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Advancing  
Latinas in the  
Workplace:  
What Managers  
Need to Know



## ABOUT CATALYST

Catalyst is the leading research and advisory organization working to advance women in business, with offices in New York, San Jose, and Toronto. As an independent, not-for-profit membership organization, Catalyst uses a solutions-oriented approach that has earned the confidence of business leaders around the world. Catalyst conducts research on all aspects of women's career advancement and provides strategic and web-based consulting services on a global basis to help companies and firms advance women and build inclusive work environments. In addition, we honor exemplary business initiatives that promote women's leadership with our annual Catalyst Award. Catalyst is consistently ranked No. 1 among U.S. nonprofits focused on women's issues by The American Institute of Philanthropy.

**ADVANCING LATINAS IN THE WORKPLACE:  
WHAT MANAGERS NEED TO KNOW**

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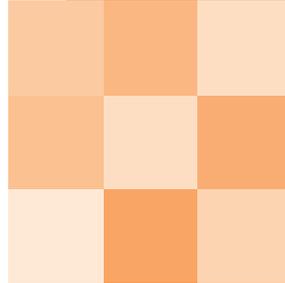
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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & KEY FINDINGS

### Introduction

Since 1997, Catalyst has released a continuous stream of research that sheds light on the career experiences of women of color in corporate management. Through widely-disseminated research reports, speaking engagements, events, and media interviews, we have raised corporate America's level of awareness on this topic.

But when Catalyst addresses groups or meets with corporate clients and members about issues relating to women of color, we find that companies and managers want more. We are frequently asked about the unique experiences of specific racial/ethnic groups that are included in the women-of-color category. Many companies, particularly those in the West, have expressed great interest in knowing more about the Latina workforce.

In response, Catalyst presents this report on Latinas in corporate management, and the strategies companies and managers need to take advantage of this information.

Our extensive knowledge about Latinas in the corporate workforce comes from many sources—our proprietary advisory services engagements; interactions with audiences at speaking engagements; relationships with our member companies; relationships with senior Hispanic corporate advisors; and a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data. For this report, our quantitative findings come from 342 Latina survey respondents. The qualitative findings are from 13 focus groups with entry- and mid-level Latina professionals, as well as in-depth interviews with senior Latinas. These respondents all participated in Catalyst's larger 1999 study, *Women of Color in Corporate Management: Opportunities and Barriers*<sup>1</sup>. In sharing our knowledge about Latinas, as well as our recommended action steps, it is Catalyst's hope that this report will help companies and managers recruit, retain, and advance this important segment of the workforce.

### Working with Latinas: What Companies Need to Know

One need only watch television or flip through a magazine to notice corporate America's increasing focus on marketing to the growing U.S. Hispanic community. However, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of Latinas in senior positions at Fortune 500 companies. For example, the percentage of corporate officers who are Latinas in the Fortune 500 was a minuscule 0.24 percent in 2002

<sup>1</sup> Catalyst, *Women of Color in Corporate Management: Opportunities and Barriers*, (1999).

(25 Latina corporate officers out of a total of 10,092)<sup>2</sup>, up very slightly from their representation in 1999—0.21 percent.<sup>3</sup> But despite these small numbers at the top, Latinas represent an important and growing source of talent. The following steps outline the business case for focusing on the Latina workforce.

### Tap a growing talent force.

- Women of Hispanic origin are one of the fastest growing groups of women in the U.S. labor force. From 1990 to 2001, their total employment increased 76 percent—from 3.8 million<sup>4</sup> to 6.7 million<sup>5</sup>, and is projected to increase another 37 percent to 9.2 million by 2010.<sup>6</sup>
- The number of Hispanic women earning Bachelor's degrees increased 150 percent between 1990 and 2000, which was larger than the rate of increase for any other racial/ethnic group.<sup>7</sup> Also, the percentage of Hispanic women who earned a Master's degree increased 164 percent during this same time period.<sup>8</sup>

### Recognize the value for global businesses.

- Bilingualism is a critical business skill. Spanish is one of the most commonly spoken languages in the world. It is estimated that there are approximately 325 to 350 million people around the world whose first language is Spanish, while there are approximately 340 million people whose first language is English.<sup>9</sup>
- "Biculturalism" is also an important business skill. Latinas who are foreign-born can act as "connecting points" to other countries, which is crucial for global companies.
- Latin American-based companies, including those based in Mexico, generated \$112 billion in revenue for fiscal year 2001, demonstrating the region's growing financial influence.<sup>10</sup>

### Connect with a large and growing market.

- From 1990 to 2007, the nation's Hispanic buying power is projected to grow at an annual rate of 8.7 percent, which exceeds the 4.8 percent estimate for non-Hispanics. This buying power is projected to exceed that of all other ethnic or racial minorities by 2005.<sup>11</sup> Now more than ever, American-based global companies target the Latino consumer market with multi-million-dollar advertising budgets, in an effort to tap this buying power. Latina managers, particularly those at senior decision-making levels, can help businesses understand, target, and reach this growing market.

<sup>2</sup> Unpublished data collected for the 2002 Catalyst Census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners of the Fortune 500.

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished data collected for the 1999 Catalyst Census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners of the Fortune 500.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings (January 1991): p.208

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings (January 2002): p.170

<sup>6</sup> Howard J. Fullerton, Jr. and Mirta Toosi, "Labor force projections to 2010: steady growth and changing composition," *Monthly Labor Review* (November 2001): p.23

<sup>7</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2001*: p.327

<sup>8</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. *Digest of Education Statistics, 2001*: p.336

<sup>9</sup> *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 14th edition.

<sup>10</sup> "The International 500: Out annual survey of the 500 foreign corporations," *Forbes*. July 22, (2002): 122-160

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey M. Murphey, "The Multicultural Economy 2002: Minority Buying Power in the New Century," *Georgia Business and Economic Conditions*. Volume 62, Number 2 (second quarter 2002): p.6

## What Managers Need to Know

### Learn how to work with a diverse workforce.

As a manager, it is important for you to be aware of the diversity of the workforce. Differences within and among employee groups are valuable only when they are recognized and understood. An inclusive work environment, with few adjustments required for Latinas to "fit in," will come about only when differences in background, values, and expectations are recognized and can be accepted and affirmed. This report provides information about Latinas' unique issues and experiences in the workplace.

### Gain insight into organizational behaviors.

You will learn about behaviors, on the individual and organizational levels, that support or hinder the career progress of Latinas. For example, our research shows that Latinas perceive a lack of organizational support for those with extended families.

### Learn specific steps to take toward good management of Latinas.

Throughout this report, you will find recommendations for specific actions you can take to develop Latina staff members. Catalyst also provides a list of external resources for you and your Latina staff members (e.g., diversity web sites; guides on workplace flexibility; a directory of Hispanic professional associations).

## Key Findings

The top-line findings from our research on Latinas are listed below. Subsequent chapters of the report outline each key finding in detail and provide relevant action steps for companies and managers. As a manager, it is important for you to understand and respond to each of these findings in order to tap the talent of this increasingly important segment of the workforce.

### There is great diversity among Latinas, as to language facility and national origin.

- About three out of four Latinas surveyed are bilingual. One in four speaks only English.
- The Latinas surveyed include those from a variety of national origin groups: Mexican; Central/South American; Cuban; Puerto Rican; those who considered themselves to be "White/European;" and others who reported mixed backgrounds (two or more national origin groups).
- Most Latinas we surveyed were born in the United States (73 percent), but this varies by national origin group. For example, more than 90 percent of Mexican women reported being born in the United States, compared with just 28 percent of Central/South American women.
- About one-third of Latinas surveyed have graduate degrees.

