



CENTER FOR  
WORK-LIFE POLICY

# INVISIBLE LIVES: CELEBRATING AND LEVERAGING DIVERSITY IN THE EXECUTIVE SUITE

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Survey research sponsored by  
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## Introduction

The last forty years have witnessed a sea change in the opportunities available to minorities—especially female minorities.

Fueled by the anti-discrimination laws of the '60s and '70s and the global talent shifts of the '90s and '00s, the face of power has begun to change. One only need look around our workplaces. Whether you're talking Wall Street, Main Street, or Pennsylvania Avenue, most management teams now include powerful and conspicuous non-white and female talent. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Avon CEO Andrea Jung and Time Warner CEO Dick Parsons are cases in point.

Despite these success stories, progress seems to have stalled. The data show that minority professionals are not being promoted or advanced at a rate commensurate with their weight in the talent pool. They remain “bunched” in the early stretches of the career highway. Few make it into the fast lane. Too many languish in slow lanes and service roads. Too many are diverted into dead ends.

Why?

The first generation of policy and practice centered on opportunity and access. It has reached its limits. For many professionals of color it simply hasn't produced traction over the long haul. Take, for example, anti-discrimination legislation. The goal of these laws and policies was to eliminate barriers so that women and minorities could access education and the professions on precisely the same terms as white men. In other words, it didn't change the game; it just allowed a more diverse group of individuals to play the game. Allowed, that is, as long as these more diverse groups kept to the rules and tailored their appearance and behavior so as to approximate successful white men, according to Dr. Ella Bell, a professor at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business.

“If you're an African-American woman, you're seen as too assertive or aggressive. Women aren't supposed to be seen that way. If Asian, you're not aggressive enough; you're too quiet. If you're Latina, you're too emotional and too talkative, and use body language too much. These leadership styles don't nicely fit the traditional patterns and behaviors of white males and white women,” Dr. Bell said.<sup>1</sup>

Minority professionals are left with little choice but to spend their work lives playing an elaborate game of pretend, an effort that drains emotional energy away from productivity. Yet for some minority professionals, this strategy of cloning the white male competitive model has worked well, resulting in a workplace that in terms of sheer numbers is among the most racially balanced communities in American society, according to legal scholar Cynthia Estlund's recent path-breaking research.<sup>2</sup> Families, schools, congregations and voluntary associations remain segregated, Estlund noted. Work, on the other hand, is the “single most significant site of regular and ongoing interactions among adult citizens of different racial and ethnic identities. Through these sustained interactions, co-workers learn about each others' lives and develop feelings of affection, empathy, and loyalty for each other. They also experience friction and conflict, even anger and resentment. But with a paycheck and all that is at stake in a job, they often find ways to deal with conflict and to get the job done in spite of personal differences.”



In this comparatively integrated workplace, the United States is confronted with a huge opportunity—and a huge challenge—said Princeton University Professor Cornel West. “These issues are central to what the democratic experiment is all about. If America can meet the challenge and tap into the long run creative and productive energies of the 60 percent of our fellow citizens who are ‘minorities,’ this nation will flower and flourish.”<sup>3</sup>

The difficulty lies in recognizing that statistics aren’t sufficient. True diversity—the kind that serves both the best of American ideals and buttresses the bottom line—is not reflected in a headcount. True diversity means minority employees not only do their jobs, but can be themselves at the same time. Only then will Professor West’s vision of a flowering and flourishing nation come to fruition. We aren’t there yet. For many, the need to “render invisible” their real identities has exacted a huge toll. For a substantial number, covering up, staying below the radar, has produced isolation, alienation and disengagement—with predictable effects on commitment and performance.

Angela Williams, vice president and deputy general counsel for Sears Holdings Corporation, used the phrase, “invisible lives” to describe the alienation she and her minority colleagues face at work. She spoke of the stress—hidden but for those who feel it—minority women feel on the job when they must learn how to relate to male, white colleagues in a way that makes those colleagues feel comfortable. “In doing so, minority women are denying their own authenticity,” she said. “A highly qualified woman of color feels she can’t be overly assertive, show her cards or use her strengths—doing so may undermine her professionally or be used against her. For example, women of color will refrain from making presentations together in order not to overwhelm upper management.”<sup>4</sup>

Corporations have a huge stake in this problem set. Here, what is right is also good business, said Bruce Gordon, CEO of the NAACP, who is planning a series of meetings with corporate leaders to “help them think through the bottom-line benefits of diversity.”<sup>5</sup> The talent pool and markets are changing. The ability of corporations to attract the best workers and through them, reach the most customers, depends on management’s ability to render their workplace environments comfortable for minorities, and conducive to drawing their best from them. At present, however, major disconnects persist.

For starters, the invisibility of minority lives prevents employers from recognizing or leveraging a rich repository of cultural capital. Minorities—particularly female minorities—play high profile roles as leaders, spokespersons and mentors in neighborhoods and communities. In these roles they incubate valuable transferable skills, which could translate into sources of strength for their corporations if properly recognized. But these roles are often hidden from view and consequently ignored by employers. They can’t leverage what they don’t see—or what isn’t shared.

It’s also true that the invisibility of these lives prevents employers from understanding or supporting the burdens and responsibilities experienced by professionals of color. They deal with a triple load: nuclear family, extended family and vulnerable community residents. Then, at work, they often find themselves grappling with yet another issue invisible to others but obvious to them—that of hidden bias in the subtle demands made by the dominant group regarding dress, speaking style and other personal characteristics. This heavy load needs to be lightened if minority professionals are to flourish and give their all in the workplace.

What can corporations do?

A central thrust of this research is to develop a package of private sector solutions. The survey findings shed light on the following:

- How can a company harness the cultural capital that minorities routinely develop in neighborhoods and communities?
- How can a company “widen the tent” in terms of employee benefits so that they address needs that go beyond nuclear family?
- How can a company eradicate hidden bias so that differences no longer create roadblocks?
- And how can a company create new bonds of trust so that minority professionals feel able to share their full identities, dreams and ambitions?

This study is the second in a series of research projects for the “Hidden Brain Drain: Women and Minorities as Unrealized Assets,” a private sector task force formed in 2004 under the auspices of the Center for Work-Life Policy. (A description of the task force can be found in the Appendix). This research was sponsored by three members of the task force—General Electric Company, Time Warner and Unilever.

### **Survey Methodology**

The targeted survey sample comprised 1,601 professionals in the United States ages 28-55 that have a college or professional degree. This included 1,001 minority women (of whom one-third were African-American, one-third Hispanic and one-third Asian), 200 minority men (also equally divided between the three racial groups), 198 white women and 202 white men.

The survey targeted people equally in four professional areas: medicine, law, education and business professionals or accountants with graduate degrees. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64%) hold graduate degrees. The sample was drawn from lists of professionals with degrees in those categories.

Interviews averaged 20 minutes and were conducted by telephone between January 21 and February 17, 2005. The survey was conducted by Charney Research under the auspices of the Center for Work-Life Policy, a not-for-profit research organization.

The sampling methodology precludes the measurement of the statistical significance of the findings, as the lists from which the sample is drawn do not represent a random sampling of the respective professions. However, we are not aware of any systematic biases in the selection of professionals who appear on these lists and thus believe them to be reasonably typical of their professions. The sheer number of respondents provides reasonable comfort that this research represents a fairly accurate national picture of minority professionals.

In the exhibits, percentages may not always add to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple answers from respondents. The base for each question is the total number of respondents answering that question. In some cases results may be based on small sample sizes. This is typically true when questions were asked of subgroups. Caution should be used when drawing conclusions from the results based on these small samples. Percentages depicted may not add up to 100 because some answer categories may be excluded from the exhibit.

## Key Findings

1. *Cultural capital.* Professional women of color hone leadership skills and core values in neighborhood and community.

- Among highly educated African-American female professionals, 25 percent are active leaders in their religious communities (compared with 16% of white men).
- Forty-one percent of highly educated African-American female professionals are involved in social outreach activities (compared with 32% of white men).
- Focus group participants were particularly heavily vested in serving their communities through their work as lead members of charitable boards.
- Minority women are on the front lines helping young people in their communities as mentors, tutors, and “big sisters.” A quarter of African-American businesswomen (25%) take on these roles (compared to 14% of white businesswomen).
- A number of minority women (14%) take up leadership roles in a variety of professional associations that run the gamut from the bar association to professional women’s business groups.

2. *An overload of care.* Minority women shoulder an extensive set of responsibilities that reach beyond the nuclear family. Professional women of color play critical roles as caregivers to a wide circle of family and friends.

- Fifty-seven percent of Asian women and 51 percent of African-American women have children at home, compared to 41 percent of white women. Fifty-four percent of minority women in the business sector have children at home, compared to 38 percent of white women in business.
- Seventeen percent of African-American women care for elders and extended family in the home or community, spending an average of 12.4 hours per week on this work. In contrast, white men spend 6.6 hours and white women spend 9.5 hours per week caring for elders and extended family. Ten percent of minority women who work 50 or more hours per week serve as mentors to young people in their communities, and 15 percent take on the role of godparent to a child.
- Minority professionals and African-American women in particular are more likely to be dealing with the roles of single parent and primary breadwinner. Eighteen percent of young African-American professionals report that they are single mothers, compared to only 7 percent of young white women. More than 60 percent of young Asian women earn more than their spouses, as do 60 percent of high-earning African-American women.

3. *Hidden bias.* A substantial number of minority professional women feel excluded and alienated by hidden biases in corporate cultures that center on style, legitimacy and trust. Minority professional women:

- Feel excluded and constrained by “style compliance” issues—the need to fit into a corporate culture dominated by white men. Forty-two percent of minority women in large corporations and 35 percent of young African American women are affected by this issue. Thirty-four percent of minority men and 24 percent of young white women (ages 28-40) also share this concern.

- Struggle with legitimacy or a “merit perception” problem: the conviction on the part of co-workers that they are affirmative action hires. One-quarter of minority women in business (25%) are troubled by merit perception. In focus groups, participants described the feeling of constantly needing to re-audition for the job they have. In addition, almost a third (29%) of minority women in business are convinced colleagues perceive they don’t work hard enough or lengthy enough hours.
- Don’t trust their employers and are not comfortable sharing information about their community activities and family lives. Forty percent of minority businesswomen don’t fully trust their employers. A majority (51%) of young minority women (ages 27-35) is disturbed by a lack of trust in their supervisors.
- Worry that promotions are based on comfort level (and appearance) rather than on ability. The belief that sharing the boss’ race, gender and class is more important than doing the job well is extremely widespread. Thirty-four percent of African-American women in business voice this concern, as do 30 percent of minority women overall. Interestingly, this resonates across gender and race lines. Thirty-four percent of white women and 32 percent of minority men share this concern.
- Experience a dearth of mentors that look like them. Twenty-nine percent of minority female professionals lack mentors who can help them navigate these hidden biases.
- For a significant number of minority women (39%) these hidden biases are severe enough to cause alienation, disengagement and a “downsizing” of expectation. Some quit but stay on the job while others leave corporate America—poor results for both individuals and companies.

#### 4. *What can companies do?*

- Seventy-one percent of young minority women (64% of minority women overall and 67% of minority businesswomen) want “set aside” time for volunteer activities.
- Sixty-eight percent of young minority women and a similar percentage of minority businesswomen (64% of minority women overall) favor matching grants for charities—whether the local library or developing schools in third world countries.
- Seventy-one percent of young African-American women (57% of minority women overall and 62% minority businesswomen) want training in fundraising for religious and community groups.

5. *Solutions to tap the hidden strengths of minority executives.* Companies at the cutting edge are experimenting with a variety of initiatives designed to realize the invisible lives of employees by doing the following:

- Harnessing cultural capital
- Combating bias and build trust
- Widening the tent
- Sponsoring networks and find mentors
- Providing incentives for minority retention and recruitment

## Part I: Invisible Lives

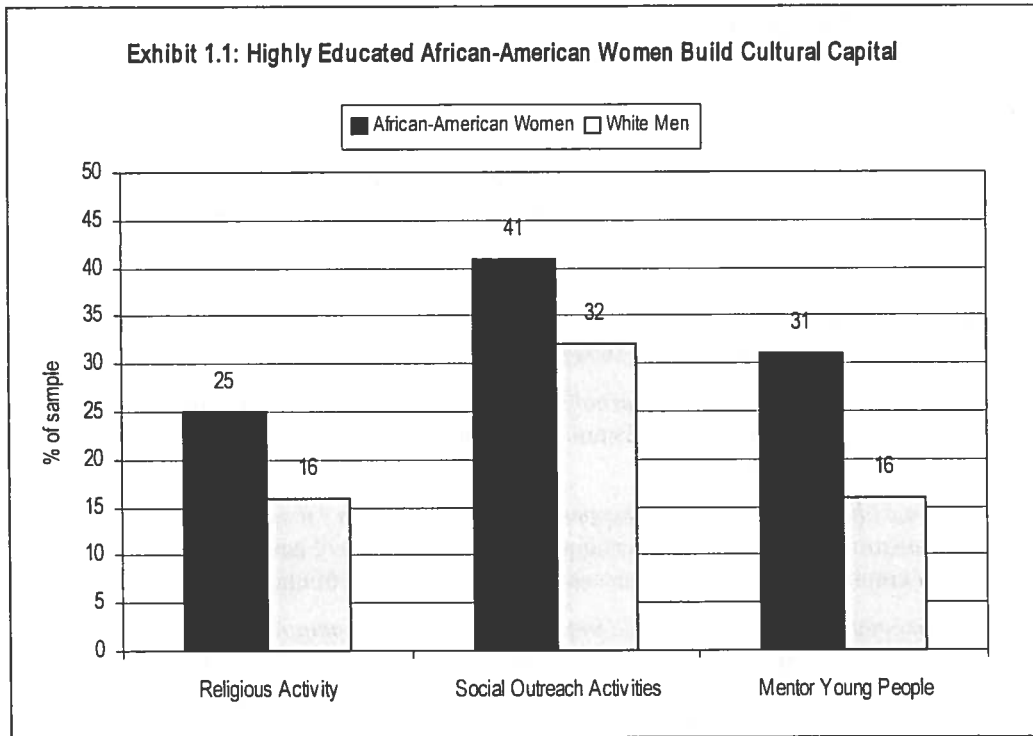
### Chapter 1: Cultural Capital

Professional women of color incubate leadership and other transferable skills in their neighborhoods and communities. Minority women build this cultural capital in the following ways:

- *Hold pivotal roles in religious communities.* Among highly educated African-American female professionals, 25 percent are active leaders in their religious communities (compared with 16% of white men).
- *Engage in hands-on social outreach.* Forty-one percent of highly educated African-American female professionals are involved in social outreach activities (compared with 32% of white men).
- *Serve as board members, spokespersons and fundraisers for not-for-profit organizations.* Focus group participants were particularly heavily vested in serving their communities through their work as lead members of charitable boards.
- *Act as mentors to young people in neighborhood and community.* Minority women are on the front lines helping young people in their communities as mentors, tutors, and “big sisters.” A quarter of African-American businesswomen (25%) take on these roles (compared to 14% of white businesswomen).
- *Seek roles in professional associations outside their companies.* A number of minority women (14%) take up leadership roles in a variety of professional associations that run the gamut from the bar association to professional women’s business groups.

Professional women of color engage with neighborhood and community in myriad ways, often in leadership positions. Minorities—particularly minority women—comprise the backbone of religious organizations and provide a significant part of the energy driving social outreach in this country. Many invest substantial time in these roles, acquiring substantial cultural capital, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s term for nonmonetary wealth and relationship capital generated outside the workplace.

However, all too often, cultural capital remains hidden from view because minority professionals are wary of calling attention to difference. The Center for Work-Life Policy’s focus groups conducted with minority professionals in five Fortune 500 companies underscore this reality. Participants talked eloquently about a rich web of roles and relationships in neighborhood and community that are invisible to colleagues and employers. This “below the radar” property of cultural capital means that oftentimes it’s neither celebrated nor leveraged, with negative consequences for both employees and companies. In his work on “bleached out professionalism,” Sanford Levinson describes how the legal profession has required that one abandon race, gender, religion, and ethnic background as “irrelevant to defining one’s capacity as a lawyer.”<sup>6</sup>

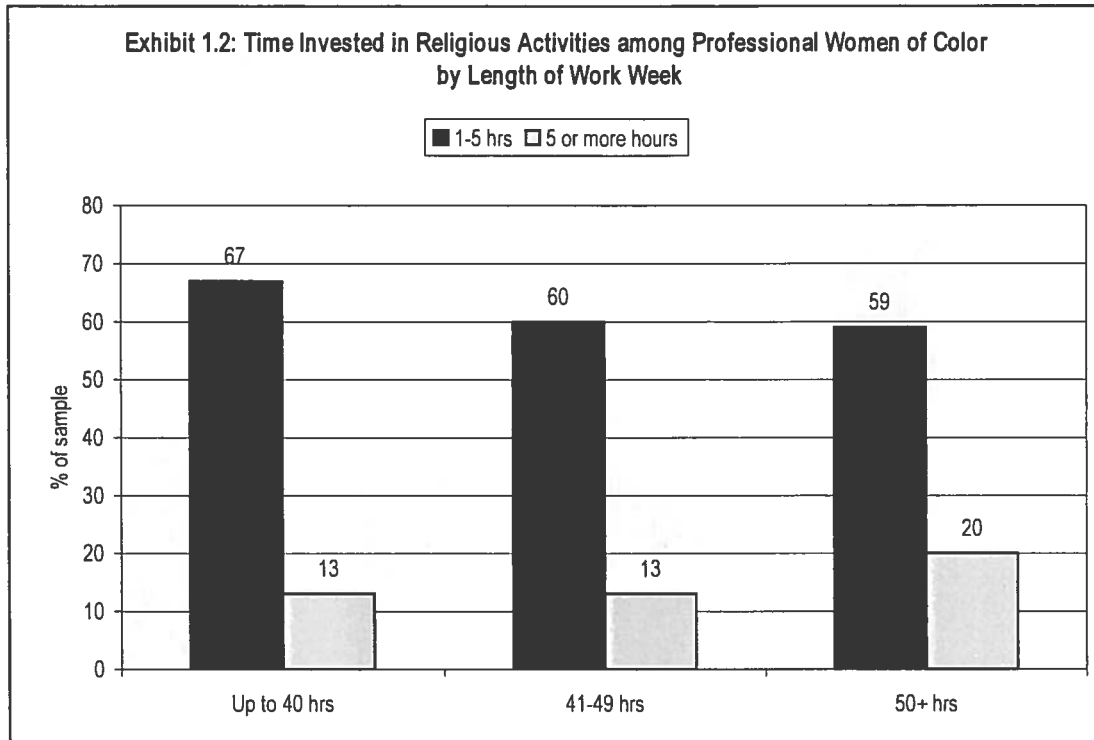


**Minority Women Play Pivotal Roles in Religious Communities**

The cultural capital produced through participation in religious activity creates leadership (moral heft as well as strategic vision), communication and managerial skills that could be readily transferable to the workplace but often languish untapped. Professional women of color are deeply involved in religious institutions, which remain the focal points of many minority communities. On average, 71 percent of minority women (and 84% of African-American women) belong to a church, mosque or synagogue.

