WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PRACTICES FOR WOMEN AND ORGANIZATIONS

Margaret M. Hopkins
University of Toledo

Deborah A. O'Neil
Bowling Green State University

Angela Passarelli and Diana Bilimoria
Case Western Reserve University

This article presents a comprehensive perspective of leadership development that addresses the unique needs of women in organizations. The authors propose 7 categories of leadership development practice and examine the opportunities and obstacles in each of these practices for women. The authors offer recommendations for consulting psychologists and human resources professionals targeted to female clients and to organizational practices in order to advance women's leadership development. Finally, the authors discuss the overarching themes emanating from their research and implications for women and leadership development.

Keywords: women, leadership development, career development

The ongoing development of individuals to effectively lead in the global economy is a competitive advantage that contributes to organizational success. Organizations must focus on developing both male and female employees to compete in this rapidly changing, turbulent new world order. Women joined the workforce in record numbers beginning in the 1970s, and today women make up more than half of the managerial workforce, rising from 18% in 1972. Among *Fortune* 500 companies, women are 15.4% of the top officers and 2.4% of the chief executive officers (U.S. Women in Business, 2008). Along with the rise of women into the ranks of leadership come some unique opportunities as well as challenges, both overt and subtle, for women to realize their full potential. The purpose of this article is twofold: to examine leadership development practices with a particular focus on the needs of women, and to provide recommendations for consulting psychologists and

Margaret M. Hopkins, Department of Management, University of Toledo; Deborah A. O'Neil, Department of Management, Bowling Green State University; Angela Passarelli and Diana Bilimoria, Department of Organizational Behavior, Case Western Reserve University.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Margaret M. Hopkins, Department of Management, College of Business Administration, University of Toledo, Mail Stop 103, Toledo, OH 43606. E-mail: mhopkin@utnet.utoledo.edu

human resources professionals working with individual women and with organizations to advance women's leadership development.

Although we recognize that men and women are more similar than different, differences do exist along biological, neurological, and psychological dimensions. For example, diverse gender approaches to information processing, responses to stress, and motivation have been highlighted (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005). It has been suggested that women and men also have divergent conceptions of career success. One study found that women tend to define career success as an interest in intrinsically rewarding roles, personal achievements, self-development, and work–life balance, whereas men tend to view success as high salaries, moving up the corporate ladder, and achieving status (Sturges, 1999). In addition to differences in definitions of success, women also experience competing priorities for their time and attention across life and career stages that are different for men (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Vinnicombe and Singh (2003) concluded that women and men have different value orientations, thereby requiring different approaches to leadership development.

In this article, we build the case for why leadership development needs to be unique and different for women, tailored to meet their specific developmental needs. Based on our account of leadership development for women, we propose recommendations for consulting psychologists and human resources professionals targeted to female clients and to organizational practices. We offer a comprehensive viewpoint that addresses the individual and structural challenges of leadership development for women, the development strategies that are effective for women, and the support structures and encouragements that organizations can undertake to create sustainable leadership development contexts for women.

First, we discuss women's leadership development in the context of known differences between women and men in leadership. Next, we investigate the presence of existing research on women and leadership development. Third, we define effective leadership development and discuss best practices in leadership development focusing on both individual change and organizational transformation. Fourth, we propose seven categories of leadership development practice and examine their relationship to the unique needs of women. We explore the opportunities and obstacles in these seven practices for women, and present recommendations for consultants working at both the individual and organizational levels. Finally, we discuss the overarching themes emanating from our research and implications for women and leadership development.

Gender Differences in Leadership

The systematic development of women's leadership must take into account three aspects of sex-related differences demonstrated by previous empirical research. First, women and men differ in leadership styles. A meta-analysis of more than 160 studies of sex-related differences found that women use a more participative or democratic (communal) style and a less autocratic or directive (agentic) style than men do, although this tendency declines in highly male-dominated settings (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Other research on performance, leadership, and influence in teams has similarly shown that men display a more self-assertive and dominant style and less deference and warmth with team members than do women (Carli & Eagly, 1999). Female managers more than male managers tend to adopt a transformational leadership style, especially in mentoring

followers and attending to them as individuals (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

Second, women and men differ on the behaviors of leadership. Several studies using 360 degree feedback processes indicate that women managers and executives consistently score higher on behavioral competencies such as teamwork, empowerment, sharing information, and care for employees ("As leaders," 2000). Other studies of leadership competencies reveal that women, on average, are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, and are more adept interpersonally, whereas men, on average, are more self-confident, optimistic, adaptable, and able to manage stress (Goleman, 1998).

Third, sex-related differences emerge in the evaluation of leadership. Although a meta-analysis of 82 studies measuring leadership effectiveness (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995) found that male and female leaders do not differ overall in effectiveness, comparisons of leader effectiveness favor men when the setting is male-dominated, when a high percentage of subordinates are male, or when the role is seen as more congenial to men (in terms of self-assessed competence, interest, and low requirements for cooperation or high requirements for control). Comparisons favor women when the above conditions are reversed (Eagly et al., 1995).

In addition to sex differences related to leadership, organizational environments are themselves gendered, also affecting leadership development efforts. Organizations, particularly those that are male-dominated, are not gender-neutral—they reflect environments where women's presence, performance, and success are scrutinized, measured, and evaluated differently from men's (O'Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008). As Ruderman and Ohlott (2005) noted, "even the most progressive modern organizations have been created by and for men, and thus tend to have systems, policies, norms, and structures that favor the male life experience" (p. 4). Thus, efforts to systematically develop women's leadership must be cognizant of this important contextual element and appropriately tailor a learning agenda that takes this factor into consideration.