### Some Latinas face work/family issues that are not adequately addressed by corporate policies.

- Like all people, Latinas are influenced by their childhood experiences and by their families. This influence is illustrated by the motivation to succeed, a strong work ethic, and a need to fulfill a traditional role at home.
- Latinas place a great deal of emphasis on their relationships with extended family members, who serve as sources of support. These close relationships seem to be less than optimally supported by corporate policies.

### Many Latinas feel that they face barriers to successfully building effective professional relationships.

- Many Latinas have to overcome stereotypes in order to forge connections with influential others.
- As with other women of color, the lack of a mentor is the number one barrier to success for Latinas. In addition to lacking access to mentors, role models, and sponsors, some Latinas also report the lack of access to networks as a difficulty, resulting in significant disadvantages such as being passed over for key assignments.
- When Latinas lack access to key employees, managers have the opportunity to play a broader role in developing their careers.

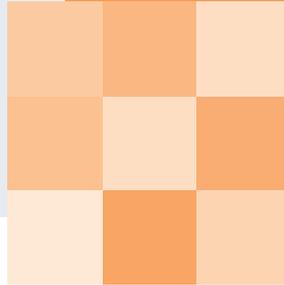
### In responding to their outsider status, Latinas take a number of different approaches. Diversity policies are not seen as creating inclusive work environments.

- Many Latinas make a concerted effort to fit in; others report maintaining their unique styles. Deciding whether to reveal their ethnic backgrounds is an additional complication facing women of color who are not immediately identifiable as such, as is the case with many Latinas. Strategies vary; some decide not to reveal cultural background while others emphasize it. Managers play an important role in encouraging acceptance of a range of backgrounds and styles at work, and fostering a more open work environment.
- Some Latinas question the effectiveness of diversity policies that are meant to create inclusive work environments.

## CHAPTER 2: PROFILE OF LATINA PARTICIPANTS

### KEY FINDINGS

There is great diversity among Latinas. About three out of four are bilingual, but their backgrounds vary by national origin group.



Understanding the diversity of Latinas in corporate management is a first step to making the most of this important segment of the workforce.

### Latina Survey Participants

- About three out of four Latinas are bilingual. Some 37 percent are bilingual and speak a second language at home, while another 41 percent are bilingual but do not speak a second language at home. A total of 22 percent of the Latina participants speak English only.
- Three out of four Latinas surveyed were born in the United States.
- About one-third of Latinas have graduate education.
- Two-thirds of the sample are married and one-half have children.
- Sixty-one percent were raised in middle-class families.
- Less than one-third (26 percent) hold a line position.
- Average age at the time of the survey was 39.
- On average, Latina women had been with their company 13.5 years at the time of the survey.

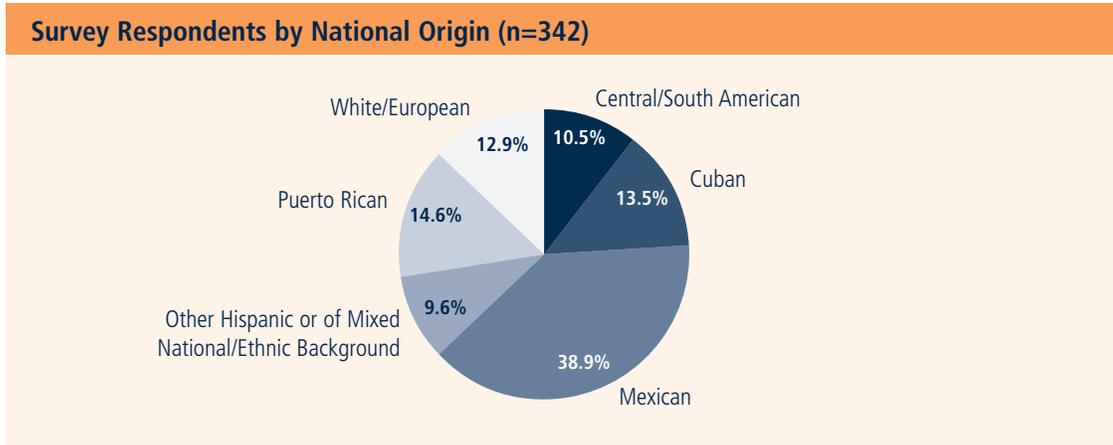
In previous work, Catalyst reported that women of color are not a monolithic group. The experiences of women of color in corporate America vary dramatically by ethnic group, as illustrated by the table that follows.

Profile of Women-of-Color Respondents		
<b>Professional</b>	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Perceptual</b>
<b>Graduate Education</b> African-American: 52% Asian-American: 59% Latinas: 38%	<b>Marital status: Married</b> African-American: 52% Asian-American: 70% Latinas: 65%	<b>Need to adjust style</b> African-American: 36% Asian-American: 25% Latinas: 20%
<b>Reporting within 3 levels of CEO</b> African-American: 13% Asian-American: 6% Latinas: 12%	<b>Born in U.S.</b> African-American: 95% Asian-American: 34% Latinas: 73%	<b>Existence of Stereotypes</b> African-American: 56% Asian-American: 46% Latinas: 37%
<b>Supervisory responsibilities</b> African-American: 57% Asian-American: 41% Latinas: 58%	<b>Bilingual</b> African-American: 13% Asian-American: 77% Latinas: 78%	<b>AA/EEO helped with recruitment</b> African-American: 55% Asian-American: 30% Latinas: 43%

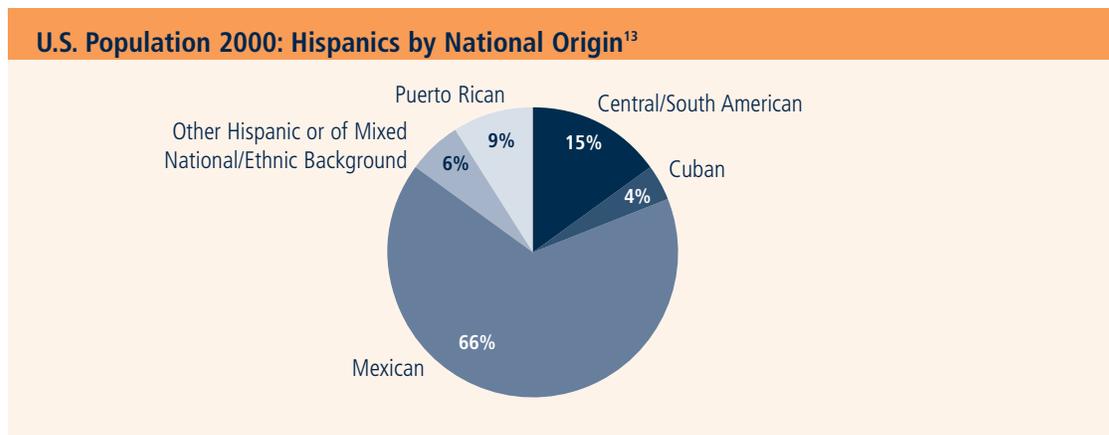
Source: Catalyst, *Women of Color in Corporate Management: Opportunities and Barriers*, (1999).

According to the U.S. Census of the general population, Mexicans are the largest Hispanic national origin group, making up almost two-thirds of Hispanics.<sup>12</sup> In this study’s sample, Mexicans are also the largest national origin group, but their proportion is lower (38.9 percent). Cubans are also more highly represented among our sample of managerial and professional women than among the general population.

At this point, Mexicans appear to be under-represented in the ranks of managerial and professional Latinas. While our sample represents current managerial and professional Latinas, the general population distribution represents the pool of potential employees.



<sup>12</sup> US Census Bureau, "The Hispanic Population in the United States" (March 2001): p.4



There is also diversity within national origin groups, as shown below.