Many minority professional women hold a variety of leadership responsibilities in their religious communities. Among highly educated African-American female professionals, 25 percent are active leaders in their religious communities (compared with 16% of white men). Older women are more likely than younger women to be actively involved. Additionally, nearly one-quarter (24%) of minority women in the business sector are leaders or activists in their religious institutions.

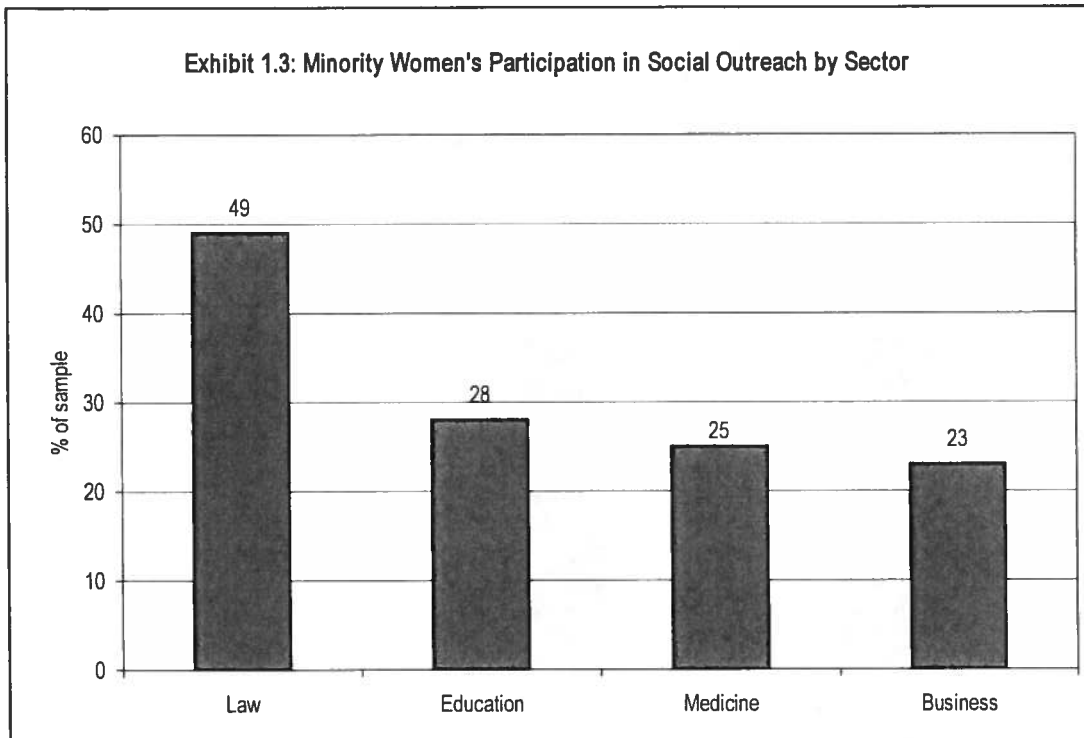
Such commitment to religious service requires time. Among minority women professionals, 64 percent spend one to five hours a week and 14 percent spend more than five hours a week on their religious communities. Regardless of the demands of the office and home, female professionals of color are motivated to invest in their religious groups. In fact, across professions, including those who work over 50 hours per week, at least 60 percent of minority women commit one to five hours a week to religious activity.



**Engage in Hands-on Social Outreach**

Like religious participation, social outreach generates a set of transferable skills and hones core values (leadership, communication and organizational skills). Forty-one percent of highly educated African-American female professionals are involved in social outreach activities, compared with 32 percent of white men. Nearly one-third (31%) of minority women are involved in a wide spectrum of social outreach activity, such as volunteering in local schools, hospitals and labor unions. Many of these activities are “close to home” reflecting their identities as mothers and members of needy extended families. Minority men are also active in this arena, with 25 percent involved in some combination of community activities. Female minority lawyers (49%) and African-American female professionals under 40 (35%) are the most likely to participate in social outreach activities.

In focus groups conducted with minority professionals, participants talked about their “invisible lives” with eloquence and passion. James, an African-American vice president at a major pharmaceutical company, is enormously vested in his work as a paramedic with a local volunteer rescue squad. “Most weekends I’m out there in the community six to seven hours—dealing with overdose situations, hit-and-run accidents, heart attacks. It’s a great opportunity to ‘give back’ and allows me to set an example for my teenage son. He now has his EMT certification and rides with the same squad. It’s my legacy to him and to my neighbors.” But James’s 30 years’ experience as a paramedic has little traction in the workplace. He mostly does not choose to talk about this role with colleagues.



Professional women of color invest even more time in social outreach than they do in religious communities. Almost one in five (18%) spend over five hours a week on outreach, while two in five (41%) contribute 1-5 hours each week. Also significant, the women who invest the longest hours at work are also those who give the most to their communities. This indicates both the scope of their contributions, and the intensity of their lives.

**Serve as Board Members, Spokespersons and Fundraisers in Not-for-Profit Organizations**

Minorities who participated in our focus groups—all of whom were senior executives in five Fortune 500 companies—were particularly vested as “lead” members of not-for-profit boards. They were involved in a multitude of roles: strategic planning, logistics, fundraising, and they often found themselves wrestling with the particular challenges of tending a “start-up,” or marginal organization.

Participants in our focus groups tended not to advertise these involvements. They felt there was at least some stigma attached to their charitable work. Religious involvements were thought to be particularly stigmatizing. In the words of one participant, “at my company you get many more brownie points working on your golf handicap than working in the local homeless shelter.” Some participants told us that the focus group discussion was the first time they had ever talked publicly about their charitable work and the passions that underlay it.

For example, Zara, an African-American executive who participated in one of our focus groups, has experienced what it feels like to be on top and under the radar. (All research participants referred to in this report by a first name only are disguised at their request.) Comparing her former position at an African-American media company to her current job at a Wall Street firm is a study in differences. At the media company, Zara enjoyed a high-profile existence highlighted by close personal and professional interaction with senior



management, who knew about her membership on the board of a small community-based non-profit organization. When it came time for the group's annual fundraiser, Zara felt comfortable enough to ask the president of the media company to be an honoree, because she knew the president was supportive of her work, as she explained, "When you ask people to be honored, you are asking them to dig into their pockets a bit." Zara's superiors also knew about her personal life, including knowing her fiancé, who attended company events. When she asked for permission to put her fiancé's son on her health plan, her company allowed him to be named as a dependent.

At the Wall Street firm where she currently works, however, Zara doesn't share her board involvement and personal life with those above her. She feels comfortable going to the company's corporate philanthropy department to ask for funding for her charity, but she does not have the personal relationship with the firm's president to approach him comfortably and ask him to be an honoree. Her husband does not come to company events and is not included in the radar of Zara's work life.

Further emphasizing this invisibility, another focus group participant, Stephanie, is a young high-flyer with a bright future in her firm. She could be contributing even more, however, if she felt comfortable sharing more of who she is with her colleagues. What she doesn't discuss: that she runs an award-winning Girl Scouts troop in a homeless shelter. She has been doing this work for years, bringing warmth and strength to low income girls. "These kids are not going to Harvard; they don't have a place to live; they don't know how many times they're going to eat today; they have to take care of children not much younger than they are," she said.

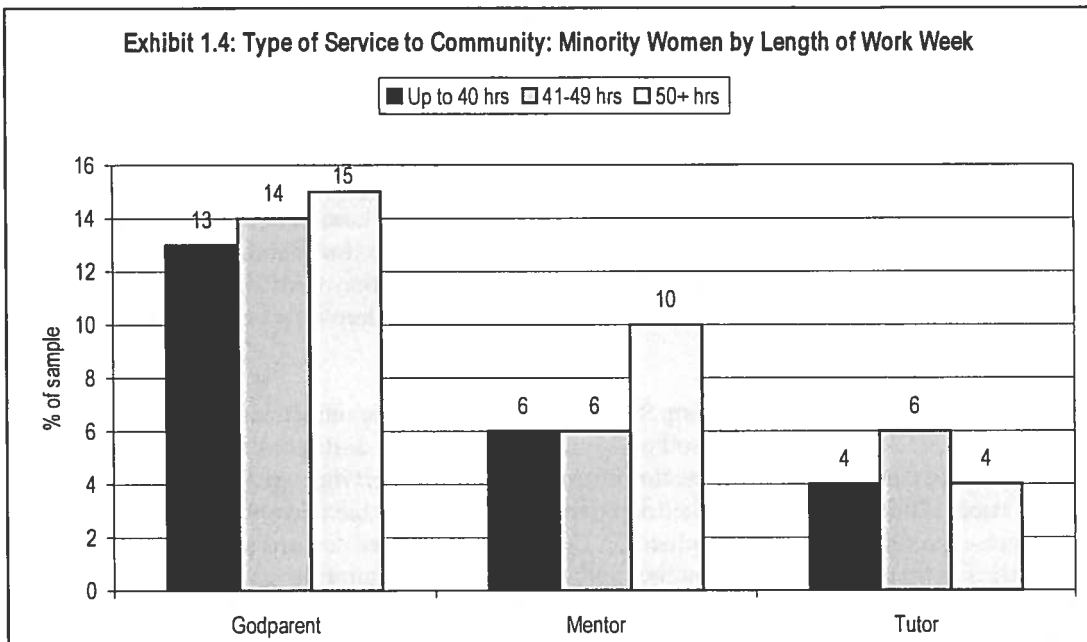
In the process of organizing the troop, Stephanie is serving as an unofficial goodwill ambassador for her firm. She is also honing and expanding her skill set as a leader that must navigate public and not-for-profit sector bureaucracies while serving a population with special needs. But her work with the troop demands that Stephanie leave work at 5:30 pm a few times a month. This doesn't bother her. Despite the fact that she arrives at 7 am on those days, she is acutely concerned about being thought of as less than fully committed to her job. She refrains from talking about her Girl Scout's program at work—even though the initiative earned her a Future Leaders Today award and a ceremony at the White House.

Stephanie's experience suggests a second reason that minority professionals' lives remain invisible to their managers: because they are deliberately hidden. Stephanie persists in her community work in the face of this resistance, but it forces her to retreat inside a protective shell. The company must persuade her to emerge before it or Stephanie can realize her full potential.

### Professional Women of Color Serve as Mentors in Neighborhoods and Communities

Minority women are on the front lines helping young people in their communities as mentors, tutors, and “big sisters.” A quarter of African-American businesswomen (25%) take on these roles (compared to 14% of white businesswomen).

Just as minority female professionals working the longest hours invest the most time in their community organizations, so too do these hard-working women invest the most time in mentoring, tutoring or acting as godparents to the children of their friends. Indeed, minority women with three or more children and single women with children are most likely to serve as godparents to other children (21% and 17%, respectively). African-American women with graduate degrees are most likely to serve as mentors to neighbors and members of their religious communities—people they’re not related to (12%).



### Seek Roles in Professional/Educational Associations Outside Their Companies

Not only are professional women involved in religious leadership, social outreach and mentoring; they also play a key role in the associations that defend and advance the activities of people in their professions. Roughly one in seven professional women of color (14%) participates in professional and educational associations beyond ordinary membership, including serving as a committee member, spokesperson or chair.

Of our respondents, more than a third of minority women active in professional organizations (35%) spend one to five hours a week on these responsibilities. Another 19 percent contribute more than five hours per week to these organizations. In short, minority women provide much of the pro-bono labor that makes these important organizations function.

## Cultural Capital in Action

We had the opportunity to conduct an in-depth interview with Demitra Jones, who is devoted to Delta Sigma Theta, an African-American sorority even older than Pitney Bowes, the company she works for. Founded in 1913, Delta Sigma Theta is like most African-American sororities in that “it places more emphasis on service than on socializing,” according to Demitra. Her membership in Delta Sigma Theta is a strenuous commitment, demanding 30 hours a month on top of her regular 50- to 60-hour workweeks. Then there’s church and family, including caring for two younger brothers who she hopes will do “as well or better than I.” Demitra is married as well, but fortunately, her husband is also very busy, she added with a laugh.

The intensity of her attachment to her sorority poses its challenges. “It’s difficult to have work-life balance when you’re trying to be so involved, but it’s part of my upbringing. I feel obligated to help others because I feel like I’ve been given a lot,” she said. Also, the situation is a win-win for her and for her company, and it’s been that way since the beginning. It was a Delta Sigma Theta member who matched Demitra with the company, and this happened even before she entered college, through Inroads, a leadership development institute for minority youth. There she found a mentor in a member of Delta Sigma Theta whose own need to “give back” propelled her onto Inroads’ staff and into Demitra’s life as an essential advisor.

“She told me how to get into the corporate world, what it takes, what grades and class work you have to have. She talked to me about course selection; she talked to me about career opportunities,” Demitra recalled. Under this mentor’s guidance, Demitra and her firm found each other. In 1992, Demitra interned there, and she has never left. Demitra’s arrival at the company marked the beginning of a mutually salutary relationship between her employer and her sorority that thrives today and manifests itself in dollars and cents as well as in a less tangible benefit: Demitra’s cultivation and training as a leader in both worlds. The company has supported Delta Sigma Theta scholarship initiatives by purchasing advertising space in fundraising souvenir journals, for example. It has also matched gifts that Demitra herself made to a research fund affiliated with the sorority. “It’s good exposure for the company as well,” she said.

It’s no coincidence that Demitra’s rapid rise in the company paralleled her progress through the intricate leadership structure of the sorority, which she joined as a junior at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. From her beginnings as an intern in the one and a pledge in the other, Demitra has ascended to positions of increasing responsibility. As a compensation analyst, she evaluated jobs, wrote job descriptions and determined appropriate pay and incentive levels. From there she moved to doing the same thing but writ larger, for the company’s entire northeast region. Telling people how much they’re going to make is a professional specialty that demanded all of the gumption and savvy she’d developed during her years in the sorority, especially in a corporate environment where she still feels her minority status. Demitra takes consolation from the knowledge that corporate America is more diverse than ever before, but the paucity of African-Americans and especially African-American women in management is still cause for concern. Fortunately, Delta Sigma Theta has armed her with chutzpah in abundance. The sorority is a proving ground for leaders, a kind of crucible whose heat forges confidence and strength of character.

“It’s confidence building. It’s public speaking. You have to defend your opinions, defend your decisions, make your business plan for anything you propose that’s going to use chapter funds,” she said. “It’s quite intense, and sometimes you feel like, ‘Why am I doing this?’ but it’s training. Women sometimes get intimidated in the workplace because it’s predominantly male, but if you can make it in this [sorority], you can make it in any environment.”

### **Minority Professionals' Cultural Capital Remains Hidden From View**

Such substantive community involvement develops strategic and interpersonal skills, hones core values and builds organizational and communication capabilities, all of which are transferable skills highly valued in workplaces. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, not the least being an actual or perceived stigma, this cultural capital remains largely hidden from view, as minority employees are hesitant to share their extensive community-based activities with their employers.

As Angela Williams, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel for Sears Holdings Corporation states:

*Corporate America continues to overlook the tremendous values found in the diversity of an individual's culture, experience and thought, effectively denying the equality of human beings. When women and especially minorities feel that they must model the existing work culture, they remain silent on significant parts of their lives. They render invisible to their employer the richness of who they are and what they offer. As a result, the corporate culture fails to leverage its most significant asset—human capital.<sup>7</sup>*

A case in point is Joyce, who is a change agent to be reckoned with in her community. In a lengthy interview, Joyce told us how she was recently inspired by her progressive pastor's vision to transform the congregation's stance on a divisive social issue. Joyce was responsible for single-handedly developing and implementing a strategy for reframing her church within her community.

When her pastor first revealed his new vision for his congregation, Joyce realized that the intensity of his enthusiasm left him blind to the challenging reality of implementation and community reaction. Joyce enlightened him, evoking the idiom she'd learned to speak during her twenty years in the corporate world: "You know what, pastor, it sounds great but I'm sure you're going to have push-back." Her pastor came to understand that he needed a strategist and that in her, he had one. Together they launched the church toward change, putting a plan down on paper, initiating a series of meetings with congregants, plotting programming and crunching numbers.

Does all this sound like valuable leadership training? The irony is that, despite being a strategic planner at a Fortune 100 company, Joyce never leads such comprehensive initiatives at work. "Sure, I develop strategic plans here," she reflects, "but my hands are tied half the time. [At church] I have an audience that says, 'Yeah, do your thing.'" While Joyce accepts that life in the workplace can't always be so ecstatic, she wishes there weren't such a sharp divide between her personal and professional lives. In the workplace, she feels she can't mention the extensive strategic work she's doing for her church, nor does she anticipate doing comparable work for her company even though she wants to, and knows she can.

As was the case with Joyce, the stigma of religious affiliation forces minority employees to downplay or hide completely their community and religious involvement. Even when employees hold high-level positions on the boards of not-for-profit organizations where they reap invaluable workplace skills, minority professionals choose not to share this aspect of their lives.

For example, Michael, an Asian-American executive at a large California-based energy company, is reluctant to share with colleagues his position on the board of a prominent charity. His reticence about this accomplishment stems from the fact that the charity

supports some faith-based organizations and targets minority families which are “the big taboo subjects of the workplace: religion and ethnicity.”

In his view, it leads them to think, “You’re *different*. I have always suspected that—and now you’re confirming it.” Michael admits that if people, himself included, talked more openly, then the taboos might be lifted, and his charity work might gain legitimacy and heft. But his short-term view is strictly pragmatic: “Why give anyone ammo?”

### **Transferable Skills and the Power of Celebration**

Some leading corporations are already way ahead of the game on altruism. Goldman Sachs is one, says Aynesh Johnson, a vice president with the firm, which provides a wide range of investing, advisory and financing services worldwide. With the firm’s full knowledge and encouragement, Aynesh is sharpening her people skills by serving as board vice president for the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center. “Everybody’s a capitalist and everybody wants to do well professionally, but the world is bigger than 85 Broad [Goldman Sachs’s New York corporate headquarters]. At Goldman, we do not view community service as an option, but something we must do.” As a result, Aynesh views her position on the center’s board as “part of her career,” because Goldman Sachs views such after-hours work as leadership training aligned with the firm’s culture of giving back to the communities in which we live and work. She says her non-profit experience has “taught me how to work with a number of different individuals...maximizing their contributions.”

Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center is a non-profit settlement house that supports public housing residents who happen to share a zip code with some of the richest people in the world. “You’re surrounded by significant wealth, but right there in the middle of the neighborhood are low-income families who make no more than \$20,000 a year and are trying to figure out how to live in New York City,” she said. The center serves as an important bridge between the two communities and develops opportunities such as access to art, music, education and healthcare so that at-risk youth can overcome the poverty-related barriers to success and self-sufficiency. In the process of figuring out how to fundraise for the organization, Aynesh has taken on a marketing challenge so intense it would serve admirably as a business school case study.

