

# Restaurant Business<sup>®</sup>

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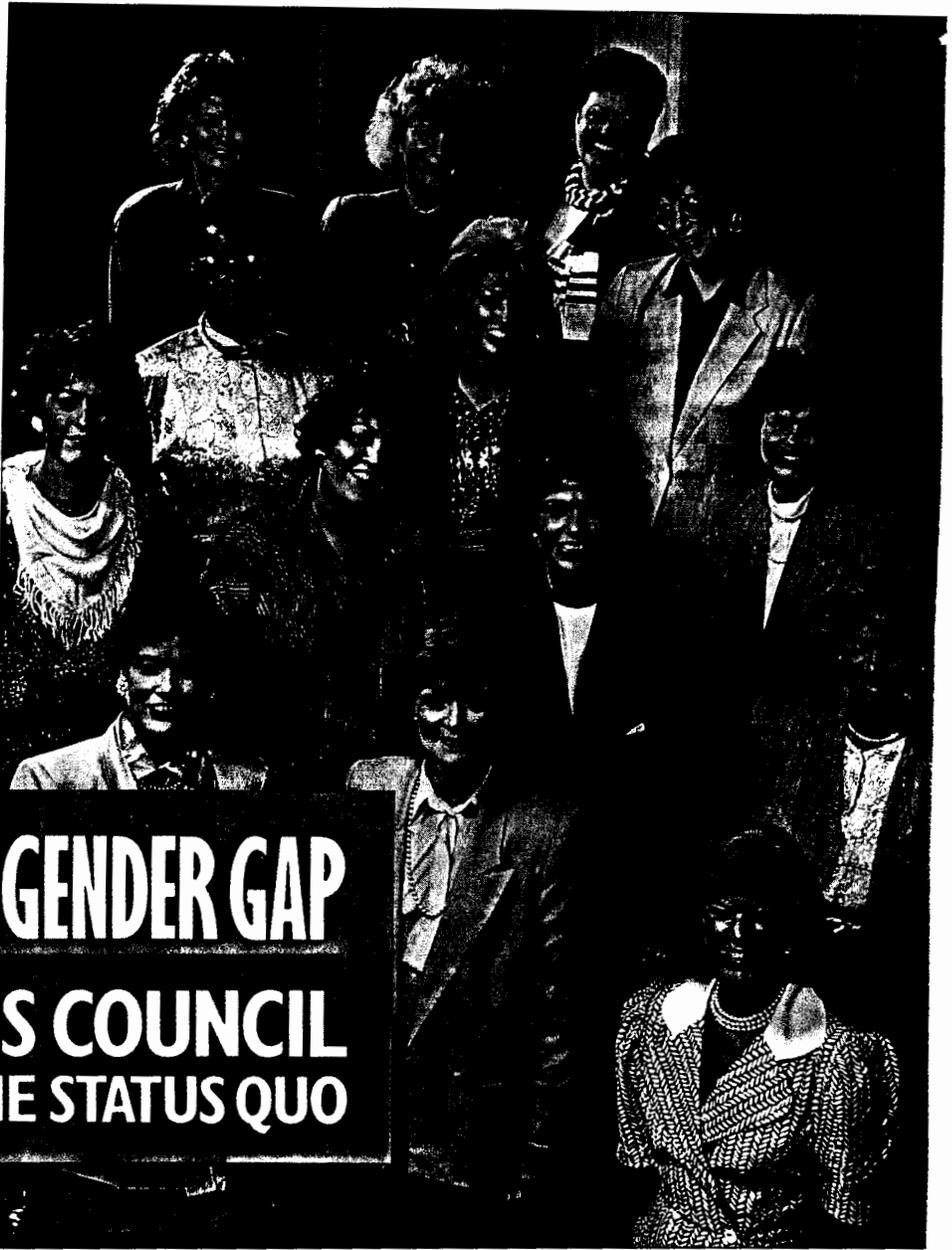
## BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP

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## BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP RB WOMEN'S COUNCIL CHALLENGES THE STATUS QUO

Within the foodservice industry, women represent a tremendous pool of underutilized talent: Although women account for nearly two thirds of the employment force, only a small percentage make it up the ladder to executive and ownership positions. Recently, *RB* huddled with a dozen women who have achieved that status to examine the subtle barriers to advancement that women still face. Their insights were both heartfelt and heartening, their message a challenge to the industry: Women can become a significant force in management, if only the industry will realize their potential.

*Researched and written by James Peters*

*Top row, l. to r.: Jo-Linda Thompson; Nancy Buboltz; Marcia Harris; Kathleen Talbert. Second row from top, l. to r.: Roberta Jones; Karen Settlemyer; Jenene Garey. Third row from top, l. to r.: Joan Lang; Leslee Reis; Laura Hayden; Toni Knorr. Bottom row, l. to r.: Karen MacNeil; Lenora Bowen; Edna Morris.*

It has been said that the greatest loss in life is that of human potential. For women in the work force that sentiment has a particularly unsettling effect. Women account for nearly two thirds of all foodservice workers and about half of the graduates of foodservice management programs. Yet, go to trade meetings or review the rosters of corporate officers among foodservice concerns and you'll soon discover that women continue to be a minority in senior-level company management.

