

## *Advancement Is a Challenge*

**W**HERE are you going? Do you want to succeed in your chosen work and climb to an important position as a specialist in your field or to an executive position?

Some people claim that women in business lack ambition to succeed because their goal is marriage rather than professional achievement. A look at the records shows, however, that we are living in an era of expanding opportunity for women in many fields of business where marriage does not interfere with their business careers. Records of businesswomen show that success in business often makes a more successful marriage, whether the woman continues her work or not.

So, where are you going in your business career? Have you set a goal? Are you ambitious to prove your ability to succeed? Do you take pride in your accomplishments and welcome each opportunity to test your prowess? Are you willing to give more in time, thought, and effort than you are paid for? Unless you honestly can answer these questions with "yes," you are probably one of the many young women who wishfully hopes for success but does nothing to gain it.

Should you stay with your company or seek a new position? First, analyze your attitude, your ability, and your accomplish-

ments. Then, weigh your opportunity for advancement with your company. If you are drifting along in a routine position with no opportunity to step into a more responsible one, perhaps you should look elsewhere. Analyze yourself critically. What is your objective? How far are you from your goal? How can you reach that prized position?

To stay in one position too long may deaden your initiative. A person who takes a new position that is more challenging and requires more skill and more initiative is respected for her ambition to mount the ladder of success. But be sure you have made the most of your present opportunity before you consider a change. One who flits from job to job may receive rightly the reputation of a restless visionary who isn't willing to master difficulties or overcome hardships. When you find your work has become routine, with no opportunity to advance, perhaps that is the time for you to make a decision to change positions, even though you have no new position in sight.

Do you need more schooling in your specialization or in some related field that seems more interesting to you? It takes courage to stop, look, and listen to your good judgment. Few people reach success without will power to make sacrifices and to concentrate on the necessary preparation for a top position.

If you aim for an executive position, are you willing to assume the responsibility and to stand the pressure that comes with such a position? More money looks enticing, but you will be expected to earn it. Do you want the prestige of being head or supervisor of a department? When you assume leadership of one or more people, you must have the qualifications of a leader. Do you hope for security? The more responsibility you have, the greater is the test of your ability to hold the position. There is no security unless you earn it. Do you want happiness and the satisfaction of a job well done? This is probably the most powerful reason for wishing to succeed in your work. With such a reason, the trials, problems, and pressures become a challenge, not a hardship.

More money, more prestige, more security, more happiness and satisfaction, these are reasons for seeking a new position. Unless the change results in more happiness and satisfaction, you will

not have gained the position that gives you real opportunity to develop your best abilities for a business career.

Are there barriers that prevent you, a woman, from advancing to an executive position? Women are in executive positions in almost every field. These positions may include direction of the work of a few people or of many people. Your ability to succeed, your determination, and your breadth of vision will override barriers. There are not enough qualified women for top positions. That is a challenge to you.

### **The Woman Executive**

As an executive you must be able to select, train, and lead those who come under your direction. You must inspire loyalty in those in subordinate positions and earn the respect of top management. This requires many qualities that must be fostered and developed. These qualities include the ability to look ahead, to make a plan, to weigh values, and to set up the necessary machinery to carry out the plan.

You will need to further the habit of clear thinking, concentration, and persistence. This is essential in one who directs a department or a program of work. Women tend to be emotional and unpredictable in time of emergency and stress. Remember that emotional conflicts sap the energy that should be directed to productive work. As a business executive, you can't afford to give way to tears, nerves, or other signs of feminine weakness. You must be dependable. You must be able to differentiate between

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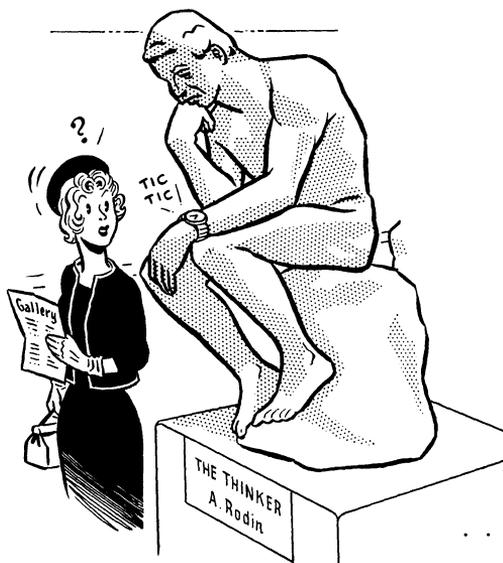
essentials and nonessentials. With good judgment and calm analysis of situations you can build confidence in your staff. Most executives have their moments of indecision. But when you must lead, you must get the best advice possible, then have the courage to decide on the course to take, and inspire your staff to accept that decision and to work for a successful accomplishment of the objective.

