

# PICKING UP THE PULSE

The Recruitment, Retention and Advancement Of  
Women in The Greater Cincinnati Workplace:

Leadership Cincinnati Class XXIX

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## Executive Summary

Leadership Cincinnati Class XXIX Project Team ("LC Project Team") conducted a study of the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in organizations in the Greater Cincinnati area, building on certain of the earlier recommendations of the 2005 Pulse: *A Study on the Status of Women and Girls in Greater Cincinnati ("Pulse Study")*. This report summarizes the responses of those members of Leadership Cincinnati Alumni and Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber who responded to a 33-question survey developed by the LC Project Team. The survey was designed to determine respondents' perceptions on how the recruitment, retention and advancement of women is supported, recognized and practiced in their respective organizations, as well as how these organizational practices and policies relate to the overall representation of women in their organizations' top management and on their company boards.

The results of the study indicate that while the recruitment, retention and advancement of women tend to be supported by top management, it is not considered to be a top organizational objective. The findings clearly show that the largest representation of women on company boards and in top management are significantly higher in the small private and non-profit organizations than in the larger for-profit companies. In terms of work/life balance and alternative work arrangement programs aimed at retaining women, these programs appear to be limited and largely inaccessible to women in senior management. Although communication of advancement criteria, and leadership development of high-potential women are believed to be lacking in most companies surveyed, strategies utilized by some of the more successful companies to identify, develop and advance high-potential women for leadership positions included providing networking opportunities, leadership training, mentoring and rotation programs.

This study represents only one small step forward in the broader ongoing initiative to improve the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in the Greater Cincinnati area. It is recommended that going forward, focus groups be conducted to identify best practices of successful organizations in addition to tools and resources to improve gender diversity. To maximize the impact and benefit of this study, these findings must be shared with organizations that are working in this important area so that they continue to make meaningful progress in understanding and addressing issues affecting the recruitment, retention and advancement of women in the workplace.



The Recruitment., Retention  
and Advancement of Women  
in The Greater Cincinnati Workplace

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**Picking Up the Pulse Project**

*June 9, 2006*



Leadership Cincinnati Class XXIX Class  
Project Team


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## The Survey

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- **Built on "Pulse Study" Recommendations**
- **Interviewed Organization and Women's Group Leaders**
  - YWCA, UC, Women's Business Cincinnati, Women's Fund Leadership Council, Small Business and Programs, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, Deloitte & Touche 100 Wise Women Program and the Pulse Study Authors
- **Survey Format**
  - 33-Question Survey
  - Identify respondents' perceptions of the recruitment, retention and advancement practices and policies
- **Targeted Recipients**
  - Leadership Cincinnati Alumni
  - Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber Members



## Survey Respondent Profiles

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### Respondents

- Women (63%)
- Between 44-54 yrs
- Executive and Administrative Management

### Representative Companies

- Professional Service Industries
- Over 5000 Employees
- Over \$1 Billion in Annual Revenues
- Located in Hamilton County

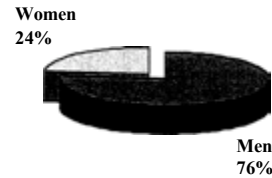
## Representation of Women in Top Management and on Company Boards



Percentage of Women in Top Management



Percentage of Women on Company Board of Directors

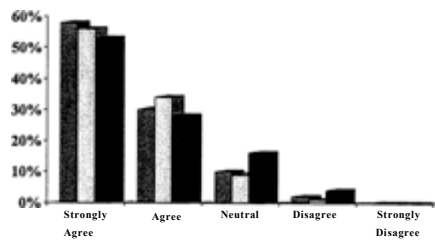


- Small Private/Non-Profit Organizations had the largest representation of women
- Large For-Profit and Public Companies had smallest percentage of women
- Companies with the highest percentage of women on company boards tend to have the highest representation of women in top management

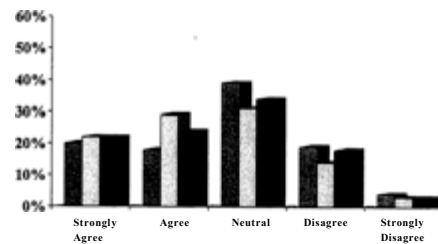
## Top Management Support of the Recruitment, Retention and Advancement of Women and Priority as a Top Organizational Objective