### Profiles by National Origin/Ethnicity

#### Central/South American

- Dominated by immigrants; 72 percent foreign-born.
- Most are bilingual (97 percent).
- Most likely to have upper class or wealthy background (34 percent).
- Least likely to have managerial positions (38 percent compared with 58 percent for total Latinas).

#### Cubans

- Dominated by immigrants; 60 percent foreign-born.
- One-fifth are upper class or wealthy (second only to Central/South Americans).
- Greatest percentage of bilingual respondents (98 percent).
- Most likely to have a very senior job level (24 percent report being 1-3 levels from their CEO).

#### White/Europeans

- Some 16 percent report very senior job levels (1-3 levels below CEO), second only to Cubans.
- Most likely to speak English only (35 percent).
- Most likely to be born in the U.S. (93 percent).
- Most likely of all groups to have line positions (33 percent versus 26 percent of total Latinas).

#### Mexicans

- Less likely than other groups to be bilingual (33 percent speak English only)
- Almost all Mexican respondents are U.S.-born (92 percent), second only to White/Europeans.

<sup>13</sup> US Census Bureau, "The Hispanic Population in the United States" (March 2001): p.4

## Puerto Ricans

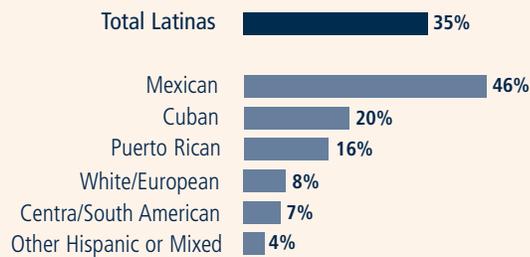
- Most are bilingual (94 percent).
- More than one-half (58 percent) are U.S.-born.
- More likely to have children younger than 18 living at home (70 percent) compared to the 49 percent for total Latinas.

**A note to our readers:** It is often easy, when learning about a group’s common characteristics, to generalize to other members of that group. The information above, for example, indicates that Cuban Latinas are the most likely of all Latina groups in our survey database to have senior-level jobs. However, this does not mean that all Cuban Latinas work at a senior level. Similarly, not all Puerto Ricans are bilingual.

## Identification with Race/Ethnic Group

About one-third of all Latinas indicate that they have a strong connection with their racial/ethnic community (35 percent). However, this finding varies widely across national origin groups, with Mexicans most frequently reporting these connections.

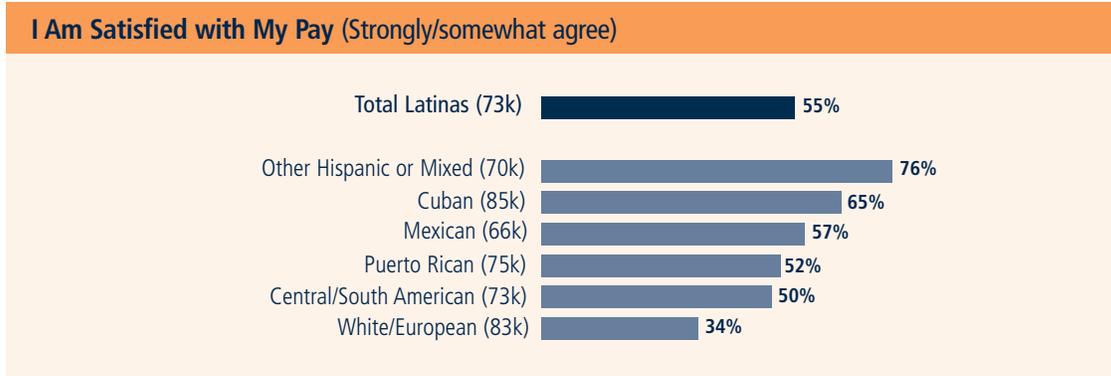
### In My Life in General, I Am Strongly Connected to My Racial/Ethnic Community (Often/always)



p<.10 Mexican vs. All other Latinas

## Compensation and Pay Satisfaction

Satisfaction with pay among Latinas is on par with that of the general population.<sup>14</sup> However, satisfaction is not consistent for Latinas.



Cuban Latinas earned the most in the study. Mexican respondents are the lowest paid, but more than one-half report they are satisfied with their pay. White/Europeans, the group with the second greatest total compensation, are the least satisfied with compensation.

One possible explanation for the disparity between White/European Latinas' pay and their satisfaction with pay is that they may have a higher expectation of earnings. The group one identifies with is usually one's reference group, and whites generally earn more than people of color.

Another difference is that Cuban Latinas spend the shortest time in their job grade, suggesting that they move up more quickly than other groups.



<sup>14</sup> Genesee Survey Services, Inc., *National Work Opinion Survey*, 2002.

## What Managers Can Do

The following recommendations will help you build a knowledge base about the experiences of Latinas in your organization, and highlight their importance to your business.

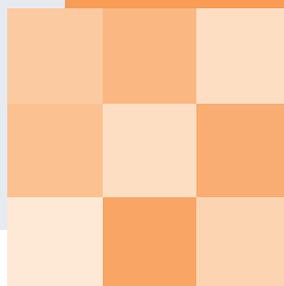
- Assess your organization and understand the demographics of your workforce. You can learn a lot from statistics about representation, recruitment, turnover, retention, and advancement of various groups in the employee population. Statistics can also help you see the extent of the untapped talent pool in your organization. (If your Human Resources department does not have these measures and needs to create a system to collect and analyze them, refer to the Catalyst *Making Change* booklet, "Using Metrics to Support Workforce Diversity.")
- Make sure you and your staff understand the business case for recruiting, retaining, and advancing Latinas in the workforce. Brainstorm the links between your organization's goals, factors that influence the bottom line, and diversity. Then gather data to confirm and refine your business case (see Catalyst's *Making Change* book, "Creating a Business Case for Diversity").
- Be sure you and your staff are aware of the diversity among Latina groups. Get to know each employee who reports to you as an individual. Try not to generalize about people as part of a group. This report, for example, discusses the large percentage of Latinas who are bilingual or foreign-born, but it also emphasizes that there is diversity even within subgroups, and many individual exceptions. Your education can start with this report and the resource list found on pages 29-31.
- Work with employee leadership groups to communicate the accomplishments of talented employees; use company programs to create highly visible opportunities.

### Hispanic Forum at General Electric

At General Electric, the Hispanic Forum helps recruit diverse talent, provide development opportunities through mentoring and career seminars, and provides Hispanic members with leadership opportunities within the Forum. There is strong GE leadership commitment and involvement in the Forum. Business Champions, who report directly to the Chairman and network leaders, work closely with business unit CEOs to develop the Forum's strategy and key events. For example, the Forum holds an annual leadership summit, at which business and functional leaders from around the world discuss key business initiatives with the 200 plus GE Hispanic leaders in attendance. This summit is a great opportunity for leaders across GE to network with Hispanic employees. Attendance was based on employees' performance in their respective businesses and their contributions to the Hispanic Forum.

**KEY FINDINGS**

Some Latinas face work/family issues that are not adequately addressed by corporate policies.



As a manager, you want to get the best work out of your staff members and enhance outcomes for the organization. Research has shown that helping employees address work/life issues is an important tool for doing so. For example, flexible work arrangements have been shown to improve employees' satisfaction and commitment, raise their morale, increase productivity, and lower organizational turnover.<sup>15</sup>

However, before you can help staff members address work/life issues, you need to be aware of their particular situations and concerns. In this chapter, we identify some work/life issues that Latinas (and others) face that could use more attention from organizations.

