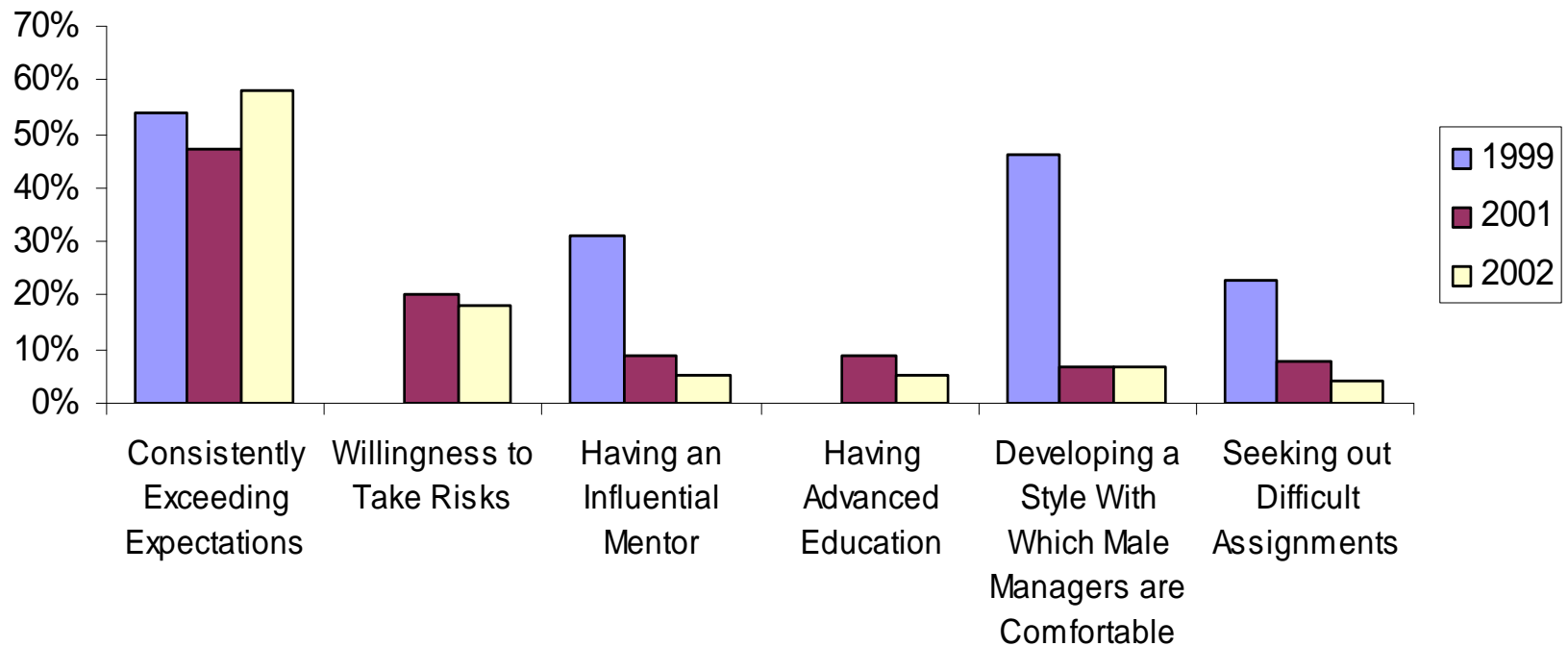
“The top level power positions are difficult for women to obtain . . .”

Why They Are There

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

- ***Willingness to take risks*** was cited by 18% of the respondents
- ***Having an influential mentor*** and ***having advanced education*** were also mentioned by about 5% of the respondents