For women of color, opportunities to advance in the ranks of organizational leadership are even more difficult than for White women (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Catalyst, 1999). In a comprehensive study on women of color in organizations, Catalyst (1999) found that study participants reported less access to mentors and sponsors, and those women who intended to leave their organizations said that ineffective organizational diversity initiatives had failed to address subtle gender and racial biases. Bell (1990) found that African American women live "bicultural life experiences," resulting in increased stress and pressure that occur from having to navigate two worlds—their predominantly White professional work world and their predominantly Black community world.

Research on Women and Leadership Development

We conducted an illustrative overview of the literature to provide an understanding of the extent to which women's leadership development is emphasized. Academic research relevant to leadership development for women is scattered across a variety of fields, including management, business, and psychology. This diffusion of literature dilutes cumulative knowledge, making it difficult to derive an overarching framework.

A literature search of the PsychInfo and Business Source Complete databases using the search terms *women* and *leadership development*, *management development*, and *executive development* was conducted. Abstracts of each article were reviewed for evidence of leadership, management, and executive development processes, practices, and

frameworks relative to women in organizations. Business Source Complete yielded the most references: women and leadership development, 83; women and management development, 340; women and executive development, 1. However, examination of the abstracts yielded very few relevant articles; just 26 of 424 or 6% of the total articles discussed leadership or management development practices and processes for women. The PsychInfo database search yielded 19 references for women and leadership development, 14 for women and management development, and 1 for women and executive development. Applying the same search criteria to the abstracts of these articles, 29% (10 of 34) were found relevant to the topic of women's leadership development. This overview of the literature suggests that the topic of women's leadership development is underrepresented in the business and psychology literature.

Leadership Development

Before we examine leadership development for women, it is instructive to describe the features of leadership development in general. Leadership development has been defined as "expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes" (Day, 2001, p. 582). Leadership development is a large and growing business, with $50 billion spent in the year 2000 alone (Ready & Conger, 2003).

For leadership development to have maximum impact, programs must focus on two levels of learning simultaneously—the individual level and the organizational level (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). Individual leadership development has moved increasingly toward an emphasis on development through experience in the context of the work itself (McCall, 2004). The intent is to work with individual members to improve their skills and knowledge in service of building the overall capacity and effectiveness of the organization (Cummings & Worley, 2005). The best leadership development programs do not stand alone but are closely aligned and integrated with the strategic objectives of the organization (Cohn, Khurana, & Reeves, 2005). Ultimately, leadership development offers opportunities for organizational transformation (Leonard & Goff, 2003). Effective metrics for the appraisal of leadership development programs measure individual learning and performance as well as organizational impact (Holton, 1996).

In their review of best practices in leadership development, Fulmer and Bleak (2008) identified five essential standards: start with the top, connect leadership development to the business itself, construct an integrated leadership strategy, be consistent in the execution of leadership programs, and hold leaders and the organization accountable. Although top leadership must champion leadership development, it is the responsibility of leaders at all levels, line managers as well as human resource managers, to develop organizational leaders (Cohn et al., 2005). Ready and Conger (2003) propose that individuals take responsibility for their own leadership development and that organizations provide a menu of development opportunities for employees.

Leadership Development Framework for Women

Given that women face unique challenges in leadership, oftentimes unrecognized by others, it is imperative that leadership development strategies are advanced to meet their specific needs. Kanter's (1977) theory of tokenism holds that underrepresented individuals at the senior ranks of an organization require unique strategies for success and achieve-

ment because they often must respond to different expectations and have different resources than their mainstream peers. This is true of women who may have achieved parity with their male counterparts in position and compensation but have had very different experiences along the way (Lyness & Thompson, 1997).

The most effective developmental experiences incorporate a variety of assessments, challenges, and support mechanisms (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). We propose an organizing framework for the multiple methods of leadership development that consists of the following seven categories of formal and informal developmental practices: assessment, training and education, coaching, mentoring, networking, experiential learning (i.e., developmental job assignments and action learning projects), and career planning. We believe our framework of seven developmental practices features aspects of assessments, challenges, and supports. In the following sections, we explore women's leadership development within each of these seven categories of developmental practice and offer recommendations for consultants and human resources professionals working to maximize women's individual and organizational leadership contributions.

Assessment

The value of leadership competency assessment has been well established for the contemporary development of leadership in organizations, especially through 360 degree competency instruments and assessment centers (e.g., Bartholomew & Hannum, 2006; Toegel & Conger, 2003). Using leadership assessment tools for women, however, should be undertaken thoughtfully for the following reasons. First, previous research has noted the prevalence of an "insidious" gender bias in the assessment of leadership in organizations (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995, p. 3). Given that conceptions of leadership have been found to be associated preponderantly with men (Brenner, Tomkiewicz, & Schein, 1989; Heilman, Block, & Martell, 1995; Metcalfe & Altman, 2001; Schein, 1976) and standards of success are generally measured in male terms (Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008), assessments of leadership inherently reflect gender stereotypes and prejudices.

