DEAR WOMEN!!! Beware that It’s Up to YOU Choise is YOU or You are ChoiceLESS

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DEAR WOMEN!!!

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Develope and Use Your Entrepreneurial Ability and Spirit
By Sustainable Education Via Distance And Open Learning

ABSTRACT

Any kind of education is getting very important for our live at any level day by day. After 1970s, education is included developed technology within running at any level, at any kind of it forma lor informal as traditional and distance. The most limited learner were women for educating their self according to the men beside for their multi responsibility as mother ship, housing and other reasons as economic, religion, cultural, geographical conditions so on. How women have ability for education this brings inequality between men and women in for workforce and in workplace for developed and under developed countries. This interaction can be achieved in a variety of ways by teleconference, written comments or electronic means, not just face-to-face. As noted earlier, one of the outcomes of the group teleconference interviews was that the women, some for the first time, realized that there were others studying in their subject who were having the same doubts and difficulties and grappling with many of the same issues. For many of them this was very confirming and encouraged them that they were on the right track.

Information and communication Technologies (ICTs) are profoundly affecting social structures. Farmers in rural areas use mobile phones to Access market prices. Poor people who do not have formal identification documents obtain loans and credits through smart cards that store personal information such as fingerprints. In particular, ICTs are creating opportunities for women, enabling them to participate in political, social, and economic processes at unprecedented scale. The role that ICT can play in enabling gender equity, however, is constrained by access, low literacy, and limited data for ICT usage by more girls and women in the development of ICTs, the world an better ensure there is quality content, products, and services that meet the needs of girls and women as well as their families, communities and countries.
Concurrently, girl’s passive participation with ICTs leaves them vulnerable to predators and less likely to engage in ICTs for knowledge gathering, sharing, and eventually business development and careers. There is little known about the intersection of the girl child and ICTs in the developing world other than some pilot studies that provide a glimpse as to their value in education for girls as well as boys. But the lack of disaggregated data and indicators make these issues difficult to discuss, like most other aspects of gender and ICTs.

Today modest developed ICT is using for educational arena visually, electronically by the internet as a social media for women and men. Even as if indicated responsibilities of women they have to complete their educational lacks in social and economical side according to the men using latest technology. Today distance education or online education opportunities are one of the best solution way for them to be successful in their working carrier by to keep equality with men and even also pass them in certain areas. Many of the women in the study were moving towards this position of having a stronger voice as their confidence increased. By adding ways of supporting learners that are based on women's ways of knowing and learning to the repertoire of support already available it ensures that all students have an opportunity to access effective support which is tailored to them. Many researchers told us to respect women. A television ads for bikes broadcasted that life for a girl is full of choices. Women activists proclaimed from rooftops that women are liberated. Today’s woman has come of age. She is ambitious and resilient. She avoids competency traps and likes to get challenged. She works for intellectual satisfaction, dignity, independence and fame. Money is a byproduct and more often a supplemental income back home. Equipped with the right aptitude and attitude, she aspires for a career graph on par with her male counterparts. I come from an academic organization that is equally fair to both the genders. So my respect goes out to similar such organizations and to all the men that contribute to a woman’s success at workplace. What we need is for more and more men to shed their ego. And for more and more women to do what it takes to realize their career dreams. Until that happens, speeches about reforms and equality will remain a farce. How they educate themselves they will be more and more self confident to success breaking difficulties an even “Glass Ceiling” by their choice in work place.

Because

**Choose THEY have or They are ChoiceLESS**

**Keywords:** Women, distance education, entrepreneurship, work-life, work place, breaking glass ceilings.
INTRODUCTION

Distance education has been in existence for at least 100 years. "The first formal distance learning programs appeared in the mid-nineteenth century as postal systems were developed and as more people learned to read and write" The evolution of the penny post allowed for two-way communication through the exchange of letters (at the cost of one penny) between teachers and students. In Canada, the Canadian North West Mounted Police were used to deliver courses in areas without mail service (Srivastava, 2002). Faith (1988) described her grandparents as Canadian pioneers and prairie homesteaders who relied greatly on home study for the education of their twelve children, and it was my grandmother who supervised this activity. Indeed, there was pressure on girls from pioneer families to be highly literate so that they could one day, in turn, educate their own children.

