

2008

## Women in Hospitality

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### Recommended Citation

Brownell, J., & Walsh, K. (2008). *Women in hospitality* [Electronic version]. Retrieved [insert date], from Cornell University, SHA School site: <http://scholarship.sha.cornell.edu/articles/835>

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# Women in Hospitality

## **Abstract**

[Excerpt] It is unlikely that there will ever come a time when gender in the workplace will not matter. Regardless of culture, historical context, or social circumstance, men and women view the world - and often each other - through gender-specific lenses (Tannen, 1990; Arliss and Borisoff, 1998). While this element of diversity has the potential to enrich workplace interactions and improve organizational outcomes, it also brings with it issues of power, justice, and identity. Hospitality organizations, in particular, have been the focus of numerous studies as women in service contexts - whether consumers, employees, or leaders - confront gender-linked dilemmas that are particularly complex and acute.

## **Keywords**

gender in the workplace, women employees, women travelers, workplace, female employees

## **Disciplines**

Hospitality Administration and Management

## **Comments**

### **Required Publisher Statement**

© SAGE. Final version published as: Brownell, J., & Walsh, K. (2008). Women in hospitality. In R. C. Wood, & B. Brotherton (Eds.) *The SAGE handbook of hospitality management* (pp. 107-128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.

## **Women in Hospitality**

Judi Brownell & Kate Walsh

### **Introduction**

It is unlikely that there will ever come a time when gender in the workplace will not matter. Regardless of culture, historical context, or social circumstance, men and women view the world - and often each other - through gender-specific lenses (Tannen, 1990; Arliss and Borisoff, 1998). While this element of diversity has the potential to enrich workplace interactions and improve organizational outcomes, it also brings with it issues of power, justice, and identity. Hospitality organizations, in particular, have been the focus of numerous studies as women in service contexts - whether consumers, employees, or leaders - confront gender-linked dilemmas that are particularly complex and acute.

As this chapter unfolds, it will become clear that, while women have made progress toward parity in the workplace, significant issues surrounding women employees in hospitality and the needs of women travelers remain unresolved. After several decades of study, and in spite of growing legislation addressing issues of women and work, women are still poorly represented in the senior management ranks (Abelson, 2001; Brown and Ridge, 2002; Vigil, 2002; Archer, 2003; Rindfleish and Sheridan, 2003). In fact, one report finds that 'both in earnings and promotions, women are worse off than they were six years ago' (Isaacson, 2002: 12). While other researchers remain more optimistic, there is no doubt that serious barriers remain and continue to stall women's career development. In addition, there is little question that hospitality organizations are among the most difficult environments for women seeking career advancement and personal satisfaction (Martin, 2000; Primavera, 2001).

While we explore the subject of women as workers and consumers in hospitality through a North American lens, we hope that the ideas and issues that arise will provide insight to all hospitality professionals. Toward this end, the chapter begins with an historical overview of women's entry into the workplace in the United States. The unique features of the hospitality environment are then delineated as they help to explain the need for special focus on this

industry segment. A discussion of women's career development follows. This section reviews the current status of women in hospitality management and explores the multi-faceted subject of organizational leadership. Research findings are presented that help us better understand both gender-related issues as well as the dynamics of women's leadership roles. The subject of salaries and gender equity is also discussed.

The central portion of this chapter presents a review of literature related to four challenges women confront as they seek to reach and succeed in senior leadership positions in the hospitality industry. Topics such as gender stereotyping, work and family balance, overcoming old boy networks, and mentoring are discussed in light of gender-specific concerns. Research gaps are also identified for each theme, and current organizational responses to each of these challenges are then reviewed. Next, we examine the emerging interest in a new and growing market segment, women as business travelers and consumers of hospitality. As women in all industries travel more frequently, their unique needs become an important concern to hospitality professionals. Women's travel preferences are discussed and examples are provided of the ways in which the hospitality industry is addressing this new market segment. Finally, the last section of this chapter moves into the future, suggesting how globalization might affect women's careers and outlining three other topics that will require research in the decades ahead.

### **A Brief History of Women and Work**

In 1943, a set of 'tips' was provided for male supervisors looking to maximize the effectiveness of their female employees (Anonymous, 2003). Among them:

- pick young married women ... they are less likely to be flirtatious;
- older women who have never contacted the public ... are inclined to be cantankerous and fussy;
- 'husky' girls ... are more even-tempered and efficient; and
- women make excellent workers when they have their jobs cut out for them, but they lack initiative in finding work themselves.

While it might be assumed that women have come a long way, progress toward workplace parity has been along a rocky road whose end is not yet in sight. In the United States, most women

entered the workforce due to the country's economic and social needs rather than because of individual choice. For instance, women took clerical positions during the Civil War period when there was an increased need for record keeping. This early introduction of women into the office contributed to the feminization of what was later referred to as secretarial activities (Strom, 1989). Even today, office work continues to be gender-linked with nearly 97% of clerical work being handled by women.

It was assumed from the beginning that women would work longer hours and receive less pay than their male counterparts. Due to this attitude, women laborers soon began to organize. Among the earliest collective efforts was The International Ladies Garment Workers' Union. Formed in 1900, these female garment workers held a memorable strike in 1909 often referred to as the 'uprising of 20,000'. Another early organization created to ensure that women's voices were heard was the National Women's Trade Union League, pioneered by Mary O'Sullivan and Leonora O'Reilly (Elman, 2001). While it had been common for single women to work, the needs of a war time economy saw married women leaving their homes for offices and factories. Just when women were becoming accustomed to their new found independence and productivity outside the home, the great depression made jobs scarce. A significant number of US cities and states passed laws prohibiting married women from working. As a consequence, women sought the support of their peers through professional association. In 1919 Lena Phillips founded the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs which served as an advocacy organization for women who wanted to remain in the workforce. A decade later, the International Federation for Business and Professional Women was founded and remains active today. By affiliating with like-minded colleagues, women's voices could not as readily be ignored.

In addition to a gradual movement of women from the home to the workplace, major changes in the labor markets after World War II included a shift from manufacturing to service industries (Beck, 1998). As previously noted, both the laws and the social norms of the early twentieth century operated to keep most married women at home. One study places the percentage of married working women in 1913 in the neighborhood of 2% (Mouton, 2000). Throughout the early years of the twentieth century it was common for women to become managers only through the early death of their husbands. As post-World War II women began entering the job market in greater numbers, inequities were even more readily apparent. In his

history of workplace bathroom practices, for instance, Linder (1997) points to the fact that even the government's early efforts to regulate equality were often misguided. For instance, when the number of men's and women's toilets was specified, the government did not require that companies allow their employees to use them. It is reported that when women began to win seats in Congress, they missed a significant number of votes due to the long hike they were forced to make to use the women's restroom facilities (Walsh, 2000). Such stories create a backdrop upon which we clearly see the emerging picture; working women in America have been treated 'differently'.

The 1950s was an important decade in the history of women and work. New prosperity no longer required women in the factories. A wide range of new products for the home began to change the role of wives and mothers. The mass media was becoming more influential, and promoted an image of family togetherness that solidified the woman's role as center of domestic activity. This culture came to be known as the 'feminine mystique', a term coined by Betty Friedan (Powell, 1993). It characterized a framework in which women had no real destiny of their own but rather derived their sense of self and personal satisfaction from service to their families (Valentine, 1994). One element of this perspective was that respectability demanded that mothers control their daughters' actions (Mouton, 2000) and keep girls' attire, interests, and work - distinct from those of boys. Little girls stayed clean, learned to decorate and cook, and never raised their voices. As a result, women coming of age in the 1950s would later find the discomforts of asserting themselves in the workplace to be particularly acute.

