

## **Lesson:-31**

### **Personality and its theories**

*Welcome students to your today's lesson on Personality. In our earlier section we have appreciated the need for understanding the individual factors like personality to appreciate and comprehend one's behaviour in the context of organizations. In the following section we will learn the nature of personality, the determinants of personality, and will review various theories of personality.*

In organizations, does personality matter? Ask that question of anybody who has spent any time in organizations or teams, and, intuitively, most will respond in the affirmative. Frequently, people will be more than willing to cite examples of how personalities have affected team performances or how personalities made life in an organization unbearable (or, an enjoyable experience). Personalities, in a study of organizational behavior do matter.

So, what is personality? The word personality comes from the Latin root persona, meaning "mask." According to this root, personality is the impression we make on others; the mask we present to the world

Personality is defined as "a unique set of traits and characteristics, relatively stable over time." Clearly, personality is unique insofar as each of us has our own personality, different from any other person's. The definition further suggests that personality does not change from day to day. Over the short-term, our personalities are relatively set or stable. However, definition does not suggest that personality is somehow rigid, unchangeable, and cast in concrete. Definition recognizes that, over a longer term, personality may change.

To examine whether this change is indeed consistent with most peoples' reality, we ought to examine "where personality comes from"; what are the origins of personality?

#### **THE ORIGINS OF PERSONALITY: THE NATURE-NURTURE DEBATE**

For psychologists studying the development of personality, "nature vs. nurture" was a central debate. "Nature vs. nurture" suggests that biology (a person's genes) and society (the environment in which a person grows up) are competing developmental forces. In the past, the debate sought to find whether one may be more important than the other. Today most psychologists would concede both nature and nurture are necessary for personality development. Both help to make us who we are.

#### **Determinants of Personality**

Several factors influence the shaping of our personality. Major among these are

1. Heredity,
2. Culture,
3. Family Background,
4. Our Experiences through Life,
5. And The People we interact with.

There are some genetic factors that play a part in determining certain aspects of what we tend to become. Whether we are tall or short, experience good health or ill health, are quickly irritable or patient, are all characteristics which can, in many cases, be traced to heredity. How we learn to handle others' reactions to us (eg.our appearance) and the inherited traits can also influence how our personality is shaped.

### ***Culture:***

The culture and the values we are surrounded by significantly tend to shape our personal values and inclination. Thus, people born in different cultures tend to develop different types of personalities which in turn significantly influence their behaviours. India being a vast country with a rich diversity of cultural background provides a good study on this. For example, we have seen that people in Gujarat are more enterprising than people from other states, Punjabees are more diligent and hardworking, people from Bengal are more creative and with an intellectual bend and the likes.

### ***Family Background:***

The socio-economic status of the family, the number of children in the family and birth order, and the background and education of the parents and extended members of the family such as uncles and aunts, influence the shaping of personality to a considerable extent.

First-borns usually have different experiences, during childhood than those born later; Members in the family mould the character of all children, almost from birth, in several ways -by expressing and expecting their children to conform to their own values, through role modeling, and through various reinforcement strategies such as rewards and punishments which are judiciously dispensed. Think of how your own personality has been shaped by your family background and parental or sibling influences!

### **Experiences in Life:**

Whether one trusts or mistrusts others, is miserly or generous, have a high or low self esteem and the like, is at least partially related to the past experiences the individual has had. Imagine if someone came to you and pleaded with you to lend him Rs. 100 which he promised to return in a week's time, and you gave it to him even though it was the last note you had in your pocket to cover the expenses for the rest of that month. Suppose that the individual never again showed his face to you and you have not been able to get hold of him for the past three months. Suppose also that three such incidents happened to you with three different individuals in the past few months. What is the probability that you would trust another person who comes and asks you for a loan tomorrow? Rather low, one would think. Thus, certain personality characteristics are moulded by frequently occurring positive or negative experiences in life.