This spring, *Restaurant Business* tried to find out why by hosting the Women's Council, a roundtable discussion of the issues women in foodservice face. In May, 14 participants—all of them women—gathered in Chicago to address the challenges, obstacles, and opportunities facing women today. Each

Pizza Hut Inc., Wichita, KS;

- Toni Knorr, corporate director of food and beverage, Hyatt Hotels Corporation, Chicago;

- Karen MacNeil, *RB* columnist and Women's Council moderator;

- Edna Morris, vice president of human resources, Hardee's Food Systems, Rocky Mount, NC;

- Leslee Reis, owner/chef, Cafe Provencal, Evanston, IL;

- Karen Settlemyer, Restaurant Enterprises Group, Costa Mesa, CA;

- Kathleen Talbert, director, French Culinary Institute, New York City; and

- Jo-Linda Thompson, general counsel, California Restaurant Association, Sacramento.

Also attending the council were *RB*'s executive editor, Joan Lang, and associate food editor, Roberta Jones.

All these women have, in their own

rector position at Creative Gourmets. "I came into my present position, and faced for the first time in my life the challenge of people questioning my credibility, which I had never doubted for a moment," said Bowen.

**COMMITMENT AND ENERGY.** Being the company's first woman director, Bowen said she initially faced some resistance, but added that hard work has helped her to overcome all that. "I decided to continue with the same kind of commitment, energy, and conscientiousness that I had shown throughout my career," she told other roundtable members. Gender "has now become a nonissue because of my performance and the example I set for others. The credibility is now there."

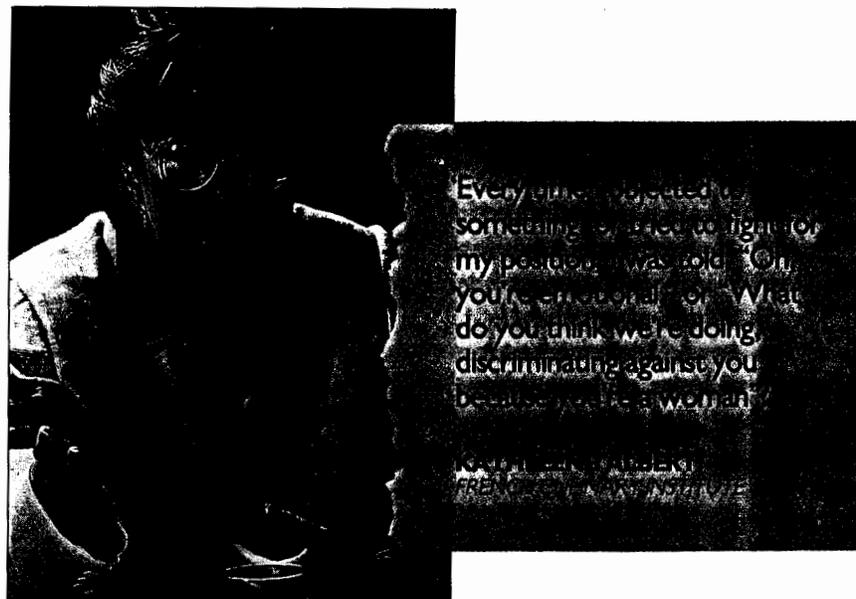
Oftentimes, credibility doesn't come easily for women seeking high office. Once the only woman manager in an international hotel chain, the French Culinary Institute's Talbert recalled having to resign. "Every time I objected to something," she said, "or tried to fight for my position, I was told, 'Oh, you're emotional,' or 'What do you think we're doing, discriminating against you because you're a woman?'"

"I knew that if I stayed, I would stagnate and never get promoted above my present position," added Talbert. "It was a personal challenge. Do I stay? Do I try and really fight through what is an impossible situation, to change what is really an ingrained attitude with people who have been with the company for 30 years? I chose to move out. I don't regret it, but I am sorry that the company wasn't a little more forward thinking."

## THE DEMOGRAPHICS

A relative newcomer to the ranks of management, Pizza Hut's Hayden observed that "corporate America is really starting to struggle with both two-income families and moving people. People are less mobile today, and wives (or husbands) are less willing to give up their jobs to move for their spouses."

In today's tight labor market, neither foodservice nor most other industries can afford to ignore these kinds of societal changes. Few families in the U.S. can exist comfortably on one income, and few companies can function without female employees. The number of working women has increased steadily since 1950, with 53.5% of all women aged 20 and older now in the labor force. In the meantime, the overall percentage of working men has actually been declining for more than 20 years—from 86% in 1960 to 78%



Every time I objected to something, or tried to fight for my position, I was told, "Oh, you're emotional." What do you think we're doing, discriminating against you because you're a woman?"

KATHLEEN TALBERT  
FRENCH CULINARY INSTITUTE

was from a different sector of the industry, and each one had a different opinion regarding where women stand in foodservice today.

The participants in this unique women's council were:

- Lenora Bowen, vice president of support services, Creative Gourmets Inc., Boston;

- Nancie Buboltz, director of catering, Minneapolis Radisson Plaza Hotel;