Initially, correspondence study was developed in order to provide equal access to educational opportunities to those who could not afford full-time residence at an educational institution. The elite rejected DE and thought it to be inferior education (McIsaac & Gunawardena, 1996). Indeed, there is still a tendency today to think that any method other than traditional classroom-based learning is inferior (Srivastava, 2002).

While some early correspondence education systems were run by government, professional, and trade associations, others were operated by colleges on a not-for-profit basis and commercial companies wanting to make money. The types of courses offered included shorthand, various languages, mining, and the prevention of mining accidents (Schlosser & Anderson, 1994). One of the largest and most successful correspondence schools was Hermod’s, which was founded in Sweden in 1898 by H. S. Hermod (Picciano, 2001). In 1883, the Chautauqua College of Liberal Arts in New York State offered one of the first American academic degree programs available by correspondence. With the gain in popularity of DE schools/programs/courses, technology began to evolve at a fairly rapid pace all over the world.

In the 1920s, there were major advances in United States communications technology, with 176 radio stations established at educational settings in order to provide DE (Picciano, 2001; Schlosser & Anderson, 1994). By the 1930s radio stations were replaced by television and video technologies and consequently hundreds of correspondence programs were made available all over the world (Picciano, 2001). Further, from the 1950s to 1970s educational television programs were developed by major universities and then broadcast on the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). To this day PBS continues to be a major player, on a national level, in the area of DE offering educational television programs such as the Adult Learning Satellite Service, Ready to Earn, and Going the Distance (Picciano, 2001).
In 1971, the Open University of the United Kingdom (OU UK) was founded. It was the first large-scale DE institution in Western Europe. This world-renowned and influential university is currently Britain’s largest single teaching institution and at any given time has over 200,000 students, with half registered in degree programs and half enrolled in single courses (Lunneborg, 1994). According to Holmberg (1986) the OU UK increased the popularity and status of distance education, and thus encouraged the development of similar educational institutions in industrial nations, such as West Germany, Japan, Canada, and lesser-developed nations such as Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Athabasca University (AU), Canada’s Open University, situated in Athabasca, Alberta, adopted Britain’s OU model in the 1970s (Runte, 1981).

Newer television delivery technologies such as cable (CATV), satellite communications, and fiber optics also became available in the 1970s to 1980s (Picciano, 2001). Created in 1980, Learn/Alaska became the first state educational satellite system operating in the United States and was able to offer several hours of educational television services daily to more than a hundred of its remote villages. Similar systems have been utilized in other states (Picciano, 2001; Schlosser & Anderson, 1994). In describing fiber optics in the delivery of DE, Picciano (2001) maintained that:

The Iowa Communications Network (ICN) has established one of the most extensive fiber optic educational networks in the country. The plan is for all school districts, colleges, and public libraries in Iowa to be connected to the ICN. The ICN model is being considered or duplicated in other states because it provides full-motion video, two-way interactive communications, as well as digital (Internet) and voice services. Thereafter, digital technology via the Internet and other computer networks were developed and utilized by DE programs in the 1990s. Digital technology was broadly defined by Picciano (2001) as "any technology that uses electronic ‘on-off’ impulses to store, transmit, and receive data" (p. 193). Examples of communications and audio/video equipment that use digital technology are audio compact discs, digital video, digital communications switches, and digital television.