### ***People We Interact With***

"A Person is known by the company he or she keeps" is a common adage. The implication is that people persuade each other and tends to associate with members who are more like them in their attitudes and values. Beginning childhood, the people we interact with influence us. Primarily our, parents and siblings, then our teachers and class mates, later our friends and colleagues, and so on. The influence of these various individuals and groups shapes our personality. For. Instance, if we are to be accepted as members of our work group, we have to conform to the values of that group which mayor may not always be palatable to us; if we don't, we will not be treated as valued members of the group. Our desire to be a part of the group and belong to it as its member, will compel many of us to change certain aspects of our personality (for instance, we may have to become less aggressive, more cooperative, etc.). Thus, our personality becomes shaped throughout our lives by at least some of the people and groups we interact with.

In summary, our personality is a function of both heredity and other external factors that shape it. It is important to know what specific personality predispositions influence work behaviors.

## **PERSONALITY THEORIES**

### **Traits Theory**

The traditional approach of understanding personality was to identify and describe personality in terms of *traits*. In other words, it viewed ***personality as revolving around attempts to identify and label permanent characteristics that describe an individual's behavior.***

*Popular characteristics or traits include shyness, aggressiveness, submissiveness, laziness, ambition, loyalty, and timidity.* This distinctiveness, when they are exhibited in a large number of situations, are called personality traits. The more consistent the

characteristic and the more frequently it occurs in diverse situations, the more important that trait is in describing the individual.

### **Early Search for Primary Traits**

Efforts to isolate traits have been stuck because there are so many of them. In one study, as many as 17,953 individual traits were identified. It is virtually impossible to predict behavior when such a large number of traits must be taken into account. As a result, attention has been directed toward reducing these thousands to a more manageable number. One researcher isolated 171 traits but concluded that they were superficial and lacking in descriptive power. What he sought was a reduced set of traits that would identify underlying patterns. The result was the identification of 16 personality factors by Cattell, which he called the *source*, or *primary, traits*. These 16 traits have been found to be generally steady and constant sources of behavior, allowing prediction of an individual's behavior in specific situations by weighing the characteristics for their situational relevance. Based on the answers individual gave they have been classified as on the basis of the answers individuals give to the test, they are classified as:

1. Extroverted Or Introverted (E Or I),
2. Sensing Or Intuitive (S Or N),
3. Thinking Or Feeling (T Or F), And
4. Perceiving Or Judging (P Or J).

These classifications are then combined into 16 personality types.

To illustrate, let's take several examples.

### **Measures of Personality**

#### **Can Personality be measured?**

If we wish to measure the current in a electric circuit, we can insert an ammeter into the circuit. If we wish to measure the weight of some substance, we simply place that substance on scales designed to measure weight. What about personality? Unfortunately, we cannot directly "measure" personality. But if we cannot directly observe the seemingly unconscious, how do we know it exists?

The answer to the question lies in the fact that we can, in fact, directly observe behaviors. As students of human behavior, we are then left to infer personality from the behaviors it manifests.

Psychologists thus use behavioral indicators in constructing projective tests. These tests are designed to draw conclusions about personality from observed behaviors.

There are various standard tests and scales available to measure personality. In the following section we will be describing a few of these.

**Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)** :It is a projective test that offers more validity. The TAT consists of drawings or photographs of real-life situations. People taking the test are instructed to construct stories based on these images, and trained raters then score the recorded story for predefined themes. Psychologists assume that the stories people tell reflect the unconscious.

**Myers-Briggs Types Indicator (MBTI)** was originally developed by a mother & daughter team which have the following components.

**INTJs are visionaries.**

They usually have original minds and great drive for their own ideas and purposes. They are characterized as skeptical, critical, independent, determined, and often stubborn.

**ESTJs are organizers.**

They are realistic, logical, analytical, decisive, and have a natural head for business or mechanics.

They like to organize and run activities.

**The ENTP type is conceptualizer.**

He or she is pioneering, individualistic, versatile, and attracted to entrepreneurial ideas. This person tends to be resourceful in solving challenging problems but may neglect routine assignments. A recent book that profiled 13 contemporary businesspeople who created super successful firms including Apple Computer, Federal Express, Honda Motors, Microsoft and Sony found that all 13 are intuitive thinkers (NTS).IZ

This result is predominantly interesting because intuitive thinkers represent only about 5 percent of the population. More than 2 million people a year take the MBTI in the United States alone. Organizations using the MBTI include Apple Computer, AT&T, Citicorp, Exxon, GE, 3M Co., plus many hospitals, educational institutions, and even the U.S. Armed Forces.