### **The Importance of Time**

Time is the essence of business. Time schedules, timecards, timed plans, and timed work are part of most business positions. The higher the position, the more important is the ability to analyze a situation quickly and to make a sound decision in time to put the plan into profitable action.

Some women resent this pressure of working against time. They spend their energies fighting the idea, rather than organizing their work to comply with the demands. Don't get into the habit of telling everyone how busy, how overworked, and how tired you are. Too many women develop this boring habit. They try to impress everyone with their own importance by a recital of pressing work. The woman who is too busy to relax and do some constructive thinking is either a poor organizer or she is too egotistical to delegate authority.

As a new executive, you can learn from those who have already succeeded. They have discovered that it pays to take time to think, to plan, and to organize. Time is important. Pressure is great. But never become too busy to think.



. . . it pays to take time to think . . .

### **Ideas Pay Dividends**

To be a leader in business you must be creative, original, and productive of ideas. You must have vision to foresee future needs and to project a plan to meet the situation.

Are you willing to work on the suggestions of others or do you like to take a problem and work out the solution?

When you are an executive you must not only originate ideas but you must be open-minded to the ideas of others. Accept each suggestion with the hope it will work. Avoid preconceived decisions. Try the *it-can-be-done* approach. Weigh all sides of the question before you reject the idea. Many famously successful ideas were laughed at by the public until some wise person gave the originator an opportunity to prove the idea was sound.

As an executive, you are expected to toss out ideas to your staff, to suggest, to encourage, and to guide. If the plan does not succeed, accept the responsibility for either an unsound idea or poor judgment in directing the action. If the idea does develop into a worthwhile action, promotion, or plan, give the credit to those who made the idea succeed. Your stature as an executive depends on the success of your staff. You actually gain in prestige as you build up the efficiency of your staff and publicize their successes.

Another feature of ideas is that they must be put to work to be successful. It is not enough to have ideas. You must have the *know how* to put these ideas to work for the good of the company.

### **Enthusiasm and Loyalty**

If you are happy in your work, you are more apt to succeed. Enthusiasm for your work and loyalty to your company smooth the way for your advancement.

A maturity of judgment to understand company policies will help you interpret these policies to your staff so that each will accept the edict with enthusiasm and loyalty. If you set an example of loyalty, you can demand loyalty of those who work under your direction.

Your enthusiasm and interest in your work will give you an inner drive that will carry you over the rough spots. Self-pity, emotional reactions, hurt feelings, sensitivity to slights, and petty

actions have no place in the busy life of a woman executive. Good health and enthusiastic participation in the work to be done minimize the troublesome annoyances that can grow to overshadow the really worth-while objectives of your work. Enthusiasm and loyalty will keynote happiness for you.

### **Knowledge**

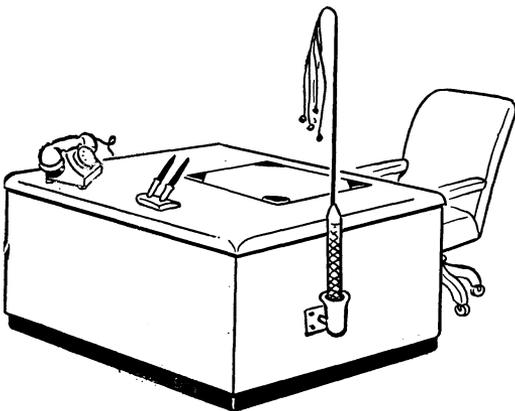
If you would advance to a responsible position in business, you must have not only technical or specialized knowledge but also diversified knowledge. Then you will understand the many phases of work which must be coordinated to make a company successful. This means that you must continue to study and advance in your specialization. Take advantage of every opportunity to become informed in related fields. That will give you the ability to coordinate your work with the objectives of your company.