As diverse as Latinas are, family appears to play an essential role in most of their lives. Managers who recognize, understand, and address this role will be better able to recruit, retain, and advance Latinas. As one woman stated,

*"To Hispanics, whether you're Colombian, Puerto Rican, or whatever the case, family is important. That's the commonality. It's the grounding factor."*

The importance of family ranges from formative experiences in one's nuclear family to current participation in extended family life.

**Influence of Family Background**

Several Latinas described the influence their family backgrounds had on their values. Many spoke about the motivation to succeed that arose from the hardships they or their family members experienced:

*"I've gotten so much more in touch with my culture and my family, now I really see myself as a Hispanic, a Mexican female. There were so many things that I never realized that were sacrificed for me. My grandparents were from Mexico. My mother only spoke Spanish when she was a little girl. And in school, she was physically punished if she spoke anything other than English."*

<sup>15</sup> Catalyst Infobrief: Benefits of Workplace Flexibility, 2003 (In Press).

*"We have...very strong values. We came from another country, and I think that all of us fight to be here. We want to stay and to improve, and we want it to be better every day."*

### Traditional Gender Roles in Families

Several Latinas commented on the traditional family roles expected of women in their culture:

*"I'm marrying someone who's not Hispanic, but I feel that as a traditional Hispanic woman, I am responsible for the upbringing of my children. It's going to be weird, because I never saw [my dad] stay home from work when I was sick. Now, [my fiancé] might do it."*

Some Latinas perceive differences between themselves and majority women around domestic duties:

*"Non-minority women would ask me, 'You cook when you go home?' And I would say, 'Yes, I've got kids.' Of course I do; my mother cooked. That's one of the differences between [other] people and [us]. Food is very important; family is very important."*

Respondents were asked about the extent to which family commitments have prevented them from advancing to a higher-level job at their current companies. Latinas are more likely (21 percent) than total women of color (14 percent) to cite family commitments as a barrier to their advancement.

*"When you have a really strong culture within your family, there's a lot more commitment to your family. It requires a lot more time from work."*

Latinas illustrate the growing need for more effective work/family support from organizations, but this is not an issue that solely affects Latinas. The entire workforce will experience growing elder care responsibilities in coming years and, therefore, organizations will need to respond to the expanding definition of family with effective work/life policies and practices.

### Extended Families and Company Responses

Many Latinas report that their participation in family life extends beyond the nuclear family. Some speak of the lack of understanding they encountered from coworkers regarding their commitment to their extended families:

*"Whenever someone says, 'Let's go to lunch' or asks me to stay late, I say, I can't. I have my family that I need to attend to. Yesterday someone told me, 'That excuse is getting to be pretty old.' And I said, 'It's not an excuse.' The person said, 'Well, you don't have a family.' I said, 'Yes, I do. It's my brothers, my sisters, my parents, my cousins, my aunts, my uncles.' I think a lot of people don't see that. Your extended family is as high priority as your children and your husband."*

Organizations may be too restrictive for some Latinas about the range of family members accepted at company functions:

*"If it's (an event) that I think is really important, I want to bring my family. I want them to know and to understand what's going on. My dad has a third-grade education and was a copper miner all his life. He's proud of the fact that his daughter is doing [something] that's not even within the realm of his understanding. But it's seen as a negative to bring your family to an event. At certain events, you're to bring a spouse, and if you don't have a spouse—which I don't—then what do you do? You go by yourself, and then there's a whole level of innuendos about being a single Latina woman out scouting."*

### Elder Care

One out of five Latinas surveyed report that they have elder care responsibilities. This is higher than among predominantly white female samples surveyed by Catalyst. As one Latina states,

*"If [your parents] get sick, they call you up because you're the daughter and you have to respond."*

Latinas with elder care responsibilities are more likely than those without such obligations to cite support from the company for balancing family responsibilities and work commitments as a very/extremely important strategy for achieving success (52 percent compared to 41 percent, respectively).

## What Managers Can Do

The work/family issues faced by Latinas are growing issues for all employees. The recommendations below will help employers address these concerns.

- Establish explicit performance expectations. Focus on productivity at work rather than time in the office.
- Create an open dialogue with your employees. Make sure you understand how individual employees define "family," and use an inclusive definition when planning work-related social events. Work with Human Resources to ensure that policies and programs are available for extended-family-member dependents.

### **Paid Time Off at WellPoint Health Networks, Inc**

One way to ensure that employees can meet a range of family obligations, not restricted to traditional definitions of family, is to create a bank of days off that the employee may use for any reason. At WellPoint, the "paid time off" policy gives employees more flexibility in attending to family and other personal responsibilities. WellPoint evaluated its previous policy and eliminated several separate categories of time off (e.g., sick time, vacation, personal days). The company then instituted paid time off (PTO), which allows employees to accrue all of their hours off in one bank. Employees have the flexibility to use their banked days or hours in ways that fit their own needs.

- Learn about the growing issue of elder care. Offer support to help employees fulfill elder care responsibilities.
- Find out about your organization's benefits and programs designed to help employees manage family responsibilities (i.e. family leave, flexible arrangements, resource and referral programs, dependent care programs, employee assistance programs). If you think your Human Resources department does not have a comprehensive work/life strategy, let them know about companies that do.

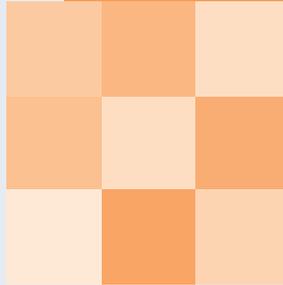
### **Work/Life Balance Strategy at IBM**

In 1998, IBM began a deliberate, global initiative to help employees achieve the right balance between their work and personal lives. A Global Workforce Flexibility Project Office, commissioned by the senior management team, was launched to address issues relating to workload and work/life balance. The office began by outlining a process using the following key components: executive partnership, specific functional/geographical areas as pilots, managers/employee training, technology, communications, and measurements. This process was successfully used to pilot flexible work options in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and North America. The overall strategy has created increased flexibility in how, when, and where work is done at IBM.

## CHAPTER 4: RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS IN THE WORKPLACE

### KEY FINDINGS

It is a challenge for many Latinas to build effective professional relationships, because many feel they lack access to role models, sponsors, mentors, and informal networks. Many feel they must overcome negative stereotypes in order to form successful relationships.



It is increasingly common for managers to be evaluated on their ability to manage heterogeneous work teams. As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, success may rely on your ability to motivate a diverse team to help your company succeed.

To ensure that your team members perform optimally, it is essential to facilitate their cultivation of key relationships in the workforce. Catalyst research shows that Latinas face several challenges in doing this that managers should know about.

### Countering Stereotypes

More than one-third of Latinas surveyed (38 percent) report that stereotypes exist for women of their racial/ethnic group. Latinas with a high connection to their racial/ethnic group (46 percent) are more likely to perceive that stereotypes of women of their ethnic group exist than are those women with a low connection (33 percent).

