



Skills needed and potential barriers faced by women in business management in Montana  
by Judith Eileen Birch

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education  
Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in the perceptions of women business management students at Montana State University, Montana women managers, and Montana personnel directors as to the skills needed to be a manager, whether women needed more training in these skills, and the barriers that women may face in being managers. Specifically, the research was conducted to determine whether the responses of those queried were dependent on their membership or affiliation with women business management students at Montana State University, Montana women managers, and Montana personnel directors. The study was conducted during the academic year 1982-83.

Lists of names were obtained from the School of Business at Montana State University, the Montana division of the American Society of Personnel Administration, and The Montana Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. From the latter two groups individuals were chosen who were employed in private businesses. From all three populations 167 valid responses were used in the study.

The survey instrument focused on the skills needed by managers, whether women needed more training in these skills, and the barriers women may face in becoming managers. The skills included: decision-making, planning, coordinating, delegating, evaluating, communicating, accounting, risk-taking, and competing. The responses to the survey instrument indicated that all the managerial skills, except accounting, were considered to be needed by managers. There was general agreement that women needed more training in these skills, except for accounting and evaluating.

Responses from the three groups indicated these were barriers: aggressiveness, the first woman in upper-level management, and career-mindedness. Those not perceived as barriers were femininity, motherhood and management, ambition, assertiveness, confidence, the fear of success against a male competitor, the pursuit of a managerial career and marriage, a woman's emotional make-up, and acquiring masculine traits.

These potential barriers showed no clear direction of response among the three groups: the possibility of pregnancy, mentors, marriage and mobility, competence and waiting longer than men to be promoted, marriage and family, dead-end jobs, and the informal network.

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of

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APPROVAL

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This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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Date

January 30, 1984

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