

Treacherous Terrain: Equity and Equality at Work and at Home

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Importance of Conference

- Comfort of finding similar others: “I am not the only one who...”
- The need to **confide outside**, especially leaders
- Successful women executives often build two networks,
 - One co-ed, of co-workers
 - One of women from outside (Ibarra)

Differences Among Women Can Be An Obstacle

- "She's oversensitive – sees discrimination everywhere"
- "She doesn't get it. She's naïve. Wait until she sees what it's like at the top"
- Friendship: Similar
- Networking: Most to learn from women with dissimilar experiences (Granovetter)

What is your experience?

- Percentage of women determines your experience of gender relations (Kanter, Pettigrew and Martin)
- **Power:** What is number of women at top of your org.?
 - None, one, two, more?
- **Peers:** What is number of women at your level?
 - **Pioneer** (Solo or a very few)
 - **Small minority** (Less than 20%)
 - **Breaking glass ceiling** (20% +), backlash
 - **Balance** (40% +), morale soars
 - **Women-dominated** (60% +)
- Listen to those whose experience differs, their past may be your future or that of the women you work with

Link.com: A Large, Successful, Male-Dominated Organization

- Highly profitable, skyrocketing revenues, stock splits, growth
- Women: Link.com slightly better than high tech industry norms:
 - 26 % women in engineering and scientific positions, breaking glass ceiling
 - 15% of women in middle-senior management positions, struggling minority
- Few pockets overt discrimination
 - Example: One Vice President had an explicit “No skirts” policy in his large division

Listening to the Women at the Top of Link.com

(Martin and Meyerson)

- Frank interview data from seven of the eight highest ranking women executives (names are pseudonyms)
- Pioneer women working in a virtually all male environment
- Each woman had different individual coping style

Patricia Sullivan, Divisional Director: Haven Creator

- Link.Com's aggressive Culture
 - Like working in the heat without air conditioning
- Dilemma: Adapt or fail?
- Patricia's choice: Creating a haven in her division

Denise Brousseau, Manager of Education: Learning to Play War Games

- Lack of confidence
- Hurting people's feelings
- A training program's war game

Natalie Kramer: Corporate Officer and Vice President for Marketing: Advocate for Women

- Conformity and authenticity: The consultant's advice
- The invisible job
- Danger: Single issue, losing support
- Interruptions and respect
- Natalie's choice: Fighting for herself and others

Individual Coping Styles at Link.com

- Haven creator
- War gamer
- Advocate for women
- Other options
 - Humorous team player
 - Confidante for other women
 - Star performer hoping for meritocracy
 - Gender “blind” challenge- seeker

No matter which individual style, women encountered same problems

- Discomfort with aggressive culture
- Authenticity difficulties
- Isolation, usually
- Invisible job
- Lack of mentors
- Lack of honest feedback
- Slower promotions than peers
- Lower salaries than peers

Seeking Solutions

- Don't blame yourself or focus on fixing an individual's coping style
- Do "fix the situation"
 - When numbers are few, women and minorities have predictable problems
 - Heightened visibility
 - Performance feedback skewed too positive or too negative
 - Slow promotions and inequitable pay
 - **To reduce these problems, numbers of women must increase**
 - Tipping points
 - 20%: Women break glass ceiling, but backlash
 - 40% Morale and performance soar

Suggestions

- Listen to women whose experiences differ from yours
- Focus on increasing the numbers of women.
 - Means to this end: Mentoring, fair pay and promotions, family-friendly policies
- When there are more women, all women will benefit
- Consider being an advocate for women?