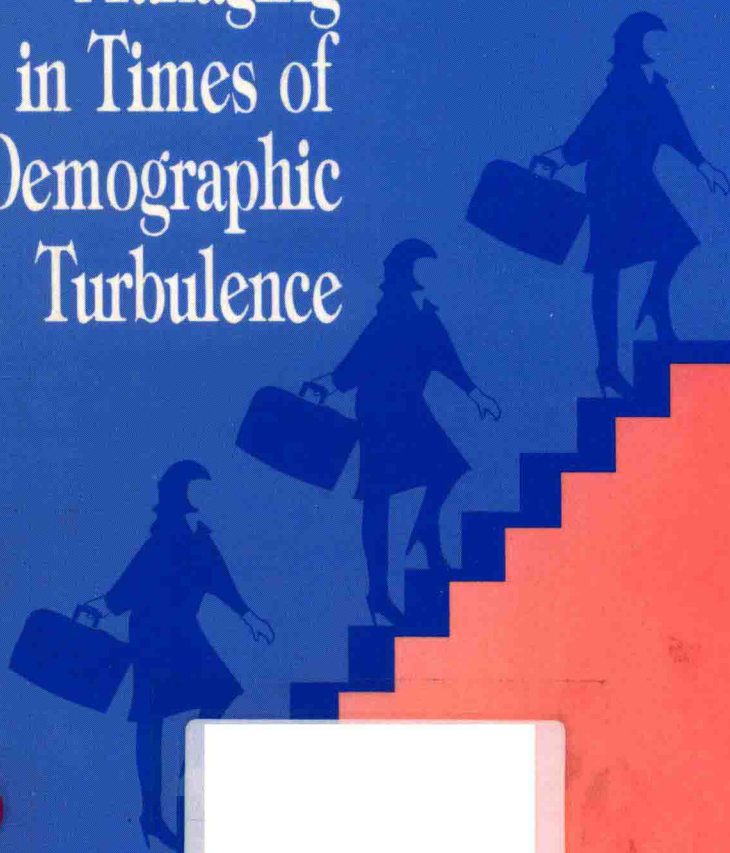


Womanpower

Managing
in Times of
Demographic
Turbulence



edited by

MA SEKARAN - FREDERICK T. L. LEONG

WOMANPOWER

Managing in Times of Demographic Turbulence

edited by

Uma Sekaran

Frederick T. L. Leong



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WOMANPOWER

To Anisha K. Sekar
With love
and
To Sandy Leong
Wife, partner, and friend
for her support and affection

Foreword

I was pleased to be asked to contribute a foreword to this volume with the delightful title of *Womanpower*. By now, many human resource specialists in academia and in organizations know that a relatively high proportion of the new workers added to the labor force in the next decade, as in the past few decades, will be women. Not only white women, but women of color too, will make up a larger percentage of the paid labor force in the future than in the immediate past. *Womanpower* deals with many of the important issues surrounding this major demographic and social shift.

While it is a foregone conclusion that the proportion of the paid labor force that is female is increasing, what, if anything, organizations or our legislatures will do in response to this change is not. Researchers have documented the many problems that women encounter as they strive to make a contribution as both a paid worker and as a productive family member, problems that could be alleviated by additional social and organizational changes. It is a basic tenet of open systems theory that a change in any part of the system affects other parts of the system. The United States, as well as other countries, is now experiencing a decided shift in the demographic composition of the paid labor force. The movement of women into the paid labor force and into time-consuming and demanding professional and managerial positions will inevitably lead to other changes as well.

As a country that has neither an industrial nor a family policy, the United States leaves organizations and individuals to cope with societal changes as best they can. All too often, organizations, too, do little and thus leave individuals to absorb the stress of change. *Womanpower* recognizes both the stress and the potential power of women who are productive members of the paid labor force and responsible for the care and nurturing of others—husbands or boyfriends, children, parents. Toward that end, the chapters in the book not only discuss aspects of the changing demographics of the labor force, but also offer suggestions for changes that can be initiated by individuals, organizations, and legislatures. Thus, the book is relevant for several audiences. First, the book provides good source material for scholars interested in women and work. Second, I recommend the book as text or supplement in courses in women and work. The suggestions for change are likely to be appealing to students who are as interested in change as they are in the facts of the situation. Finally, the book is stimulating reading for practitioners concerned with organizational and public policy.