As Latinas navigate the work environment and form relationships with others, the burden for countering stereotypes and educating others often falls on them. As one Latina states,

*"The managers that I've spoken to think of Mexicans as very lazy because of their notion that in their work habits, they have a siesta time... and that they take a break. I try to educate them and say, 'Well, I also understand they're the most productive people because they do have a break. If you look at the quality of what we produce in Mexico, they are the top of our line. So where are you getting your information?'"*

Another Latina comments on stereotypes about accents:

*"Some people tend to relate my level of intelligence with my accent, which is wrong."*

Yet another Latina discusses the pressure to appear less feminine for fear of being perceived as flirtatious:

*"There's a perception that if you're female and you want to advance, you have to take on some male characteristics. In my family growing up, my being a little girl or woman was just as important as anything else and important to me to preserve. I wasn't going to get into male roles in my manner or in my dress. Sometimes there is this perception that we need to lay that aside or we'll be seen as flirtatious."*

The following description of an encounter one Latina had with a coworker illustrates the persistence of negative stereotypes, and the difficulty in educating unenlightened others in the workplace:

*"When I first started in this job, whenever there was a Spanish name in the newspaper, a coworker of Polish descent would ask me, 'Did you see—do you know so and so?' It was never good; it was rapes or killings. I would say, 'No... Why would I know every Puerto Rican in town?' I had to [show] that not everybody from Puerto Rico is poor, is uneducated and works in the fields; there are professionals."*

A common success strategy that women have reported in Catalyst research is exceeding performance expectations. In our 1999 study, *Women of Color in Corporate Management*, about one-half (49 percent) of women-of-color respondents cited exceeding performance expectations as a success strategy, and approximately the same percent of Latinas agreed (43 percent). Exceeding performance expectations is seen as an important step in overcoming stereotypes and establishing credibility.

## Key Relationships

Because of their outsider status and the stereotypes they face, many Latinas report a lack of access to "in groups" in the workplace. When asked to identify barriers to career advancement, Latinas, like women of color in general, cite their lack of mentors, networks, and role models.

As one Latina said,

*"If you're [a senior white male], you're okay; you have a godfather for life. But if you're totally the opposite—if you're a female, a woman of color, if you have kids—then you're on a different track. You're on a totally different track."*

Top Barriers to Advancement	A great to very great extent	
	Total Women of Color	Latinas Only
Not having a mentor/sponsor	47%	42%
Lack informal networks	40%	37%
Lack of role models of my race/ethnicity	29%	28%

In one situation, an organization failed to capitalize on a Latina's unique qualifications because she lacked a network:

*"I had a very good opportunity to work in Latin America, in a very key position. A requirement was that you be bilingual. A white female was hired. I was told that the only reason I didn't get the job was because I didn't have a big network in the company...The other person didn't speak Spanish at all, and she's taking classes at Berlitz."*

Latinas in focus groups shed light on interpersonal workplace dynamics affecting their career progress. Some Latinas report conflicts with white women in the workplace:

*"White females don't like reporting to minorities. A (white) support person wants to be at the same level as the professional. By logic, why should they be? But they want to be out there running the show, too."*

## Barriers Persist Over Time

According to Catalyst's recent follow-up study of women of color, there were no significant changes between 1998 and 2002 in the barriers to success perceived by Latinas. However, in the period between 1999 and 2001, the following success factors seemed to gain in importance, having been cited more frequently: high-visibility projects (from 46 percent to 72 percent); technical skill (from 24 percent to 37 percent); managing others' preconceptions (from 12 percent to 24 percent); and influential mentor/sponsor (from 38 percent to 54 percent).<sup>16</sup> While the existence of barriers is still the same, the need for mentors, high-visibility projects, etc., has become even more important over time.

## Mentoring

### Finding a Mentor

As with other women of color, lack of a mentor is the number one barrier to success for Latinas, reported by 42 percent of Latinas. Some Latinas credit a combination of luck and skill in obtaining mentors, as in this woman's story:

*"I got on the promotable list strictly by the luck of the draw. I happened to have been invited to a vice president's quarterly meeting. I sat next to a fellow who was a vice president... He found my opinions and some technical ideas that I had interesting. He sponsored me to a few other vice presidents. That was how I got on the list. You actually went to a fish bowl and picked the number where you would sit. So it was just the luck of the draw that I sat next to this guy."*

Others connect with mentors and sponsors based on others' perceptions that their work is strong:

*"After my assignment was done, the director called me and said, 'I'm really impressed with your work. I want to try to find you a job'...So he found out that [company] had just moved from New York, and he got me two interviews—one with personnel and one with editorial services. And I was offered both jobs, and took the one at editorial services. I stayed with that group for about 12 years."*

<sup>16</sup> Unpublished data collected for *Women of Color in Corporate Management: Three Years Later*, Catalyst, (2002).

## Types of Relationships with Mentors

Latinas who have mentors agree that their mentoring relationships are characterized by trust and mutual sharing. They also rate their mentors highly on serving as role models, suggesting strategies for accomplishing career objectives, helping with developing job-related skills, and recommending and providing assignments that increase contact with senior managers. However, Latina survey respondents report that their mentors tend to not provide guidance about issues relating to race/ethnicity or gender.

For some Latinas, a mentor's lack of awareness of race and gender is not a problem. One Latina describes a mentor's "color/gender-blind" style:

*"My mentor was a man who was my district manager for eight years. He worked very closely with me to make sure I was going to succeed... And it's because he believed in me as a person, not per se being a Hispanic woman."*

Mentors and mentees, especially when they do not share the same race/ethnicity, should understand each other's preferences pertaining to discussing race and gender. While some women of color desire guidance and support on these issues, others find beneficial mentoring relationships without ever overtly addressing race or gender with their mentors.

## Quality of Relationship with Manager

Because many Latinas report that they tend to lack important professional relationships, and say their mentors do not provide advice on gender and ethnic issues, it may be up to managers to take a central role in developing and motivating their Latina direct reports, as well as creating and cultivating an inclusive work environment.

Three out of four Latina respondents agree that their managers are comfortable interacting with them (75 percent). However, fewer Latinas rate their managers highly on career development or dealing with organizational politics.

Quality of Relationship with Manager	Somewhat/strongly agree Latinas
Comfortable interacting with me	75%
Takes pride in my accomplishments	65%
Cares about my work satisfaction	64%
Strongly considers my goals	57%
Helps me to understand organizational politics	49%
Maps out clear developmental goals	34%

There are Latinas whose managers do take an interest in developing their careers, as exemplified by this quote:

*"And then finally when I interviewed for this job and got my current supervisor, it was a complete 180. I couldn't believe how much support, how much potential he actually saw in me. He valued me more than I valued me. Absolutely. And he's made a world of difference in where I feel I see myself going now versus where I did a couple of years ago. There isn't any training that I can't go to him and ask for and feel pretty comfortable about getting, or any support at any level."*

A senior-level Latina talks about the difficulties some managers have in dealing with minorities, and provides advice to both managers and individual women of color on how to overcome such limitations:

*"Ask yourself, when you have a woman working for you or a minority of any kind, what are your expectations of that person? Always have high expectations of that person. One of the biggest road blocks is that everybody always has low expectations of what we can do... As a manager, you should ask, what expectations do you have of a person? Just make them ten times higher and give it a try. Because I think the thing that hurts most people here, good people on my level, is that your managers just don't think you can handle it."*

## What Managers Can Do

The following steps will help you combat negative stereotyping about Latinas in your organization and facilitate their cultivation of important relationships.

- Broaden the range of role models within your organization. For example, invite guest speakers from diverse backgrounds, including those from Hispanic backgrounds and/or with noticeable accents.
- Educate your staff and others in the workforce about the "cultural nimbleness" of those who are familiar with different cultures.
  - ◆ Stress the benefits to global as well as domestic businesses.
  - ◆ Recognize that facility in Spanish is an advantage in a global economy.
  - ◆ But keep in mind that not all Latinas have close connections with other cultures, as there are individual differences within groups.
- Look for daily opportunities to champion Latina professionals. For example:
  - ◆ Showcase the qualifications of new Latina staff members when you introduce them to others at work.
  - ◆ Avoid making negative statements about your staff members' ability or potential. Restrict any such negative feedback to your line of management or Human Resources.
  - ◆ If others make dismissive or disparaging remarks about your staff, immediately challenge them. If colleagues, or her subordinates, try to undermine a staff member's authority, do not allow it.
- Seek out a Latina mentee or mentor. Use a common interest as a way to connect to potential mentees or mentors whose backgrounds differ from your own. Alternatively, identify a Latina employee and encourage your own colleague to serve as her mentor.
- Be an advocate for your talented employees.
  - ◆ Speak up during discussions on advancement, and advocate for employees who may be unnoticed.
  - ◆ Include Latinas in high-potential slates.
  - ◆ To create positive role models, suggest to HR that greater emphasis be placed on recruiting Latinas.
  - ◆ If your company has career or leadership development programs, advocate that your high-performing Latinas participate.