“It’s a wonderful opportunity,” Aynesh says. “But it’s not glamorous.” Most of the children served by the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center confront and struggle with some of society’s most difficult problems: poverty, illiteracy, unstable home environments, drugs, crime, and physical, emotional and learning disabilities. Because the population it serves is so challenging, the center’s goals seem incremental at times. “We’re starting out at a place of, how do we get these kids lunch and dinner, and how do we get them into school,” Aynesh said. “That’s not necessarily a profile where people want to jump up and down and say yes [I want to give].” But, in Aynesh’s opinion, the center’s mission of providing comprehensive alternatives to the street should be one that inspires donors to dive for their checkbooks.

Because of this belief, Aynesh is learning how to listen gracefully when someone says, “no,” and how to refuse—also gracefully—to take that “no” for an answer. These are skills senior leaders at Goldman Sachs thinks are important. As a result, at work she does not hesitate to be open about her altruism: “Managers know [about my work], all the way up to the executive suite.” Some executives have even been involved in her volunteer activities, or have become those donors who jump up and down and say yes. Now that’s value added.

## Chapter 2. An Overload of Care

Minority women—often “flying solo”—shoulder an extensive set of responsibilities that reach beyond the nuclear family.

Professional women of color play critical roles as caregivers to a wide circle of family and friends. Compared with their white peers, minority women are more likely to:

- *Have children under 18 in their households.* Fifty-seven percent of Asian women and 51 percent of African-American women have children at home, compared to 41 percent of white women. Fifty-four percent of minority women in the business sector have children at home, compared to 38 percent of white women in business.
- *Care for elders/extended family in home and community.* Seventeen percent of African-American women care for elders and extended family in the home or community, spending an average of 12.4 hours per week on this work. In contrast, white men spend 6.6 hours and white women spend 9.5 hours per week caring for elders and extended family. African-American women in the business sector, on average, spend more than 17 hours per week on elder and extended family care.
- *Care for needy youth in the community.* Ten percent of minority women who work 50 or more hours per week serve as mentors to young people in their communities, and 15 percent take on the role of godparent to a child. In our focus groups, we found that minority women take responsibility for children outside their immediate families, be they children of needy neighbors, friends or relatives.
- *“Fly solo.”* Minority professionals and African-American women in particular are more likely to be dealing with the roles of single parent and primary breadwinner. Eighteen percent of young African-American professionals report that they are single mothers, compared to only 7 percent of young white women. More than 60 percent of young Asian women earn more than their spouses, as do 60 percent of high-earning African-American women. In addition, with or without children, African-American female professionals are more likely than other women to be single (37% African-American women vs. 26% white women).

On the family front, minority women professionals confront a particularly challenging set of responsibilities. Many deal with a triple burden of care: nuclear family, extended family and needy people in their communities. This cumulative load generates significant time demands in the lives of professionals who are already feeling pressured.

These wide-ranging responsibilities and the values they both reflect and refract ought to be a source of pride and the target of corporate support. Instead, they are hidden from view.

Why this invisibility?

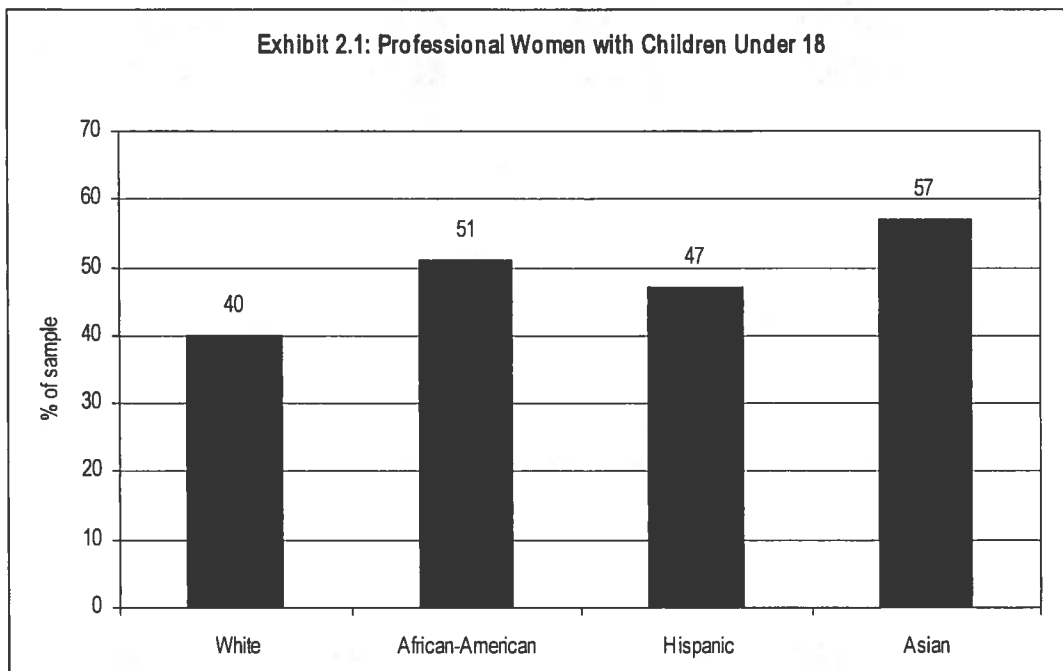
Many minority women are loathe to share these concerns with employers. They fear the potential stigma, and they also don't believe companies are ready to be helpful. In the words of one African-American executive, “Why should I talk about burdensome relatives? All it does is reinforce negative stereotypes, and it isn't as though the company is about to help me with Tiffany's health care bills.” Tiffany is this woman's nine-year old goddaughter, an asthma sufferer who has no one but her godmother to rely on.

According to Angela Williams, “Minority women’s responsibility to their community is complex: extended family, church, neighborhood, professional organizations. Balancing all of these relationships is stressful. For those who have made it, there’s a bottomless pit of need.”

This chapter focuses on “mapping” this complex work of care in minority professional women’s lives.

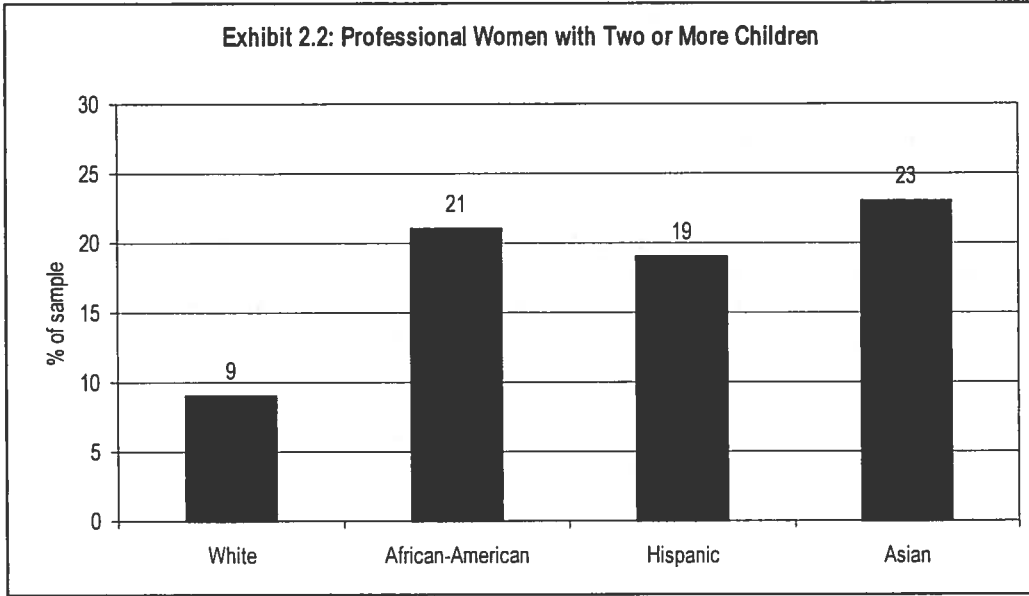
**Women of Color Are More Likely than White Women to Have Children at Home**

Part of the home burden on professional women of color has a simple explanation: over half of minority professional women (51%) have children at home, including over a quarter (27%) that have two or more children. In addition, four percent of minority women care for a chronically ill or disabled child.

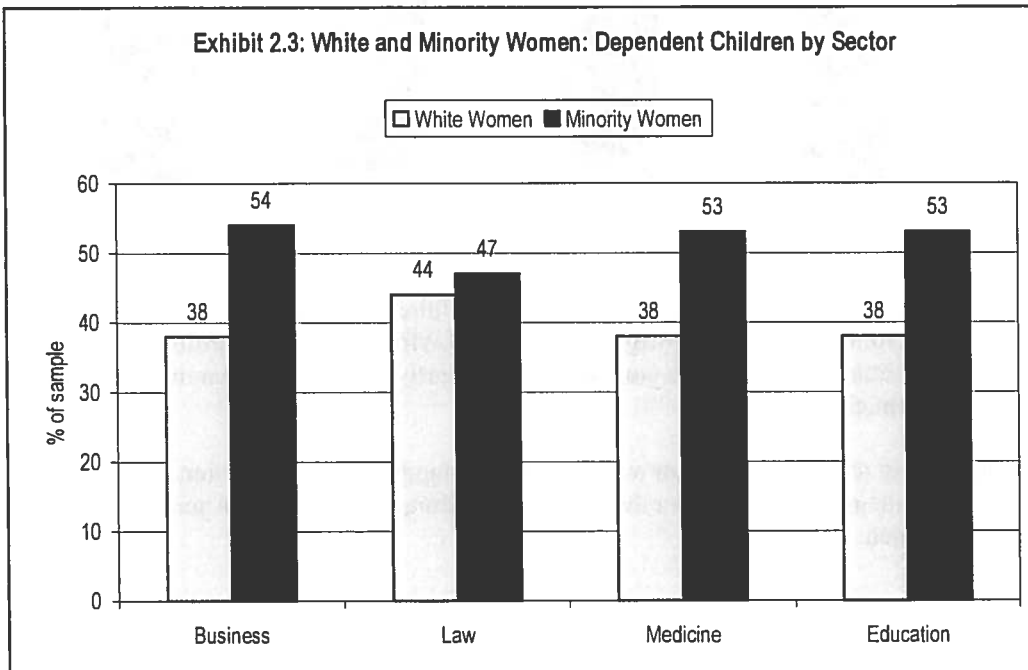


Asian professional women are most likely to have children at home (57%, including 30% who have two or more children). Fifty-one percent of African-American professional women have children at home. Among the younger cohort, nearly six in ten women of color (57%) have dependent children.

In contrast, just 41 percent of white women are working mothers. In addition, only nine percent of white professionals have two or more children, compared to 21 percent of minority women.



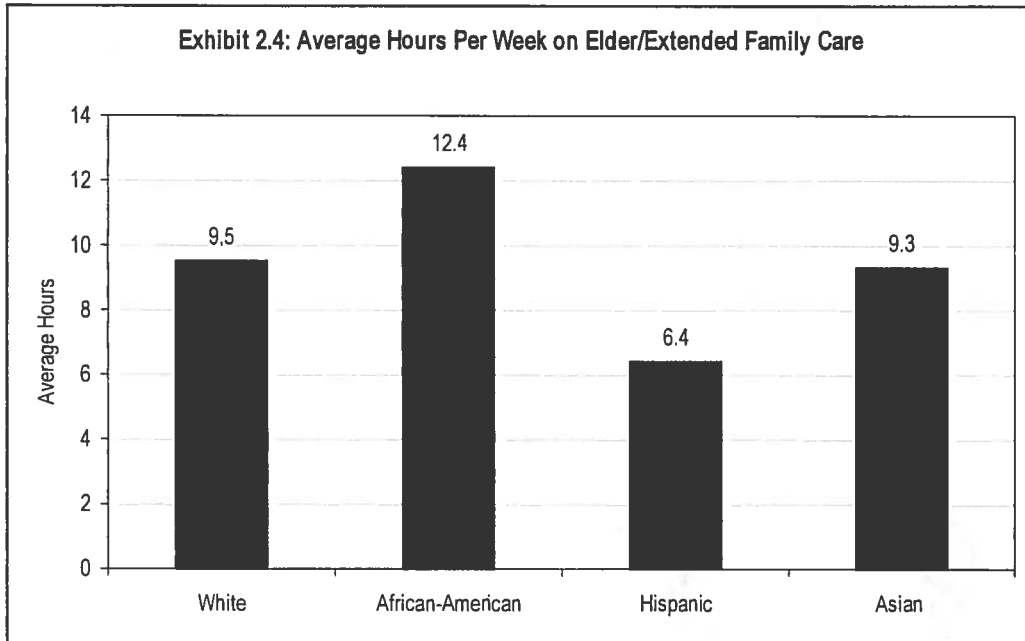
Minority women in every sector with the exception of law are more likely to have dependent children at home. For example, 54 percent of minority women in the business sector have children under 18 living in the household, compared to only 38 percent of white women in business.



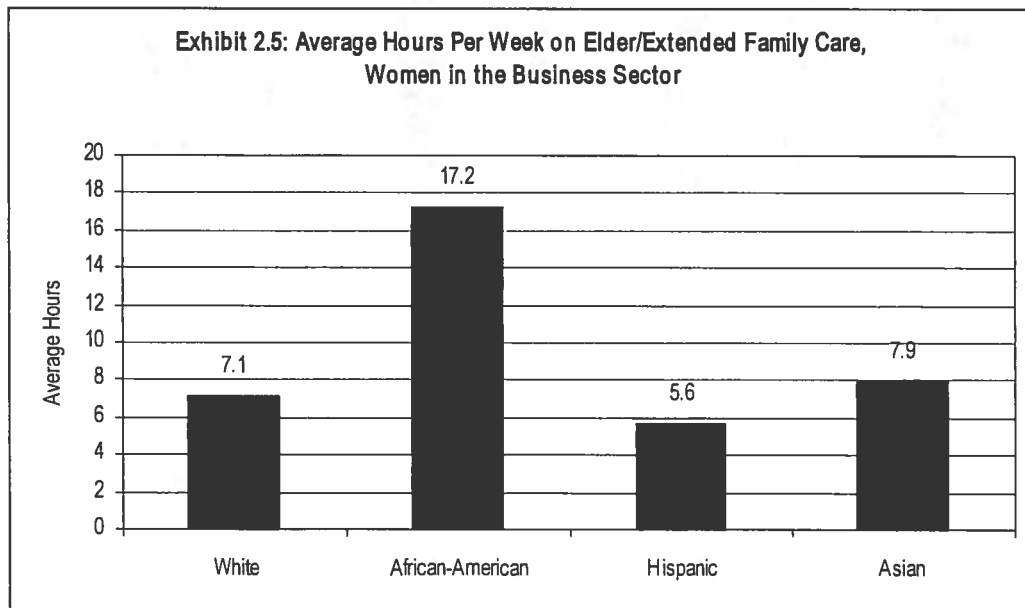


### Care for Elders/Extended Family in Home and Community

Besides caring for their dependent children, minority female professionals also spend time caring for elders and extended family in their homes and communities. For example, of our respondents seventeen percent of African-American women care for needy extended family members. On average, African-American women spend more hours per week on elder and extended family care than do white women (12.4 hours compared to 9.5 hours for white women and 6.6 hours for white men).



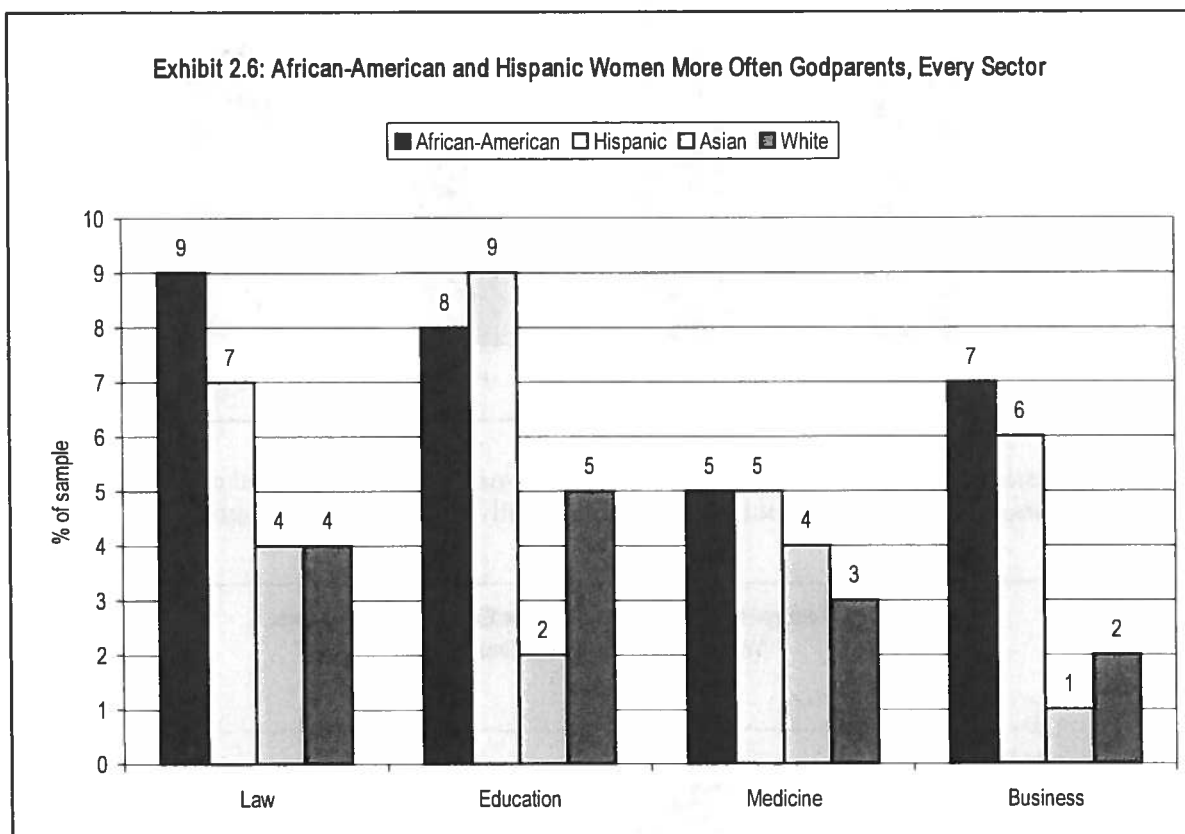
Of professional women in the business sector, African-American women spend on average 17.2 hours per week caring for elderly or extended family—far more than any group.



For the small minority (5%) of women in our sample who have elders or extended family living in the home, the demands are often substantial. Almost half of minority women with in-home elder care responsibilities spend five hours a week or more fulfilling these obligations. Nearly four in ten of them (36%) spend more than \$100 a month on senior care. As the women in our sample age, we expect the proportion caring for elders in their homes and outside the home to rise. At present, the oldest women in our sample are 55 years, and most are still a somewhat young population with relatively young parents.