In their study of male and female MBA students, Pratch and Jacobowitz (1996) found that women with strong agentic orientations were negatively evaluated as leaders by their peers, whereas men demonstrating communal tendencies suffered no negative perceptions of their leadership abilities. They noted that both men and women in their sample expected women to demonstrate relational, other-oriented behaviors, but that there were negative consequences when women displayed more traditionally masculine behaviors associated with leadership effectiveness.

Thus, the interpretation of the results of leadership assessment tools should be undertaken with a special understanding of the gender roles and norms prevalent in the workplace (cf. Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005). These biases are particularly likely for those women who are at higher organizational ranks generally associated with male executives; the anomaly of a woman executive in a male-dominated organization may itself affect ratings of her leadership behaviors.

Second, it is possible that women may not seek 360 degree assessment and feedback in part because of their own lack of confidence about the nature of the results likely to be obtained and in part because of their unwillingness to impose on others' time (cf. Boatwright & Egidio, 2003). This dearth of developmental feedback about leadership strengths and gaps can be detrimental in the long run.

Third, the gendered context of organizations must be recognized in any assessment process. In her study of library leadership, Turock (2001) noted that whereas the library

workforce is largely populated by women, the parent organizations of those libraries are most decidedly not. She suggested that women's unique skill sets and the new vision of leadership that calls for emotional intelligence, inclusiveness, and connectedness should work to women's advantage, although the bureaucratic, male-dominated hierarchy still exists.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Encourage women to obtain 360 degree feedback that is crucial for development and assist in interpreting the results in the context of the work environment.
- Facilitate the client's understanding of the impact of leadership behaviors, and help her develop a broad repertoire of behaviors and styles, for example, instrumental and relational.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Ensure that leadership-relevant competencies and behavioral indicators are included in 360 degree and other leadership assessment tools, especially in male-dominated workplaces; help the organization become aware of bias in merit-based decisions using assessment tools; provide training to reduce possible evaluation bias; and work to deconstruct gender stereotypes around leadership so that women and men can more fully employ a variety of leadership styles.
- Assist the organization in providing opportunities for assessing development distinct from performance, engaging in developmental discussions regarding leadership assessments, integrating leadership development assessments within a comprehensive leadership development and succession planning process for women, and creating a culture of assessment and development targeted to women.

Training and Education Programs

In general, effective training programs report 7%–18% improvement in leader-related outcomes (Hand, Richards, & Slocum, 1973; Latham & Saari, 1979; Noe & Schmitt, 1986), with motivation to learn being a key to transferability (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). One meta-analysis of managerial training indicated that it is moderately effective in increasing knowledge and performance for both men and women (Burke & Day, 1986). A more recent meta-analysis indicated that training is highly effective for increasing knowledge, highly/moderately effective for objectively measured behavioral outcomes, and moderately effective for subjective behavioral and system-level outcomes (Collins & Holton, 2004).

In their study of women in health care, Hopkins, O'Neil, and Bilimoria (2006) found that increasing knowledge, skills, and education through access to training courses was one of the most frequently cited strategies for building leadership skills. Leadership training programs have had encouraging results for women. For instance, Feldman (1989) reported that in US West, a Colorado-based telecommunications company, the ratio of women of color having opportunities to advance to midlevel management and above was 1 in 289 versus 1 in 21 for White males. This stark finding led to the creation of the Women of Color Project, which provides leadership training opportunities for women in the organization. The outcomes of the program were impressive, with 46% of the first group of attendees having been promoted at least once.

Adler, Brody, and Osland (2001) described the experience of one organization's creation of a global women's leadership forum designed to identify and develop high-potential women from across the organization. The program was initiated and championed by the CEO and was viewed as an organizational change process, signaling senior-level commitment to a new way of doing business that would include ongoing training and development of talented women in the organization. Vinnicombe and Singh (2003) believe that women-only leadership training, in concert with other leadership development initiatives, is essential for women to develop a stronger sense of self and stronger relationships to other women.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Advise women to seek formal educational opportunities that open up access to leadership opportunities.
- Encourage women to inquire about and complete organizational training programs to enhance leadership knowledge and practice.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Advise organizational support and sponsorship for women to obtain advanced degrees and continuing education, such as executive education and certification programs.
- Create "women-only" as well as mixed-sex leadership development programs, both championed by senior leadership and focused on knowledge and behavioral learning outcomes.

Coaching

A common strategy used to reinforce leadership training and development is the use of executive coaches. Kilburg (1996) defines executive coaching as

> a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority in an organiza-tion and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (p. 142)

Many organizations today are choosing to employ coaching as a developmental intervention for their senior and high-potential executives in order to bring about orga-nization-wide transformation. The process of coaching typically includes one-on-one meetings between the coach and the individual being coached, 360 degree and other feedback methods on the individual's strengths and weaknesses, and development of an action plan for change (Goldsmith, Lyons, & Frees, 2000). An article devoted entirely to the topic of executive coaching appears elsewhere in this special issue.

Coaching may be of particular value to women for several reasons. Women's unique developmental concerns include connection, wholeness, authenticity, agency, and self-clarity, which will manifest over the course of a woman's professional life (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005). Coaching, focused on balancing these developmental concerns with orga-nizational cultures that may not recognize the value of women's desires to be collabora-

tive, lead integrated lives, act authentically, and seek accurate feedback, may be particularly crucial for women (Ruderman & Ohlott, 2005).