The 1960s witnessed a striking departure from the old roles and rules of past decades (Table 1). While previously women had been 'drafted' into the workforce due to economic and political conditions, and later kept at home to tend to domestic issues, in the 1960s women began coming back into the workforce voluntarily (Beck, 1998). The shift from manufacturing to service industries was also accelerating and women, as we will discuss in a later section, were in demand as never before. This trend has continued and, as a consequence, the balance of work and family life has been shifted (Gini, 1998). Yet, as studies in the 1970s and 1980s revealed, women working outside the home continued to shoulder nearly all of the responsibility for making sure their homes were clean and their families satisfied.

By 1984, almost two-thirds of women with children between six and eighteen years were in the labor force (Powell, 1993: 36). Still, stereotypes created in earlier periods served to limit the nature of work women could do. One study reports that half of all those in the labor force during the 1980s continued to be in gender-stereotyped occupations. Men were hired for heavy manual labor, jobs that required technical expertise, and managerial positions. Women, on the other hand, were dominant in service and support roles (Beck, 1998). Work for both men and women continued to be influenced by gender; even now, women continue to fill a much narrower range of occupations than do men. In addition, men in female-dominated workplaces hold a majority of the senior management positions (Brown and Ridge, 2002).

### **Women in Management**

Today, while women comprise 47% of management, they hold only 12% of corporate-level positions, 5% of top-management jobs, and half of 1% of the highest positions in corporations (Aguinis and Adams, 1998; Adler, 1999; Oakley, 2000; Isaacson, 2002; Vigil, 2002). They also represent only 4% of the top wage-earners (Appelbaum et al., 2003). These statistics represent only a two to three percentage point gain from 1995 to 2000 (Catalyst, 2001). And, while 25% of men reach executive-level positions, only 9% of women are likely to do so (Schneer and Reitman, 1995). This is not a phenomenon particular to the United States. Women in Europe are no better off than their US colleagues. In Europe, women represent approximately 30% of management, yet hold between 1 and 5% of senior-level managerial roles (Gardiner and Tiggemann, 1999).

Today, researchers are finding that many women seem to remain in what is termed 'the marzipan layer just below the top-executive icing' (The Economist: June 28, 2003: 90). In this layer, women, such as those in human resources and sales, are rarely chosen to move to executive-level positions. Instead, the highest position they usually attain in these support positions is the director level. In tournament fashion, women appear to drop out of the running as they move up the executive ladder (Isaacson, 2002). At the current rate of increase, one author suggests that it will be 2466 before women will reach equity in the executive suite (Beck, 1998). Determining why women's career advancement has seemingly been stalled, and the specific obstacles that need to be addressed, is the focus of our later discussion.

There was a time when researchers hypothesized that the numbers of women executives automatically would continue to increase; that simply placing more women into senior positions somehow would make it easier for others to follow. Rindfleish (2003) is among those who have recognized that the future will not unfold quite so seamlessly. He argues that deliberate strategies will be required for women's leadership opportunities to increase. Women will need to take risks to get ahead (Vigil, 2002). On this theme, Hardy-Sellers (2002) reminds us that the glass ceiling has been renamed the concrete ceiling by those who have continued to struggle in their climb to the top. Perhaps this is no where more true than in hospitality organizations where a sexualized workplace contributes to the obstacles women continue to confront.

### **Features of the Hospitality Workplace and the Nature Of Women's Roles**

The hospitality environment itself is a strong force in shaping the way in which men and women interact. The term 'sexualized' has frequently been used to describe the hospitality workplace (Gutek, 1985; Gutek et al., 1990). Hospitality implies having a good time, doing whatever it takes to satisfy others. Dominant images of the industry include wine glasses, whirlpools, and breakfast trays-symbols of romance, of feeling good, of pampering.

Dimensions of the workplace directly influence employee behavior. Many service providers work in close proximity to one another. Their shifts are long and irregular; men and women work together closely during evening and night-time hours. The duties of the hospitality workplace are likely to take employees into settings traditionally associated with gender-linked behaviors. Job responsibilities frequently require employees to spend time together in bedrooms, bars, and lounges. Restaurant kitchens are an example of one of the strongest male-dominated hospitality cultures. As the former director of the French Culinary Institute once lamented, many chefs are reluctant to hire women graduates. She explains: 'They say, You are going to ruin the spirit of my kitchen if you send me a woman because then the other chefs aren't going to pay attention to their work, they are going to be chasing after her' (Peters, 1988: 118). Contributing to a culture that accentuates gender differences is the fact that hospitality employees are often hired, at least in part, because of their physical attractiveness. Airline attendants, sales managers, and convention planners all project their organization's image to the public and, in many instances, this image accentuates and perpetuates gender-related stereotyping. Finally, the

hospitality industry is one of the most diverse and, while a highly desirable characteristic, this diversity is often accompanied by a set of complex gender-related challenges. Different cultures mix gender and business in different ways (Axtell, 1990). In hospitality, bringing together men and women from different cultures with different gender-related experiences, expectations, and assumptions often creates awkward situations for women managers, employees, and guests. For instance, if a customer's understanding of the requirements of a barmaid includes services the female employee does not feel obligated to provide, problems are likely to result. As Wood (2004) notes, increasing gender and other diversity dimensions is a journey that ultimately will provide hospitality organizations with a talent advantage. Such advantages, however, will be realized only as we learn more about the challenges diversity presents and as we design and implement human resources strategies to address them.

Another characteristic of many hospitality organizations is their emphasis on tradition. Repeat guests, in particular, have firm expectations concerning how they want to be treated and the types of services they want to receive. These customers value a consistent and stable product. Consequently, the industry's journey into the twenty-first century, and its willingness to adopt new policies and implement new technologies, has often been slower than changes that have occurred in other types of industry.

It becomes clear that women in hospitality experience additional challenges as a result of the nature and characteristics of the industry in which they work. As employees respond to the varied 'moments of truth' that arise, both men and women have an opportunity to define and influence organizational practices. Hospitality leaders are gradually learning how best to create cultures in which expectations and professional roles are not inappropriately gender-linked. Achieving this goal will undoubtedly require continued attention and commitment, both from industry leaders and from the women who are reaching for the top.

## **Women's Career Development in Hospitality**

### ***Women working in hospitality***

Job opportunities in the hospitality industry are continuing to increase. In 2004, the US hospitality industry employed more than 12 million people; women and minorities constitute

57% of this workforce (Wood, 2004). While hospitality has been one of the fastest areas of employment growth, it has been particularly so for women with nearly three-quarters of the recent increase represented by women's jobs. Many of these positions, however, are part-time, low-status and low paid. In fact, gender segmentation has been relatively stable with women horizontally segregated into particular positions and areas of operation and vertically segregated into relatively low status areas (Babin and Boles, 1998).

While the industry heralds some exceptional female CEOs and executives (e.g. Marilyn Carlson Nelson, CEO of Carlson companies; Stephanie Sonnabend, President, Sonesta International Hotels; Charlotte St. Martin, EVP, Loews Hotels and Barbara Talbot, EVP Four Seasons, to name a few), women who hold top-level positions remain the exception rather than the norm (Mann and Seacord, 2003). In the hospitality industry in the USA, women outnumber men in entry-level managerial positions. Yet, less than 44% of managerial positions are held by women and, similar to the situation in other industries, only a small number of women occupy executive-level positions (Knutson and Schmidgall, 1999; Costen et al., 2003).