**The Big Five Model**

MBTI may be deficient in valid supporting evidence, but that can't be said for the five-factor model of personality 'more typically called the Big Five.

In contemporary, an impressive body of research supports that five basic dimensions motivate all others and encompass most of the significant variation in human personality .

The Big Five factors are:



Slide 3

**Personality theories**

- Traits theory
  - This theory is a traditional approach of identifying the personality and describing it in terms of traits
  - Traits include shyness, aggressiveness, submissiveness, laziness, ambition, timidity.

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Slide 4

**Measures of personality**

- Personality can be measured through:
  - Thematic appreciation test
  - Myers- briggs types indicator
  - INTJs are visionaries
  - ESTJs are organizers.
  - The ENTP type is conceptualizer.

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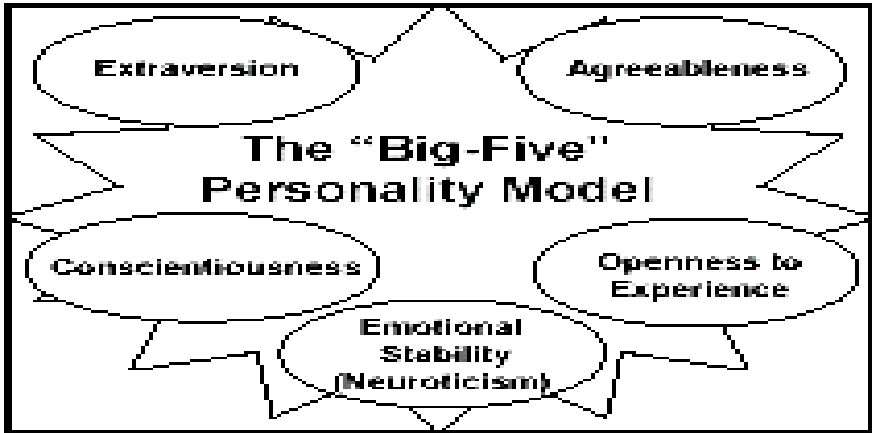
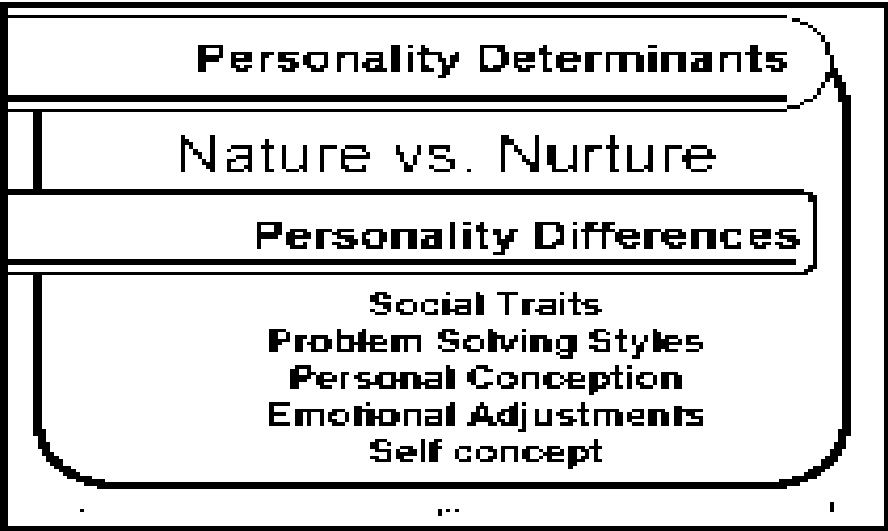
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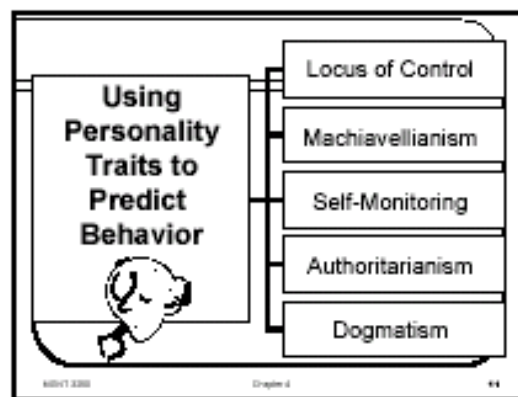
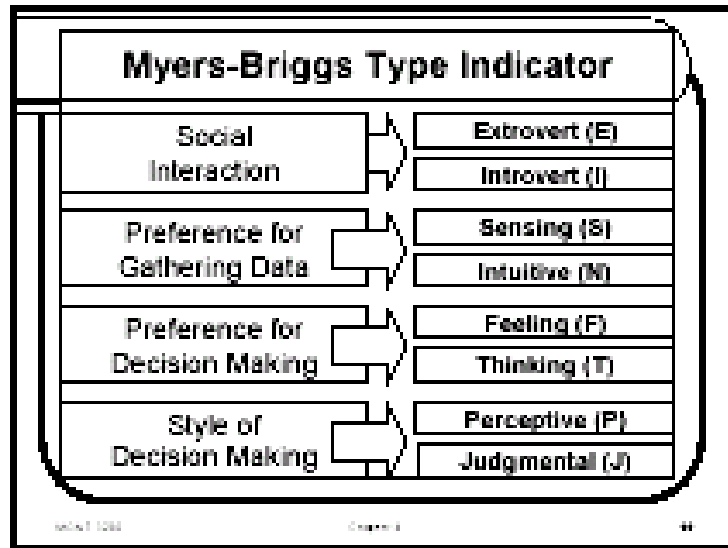
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**Personality**