Women also face a distinct set of career decision factors. For example, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) propose that women take into account multiple life roles, and that an emphasis on challenge, balance, and authenticity will alternate in importance for women during the early, middle, and later stages of their careers. Similarly, O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) found that the careers of women tend to fall within three age-related phases: the idealistic achievement phase, the pragmatic endurance phase, and the reinventive contribution phase. At each of these phases, women will require a differential coaching focus on issues of achievement and confidence, work–life balance, and sustaining a developmental perspective toward personal and professional contributions.

At different points throughout their careers, many women seek to balance their careers with their family responsibilities (Powell & Mainiero, 1992). A priority on family life may force women to temporarily suspend their work life, a decision that often derails their leadership attainment (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Given the unique circumstances that women face, the counsel of a coach who can assist the individual in her own developmental journey and who focuses on the holistic nature of women's development would be beneficial.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Practice a holistic approach to leadership development for women by using work–life integration and career–phase-specific insights.
- Interpret 360 degree and other feedback in light of the individual's developmental goals as well as life and organizational contexts.
- Develop an understanding and sensitivity to issues women may face in particular organizations or industries.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Advocate for professional executive coaching for women leaders as an ongoing developmental strategy.
- Help foster a developmental coaching culture across the organization that focuses on leadership development as a separate process from performance evaluation.

Mentoring

Diverse mentoring relationships enhance career development (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Ragins & Kram, 2007), clarity of professional purpose (Kram, 1985), and promote personal development and learning (Van Velsor & Hughes, 1990). Individuals who have mentors are often more satisfied, more highly paid, and have more interpersonal competence (de Janasz, Sullivan, & Whiting, 2003).

Ragins and Cotton (1991) reported that women receive less mentoring than their male peers. Mentoring has been found to be more strongly related to men's career success than women's; more successful women have indicated that mentoring was less important to their career advancement than did less successful women (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). A variety of explanations have been offered to make sense of these findings. First, women are underrepresented at top leadership levels in organizations, creating a paucity of same-sex mentors (Rothstein, Burke, & Bristor, 2001). Second, mixed-sex mentoring

relationships are often complicated by traditional gender styles and roles. In addition, women at senior ranks are often reluctant to mentor because they feel overburdened, that it is too risky for their careers, or that they are not qualified (Ragins & Cotton, 1991).

Given the dearth of women at higher levels in organizations, women are more likely to find themselves in cross-gender mentoring relationships than men. Although mentoring relationships with men provide valuable career benefits, such as access to information and resources, these relationships can be complicated by traditional gender roles and external perceptions. For example, Ragins and Cotton (1993) assert that traditional gender stereotypes lead to women being more passive and submissive with a male mentor than with a female. In addition, concerns about sexual harassment and fear that the relationship might be perceived as sexual by others can hinder the mentoring relationship. Cross-gender mentoring relationships must be effectively managed, which means paying attention to the internal implications of the relationship, such as monitoring behaviors and feelings, and the external implications of the relationship to avoid loss of credibility in the eyes of others or charges of protégé favoritism (Clawson & Kram, 1984). Women engaged in mentoring relationships must manage the internal dynamics of mentor and protégé as well as the external dynamics between the mentoring dyad and the rest of the organization, particularly the protégé's manager (Blake-Beard, 2001).

Expectations of female mentors differ from those of male mentors in terms of the amount of nurturing and support they are expected to offer, resulting from traditional female family roles of mothering and nurturing being applied to work settings (Parker & Kram, 1993). Woman-to-woman mentoring relationships are also more visible than traditional mentoring relationships because of token dynamics in organizations. This increased visibility creates additional pressure for senior women who see protégé failure as reflecting poorly on them (Ragins & Cotton, 1993).

Parker and Kram (1993) suggest several strategies for removing barriers that prevent women from mentoring women in organizations. First, women should increase their own self-awareness and challenge assumptions that undermine connection. Second, the responsibility of increasing the level of intimacy of the relationship falls on senior women given that junior women are more vulnerable. A byproduct of strengthening these linkages is a mentoring network of women that enhances the power and influence of women at all ranks of organizations.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Assist clients in cultivating both female and male mentors, in actively managing their mentoring relationships, and in defining strategic learning objectives for the mentoring relationships.
- Support women in developing the skills needed to play the role of both mentee and mentor.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Structure mentoring programs that match high-potential women with people in high-profile executive roles who have decision-making authority and can provide access to opportunities.
- Construct opportunities for women to mentor other women and men in the organization.

- Support mentoring relationships at all levels in the organization, and design programs that assist women in structuring and managing their mentoring relationships.

Networking

Outcomes of interpersonal networks include increased influence and power; access to job opportunities, information, and expertise; and job performance (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, & Tsai, 2004). Similar to other leadership development methods discussed earlier, traditional structures and gender roles diminish networking opportunities for women. A recent Catalyst (2004) survey reported that 46% of women managers cited exclusion from informal networks as barriers to career advancement, compared with only 18% of men. In one study investigating the problems of career advancement for women, different perspectives of women and CEOs emerged (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998). When asked to identify those factors that prevent women from advancing, women believed that male stereotyping, exclusion from informal networks, lack of experience, and an inhospitable culture were the primary reasons. On the other hand, CEOs cited a lack of experience and women not being in the pipeline long enough.

Even when men and women hold equivalent positions, they are considered to be operating in different social circles that necessitate distinct methods of network formation and composition (Ibarra, 1997). In effect, two largely segregated networks, one predominantly male and the other predominantly female, exist in organizations (Brass, 1985). Research suggests that women navigate between two different networks, one providing instrumental benefits and the other offering expressive benefits, and that this balancing act is both time consuming and stressful (Ibarra, 1993). Whereas men rely on one another for both emotional support and career assistance, women rely on other women for emotional support and friendship and look to men to provide instrumental career assistance.