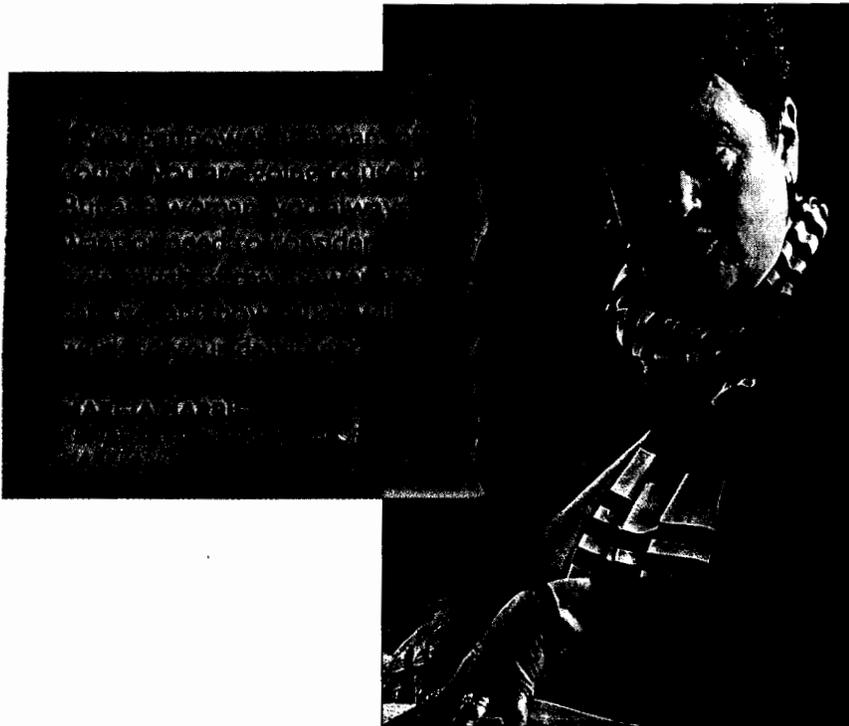
- Jenene Garey, associate professor, New York University Center for Food and Hotel Management, New York;

- Marcia Harris, executive vice president, Restaurant Association of Maryland, Baltimore;

- Laura Hayden, personnel director,

way, begun paving the way for future generations of foodservice professionals. But not without difficulty or personal sacrifice. "I remember waking up one day and saying to myself, I wasn't a person, I was a company," recalled Settlemyer of Restaurant Enterprises Group. "I didn't have any friends, and it has been a constant challenge for me to make myself step back, do my job, yet still be a person."

Despite demonstrated competence, many women say they must still vigorously defend their positions in a male-dominated world. Creative Gourmets' Bowen, once a college professor of mathematics and owner of a country inn and restaurant, recalled first assuming a di-



in 1980, and slightly less than that today. In 1983, white male workers became a minority in the labor force for the first time in U.S. history.

The Labor Department predicts women will account for two thirds of labor's growth between now and 1995. Because of this, children will play an increasing role in workers' lifestyles. In 1986, two out of five women workers had children under 18; one of five working mothers was a single parent.

**ADDED RESPONSIBILITIES.** For women managers who have children, the added responsibilities create even greater challenges. Radisson's Buboltz worked her way through the ranks during her 12 years with the hotel chain. When offered a catering manager position that required her to move to a new city, Buboltz, a mother, hesitated, then eventually accepted the opportunity.

"Moving with my children to a new job, and being accepted by my new supervisors was a real challenge," Buboltz told other roundtable participants. "I knew I could do it, but my children did not want to move. I also had to convince my supervisors. It took about six months before I could institute what I felt should be done in the catering department."

In addition to demands brought on by family, the labor force will be older by the year 2000. Workers between the ages of 20 and 34 will decline by 4.6 million, while those between 45 and 54 will increase by 12.8 million. Half of working women in 2000 will be between 35 and 54.

Eating and drinking places, the nation's largest private employer, will generate 2.5 million new jobs by the year 2000, about 10% of all the net increase in jobs for all industries. These changes indicate important forces affecting the foodservice industry, specifically in providing child care (only 0.03% of U.S. employers currently do so), health insurance, and retirement plans.

Beyond filling staff positions and providing workers with benefits, the industry's greatest challenge will be breaking the psychological and social barriers

women face in entering management.

Despite gains made by women, the work environment has in many ways failed to adapt to the country's changing family structure. However, economic and social forces are making the situation difficult to continue this way. The pressure for change isn't only coming from women. Men, who've also had to adapt to social change, are demanding that their wives earn more money, that better child care be made available, and that they themselves have more time to spend with their families.

"Employees today want to know what the schedule is and what the hours are," said Reis of Cafe Provencal. "It isn't that they're afraid to work hard. They just want to protect some semblance of quality of life. They want to make sure they have some nights off to be with their families."

