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**NEW RESEARCH SHOWS MOST PROFESSIONAL WOMEN SEEK TOP LEVEL POSITIONS BUT CORPORATE BARRIERS HOLD THEM BACK**

Philadelphia, February 22, 2001 ... *The Leader's Edge* Research recently conducted a national study to learn women's views on how women seek, keep, and further their leadership roles in corporations.

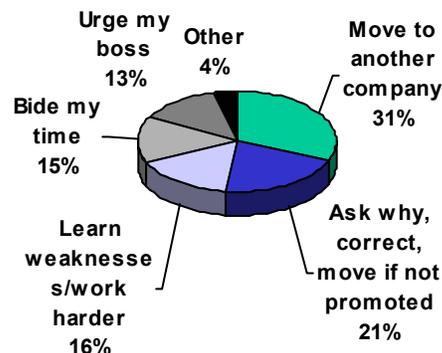
"The research showed that professional women are proactive in advancing their careers, but the majority believes that their corporation's culture – factors outside their direct control – excludes women from the higher echelons of power and that a Boardroom Barrier exists within their companies," observed Molly Shepard, CEO of *The Leader's Edge*. For the purpose of the research, "Boardroom Barrier" was defined as "those factors external to women that prevent them, and not their male counterparts, from moving to the top of their organizations."

There is widespread belief that the old "glass ceiling" has been cracked, with large numbers of women in middle management. "Yet," said Ms. Shepard, "the Boardroom Barrier, which affects women reaching for the highest levels in corporations, is shown to be in tact."

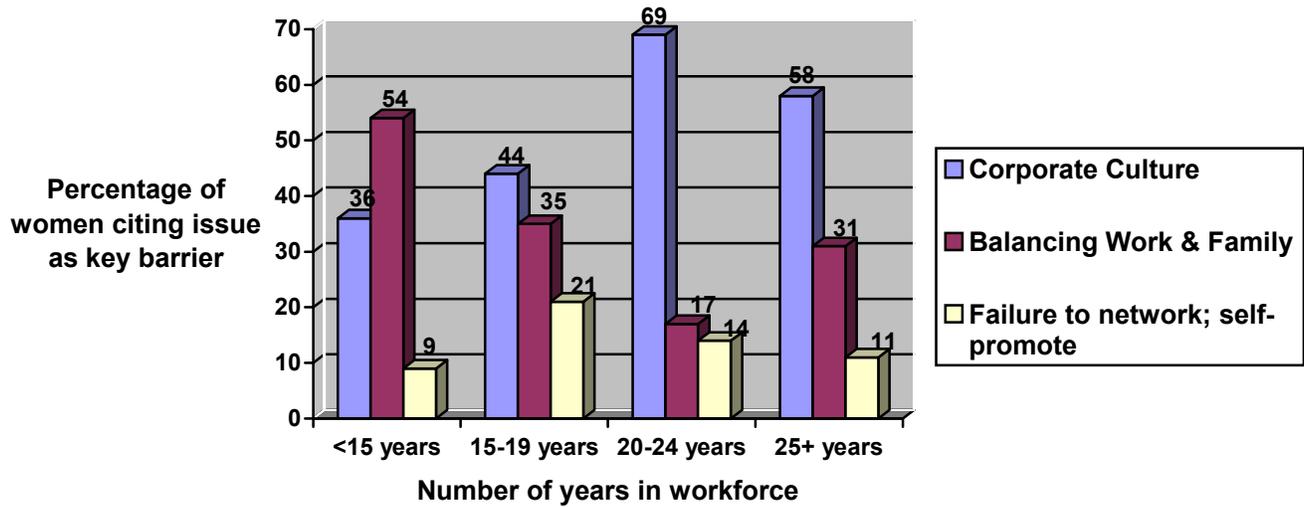
Two-thirds of women say they desire top-level executive positions, and more than half of the women surveyed will move to another company if they are passed over for promotion, suggesting serious implications both for ambitious women and for their companies.

**Women's Reactions to Being Passed Over for Promotion**

*"If I expected a promotion and did not get it, I'd...."*



## What professional women perceive as advancement barriers



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Most respondents (55%) say that Corporate Culture is the most significant barrier to women achieving top executive positions, while only twenty-nine percent (29%) think work/family balance is a significant barrier to advancement and 16% believe that a lack of self-promotion holds women back from achieving top-level positions.

### Barriers to Achieving Top Positions

### Is there a Boardroom Barrier at your Company?

Women in the workforce 20 or more years have a significantly greater perception that corporate cultures raise a barrier to advancement, suggesting that the ability to look back over the progression of a career further reveals the issue.

*The Leader's Edge* research conducted this study to learn about professional women's:

- Attitudes toward professional life & the corporate culture
- Communication styles & self-promotion
- Experience with mentors & networks

*The Leader's Edge* had fully analyzed the segment of the findings related to executive women's attitudes toward professional life and corporate culture. A complete report on this segment and a respondent profile are available from *The Leader's Edge*. Over the next several months, the organization will further study the results and release data about the other segments of the research.

*The Leader's Edge*<sup>™</sup> works to enhance executive women's effectiveness as senior leaders and to help them take on greater roles in their organizations.

Those seeking more information on *The Leader's Edge* and its research may contact Molly Shepard, founder & CEO, at:

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