This book has its roots in a preconvention program organized by Uma Sekaran the year she served as Chair-elect to the Women in Management Division of the Academy of Management. While a preconvention program may operate as an important seed for the development of a book, a seed does not automatically become a flower. The work done by Uma Sekaran and Fred Leong, as well as each of the contributors, after the preconvention, is responsible for the development and flowering of *Womanpower*.

—BARBARA A. GUTEK
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Womanpower and Changing Demographics: Introduction

UMA SEKARAN

FREDERICK T. L. LEONG

This book advocates multifaceted strategies for empowering women to enhance organizational vitality in the context of the impending demographic turbulence at the workplace. The projected demographic changes in the labor force within this decade and beyond are amusing to some, threatening to others, and simply perplexing to most. The fact is that the composition of members at the workplace and the nature of jobs will change considerably in the next two decades. The average age of the working population will rise and climb to 30 by the year 2000. More women will enter the work force and 61% of all women of working age will have jobs by the year 2000. Minorities will make up 29% of the new entrants and immigrants will also represent a large proportion of the increase in the population. Thus nonwhites, women, and immigrants will make up more than five sixths of the net additions to the work force in the next 10 years (Johnson, 1987). These changes make it imperative that we understand how to capture the synergy of this future diverse group of individuals at work.

The nature of the jobs will also change, with the professional, technical, and sales jobs becoming the fastest growing sector. These new jobs will need a higher level of education and training and the effective mobilization of diverse skills. Service jobs will be on the increase

as well. Women are likely to take a large proportion of the new jobs that will be opening up because more and more women are now becoming educated and trained to take up professional, technical, and service occupations in the future.

With more women and minority members expected to enter the work force, scholars and practitioners have started to identify some critical issues that need to be addressed if the United States is to remain competitive in the marketplace. These piecemeal attempts, however, have not focused on systematically formulating strategies that would lead to multiple pathways for achieving excellence at the workplace.

Literally hundreds of articles have been written both in the popular press and in scholarly journals, charting the advances made by women in the workplace and at the domestic front. Irrespective of the area examined, the discussions start with a positive note on the strides made by women, but tagging along, invariably, is an ambivalent statement as to where they are headed. The following serve as illustrations.

- (a) The number of women managers doubled in the past decade, *but* only 1% of them are real managers; 40% of women managers do not even have any staff to manage (*Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 1989).
- (b) The wage gap between the sexes has been narrowing in the past few years; today, *however*, women get 66 cents for each dollar earned by men (Wallis, 1989), and on an average, women at the V.P. level and above make 42% less money annually than men in the same positions (Heidrick & Struggles, 1987).
- (c) Men in two-paycheck families are now sharing more in the household work; they are now doing 30% of the work at home, compared to 20% just a decade ago; *but* women are the ones who have earned the right to get exhausted (Wallis, 1989).
- (d) Women are slowly beginning to enter the nontraditional occupations as well. Generally, *however*, for every 10% increase in the number of women in an occupation, the annual wage goes down by \$710 for employees in that particular occupation ("Is sex discrimination the root of wage differences?" *National Research Council News Report*, April 1989).

Such examples can be multiplied severalfold as we discuss hiring minorities, promoting women, or legislation that has tried to help women but not gone far enough to be of real benefit. Several impediments block women and minorities from contributing effectively to

the gross national product (GNP). These need to be examined in some depth so that effective solutions can be generated to enhance organizational productivity, especially at a time when remaining competitive in the global market is of critical importance to the United States. Hitherto, we have engaged primarily in problem identification and our acculturated stereotypical thinking patterns have kept us from generating workable solutions and marching forward. In the context of the increasing numbers of women from different ethnic origins, races, and cultures who are entering the workplace, we should go far beyond suggesting that organizational structures and processes be designed to facilitate women who are on the "fast track" and those who choose to tread the "mommy track." We have to do *much better* than that if we are to capitalize on the skills and contributions of the vast majority who do not want to be forced into choosing between two awkward and irrational alternatives!

Taking a proactive stance, the authors of the eight chapters in this book offer multipronged strategies for enhancing the contributions of all at the workplace. The suggestions in this book need to be considered and implemented not merely because the quality of life of organizational incumbents will be improved, but more so for enhancing the productivity and profitability of organizations and injecting vitality into them.