All-women's networks now exist in numerous organizations (Brady & McGregor, 2007). These networks have been described as women's attempts to create for themselves the support generated by and for men through their same-sex grouping (Vinnicombe & Colwill, 1996). Women tend to have a more social orientation to their networks and men have a more utilitarian outlook (Singh, Vinnicombe, & Kumra, 2006). Although women are apt to focus on the social support of their networks, they also realize their skill-building and career development returns (Brady & McGregor, 2007). Specific benefits of network membership identified by women include confidence building, career counseling, coaching, and understanding organizational politics (Burke, Rothstein, & Bristor, 1995).

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Encourage women to include both women and men in their networks, to recognize the instrumental benefits of networks in addition to the social supports, and to cultivate varied task, friendship, and advice networks.
- Suggest that women connect with formal and informal networks of female professionals who share common experiences within organizations and industries.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Advocate the support of women's networks in the form of resources, top leadership advocacy, and openness to learning to advance the leadership development of women.

- Create methods for organizations to increase women's access to formal and informal networking opportunities within organizations and professions.

Experiential Learning

According to Koopmans, Doornbos, and van Eekelen (2006), 60%–80% of the learning that occurs in organizations takes place through informal growth opportunities. Examples of these opportunities associated with leadership development include challenging, high-profile work assignments and diverse business experience marked by transitions into new responsibilities. The breadth and diversity of job assignments are positively related to progressive leadership attainment (Bray, Campbell, & Grant, 1974).

In a study of male and female executives, Lyness and Thompson (2000) reported that challenging job assignments, transition to new job responsibilities, and job mobility were specific developmental experiences that facilitated leadership development. Yet, access to such opportunities and their relative value differ by gender. Women have less access to challenging work assignments and are less likely to be given assignments that are high risk to the company (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). High-risk job assignments generally carry large amounts of visibility and provide recognition for success that translates to future leadership opportunities. This visibility is important for women who report that a proven track record of success (Lyness & Thompson, 2000) and consistently exceeding expectations (Ragins et al., 1998) are critical factors for advancement.

Women are more likely to be siloed into staff positions such as human resources or corporate communications as opposed to line positions with profit and loss responsibility that most frequently lead to organizational leadership positions (Bilimoria & Piderit, 1994). Ohlott, Ruderman, and McCauley (1994) propose that subtle forms of discrimination preclude women from obtaining positions that include high-stakes responsibility, managing diverse businesses, and dealing with external pressure. Ryan and Haslam (2007) note that women who break through the glass ceiling are more likely than men to find themselves in precarious leadership positions that they labeled "glass cliffs."

International job assignments offer high visibility and build cross-cultural skills that lead to success in senior leadership roles. Adler (1994) revealed that female and male MBA graduates expressed equal interest in international assignments, yet only 3% of North American managers sent abroad were women. In addition, 75% of companies indicated that the prejudice of international businesses against women was so great that they would be set up to fail, yet only 20% of expatriate women said that their gender put them at a disadvantage. Adler suggested that these gaps would narrow if employers helped women build credibility with overseas colleagues by providing them with full-term (rather than temporary) overseas assignments.

An additional source of experiential learning particularly for women of color is that of the leadership roles they play in their communities. Hewlett, Luce, and West (2005) suggest that the leadership abilities of people of color that are finely honed in their roles as mentors and stewards of educational and community organizations are largely invisible to their work organizations.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Assist women in exercising agency in striving for developmental opportunities, particularly those involving high-visibility assignments and international experience.

- Propose the conscious transfer of leadership skills and abilities developed in volunteer and community roles into the workplace, as well as informing workplace colleagues about extraorganizational leadership contributions.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Design programs that provide access for women to developmental job assignments strongly associated with career advancement, for example, higher risk, higher return, visible, diverse, external, and international responsibilities.
- Have organizations examine the process of awarding developmental opportunities and challenge inherent bias in existing practices.
- Support the recognition of women's extraorganizational leadership capabilities and support encouraging the transfer of knowledge into organizational responsibilities.

Career Planning

Research on women's career histories reveals that women have less mobility within and between organizations (Lyness & Judiesch, 1999) and are more dependent on formal promotion procedures in the corporation than are men (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). For these reasons, intentionally managing one's own career plan has been demonstrated as a facilitator of women's advancement. All too often, however, women are not taught the fundamentals of strategic career and succession planning in either their formal educational programs or in their organizations. Haring-Hidore (1988) found that many women educational administrators attending a professional networking program were focused on their present performance to the exclusion of their future potential and were unable to cite 5- and 10-year goals. This is in line with findings that suggest that the number-one strategy cited by women for career advancement was to "consistently exceed performance expectations" (Catalyst, 1996; Ragins et al., 1998), necessitating a focus on present performance to the detriment of strategic career planning.

According to a global study conducted by Catalyst (Mattis, 2001), White male managers were found to give feedback on job performance to both male and female direct reports but spent time discussing career paths and future advancement opportunities only with male employees, not female employees. The focus of the manager–female employee conversations was on present performance, versus present performance *and* future potential in the manager–male employee conversations. Mattis (2001) provides a compelling list of actions that individual managers can take, including ensuring that candidate lists for vacant positions always include two or more women, assigning proportional representation of women to projects and committees, encouraging training for "plateaued" women, and sending clear messages that he or she is committed to diversity in the organization.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Individual Women

- Assist women in thinking strategically about how to advance in organizations and in careers and in being purposeful and proactive about enhancing their career and leadership effectiveness.
- Propose that women share their career desires and career plans with those who can facilitate success.

