

How to succeed in business really takes trying

By CAROL MAHONEY

"How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" may be a catchy title for a Broadway musical, but it's not sound strategy for women.

Success in the real business world demands determined effort on their part, according to Bert Whitehead, head of the business department at Marygrove College in Detroit.

He focused on this situation when he spoke at a recent meeting of the Michigan Federation of Business and Professional Women in Birmingham.

Whitehead cited the statistic that women earn only half of what men earn. Of those people in the U.S. earning over \$20,000, only two per cent are women.

"We need to step back and ask ourselves some hard questions," he said. "Why don't women make it in business?"

Whitehead describes business as the power structure in our society. Men attain status while vying for places in that structure. Women, on the other hand, historically have had only a derived status in that the success of their man is reflected on them.

Whitehead believes most girls have been raised to believe that in order to be successful they must find a man and keep him. "Success was derived from being married to a successful man and being Mrs. X. There was no

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— Bert Whitehead, business professor

distinction in being Miss X," he said.

In an interview on the Marygrove campus, Whitehead offered guidelines to a woman who wishes to come to terms with the power structure as it exists.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, he said, she must decide what she wants is the most important thing in her life. "You can't be president of General Motors if you have to be home to make dinner at five o'clock."

Second, Whitehead encourages women to educate the men around them. "Liberation has more to offer men than it does women," he said.

"If you consider that our death rate is twice that of women, it's time we males started asking ourselves what we are doing that kills us so fast."

He also thinks men miss out on family life because they are compelled to drive themselves so hard in their jobs. Consequently, they have little time to share with their children.

Adequate preparation is another must for women who want to succeed in the business world. "Preparation of women for business traditionally has not been good," Whitehead said. "If they don't know the fundamentals of supply and demand or a debt from a credit, they're not going to get anywhere in business."

PREPARATION is where Whitehead believes Marygrove College excels. A new Women in Management program, which Whitehead described as the "toughest in the area," is designed to help women take advantage of opportunities opening to them in the world of business.

In addition to courses such as English composition, computer science, mathematics and economics, the program also seeks to combat the cultural influences which have impeded the success of women in business.

As an example, Whitehead pointed out how sex roles can inhibit success.

Because little girls are more restricted in their activities, they learn not to take risks. A woman jokingly told Whitehead that she never bets on anything unless she is sure she will win. He does not encourage this attitude.

"In business, you have to take risks," he told her. Conversely, he added that the macho mentality of many men leads them to take too many risks.

Besides encouraging them to overcome traditional feminine reticence, Whitehead urged women to "build allies."

"Women have to help each other," he said. "And on the job, your most important ally has to be your boss."

Whitehead advises women to communicate effectively with their superiors. In today's climate of affirmative action, he said that white male managers are sometimes on the defensive: "They are afraid of women and blacks."

Whitehead urges women to take the initiative in discussing their performance on the job. He advises settling differences if possible without resorting to legal redress.

In addition, he suggests that women in management positions play by the rules as they are. "Discrimination is there, but you can be a success in spite of it if you know how to deal with it," he said.

To demonstrate his point, he told the story of a women executive he knows. During the course of a business meeting, the vice-president decided to tell an off-color story. Because she was the only woman in the room, he asked her to leave.

Whitehead said that whenever he tells the story, most women say that she should have confronted the vice-president on the spot and refused to leave. What actually happened, he said, was that the woman left, but relayed the incident to a superior officer in the company.

The vice-president was called on the carpet and later made a public apology to her at the next executive meeting.

The rule in this case, Whitehead said, was not to confront a superior in the presence of his subordinates. "Men learn this in the service," he added.

Although Whitehead agrees that some rules are not desirable, he believes women must learn them before they can hope to effect change.



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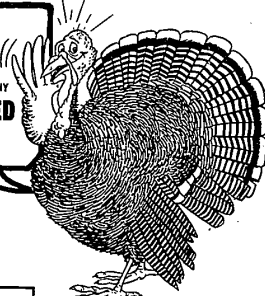
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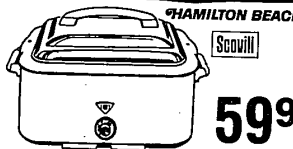
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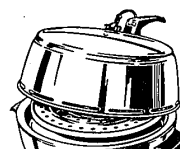
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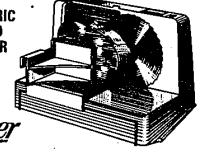
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