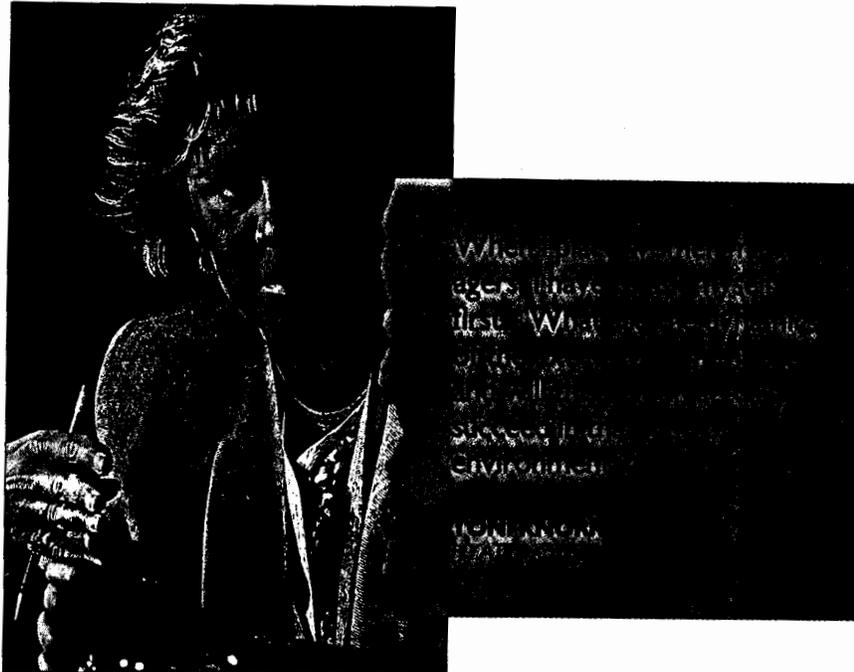
### COMPETENCE VS. GENDER

Time and again, women have demonstrated their competence in the foodservice workplace—performing tasks, achieving objectives, and introducing new ideas. But, according to most roundtable participants, they've had to work harder to get the same recognition as men, and usually for less pay. In addition, women in two-parent families still bear the heaviest burden of child-care and household duties, while single mothers must carry the full weight of these responsibilities.

Roundtable participants acknowledged that they've often been forced to

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prove their competence beyond the degree men are required to. Hayden faced this when considered for a promotion requiring she negotiate with labor unions. "They thought I was sweet, and there were discussions such as 'Are you personally tough enough to deal with these union stewards, Laura, and can you take these men on?'"

**THE ONLY WOMAN.** Hardee's Morris said she faced the challenge of being the only woman in management. According to Morris, male reaction to her presence went something like this: "We are letting someone very different, a woman, into this inner sanctum where we sit and make decisions and set policy."

As far as working *for* a woman, Reis summed it up best. "I am sure there are some people who don't like working for me, but I would hope it's because they think I am too tough and not because I am a woman." When hiring, Reis said she considers competence, not gender. "I don't just mean job competence, but humanitarian competence as well," she told roundtable members. "I look at the whole picture of the person. I do not think I have ever hired one person because I thought I should have one more man or one more woman."

Roundtable participants generally agreed that gender isn't an issue for them when they themselves evaluate employees. But, Talbert felt the group wasn't being realistic about gender's true impact on hiring decisions.

"Let's be realistic," said Talbert em-

phatically. "Gender figures into it, because I see it when I go to place our student graduates. I have chefs tell me they don't take women in the kitchen. They say, 'You are going to ruin the spirit of my kitchen if you send me a woman because then the other chefs aren't going to pay attention to their work, they are going to be chasing after her.'"

**INVITED GUESTS.** To overcome their resistance, Talbert said she invites the chefs to be judges at graduation exercises. "Not surprisingly," she added, "40% to 50% of our graduating classes are women, as are many of the best students. They score the highest on exams, they win many of the prizes for creative

menus. When these old-guard chefs see this and then hear from other chefs that a woman worked out very well, attitudes start to change."

Talbert does not, however, place women chefs with the really staunch chauvinists, because, she insisted, "they are going to push her until she breaks and then they will say: 'See!'"

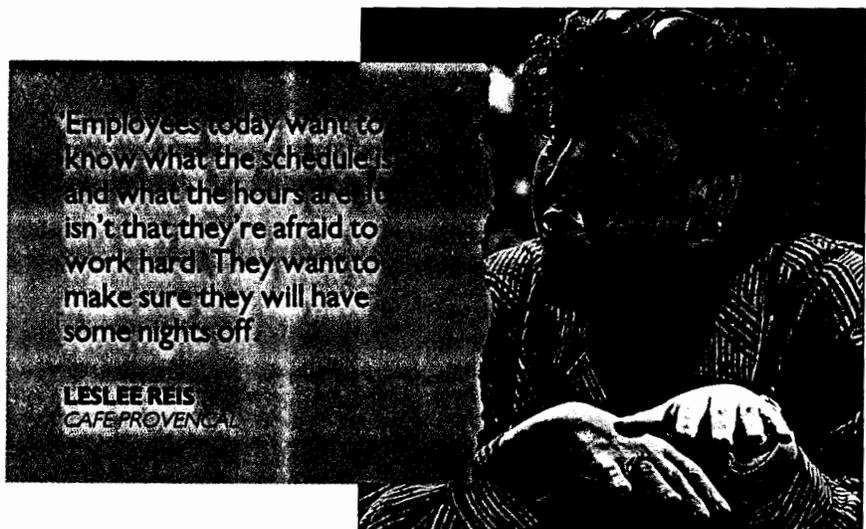
Hyatt's Knorr agreed with Talbert's analysis. "When I place women managers, I have to ask, 'What are the dynamics of the executive committee and will this person actually succeed in that environment?'" said Knorr.

Another fear of senior management, according to roundtable participants, is that women are more likely than men to leave a job to pursue a family. In reality, however, studies have shown that senior-level males remain with a company only 3.5 years on average.

## GETTING SHUT OUT

Competence can be classified into two categories: formal and informal. Formal competency is the compilation of education, experience, and skills, while informal competency is gained through less structured systems, often characterized as the "old boy network." Access to this particular ladder to the top is often denied women, who say they're generally excluded from golf and other social events—where business relationships tend to be galvanized.

"There are ways to shut you out in a very subtle fashion, and I used to attend a lot of food and beverage area meetings where I was the only woman," noted Talbert. "We would talk business and that was all fine and good, and I was there on equal footing. But at night, they went



out on the town. This is where all those little tight-knit alliances happen."

**INFORMAL NETWORK.** In many cases, senior managers have wives who don't work and who accompany them on business trips. Spouse programs not only provide entertainment for traveling spouses, but also an opportunity for information-gathering about coworkers. A professional woman is less likely to have a nonworking spouse who will travel with her. As a result, she can often be excluded from this informal network.