Recommendations for Consultants Working With Organizations

- Advocate that organizations support and encourage the process of intentional career planning and purposeful leadership development for women, and foster a developmental versus an evaluative approach to strategic career planning and leadership development.
- Promote the idea that organizations hold managers accountable for providing strategic leadership and career development for their female staff.

Conclusion

In this article, we have provided insights into particular aspects of leadership development for women and have offered specific recommendations for consulting psychologists and human resources professionals working with individual women or intervening at an organizational level. Below we propose three overarching implications that emerge from the gender-based leadership differences and seven best practices that we have identified. These three metathemes reflect the notion that effective leadership development must exist simultaneously at both individual and organizational levels.

First, leadership development increases women's portfolios of human, social, and political capital, resulting in benefits at both the individual and organizational levels. Each of the seven developmental practices provides opportunities for women to gain experience and enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities through their various learning interactions. For example, human capital is developed through access to education and training programs, executive coaches or mentors, and stretch job assignments. Social and political capital increase as a result of an expansive personal network, multiple mentors, challenging developmental experiences on the job, and strategic career planning.

Responsibility for developing the human, social, and political capital of women rests at the individual and the organizational levels. Women must take control of their own careers and identify individual learning agendas for their own leadership development. Organizations have a responsibility to provide leadership development offerings specifically tailored to the learning and development needs of women. Although presenting developmental opportunities for women is critical, sponsoring ways to share and practice new learning are also vital for women's development as well as for organizational development. Finally, accountability at all organizational levels is essential to ensure effective leadership development for women. This is especially important given the lack of access faced by women in each leadership development practice. One effective method of accountability is to have management assessments include metrics for the development of the human, social, and political capital of women.

The second implication from our discussion considers the leadership development of women employees as a strategic business advantage to organizations (Hopkins & O'Neil, 2008). For example, women can provide unique insights into the consumer behavior of customers and can offer differentially beneficial (female) perspectives on client relations and overall business directions and practices than mainstream (male) thinking (Bilimoria, 2000). Maximally harnessing these advantages would mean promoting a leadership development culture for women at all organizational levels. This viewpoint may require a mindset shift at all levels in organizations; yet doing so has the capacity to offer

organizations a distinct competitive advantage as they recognize and tap into the unique capacities of their female employees.

Third, the importance for women to feel connected to the goals and objectives of the larger organization and to envision a holistic picture of themselves as integral organizational partners must be of primary emphasis. As organizations structure effective leadership development systems for women and as women realize leadership development practices in their organizations, they will likely experience stronger organizational connections that may well lead to increased organizational commitment. These leadership development investments on the part of organizations will pay dividends in increased integration of women's relational skills and their ability to continue to add unique value to their organizations.

Consulting psychologists and human resources professionals can play an integral role in helping women and organizations highlight these three themes: increasing women's portfolios of human, social, and political capital; recognizing women as a strategic business advantage; and strengthening women's connections to their organizations. As we have proposed, consultants can advocate for individual and organizational changes that support these themes, and assist in designing leadership development programs, policies, and procedures that effectively address the underlying issues. The construction of leadership development that recognizes and addresses women's unique contributions will result in women realizing their individual potential and in organizational transformation, the two primary objectives of effective, sustainable leadership development.

References

Adler, N. J. (1994). Competitive frontiers: Women managing across borders. In N. J. Adler & D. N. Izraeli (Eds.), *Competitive frontiers: Women managers in a global economy* (pp. 22–40). Cambridge, England: Blackwell.

Adler, N. J., Brody, L. W., & Osland, J. S. (2001). Going behind twentieth century leadership: A CEO develops his company's global competitiveness. *Cross-Cultural Management, 8,* 11–34.

Alimo-Metcalfe, B. (1995). An investigation of female and male constructs of leadership and empowerment. *Women in Management Review, 10,* 3–8.

As leaders, women rule. (2000, November 20). *Business Week*. Retrieved December 10, 2000, from http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_47/b3708145.htm

Baldwin, T. T., & Ford, J. K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel Psychology, 41,* 63–105.

Bartholomew, C. S., & Hannum, K. (2006). Research update: 360 degree performance assessment. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 58,* 117–124.

Bell, E. L. (1990). The bicultural life experience of career oriented Black women. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 11,* 461–464.

Bell, E. L., & Nkomo, S. M. (2001). *Our separate ways: Black and White women and the struggle for professional identity.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Bilimoria, D. (2000). Building the business case for women corporate directors. In R. J. Burke & M. C. Mattis (Eds.), *Women on corporate boards of directors: International challenges and opportunities* (pp. 25–40). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic.

Bilimoria, D., & Piderit, S. K. (1994). Board committee membership: Effects of sex-based bias. *Academy of Management Journal, 37,* 1453–1478.

Blake-Beard, S. D. (2001). Taking a hard look at formal mentoring programs. *Journal of Management Development, 20,* 331–345.

Boatwright, K. J., & Egidio, R. K. (2003). Psychological predictors of college women's leadership aspirations. *Journal of College Student Development, 44,* 653–669.

Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2005). *Resonant leadership.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Brady, D., & McGregor, J. (2007, June 18). *What works in women's networks. Business Week.* Retrieved December 4, 2007, from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/ 07_25/ b4039069.htm

Brass, D. J. (1985). Men's and women's networks: A study of interaction patterns and influence in an organization. *Academy of Management Journal, 28,* 327–343.

Brass, D. J., Galaskiewicz, J., Greve, H. R., & Tsai, W. (2004). Taking stock of networks and organizations: A multilevel perspective. *Academy of Management Journal, 47,* 795–817.

Bray, D. W., Campbell, R. J., & Grant, D. L. (1974). *Formative years in business: A long-term AT&T study of managerial lives.* New York: Wiley.

Brenner, O. C., Tomkiewicz, J., & Schein, V. E. (1989). The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics revisited. *Academy of Management Journal, 32,* 662–669.

Burke, M. J., & Day, R. R. (1986). A cumulative study of the effectiveness of managerial training. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 71,* 232–245.

Burke, R. J., Rothstein, M. G., & Bristor, J. M. (1995). Interpersonal networks of managerial and professional women and men: Descriptive characteristics. *Women in Management Review, 10,* 21–27.

Carli, L. L., & Eagly, A. H. (1999). Gender effects on social influence and emergent leadership. In G. N. Powell (Ed.), *Handbook of gender and work* (pp. 203–222). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Catalyst. (1996). *Women in corporate leadership: Progress and prospects.* New York: Author.

Catalyst. (1999). *Women of color in corporate management: Opportunities and barriers. Executive summary.* New York: Author.

Catalyst. (2004). *Women and men in U.S. corporate leadership: Same workplace, different realities?* New York: Author.

Clawson, J. G., & Kram, K. E. (1984). Managing cross-gender mentoring. *Business Horizons, 27,* 22–31.

Cohn, J. M., Khurana, R., & Reeves, L. (2005, October). Growing talent as if your business depended on it. *Harvard Business Review,* 62–70.

Collins, D. B., & Holton, E. F. (2004). The effectiveness of managerial leadership development programs: A meta-analysis of studies from 1982–2001. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 15,* 217–248.

Conger, J. A., & Benjamin, B. (1999). *Building leaders: How successful companies develop the next generation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (2005). *Organization development and change* (8th ed.). Florence, KY: Thomson South-Western.

Day, D. V. (2001). Leadership development: A review in context. *Leadership Quarterly, 11,* 581–613.

de Janasz, S. C., Sullivan, S. E., & Whiting, V. (2003). Mentor networks and career success: Lessons for turbulent times. *Academy of Management Executive, 17,* 78–91.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007, September). Women and the labyrinth of leadership. *Harvard Business Review,* 63–71.

Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & van Engen, M. (2003). Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychological Bulletin, 129,* 569–591.

Eagly, A. H., & Johnson, B. T. (1990). Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 108,* 233–256.

Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., & Makhijani, M. G. (1995). Gender and the effectiveness of leaders: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 117,* 125–145.

Feldman, D. (1989, August). Women of color build a rainbow of opportunity. *Management Review,* 18–21.

Fulmer, R. M., & Bleak, J. (2008). What have we learned about strategic leadership development?

In C. Wankel & R. DeFillippi (Eds.), *University and corporate innovations in lifetime learning* (pp. 161–179). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Goldsmith, M., Lyons, L., & Freas, A. (Eds.). (2000). *Coaching for leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence.* New York: Bantam Books.

Hand, H. H., Richards, M. D., & Slocum, J. W. Jr. (1973). Organizational climate and the effectiveness of a human relations training program. *Academy of Management Journal, 16,* 185–246.

Haring-Hidore, M. (1988). A career advancement program for women administrators. *Journal of Career Development, 14,* 279–286.

Heilman, M., Block, C. J., & Martell, R. F. (1995). Sex stereotypes: Do they influence perceptions of managers? *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 10,* 237–252.

Hewlett, S. A., & Luce, C. B. (2005, March). Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success. *Harvard Business Review,* 43–54.

Hewlett, S. A., Luce, C. B., & West, C. (2005, November). Leadership in your midst: Tapping the hidden strengths of minority executives. *Harvard Business Review,* 74–82.

Higgins, M. C., & Kram, K. E. (2001). Reconceptualizing mentoring at work: A developmental network perspective. *Academy of Management Review, 26,* 264–288.

Holton, E. (1996). The flawed four-level evaluation model. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 7,* 5–21.

Hopkins, M. M., & Bilimoria, D. (2008, August). Social and emotional competencies predicting success for male and female executives. *Journal of Management Development, 27,* 13–35.

Hopkins, M. M., & O'Neil, D. A. (2008, August). *Women's networks: Opportunities for individual and organizational development.* Paper presented at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting, Anaheim, CA.

Hopkins, M. M., O'Neil, D. A., & Bilimoria, D. (2006). Effective leadership and successful career advancement: Perspectives from women in healthcare. *Equal Opportunities International, 25,* 251–271.

Ibarra, H. (1993). Personal networks of women and minorities in management: A conceptual framework. *Academy of Management Review, 18,* 56–87.

Ibarra, H. (1997). Paving an alternative route: Gender differences in managerial networks. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 60,* 91–102.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). Some effects of proportions on group life: Skewed sex ratios and responses to token women. *American Journal of Sociology, 82,* 965–990.