### Care for Youth in the Community

Minority women are also often involved in caring for children who are not their own and who do not live with them. Most commonly, these responsibilities include paying for housing or educational costs (34 and 33%, respectively), visits to these children in their homes (32%), transportation (29%), taking children to medical care, mentoring or paying for medical care (23%).



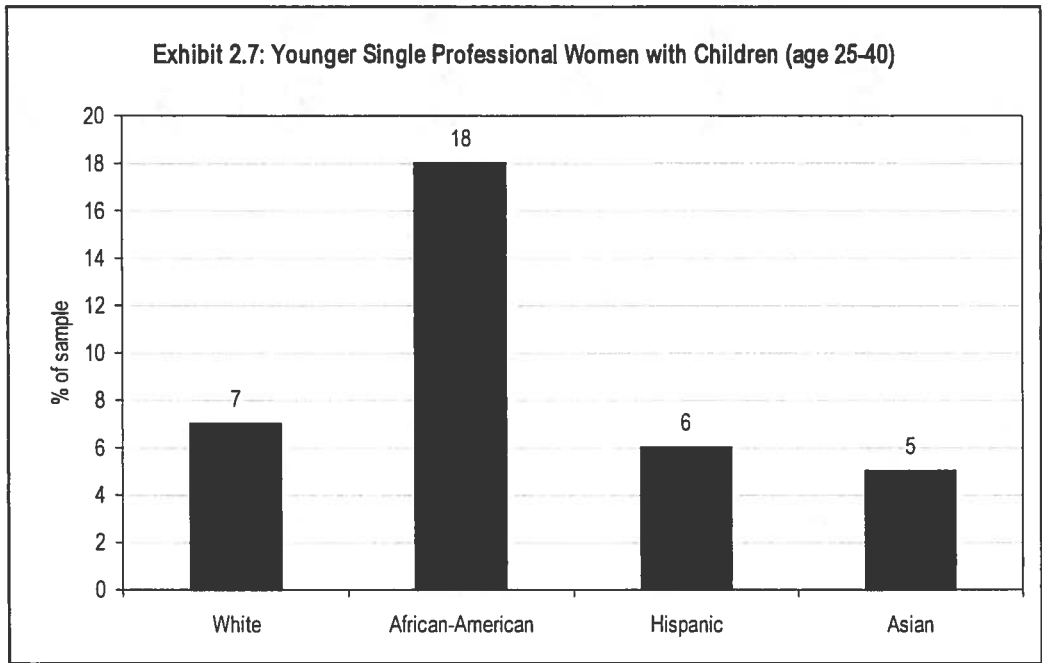
Ten percent of minority women who work 50 or more hours per week serve as mentors to young people in their communities, and 15 percent take on the role of godparent to a child. Minority female professionals working the longest hours invest the most time in mentoring, tutoring or acting as godparents to the children of their friends. Indeed, minority women with three or more children and single women with children are most likely to serve as godparents to other children (21% and 17%, respectively). African-American women with graduate degrees are most likely to serve as mentors (12%).

In every sector, African-American and Hispanic women are more likely to serve as godparents to youth in their communities than white or Asian women.

One of the impressive professionals we encountered in our research is Sheryl Battles, an African-American vice president of corporate communications at a major global corporation. In addition to her primary responsibility managing executive and investor communications, she coordinates the corporation’s communications on issues of diversity and in that capacity supports 30 to 40 events a year. It’s a task that constitutes just five percent of her official job description but consumes roughly 25 percent of her 50-hour workweeks. In her personal life, she speaks at community events and career seminars for minority students, and is involved in the church that she, her husband, and their daughter attend. She is also on the board of a local center for the arts and has been active in its African-American Cultural Heritage Series since its inception a decade ago. Sheryl considers these activities an obligation, a personal need and a lifelong commitment.

**“Flying Solo”**

African-American women, especially younger women under age 40, are more than twice as likely to be single mothers, with 18 percent of younger African-American women in our sample single with children, compared to single-digit figures for every other race.



In addition to being single parents, many married minority women are primary bread-winners. While younger married Asian professionals are the least likely to be single mothers, they are the most likely to earn more than their spouses: of our sample, 61 percent of Asian professional women under 40 earned more than their spouses, as do 60 percent of African-American women who fall into the “high-earning” category; that is, they earn more than \$75,000 a year.

Our African-American female respondents demonstrate an interesting earnings pattern. Among professional women with an annual income of less than \$75,000, African-American women tend to earn less than their spouses. However, among high earners, African-American women earn more than their spouses. The greatest difference in income between

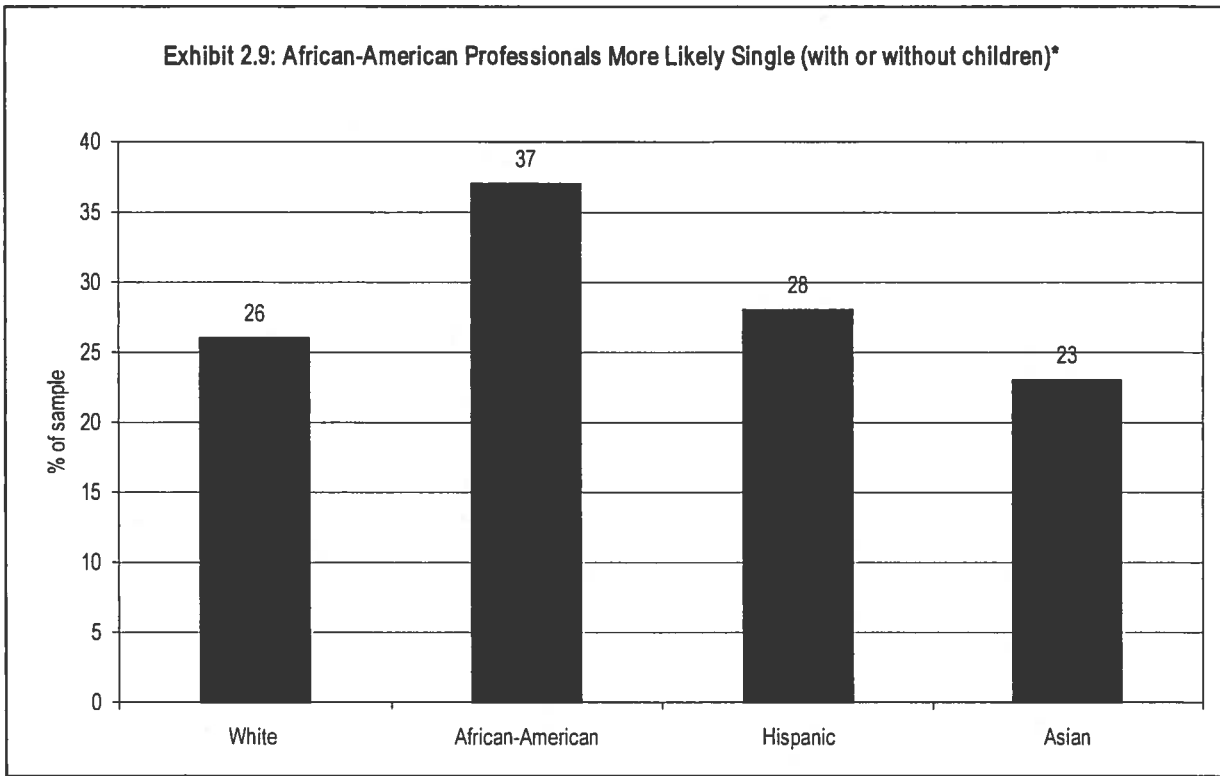
African-American female professionals and their spouses occurs in the \$100,000 to \$149,000 range.



With or without children, African-American female professionals are more likely than women of other races to be on their own. Thirty-seven percent of African-American women are single, compared to 26 percent and 23 percent of white and Asian women, respectively.

Candace, an attorney and senior vice president at a Fortune 500 company, described her commitments to extended family at one of our focus groups. For long periods, she took care of elderly family, ill friends and in-laws, including one with AIDS, nursing them through death. As the main breadwinner in her family, she pays the college tuition for her nephew and for a friend's child. She emphasized that such obligations are not unique to her but are common for women of color. She feels privileged to contribute to her community.

**Exhibit 2.9: African-American Professionals More Likely Single (with or without children)\***



\*includes women who are single, divorced, separated and widowed.

## Chapter 3. Hidden Bias

Another stumbling block in the path of minority professionals who want to be more fully themselves and fulfill their potential at work are the feelings of exclusion and alienation that arise when they sense the hidden biases in corporate cultures that center on style, legitimacy and trust. The result: isolation and disengagement. Many “quit” but stay on the job.

Minority professional women:

- Feel excluded and constrained by “*style compliance*” issues—the need to fit into a corporate culture dominated by white men. Forty-two percent of minority women in large corporations and 35 percent of young African-American women are affected by this issue. Thirty-four percent of minority men and 24 percent of young white women also share this concern.
- *Struggle with legitimacy* or a “merit perception” problem: the conviction on the part of co-workers that they are affirmative action hires. One-quarter of minority women in business (25%) are troubled by merit perception. In focus groups, participants described the feeling of constantly needing to re-audition for the job they have. In addition, almost a third (29%) of minority women in business are convinced colleagues perceive they don’t work hard enough or lengthy enough hours.
- *Don't trust their employers* and are not comfortable sharing information about their community activities and family lives. Forty percent of minority businesswomen don’t fully trust their employers. As a result, the wealth of cultural capital and the weight of family responsibility are invisible to employers and consequently ignored. You cannot support what you cannot see. A majority (51%) of young minority women is disturbed by a lack of trust in their supervisors.
- Worry that *promotions are based on comfort level (and appearance) rather than on ability*. The belief that sharing the boss’ race, gender and class is more important than doing the job well is extremely widespread. Thirty-four percent of African-American women in business voice this concern, as do 30 percent of minority women overall. Interestingly, this resonates across gender and race lines. Thirty-four percent of white women and 32 percent of minority men share this concern. This is a wake-up call for companies: professional employees across the board are deeply skeptical about the fairness of promotional practices.
- Experience a *dearth of mentors that look like them*. Twenty-nine percent of minority female professionals lack mentors who can help them navigate these hidden biases.
- For a significant number of minority women (39%) these hidden biases are severe enough to cause alienation, disengagement and a “downsizing” of expectation. Some *quit but stay on the job* while others leave corporate America—poor results for both individuals and companies.

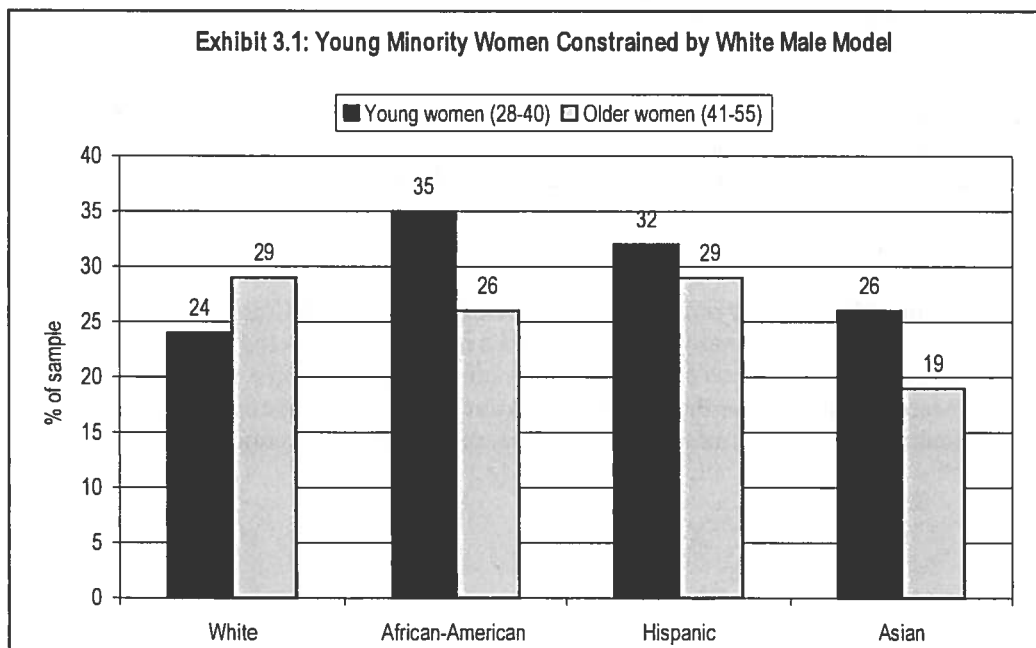
Minority women deal with many of the normal stresses and strains of modern day professional life: lengthening workweeks, accelerating expectations on the productivity front, and increased difficulty juggling work and family. In addition to these conspicuous pressures, minority women deal with a set of hidden biases, many unconscious. “Style compliance” issues and the widespread perception that they did not get their job on grounds of merit can seriously affect morale, and ultimately performance.

### “Style Compliance” Issues

Forty-two percent of minority women in large corporations feel constrained by expectations that they should look, sound or act like white men in the executive suite. Among minority women as a whole, young women (30%) are more affected than older women (22%), and young African-American women (35%) and young Latina women (32%) are especially affected. Style compliance concerns are not occupation-specific, nor are they affected by income level.

Minority men and white women also have trouble with style compliance issues. More than a third of minority men (34%) consider style compliance a problem, along with just under a third of white women (29%).

The most common style compliance problem for minority women relates to being passed over because they do not conform to a conventional notion of how “leaders” should behave. Some 32 percent of minority professional women in large corporations have a problem with “quiet speaking style equated with lack of leadership potential.” On the other hand, 30 percent of African-American women in large corporations have a problem with “loud being identified with troublemaker.” Figuring out how to calibrate one’s speaking style can be challenging!



Remember Joyce? She is a certain kind of manager’s dream employee, and another kind of manager’s nightmare. She gesticulates. She’s extroverted, intense, colorfully dressed. Her cornrows and big, bold jewelry signal her tendency to celebrate ethnic difference—her own and others’. Her current favorite necklace is a souvenir from a recent trip to Asia.

These traits sometimes get Joyce into trouble, for example, when she included her experience as an amateur opera singer on her resume. That item caused an interviewer at her Fortune 100 company, where she works now as a strategic planner, to raise his eyes from the document to give her a skeptical look and a recommendation that she revise straightaway. It was a clear message that it is best to leave that information at home. Never mind that it

might be the source of skills useful to the firm, such as a gift for presentations and public speaking.

Over the course of her career, Joyce has learned how to move past these moments and bounce back to her search for a manager who wouldn't let her energies and enthusiasms go to waste. Change is what turns her on and catalyzes her best work. Her enthusiasm for change is what enabled Joyce to help her pastor transform their church, as described above. But disruption is innovation's downside. And employers whose job is maintaining stability or who simply don't share Joyce's enthusiasm for shaking things up find her inconvenient.

In fact, Joyce said her most recent supervisor didn't know what to do with her, which was especially discouraging to her because they were both African-American women. "She was just always saying to me, 'Oh, you and I are so different,'" Joyce said of her boss. Asking repeatedly for more—and more challenging—assignments, Joyce walked away from those conversations empty-handed and gradually moved toward a position of passive resistance. She started working nine to five days, and doing only the minimum necessary to get her job done.

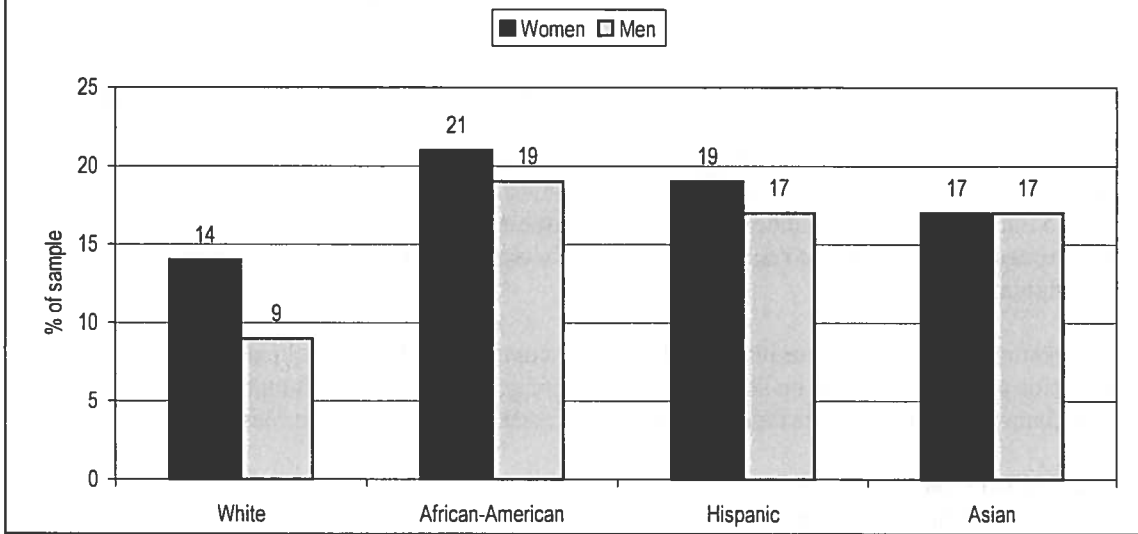
Another focus group participant, Roopa, is Asian with a demanding senior position at a major consumer products company. Two years ago, she was feeling stalled in her career and ready to leave. The message she was getting was that she didn't display the right leadership skills. "My quietness has been perceived as a lack of leadership, but it's a culturally imbedded characteristic. I've gotten some feedback that I'm a little too polite and consensus driven and that I should be more abrupt and competitive. Those things are very cultural. We don't argue in my family; there's a lot of respect for the elderly and hierarchy. [My bosses] want me to 'disrupt the environment'—it's just not my nature. Honestly, I would look like a fool." She asked her boss about succession planning and learned she wasn't included. Because she was so committed to the company, she decided to stay on, but made a lateral move to another area.

#### **Legitimacy and Merit—A Problem of Perception for Women of Color**

While most minority professional women have won a position of respect in their workplaces, some female professionals of color (19%) do worry about the perception—among co-workers—that they received their job or their promotion as a result of affirmative action instead of merit. A similar proportion of minority professional men express these concerns (19%).