Top Management Support

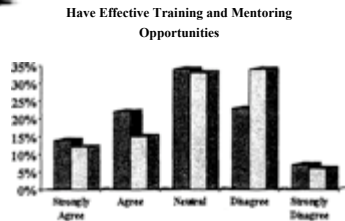


Top Organizational Objective

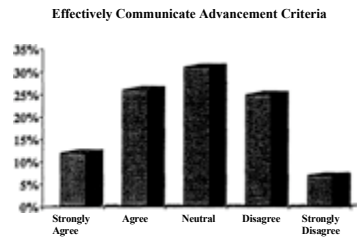


- Largely supported by top management
- Not considered to be a top organizational objective

## Company Effectiveness in Providing Development Opportunities and Communicating Criteria to Prepare Women for Top Management



Black = Training  
White = Mentoring



### Training and Mentoring

- Leadership development programs are lacking in organizations
- Highly correlated to largest representation of women in Top Management

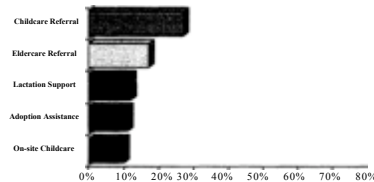
### Advancement Criteria

- Top Management needs to better communicate criteria and prepare women for leadership positions

## Work/Life Balance and Alternative Work Arrangement Programs Offered

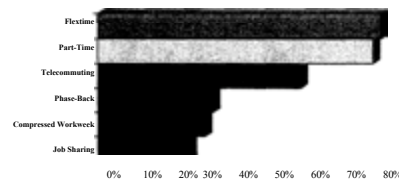
### Work/Life Balance

- Lack of meaningful programs that truly assist caregivers who tend to be primarily women

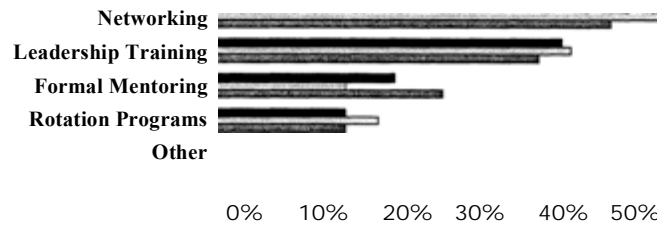


### Alternative Work Arrangements

- Offered for Staff and Line Employees
- Largely inaccessible to or impractical for Senior Management



## Programs Offered for the Advancement of Women



All Companies - Majority Women in Top Mgmt - Above Top Mgmt Average

- Companies offering networking opportunities, leadership training and formal mentoring have the highest levels of women in their senior ranks
- Very few measure their programs' effectiveness



## Conclusions

- While it is encouraging that Top Management appears to support the recruitment, retention and advancement of women, they must more effectively communicate women-based initiatives as a top organizational priority
- Top Management must ensure that sufficient and effective programs are fully developed to address these issues, measure their effectiveness and enforce accountability
- Top Management's proactive support of women-based initiatives is critical to their organizations' bottom-line success



## Conclusions (continued)

- It is critical for organizations to provide meaningful work/life balance programs to caregivers and make them truly available to top performers and those in the organizations' senior ranks
- Effective communication and execution of women's leadership development programs, best practices and lessons learned need to be applied more broadly
- There must be a concerted effort to recruit women for all positions, retain the best and the brightest through innovative and effective programs, and provide real opportunities for giving meaningful consideration to top-performing women to reach the highest levels.



## Next Steps...

- **Conduct Focus Groups to Identify Best Practices for the Recruitment, Retention and Advancement of Women in Greater Cincinnati Organizations**
  - Identify and examine those individual organizations who appear to be the most successful
- **Provide Organizations with Tools and Resources to Improve Gender Diversity**
  - Women's Resource List
  - Female-Friendly Policies and Practices
- **Ensure Sustainability of This Initiative by Sharing Findings with Other Women's Organizations Including Women Excel (Cincinnati USA Regional Chambers Women Initiative Program)**

## Check Your Company's Pulse

- Is Your Top Management Supportive?
- Has it Communicated a Clear and Convincing Message?
- Does Your Company Provide Meaningful Programs?
- Is Your Company Measuring the Program's Effectiveness?
- Are Your Managers Being Held Accountable?