Similar statistics characterize the food-service industry where women comprise 44% of managers but only 4% of top-level executives (Primavera, 2001). A recent study concluded that women in foodservice hold 14% of corporate office positions and only 4% of board of director seats at the parent companies of the hundred largest foodservice chains (Walkup, 2003). When Catalyst (a US non-profit organization working to advance women in business) studied women's roles in the industry's 100 largest restaurant chains (Table 2), they arrived at similar conclusions. While the majority of employees were female, women were grossly under-represented at the senior levels, holding only 8% of the board seats and 4% of the 'highest titles' in these foodservice organizations (Martin, 2000). Another recent Catalyst study (2002) suggests that at the present rate, it will take 39 years for women to occupy 50% of corporate office positions. It is clear that women are barely visible in the top executive positions in food-service (Wood, 2004).

The situation is identical in the UK and many other European countries where hospitality is one of the fastest growing sectors and, in the UK, represents the nation's second-largest industry (Purcell, 1996). By the early 1990s, British women comprised 47% of the hospitality workforce, but held only 8% of director positions and half of 1% of executive-level positions

(Maxwell, 1997). While women account for most of new industry entrants, especially at the managerial level, they still do not hold influential positions. In fact, women in managerial positions often report feeling left out of important decisions that affect their departments and companies (Bates, 2002). In one study, over 15% more women than men reported feeling dissatisfied with their career progress and advancement (Backmon et al., 1997).

Renewed attention by researchers and practitioners alike is required to uncover the reasons why women's movement into senior hospitality positions appears to have stalled. This situation is particularly troublesome in light of women's facilitating and inclusive leadership characteristics, a subject discussed in the following section.

### ***Women as hospitality leaders***

The majority of studies indicate that today's successful organizations are team-oriented, agile, flatter, flexible and holistic in their vision and strategy (Appelbaum et al., 2003). As a result, organizational leaders need to be non-coercive, comprehensive thinkers - individuals who are skilled at building work relationships and fostering collaborative teams. These are the traits and behaviors most frequently associated with women's management style (Fletcher, 1998; Colwill and Townsend, 1999; Kolb, 1999; Pounder and Coleman, 2002; Birute and Lewin, 2003).

In addition, women tend to possess transformational leadership characteristics, those traits that enable them to enact dramatic organizational change through providing a vision and inspiring a sense of purpose in others (Bass, 1985; Rosener, 1990; Yammarino et al., 1997). Women also demonstrate characteristics of 'superleadership', a style in which the leader creates self-direction and self-leadership in followers (Sims and Lorenzi, 1992).

In a groundbreaking study that examines gender differences in leadership style, Eagly and Johnson (1990) found that women emphasize both interpersonal relationships and task accomplishment, whereas their male counterparts focus more intently on the task. Women also tend to adopt a more democratic style than men. They are more likely to manage others by offering rewards while their male counterparts are more likely to manage others through punitive measures (Cooper, 1992). It would appear that women typically act in ways that are more

participative, consultative and egalitarian than their male counterparts. They also tend to display more effective communication and people-management skills (Brownell, 1994; Ibarra, 1999; Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002). Women who lead in facilitative ways are likely to be accepted and rated highly by both male and female subordinates (Eagly et al., 1992; Vroom and Jago, 1995). And, as a result of these leadership behaviors, individuals who work for women often demonstrate higher levels of performance, job satisfaction, and job commitment (Yammarino et al., 1997).

Yet, research also suggests that women may be caught in a double-bind (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2002). That is, many of the behaviors they demonstrate - such as using consensus in their decision-making, viewing power as relational, building supportive work environments, and promoting diversity - may not be recognized as valuable in more traditional, male-oriented work cultures (Oshagbemi and Gill, 2002). Consequently, when women try to adopt what are traditionally viewed as typically 'male-oriented' behaviors - such as acting in a highly assertive manner or emphasizing task dimensions of a project - the results can be disastrous, for in addition to increasing their already high stress levels, these women leaders risk facing harsh criticism from both their peers and their supervisors (Colwill and Townsend, 1999; Gardiner and Tiggemann, 1999). Only when women use a combination of what is traditionally viewed as feminine and masculine behavior does their likelihood of success in traditional, male-oriented work cultures increase (Appelbaum et al., 2003).

Given the frustrations many women encounter, increasing numbers of women are taking charge of their own careers in an effort to advance more smoothly (Hall, 1996, 2002). Career-oriented women realize that it is unwise to assume that hard work and the quality of their contributions alone will ensure recognition and timely promotion (Dowling, 1981). Women are searching for ways to drive and reinvent their careers and to assume more responsibility for the paths they take (Mirvis and Hall, 1994). Increasingly, professional women are seeking companies that offer them challenging work, learning-oriented relationships and valued rewards - rewards that are often intrinsic (Hall, 2002). In their search for particular job features, women in hospitality management are increasingly ready to shift both the companies they work for and the type of work they do. Consequently, women's careers are more likely than ever to zigzag, in a non-linear manner, as they move to and from companies and jobs that meet their needs and

provide growth opportunities (Bateson, 1994). It is clear that sophisticated women will seek organizations where they have salary equity and where gender-related workplace challenges are being addressed.

### ***Salaries and gender equity***

Not surprisingly, in addition to finding limited opportunities to advance, women also experience a pay disparity. On average, women executives earn 68% of the salary that their male counterparts demand for the same work. According to one recent study, this gap has been widening (Seglin, 2002). In 1995 a female manager earned 86 cents for every dollar her male counterpart earned; by 2000, this gap increased to 72 cents. In a similar study, seven out of ten industries that employ over 70% of women saw the pay-gap increase over the past ten years (DeCrow, 2002). In other research that examined executive-level pay, women accounted for 31% of the lowest fifth pay level rank, yet comprised only 15% of a sample of 336 executives (Renner et al., 2002). Indeed, when asked if they believed their compensation to be fair, only 62% of female executives agreed while 72% of men holding similar positions believed this to be true (Bates, 2002).

In the hospitality industry, pay equity findings are very similar. By 1994, women in hospitality management positions were earning close to 18% less than men holding similar positions, and many believe that pay gaps actually widen at executive-levels (Brownell, 1994; Woods and Kavanaugh, 1994). When asked about pay discrepancies, most women agreed they exist and, while women traditionally have been more likely to accept lower salary levels than men (Burgess, 2003), this situation is rapidly changing. While issues of pay equity remain severe in far too many hospitality organizations, we have seen that the most successful women are beginning to assess organizational cultures and practices and are looking to join those companies that are addressing their salary issues and that are seeking to identify and address other career challenges in meaningful ways.

### **Challenges for Women in Hospitality**

A host of factors can impede a woman's career climb and salary levels (Catalyst, 2003). These include organizationally-based stereotypes as well as factors relating to women's decisions

about their careers and families. Whether aware of it or not, women managers too frequently are excluded from participation in communication networks, especially the informal networks that shape recruiting decisions and succession plans (Purcell, 1996). In the hospitality and restaurant industries, senior leadership often fails to recognize the need to develop its junior colleagues. As a result, they neglect to provide mentoring opportunities, particularly for their female managers. Research related to each of these four challenges is examined below, and research gaps are addressed.