### Leadership Development at Verizon Communications

In 2000, Verizon Communications piloted the Development and Leadership Initiative (DLI) with its Hispanic managers to better serve its fastest growing business market. Business line leaders worked with Human Resources to identify a leadership pipeline, consisting of three levels of high-performing managers. A three-day symposium then focused on individual professional development, integrating company vision and values. Senior leadership was highly involved, sharing with participants their

## Leadership Development at Verizon Communications (continued)

perspectives on competencies for advancement. The participants' managers also discussed career progress and development with them. In addition to providing clear performance requirements to Hispanic managers, this initiative gave participants the opportunity to form important relationships with senior leaders across functions and divisions that strengthened their career networks.

- Develop your relationships with your Latina direct reports to include mapping out their goals and assisting them with navigating organizational politics. Evaluate job performance fairly, with a focus on results.
  - ◆ Allow differences in behavioral and work style (to the extent feasible in your organization).
  - ◆ Do not let your overall assessment of someone's performance be driven by how similar he/she is to you in style and background.
  
- Help Latinas build internal and external networks. If your company has employee networks or affinity groups relevant to Hispanics, encourage your staff members to join. Find out ways you can get involved as an advisor or sponsor to the employee network. Also, sponsor Latina direct reports to become involved in professional associations.

## Hispanic Employee Network at General Mills

The Hispanic Network at General Mills has a long history. It was originally founded as two networks that existed prior to General Mills' merger with Pillsbury. Today, the General Mills Hispanic Employee Network supports the strategic goals of the company's diversity department, working closely with the department to recruit, retain, and develop Latinos. The network comprises five committees, focusing on the following areas: recruitment and development; networking; cultural awareness; community and volunteering; and public relations. The Hispanic Network communicates its efforts and activities through its quarterly newsletter and on the Hispanic Network web page, which can be accessed via the General Mills intranet. Members report that the network also has an important role in articulating the barriers and opportunities for Latinos at the company.

## Hispanic Employee Forum at Texas Instruments

Texas Instruments uses its Hispanic network to communicate the accomplishments of its Hispanic employees. Hispanic Employee Initiative Forum (HEIF) is Texas Instruments' national employee network of Hispanic employees, which any employee can join. There is active leadership participation and commitment in HEIF. Senior leaders serve as sponsors, providing guidance and support to the network in addition to attending workshops and conferences. Also, an Advisory Board, which is made up of senior Hispanics at TI, provides guidance to HEIF members on ways to move up in the ranks. Members of the network find that this Advisory Board is also highly valuable for the connections they make between HEIF members and upper management. Texas Instruments has found that this network contributes to the company's business strategy and is key to retention, recruiting, and productivity.

## CHAPTER 5: RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE CHALLENGES

### KEY FINDINGS

In responding to their outsider status, some Latinas make a concerted effort to fit in while others maintain their unique styles. Diversity policies are generally not seen as creating inclusive work environments.

Diversity theorists contend that work environments that do not require strict adherence to narrow behavioral norms, and that allow members to create their own approaches to work, are more suitable for diverse workgroups.<sup>17</sup> Catalyst’s findings from a longitudinal study of women-of-color managers reinforce that contention, linking more open work environments with the retention of women of color.<sup>18</sup> An important feature of open work environments is that they do not require women of color to make extensive adjustments to fit in.

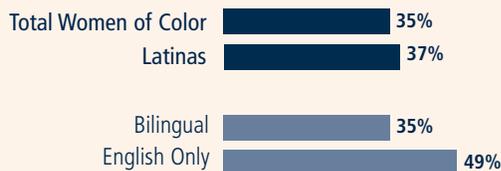
Many Latinas do not initially experience a comfortable fit with their work environments. They spend a good deal of time and energy fitting in. If you can help make your area of the work environment more open to differences, you will be more successful at retaining talented Latinas.

### The Workplace Context: Openness to Differences

When asked about the openness of work climate in the company for which they work, approximately one-third of Latinas reported that differences in behavioral style are encouraged.

Bilingual Latinas are less likely to report that differences in behavioral style are encouraged—suggesting that their cultural differences are less accepted.

#### Differences in Behavioral Style Are Encouraged (Strongly/somewhat agree)



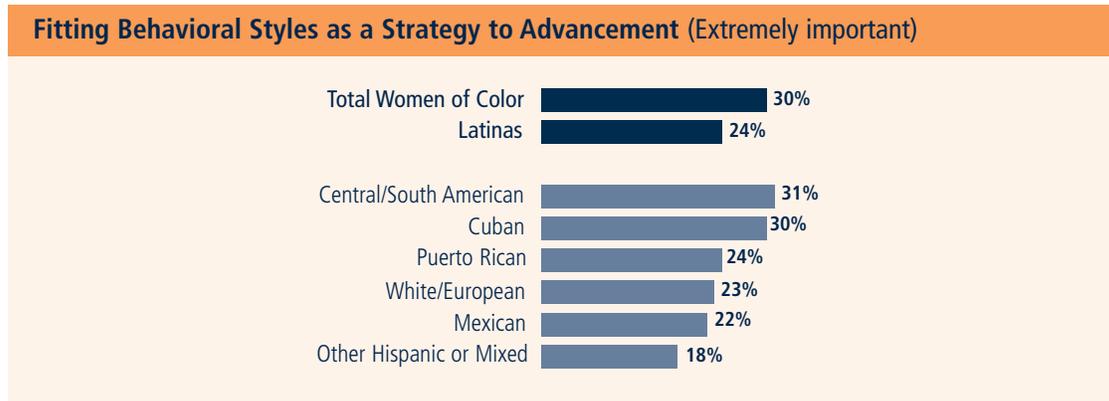
p<.05 Bilingual vs. English Only

<sup>17</sup> Taylor Cox, *Cultural Diversity in Organizations*. (San Francisco, Berrett Koeler Publishers: 1994).

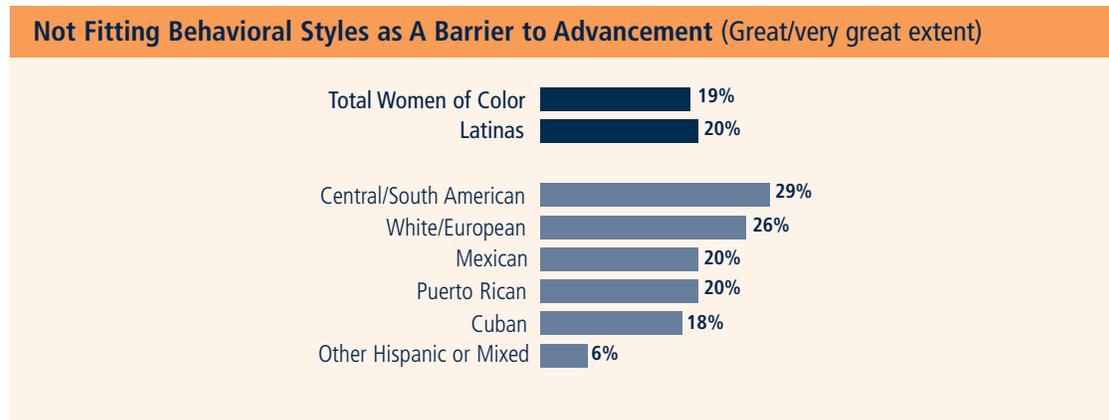
<sup>18</sup> Catalyst, *Women of Color in Corporate Management: Three Years Later*, (2002).