The World Wide Web (WWW), text-based e-mail and group software, and asynchronous learning networks (ALN) have provided a fairly inexpensive technology for the delivery of DE (Picciano, 2001). Lau (2000) described the conceptualization of the WWW at the European Particle Physics Laboratory (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland to its introduction in 1991. It was initially developed in order to provide individuals in the academic and scientific community with access to the most updated research and scientific materials. Its emergence has become inexplicably valuable to the world of DE and "It is the fastest, easiest and richest means of information and knowledge dissemination not only as information provider, but also as network connector around the world regardless of time and space" (Kamel, 2000, p. 167).
Currently, distance education is available throughout the world, in both industrialized and developing countries. According to McIsaac and Gunawardena (1996), since the 1950s, the developing world’s population has doubled to 5 billion people. As the population increases so does the growth of DE. Kramarae (2001) identified many other factors that have influenced the growth of DE, including:

- decrease in government subsidization of the public institutions of higher education,
- increase in costs of higher education at both public and private institutions,
- increase in the number of employed women,
- reduction in secure long-term jobs,
- increase in credential requirements for entry to and continuing work in many jobs,
- rapid change in information technologies,
- increase in online business,
- increase in venture capital funding in knowledge enterprises,
- increase in college enrolments,
- increase in attention to lifelong education,
- increase in competition among institutions for education dollars,
- increase in the globalization of competitiveness and commerce,
- shift to the use of web-based training for workers, and
- shifts by the United States Army to distance learning via laptop computers.

These changes have significant implications for the future of DE and are strong indicators that DE will continue to evolve in order to meet the needs of a competitive global economy.

**WHAT IS DISTANCE EDUCATION?**

DE is a viable alternative to traditional classroom-based learning. It is convenient and flexible and allows individuals to register in courses or to enroll in undergraduate and graduate degree courses/programs anytime, from virtually anywhere. Rezabek (1999) asserted that DE can be incorporated into an individual various everyday activities at home or at work. Stevenson (2000) provided specific examples of employment training courses available online including on the job safety courses, human resource topics such as sexual harassment, management of skills such as team-building, the use of specific medical equipment as well as other types of equipment. As well, Stevenson indicated that access to quality education in the form of DE is available to individuals of all ages, all over the world, and in all types of financial circumstances. Educational opportunities abound.

With today’s emphasis on lifelong learning, DE provides individuals with opportunities for continued personal and professional growth and development. Moreover, many terms and definitions are used in the current literature to describe DE. For example, the term E-learning is quite common.
Others include: distance learning, external studies, remote learning, open learning, distributed learning, non-traditional study, asynchronous learning, telelearning, supported self-study, individualized learning, independent learning, student-centered learning, interactive learning, resource-based learning, computer-based training, computer-mediated distance learning, computer-assisted learning, online education, Web-based learning, and flexible learning.

Although there may be slight variations in the terminology, these terms are all used to describe the basic concept of DE, which is defined by Rezabek (1999) as:

The transportation of information and the involvement of a learner in the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of an area of study through planned, usually structured, and organized (but also incidental) communication, that also uses supplemental resources and media-assisted two-way communication, where the learner and instructor are separated by distance and/or time. (p. 12). Interestingly, the United States Department of Education broadens the definition somewhat by acknowledging that DE supports the pursuit of lifelong learning. As well, there are numerous DE providers identified in the literature. The Distance Education and Training Council (DETC) offered a listing of institutions offering DE including: major corporations and small businesses, educational agencies, government agencies, branches of the armed services, trade associations, religious institutions, service industries, political entities, private sector.

Many trends in DE are documented in the literature. Broad trends in the area of Adult Learning (which can include DE) provide an overarching view of current changes in the world. Changing populations such as increases in the numbers of foreigners, immigrants, senior citizens, college-age students and adults pursuing higher education are placing increased demands on existing institutions. As well, changes in the workforce and the workplace are emphasizing the need for well-trained, educated employees who are committed to lifelong learning.

Further, given the rapid growth of technology and demand for DE many faculty members of institutions and the institutions themselves are finding it challenging to adapt in various ways. The process of globalization influences economic, social, and cultural trends that inevitably affect the area of DE.

EDUCATION'S ROLE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Advantages and Problems

Proponents of educational technology for years have stated that faculties need to focus more on teaching “21st-century skills,” such as problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration.
The 21st century learners will need to meet the complex demands of the new economy and society in a globalized form (Radović Marković, 2006-2007).