The *Most Influential* Factor in Their Career Success



Comments From the Top

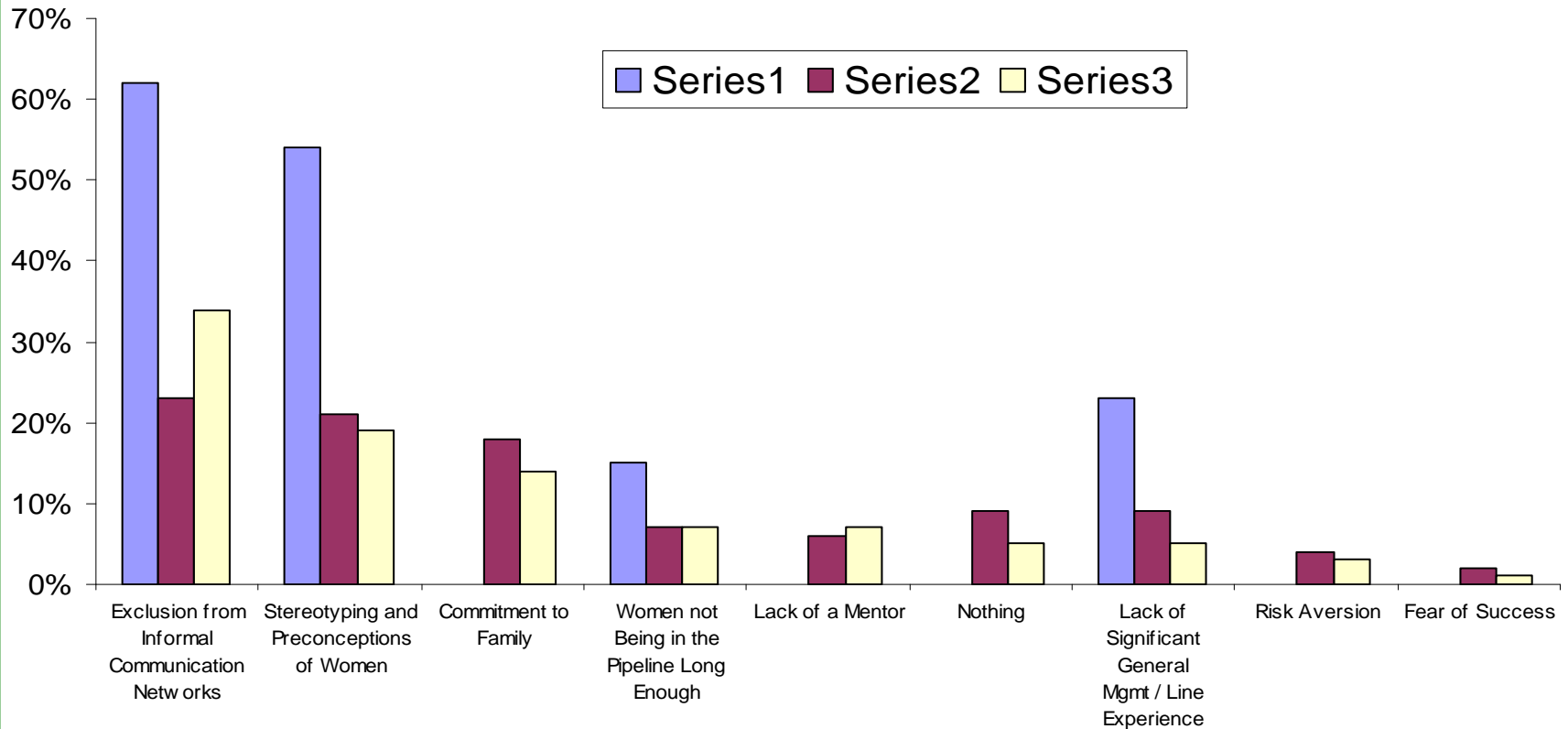
- “I was given an amazing opportunity because I had proven my ability, not because of my gender. I am constantly encouraged to reach higher goals . . .”
- “As a female executive, I have been given challenging new roles and positions and have been rewarded accordingly . . .”
- “As a female CEO and co-founder, I am particularly attentive to female employees with potential for advancement . . .”

What Holds Women Back

Nearly 34% 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

- Nineteen percent of the respondents indicated that ***stereotyping and preconceptions of women*** was the most important factor
- Fourteen percent of the respondents indicated that ***commitment to family*** was the most important factor
- Only 5% 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



Comments

“Our senior team is male oriented - This fosters specific character traits being perceived as successful. It also fosters an environment where there is a lot of informal networking in which women are typically excluded.”

“There is an unspoken, unnoticed bias against women in executive roles”

“It’s still a man’s world - misconceptions that women cannot do as good a job or will leave as soon as they get pregnant”

“My company does nothing to encourage or mentor women.”

Attracting and Retaining Executive Women

Only 42% of Athena survey respondents agreed that their company is effective at **attracting** women executives

Only 39% of respondents agreed that their company is effective at **retaining** women executives

Company Initiated Strategies Important for Women's Career Advancement

Sixty-one percent of the Athena survey respondents indicated that obtaining **high visibility assignments** has been the most important factor in their own career advancement

Nearly 38% said **programs that identify high potential employees** were most important for their career advancement

Thirty-two percent said that **attending training or education courses** was important for their career advancement

Nearly 23% indicated that **executive development opportunities** were important for their career advancement

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

Only 6% indicated that *formal mentoring programs* were important

Only 1% indicated that *career planning* programs were important

Nearly 10% indicated that *improving the recruiting of women leaders* was important

Only 5% indicated that *diversity in succession planning* was important

Self-Initiated Strategies Important for Women's Career Advancement

Seventy-seven percent of the Athena survey respondents indicated that they used networking to advance their careers

Sixty-seven percent volunteered for high-visibility assignments to advance

Sixty-five percent took advantage of informal mentoring to advance

Sixty-three percent became involved in outside organizations to build leadership skills

Fifty-seven percent attended training or education courses

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 62% 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

Nearly half of Athena survey respondents indicated that their companies did not have **any** formal policies or guidelines for flexible work arrangements

- 92% did not have *job sharing*
- 65% did not have *flexible work weeks*
- 67% did not have *full time flexible options*
- 61% did not have *part-time work arrangements*
- 65% did not have *flextime*
- 62% did not have *telecommuting*

Over 40% of respondents indicated that they have used flexible work arrangements at some point in their career

Implications

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**

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

Company-Supported Childcare Resources are Scarce

- Eighty-eight percent of Athena survey respondents indicated that they have not used any childcare programs in their companies
- That was not surprising given that fifty-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)
- Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated that they did not have a childcare referral program in their companies
- Fifty-five 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 limited 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

Comments

- “My company stands to lose several women to their families because it does not offer attractive flexible work arrangement options . . .”
- “No program exists to encourage retention of executive women who have families . . .”
- “The legal profession is very demanding and slow at adopting policies such as maternity leave, part-time, flex-time, etc. resulting in many women leaving the profession . . .”

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

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 your 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

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

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