Develop your skill to read fast and pick the *meat* from the many publications, reports, and other printed matter that relate to your business or business in general. Train yourself to retain facts and to sort and sift the mass of information into significant knowledge as against insignificant chatter.

### **Organizational Ability**

When you first entered business, no doubt you often questioned a rule or policy and thought you could make a better decision. As you advance to an executive position, you begin to realize how carefree were your first days and how your problems have increased with your responsibilities.

Can you set up a project or plan, analyze the needs, and organize the steps necessary for completion of the plan? Many people who are successful in a field of work cannot direct the work of others. There's a difference between a skilled technician and a skilled leader, and between a leader and a driver. The



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*leader* inspires the workers and gains their respect so that they work willingly and are happy in their work. The *driver* overlooks the importance of good human relations and considers that the result justifies the method of getting the job done.

Organizational ability requires an understanding of human nature as well as an analytical mind to sift important objectives from unimportant details. Do you like to work with people, to teach, to guide, to lead? Can you recognize latent ability and plan work to bring out and develop the talents of your staff? These traits are essential in any executive position.

### **Human Relations**

Human relations become a Number One problem to anyone who directs the work of others. You must decide what qualities will make you respected as a good leader as against the easy-going *good fellow* or the *fair weather friend*.

A study of case histories reveals that the cause of failure in an executive position is more often due to the inability to handle people than the inability to handle the technical and special skills of the job.

The leader must set an example for her staff. She must inspire confidence and earn respect and loyalty.

*Square-dealing* is essential in a leader. If your staff knows you are honest, you are interested in their welfare, you give credit for good work, you try to correct errors by private rather than public criticism, and you judge each person on merit rather than favoritism, then you will gain the willing cooperation of each person. You will be able to depend on each one whether you are there to supervise or not.

If you are a good leader, you will delegate authority and responsibility for certain work to each member of your staff. Talk over problems with them and listen to their suggestions. Perhaps the desire to show appreciation for your confidence and trust in them will be an incentive to greater effort and greater success in their work.

Your good judgment will be required to decide when to say *no* to a plan or idea. Can you explain why this is necessary? Can you give a counter-suggestion that is more promising?

If you are an executive, you must *assume the responsibility* for the work of your staff. You must take the blame and accept the criticism of management. If you have misjudged a person's ability or failed to train her sufficiently for her work, you must be willing to accept the blame. Admit your error. Analyze the cause of the failure and take the necessary precautions to avoid a repetition.

If you are responsible for the work of others, you can lessen the chance of misunderstandings and confusion by making clear-cut requests and assignments. Discuss the plan with the workers. Be sure the problem is understood.

If you must correct or discipline someone on your staff, take time to have a conference in private so that you and the employee are able to discuss both sides of the problem. Never attempt to discipline anyone when you are angry. Start the interview with a statement of the good features of the work so that the employee is prepared to accept your criticism of the faults or weaknesses. Be firm but fair in your discussion so that the employee understands what is expected in the future. Every disciplinary measure should help, not break, either the individual's spirit or respect for you.

Self-control in time of stress, humility for honors received, and appreciation of the ability of others will make your work with men and women more effective and will win for you the respect of management, your co-workers, and those on your staff.

### **Keep Growing**

Competition in business is so great that no one dares to rest on present accomplishments. If you would advance in your chosen work, you should widen your interests and your appreciation of skill in many fields. Women tend to limit their circle of friends,



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their scope of reading, and their attendance at lectures and meetings outside their field.

Too often, women do not consult specialists who can be of great help. These specialists may demand a high fee for a special short-term job, and women are apt to consider the size of the fee rather than the worth of the service. The experienced executive is able to evaluate the worth of specialized service and to put the service to work to accomplish the objective. It pays to be open-minded to the advice, service, and help of the experts. Your growth in your work depends on your ability to make the most of every opportunity to improve the effectiveness of your work and the work of your staff.

If you would advance in your work, take an *inventory* of yourself! Are you using all of your ability or are you giving just a half-hearted performance? Do you need more training under an expert? Do you have maturity of judgment or do you rely on your femininity to carry you ahead?

You may overrate yourself or you may be a severe critic, but if you would advance to a more responsible position, be honest in your self-analysis. You are the only person who can decide what you are and what you must do to improve your rating.

Where are you going? The answer is yours. Neither chance nor luck will decide. You can advance if you accept the challenge.