The workplace of tomorrow will increasingly require 21st century learners to work in teams, collaborating across companies, communities, and continents. Certain skills cannot be developed solely by simple multiple choice exams. New education programmes for entrepreneurs must be based on exchanging good practice through studies and Networks among strategic partners (researchers, entrepreneurs, financiers, advisors, policymakers, and so forth). To address individual needs of learners, attention must be paid to adaptability of the curriculum and the learning environment. A worthy institution views quality issues as primary and integral throughout the conceptual design of its education programs. True quality institutions, must govern their curriculum, instruction, and support services by policies and standards established to assure future success of the participants (Capogrossi, 2002). In many occasions, the assessment and examination vehicles have been evaluative measures of knowledge and competencies of learners measured against learning objectives derived from the needs of the industry and professions. Successful institutions must design their learning objectives to serve the demonstrated needs of the desired student audience. The academic and professional needs of the student audience will be at the foundation of the curriculum, and the subject matter objectives will become the focus of quality control process (Capogrossi, 2007).

It is well known that a correlation exists between entrepreneurship and economic performance. But entrepreneurship brings more than this correlation to our societies, because the science is also a vehicle for personal development. In spite of importance of entrepreneurship for personal and social development, all potentials are not fully being exploited particularly in the European Union (EU). The EU has failed to encourage an abundance people to become entrepreneurs. According to the Eurobarometer, although 47% of Europeans prefer self-employment, only 17% actually realize their ambitions (European Commission [EC], 2007). Regarding new entrepreneurial initiative, only 4% of Europeans state to be engaged in creating a business, and 29% of Europe’s SME declared growth as their main ambition (EC). Europe, unlike the United States, suffers from low expansion rates after start-up. Europe’s untapped potential appears to derive from a complex set of mutually interacting framework conditions, attitudes, and skills.

In this paper, however, priority will be given to virtual learning as a means to enhance entrepreneurship among women. In that context, entrepreneur’s skills will be defined, which should fulfill present and the future needs of our societies.
This dilemma leads to the following central research questions:

- How do we gain skills, which will meet new requirements of societies?
- Is high quality traditional entrepreneurship education the most effective choice for obtaining new skills for entrepreneurs or necessary to foster alternative ways of education?
- Which factors should become educational components to emphasize when devising an academic entrepreneurship program: perceptions, financial factors, productivity factors, product development, self-awareness, or self-motivation? Why?
- If entrepreneurship is taught in an online learning environment,
- What evaluation tools or measures should academia use to determine or identify success factors or traits to becoming an entrepreneur?
- The core of this paper is to address, inter alia, the above set of questions while particular emphasis will be given to the question of how women may acquire entrepreneurial education while not balancing both their jobs at work and at home.

GENDER AND DISTANCE LEARNING

The changes in women’s educational and career attainment may have multifaceted characteristics. Women might have increased their enrolment in colleges compared to men, but women may still differ in terms of the types of subjects in which they are enrolled. A study conducted by the World Bank has recently shown that if women in the field of agriculture had the same education as men did, the agricultural yield in developing countries would increase by 6 to 22%. This example, as well as other similar ones, gives every rightful reason to focus greater attention to further development of educational programs aimed at women, but also to enhancing contemporary technologies that will improve e-learning. Distance learning is becoming increasingly attractive for women, as shown by some research studies. Namely, more than 60% of those over 25 years of age and female opt for this type of development and education in the world (Radović Marković, 2006a).

The reason for this lies in the fact that this method of learning offers numerous advantages. Among the most prominent benefits, the following may be pointed out:

- The flexibility of the learning process (learners study at the time most convenient to them).
- Achieving a better balance between personal and other commitments (they may spend more time at home with their families).
- Minimizing costs (both time and money savings are made).
- A deeper sense of self-fulfillment (acquiring relevant and useful knowledge and achieving professional goals).

Furthermore, women at a certain age, over the age typical for learners (18-22 years of age), consider virtual classrooms to minimize the embarrassment and alienation factor (Capogrossi, 2002).

In addition to these advantages provided to women by online studying, distance learning also enables women to choose a certified course, offered by more than 90% of faculties in the world. Accordingly, women are given the opportunity of choosing some of the programs from a broader range, the ones that best suit their professional interests and goals, without the requirement to move geographically.