- ↳ The overall profile or combination of characteristics that capture the unique nature of a person as that person reacts and interacts with others.
- ↳ Combines a set of physical and mental characteristics that reflect how a person looks, thinks, acts, and feels.







**Exercise :** So students now we shall revise the concept of personality by doing this small exercise.

### Review Questions

1. What is personality?
2. What are the major allegations against traits theory?
3. What is Myers-Briggs Type Indicator?
4. Do people from the same country have a common personality type? Explain.
5. Define personality. Do you think a manager must have the basic understanding of personality? Support your views. Describe briefly the psychoanalytic theory of personality.

## Multiple Choice

- 1 . An individual's personality is determined by
  1. Heredity
  2. Environment
  3. Situational factors
  4. All of the above
  
- 2 . According to the Myers-Briggs type Indicator, \_\_\_\_\_ are conceptualizers.
  1. INTJs
  2. ESTJs
  3. ENTPs
  4. MBTIs
  
- 3 . Which dimension of the Big Five model refers to an individual's propensity to defer to others?
  1. Extroversion
  2. Agreeableness
  3. Emotional stability
  4. Openness to experience
  
- 4 . Holland's theory of personality=job fit argues that job satisfaction is highest and turnover lowest where
  1. A personality and occupation are in agreement.
  2. An individual is highly motivated.
  3. Salary is high.
  4. Employees have an education.

- 5 . \_\_\_\_\_ is (are) reactions to an object, not a trait. They are object-specific.
1. Internal stimuli
  2. Affect
  3. Emotions
  4. Moods

True or False

1 . If personality characteristics were completely dictated by heredity, they would be fixed at birth and no amount of experience could alter them.

True  
False

2 . A substantial body of research supports the MBTI as a valid measure of personality.

True  
False

3 . Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they are masters of their own fate.

True  
False

4 . Individuals with Holland's investigative personality are well suited for careers as small business managers.

True  
False

Anger Can Power the Creation of New Companies

LEAD STORY-DATELINE: The Wall Street Journal, June 4, 2002.