Synergistic Solutions: The Roundtables Concept

The uniqueness of this book is in its evolving *proactive* versus *reactive* practical solutions to the dilemmas our society will be facing less than a decade from now. Much of the current literature describing women's stagnation at the middle levels of the organization has delineated several obstacles faced by women as they try to progress in their careers. There does not, however, seem to be a single source that identifies the problems and also offers implementable solutions that institutions can follow from both a structural and process perspective. Organizational change can be initiated by altering either the structures such as communication channel and hierarchical levels, or by changing the processes such as the manner in which communication takes place and how people at various hierarchical levels relate to each other. Structure and processes mutually influence each other, however, and examining one to the exclusion of the other invariably

results in unintended ill consequences for both individuals and organizations. In this book, the authors consider both the structural and process aspects simultaneously, as problems are identified and suggestions are offered to resolve the issues.

It is relatively easy to come up with idealistic solutions that are usually difficult to implement. A distinctive feature of this book is that even though the chapters are authored by scholars teaching in university systems, the contents are a result of the inputs of researchers, practitioners, and consultants who discussed their topical areas in depth for a day and a half at a preconference workshop of the Women in Management Division of the Academy of Management. This workshop was specially designed and convened over a weekend in Washington, D.C. in August 1989, by the senior editor. Eight roundtables were structured to initiate discussions on the eight topical areas discussed in this book. Scholars, practitioners, and consultants who were experts in each of the eight areas were specially invited to participate at each of the roundtables. Their charge was to identify the issues and generate practical solutions that organizational systems can implement by changing their structures and processes. As a corollary, the various chapters in this book combine scholarly research with practical wisdom—a combination that is not normally found in many writings on the subject.

The book also takes a multidimensional strategic perspective in examining the obstacles to the solutions for the advancement of women. That is, not only is organizational reality explored, but an understanding of how women try to “become their own bosses” by taking on entrepreneurship as an alternative route; the extent to which legislation has helped or hindered progress; the role and responsibility of academic institutions in training and socializing the future leaders and workers, inculcating in them new patterns of behaviors and values; and how women in some other parts of the world are faring are all examined and discussed.

The impending demographic changes in the work force call for a proactive strategic management approach to human resources development and management. This book identifies the deterrents to the effective functioning of women, and more importantly, generates practical solutions to create pathways for the effective utilization of *all* human resources. No longer can organizations, counselors, and society plead ignorance of issues or solutions as they pertain to harnessing the talents of a heterogeneous group of individuals to enhance

organizational effectiveness! The necessity for taking a *proactive stance now*, as well as highlights of the contents of the book, are offered next.

THE IMPACT OF CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AT THE WORKPLACE

The art and science of harnessing talents will assume greater significance in the context of the changing work world of tomorrow. If more women, minority group members, and immigrants are going to be responsible for increasing the GNP of this country, it is time to spell out ways in which their individual talents can be effectively harnessed and their productivity increased, which is precisely what this book endeavors to do.

The solutions to complex issues cannot be simplistically tackled by a single group. Multiple constituencies (such as organizations, educational systems, legislation, and the community) have to get involved in developing strategies to effectively manage the demographic turbulence of the 21st century. The book is organized to focus on these different aspects. The first three chapters deal with the obstacles at work faced by women, in general, because of their gender, by nonwhite women because of their race and gender, and by dual-career couples who are growing in numbers in the world of work. Chapter 4 offers us insights on why organizations are losing talented women who choose to set up their own businesses, opting for the entrepreneurial route, and how they are faring. Together, these four chapters highlight: (a) the issues that women face—as they relate to work and nonwork—that impact on their attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and contributions, and (b) the solutions that women generate for themselves as a path to escape from the rigidities and constrictions placed upon them by the current organizational structures. Each of the chapters offers practical suggestions to garner more effectively the human resources within the system.

Can organizations be helped to improve their performance by more effectively utilizing women's contributions at work through legislative action? Chapter 5 examines the part played by legislation thus far, and how legislation can become more effective in this regard. The next two chapters take the first comprehensive look at academic institutions that train and shape the professionals of tomorrow, setting an introspective—and hence a slightly different—tone to the book.