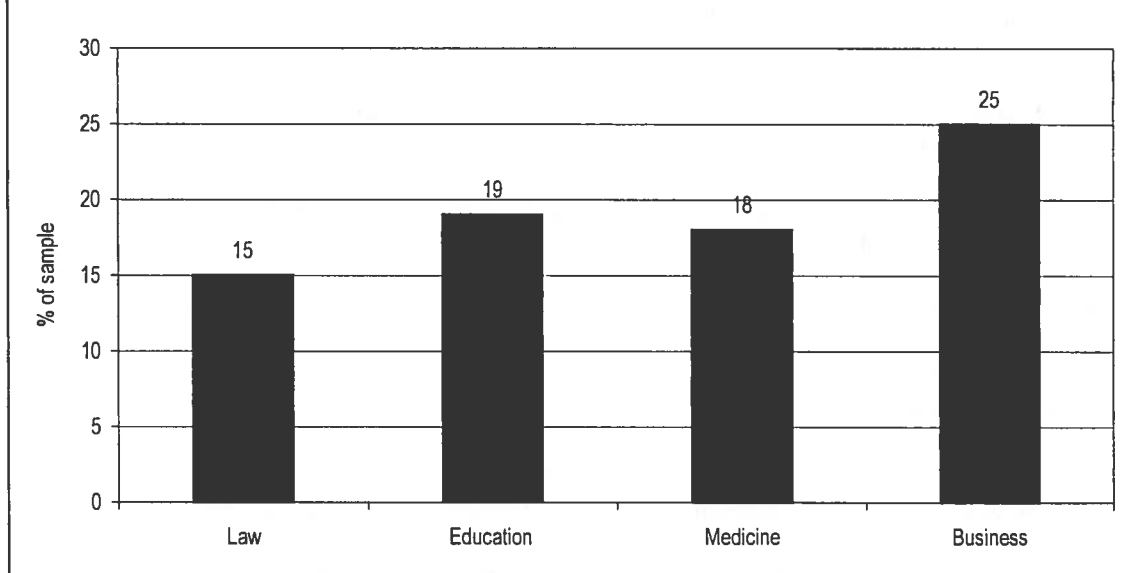


**Exhibit 3.2: Legitimacy and Merit: A Problem for Minority Professionals (men and women)**



Concerns about legitimacy and merit are most pronounced in the business world. A quarter of minority women professionals in business occupations (25%), and over a third (35%) of African-American women in large corporations report that colleagues have raised questions about their merit, compared to just 15 to 19 percent of minority women in the fields of law, education and health.

**Exhibit 3.3: Minority Businesswomen Have Most Severe Merit Perception Concerns**



Family responsibilities seem to compound the merit perception problem. Minority women with children are more likely to worry about merit perception than women who do not have children. Women with three or more children (29%) and single mothers (24%) are most concerned.

Another bias revolves around the idea that minority professionals don't work hard enough or long enough. Thirty-six percent of African-American women in large companies believe this perception is common among colleagues. According to Tuck professor Ella Bell, "Black women and black men are socialized by their parents and their teachers to believe that bosses tend to underestimate and underplay their contribution—and that they therefore have to be three times better in order to succeed in the white world." It's a way of coping with racism, she explained.<sup>8</sup>

Interestingly, women who are involved in outside community, family and extended family activities are more likely to be affected by hidden bias. This may suggest that the demands of these important outside roles tend to aggravate the stress caused by these biases.

### **Lack of Trust in Employers**

Nearly half of the minority professionals in our survey do not trust their employers. Almost half (45%) of minority women professionals do not feel that their roles and responsibilities outside the workplace are recognized or understood by their employers. A similar proportion (42%), feel they cannot trust their employers with information about their personal lives. In her work, Professor Bell describes a "code of silence" that surrounds minority women's lives.<sup>9</sup> She attributes it to a fear of revealing difference or "otherness," an understandable defense mechanism. Who would choose to reveal deep ties to inner-city communities if this would jeopardize a tentative toe-hold in the corporate culture?

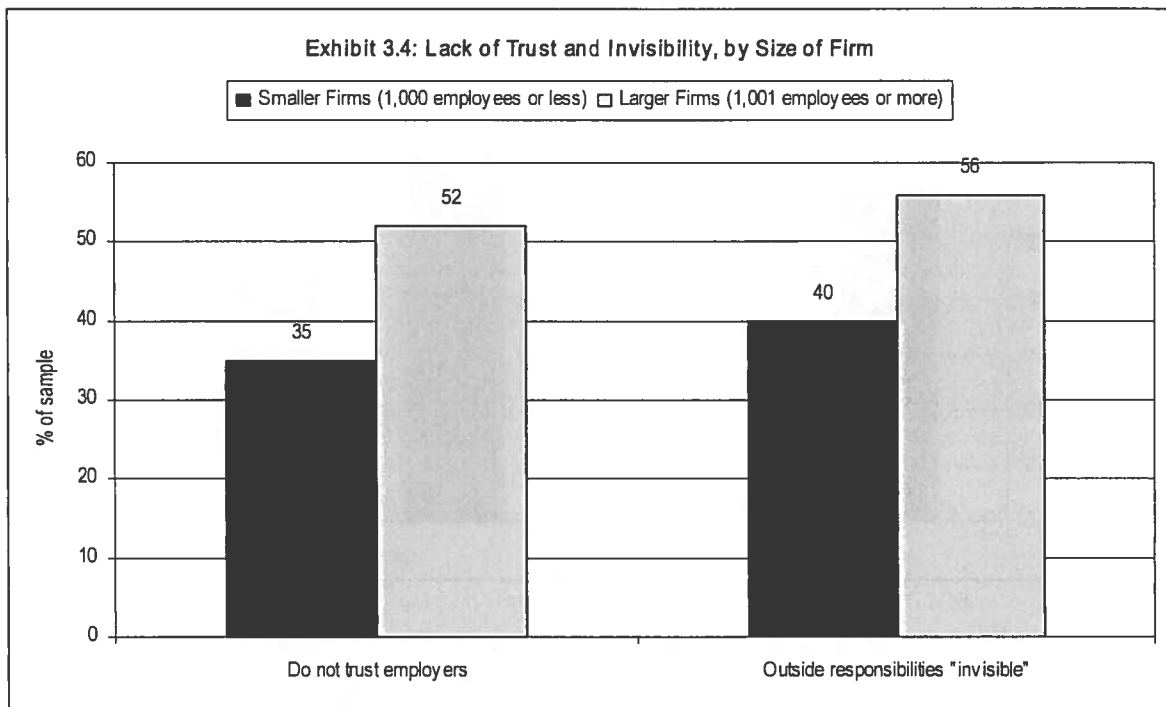
Minority women in larger companies (56%), young women of color (50%) and Asian women (49%) are the most likely to feel that their lives are "invisible" to their employer. The female professionals of color who are the most hesitant to share information about their lives outside work include those in larger firms (52%), those 35 or under (51%) and single women with children (41%).

These findings around trust are among the most important and alarming of any in the survey. The fact that almost half, and in some cases more, of minority women fail to trust their employers with information about their lives, either because they don't believe their boss would value this information, or because they fear this information might be used against them, is a fundamental problem. It ensures that cultural capital remains invisible and it guarantees a situation where the pressing family needs of minority professionals go unacknowledged and unanswered—with a predictable impact on productivity. Employers are unable to support what they do not see. Building a greater measure of trust is essential if employers are to develop the work-life policies and practices needed to realize the full potential of minority professionals.

Latisha is a 30-something African-American executive at a global consumer products company who spoke in a focus group about her feelings of alienation and distrust. "I find that when do try to open up personally, people just don't get it. I grew up in a project in Newark. My mother was on welfare. Both my parents are gone. Both contracted AIDS at different times in their lives, and people just don't understand me. They just don't get it. So you stop trying. They just don't understand where you're coming from and why you see the world the way that you see it, [or] even how you came up out of that. My boss says, 'I don't

understand how you get to where you are from that.’ I stop talking about that because they just don’t understand. I just feel so different [from everyone else] when [I’m] talking about it. You don’t want to feel so different.”

She sees no place to move upwards at her company, and while this bothers her, she knows not many people of color have made it as far as she has. Recently, she attended a big conference for people at her level in her department. Of at least 200 people, only two were black women. There were no black men. “Do I need to start looking at companies that do have a history of promoting minorities and women?” she asked rhetorically. “If you look at the top in this company it’s all white men.”



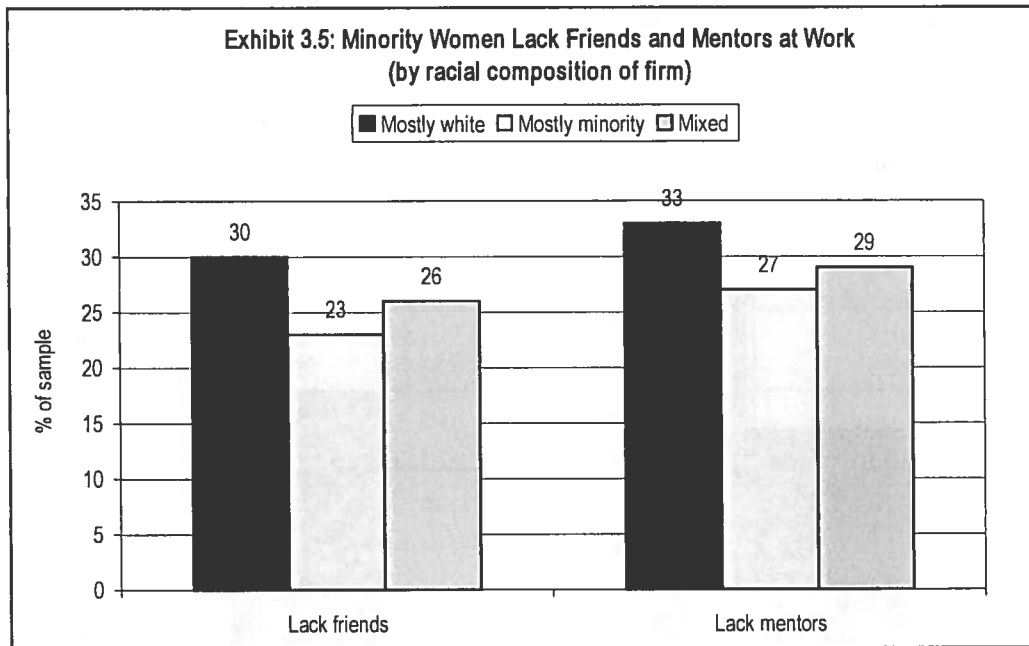
**Promotion on Grounds of Appearance and Comfort Level**

Promotion and succession planning are major sources of anxiety among minority women. Fifty-four percent of minority women in large corporations are convinced that promotions in their workplace are not based on ability, but on whether senior managers (who are usually white men) are comfortable with the candidate, which often relates to whether the candidate looks and acts like them. Across the board, three in ten (30%) of minority professional women feel this way. That’s nearly half (46%) of young African-American women and 30 percent of Hispanic female professionals.

Michael, the Asian-American executive introduced above, says minorities have to work harder because they don’t look like the CEO. “I feel like I have to work harder, proving to people that I fit in. I’m not sure it’s a glass ceiling so much as a Jell-O floor. The presumption is that we’re on shaky ground, no matter what we’re doing.”

### Experience a Dearth of Mentors Who Look Like Them

Survey respondents (29%) and focus group participants indicated that one major reason women of color face high levels of stress on the job is that they lack mentors that look like them—that there is no one with the same ethnic or cultural background at a senior level who can help navigate corporate politics and bias. This problem is more prevalent among women under age 40 (32%) and among women in business (33%). Minority women who work in mostly white environments perceive their dearth of workplace mentors more acutely (33%) than those who work in mixed or mostly minority organizations.



Stephanie, the rising young African-American we met earlier, likes her mentor, but indicates that this is often not enough. “There isn’t anyone who looks like me up the brand marketing chain, so it’s hard to find anyone who really levels with [me].” Her company has a formal mentoring program that pairs mentees with someone one to two levels more senior. “My mentor is a regular white guy. He’s a great guy, but he’s a regular white guy.” Stephanie says she would find it particularly empowering to find a mentor who she could “see herself as.”

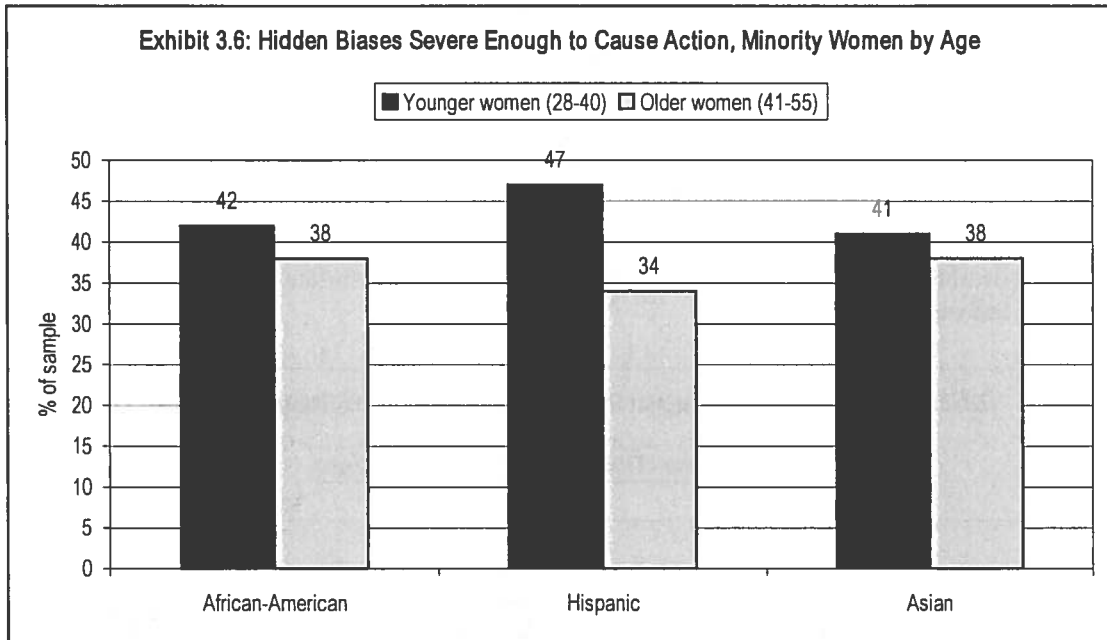
Meera is Indian and came to the United States 12 years ago. During a focus group she explained that she longs for advice on how to interact with her colleagues. She currently works as an IT manager for a global corporation, and she is an expert in her field. But she feels very lost in other areas of her work life. She is uncomfortable going out with colleagues outside of work because of her fear that she’ll have nothing to talk about.

Meera finds it impossible to find or initiate the informal networks that are so important for getting ahead because people just don’t understand her and her culture. Recently, her boss’ father passed away and she was unclear about the proper etiquette. “I was clueless; should I go to the funeral? What should I say? What should I wear? I didn’t know who to ask for help.” Moving up in the organization is more than technical know-how, Meera says. “It’s also about your understanding of other people and other cultures. The company should set up programs to help people from other cultures adapt.”

### The Impact of “Hidden Bias”

The hidden biases considered in this section have serious effects on the women who experience them. Almost one-fifth of professional women of color (19%) have found these biases severe enough to make them consider quitting. Twenty percent (20%) have found these same on-the-job biases powerful enough to cause a downsizing of expectation and effort. Minority professional women under 40 and African-American women in large corporations are particularly likely to feel discouraged as a result of hidden biases. Almost a third (27%) of these women report they consider quitting.

“Considering” is a key word here. Although these women may have one foot out the door, they don’t actually quit. There are too many family responsibilities to contemplate any period without a paycheck. “Teetering on the edge” (thinking about quitting, looking for a job, trying to figure out which jobs have the same hidden biases) may well last months, if not years, and during this time many minority women “put their heads down” or “stay under the radar.” Many talk about doing the minimum to get by.



## Part II: Solutions

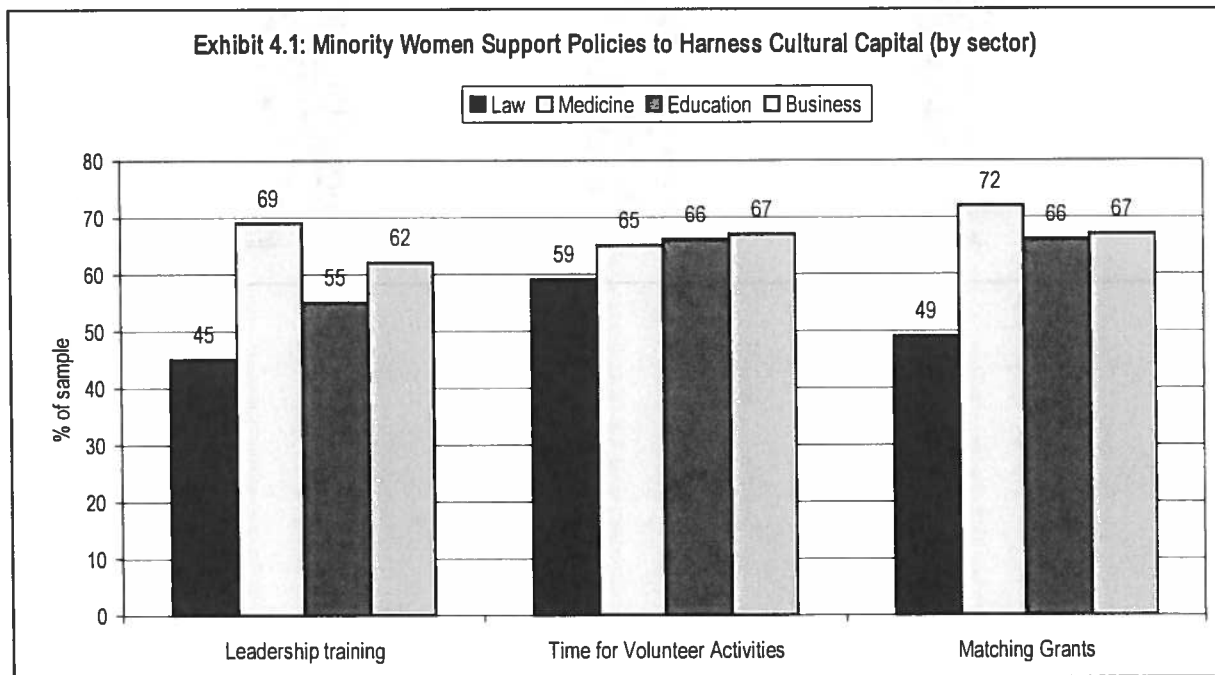
### Chapter 4. What Can Companies Do?

#### Support the Accumulation of Cultural Capital

As discussed, minority professionals, and particularly minority women, are a rich source of cultural capital, the valuable skills and knowledge essential to leadership development. By volunteering in their neighborhoods or houses of worship, these workers are essentially obtaining their own skills training—on their own time and their own dime.

Managers can support their employees in numerous ways by taking the single step of familiarizing themselves with this work. They can reduce the alienation described in these chapters by recognizing or celebrating these efforts. They can enrich their in-house training programs by linking with and enlarging upon these workers' off-the-clock efforts. They might even gain customers by tapping employees as official company representatives if the communities they serve match the company's customer profile.

- Seventy-one percent of young minority women (64% of minority women overall and 67% of minority businesswomen) want “set aside” time for volunteer activities.
- Sixty-eight percent of young minority women and a similar percentage of minority businesswomen (64% of minority women overall) favor matching grants for charities—whether the local library or developing schools in third world countries.
- Seventy-one percent of young African-American women (57% of minority women overall and 62% minority businesswomen) want training in fundraising for religious and community groups.



Time Warner is one company that does more than mouth pieties about its support for workers' volunteer efforts. The company expresses its appreciation in the most powerful way possible: financially and professionally, through the Andrew Heiskell Community Service Awards.