In other words, women are no longer limited to the local educational institutions, but have at their disposal a more comprehensive choice of educational programs offered worldwide. Studying over the Internet enables women permanent development thus reducing the educational gap in comparison to men. At the same time, the social status and life quality of women are being improved. Higher qualifications enable women to contribute more to their community.

**ADVANTAGES OF ONLINE LEARNING FOR WOMEN**

The Internet has extended many new opportunities to businesspeople both men and women. One such opportunity is the ability to complete programs online. Most universities, polytechnics, and other training providers are presently using study-away approach capitalizing on the online potentials of the Internet programs delivery as and when services are warranted.

More and more, learners completing a traditional degree and people who want to expand their skill sets are reverting to online programs. The selection is partly due to convenience and effectiveness and partly because the programs as a whole are affordable. As with in any other program, a certificate is earned belongs to the successful completion of the program as well as an official transcript of academic record. Online programs range from 1-hour courses on self-development to an entire doctoral degree program.
The American Business Women Association (ABWA) in 2001, in accordance with its mission to help educate and train its members, views online classes and course-work as an effective option for women who desire to continue developing their business skills, and hence the association embarks on creation of more partnerships with quality companies that involve in online programs delivery. For instance, the association formed partnership with QuicKnowledge.com, which is offers discounts on all its courses to ABWA members.

The association also consider all hours completed through online courses as part of its Continuing Education Credit program (ABWA).

However, the most significant contribution of online programs particularly to women is having the opportunity to self-pace within a desired time frame. Through the online programs, learners can complete projects whether at work, home, or selected locations. On many occasions, a busy executive may not be able to leave the office, and yet, assignments, term papers and even research projects have to be finalized somehow; the magic of getting the assignments complete may be made possible through the online mode. Where programs are completely in online mode, all class lectures, assignments, tests and instructions are delivered through the Internet. Some programs have voice and/or video assisted delivery, and may also include PowerPoint and iPod presentations.

That is the main reason that Internet service provider, a browser, and a computer with plenty of random access memory (RAM) are needed prior to an online course commencing to receive lectures from anywhere and any time. According to Barbara Sleeper, on different occasions, learners do travel from one location to the other in the course of their programs; this may be some weeks or even months at a time so that learners create networks while continuing their studies (ABWA, 2001). Sleeper was an ABWA national member who served as 1987-1988 National Secretary, 1986-1987 District II Vice President, and was named one of the 1989-1990 Top Ten Business Women of ABWA. Sleeper is the Director of the MBA program at Dallas Baptist University, and has developed an online marketing course in consumer behaviour in support of his opinion and ideology (ABWA). Sleeper opined that for graduate programs, universities should transfer credits to and from one another on reciprocal credit recognition basis without experiencing resistance (ABWA).

Hence, graduate learners should have the option to continue their education and not lose the hours of completed courses when transferring into another educational institution.
Forming an international learning network of women may enhance entrepreneurship opportunities in Serbia as well as in countries that are developing or in transition. Because the functionality of the technologies and the benefits of virtual learning to learners and professors have been misunderstood, the entrepreneurial process although improved for other nations become more familiar with the techniques, potential learners as well as educators may be able to effectively discern the pros and cons of how e-learning enhancing entrepreneurship.

**ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION**

“Entrepreneurship development concerns the development of people's potential as a country's most valuable resource” (Kroon, De Klerk, Dippenaar, 2003, pp. 319-322). The process is an innovative and dynamic technique, which is also an important segment of economic growth. Entrepreneur is a catalytic agent of change, which generates employment opportunities for others.

Therefore, paying attention to improving skills of entrepreneurs and their education is necessary to increase competencies. Considering the importance of education for entrepreneurs, recently it becomes evident that entrepreneurship is one of the fastest growing sciences in today’s undergraduate curricula in the United States and worldwide (Radović Marković, 2007a).