### *Gender stereotyping*

In hospitality environments stereotyping (Walkup, 2003), treating both men and women employees in a manner consistent with gender expectations regardless of the person's organizational position (Gutek et al., 1990), constitutes a serious barrier to women's career advancement. For instance, the stereotype of a woman as nurturing may be in sharp contrast to her role requirements on the job; yet, the way she is treated cannot help but influence her subsequent behavior as she receives cues regarding what it means to be a woman in a particular role or position (Smeltzer and Werbel, 1986). Those with decision making responsibilities frequently presume that women are less motivated and loyal than their male counterparts, and are only committed to their careers for the short term. This perception is due in part to the fact that women require greater flexibility with regard to periods of maternity leave and shifting family needs (Hicks, 1990; Traves et al., 1997). These individuals may also hold onto more traditional, masculine-oriented ideas about what makes an effective leader. For example, a 'cowboy mentality' still exists in some organizations that perpetuates the notion that leaders must be pioneering, take-charge individuals who make a decision and then forge ahead (Hogue, Yoder and Ludwig, 2002).

In line with this thinking, female managers have been criticized for not being decisive when managing male employees, for not responding assertively, and for being unable to make the tough decisions (Purcell, 1996). Certainly, women's linguistic style, specifically women's tendency to qualify their assertions, can contribute to misinterpretations of women as weak managers (Brownell, 1994; Oakley, 2000). Even a recent hospitality study found pervasive attitudes towards women as the weaker sex, as well as gendered presumptions about the types of

jobs appropriate for women and men (Woods and Viehland, 2000). In looking across industries, a second study found that 40% of women surveyed had been denied a promotion or raise because of their gender-related attributes (Dickerson and Taylor, 2000). Perhaps not surprisingly, as a result of these preconceived notions, women also are likely to short-change their own contributions (Burgess, 2003). Women often fail to promote themselves in ways their male counterparts recognize. They more frequently demonstrate self-limiting behaviors as a result of their lower self-confidence in their ability to perform their job. In addition, women are often willing to accept the 'dirtier', less glamorous, forms of work (Dickerson and Taylor, 2000). Thus, in a culturally imbedded, often unconscious manner, both men and women alike foster gendered stereotypes about feminine and masculine-oriented work. In fact, Fletcher's (1998) study of female engineers indicates important ways both men and women create cultural systems that marginalize feminine-oriented work contributions. The implication of her research is that many of today's organizational reward structures ignore the care-taking functions women often assume. The presumption is that women adopt these roles to fulfill their basic primary needs as nurturers and carers. Such views overlook the contribution these and similar female-linked behaviors make to organizational health and effectiveness.

In terms of research gaps, asking the right questions often assures us that researchers will identify, and inevitably enable us to address, high priority areas of concern. Unfortunately, this is less the case with regard to gender stereotypes. Not only are stereotypes frequently held at a cultural level, they are imbedded in the way men and women think and act on a largely unconscious level. Organizational scientists are not in a position to change the way individuals think, they can only observe behavior and ensure that organizational hold its members accountable for appropriate behavior. To date, research tools and approaches have not sufficiently considered the questions related to stereotypes and their impact on women's careers.

### ***Work/family balance***

In addition to stereotypes, women also face difficult personal demands and tradeoffs that impact their ability to advance through the management ranks. More so than men, women often bear responsibility for managing their family lives regardless of their own job requirements. This may include attending to young children and aging parents (Scase and Goffee, 1989; Traves et

al., 1997). Such 'dual managerial roles' often leave women feeling exhausted, pulled, and fragmented. Many female managers with families report that they continually have to juggle not a work/family balance but, instead, a work/family tradeoff. The implication is clear, one primary responsibility is often compromised for the sake of the other. In fact, one respondent in a 1994 study wrote, 'The real issue is sacrifice. Sacrifice is required if you want to stay in the profession - sacrifice of everything non-work related' (Brownell, 1994b: 106).

To meet these challenges, some women try to find supportive help at home; others opt for a reduced work schedule and take themselves out of the running for jobs with greater responsibilities and heavier workloads (McGrath, 1999; Higgins et al., 2000). In addition, some women temporarily leave their careers to take care of family needs, hoping to re-enter the industry some time in the future (Burgess, 2003). Others remain at their jobs, but because of their families and spouses' obligations, are geographically immobile. As a result, they are unable to accept new responsibilities at different operational locations. All of these factors have the potential to dramatically stall a woman's career advancement.

In the hospitality industry, a field legendary for its long and often inflexible work hours as well as its boundaryless crossover between work and non-work life (Purcell, 1996), women have reported responding to their work-family challenges by leaving their positions to pursue more flexible entrepreneurial ventures both within and ancillary to the hospitality industry (Taylor and Walsh, 2004). Simply put, the demands hospitality organizations make of its managers act as strong disincentive to its female managers to remain employed within them. Yet, the decisions women make can hardly be viewed as a 'choice'. In response to their employer's needs and demands, many women have been forced to make changes in the way they work and have subsequently opted out of the corporate and operational tracks in favor of self-employment (Burgess, 2003).

Research gaps in work/family balance are considerable. Many organizations view work/family initiatives as expenses to be minimized rather than investments that provide a return over time. Studies that link work/family human resources practices to the bottom line will be invaluable to hospitality organizations looking for ways to justify their women-friendly policies. It would also be useful to know more about how women who have elected to work part-time or

share jobs can be transitioned back into full time positions and, importantly, what effect non-traditional work schedules have on judgements of their readiness or suitability for promotion. Other issues related to work/family initiatives pertain to employees' perceptions of organizational justice and equity. Do single employees resent the organization's focus on family issues and, importantly, do these feelings have an impact on their loyalty and performance?

### *Old boy networks*

Networks are informal social systems that use friendship and alliances to organize and control power, influence, and rewards within the formal organizational structure. In a reciprocal manner, members support one another's needs and agendas in efforts to preserve the status quo (Oakley, 2000). In hospitality organizations, large numbers of women continue to report that they have been excluded from these informal communication structures, especially those that shape critical organizational practices such as recruiting and succession planning (Purcell, 1996). This research suggests that the old boy network still pervades the industry and serves as a barrier to women seeking opportunities for growth and advancement. In fact, in her study of women's career development, Brownell (1994a) reported that both senior and middle women managers ranked the old boy network and limited access to information as the most significant obstacle to their career development.

Clearly, the most effective way to reduce the negative impact of old boy networks is to increase the number of women ascending to senior-level positions (Oakley, 2000). New entrants, many of whom would have perspectives different from current informal network members, would likely challenge the way decisions are made. Even behavioral norms, such as the use of conversational sports metaphors or happy hours as the setting for deal-making, would be altered substantially (Oakley, 2000). Thus, to preserve their positions (as well as the salaries that accompany them), members of these networks are likely to put female senior management candidates through rigorous competency tests. Tests such as these signal that women have to fight to gain entry to the upper echelon and that if they do gain access, they are not always welcome. Even if women held senior-level positions, they would likely remain excluded from this sort of social bonding and would be on the periphery of decision making activities.

Constituting a major research gap, the study of old boy networks is particularly illusive. To date, little evidence has been offered for how to break into these informal but powerful social links. Efforts to do so require a change in initiative and this literature may provide the best direction for those seeking to better understand this dynamic. The questions that need to be asked include ‘What does it mean to break into an old boy network?’ and ‘How can the influence networks bring to their members be distributed in a more equitable manner?’. While the literature on social networks is robust, much more study is required before we understand fully what these social structures mean for women seeking to move into tighter and more exclusive circles.