This past year, Time Warner recognized "Prom Princesses/Prom Dudes Project" founder Patty Gonzales, the government affairs manager at Time Warner Cable in Austin, Texas. Gonzales's organization collects donated prom dresses and secures free tuxedo rentals for foster children during prom season. She also founded a leadership program for the Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Gonzales and seven other 2005 Heiskell Award winners received \$3,000 towards the charity of their choice, a \$2,000 personal honorarium, and the respectful attention of the company's top executives at a lavish luncheon ceremony featuring such luminaries as Dr. Maya Angelou, poet, author, educator and civil-rights activist.

"Our Heiskell award winners are the unsung heroes of our company," said chairman and CEO Dick Parsons. "We're proud of their many accomplishments and their ongoing efforts to give back to the communities in which they live and work."<sup>10</sup>

Such words and actions send a powerful message across the company that narrows the gap between employees' home and work lives. As a result, employees feel more comfortable sharing their accomplishments and strengths, and maybe even their difficulties. This in turn contributes to the free flow of information in the office, creating an environment that's more comfortable, and more productive, for everyone.

Another company with a long tradition of embracing and nurturing cultural capital through active corporate citizenship is Johnson & Johnson. Recognizing its responsibilities to the communities it operates within locally and around the world, Johnson & Johnson reflects this core value in the substantial community involvement of the many employees at its operating companies, who volunteer their time and resources to improve the health, education and living conditions of people throughout the world. Some highlights of Johnson & Johnson's programs to promote community engagement include:

- **Diverse Community Healthcare Committee.** Led by the Corporate Contributions department and a group of volunteers from many Johnson & Johnson companies, this committee partners with non-profit organizations and with the National Urban League, National Council of La Raza and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This effort brings minority and underserved populations valuable health information about diseases such as diabetes and hypertension as well as education on important child safety issues.
- **Affinity groups.** Since the 1970s, Johnson & Johnson has fostered the development of affinity groups, starting with HONOR, Help Our Neighbors with Our Resources. Johnson & Johnson affinity groups undertake significant outreach in communities across the country to lead and support literacy projects, community education about disease prevention, screening and treatment in areas such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, renal disease, women's health and heart disease among others.
- **Employee volunteers.** The Johnson & Johnson family of companies also supports employee participation with non-profit organizations and with initiatives such as Habitat for Humanity or United Way. Some employees may have the opportunity to serve on the boards of non-profit institutions which provides them with first hand

knowledge of how boards work. This has an additional, developmental effect by preparing them for possible board level assignments within the family of Johnson & Johnson companies.

Companies like Time Warner and Johnson & Johnson recognize that embracing cultural capital is a mutually beneficial strategy through building and nurturing transferable leadership and management skills.

Adding to the list of innovative corporate best practices in building cultural capital, since 1991 American Express has actively worked to promote community engagement and corporate responsibility (and with this, build the cultural capital of its employees) through a Paid Sabbatical Program. Targeting employees of all levels with 10 or more years of service, this program provides an opportunity to develop leadership and other transferable skills while working to strengthen communities and make them a better place to live and work. Paid sabbatical activities might include counseling hospital or hospice patients, teaching at a local high school or college, working full time at a shelter for the homeless or other volunteer activities.

In addition to the unique sabbatical program, American Express promotes employee community engagement through the American Express Foundation, which helps to place executives on non-profit boards. This active involvement in non-profit board development brings additional leadership to community organizations, and also enhances the transferable skill set of corporate employees.

PepsiCo is also working to support the accumulation of cultural capital through company-sponsored community engagement. At its annual Community Service Week at corporate headquarters, PepsiCo employees have the opportunity to participate in a community service in partnership with the national service organization City Year. Other PepsiCo locations have similar programs. The company also posts opportunities for community involvement on its website so that employees know what options are available.

Goldman Sachs has established a similarly innovative program: Community TeamWorks. Through this program, the company gives employees one day off each year to volunteer for local non-profit organizations. Impressive participation rates in this program indicate that Goldman Sachs has accurately assessed its employee's eagerness to grow their cultural capital and give back to communities: in 2004, over 14,600 Goldman Sachs employees and their families and friends worked with 694 not-for-profit organizations, providing a wide range of services, working with the elderly, building homes or mentoring young people.

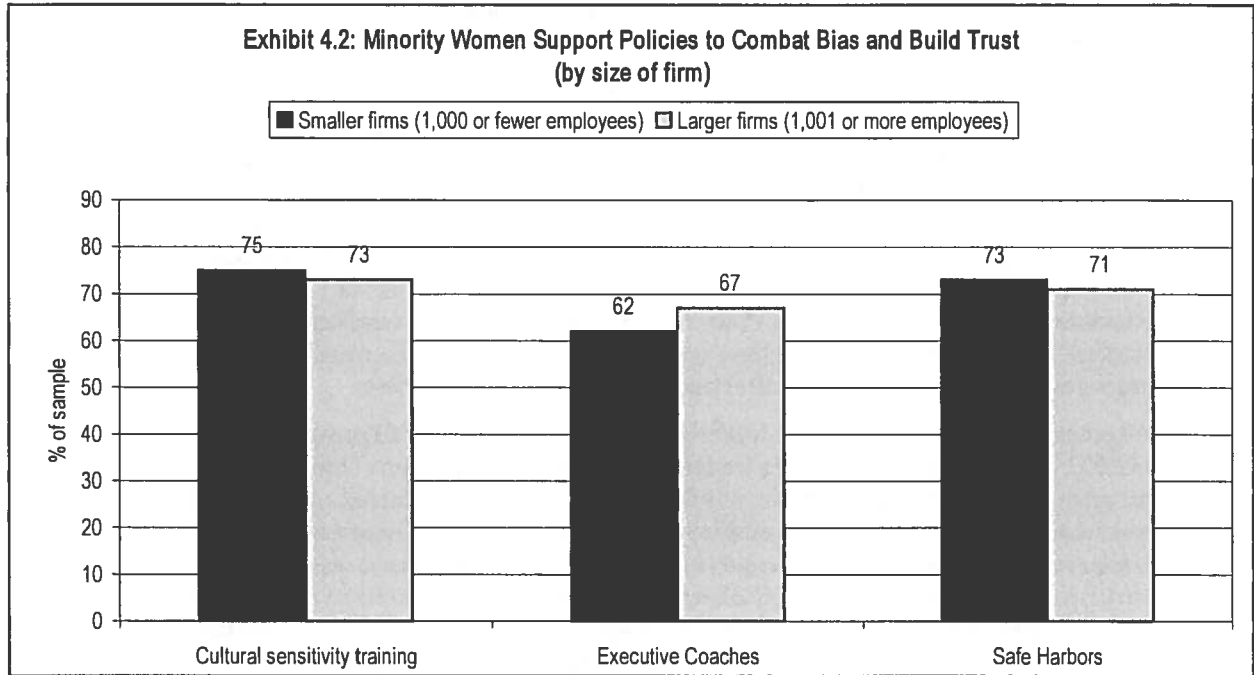
### **Combat Bias and Build Trust**

It is a harsh reality that more than 50 percent of minority women in large corporations don't trust their employer with information about their lives. This creates significant potential for miscommunication and tension in the workplace, and has negative implications for the bottom line. Companies can implement a wide range of policies and programs to combat bias and build trust, such as the creation of "safe harbors" or cultural sensitivity training and executive coaching.

- Seventy-five percent of Hispanic female professionals favor the creation of a company "safe harbor"—a place they can take company, family or community concerns and brainstorm solutions while maintaining anonymity. African-American women and men also support this program.



- Seventy-two percent of minority women and 74 percent minority businesswomen back cultural sensitivity training to break down stereotypes. Hispanic women (77%) support this to an even greater degree.
- Sixty-four percent of minority businesswomen want company-sponsored executive coaches to work with managers to combat bias. Sixty-two percent of minority women in large firms and 67 percent in smaller firms are supportive of this measure.



A number of companies are implementing cutting edge measures to educate their workforce on the importance of diversity. One company that has taken on a large-scale effort to promote a firm-wide leadership culture that embraces inclusiveness and enables people to contribute their full potential is Ernst & Young. In 2004, the professional services firm deployed *Inclusiveness: An Awareness Workshop*, an innovative half-day workshop through which participants increase their awareness of the firm’s vision of a broadly defined inclusive environment, and ultimately commit to action steps to realize this vision. Each aspect of the *Inclusiveness Awareness Workshop* focuses on creating a climate at Ernst & Young where inclusiveness is embraced, and people perceive they are valued because of (not in spite of) their differences.

The Awareness Workshop has three primary learning objectives: 1) to recognize the relationship between inclusiveness and Ernst & Young’s strategy and core values; 2) to identify the business case for inclusiveness and eliminate discrimination and prejudice; and 3) to provide participants with additional resources to implement lessons learned. The workshop encourages open dialogue and approaches diversity through two channels—intellectual and emotional—on which the curriculum is modeled. At the heart of the interactive program is the notion of equity and fairness—understanding that inclusion is a broad concept, and that every employee is unique and therefore has distinct needs. Discussion topics include: “Understanding the Equity Continuum,” “Exploring the Impact of Systemic and Attitudinal Discrimination,” and “Charting the Path Forward,” where individual action plans are created. These action plans may touch upon ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or other aspects of diversity.

Ernst & Young is strategic in achieving its goal of generating real, lasting cultural sensitivity and behavior change by making these workshops mandatory. As role models for staff levels with the capacity to implement change, the workshop target audience is Managers through PPDs in all 13 Ernst & Young geographies (across the U.S. and Canada).

### Getting Into the Skin at Unilever

One company that has historically welcomed diversity and championed the notion of “bringing one’s whole self to work” is Unilever. Unilever makes and markets hundreds of brands in more than 150 countries and reaches more than 150 million households every day, employing over 200,000 people from diverse backgrounds, cultures and nationalities. The company understands that diversity both in the demographics of its leadership and in the ability of its employees to understand their customers is essential if the company is to maintain and enhance its global position. As Unilever executive Rhodora Palomar-Fresnedi states, “For Unilever, diversity is both our heritage and our future.” For this reason, Unilever has established an international menu of programs and practices that both nurture local talent and develop the consumer base.

A recent example of these efforts is the Getting into the Skin (GITS) program, introduced in 2002 as a key part of Unilever’s leadership development program. Through this program, Unilever takes direct aim at hidden biases by asking selected groups of current and future leaders to spend time outside the realm of their normal experience. Former Unilever cochairman Niall FitzGerald helped create the program and was also a participant. Of a 2002 journey to Croatia he remarked, “I lived the life of a Salvation Army volunteer and picked up an unkempt, uncared for man off the street ... we talked about his life. In an eerie twist of fate, he turned out to be from my hometown. We were two people who fate had dealt very different hands. He taught me, in a way no other experience has, the power of generous listening—without judgment.” Other participants have spent time at a rural hospital in Mexico, an AIDS clinic in Ireland and a prison in Germany. The current CEO Patrick Cescau continues to build on Unilever’s mission of inclusion and has established a diversity board, which he personally chairs.

Cisco Systems recognizes inclusion and diversity as closely tied to leadership and a competitive business strategy, and is working to combat hidden bias to allow diversity to flourish. The company has recently implemented a workshop on Micro-Inequities—the micro-messages that are often sent within workplaces that trigger the costly turnover of women and minorities—as part of its larger diversity context. This program enables all employees to recognize those micro-messages, and empowers employees to develop communication skills that instead send positive messages. The workshops target leadership, to assist leaders to become more conscious about the way they act, and the impact their actions have on co-workers. Cisco’s goal is for these innovative workshops to build and sustain a healthy, inclusive, and diverse workplace.

### **Widen the Tent**

We encourage employers to assess the fit between their company's benefits package and those people for whom their employees need coverage. Even the most generous benefits package will not work if it is constrained by a one-size-fits-all notion of who needs coverage. All too often the conventional benefits package focuses on the nuclear family, in particular targeting babies and toddlers and excluding elders and members of the extended family. The central challenge for corporate policy and practice is to figure out how to widen the tent of individuals covered under benefits packages, and with this, target the extensive set of responsibilities that extend beyond nuclear family.

As discussed in Chapter Two, minority women bear care giving responsibilities that reach beyond the nuclear family to extended family and community. Also, minority women are more likely than white women to be single moms and primary breadwinners. Professional women of color want the standard set of work-life policies (flextime, telecommuting, etc.), but additional measures would boost their productivity on the job:

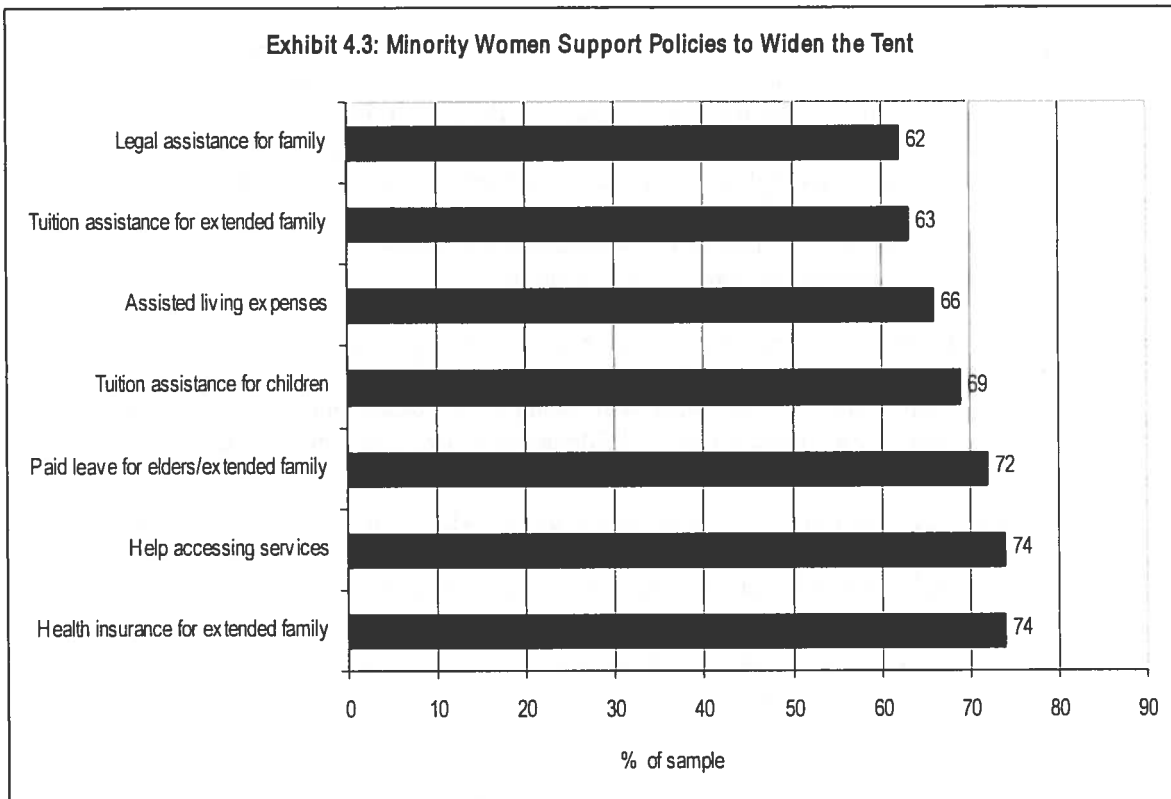
- Three quarters of minority professional women (74%) want help accessing state and federal services—particularly childcare, healthcare and education. Young minority women and minority businesswomen (79%) would be particularly interested in such a program.
- Seventy-four percent of minority women want help paying for health insurance for up to two members of their extended family. Hispanic women (78%) especially favor this.

There are forms of assistance that few companies have considered, but that might, at small expense, be of tremendous benefit. Time Warner has begun to address this issue. Patricia Fili-Krushel, executive vice president of administration explains, "I wanted to check if we were looking through a white lens in terms of how we organize benefits—and, sure enough, we were." The company recently extended its employee assistance program (which includes, for example, access to childcare referral services and company scholarship programs) to other reliant family members (perhaps an aunt or uncle). "In the last five months, there's been a 200 percent increase in uptake," she says. "There's a lot we can do that doesn't cost a lot of money. It just takes some different thinking."

- Seventy-two percent of minority women want a few days of annual leave for the purpose of eldercare—or extended family care—76 percent of Hispanic professional women. And two thirds (65%) want help with elders' living expenses.
- Focus group participants want to expand the definition of family in employee benefits. The opportunity to take bereavement leave for people outside the nuclear family would be especially appreciated, they said.
- Sixty-nine percent of minority women want tuition assistance for children. Single mothers are especially interested in this type of assistance.
- Sixty-two percent of minority women and 73 percent of single moms want legal assistance for family members dealing with the criminal justice system.

Taking active strides to widen the tent through innovative benefits programs, Johnson & Johnson recognizes that many employees require a comprehensive array of Work/Life programs and services to meet their work, family and personal needs at every stage of life. Its Employee Assistance Program services are extended to all household members, beyond the nuclear family.

**Exhibit 4.3: Minority Women Support Policies to Widen the Tent**



To address the overload of care employees' experience, Johnson & Johnson provides comprehensive child and elder care programs. Childcare is available to full-time and part-time employees, who are eligible to enroll their children and grandchildren at six child development centers. At some locations, extended family members, such as nieces and nephews, may also be eligible based on availability.

The Long Term Care Plan provides coverage for nursing and support services not covered under most group medical plans. Employees, their spouses, parents, parents-in-law, grandparents and grandparents-in-law are eligible to apply for the coverage under the Long Term Care Plan.

#### **Sponsor Networks and Find Mentors**

Networks, mentors and sponsors are enormously important in providing career traction and are essential supplements to the networks, built around concerns of ethnicity and gender, which many companies have encouraged.

- Almost two-thirds of professional women of color (65%) favor the idea of company-sponsored social networks sponsoring cultural events and community service projects. African-Americans in particular would like to see their companies do this.
- Roughly the same proportion (66%) supports the creation of mentoring programs that match minority employees with senior colleagues from similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds. In the event that senior women with minority or multi-cultural backgrounds are scarce, focus group participants suggested that senior white colleagues take on these mentoring roles with the support of a coach.

## "On-Boarding" at Goldman Sachs

As a leading global investment banking, securities and investment management firm with more than 20,000 people in 55 offices and 26 countries, Goldman, Sachs & Co. is truly global in the breadth of its business and the diversity of its people. Senior leaders at Goldman Sachs recognized early on that a critical component of their ability to maintain and strengthen a competitive edge is a diverse workforce that can offer clients the widest possible range of perspectives. One of the first tasks of the Firmwide Diversity Committee was to codify Goldman Sachs' commitment to diversity in one of the firm's fourteen Business Principles, which states in part, "In order for us to be successful, we must reflect the diversity of the communities and cultures that we serve...being diverse is not optional; it is what we must be." Goldman Sachs leadership recently intensified its efforts with the creation of the Office of Global Leadership and Diversity, which was established to direct the firm's diversity strategy and to translate its diversity commitments into specific actions. Led by Chairman and CEO, Hank Paulson, and President and COO, Lloyd Blankfein, the Committee is comprised of leaders from each of the firm's businesses and regions.