### The importance of fitting in with accepted behavioral style

Many Latinas report the importance of adjusting to fit in the corporate environment. Nearly one out of four Latinas report fitting in with accepted behavioral styles as an extremely important strategy for women of their ethnic/racial group.



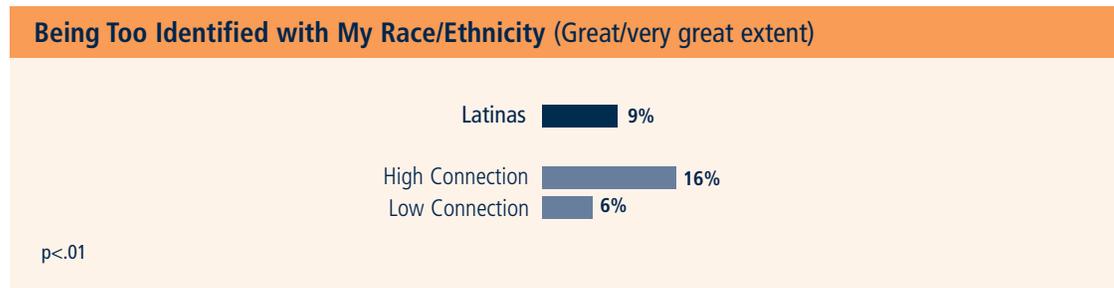
Similarly, "not fitting behavioral style to what is typical at the company" was reported as a barrier to success by one out of five Latinas. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which "not fitting behavioral style to what is typical at the company" has prevented them from advancing to a higher-level job at their current companies.



### Identification with race/ethnic group

As described previously, about one-third of all Latinas indicate they have a strong connection with their racial/ethnic community (35 percent). Latinas who feel highly connected to their racial/ethnic community appear to have a heightened awareness of the role that ethnicity and race have in their workplace experiences.

While only a small percentage of Latinas overall report that "being too identified with race/ethnicity" is an advancement barrier, Latinas with strong connections to their ethnic community are more likely to do so.



## Making Adjustments to Fit

In probing further on how Latinas fit into their work environments, nearly one-half of Latinas agree with the statement, "To fit in, women of my racial/ethnic group must make many adjustments." Women who are bilingual at home are more likely to agree with that statement (58 percent) compared to those Latinas who speak English only (44 percent).

Like other women of color, most Latina survey respondents report maintaining a conservative style of hair and make-up (87 percent) and conforming to the corporate norms in dress (84 percent).

For some, however, a conservative style of dress is not their preferred style. One Latina described the effort it took to conform to conservative styles:

*"I would go and buy \$300 suits to help me fit in. My mother almost fell over when I told her I paid \$200 for a purse. It was what I thought was a way to detract from being Hispanic...to counter their [expectations]. 'Here comes a well-dressed, educated Hispanic woman. She must have grown up with money, or one of her parents is white.' Neither of which is true. You can disguise yourself. It's effective. The level of respect, the level of trust in your work, credibility improves."*

## Maintaining Unique Behavioral Styles

When Latinas in focus groups discussed their strategies for succeeding in corporate environments, many spoke about modifying behavior, including toning down direct communication styles. Many others, however, described their continued directness in communication.

Some women spoke about maintaining their directness in communication as a way of gaining respect:

*"I get a little more respect than other females because the males in my group tend to respect more technology knowledge; plus I don't give in. I tend to be the one who usually speaks her mind."*

Others have used a direct communication style to their advantage even when it was not initially seen as a strength for them. One Latina explained the challenge of maintaining her unique accent in spite of pressure from management:

*"When I was brought here, they gave me a tutor to improve my English skills. But there was [still] the accent. So they worked with me to be able to be part of this crowd. I was supposed to change my intonation, my accent. I didn't want to do it. I said, 'I want to improve my language skills, I really want to speak English and write it well, but when I open my mouth, I want them to know who I am. So I'm not changing.' "*

### Negotiating Identity in the Workplace

Deciding whether to reveal ethnic background is an additional complication facing women of color who are not immediately identifiable as such, as is the case with many Latinas. Strategies vary; some decide not to reveal their cultural identity.

This woman's comments illustrate the pressure to not reveal her ethnicity:

*"When people don't know me, [and] I tell them I'm Mexican, they look at me like, why would you say that? Why would you let people know? Because you don't have to admit it. You look Italian, or European. You don't need to tell people that."*

Some senior-level Latinas report that they serve as advocates for other women and people of color. These Latinas help others attain important assignments and gain visibility within their organization. For these Latinas, revealing their ethnicity is an important component of that strategy:

*"I personally do not make any bones about being Hispanic. I'm very proud of being Hispanic. I think the only way that Hispanics can help each other is to be role models, and to say 'Here's a hand, let me help you up.' That is the only way if we're ever going to get anywhere."*

### Perceptions of Diversity Policies

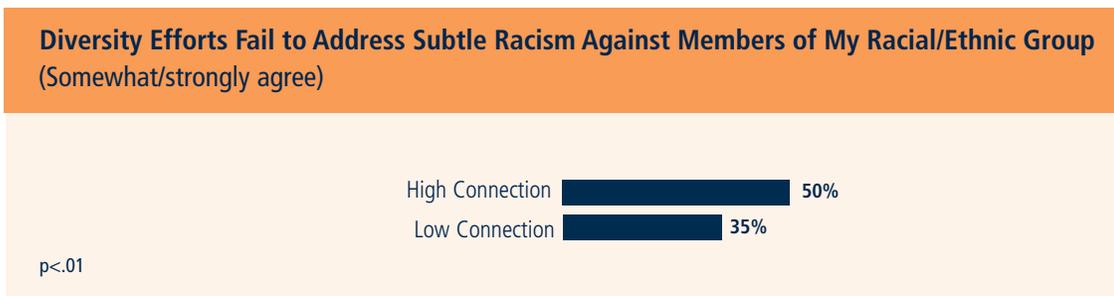
Many Latinas do not perceive diversity policies as effective. A majority of Latinas (55 percent) report that diversity policies fail to address subtle gender bias, and more than one-half report that diversity efforts place too little emphasis on the quality of the work environment (55 percent). Despite the fact that diversity policies are designed to create and foster inclusive work environments, many Latinas also feel that their work environments are not inclusive of racial, cultural, and gender differences. For example, about one out of four Latinas report that talking about race is considered taboo, and about one out of ten Latinas report that racist comments are tolerated in their organizations.

However, as noted in the table below, four out of ten Latinas report that diversity policies do foster respect for Latinas’ cultural backgrounds. In addition, compared to all women-of-color respondents, relatively fewer Latinas report that other employees feel uncomfortable around members of their racial/ethnic group.

Work Environment	Somewhat/strongly agree	
	Total Women of Color	Latinas Only
My cultural differences are appreciated	31%	39%
Talking about race is considered taboo	34%	28%
Sexist comments are tolerated	22%	21%
Many employees feel uncomfortable around members of my racial/ethnic group	25%	12%
Racist comments are tolerated	15%	12%

Diversity policies are also intended to ensure that women and people of color have advancement opportunities. It is worth noting that while Latinas are generally satisfied with their current positions and overall career achievement, less than one-half report being satisfied with the opportunities for advancement in their current organizations (40 percent).

Latinas with a high connection to the Latina community are also more likely to agree that diversity efforts do not address racism against Hispanics.