The 1990s saw the growth of entrepreneurship as a profession within business, and in that professional approach lies the secret benefit of entrepreneurship education—it helps decrease the chances of failure by stressing a consistent and proven set of practices. That idea of professionalizing the process of entrepreneurship is the other great commonality across all of modern entrepreneurship education. (“Entrepreneurial Education,” 2009, para. 2)

In the past 3 decades, formal programs (majors, minors, and certificates) in entrepreneurship have more than quadrupled, from 104 in 1975 to more than 500 in 2006 (“Entrepreneurship in American”). The development of courses in entrepreneurship has been exponential”.

“Entrepreneurship is the ability to create and build something from practically nothing” (Timmons, Section 1). The science of entrepreneurship involve initiating, doing, achieving, and building an enterprise or organization, rather than just watching, analyzing or describing an entity. Entrepreneurship is the knack for sensing an opportunity where others see chaos, contradiction, and confusion.
Though Entrepreneurship, the ability to build a “founding team” that complements self-efficiencies and talents becomes enhanced. It is the know-how to find, marshal, and control resources (often owned by others) and to ensure that funding is available when needed. Finally, entrepreneurship is the willingness to take calculated risks, both personal and financial, by performing at maximum capacity to get the odds in your favour (“Criteria for Youth,” n.d.).

USAID’s Bureau for Economic Growth, Education, and Environment authored this rigorous but adaptable tool to effectively integrate focus on women’s entrepreneurship into Missions’ SME programming.

This light-footprint tool is for USAID staff or implementing partners designing such program integration—at the Project Appraisal Document gender analysis stage or after the award has been made—as the primary activity or as part of a larger economic growth activity. Of course, others can use the tool as well. (http://wlsme.org/library/womens-entrepreneurship-diagnostic)

**GLASS CEILING**

Here is aimed to report on the processes that were identified by our respondents, lay out patterns, and illustrate them. We shall note some general trends.

**Multiple Ceilings**

When one looks at the proportion of women at upper levels of legal careers in large firms it is clear that women have a low representation as compared with men. The reasons for this are complicated, we identify not one but a number of glass ceilings at different levels of the career hierarchy.

Some of these are imposed by gatekeepers within the profession the senior members of firms who make the decisions regarding promotion and the paths leading to it, and also make the rules that structure these firms. Thus, some ceilings result from conscious decision making, and others come about because of firm practices that affect women adversely.

Ceilings may also be imposed by women on themselves in the context of pressures internal to firms, as well as those from their families and, more generally, from the culture. Individuals’ choices and the pressures they face are often interactive. Thus, what an individual describes as an individual choice when viewed collectively shows a pattern of constraints that lead to these individual decisions. Of course, the ceilings experienced by individual women are varied.
Some experience them at lower levels than others, and some do not feel they have experienced them at all. To some extent this is related to a person's history and to that of her cohort, as well as to the conditions within the firm in which she works. A study is, by its nature, a description of one point in time with some reference to the past. Some have a longer view of the past than others. And, women's career opportunities are changing in an environment where many other changes are going on.

Changing Career Opportunities: Many strides towards equality have been made in large firms with regard to women (the access of minorities is less clear), as they have elsewhere in the legal profession and in other professions. At the same time, women continue to face problems in climbing the career ladder, and only a tiny number have reached top management positions (we encountered only two such women, and they were part of a rotation system).

There has also been an acceleration of expectations on the part of a large proportion of women, particularly those who entered these firms in the last fifteen years. In the past, few women expected to rise to partnership or the opportunity to practice beyond the limited specialties to which they were assigned. Today, women and men, subscribe to an ideal of meritocracy; they feel that there should be a level playing field and that those who play on it should have their talents and contributions acknowledged and rewarded. Generational Differences: Another finding that pervades some of these issues is that of generational perspectives. Range is in age from their twenties to their sixties. Therefore, a number of generations are represented here, and they are split between those who are partners and those who are associates.

The following sections will deal with those regarded as most salient: business development mentoring; promotion; sexual harassment; hours and alternative schedules; and family issues (which, of course, have consequences for the other topics). In addition there are cultural issues that are especially difficult to define: those of style (manner and appearance) and personality.