Some of these informal barriers to women are beginning to crumble, however. The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to uphold a New York City law banning discrimination at many private clubs is expected to precipitate similar laws in other cities.

What's most compelling about such developments isn't the legal pressure imposed upon club members, but, rather, their own changing attitudes. Many changes have occurred through enlightened self-interest, especially among club members who themselves have career-conscious daughters.

In light of these changing social norms, young women entering the food-service industry have taken on a new air of self-determination, according to some roundtable members. Talbert believes some of these women have lost sight of the struggles of women just one generation ahead of them. "I think the younger women coming up have a greater sense of confidence, and say 'Of course I can do it,'" she said. "They look upon women in our position and say, 'What battles?'"

## POWER VS. PRESENCE

"Human nature never will part from power," observed Patrick Henry, one of our country's founders. "Look for an example of a voluntary relinquishment of power from one end of the globe to another—you will find none."

MacNeil said that, though women have become a presence in the industry, there's "a difference between being a presence and being a power. Having made a presence, you felt like the power was assumed because you knew that you had the intelligence and power you need; yet you find that nobody else wanted to give that power away."

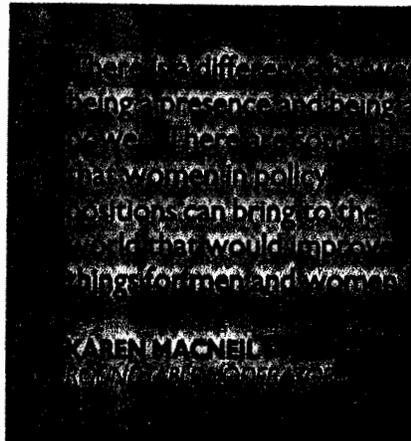
Women are, in fact, a growing presence in the nation's more powerful managerial positions. The proportion of women in all executive, administrative, and managerial jobs, including entry- and middle-level posts, went from about 20% in 1972 to almost 34% in 1984. Women, in

fact, account for more than 30% of business and law school graduates today.

**NEW EXPERIENCE.** The discussion of power dominated a substantial portion of *RB's* Women's Council. Having power in the business world is a relatively new experience for most women, and Hayden isn't sure that all women feel comfortable with it. "It is an uncomfortable feeling when you get in a room full of executives and they are all men, and you are perceived as being sweet and wonderful," said Laura Hayden, Pizza Hut personnel director. "I believe it is a psychological barrier you must overcome to feel com-

have the freedom to use power and to be themselves in whatever position they are in. I have seen too many people who are trying to emulate what they see as a power personality or behave in a way that is unnatural for them. You give up too much if you are trying to be powerful and develop a power persona."

Despite their progress in mid-level management, women are still noticeably absent in executive suites across the land. Only eight out of every 1,000 employed women hold high-level executive or managerial jobs, and women occupy only 3% of the 16,000 seats on the boards



fortable with that presence and be able to do something with that power."

Harris of the Restaurant Association of Maryland questioned whether men and women handle power the same way. "If you get power as a male, of course you use it," she told her fellow roundtable members. "But as a woman, you always want or need to consider how much of it you can use, and how much will work to your detriment. You have seen the situations where they say, 'He is powerful,' while, 'She is abrasive.'"

"Women question what other people think," added Settlemyer. "If men see an opportunity, they just go and get it. Women are much more detail-oriented and can see the big picture better than men can. But maybe we step back too far, and by not rushing ahead we do not seize the opportunity."

Of course, wanting power and having it are often different things. Reis believes it's important that "everybody

of the country's 1,000 largest corporations.

"The 'guys,' so to speak, are relatively young," noted Hyatt's Knorr. "They are only a few years older than I am, but I feel that I will probably have to go back to the field and start the climb through general manager jobs if I want to advance further in my career. There are very few women in operations, while there are a lot in personnel and other administrative positions. I believe this is a barrier to women."

Since many CEOs come from the operations side of business—and, since women managers are indeed more represented in personnel, product development, accounting, and other administrative positions—women's ascent to the CEO's office is made very difficult. The foodservice industry is no exception, but the situation is beginning to change.

In a separate interview, Jim L. Peter-

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son, president and chief executive officer of Whataburger Inc., and current president of the National Restaurant Association, said his company still doesn't have a woman officer. But, he added, "Women represent 42% of the managers, and the company is developing a climate and developing the necessary steps to assist female employees to feel more a part of the progressive career ladder." Peterson echoes the perspective of many male leaders in the industry. "It has only been during the past 20 years that women have been looking at work as a career, and they seek more enrichment from their careers than ever before."



trust to communicate and translate to them what is really happening in the larger world with people they do not often interact with," said Thompson. "I have to get them to understand what is happening, and then get them to adopt a solution I formulate. Beyond this, the greatest challenge is getting the legislature and our members together and to have the lawmakers agree with us."

## THE MENTOR FACTOR

"All of my superiors are men, and it is sometimes a challenge to find women to emulate," said Hayden. "A woman needs role models, and they are not there at the

female. I believe we are dealing with generation and age differences."

Morris described a man who chose to work in her department as a means of furthering his own career. Working with someone well connected in the company was high on the employee's wish list, regardless of the mentor's sex. "He worked with me for nine months, and respected me," said Morris. "He is older than I am, but he really thought much more about the credibility of people and what he thinks he can learn from them and how they can help."