Concurrent with these broader diversity efforts, in 2001, a group of African-American professionals formed the Firmwide Black Network (FBN), to formalize what had previously been a grassroots effort to respond to the issues and concerns of African-American professionals at Goldman Sachs. The core objectives of the FBN were consistent with the firm's strategic diversity plan and focused on enhancing recruiting efforts, increasing the engagement, retention and professional development of African-American professionals, and creating new commercial opportunities within the African-American community.

To deepen their commitment to the junior population, in 2005, several senior leaders in the FBN sought to create a hands-on mentoring and coaching approach for entry level African American professionals. On September 23, 2005 they gathered to host 80 recently hired African American professionals from offices across the globe. Throughout the day, the facilitators and speakers provided participants with practical strategies on how to successfully navigate the firm, increased knowledge of their job functions and products, and an opportunity to build relationships with senior leaders. The goal of the program was simple: to present in an accelerated fashion, information and tools that would typically be gleaned over the course of months or years. The response from the participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Having created an outstanding model of mentoring and professional development, the FBN is exploring similar programming for "on-boarding" recently hired experienced African American professionals as well. As one of five employee affinity networks sponsored by Goldman Sachs, the FBN remains a critical part of the firm's mission to building and supporting a diverse workforce.

Lehman Brothers is a company that is committed to programming to combat bias and build trust, investing heavily in networks for minority employees. For example, the African-American network, Lehman Employees of African Descent (LEAD), has developed a series of seminars to assist members in their professional development, the next of which will be an interactive discussion with a panel of senior Lehman Brothers professionals to answer questions and provide resources to encourage further exploration of topics raised. For example, a seminar entitled, "Creating a Dynamic Career" addresses the following issues:

- Effectively building individual brand while operating in a team-oriented environment.
- Tactical tips to ensure initiative on the job is recognized by managers.
- Evaluating how actions are actually perceived by colleagues and/or clients (internal and external).

- Enhancing skills to become a more valuable contributor to the team and the firm.

Lehman network activities influence employee retention. A recent survey of Lehman networks revealed that more than 72 percent of LEAD employees agree that the network impacted their decision to remain at the firm, 100 percent felt LEAD helped them meet and form relationships internally that improved their ability to do day-to-day work

Further emphasizing the business imperative for embracing diversity through networks and mentoring programs, at Booz Allen Hamilton diversity is a way of doing business, with several innovative and effective programs to promote and maintain diversity within the company. All senior managers are required produce a plan for advancing diversity in their teams over the coming year. The units share what they have accomplished in the areas of recruiting, coaching and mentoring to promote diverse talent.

This 360-degree diversity assessment is just the tip of the iceberg for Booz Allen which also boasts several effective “forums.” The Multinational Forum promotes the company philosophy that “the ability to network among colleagues with a variety of cross-cultural personal and professional backgrounds” is a necessary part of having a productive organization. The forums aim to help with career development, as well as support a mentorship program and assist the Recruiting Services Team with creating a pool of diverse talent.

#### **Institutionalizing Diversity Forums at General Electric**

Companies such as General Electric are providing much-needed access to mentors and sponsors—and fostering leadership along the way—through affinity networks. At GE, the original African-American Forum was informal: managers came together on their own time and at their own expense to make contacts and build a network. It started with a number of African-American managers gathering together to study minority retention at other corporations, trying to learn what practices worked over the long-term and of those, which might work at GE. An annual national conference was launched and CEO Jack Welch was invited to attend. Afterwards, Welch called his executive team to task for telling him there were no qualified African-Americans for key positions, because he had just left a room full of them.

The African-American Forum’s initial mandate was narrow: demystify GE’s human resources policies and provide a setting where African-American employees could meet one another and provide a mentoring opportunity for minority managers. Since the start of that first affinity network, GE has added networks for women, Asian-Americans, and Hispanic-Americans. The African-American Forum now hosts an annual national meeting which draws nearly 1,400 people for three days of workshops and panels. GE’s chairman Jeff Immelt and other senior leadership attend.

GE is now integrating this network into its succession planning. Deborah Elam, GE’s manager of diversity and inclusive leadership said, “We have begun to do this by taking high-potential employees and placing them in leadership roles within the African-American Forum and other affinity networks. This helps them gain leadership experience and exposure to top executives who, in their turn, are encouraged to explore the special strengths and attributes of talented minority professionals in the corporation.” According to Elam, “This kind of reciprocal appreciation is particularly important in our global age.”

### **Provide Incentives for Minority Recruitment and Retention**

Policies and practices need teeth. Survey respondents and focus group participants emphasized the need to “walk the talk” and implement actual financial incentives to motivate managers. This requires sincere commitment at the CEO level.

- Seventy-one percent of minority businesswomen back the notion of requiring senior managers to monitor work assignments for young professionals so as to either prevent problems before they emerge or solve them quickly. Minority women in large corporations (73%) particularly support this idea.
- Seventy-one percent of minority businesswomen support the idea of evaluating managers on their track record in both recruiting and retaining minority talent and linking this evaluation to compensation packages. Hispanic women (72%) and young women (75%) are supportive of this measure.
- Seventy-eight percent of young African-American women—and 71 percent of minority businesswomen support the inclusion of recruiting roles in job descriptions and performance evaluations. Minority women in racially mixed workplaces are especially supportive of these policies (70% to 76%).
- Focus group participants strongly endorsed the idea of proactive minority recruitment—particularly with regard to lateral hires.

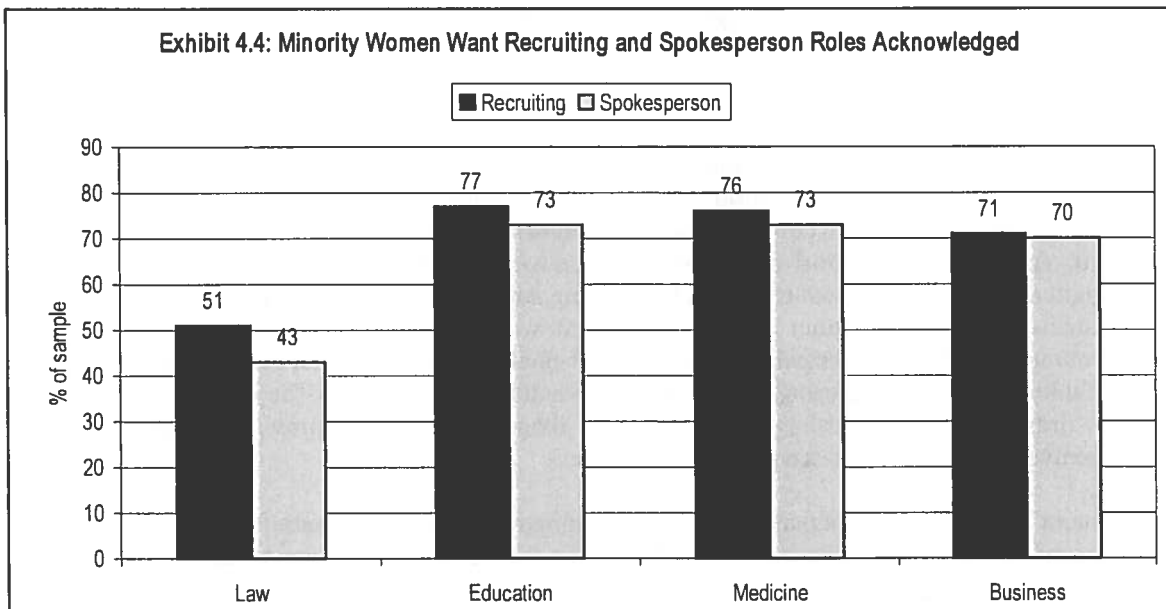
Such policy incentives were particularly important to Marie, a Wall Street professional coming back into the financial world after a few years doing client work. She wanted a company that not only had a diversity program, but a company that had a diversity program “with teeth.” As an African-American woman, she was very familiar with diversity initiatives that never seemed to amount to anything and diversity goals that were never evaluated past their inception. When Marie started work at Lehman Brothers, she was encouraged by the firm’s sizeable diversity bonus pool—an incentive that recognizes individual managers and teams for their innovative diversity initiatives. The fact that her new firm encouraged investment bankers to take diversity seriously by providing meaningful incentives was a source of reassurance for Marie.

General Electric is one company that has adopted innovative minority recruitment strategies. The company recognizes the powerful role traditionally African-American sororities play in the lives of its employees, representing robust networks of professional women who are leaders in various communities. Therefore, to strengthen the leadership pipeline for African-American women at its company, GE has partnered with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Through this partnership, known as Leadership Delta, high-achieving undergraduate African-American women pursuing degrees in math, science, or technology, are paired with African-American female executives both from GE and other companies who serve as mentors.

Through workshops and activities at a conference at GE’s training and development campus, the mentees work with the mentors to build personal leadership skills, and are expected to take what they learn back to their colleges and universities and present it to their local chapters. For the year following the conference, these powerful mentoring relationships and activities continue. As a result of this program, GE has extended full-time employment offers to a number of participants prior to graduation and Delta Sigma Theta has increased the leadership capacity of its members.

Another company that has implemented an innovative formal diversity recruitment and retention policy is Time Warner. At Time Warner, any hire at the vice president level or above must have a diverse slate of candidates. In 2002, the company created the role of executive connector to make sure that there are viable candidates available for consideration. The connector uses contacts in numerous social and professional circles to develop an extensive pool of diverse candidates. Since taking on this role as executive director of strategic sourcing and talent management, Debra Langford has been instrumental in the hiring of 65 minority senior executives. She travels frequently to events and conferences looking for talented high-potential candidates. Once Debra has facilitated a minority hire, she monitors his or her progress. She knows that, unlike their white counterparts, the individuals may not have preexisting relationships within the company, and are navigating the corporate environment for the first time. Debra organizes formal and informal gatherings of employees with similar backgrounds—for instance, a lunch for African-American fathers or a dinner for minority lawyers. Through these relationships, Time Warner, with Debra Langford in the lead, creates and nurtures a supportive corporate environment.

**Exhibit 4.4: Minority Women Want Recruiting and Spokesperson Roles Acknowledged**





## Conclusions

Recognizing and celebrating the invisible lives of professionals of color is enlightened self-interest in the best sense of the phrase. It allows corporations to tap into a rich array of transferable skills embedded in cultural capital, enabling minority professionals to reach their full potential and contributing to corporations' social responsibility platforms.

Over the last few years—propelled by factors as diverse as an aging population and the heightened threat of international terrorism—global companies have become newly committed to a more robust version of “corporate social responsibility.” Many leading-edge corporations are trying to figure out how to be more proactive in mitigating the risks of doing business. The end goal: achieving what Randy Starr of Booz Allen Hamilton has called “enterprise resilience.”<sup>11</sup>

Take, for example, the ways in which Dell has become involved in equipping youth for a digital economy—both at home and abroad. The Science and Engineering Ambassadors Programme (SETNET) in the UK encourages more young people to understand the opportunities that a science, engineering or technology-based career can offer them. Dell's Go For It Workshops introduce girls to career opportunities in IT.

Unilever has programs in many countries around the world—UK, Brazil, China, Ghana, Canada, South Africa and Mexico. In India, Unilever is taking a leading role in the creation of a world-class business school that will groom future generations of business leaders in Asia. The Nelson Mandela Scholarship program aims to improve the quality of leadership in South Africa through education and training by helping those from disadvantaged backgrounds reach their full potential, thereby bringing much-needed skills to the country.

The Cisco Systems Networking Academy Program operates over 10,000 academies in the US and in over 150 countries. A new initiative targets the world's “Least Developed Countries” in partnership with UNDP, USAID, the Peace Corps, other companies and NGOs.<sup>12</sup> This strategic partnership helps train students in LDCs for jobs in the Internet economy.

Time Warner, for example, works with MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership to raise awareness about the benefits of mentoring to adults and children around the country. In addition, they provide on-line resources and e-tool kits to enhance the mentoring experience and relationships. They also fund the National Educator Support Team (NEST), which aims to develop and retain new teachers in New York City schools. The company has decided both programs are good investments, because the pursuit of their respective missions creates a more positive business climate and a more effective workforce.

And Time Warner is not alone. In a recent publication, Jane Nelson, Director of the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative at the Kennedy School of Government, showcases some of the societal issues that have crested this new wave of corporate action: tackling bribery and corruption, creating access to HIV drugs, ameliorating climate change, providing education access for girls and improving the availability of clean water.<sup>13</sup>

All of these are worthy goals, of course, and at least some allow a company to align “community investment activity with core business competencies.” However, the number and variety of these initiatives are bewildering and critics worry that many are not

sustainable. How does a company sustain a commitment to inner-city schools in New York over the long haul?

That's where the link with invisible lives comes in. If companies were to ground social responsibility in the rich web of relationships and responsibilities minority professionals already routinely develop in their private lives, those platforms/initiatives would benefit enormously. Organically linked to the passions and value sets of employees, they would be much more likely to gain traction both inside the company, and in the wider community.

## Appendix

### Case Study of Managers: A Global Consumer Products Company

Many of our findings on cultural capital and the overload of care resonate in the international environment. In July 2005 we conducted a survey to explore the views of employees of diverse race and ethnicity within a multinational corporation that has extensive operations in the United Kingdom, India and South Africa. Our goal was to compare the experience of a group of Caucasian executives in the UK (male and female) with that of a group of multicultural executives in India and South Africa. The resulting data represents a first opportunity to gauge the cross-cultural usefulness of concepts such as cultural capital, family and community responsibility and workplace trust. At least in the Anglophone cultures surveyed, the categories have legs.

For a global corporation, homogeneity is not an option. Indeed, diversity is an economic necessity. Any company that wants to reach a broad range of consumers from women to baby boomers to Hispanics needs to hire a broad range of employees. For example, if Asian markets account for significant global value in sales, there are implications for company hiring practices—a multinational company should look like the world it serves. But that’s just the beginning. Once hired, employees have to be happy, engaged and fully present, or they won’t do their best work. This is the crux of the matter: a truly diverse organization isn’t just colorful; it’s cacophonous. It’s not just about skin tone, it’s about voices, lots of them, all together and all at once. Engaged employees are effective employees. The data gathered below shed some light on how engaged this corporation’s global employees are, what they share with their counterparts in American corporations, and how they differ from both Americans and each other.

### Survey Methodology

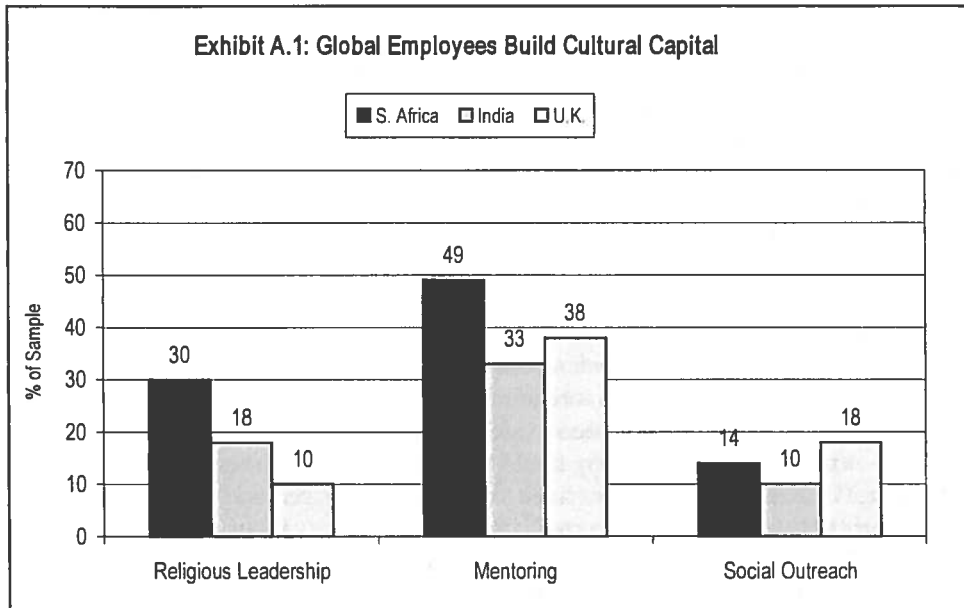
Targeting midlevel managers and senior executives, we reached 1,912 employees (422 in India, 223 in South Africa, 1,267 in the United Kingdom). Interviews averaged 16 minutes and were conducted online by Harris Interactive between July 6 and 19, 2005 using a slightly modified version of the questionnaire fielded in our U.S. survey.

### Cultural Capital

The survey reveals that like their American counterparts, global executives’ extracurricular pursuits build skills useful in the workplace. They lead their religious communities, serve as mentors and join professional associations. They tend to engage in less hands-on social outreach than Americans, however:

- *Religious leadership.* Thirty percent of South African executives participate in their houses of worship, compared to the 26 percent of African-American female professionals who are activist leaders in their churches, mosques or temples. In India, the number is 18 percent; in the United Kingdom, it’s 10 percent.
- *Mentoring.* Forty-nine percent of South African, 38 percent of British and 33 percent of Indian respondents serve as a godparent, tutor or mentor to a young person.
- *Professional associations.* Men (18%) are more likely than women (10%) to play a leading role in a professional organization, and of the three nationalities, South Africans are the most likely to do this (20%).
- *Hands-on social outreach.* While nearly one-third (31%) of American minority women volunteer in neighborhood schools, libraries, and shelters, ten percent of

executives in India, 14 percent in South Africa and 16 percent in the United Kingdom do such work.

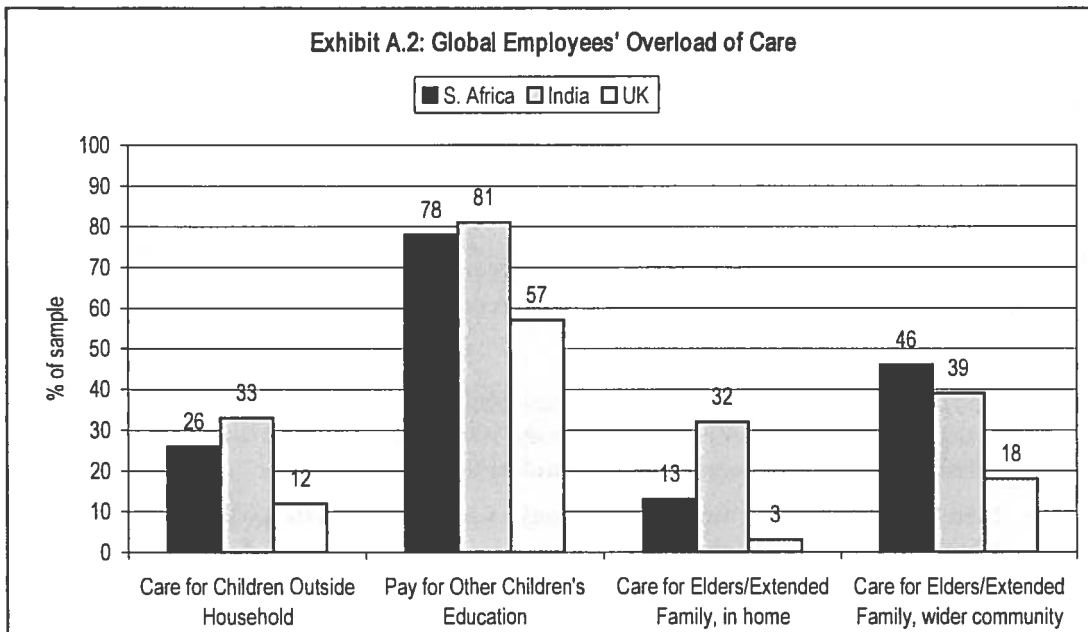


### An Overload of Care

Here, the most salient data reveals that multicultural executives in India and South Africa enjoy a special status in their countries that brings with it heavy responsibilities beyond the conventional family unit.