*Most people who end up becoming entrepreneurs are either fulfilling a lifelong dream or are motivated to do so out of necessity, such as by a layoff. Today, particularly in the midst of economic uncertainty, business cost-cutting, corporate downsizing, and unrealistic management expectations, many employees have another reason for taking the plunge into the deep waters of business ownership. Many employees are simply angry with the companies and managers who make decisions that affect their lives. In fact, some of these individuals have become quite successful.*

*For example, Ewing Marion Kauffman started his own drug company, Marion Laboratories, after an angry experience with his previous employer. Kauffman was such an outstanding salesman in the 1950s that he made more money than the president of the company. The president responded by cutting Kauffman's sales territory. A short time later, when Kauffman still out-earned his boss, the president cut his commission rate. That is when Kauffman, angry because of the president's actions, started his own drug company. Marion Laboratories was so successful that in 1989, Dow Chemical Company purchased it for approximately \$5.2 billion. "Getting taken advantage of by an employer motivated Mr. Kauffman, who died in 1993, to succeed as an entrepreneur," says Michie Slaughter, a previous executive at Marion Labs and a friend of Kauffman's. He was profoundly committed to entrepreneurship, and set up the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, Missouri. Its \$2 billion endowment is used to help fund programs for others who want to start small businesses.*

*Joseph B. Gordon considers his decision to start Differential Pressure Plus, Inc., which has sales of about \$1 million, as a "sweet reward." In fact, he claims he left his previous employer of 11 years, a Connecticut auto parts maker, "to escape from humiliating alpha-dog tyrannical management." Gordon believes that voluntarily leaving because of his anger "vindicated the humiliation of layoffs." Anger can indeed be a motivator that can lead to sweet rewards when channeled in the right direction.*

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TALKING IT OVER AND THINKING IT THROUGH!

*Almost everyone experiences anger during various times in his or her professional lives. Although many individuals perceive anger as a negative emotion, it can be used to help create a positive outcome for individuals. Cite two examples of how your anger or the anger of someone you know became the catalyst that helped to direct you or someone else to more productive, rewarding endeavors.*

*Individuals often react very differently when dealing with strong emotions such as anger. Many researchers agree that the more emotionally mature an individual is, the*

*greater the probability that the individual will make rational decisions when in a situation that evokes anger. Identify three strategies that managers might adopt to help retain a valuable employee who might consider leaving a firm because of his or her anger.*

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#### THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE!

Emotions will always play a significant role in determining employee behavior. Wise managers know that many employee exits are simply a result of incompetent, insensitive managers who often mishandle employee-related situations.

*When he started his company, Gordon decided to create the exact opposite work environment from the firm he left. For example, he allows all assemblers at his company to watch daytime television while performing their tasks. In addition, they perform their own quality checks, determine their own work hours, and can even occasionally bring children or pets to work as needed. Employee empowerment is indeed a major key to his company's success.*

Kaufman also made a point to always treat others as he would like to be treated. "It's the happiest principle by which to live and the most intelligent principle by which to do business and make money," he says.

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#### SOURCES:

Bailey, Jeff. "Anger Can Power the Creation of New Companies," The Wall Street Journal, June 4, 2002.

Where Happiness Lies: Social Scientists Reveal Their Research Findings in the Realm of Positive Psychology

LEAD STORY-DATELINE: Monitor on Psychology, January 2001.

*In a recent Positive Psychology Summit, co-sponsored by the Gallup Organization, in Washington D.C., 200 social scientists shared their research findings about happiness. That's right, these folks were meeting to discuss the effects of feeling good and, as it turns out, they had a lot of good stuff to talk about. It seems that for years, psychologists have spent the majority of their time teaching people how not to feel bad; or, how to feel less bad. But, as Ed Diener of the University of Illinois points out,*

*people don't lay in bed thinking about feeling less bad; rather, they think about feeling good and then feeling even better. This new field of "positive psychology," founded in part by Martin E. P. Seligman, Ph.D., former president of the American Psychological Association, has uncovered both anticipated and unanticipated benefits related to being in a positive emotional state-or, in psychological terms, experiencing "positive affect." Why would an article on "positive psychology" be relevant in the world of business? Stay tuned for the answer... But first, let's take a look at some of the research findings.*

*Research by Dr. Alice Isen, of Cornell University, has found that "people experience a thrill when they get a free sample, find a quarter on the street, or receive an unexpected gift and this emotion makes them feel more generous, friendlier and healthier." Isen goes on to report that people in a positive emotional state become more flexible in their thinking and more creative and better problem solvers. She also found that "small inductions of positive emotion make people smarter, more productive and more accurate. For example, when radiologists were given a small present, they made more accurate diagnoses—a good reason to be nice to your radiologist! Very importantly, according to Isen, it doesn't take very much happiness to generate these positive effects. The slightest elevation in mood—even when it is barely perceptible—is enough to produce dramatic results. "Employees who feel good because their supervisors 'gave them pleasantries' or recognized their successes are more likely to work better and harder." Furthermore, these "happy" employees are better able to "take the other party's perspective in negotiations, and are less defensive in stressful situations," Isen reports.*