**DEBATING MENTORSHIP.** There is some debate regarding whether or not mentorship can be formalized in the workplace. At Pizza Hut, a formal mentorship program is currently being developed at the corporate office for minorities and women. With the Pizza Hut mentor program, new managers are assigned to a neutral third party who serves as a mentor. Primarily, this person serves as a guiding light, a person to give advice, guidance, and feedback. After assessing the new manager, he or she is matched with an appropriate mentor according to personality, information needs, and career path.

Elmont of Creative Gourmets does not agree that a mentor can be created, however. He believes that this type of relationship is special, and only evolves naturally. "A mentor is another word for a good supervisor," says Elmont. "Sometimes a relationship develops that is exceptional, but this is not a conscious decision by the mentor."

Whether the result of a formal program or a natural outgrowth of people working closely together, mentors can assist women in advancing within an organization—in gaining power. Women who have made it to mid-level management positions often report feeling organizationally powerless. The behavior of other managers can contribute to the powerlessness of women in management. Being patronizingly overprotective by putting her in a "safe job"—not giving her enough to do to prove herself, and not suggesting her for high-risk, visible assignments—a male manager may mask a fear of being associated with a woman should she fail.

Men, and increasingly women, who assume the role of mentor to women, do assume a risk. While a new male manager who fails is seen as "just learning the ropes," a female manager in the same position is often seen as not being able to "cut the mustard." By being a sponsor of the woman, a mentor becomes guilty by

I came into my present position and was given the first time in my life the challenge of... questioning my... while I had never doubted... for the moment.

LENORA BOWEN  
CREATIVE GOURMETS

Stephen Elmont, president of Creative Gourmets, concurs. "We are a speck in history," he said, in an interview. "Women only came into the 'career industry' in the 1970s. It's not a gender issue; it's more an attitudinal problem."

Elmont believes there are no barriers once a person has demonstrated competency. With women accounting for 70% of his management staff, Elmont has learned that women perform as well as their male counterparts. He adds that, "when a woman has knowledge, she is more comfortable in delivering it. Women, by and large, are sophisticated in their ability to communicate."

Thompson, general counsel to the California Restaurant Association, spends most of her time communicating. "I have to communicate to our board, which represents all sectors of the foodservice industry, and I have to gain enough credibility and enough of their confidence and

top levels."

New York University's Garey added, "If people believe a goal is achievable, there is always more than one way to get where you are going if you have some direction. I believe it is important to have people whom you can model yourself after. If you only see men in a setting, then you begin to think 'Maybe this isn't something that is obtainable.'"

Until recently, women have had no choice but to turn to men as their mentors. However, subtle social and sexual pressures can make women feel uncomfortable in these relationships.

Bowen said that she has assumed the role of mentor to both men and women. "I find myself nurturing and coaching them to have a stronger sense of self with respect to their areas of responsibility," she explained. "I am really finding that the younger generations accept me as a mentor, whether they are male or



Corporate America is really struggling with both two-income families and moving people. People are less mobile today, and wives or husbands are less willing to give up their jobs to move for their spouses.

LAURA HAYDEN  
PIZZA HUT

association if she does not perform well.

### BALANCE OF LIFE

"Something is going to happen in California within 20 months on child care," predicts Thompson. "I believe the crisis in this country is going to be a financial crisis, and it is happening right now. Governments are out of money. So what they are doing is assigning employers responsibility, and they are going to charge employers for programs that we all think of as government programs. The question is who is taking care of the kids and who is going to pay for it?"

Any discussion about women in management inevitably shifts to issues of parental leave, child care, health insurance, and wages. The relationship between career, family, and personal achievement is the subject of an increasing number of scientific, business, social, and political debates. While the problems surrounding these issues affect everyone—both male and female—it is usually the women who are most affected by the lack of appropriate policies. Ironically, it is men who make up most legislatures and trade associations, where debate on these issues is held and policies defined.

**WHAT ABOUT CHILD CARE?** While all are important, parental leave and child care appear to be the most pressing concerns—and, according to roundtable members, the ones needing the most immediate response.

"It is the men who make the rules that we all live by and the rules that you run your business by," noted Thompson. "It is important to see the connection between money and power and how rules get made. I don't think a lot of us pay attention to this, and it is very detrimental. I cannot get the women to participate at that level. You have to be there. You

have to be seen. Your power is evident then, and it is financial. I think that women and money have not been as closely connected as they can be, and I really would like to see more women representing their companies."

The gender gap, a phenomenon first appearing and named in the 1980 presidential elections, will play an important role in this year's elections. Besides making contributions to candidates, women can influence elections by hosting meetings at restaurants. According to Thompson, "You can make the politicians aware that you have the ability to support them. You can get more attention than you ever thought possible, and it doesn't have anything to do with gender. It is really money."

Sixty-six percent of mothers between the ages of 18 and 44 work, and 51% of

them have children under a year old. A study done by the Massachusetts Office for Children and the United Way of Massachusetts Bay reported that more than half the unemployed mothers in the state would look for work if child care were affordable. Massachusetts governor and presidential candidate Michael Dukakis places affordable child care on the top of his list of policy priorities, especially as a way to get women off of welfare and into gainful employment.

Hayden said that child care is not a gender question at all. Rather, she explained, it's a "corporate America question." Said Hayden, "At Pizza Hut we recognize child care as such an issue. What we are asking is: Is there a way to give the service to the employees, but not pay for it?"