## What Managers Can Do

At many organizations, diversity initiatives may be perceived as ineffective because individual managers do not implement them well. The extent to which a work environment is inclusive, and employees do not have to conform to narrow styles, can be greatly affected by individual managers. The following steps will help you become a "champion" for diversity and inclusiveness.

- Participate in a formal diversity effort (i.e., Diversity Council, Diversity Task Force, or Employee Networks).
- Communicate clear and frequent messages about your commitment to diversity through one-on-one and small group conversations, speeches, newsletters, or memos.
- Link diversity to business issues whenever possible.
- Convene or participate in brainstorming sessions with your team or your peers to identify more concrete steps you can take to level the playing field.
- Take advantage of existing diversity training programs that your company offers.

### General Diversity Training at Northern Trust

Northern Trust requires general diversity training for all employees through an eight-hour program called *Diversity at Work* for non-managers, and a twelve-hour program, *Managing Diversity at Work*, for managers. First implemented in 1993, the training grew out of an internal environmental assessment that captured the perspectives of women and people of color then at the firm, as well as those who had left. Through this assessment, the company learned that rather than overt racism or sexism, the problem was more the subtle, unconscious behaviors engaged in by people who were unaware of the impact of their behavior on others. The resulting training is led by volunteers who are employed throughout the bank. Content includes an inclusion/exclusion activity; discussions of how behaviors impact the workplace and the business; steps for how to become self-aware; and sharing personal prejudices in small groups. The program has received positive response through course evaluations, anecdotal feedback, and an employee survey.

- Address the resistance that often results from the launch of diversity efforts. Backlash typically emerges when majority groups fear they will have fewer opportunities if another group gains opportunities. Often it is the perception of scarcity, rather than the reality, that drives such opposition. Use facts to counter resistance (refer to Catalyst's *Making Change* book, "Tackling Resistance to Diversity Efforts").
  - ◆ In one client engagement, Catalyst found that male employees believed the company unfairly favored women and people of color for promotions. Yet when Catalyst analyzed the HR data, it turned out that women and minorities actually received fewer promotions, relative to their representation, than their white male counterparts. The facts countered the myth and alerted the organization to a pattern of inequality.
- Understand the exclusionary effects of subtle messages and behaviors.

### Addressing Micro-Inequities at JPMorgan Chase

JPMorgan Chase partnered with key academic institutions and consulting partners to develop a program called "Micro-Inequities: The Power of Small," a leadership initiative that focuses on the impact of "micro-messages" in the workplace. Its premise is that each of us sends thousands of powerful, yet subtle, messages to our colleagues every day that have a strong impact in shaping others' abilities to perform at the top of their game. These micro-messages can be as subtle as a supportive head nod, a disapproving head turn, a casual wink of encouragement, or a blank look of indifference. When a manager communicates different messages to different people based on race, gender, sexual orientation, or organizational level, these messages can affect things such as productivity, morale, and turnover. Participants in this program learn strategies for how to become aware of, discuss, address, and prevent micro-inequities, as well as ways to use positive micro-messages to drive performance.

**Web Sites for Professional Associations, Organizations, and Links/Resources**

MANA: National Latina Organization  
<http://www.hermana.org>

National Society of Hispanic Professionals  
<http://www.nshp.org>

Association of Latina Professionals in Finance and Accounting  
<http://www.alpfa.org>

Hispanic Business Incorporated  
[http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/community/hispanic\\_orgs.asp](http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/community/hispanic_orgs.asp)

National Society for Hispanic MBAs  
<http://www.nshmba.org>

Hispanic National Bar Association  
<http://www.hnba.com>

**Elder Care Resources**

Administration on Aging (AoA)  
<http://www.aoa.gov>

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)  
<http://www.aarp.org>

American Society on Aging (ASA)  
<http://www.asaging.org>

National Association of State Units on Aging  
<http://www.nasua.org>

## Flexible Work Arrangements Reading List

### Catalyst's Recent Work on this Topic

*Making Work Flexible: Policy to Practice*, 1996. This practical, comprehensive guide shows organizations and managers how to implement and manage flexible work arrangements.

*A New Approach to Flexibility: Managing the Work/Time Equation*, 1997. This two-year assessment of flexible work arrangements offers strategies and solutions that work in today's 24/7 business world.

*Flexible Work Arrangements 3: A Ten-Year Retrospective*, 2000. This unprecedented look at the work experiences of women who have used reduced schedules explores the long-term effects of flexible work arrangements on career development.

*Making Change: Building a Flexible Workplace*, 2002. This issue of Catalyst's *Making Change* series lays out the case for a flexible workplace and provides managers with concrete action steps for creating and supporting a flexible work environment.

### Other Publications

Campbell, A. and M. Koblenz. *The Work and Life Pyramid of Needs*. Deerfield, Illinois: Baxter Healthcare Corporation and MK Consultants, 1997. Read this book to learn more about Baxter Healthcare Corporation's innovative work/life strategy, the outcome of a major 18-month study of employees.

Kane-Zweber, Kathy. *Flexible Work Options: A Guidebook for Employees, Managers, and Human Resource Professionals*. Motorola University Press, 1997. This guidebook provides a list of flexible options and an outline of the decision-making process, as well as advice on pitching, implementing, and evaluating a flexible work arrangement.

Miller, Barbara E. *Reinventing Work: Innovative Strategies Relinking Life and Livelihood to Benefit Business and Staff (A Workbook for Managers and Teams)*. Artemis Management Consultants, 1997. This workbook is based on the results of the Ford Foundation's study, *Relinking Life and Work: Toward a Better Future*.

Sawi, Beth. *Coming Up for Air: How to Build a Balanced Life in a Workaholic World*. New York: Hyperion, 2000. This book offers tools for examining one's lifestyle and making the personal and professional changes needed to build a more fulfilling and balanced life.

Shellenbarger, Susan. *Work and Family*. New York: The Ballantine Publishing Group, 1999. Essays from the "Work and Family" column, published in *The Wall Street Journal*. The column uses individual success stories and corporate best practices to illustrate a wide range of topics such as CEO support, workload, and dependent care resources.

### Flexible Work Arrangements Web Sites

**Gil Gordon Associates, <http://www.gilgordon.com>**

Gil Gordon, an expert on telecommuting, provides a wealth of information on how to work away from the office.

**Work Options Inc., <http://www.workoptions.com>**

This site provides tips for requesting and working in part-time arrangements.

**Boston College Center for Work and Family, <http://www.bc.edu/cwf>**

This web site provides certification and training in work/family issues, access to the Sloan Foundation's electronic network of work/family research, and links to many other work/family sites on the Internet.

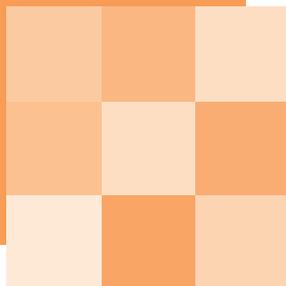
**Families and Work Institute, <http://www.familiesandworkinst.org>**

The Families and Work Institute is a national nonprofit research, strategic planning, and consulting organization focused on the changing workforce and change in family and personal lives.

**National Partnership for Women and Families, <http://www.nationalpartnership.org>**

This site links to policies, initiatives, current campaigns, and government departments that have an impact on working women and their families.

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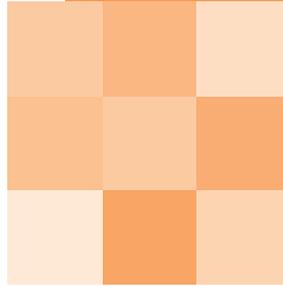
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Finally, Catalyst thanks the individual women of color who continue to participate in this important research.

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