### ***Mentoring***

In the hospitality and restaurant industries, senior leadership often neglects to provide mentoring opportunities for its female management. As a result, women fail to find and develop their own advice-based networks, as well as individuals that can assist in their career development. Networks such as these are important for women managers who often feel they are ‘re-creating the wheel’ in trying to address the challenges they face both at home and within their organizations. In fact, Brownell (1994) found that women general managers rated mentoring as much less of an important factor than did their lower-status counterparts. One explanation may be that the general managers did not rely on a mentor for their own career advancement while women entering the industry today have higher expectations. Regardless of this, it appears that the stage a woman is at in her career influences her perceptions of the most serious workplace obstacles to career development. Without mentoring and advice from those men and women that have been ‘in their shoes’, many women simply cope as best they can and plateau in middle-management positions.

In a never-ending loop, organizations that fail to organize and develop mentoring relationships for its female managers often have only a token few holding top-level positions. These few token women face tremendous pressure to survive and thrive in their positions. They face more on-the-job scrutiny than the men holding similar positions and this visibility increases their pressure to perform (Oakley, 2000). As a result of their minority status, they tend to feel isolated and alone in their struggle to succeed. While ‘token’ executive-level women may be

unable to provide the mentoring breadth needed to help develop the sheer volume of women managers stalled in middle-management ranks, other reasons for the lack of mentoring have also been uncovered. First, these women may be uncomfortable sharing the depth of the challenges they faced in rising to their positions. The fact that they hold a 'token role' also may prevent them from being able to provide developmental advice. In addition, one stream of research suggests that relationships among industry women are not always collaborative but can be characterized by jealousy and competition. A number of surveys have revealed that it is too frequently other women, not men, who have made it difficult to advance. Thus, the organizational challenge to develop senior female leadership can be complex.

While an equal number of female and male professionals graduate from management programs and enter the hospitality and restaurant industries with equivalent salaries, female managers quickly begin to lag behind in their career development. When they are unsupported and frustrated, many women simply drop out of the race (Anker, 1997; Burgess, 2003).

When it comes to research gaps, we know that the success of mentoring programs is largely dependent upon the strength of the relationship that is developed between the mentor and mentee. To date, we know relatively little about how to make these matches successful and what characteristics are important and under what circumstances. Intuitively, we recognize that the effectiveness of mentoring is related to the extent to which it is tied to the organization's evaluation and reward system. Additional research is required to better understand the incentives that can be put into place to encourage mentoring, and the specific impact mentoring has on the career development of women managers.

### **Solutions for Success: Fostering Women's Career Development in Hospitality**

While the four obstacles just reviewed present significant challenges to professional women pursuing high-level careers in the hospitality industry, solutions are gradually being addressed. The industry can improve its ability to develop and retain current and future women leadership in several significant ways. Women seeking job satisfaction and career advancement will be looking for organizations that demonstrate the best practices in human resources. Some

of these practices are described below as they address the four career challenges previously discussed.

### *Gender stereotypes*

First, hospitality and restaurant companies could benefit from examining their internal processes, especially those that foster implicit gender stereotypes. For example, company decision-makers might ask themselves: Are women expected to work in different ways than their male counterparts? Are women held to different standards of performance? What preconceived assumptions about women - especially women leaders - need to be uncovered and tested? For example, as a society, we conventionally assume that more attractive male leaders - and less attractive female leaders - are more competent than their male and female counterparts (Oakley, 2000). Uncovering and addressing assumptions in structured ways, such as through training sessions and discussion groups, could go far toward lessening their impact. In addition, to promote a transparent performance-based environment, organizational leaders can make job descriptions, work loads, and performance expectations explicit and readily available (Simms, 2003). These leaders should also be clear about potential succession plans and career paths within the organization.

Human resource practices such as these will help ensure that women, as well as men, are fairly and explicitly evaluated on their performance. These practices will also help make clear why specific individuals are selected for promotional opportunities and why others are deemed to be less well prepared. Such policies eventually will dispel the belief that women are evaluated for their performance and men are evaluated for their potential (McCracken, 2000). In addition to fostering a performance-based work environment, these practices also have the potential to close the gender-based pay gap.

Finally, to keep women in promotion pools, organizational leaders can organize forums to discuss the dire need to develop performance-based, female leadership within their organizations. They may come to recognize that women who work on flexible and/or reduced schedules can still be eligible for new opportunities and increased responsibilities. In fact, they may be ready to take on more active roles in their organizations if asked to do so.

### *Work/family balance*

In addition to uncovering and resolving stereotypes about women, human resource initiatives aimed at reducing work/family conflict have been shown to make a significant difference (Konrad and Mangel, 2000). Organized programs such as providing assistance with childcare, days off to care for children, flexible work schedules and parental leaves have reduced absenteeism and turnover for both female and male employees. As an example, KFC works in partnership with the YMCA to offer childcare options, especially during non-traditional work hours (Walkup, 2003). These programs reduce the level of conflict that employees confront. This is especially helpful for women managers who experience the greatest work/family dilemmas - often during their prime years of productivity (Hammer et al., 1997; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1999).

An interesting idea that several organizations are experimenting with is bundling their work/family initiatives. In other words, organizations are offering a menu of options and even combining different packages of support to accommodate employees' varying needs. For example, Cisco Inc., the software design company based in Virginia, offers employees and their families on-site schooling, medical care, work-out facilities, a post office, a dry cleaner, and even a golf course. Employees are encouraged to have lunch with their children in one of the on-site restaurants. While extreme in its bundling, Cisco is an example of a company that weaves work/family support seamlessly into its daily working culture. Initiatives such as these send powerful cultural signals that the organization cares about the challenges its employees face and is committed to working with its employees to resolve, if not reduce them.

When the well-being of employees is such an overt organizational value, companies are likely to attract and retain a very dedicated and loyal staff (O'Reilly and Pfeffer, 2000; Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000). Work/family initiatives have been linked with improved recruitment efforts, organizational commitment, use of organization citizenship behaviors and even firm productivity and performance (Osterman, 1995; Tsui, Pearce, Porter and Tripoli, 1997; Konrad and Mangel, 2000; Perry-Smith and Blum, 2000). Most importantly, the presence of these initiatives has been shown to increase the percentage of senior management positions held by women (Dreher, 2003). While we may applaud these organizational initiatives, Cendent

Corporation's Mary Mahoney reminds us that women also need 'strong familial support systems to navigate the winding roads between work and home life' (Mann and Seacord, 2003: 22).

### ***Old boy networks***

To weaken the impact of the old boy network, hospitality and restaurant companies encourage women to formally and informally interact with both women and men (Linehan, 2001). These types of networking opportunities help women to forge stronger working relationships. They also tend to help falsify gender-based stereotypes and fears that keep networks such as these from developing. In other words, once men have an opportunity to work with women, their gender-based stereotypes tend to disappear; they begin to view women more as individuals rather than as representatives of their gender (Powell, 1993).