Social Processes: That Influence the Advancement of Women Some consistent social processes act as a backdrop to these topics and the findings that will be explicated below. By this we mean the general social propensities to regard traditional organizational forms as natural or functional; the urge to categorize people according to a stereotyped view of their abilities or qualities; and the often unacknowledged process by which people hold inconsistent and even contradictory views-not unusual in a time of social change.
MANAGE YOUR MANAGER
For BREKING “GLASS CEILING”

To begin with, Belanger and Tuijnman (1997) presented some of the women are the primary users of Distance Education (DE) in many developed or developing countries throughout the world and are confronted with numerous challenges when working towards completing higher education through DE.

Do you feel that you've gone as far as you can with your current employer? Despite knowing that you have much more potential, is there a limit for "people like you" in your organization? If so, you've hit what's known as the "glass ceiling." This is the point at which you can clearly see the next level of promotion—yet, despite your best effort, an invisible barrier seems to stop you from proceeding. Traditionally, the glass ceiling was a concept applied to women and some minorities.

It was very hard, if not impossible, for them to reach upper management positions. No matter how qualified or experienced, they simply were not given opportunities to further advance their careers. Today, there are many more women and minorities in powerful positions. However, the glass ceiling is still very real. And it's not always limited to gender or race. Have you been pushed up against a glass ceiling? This can happen for many different reasons. Are you too much the champion of change? Do you have difficulty communicating your ideas? Are you quieter and less outgoing than the people who get promotions? Whatever the reason, you have a choice. You can accept your situation and be happy with looking up and not being able to touch what you see, or you can smash the glass with purpose and determination.

If you do, indeed, want to break through that glass, here are some steps to take. Identify the Key Competencies within Your Organization Key competencies are the common skills and attributes of the people in your company's upper levels. These skills are often tied closely to the organization's culture and vision. Companies that value innovation and strive to be leaders will probably promote individuals who are outgoing, risk takers, and not afraid to "tell it like it is." However, if you work for a conservative company (such as a publicly owned utility) chances are that top management are analytical thinkers, with a reputation for avoiding risk and making careful decisions. Ask yourself these questions:

- What are the values of your organization?
- What behaviors does your company value and reward?
- What type of person is promoted? More and more.
Once you know your target, set goals to get there. You're responsible for determining your own career direction. Be proactive and go after what you want, because it probably won't be handed to you.

Do the following: Let your boss know that you want to work toward a higher-level position. Ask your boss what skill areas you need to develop.

Work together with your boss to set goals and objectives, then monitor and measure your performance.

Having a mentor is a powerful way to break through the glass ceiling. The barriers that you face have likely been there for a long time.

Past practices, biases and stereotypes, and old ideas are often long established at the top of many organizations. Is upper management reluctant to work with certain types of individuals?

Do they exclude certain people from important communications?

- A mentor can help you learn how to get connected to the information and people who can help you.
- A mentor can also be a great source of ideas for your professional development and growth. Ask yourself these questions: Is there someone in upper management you can approach to help you?
- Will your boss be able to provide mentoring support?
- Are there people with strong political power who can offer you assistance?

Ultimately, the way to get ahead is to get noticed. You want people to see your competence, leadership abilities, communication skills, technical knowledge, and any other competencies that are typical of people at the top.

Developing your skills and network with people so that your name becomes associated with top management potential. To do this, you need to build a reputation as the kind of person who fits the description of top management.

Visibility is very important. Remember, while you can see up, those at the top can see down. Make sure that what they see is you! Seek high-profile projects. Speak up and contribute in meetings. Share ideas with peers as well as people in higher positions.
Identify places where your reputation is not what you want it to be, and develop plans to change them. (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_71.htm).

On an ending note, this write-up does not generalize gender inequality at workplace. It is an observation of what goes on by-and-large. I come from an organization as an academics that is equally fair to both the genders. So my respect goes out to similar such organizations and to all the men that contribute to a woman’s success at workplace. What we need is for more and more men to shed their ego. And for more and more women to do what it takes to realize their career dreams. Until that happens, speeches about reforms and equality will remain a farce.

Again Beware that
YOU are the Choice or YOU are Choiceless

Let’s watch one minute animation

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