*Other positive psychology studies have looked at what people like about their jobs. For example, how do people engaged in menial (low-level) jobs make their work more personally meaningful? According to Amy Wrzesniewski, Ph.D., professor of management and organizational behavior at New York University, people who view their jobs as a "calling," instead of just "work," are more likely to put in more hours, miss less work, and report higher life satisfaction. In fact, Dr. Wrzesniewski says that although you would think that people who report higher satisfaction would have more "interesting" jobs than those reporting low satisfaction, this is not necessarily the case. Rather, it is how people personally view their work that seems to matter as opposed to some specific aspect inherent in the work.*

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LEAD STORY-DATELINE: Business Week, November 20, 2000.

*After decades of being categorized as "petty", "indecisive", "emotional", "catty", and "uncommitted", a whole new perception of women is beginning to emerge from the ranks of corporate America. In an era when more and more firms are hiring and promoting women into management positions, what looks like an effort to acknowledge and honor diversity in the workplace may indeed prove to have more far reaching, fruitful, and profitable results for many firms. Although men have, for centuries, been recognized for their adroit leadership abilities, only recently has information begun to emerge regarding women's abilities to steer the reigns toward corporate success.*

*An increasing number of comprehensive management studies are beginning to unveil an interesting revelation: that in many instances, women leaders, through performance evaluations ratings submitted by peers, bosses, and subordinates, tend to score measurably higher than their male counterparts in several management-related areas.*

*A number of studies in firms ranging from high-tech and manufacturing to customer services all provide similar results. Overall, in researching performance evaluation results of company managers, female executives consistently outranked their male counterparts in almost every skill area. Although men tended to receive higher evaluations in the areas of strategic abilities and technical analysis, women outranked male counterparts in most other areas including numerous soft skill areas such as motivating others, mentoring employees, communication skills, and listening to others. They also excelled in the areas of producing high-quality work and goal setting. Harvard Business Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, author of the management classic entitled *Men and Women of the Corporation*, observes from the research findings that "women get higher ratings on exactly those skills needed to succeed in the global Information Age, where teamwork and partnering are so important". IBM's Global Services Division head, Douglas Elix, tends to concur with Professor Kanter's observations. "Women think through decisions better than men, are more collaborative, and seek less personal glory", says Elix.*

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#### TALKING IT OVER AND THINKING IT THROUGH!

Based on the research findings, what types of leadership skills do women tend to receive higher ratings in than men?

Based on the research findings what types of leadership skills do men tend to receive higher ratings in than women?

Based on your personal experiences and observations, do you believe that women tend to receive higher performance evaluation ratings in most management-related areas than their male counterparts? Please explain your answer.

What strategies can top management take to help strengthen performance skills for all managers?

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#### THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE!

*News about women leaders' overall abilities to outperform their male counterparts only serves as strong fodder for talent-hungry recruiters anxious to help find executives with strong people-related skills that are needed to retain valuable employees. A few*

*executives admit that they are even beginning to develop "a new hiring bias". With all credentials being equal between male and female applicants, they admit to freely selecting the female over the male applicant in many instances because of the perception that the female executive would be a more effective and dedicated employee and because they believe that women are more company oriented and less turf conscious. Needless to say, it is doubtful that these perceptions are accurate in every situation.*

*In the future, as thousands of women move into the ranks of middle and top management positions, hopefully there will be an increase over the current number of only six women who are CEO's at the 1,000 largest corporations. As Robert Kabacoff, a vice-president at Management Research Group in Portland, Maine states: "At the highest levels, bosses are still evaluating people in the most stereotypical ways...Even though women have proven their readiness to lead companies into the future, they're not likely to get a shot until their bosses are ready to stop living in the past."*

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SOURCES:

Sharp, Rochelle. "As Leaders, Women Rule", Business Week, November 20, 2000.