In addition to providing networking opportunities, progressive hospitality leaders also ensure that decision-making processes are explicit and formalized and are held within a context that is appropriate for all managers, men and women alike. Organizations can hold accountable leaders who fail to open their networks and adopt explicit performance-based practices. For example, Marriott now requires its leaders to develop and advance its women management. Leaders who do not develop diversity initiatives or programs to improve the number of higher-ranking females run the risk of losing their bonuses and reducing their overall compensation package (Wells, 2001).

### ***Mentoring***

Mentoring and all-women coaching programs are developmental options that have been shown to make a difference in the rate of women's career advancement. Formalized mentoring programs whereby senior executives provide support and coaching to junior colleagues have been linked with an increase in job performance, pay, promotions, career development and employee satisfaction (Fagenson, 1989; Scandura, 1992; Ragins and Scandura, 1994; Dreher and Cox, 1996). Mentoring relationships broaden managers' formal and informal networks. Effective mentors teach apprentices how the organization works. They also serve as role models, as they help socialize apprentices to the organization's norms and values. Most importantly, mentors often act as champions or political sponsors who advocate on their junior manager's behalf when

important decisions, such as promotions, are being made (Roemer, 2002). All-women coaching programs and networking opportunities allow women to consider, without penalty, ways they can develop their strengths as leaders as well as discover and address their personal limitations (Vinnicombe and Singh, 2003). So, too, networking opportunities offer ways for women to test ideas, find solutions to common problems, and obtain empathy and support. One such event is the Leadership Development Conference, formed in 1989 by women in the foodservice industry who were searching for ways to ensure that women had the resources to succeed in this competitive environment. The Leadership Development Conference provided such services as workshops, keynote speakers, networking events, and mentoring - all factors that have been shown to be crucial to women's career success. The benefits of these approaches have prompted companies such as Marriott International to organize a series of leadership conferences for its women managers, especially those who work in isolated locations and have limited networking opportunities (Wells, 2001). Working in tandem, these and similar initiatives can help to shatter the barriers keeping women from top-level positions. Most importantly, they have the potential to improve the productivity and, ultimately, the profitability of the hospitality organizations to which they belong.

Given these four areas of concern, hospitality companies benefit from examining their internal human resources processes. With the goal of fostering a meritocratic and transparent performance-based environment, organizations can make job descriptions, work loads, career paths and performance expectations explicit and readily available to all employees (Simms, 2003). Transparent and clearly communicated policies will help to dispel the notion that women are evaluated for their performance and men are evaluated for their potential (McCracken, 2000). Companies can also explore ways to keep women who work on flexible and/or reduced schedules eligible for new and more responsible positions. In addition, they can create informal networking opportunities for both men and women (Linehan, 2001), and provide forums to discuss strategies for developing female-based leadership. Finally, as has been discussed, organizations can hold accountable leaders who fail to open their networks and adopt explicit practices (Dreher, 2003). Increasingly, progressive human resource practices will become essential for organizations to attract and retain women employees (Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990; Powell, 1993; Oakley, 2000).

## **Women Travelers**

In addition to seeking hospitality organizations that address and encourage their career development, women also are consuming hospitality-related services in growing numbers. While our focus has been on women's career development in the hospitality industry and the challenges they confront as hospitality employees and leaders, this section addresses a parallel concern. As women in all businesses move up the career ladder, they are traveling more frequently. In fact, in the United States women are the fastest growing segment of the business travel industry (Scott, 1997; Wlazlowski, 2000; Carbasho, 2002). Because their numbers are increasing, women as consumers of hospitality - particularly those relatively privileged North American executives - have become an important market segment for hotels, restaurants, airlines, and a range of other travel industries.

In 2003, women accounted for more than half of all business travelers - up from 25% in 1991 and 1% approximately 35 years ago. While attention first began to focus on women travelers as a separate market segment during the 1970s, much of the literature during that decade outlined things women could do for themselves to ensure a smooth travel experience (Much, 1977; Wells, 1985). At that time few hospitality organizations recognized women travelers as an important demographic, or considered their responsibility to make travel for women safe and productive. Times have changed. Public relations efforts, advertising, and online partnerships are just a few of the many ways in which the travel industry is recognizing the profit to be made by addressing women's travel needs.

### ***Women's travel behavior***

Hospitality organizations increasingly ask 'Do women travelers have different needs from men?'. The vote is in, and it appears to be a resounding 'definitely'. While critics question whether marketers have contributed to the perception of women as a unique niche, a 1997 survey found that women indeed expressed different travel preferences (OAG's Business Travel Lifestyle Survey). Not only are women traveling more, they are also traveling differently. D.K. Shifflet and Associates in 1998, for instance, discovered that over half of room nights spent by women were associated with multi-night stays for meetings, conferences, or conventions. Men,

on the other hand, were significantly more transient and often had sequential one-night stays for sales or consulting purposes (Shifflet and Bhatia, 1998).

Women's behavior associated with traveling also differs in several important ways from their male counterparts. Women book rooms further in advance and more frequently contact the hotel directly rather than going through a reservations center. A survey of corporate travel managers conducted by Runzheimer International (2000) reported that women follow travel policies more closely than men. They also make fewer after-ticket itinerary changes and travel by coach more frequently than their male counterparts.

In 2001, Embassy Suites commissioned a survey on women business travelers and discovered that while over two-thirds of respondents said they consider themselves extroverts at home and at work, half of that group believed they become introverted when they travel. Marketing professionals believe that this finding suggests that room service and the comfort and convenience of in-room facilities play an important role in securing women's travel business (Sharkey, 2002). Another 2001 survey, for instance, found that over 75% of women order room service at least once a day when they travel compared to 54% of men (Carbasha, 2002).

Women also appear to be more concerned about getting a good night's sleep than their male counterparts (Women and Marketing, 1998). The National Sleep Foundation and Hilton Hotels conducted a joint study and discovered that nearly 20% more women than men are concerned with travel-related sleep issues; 40% more women than men reported having difficulty getting a good night's sleep before their travel.

It appears that women simply take sleep more seriously than do men (women are twice as likely as men to bring their own pillow when they travel). The Sleep Impact study also found that nearly 80% of women surveyed believed that sleep is a valuable use of time, allowing them to enjoy themselves more fully and be more productive while they're conducting business away from home. On the other hand, nearly 30% of men (and only half as many women) saw sleep as 'a waste of time'. Do men pay for their attitude? Apparently so, as nearly two out of every ten men admitted to falling asleep at meetings and conventions (Hamilton, 1999).

### *Women's travel preferences*

John Portman and Associates, an architectural firm specializing in hospitality, conducted a 2001 survey of 'what women want' when they travel (Carbasho, 2002). The results of this study of 13,000 women from Fortune 1,000 companies confirmed what numerous previous surveys on women travelers' preferences revealed (Rhymer, 1996; Taylor, 2000; Kamberg, 2001; Carbasho, 2002; McCoy-Ullrich, 2002). At the top of the list of women's concerns is security. Women want their room numbers kept private and appreciate a phone call to alert them that room service is on the way. Many hotels deliberately assign female room service personnel to deliver meals to their female guests.

With regard to specific security measures, women travelers seek well lit hallways and lighting in all public areas. Hyatt, for example, uses a special service code to identify single women business travelers so that front desk attendants can assign them to rooms near an elevator (Wlazlowski, 2000). Women also want a hotel close to the event they are attending - preferably one with an on-site fitness center and spa. Free valet parking (Coleman, 2002), to-your-door escorts, and jogging partners are provided at several luxury properties to create a safe environment for their female guests (Swift, 2000). To further promote safety, a number of hotels provide women with information on local restaurants and places of interest. Crowne Plaza offers a mapping service to assist women venturing out of the hotel for dining or recreation. This service is well appreciated, as only about half of all women business travelers research their destination before leaving on a trip and therefore find it stressful to make their way around in an unfamiliar city (Coleman, 2002). And, while every hotel, restaurant, airline, or other hospitality business has an obligation to protect its customers, there are a wide range of actions women travelers can initiate to ensure that their travel is as safe as possible (Table 3).

