Navigating Your Climb Up The Corporate Ladder

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What is the corporate ladder?

- Different in each organization
- Be prepared if you change jobs
- What does it look like for you?
  - Hierarchal
  - Flat
The View From the Top

- Women comprise 46% of the total U.S. labor force
  - 58.6% of all women 16 years of age or older are in the labor force
  - 56.6% of all mothers with children 1 and younger are in the labor force
- Women account for just 2% of top executive positions
- Women make up only 6% of lower-level executive positions
- Progress is being made - the number of women in executive roles at Fortune 500 companies has risen
  - In 1999, women held 12% of corporate officer positions
  - In 2008, the number had risen to 15.7%

http://www.investopedia.com/articles/financialcareers/09/top-female-ceos.asp#13160106503572&close
Women at the Top

- Angela Braly - President, CEO of WellPoint (2007 – Present)
- Andrea Jung Chairman & CEO of Avon Products (1999 – Present)
- Ann Mulcahy Chairman & CEO of Xerox (2001 – Present)
- Indra Nooyi Chairman & CEO of PepsiCo. (2006 – Present)
- Irene Rosenfeld CEO of Kraft Foods (2006 – Present)
- Margaret Whitman President & CEO of eBay (1998 – 2008)
- Oprah Winfrey CEO of HARPO Productions (1986 – Present)
Characteristics of Women at the Top

• Four year college degree
• Post-undergraduate education (60%)
• MBA (40%)
• Diverse experience
  – Each served in multiple capacities within her firm or industry
  – Many started at the bottom and worked their way to the top
• Have financial knowledge/experience
• Hired from within

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Local Women at the Top

• Wendie Dimatteo – *CEO* of ASK Foods
• Dana Chryst – *CEO and Owner* of The Jay Group
• Dr. Francine G. McNairy – *President* of Millersville University
• Dr. Edna Baehre – *former President* of HACC
• Anne Stevenson – *former President & CEO* of Carpenter Technology
• Anne Beiler – *Founder* of Auntie Anne’s, Inc.
Self Assessment

• Be Realistic
• Hard and soft skill assessment
• Strengths and weaknesses
• What motivates you?
  – Pay
  – Title/Recognition
  – Reputation
  – Rewards
  – Flexibility
Self Assessment

• Where are you on the ladder?
• How did you get there?
• What is your current status?
  – On track/on the way up
  – Stalled
  – About to take a break
  – Returning from a break
• Is this where you should be right now?
Looking Forward...

• How long is the ladder?
• Where do you want to end up?
  – As high or low as you want to – it is up to you!
• How will you adapt based on your circumstances?
  – If you step off, how will you step back on?
• How do you preserve your spot on the ladder
Setting Goals

• Be realistic
• Think short term and long term
• May depend on how far you are from your goal
• Take into account the skills you have and the skills you need
Road Blocks

• Politics
• The favorites/ the “chosen ones”
• Boss in your way
• Clashes with peers
• Up-and-comers nipping at your heels
• Fashion Faux Pas
Climbing the Ladder in Heels

- Fashion plays a role
- Look the part
- Copy what people in the position you want are wearing
- When in doubt, err on the conservative side
- Dress appropriate for your industry
- Balance all of this with being comfortable and being yourself
Ways to Get There

• Mentoring
• Learning
• Networking
• Flexibility
• Reality Checks
Mentoring

• What mentoring can do for you
  – Passing on knowledge and experience, sharing your own successes and failure - helps the organization, but also helps your growth
  – You can learn from your mentee
  – Keeps you in touch with newer people in the organization who may have fresh ideas
  – Allows you to “mold” the people who will be supporting your organization and possibly even your position
  – Established future allies
  – Shows ability to be supportive and be a team player
  – Builds your reputation
Mentoring

• What a mentor can do for you
  – Be a champion
  – Give good advice on where to go and how to get there
  – Provide honest feedback
  – Working with other women
Mentoring

• Approaching an assigned mentor in the workplace
  – Respect their understanding of the organization - even if you don’t agree
  – Determine how respected they are/their corporate ladder “status” within the organization to determine how much value they provide
  – Same potential benefits
Mentoring

• Choosing a mentor for yourself
  – Can’t be forced, but can be cultivated
  – Can be a more experienced peer, but is often someone in a higher position
  – Often ends up not being an assigned person
  – Doesn’t have to be someone within your organization
Learning

• Seek out continual learning opportunities
  – Can be work related but doesn’t have to be
  – Seek out knowledge – knowledge unrelated to your career may prove to be useful
  – Personal growth will assist career growth
• Acceptance and openness to change
  – Possible ways to react to change:
    • become defensive
    • entrench
    • go along
    • criticize and sabotage
    • embrace
• Turn negative experiences at work into learning opportunities
Networking

• Why do it?
  – Name recognition - develop new business/clients/reputation
  – Finding new opportunities
  – Finding takers for new opportunities
  – Support from people who understand your challenges
  – Personal fulfillment

• Developing a network - internally and externally
  – Contacts in other departments in your organization
  – Industry organizations
  – Community involvement
  – Formal or informal groups
  – Friends and family
Flexibility

• Be flexible and open
  – Night school
  – Job shadowing/internships
  – Job sharing
  – Volunteer
  – Accept a position that may not be on your ladder – may lead to something better
The Big Picture

• Preserve your spot on the ladder
• Don’t burn bridges
• Be flexible
• Don’t be afraid
• Be open to opportunity
• Follow up on your road map