These two chapters are, in a sense, ground-breaking since no one has hitherto pinpointed the responsibility of higher education in playing a proactive role in managing the demographic turbulence, much less developed comprehensive strategies for shaping the future. Chapter 6 examines how academe should itself prepare for the changing demographics, and Chapter 7 examines the part played by business schools in training the managers and leaders of tomorrow to cope with the changing workplace. Effective strategies for both better self-management of the academic institutions themselves and for training future managers and leaders are offered in these two chapters. Chapter 8, the final chapter, offers a glimpse of the status of women in some other parts of the world, to offer a comparative perspective as to where we stand as a nation. The book concludes with a summary of the recommendations made by the authors and offers some suggestions for implementing and evaluating the recommended strategies. The book thus offers useful insights on where organizational systems currently are and where they should be heading.

Further details of the chapters follow later in this Introductory section. We supplement this information with more specific comments in the introductions preceding each transition as the focus shifts from one target group to another, pointing out specific issues relevant to each chapter and how these interrelate. We conclude the book by recommending that care be taken to involve many organizational members while implementing the changes, and ensuring that evaluation schemes are developed to assess the effectiveness of the changes introduced.

1. FROM INERTIA TO EXCELLENCE: MULTIPRONGED STRATEGIES TO EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE WOMANPOWER

As the title implies, the first four chapters highlight several simultaneous strategies that need to be developed if women are to contribute effectively to the world of work. In Chapter 1, O'Leary and Ickovics argue that the "glass ceiling" can be cracked and women utilized more effectively only by developing strategies to overcome our current mental set of stereotyping, isolating, and alienating women in the workplace. Nonwhite women face an additional set of obstacles compared to their white sisters. As discussed by Betters-Reed and L. Moore in Chapter 2, our sensitivity to this should be sharpened and a

different set of strategies needs to be evolved to capture the synergy to be gained from a mix of talents in the work setting. The workplace and home are inextricably intertwined and the "myth of separate worlds" can no longer be fostered. In Chapter 3, Thompson, Thomas, and Maier address the issues that two-paycheck family members face as they struggle to balance work and family. The three authors offer organizational strategies that would help enhance member contributions to work. Chapter 4, by D. Moore, Buttner, and Rosen, shows how women search for alternative work patterns by opting for the entrepreneurial route, the obstacles they face there, and how these can be overcome. These four chapters offer insights for organizations as well as consultants for developing strategies for facilitating women to contribute to organization effectiveness to their fullest potential.

2. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES FOR WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

In Chapter 5, Carr-Ruffino, Baack, Flipper, Hunter-Sloan, and Olivolo trace the role of legislation in advancing and/or hindering women's professional advancement. The insights that these authors offer as they examine issues from a legislative standpoint help us comprehend the enormity and complexity of the issues women have to grapple with—despite, and sometimes because of, well-intentioned legislative initiatives. The authors highlight the need for proactive involvement to initiate sound legislation that is women- and family-friendly.

3. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS: ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE TRAINING OF FUTURE PROFESSIONALS/MANAGERS

Value systems, socialization patterns, and managerial styles of organizational members are usually fostered and reinforced to a large extent in academic institutions. If changes in patterns of thinking are called for because of changing demographics, the institutions that must first take a hard long look at their own functioning and how they should train future generations, are the academic systems themselves. In Chapter 6, Sekaran and Kassner examine the functioning of university systems and suggest operative strategies for bringing about the needed changes to educate the transformed university student population of the future effectively. In Chapter 7, Leong, Snodgrass, and

Gardner develop strategies for improving management education that would train both men and women to handle the changing futuristic organizational demands competently. These two chapters thus deal mostly with the educational system, which has the responsibility for preparing and sensitizing the future work generation to the drastically changing dynamics of the workplace.

4. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES OF WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT

In Chapter 8, Black, Stephens, and Rosener give us an update on what is happening to working women in several parts of the globe. This offers a comparative perspective of where we are in relation to other women across the world. Such international comparisons are necessary not only because they offer some benchmarks for assessing our own progress, they also provide a starting point for tracing the history of global progress in the next decade and beyond.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Finally, we discuss the need for effectively implementing the recommendations made in this book and illustrate how we can assess the effectiveness of the change strategies. We underscore the fact that we must be *proactive*, think through the changes that will be most useful, and start introducing them immediately.

Since no one single prescriptive grand strategy is "best" for all systems, we hope that different organizations will follow different change models to reach the same goal—that of effectively utilizing human potential. Each institution will have to assess for itself which change strategies will be most functional and practical. Several structural and process changes need to be made by every institution, however, if it is to survive and grow in the future. We expect that different institutions will opt for different combinations of strategies consistent with their resources and practical needs. This book offers some preliminary ideas; much greater innovation can spring from this base!

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