It has been suggested that women also appreciate up-graded amenities, and hotels have responded by providing makeup mirrors, gender-appropriate reading materials, climate control, flavored coffees and herbal teas. Women travelers were the inspiration for Westin's Heavenly Bed, which features multiple layers of sheets, a down comforter and a pillow-top mattress (Swift, 2000). Larger bathtubs and ample shampoo are also amenities women are thought to appreciate. Westin concluded that its female guests prefer white sleeping room walls over darker wood grains; other surveys have found that women seek large windows and stylish room furnishings.

Wyndham Hotels and Resorts ran a contest among 1,300 frequent female business travelers, nearly 90% of who were executives. They asked what respondents would do to improve business travel if they were CEO of a travel company. The winning suggestions included:

- (1) complimentary steaming of suits upon check-in;
- (2) providing emergency travel kits just for women upon check-in, with pantyhose and feminine supplies; and
- (3) giving guests the option to exercise in-room by supplying videos, weights, steps, and other portable equipment.

### ***Hotels that are meeting women's needs***

A number of hotels have been in the forefront in identifying women's needs and responding to what they have discovered. Wyndham is credited with taking much of the initiative to better understand women's travel requirements and preferences. Conducting joint research with New York University, Wyndham Hotels' Women On Their Way program includes an all-female advisory council that makes regular recommendations on how the company can best respond to the growing number of women travelers (Khan, 1999). Another hotel that understands women's needs is the Pan Pacific San Francisco which recently conducted a survey of female guests and responded to findings by taking such measures as adding diffusers for hairdryers. They also upgraded their in-room fax machines with copy capabilities as a result of survey responses (Caldwell, 2002). Three phone lines in each room now make it possible for guests to log on, fax, and retrieve voicemail simultaneously! Expotel, a hotel reservations company, addresses women's concerns by asking customers who use its booking service to rate the hotels in which they have stayed. Those given high marks for catering to women's preferences and requirements are awarded 'Woman Aware' status, allowing travelers to identify and select from this group of hotels when making reservations (Rigby, 1996).

Restaurants are also responding to this new and growing market. To make solo female travelers more comfortable, a number of restaurants, such as those in Loews and Wyndham properties, are offering 'networking tables' designated specifically for women business travelers seeking conversation and companionship while on the road (Swift, 2000; McCoy-Ullrich, 2002).

### *Women traveling abroad*

Efforts to create female-friendly environments are not limited to US properties. Novotel Atlantis Shanghai has a dedicated executive floor catering to the growing number of women travelers. Here, rooms include such amenities as nail clippers, floral arrangements, a garment dryer, and a selection of aromatherapy treatments. Special female security personnel are assigned to the floor, and a curfew is set for visitors. Similarly, Regal Airport Hotel in Hong Kong has developed Feminine Focus Rooms with special amenities that make a woman's stay more comfortable. Among the most notable are sewing kits, pot-pourri, back-lit and full length mirrors, and bath salts. The Park Hotel in Chennai offers babysitting facilities and in-room massages. For its LADY (Luxury Amenities Designed for You) program, the Ritz-Carlton Hong Kong creates female-friendly rooms for a modest supplement. Amenities include luxury toiletries, keepsake silk pajamas, and complimentary pressing. Few hotels, however, can match the accommodations of the Four Seasons Singapore, which include a business suit, matching shoes, accessories, and cosmetics for women who have lost their luggage (Manila, 2000).

### *Web sites for women travelers*

Nothing is easier than accessing information online, and an increasing number of hotels and women's organizations have developed web sites targeted to meet the needs of women business travelers. Evelyn Hannon created one of the more highly regarded resources, <http://www.journeywoman.com>. In June, 2000, Telecomworldwire launched another successful site at <http://www.m2.com>. This site features articles for women covering such topics as foreign travel, tips on traveling alone, parenting while away on business, traveling while pregnant, and work-family balance (Telecomworldwire, 2000). Wyndham's web site, <http://www.womenbusinesstravelers.com>, has received praise for its focus on issues and concerns important to women.

<http://www.HERmail.net> is an interactive site where women can ask questions and network with their female colleagues (Sharkey, 2002). <http://Worldroom.com> is the web arm of I-Quest Corporation, a global provider of Internet services to the hospitality industry which offers extensive information for business travelers. Recently, the company expanded its services

to include a new women's web channel, Women's World, which will be available both in the US and Asia. In addition many airlines, like Delta's Executive Women's Travel Network, address the concerns of women traveling alone in the air.

### ***Training employees to meet the needs of women travelers***

As they travel more, women are also registering a significantly higher number of complaints about their accommodations and service. They are finding more problems with hotels, restaurants, airlines, and car-rental agencies than their male counterparts. In fact, a poll cited in USA Today revealed that well over half of all women business travelers believe they 'routinely' encounter second-class treatment and service - what they describe as poor, inadequate, or unacceptable. Expotel found the situation equally as grim; only 2% of respondents to their survey of women travelers said that they are 'seldom uncomfortable' in hotel bars. Sharkey (2002) warns that airport hotels can be particularly unsatisfactory for single women due to the high percentage of one-night male guests. In addition, as one article explains, service employees often assume that when a man and woman are traveling together that the man holds the higher level position. Yet another frequent act of poor judgement - women are tired of being seated between two men on a plane with little room and no armrest (Travel Trade Gazette, 2001).

Given this situation, the hospitality industry would do well to examine its employee training practices more closely. Programs to ensure non-discriminatory and gender-appropriate service delivery would seem particularly relevant. Concierge staff might be prepared to recommend safe dining options for single women travelers and to provide additional local information to make women feel more confident when they venture into the surrounding community. Restaurants, too, might benefit from increased attention as to how employees can best deliver service to single female travelers. Walkup (2000) describes the dining experiences of several business women, emphasizing that servers need to be trained in how to treat single women in restaurants.

### ***The final word on women travelers***

In spite of progress on many fronts, it appears that women too often receive different treatment in their leisure as well as their professional activities (Foley, Maxwell and

McGillivray, 1999). What do women want? To get the job accomplished efficiently and effectively. Specific services, employee attitudes, and hospitality facilities can either support their efforts or can hinder the woman traveler's ability to work effectively on the road (Taylor, 2004). There appears to be no down side; men nearly always benefit from the incentives hospitality organizations have taken to respond to the needs of women travelers. Additional office equipment in sleeping rooms, business lounges, increased security measures, and even amenities like makeup mirrors have made men's travel easier (Khan, 1999). As women's career development accelerates there undoubtedly will be a growing number of business women in airplanes and hotel rooms. This transition will focus increasing attention on service features that enhance safety, enjoyment, and productivity for all business travelers.

### **Future Directions for the Study of Women in Hospitality**

The future for both women in hospitality management and women travelers will depend in large measure on the nature and quality of information generated by those who relentlessly probe and seek answers to critical questions. It is likely that a variety of approaches and methods will continue to be brought to bear on the subjects of study.