Conventional family structure for global executives in all three countries is roughly the same. Half of respondents worldwide have children under 18 living in their households. But British employees don't shoulder extra-familial burdens at the same rate as Indians or South Africans, who are more likely to do the following:

- *Take care of children outside their households.* Twelve percent of UK executives take on this responsibility, and almost a quarter of those that do so spend six hours or more per week on other children. In India and South Africa, more executives care for children outside the households: 33 percent in India and 26 percent in South Africa, and about half devote between one and five hours a week to these children.
- *Pay for other children's education.* In India, 81 percent pay for these children's education, and in South Africa 78 percent do, while in the United Kingdom, the figure is 57 percent.
- *Care for elders/extended family in home and community.* Almost a third of Indian respondents do this: 32 percent. In South Africa, the figure drops to 13 percent, but that's still far higher than the number in the United Kingdom, which is only three percent. Moreover, 84 percent of Indian respondents anticipate taking their parents in, should their parents become unable to take care of themselves.
- *Care for elders in extended family or wider community.* Almost half of South Africans take on this responsibility (46%), and 39 percent of Indians do. In the United Kingdom, it's 18 percent.



Foreign nationals or immigrants living in the United Kingdom also send money to charities or family in other, less developed countries. The UK leads the three countries in the percentage of executives who send money to family in other countries; 18 percent of all UK managers, 17 percent of South African and four percent of Indian executives do so. Of the UK respondents, 16 percent send money to charities, 14 percent to elderly parents and 11 percent to other immediate family.

One focus group participant we met, Mei, a native of Singapore now living in the United Kingdom feels a responsibility to help her parents in their retirement years. She knows that her parents don't need the money, or expect it, and that is part of the reason why she sends it back to Singapore. In her culture, traditionally, parents live with married children. Today, the expectation is that children will at least visit on weekends, but Mei can't: hence the checks. Mei's colleagues don't understand the concept of filial piety, and she doesn't understand why they don't understand. "It's in your education, it's in your upbringing. They [my parents] take care of me so I would like them to have more money to spend during their retirement.

The demands placed on successful business people often extend far beyond what their white counterparts contend with. For some, it means giving or lending money to relatives and friends; for others, it is making time to be an advisor. Maya, an executive in the United Kingdom and a focus group participant, finds that the need for guidance among those close to her—and often those not so close to her—is a tax on her time. She receives phone calls from family, friends and even friends of friends or friends of family asking for advice or asking her to give advice to their children. By virtue of her professional success, Maya is seen as the obvious source of worldly wisdom: "It's a much more demanding expectation [than giving money] because they will say to you, 'Well, you're the one with experience.' Or you get the odd call that someone cannot decide which college course to take and wants you to give career counseling. You are put in a spot where you are by default the role model because you've got somewhere."

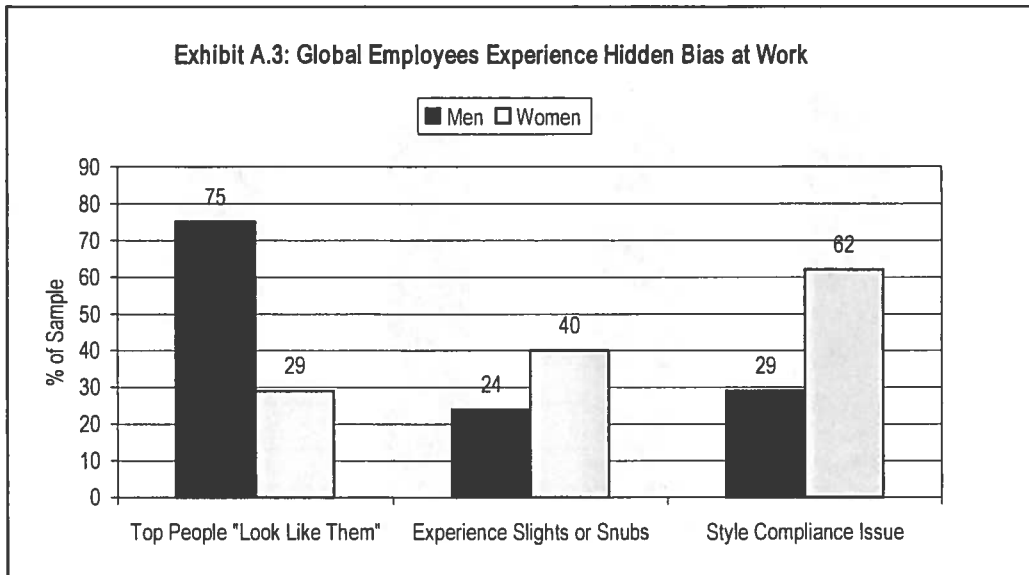
The responsibility of sending money home is borne out of necessity in addition to love and solidarity. Focus group participant Beatriz, an expatriate from an African nation in the United Kingdom, sends home 50 percent of her salary. She explains, “I don’t send the money home because I feel like it’s an obligation or because I am in a position to do it. It’s simply because I am one of very few people in my family who is actually employed. My country has about a 30 percent unemployment rate, so it’s a necessity.”

The people who constitute Beatriz’ extended family, and benefit from the money she sends home, range from a cousin’s child orphaned by AIDS to close friends with whom she grew up. “It just sometimes feels never-ending. It stretches out in ways that you can’t understand.”

### **Hidden Bias**

Employees feel that hidden and overt bias and an inability to share their lives with their supervisors is a problem, but more people in South Africa and India feel that way than do people in the United Kingdom, and more women feel that way than men:

- Men (75%) are nearly three times as likely as women (29%) to say they see people who look like them at a top job.
- Women are almost twice as likely as men to say they’ve experienced slights or snubs at the workplace, by a margin of 40 percent to 24 percent. Almost half of the South African respondents said they had been insulted at work based on their race, gender, ethnicity or religion; 21 percent of British and Indian respondents felt slighted.
- Employees worldwide, especially women, are grappling with “style compliance”—the need to fit into a corporate culture dominated by white men. More than twice as many women as men say they are facing this problem: 62 percent to 29 percent. But whites (40%) share these concerns almost equally with non-white employees (41%).
- Of the three nationalities, South Africans are most worried about style compliance (49%), but managers in the United Kingdom are more focused on it than Indians are, 42 percent to 28 percent. The most common style compliance issue is the equation of a quiet speaking style with a lack of leadership potential.
- A substantial majority of global executives worldwide feel their lives are invisible to their employers: 67 percent of Indians, 65 percent of South Africans and 59 percent of managers in the United Kingdom. Almost half of Indian managers don’t trust their employer with information about their private lives; 43 percent of employees in South Africa and 35 percent of employees in the United Kingdom share this distrust.
- Experience a dearth of mentors that look like them. Twenty-nine percent of minority female professionals lack mentors who can help them navigate these hidden biases.
- For a significant number of global employees, these hidden biases cause them to consider quitting: 45 percent of Indians, 40 percent of UK employees and 38 percent of South Africans.



**What Can the Corporation Do?**

**Help Build Human Capital**

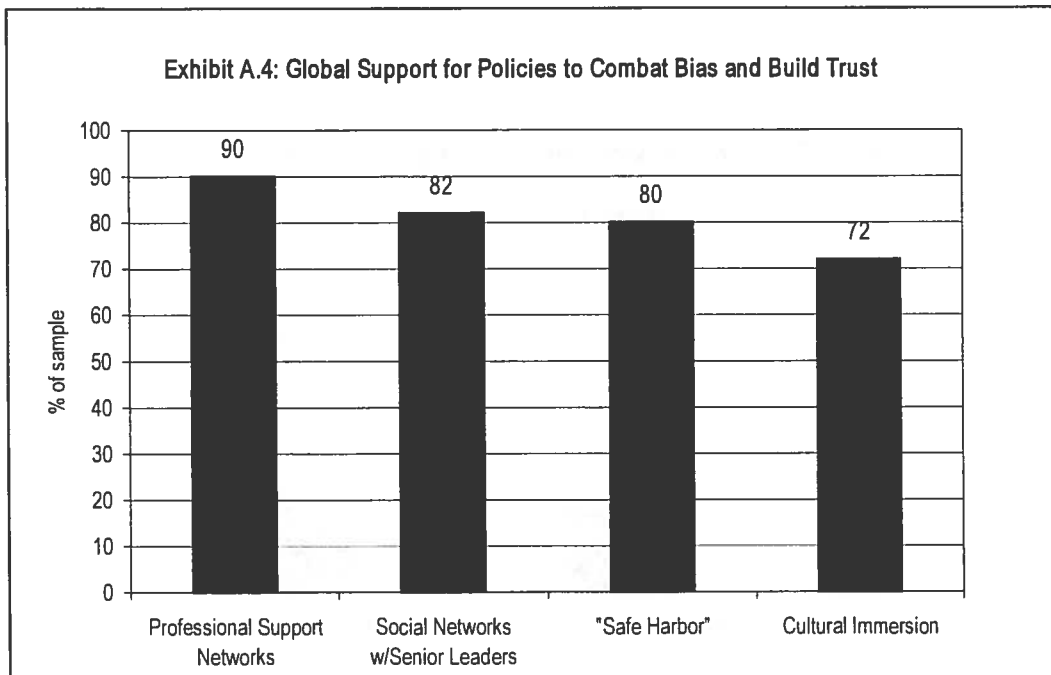
Of a menu of options, including everything from elder-care services to a fitness facility to an employee stock plan, global employees in all three countries agreed tuition assistance was the top priorities. The company must also, however, consider its different cultural contexts when it thinks about employee programming.

- The consensus in favor of tuition assistance is stunning: 100 percent of South Africans and 97 percent of employees in India and the United Kingdom favor this program.
- Seventy percent of multicultural employees across the board say they want leadership training.
- Almost half want the company to sponsor community service: 49 percent of Indians, 47 percent of South Africans and 46 percent of UK employees. This compares with relatively lackluster support for such ideas as sports, the next most popular option, with 21 percent support in the United Kingdom.

**Combat Bias and Build Trust**

South Africans in particular want programming designed to root out hidden bias, but such programs are popular among the employees in the three countries.

- Ninety-six percent of South African employees, 92 percent of Indian and 89 percent of employees in the United Kingdom would be in favor of cultural sensitivity training programs to challenge and break down stereotypes.

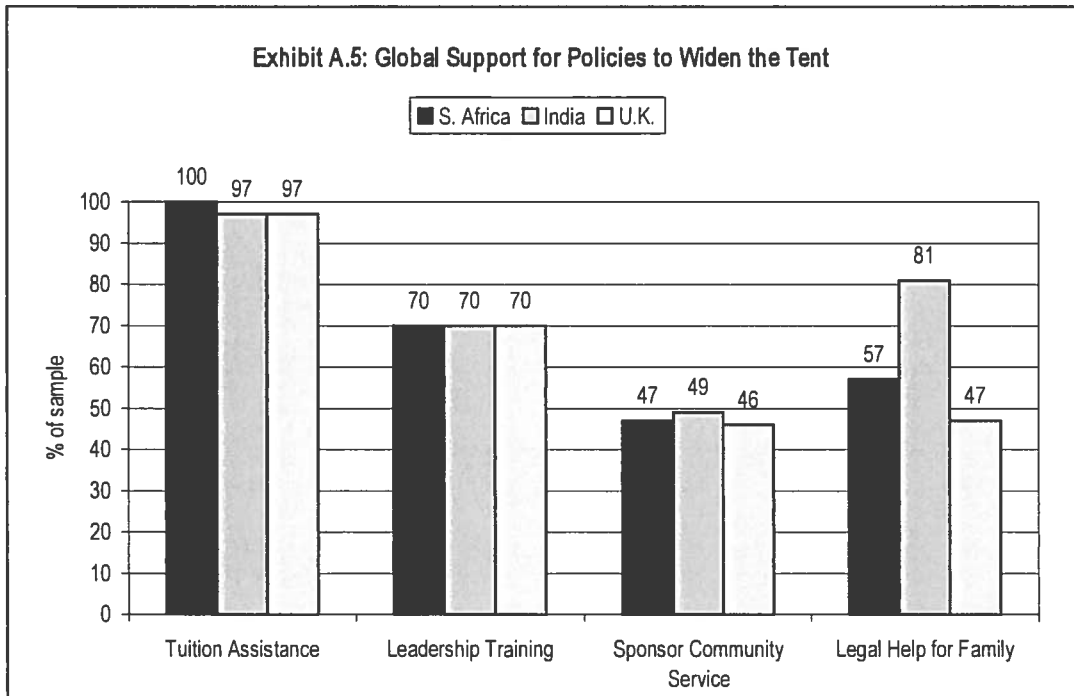


### **Widen the Tent**

Given the corporation's global reach, it's essential that the leadership consider the benefits needs of employees in different countries. Multinational and American managers face the same challenge: thinking outside the box of the nuclear family.

- More Indians favor paid leave for elder care (86%); they also favor financial assistance for old age homes (80%) and for taking an elderly parent into the household (75%).
- More South Africans favor tuition assistance for extended family (87%); 80 percent of Indians and 55 percent of United Kingdom employees would also like this program.
- Indians also favor company assistance to employees when family members need legal help (81%), but South Africans (57%) and United Kingdom employees (47 %) support the idea less strongly.
- In general, Indians and South Africans seek more benefits from the company than employees in the United Kingdom. British support for programs other than flexible working hours and paid leave for elder and extended family care hovers in the fifty percent range, while for Indians and South Africans it's about 20 percentage points higher.





### Sponsor Networks and Find Mentors

Networking and mentorship initiatives enjoy broad support

- Ninety percent of employees want professional support networks to ensure the availability of mentors from diverse backgrounds.
- Eighty-nine percent favor the formation of an internal team, underwritten by the company, to break down stereotypes around style compliance.
- Company-sponsored programs that encourage social networks with senior leadership would be a big plus, agree 82 percent of employees worldwide.
- Eighty percent feel the company should create a “Safe Harbor,” where employees could discuss personal issues anonymously.

### Provide Incentives for Minority Retention (and Recruitment)

Again, broad consensus and differences of opinion coexist on the subject of incentives.

- Seventy-eight percent of global employees want performance evaluations to include a measure of competence in dealing with different cultures, but that figure masks a spread of 17 percent in support for the idea. Ninety percent of Indians and 88 percent of South Africans favor it, but only 73 percent of UK employees feel the same way.
- Likewise, South Africans (78%) and Indians (77%) are more receptive to the idea of allowing subordinates to evaluate managers by their track records in developing female and multicultural talent. In the United Kingdom, support for this practice drops to 60 percent.

- The company should require senior managers to monitor work assignments for young professionals, according to 90 percent of employees. Only 71 percent of American minority businesswomen felt this way.
- A cultural immersion program for senior executives, sponsored by the company, would be a good idea, according to 72 percent of employees.

## The Hidden Brain Drain Task Force

“The Hidden Brain Drain: Women and Minorities as Unrealized Assets” was launched in February 2004. Spearheaded by Sylvia Ann Hewlett (Columbia University), Carolyn Buck Luce (Ernst & Young) and Cornel West (Princeton University), this multiyear private sector task force targets an urgent challenge of our age: how to retain and advance highly qualified women and minorities, many of whom are opting out of mainstream careers. A recent Catalyst study shows that 33 percent of women with MBA degrees are not in full-time jobs, compared with 5 percent of their male peers.<sup>14</sup>

United by an understanding that the full utilization of the talent pool is at the heart of competitive advantage and economic success, the 30 global corporations that comprise the Task Force have committed to a multi-year effort to determine how to nurture female and minority talent over the long haul. “We intend moving beyond the ‘one-size-fits all’ model and explore the nuances that require more fine-tuned approaches across industries and sectors,” says Carolyn Buck Luce, the Task Force chair.

Members of the Task Force share models of best practice and aim to develop a new generation of policies and practices. In addition, these senior executives are committed to driving change within their own organizations.

The task force starts its deliberations at a time when economic conditions and demographic shifts underscore the importance of its mission. “A large part of the potential talent pool is either female or minority,” says Sylvia Ann Hewlett, founder of the Center for Work-Life Policy, the sponsoring organization. “With the professional labor market tightening, it behooves us to give serious attention to these matters of retention and reattachment.” Cornel West sees the work of the Task Force as critical in constructing a more integrated, diverse and democratic society. In Professor West’s words, “these issues are central to what the democratic experiment is all about. If America can meet the challenge and tap into the long run creative and productive energies of 60 percent of our fellow citizens, this nation will flower and flourish.”

In March 2005 the task force successfully completed its first cycle of research. See “Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success,” published by the *Harvard Business Review* in the form of an article and a report. The second cycle of research, “Leadership in Your Midst: Tapping the Hidden Strengths of Minority Executives,” will be published by the *Harvard Business Review* in November 2005. In 2006 the Task force will target two research areas: “Re-Engineering Extreme Jobs: Aligning work to tap the full potential of a diverse talent pool in a global marketplace,” and “Pipelines, Preparedness and Progressions: The advancement of women in science, engineering and technology.”

The first annual Hidden Brain Drain Summit will take place in New York in June 2006.

### **Task Force Membership:**

*Co-Chairs:* Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc; Ernst & Young, General Electric Company; Goldman Sachs; Johnson & Johnson; Lehman Brothers; Time Warner

*Steering Group:* American Express; BP plc; British Telecommunications; Cisco Systems; Coors Brewing Company; Eversheds LLP; Moody’s Corporation; The New York Times Company; PepsiCo; Pfizer Inc.; Pitney Bowes Inc.; ProLogis; Sears Holdings Corporation; Sullivan & Cromwell LLP; Unilever plc

*Members:* Alcoa Inc.; Citigroup; Credit Suisse First Boston; General Mills; Intel Corporation; Novartis; UBS; White & Case LLP; Xerox Corporation

*Advisors:* Ella L. Bell (Tuck School of Business), Anna Fels (Psychiatrist and Author), Ilene H. Lang (Catalyst), Anwar Shaikh (New School University), Leslie Silverman U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), Laura D'Andrea Tyson (London Business School)

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