

Auto industry's sexual attitudes have deep roots

What do women want? I was reading one of those "how women aren't making it to top jobs in the auto industry" stories in *Automotive News* the other day, plowing along through the old clichés about Detroit clubbiness, the old-boy (as opposed to old-girl) networks, "institutional bias" and other worn-out clichés of job discrimination, when this question confronted me.

It doesn't take any great powers of observation to notice that there are a few women top executives in heavy industry. A good deal of this is likely to be due to years of bias having its way.

Bias is a genuine phenomenon, and no doubt the auto industry has suffered its share of it. On the other hand, I've noticed that the domestic

auto companies generally are run by men who have worked their way from something approximating blue-collar or muddling white-collar origins, a marked contrast to the social elite who dominate the bulk of major corporations. Whether this ladder is as available as it once was is another question.

NONE OF the women executives in the story pointed out the obvious that most of the work done in the auto industry is what used to be called men's work, unless, say, you were in the Soviet Union or on a Chinese commune.

Pouring steel, hot forging and running stamping presses are rather tough jobs, and on occasion involve physical danger and strain on the or-



auto talk
Dan McCosh

der of the front line in Iraq. Many of the people who do the work are it as a big improvement over as working in an independent road mine where they cut a few corners on the shoring timbers.

For better or worse most of the men working these jobs feel as if one reason they are doing them is that they can be sure to get a remotely

related to them even has to get that hot and dirty.

Maybe that doesn't have much to do with why executives get promoted, but the fact is that the male culture has deep roots in that industry, an executive has to lead the steel puddlers and hot forge hammermen.

There also is the fact that cars are almost all male-oriented. This is

demonstrated by the number of women who subscribe to car magazines — which have fewer women readers than *Playboy*, *Penthouse* or *Sports Illustrated*. Tinkering with cars is a male rite of passage ranking only slightly behind asking a girl out to the senior prom.

This has significance in the auto industry in that even the new women recruits in automotive engineering rarely spent their adolescence wrestling with the transmission in a 1963 Oldsmobile.

These executives who mispent their youth tinkering with cars today are looked as "ear guys" (ear per cent) as opposed to the disdainful "bean counter" or otherwise denigrated bureaucrats who keep the fat cats from building the cars

they really want.

Is all this changing? Frankly, I don't know. Curiously, one of the most prominent women in the Detroit auto business, Mary Sheridan, who founded Sheridan Industries to manufacture the heavy industrial machinery she invented while working as a machinist, passed away a few years ago with barely a notice.

Today, I have a daughter who is possibly good at arc welding, and a son who is a better cook. In fact, I know one GM engineer who likes to work on her restored Buick in her spare time.

None of this seems to be the making of much of a shift in the macho ways of an industry that melts steel and makes automobiles.

Is the stock market a good place to spend 1991?

January 1	
We've just elected our youngest President ever to deal with Khrushchev	\$175,066
The Berlin Wall is up. The Day of Pigs is a disaster, and I'm out of the market	\$137,980
Missile crisis may bring on World War III. I'm not investing long term	\$151,070
Nov. 22 — President assassinated. Nothing will ever be the same again	\$123,055
We've bombed North Vietnam and been attacked in the Gulf of Tonkin	\$105,689
We can't afford both the Great Society and a war in Vietnam	\$93,980
The Dow peaked at 285, and it's been downhill ever since	\$104,438
A Six-Day War in the Midwest and five days of rioting in Detroit	\$84,309
Assassinations, riots. But the Pueblo — the future is a gamble	\$75,926
Apr. 4's not the only thing the idiot to the moon. Prime rate at 12%	\$82,893
Protests, demonstrations, Kent State. Nothing is stable	\$79,765
When the market drops 29 points in one day. I drop out	\$69,851
The Dow topped 1960 for the first time. We're due for a crash	\$58,717
OPEC is in control. But President Nixon won't be fooling	\$68,511
This is the worst market for stocks since the Great Depression	\$40,211

Small agendas, big results



focus: small business

Mary DiPaolo

A former senior partner at a mid-level law firm, Doug Post is an attorney who will never be forgotten for his employee meetings strategy.

Instead of conducting a production meeting was to call us one by one, and discuss and dictate what we wanted to accomplish and how we were to respond before the group met. And his office manager, "It was an amazing thing to watch him do this because I don't think he had the remotest idea of what else would work to get real results."

The end result is that making employee meetings more productive is a thing business owners who follow a few simple guidelines. When organized and conducted properly, employee meetings are an important communications tool that benefit everyone.

Meetings can help smooth out the rough spots encountered in the day-to-day operations of a business, and help people to work together harmoniously and effectively.

The first step to more successful meetings is to take full responsibility for their outcome. This does not mean planning a meeting and agenda that includes manipulation tactics. Rather start by setting meeting goals that clearly define realistic and results-oriented objectives.

This is important when addressing specific problems, because meetings that focus primarily on discussion generally have no end. Regarding the agenda issue, it is best to discuss a maximum of three items during the meeting and then assign a block of time on the calendar for each. This forces each participant to focus on and resolve agenda items in a limited amount of time.

An efficient and effective meeting involves only the people who are directly concerned with the purpose of the meeting. Inviting unnecessary employees will water down the accomplishments and may obstruct plans for producing important results. But excluding people who should be directly involved can have the same effect.

As the leader of a meeting, be sure to keep any discussion on track. What's the real problem or problem from the subject matter? What's the solution? Is there a target? Is there a deadline? It's best to put the question to the group. How do we get there? Are we saving time to the group? What's the discussion?

Next we will review how business owners and managers can develop their ability to get things done through coaching for improved performance.

There is always a 'reason' not to invest

By Sid Mittra
special writer

Of all the major problems facing the affluent professional, none is more critical than those relating to investment planning.

Today I will discuss the cost of procrastinating, which may indeed be very high.

Take a look at the chart "Is the stock market a good place to spend 1991?" which was compiled by a large brokerage firm.

Since 1960, every year there has been at least one compelling reason for not participating in the market. And yet, in 1960 the person who had the courage to invest \$10,000 in the stock market and leave it there without further supervision, has \$175,066 today.

BY CONTRAST, over the same period, \$10,000 in the money market would be worth only \$23,670 today. The cost of waiting is indeed high.

Look at it another way. Suppose in 1979 you had decided to set aside \$1,000 each year for 10 years. Not feeling comfortable about the market, you decided to park the money in a money market.

Ten years later you would have \$16,470 in your money market account. Had you put the money in the stock market, and done so each year by investing on the worst day when

the prices were at their peak, you would have \$40,100. A 24 percent return more than in the money market.

OF COURSE, the gain would be more substantial if you had made at least one of the 10 investments on the way.

A recent University of Michigan study underscores the real cost of waiting. If you had fully participated in the 1962-1967 bull market, your average annual rate of return would have been a whopping 26.3 percent. However, if you procrastinated and

did not get in the market until 1968, you would have lost 24 percent of what you could have had by bank saving around

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