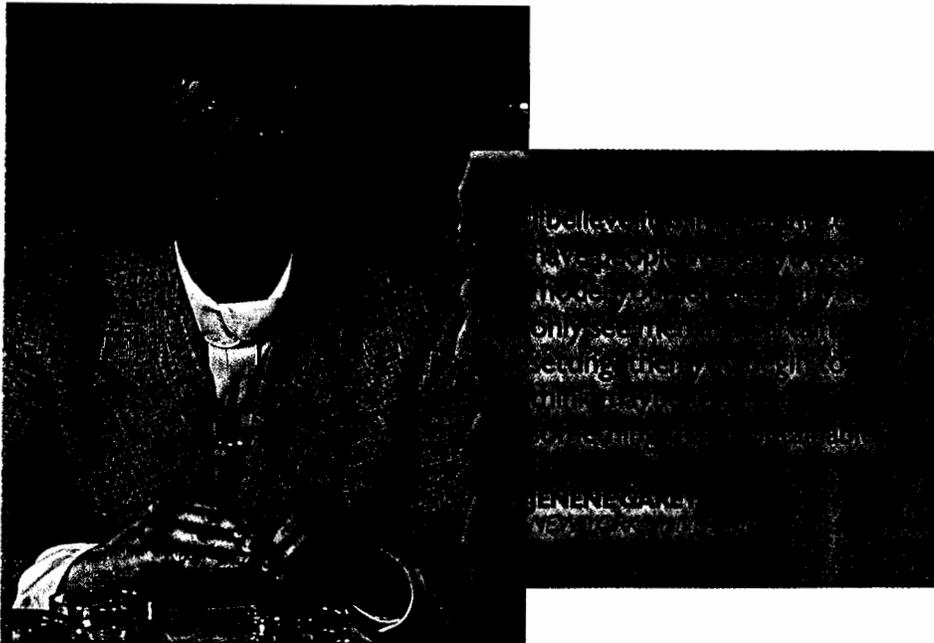
While the foodservice industry doesn't want these types of programs legislated, few alternatives are being suggested.

Child-care companies are also part of the service industries. These companies face increasing competition and expensive liability insurance, not to mention labor and governmental issues of their own. All this is adding to the overall costs of providing child care.

**A UNIQUE APPROACH.** Rather than paying for child-care benefits, PepsiCo is using its size to make child care more available and affordable for its employees. Working out a deal with La Petite Academy, a national child-care provider, PepsiCo agreed to actively market the company's services in exchange for a discount to PepsiCo employees. The re-

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duced cost is seen as a benefit by employees, without adding a significant financial burden to the company. In addition, this unique approach avoids a growing problem among companies that subsidize child-care costs: resentment by employees who have full-grown children not needing child care or employees who do not have children at all.

Hardee's Morris believes that, in order for such programs to be effective, companies must show that child care is not some humanitarian policy only the head of personnel thinks is important. Rather, it should be stressed that there are good business reasons for doing it. "If you look at the companies that are profitable, and show that they have child care, it really helps to start people listening," said Morris.

At Hardee's, explained Morris, "we do not think of child care as an issue dealing with women. It is looking at something that could be good for business. Men didn't generate the idea, but there has been a lot of interest in working on it once it was brought up."

"They mention it at the dinner table, and their wives—who work every day—say, 'You get interested in that,'" asserted Reis.

Not all companies have the size and influence of a PepsiCo or Hardee's. On the other hand, you'll find some innovative solutions to labor shortages coming out of smaller foodservice operations.

"Paying for child care is not worth it from a dollar point of view," said Robert Hutchinson, a franchisee of Roy Rogers

Restaurants in New England, in a separate interview. "But with unemployment rates at less than 3%, we have to do something to get employees into the restaurant to work."

For every hour an employee works, Hutchinson pays 50% of child-care costs for one child. There is no minimum number of work hours required to be eligible, and the benefit is available to all employees. In addition to child-care benefits, his company gives managers and employees at least one weekend day off, limits managers to 50-hour work weeks, and does not ask employees to work later than they're scheduled to.

"We also pay \$5 an hour to start and have a health insurance program avail-

able for all employees," noted Hutchinson. "Being able to spend time with my family is a concern of mine. I want my employees to be able to spend time with their families."

Hutchinson's program hasn't only helped attract quality employees. It also won him the "Operator of the Year" award from Marriott Corporation, parent company of Roy Rogers Restaurants. "We are a service industry, and we need employees to provide the service," noted Hutchinson. "The only way to survive the competition for quality labor is to address the 'balance of life' concerns of our employees."

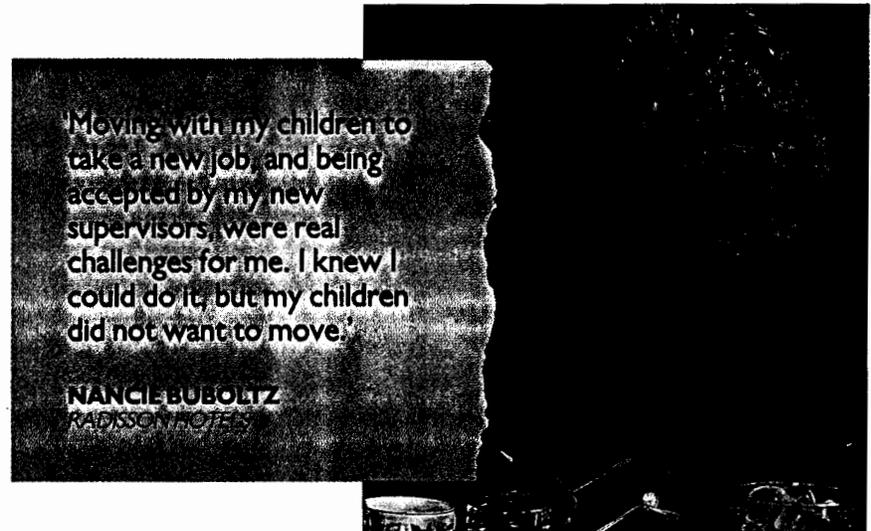
### SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Concluding the Women's Council, participants set their sights on the future.