While there are numerous areas that require further exploration, the following four topics represent several of the most promising directions for researchers seeking to contribute to our knowledge of women and hospitality.

### **Globalization/technology and its effect on women's careers**

The shift toward a knowledge economy and the increasingly global nature of the hospitality industry has affected the profile of those most likely to succeed in the business. Today's manager requires not only a strong knowledge base, but the ability to work collaboratively irrespective of spatial, time and cultural differences. Successful managers are those who demonstrate well-developed communication skills and who are continually flexible and creative (Baum, 1990). If this is the case, the future looks particularly bright for women who have repeatedly demonstrated strong communication abilities and a personal style characterized by a focus on building consensus (Gillian, 1997). As we have discussed, women managers have also been shown to demonstrate a facilitating style that fosters teamwork (Shirley, 1995) as well

as more effective listening skills (Arliss and Borisoff, 1998). Such well-developed interpersonal competencies will serve them well as diversity increases and multinational companies seek employees who can facilitate global understanding. At this time, however, only 3% of women are international managers and some researchers suggest that unless they belong to formal support networks, it is unlikely that these numbers will increase at a significant rate (Linehan, 2001).

Work and family balance is an issue likely to continue to dominate human resource concerns. Technology makes more options possible as women and men alike set up home workstations and take advantage of flexible shifts. Decision support systems and other communication technologies allow group interaction and facilitate decision making.

### *Issues of women's wellness*

Women are not only working in greater numbers than ever before, they are also working harder as they aim for the tops of corporate ladders. Consequently, an emerging concern that extends issues related to work/family balance is the degree to which women are able to maintain cognitive/emotional as well as physical health, and what interventions might be available to ensure their well being in the hospitality workplace. Those who hold middle-management positions - where most women currently can be found - are more likely to experience stress and burnout than any other managerial level (Buick and Thomas, 2001). As a consequence, the likelihood that these managers eventually will leave the industry is particularly high. Stories from those women who pioneer as leaders in their organizations might reveal insights into how 'token' women have managed stress and isolation.

Chronic physical illness in the workplace-ot just acute - has become an area of concern and study for organizational theorists and practitioners alike. What happens when women believe they must hide, or at least minimize, their recurring health problems? How does the actual health issue as well as the climate of mistrust affect the individual's success? Increasing recognition of this concern has encouraged researchers to examine the link between mental and physical well-being and to seek ways in which work can be reconfigured to help individuals perform at their best without sacrificing their personal well-being.

Human resource policies that facilitate the establishment of such supportive practices as work/family balance, mentoring, and informal networking opportunities reduce absenteeism and turnover and increase both women's satisfaction and their performance. Thus, as organizations look after women's cognitive/emotional well being, contributions from these employees increase. Given projected labor pools, retaining employees will become increasingly important for organizational success. Research that ties this improved performance to the organization's bottom line will ensure that such policies become institutionalized and more commonplace.

### ***Women's career development as an organizational change effort***

Another future direction for research pertains to the gendered assumptions that surround work for both men and women. While an uncomfortable topic, to be successful organizations will need to identify and implement large-scale change initiatives. The most successful organizations will be those that question current practices and traditional patterns by asking, 'Why are room attendants almost always female?' or 'What can we learn from female chefs?'. Researchers who pose these and similar questions surface information that will inform and prepare the next generation of women leaders.

Further, research that demonstrates the value diversity brings to decision making and organizational effectiveness will become more frequent and more forceful. Women's distinctive ways of viewing dynamic situations and solving problems will be studied more frequently with the goal of better understanding the tangible added value of multiple perspectives.

### ***Expanding our understanding of women travelers***

We have just begun to probe the needs of women travelers and the ways in which their increasing numbers are changing the shape of hospitality services and service delivery. As international travel becomes more commonplace, accommodations for women overseas will become ever more important. Researchers may focus on better understanding women's needs as they travel through time zones and within unfamiliar cultures. The lodging and food service sectors have been quick to respond to women as a new and growing market demographic. The coming years will likely see an increase in the attention paid to women travelers by other segments of the hospitality industry. Cruise lines, casinos, airlines, and clubs may all begin to

address women's needs in slightly different ways. Studies that provide detailed information on women's concerns, needs, and expectations will prove valuable as women more frequently venture into ships and casinos alone.

## **Conclusion**

Those who believed that all women needed was 'time in rank' to be promoted into senior level positions have been largely disappointed with the lack of women's career progress over the past decade. As noted earlier, there is reason to speculate (Isaacson, 2002) that women may be worse off than they were six years ago in the rate of progress they are making toward both earnings and promotions. What many organizational leaders failed to recognize is that career development requires a combination of several factors, including well-defined human resource initiatives. Research being done on women's careers in hospitality has begun to surface some of the strategies that hospitality organizations can implement to assist women in reaching senior level positions. This work, however, has just begun.

If enrollment in hospitality management programs is an indicator of women's potential to impact the industry's future, the decades ahead indeed look bright. The percentage of women in the entering classes of the major US hospitality programs continues to grow (Sigala and Baum, 2003). As women are increasingly focused on achieving senior management positions, the range of available role models will widen and opportunity for success in the industry will become more readily apparent. These women also will be among those who travel more frequently, both for business and pleasure. Through surveys, interviews, and other research efforts, data will be gathered and brought to bear on current practices with the goal of making travel safer and more satisfying for women who increasingly depend upon buses, trains, airplanes, hotels, restaurants, and other service providers to meet their travel needs. A better understanding of women and hospitality, both as employees and consumers, will benefit men and women alike as they work together in the decades ahead to create high-performing and socially responsible service organizations.

**Table 1.** The family and women's changing roles.

1950s - mothers had no destiny, did everything for husband and children

1960s - dramatic split from old roles

1970s - women fading from place in center of family

1980s-female yuppie

1990s - new family unit, mothers one member of a group

*Adapted from Valentine, V. (1994). Advertising's happy families, Campaign, 26–28.*

**Table 2.** Catalyst study of women in food service.

- 56% of employees are women
- 44% of managers are women
- 14% of corporate officers are women
- 8% of board directors are women
- 4% of the 'highest titles' are women

*Adapted from Primavera, B. (2001). Women stand tall in the heat of the kitchen but executive prospects are still chilly, Nation's Restaurant News, 35(46), 32–34.*

**Table 3.** Recommended precautions for women travelers.

- Request a room with a peephole, dead bolt and chain lock
- Make sure there is no connecting door to another room
- Select hotels that take extra measures to ensure personal security
- Travel light
- Read or work while traveling
- Use crowds to be inconspicuous; stand in a group while waiting for a cab
- Make arrangements to arrive before dark if possible
- Before driving away in a rental car, make sure the gas tank is full and the tires are properly inflated
- Take a cell phone for emergencies
- Use valet parking whenever possible
- Ask for an escort to your car if valet parking is not available
- Never give out your room number
- Keep some money in an outside pocket to avoid fumbling through your purse for tips
- If you are expecting a delivery from outside the hotel, have it left at the front desk
- Ask to have a five minute warning phone call before room service or other deliveries are sent to your room
- When going out, leave the lights on and the closet doors and shower curtain open
- Meet others in a public location such as the lobby
- Make sure friends or family at home have your schedule and hotel information

*Adapted from McCoy-Ullrich, Dawn (Feb. 1, 2002). Alone on the road: Travel industry responds to women's security needs, American Woman Road and Travel, 3–4.*

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