Kilburg, R. R. (1996). Toward a conceptual understanding and definition of executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 48,* 134–144.

Koopmans, H., Doornbos, A. J., & van Eekelen, I. M. (2006). Learning in interactive work situations: It takes two to tango; why not invite both partners to dance? *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 17,* 135–158.

Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work.* Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.

Latham, G. P., & Saari, L. M. (1979). Application of social-learning theory to training supervisors through behavioral modeling. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 64,* 239–246.

Leonard, H. S., & Goff, M. (2003). Leadership development as an intervention for organizational transformation: A case study. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 55,* 58–67.

Lyness, K. S., & Judiesch, M. K. (1999). Are women more likely to be hired or promoted into management positions? *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 54,* 158–173.

Lyness, K. S., & Thompson, D. E. (1997). Above the glass ceiling? A comparison of matched samples of female and male executives. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 82,* 359–375.

Lyness, K. S., & Thompson, D. E. (2000). Climbing the corporate ladder: Do female and male executives follow the same route? *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85,* 86–101.

Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2005). Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the "opt-out" revolution. *Academy of Management Executive, 19,* 106–123.

Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2006). *The opt-out revolt: Why people are leaving companies to create kaleidoscope careers.* Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.

Mattis, M. C. (2001). Advancing women in business organizations: Key leadership roles and behaviors of senior leaders and middle managers. *Journal of Management Development, 20,* 371–388.

McCall, M. W. (2004). Leadership development through experience. *Academy of Management Executive, 18,* 127–130.

McCauley, C. D., & Van Velsor, E. (Eds.). (2004). *The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Metcalfe, B., & Altman, Y. (2001). Leadership. In E. Wilson (Ed.), *Organizational behaviour reassessed: The impact of gender* (pp. 104–128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Neil, D. A., Hopkins, M. M., & Bilimoria, D. (2008). Women's careers at the start of the 21st century: Patterns and paradoxes. *Journal of Business Ethics, 80,* 727–743.

Noe, R. A., & Schmitt, N. (1986). The influence of trainee attitudes on training effectiveness: Test of a model. *Personnel Psychology, 39,* 497–523.

Ohlott, P. J., Ruderman, M. N., & McCauley, C. D. (1994). Gender differences in managers' developmental job experiences. *Academy of Management Journal, 37,* 46–67.

O'Neil, D. A., & Bilimoria, D. (2005). Women's career development phases: Idealism, endurance, and reinvention. *Career Development International, 10,* 168–189.

Parker, V. A., & Kram, K. E. (1993). Women mentoring women: Creating conditions for connection. *Business Horizons, 36,* 42–51.

Powell, G. N., & Mainiero, L. A. (1992). Cross-currents in the river of time: Conceptualizing the complexities of women's careers. *Journal of Management, 18,* 215–238.

Pratch, L., & Jacobowitz, J. (1996). Gender, motivation, and coping in the evaluation of leadership effectiveness. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 48,* 203–220.

Ragins, B. R., & Cotton, J. L. (1991). Easier said than done: Gender differences in perceived barriers to gaining a mentor. *Academy of Management Journal, 34,* 939–951.

Ragins, B. R., & Cotton, J. L. (1993). Gender and willingness to mentor in organizations. *Journal of Management, 19,* 97–111.

Ragins, B. R., & Kram, K. (Eds.). (2007). *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ragins, B. R., Townsend, B., & Mattis, M. (1998). Gender gap in the executive suite: CEOs and female executives report on breaking the glass ceiling. *Academy of Management Executive, 12,* 28–42.

Ready, D. A., & Conger, J. A. (2003, Spring). Why leadership development efforts fail. *MIT Sloan Management Review,* 83–88.

Rothstein, M. G., Burke, R. J., & Bristor, J. M. (2001). Structural characteristics and support benefits in the interpersonal networks of women and men in management. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 9,* 4–25.

Ruderman, M. N., & Ohlott, P. J. (2005). Leading roles: What coaches of women need to know. *Leadership in Action, 25,* 3–9.

Ryan, M. K., & Haslam, S. A. (2007). The glass cliff: Exploring the dynamics surrounding the appointment of women to precarious leadership positions. *Academy of Management Review, 32,* 549–572.

Schein, V. E. (1976). Think manager, think male. *Atlanta Economic Review, 26,* 21–24.

Singh, V., Vinnicombe, S., & Kumra, S. (2006). Women in formal corporate networks: An organisational citizenship perspective. *Women in Management Review, 21,* 458–482.

Sturges, J. (1999). What it means to succeed: Personal conceptions of career success held by male and female managers at different ages. *British Journal of Management, 10,* 239–252.

Toegel, G., & Conger, J. A. (2003). 360-degree assessment: Time for reinvention. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 2,* 297–311.

Turock, B. J. (2001). Women and leadership. *Journal of Library Administration, 32.*

U.S. Women in Business. (2008). *Catalyst*. Retrieved May 11, 2008, from http://www.catalyst.org/
    publication/132/us-women-in-business

Van Velsor, E., & Hughes, M. W. (1990). *Gender differences in the development of managers: How
    women managers learn from experience.* Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

Vinnicombe, S., & Colwill, N. L. (1996). *The essence of women in management.* Englewood Cliffs,
    NJ: Prentice Hall.

Vinnicombe, S., & Singh, V. (2003). Women-only management training: An essential part of
    women's leadership development. *Journal of Change Management, 3,* 294–306.