"There are some things that women in policy positions can bring to the world that would improve the world for men and women," said moderator MacNeil, referring to the innovative policies some companies have put forward regarding support for their labor force.

While all the roundtable participants agreed that the work environment is changing—and that there are more opportunities for women opening up—they insisted that many women are still too limited in a corporate environment and are therefore breaking out on their own.

"Opportunities for women in management are greater in the independent sector of our industry than with the chains," observed Edward Lump, executive vice president of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association and current president of the International Society of Restaurant Association Executives, in a separate interview. "Because of their size, chains are



Moving with my children to take a new job, and being accepted by my new supervisors, were real challenges for me. I knew I could do it, but my children did not want to move.

NANCIE BUBOLTZ  
RADISSON HOTELS

less adaptable to changes in the marketplace than independents. I have seen many more women advance in small restaurants and open their own businesses."

**HARD-TO-GET LOANS.** One of the most frustrating barriers for women entering business is the attitudes of lending institutions, said roundtable participants. "The bank is the corporate structure women face," said Reis. "When I went to the bank to get a loan for my business—at the time doing more than a million dollars in sales, and which I ran—the bank officer said, 'Why didn't your husband come?'"

Despite these barriers, small businesses are expected to be a major source of new jobs in coming years, and women in foodservice will likely prosper in this arena. The Small Business Administration estimates that companies with fewer than 500 employees created about two thirds of all new jobs in the U.S. from 1980 through 1986. A report by the U.S. House Small Business Committee concluded that the increase in the number of companies owned and managed by women may be the "most significant economic development of recent years."

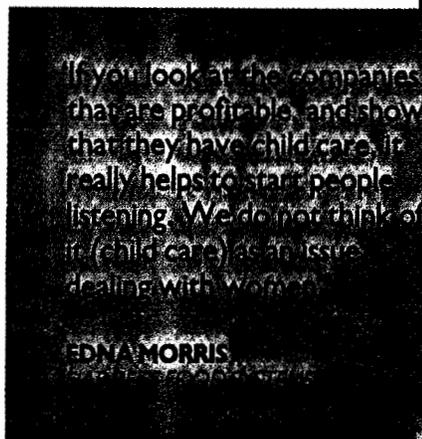
Of the 10 specific industry groups accounting for the largest dollar volume of receipts for women-owned firms in 1982, eating and drinking places recorded the highest receipts, in excess of \$6.6 billion. According to the Labor Department, from 1977 to 1983—the most recent period for which data is available—the number of nonfarm sole proprietorships operated by women increased from 1.9 million to 3.3 million, an annual increase of 9.4%. Women's share of all nonfarm sole proprietorships rose from nearly 23% to 28%. Since women are starting firms at a rate twice that of men, it is expected women will own 50% of U.S. businesses by the year 2000.

Roseanne Taylor, owner of Cafe Manhattan Restaurant in Springfield, MA, is one of the many women business owners making a mark on the industry and the community in which she lives. Active on the boards of various businesses, banks, and civic groups, Taylor's biggest complaint is the lack of recognition given to the women in the industry. "The trade press and trade associations need more representation by women," said Taylor in an interview. "Our industry is composed of a majority of women; I would like to hear what they have to say."

Harris defined the changing role of the Maryland Restaurant Association this way: "We are becoming more aware

of the political power that we do have, becoming perhaps a bit more sophisticated in applying that power. I think the real challenge is to help the association and the members of our industry become more proactive on the legislative front than reactive. We are still at the stage in our development where we wait for something to happen and then determine what the appropriate response is. I believe the real key to our success is our ability to project into the future and iden-

Redefining roles, including women in informal communication networks, structuring mentorship programs, making "balance of life" a priority policy agenda item, and forcing representation of women in policy and program meetings have all been identified as strategies to tap the limitless source of energy, creative abilities, dedication, and loyalty of women in the foodservice industry. Relinquishing power, or the perception of power, for the furtherance of this objec-



tify key issues such as child care."

Peterson of the NRA said, "It is in our plan to construct a symposium that will spark a direction for the National Restaurant Association to enhance the career opportunities for women in the foodservice and hospitality industries." Peterson invited input: "I want to hear from people; we do not have all the answers, and I am wide open to making this a priority item."

**POOR REPRESENTATION.** While this new attitude and direction sound promising, women lament the lack of representation on the boards and in the executive offices of trade associations. They see little representation in hospitality management education programs, especially in courses teaching operational skills. They also believe that the trade press should be more aggressive in covering successful women, and in addressing women's issues.

tive is the first task for men. Though these challenges will involve change and self-sacrifice, the risk may reap substantial benefits not just for women, but for the foodservice industry itself. □

*James Peters is the founder of the Responsible Hospitality Institute, Northampton, MA. He writes frequently on social issues for RB.*

*Restaurant Business is exploring the feasibility of forming a permanent Women's Council to function as a support and educational organization for women in foodservice operations, including both chain executives and independent owner/operators. If you are interested in either cosponsoring or becoming a member of such an organization, contact Peter Berlinski, editor. For your convenience, there is a postpaid Letter to the Editor form in the back of this magazine.*