

Leadership for Women™ Program

Final Evaluation Report

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Leadership for Women*TM Program

There has been a recognized need to increase the number of women in leadership positions in the workplace. While women represent about half of the working population, only thirty percent occupy supervisory positions. Opportunities for women to develop leadership competencies are not readily available and access is frequently limited due to shorter years of experience in the workforce than their male counterparts. Challenges in balancing personal and professional responsibilities and gender differences in conceptualization of what counts as leadership are issues that women face when assuming leadership positions. It is evident that women need opportunities to develop leadership competencies in an environment that is accessible, and sensitive to the unique challenges that women in leadership encounter.

Kathy Watt of LMI Canada is offering a leadership program based on the *Leadership for Women*TM Program created by Paul Meyer (2006). This leadership program was designed to respond to the unique situation of women in leadership. While the program has many components, the purpose of this specific research is to determine the **impact of goal setting on the development of women's leadership competencies**. Insights gleaned from the research assisted in identifying the outcomes or areas of impact resulting from the overall program including women's perceptions of their growth and development with respect to personal and professional productivity, as well as strategic planning.

1.2 **Evaluation focus and data gathering activities**

The evaluation initiative involved both process and outcome evaluation components. With respect to the process aspects of the evaluation, areas of investigation focused on the practices of women in setting and enacting personal and professional goals, and their perceived level of confidence in assuming leadership roles prior to the program. Changes in their goal setting practices and development of leadership competencies associated with the leadership program were followed throughout the seven months by way of program journals and conversations with the program instructor. In terms of the outcome aspects of the evaluation, a range of potential impacts was investigated, encompassing areas of change related to goal setting practices, leadership competencies, and personal and professional productivity.

Data collection activities were undertaken between October 2009 and May 2010. These efforts included completion of a literature scan, development of interview questions, review of participants' journal entries and key informant interviews with eight participants enrolled in the *Leadership for Women*TM Program at the onset of the program as well as upon

completion. Data collection, analysis and synthesis were ongoing throughout the process. Using content analysis, key themes, trends and findings were identified specifically as they related to the impact of goal setting on leadership competencies. A final report was completed in June, 2010.

1.3 Organization of the report

This report provides a summary of the methods and outcomes resulting from this evaluation initiative. The second section, a scan of literature, provides a succinct overview of the key themes related to women in leadership positions and the utilization of goal-setting techniques. The third section provides a synopsis of the women's demographics, and an overview of their goal setting practices and perceived level of confidence in leadership roles prior to the program. The fourth section documents the participants' journey during the *Leader for Women™* Program highlighting the process by which they establish personal and professional goals, set the stage for success by seeking out information, resources and supportive groups, as well as identifying criteria to assess the successful achievement of their goals. The fifth section documents the effectiveness of program and related activities as they impact development of leadership competencies and practices of goal setting as they relate to achieving personal and professional goals. The final section makes recommendations relevant to the design and implementation of future leadership initiatives for women.

2.0 LITERATURE SCAN

2.1 Overview of women in leadership

Over the past decade, the desire to increase the amount of women leaders in the workplace has been well documented in the literature. Women in the work place total approximately half of today's employees but occupy only a third of the managerial roles, most of which are at the lower levels (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003). In 2007, Catalyst, a women's research organization released a report that provides census information on women board directors of the FP500, stated that of the 4061 board members in the 500 companies across Canada, only 13% (n=527) were female. This is an increase of only 1% when measured against data from the 2005 report. In Atlantic Canada, the numbers are slightly higher than the national average with the provinces of Nova Scotia (20.8%) and New Brunswick (18.4%) reporting the second and third highest percentages in Canada. The trend for these two provinces seems to indicate a slight increase in the number of female board members in Canada over the past 3 years; however this is not the case. Data that includes all of the provinces indicates that Canada has been at a standstill in the number of female board members since 2003.

Unfortunately, this is not unique to our nation. Studies across Europe, Asia and the Middle East all report low number of females holding high level positions (Women in National Parliaments, 2009). In fact, data compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union as of October 31st, 2009 stated that of the total elected MP's in the World, only 18.6% were women (Women in National Parliaments, 2009). The region with the highest percentage of elected women MP's were the Americas at 22.2%, with Europe being the next closest at 19.5%. The regions with the lowest amount of elected women MP's were the Pacific (15.2%) and Arab States (8.6%) (Women in National Parliaments, 2009). The number of women MP's are surprisingly low in spite of the many political statements promising to address gender equality in the public sphere (Norris & Inglehart, 2001).

The reasoning for the low number of women leaders compared to their male counterparts is complex. The obstacles that women face when climbing the corporate ladder have been shown to be different than that of men, and so has their desire to achieve such positions (Vinnicombe & Sighn, 2003; Meyer, 2006). Other arguments suggest that the tools used to promote leadership qualities are not suited for the learning styles of women (Vinnicombe & Sighn, 2003). Currently the vast majority of women's leadership literature focuses on the difference in leadership styles between men and women. There is much debate on how the different gender personality traits affect leadership styles. Even as women around the world continue to advance in their careers, many still view male leaders differently than their female counterparts" (Meyer, 2006).

Tackling the obstacles faced by women leaders is not easy. There is an abundance of articles in the literature focusing on various theories and strategies for overcoming the obstacles. This section aims to highlight the obstacles and discuss the various leadership development

techniques used to conquer them. Currently, there is very little research on how the different genders utilize leadership development techniques. It is our thought that certain tools for leadership development may be used more efficiently or differently by one gender as compared to the other. In other words, what is effective for men may not necessarily be applicable for women (Yoder, 2001). Understanding how women utilize leadership development tools will benefit those who offer such programs. This will allow program facilitators to adapt the tools making them more gender appropriate. Therefore, the purpose of this literature scan is to investigate how women utilize leadership development tools. Particular focus will be placed on goal-setting methods with respect to better practices, and motivational strategies used to achieve the goals. The literature scan review will also provide insight into the types of obstacles that women leaders encounter in their workplace and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges.

2.1.1 Obstacles in the Workplace

The obstacles faced by women leaders have diminished over time but have not completely disappeared (Erkut, 2001). The structure of work was not designed to take into consideration women in leadership roles and the impact that the family systems would have. The following section provides an overview of the institutional and family obstacles women leaders encounter.

Institutional Obstacles

Institutional obstacles refer to the conflicts women leaders are faced with in their own workplace settings. As mentioned, these obstacles are part of the workplace and are not brought on by the women leaders themselves. After reviewing the literature, the obstacles can be summarized into three general themes: 1) gender stereotypes, 2) workplace culture and 3) implemented workplace policies (Erkut, 2001).

Gender stereotypes

Based on a literature scan the most pronounced workplace obstacle encountered by women leaders is gender stereotyping. Gender stereotypes are persistent and strong and have been shown to have a greater negative impact on women as compared to men in performance evaluation (Swim, Borgida, Maruyama, & Myers 1989; Heilman, 2001). It has been argued that gender stereotypes consist of status beliefs that associate greater leadership and competence with men as compared to women (Ridgeway, 2001; Meyer, 2006)

A study by Heilman (2001) explored the descriptive and prescriptive nature of gender stereotypes in the workplace setting. It was proposed that gender stereotypes and the expectations that arise from them (i.e. how a women behaves, and what women are supposed to be like) result in “*devaluation of their performance, denial of credit to them for their successes, or the penalization for being competent*” (Heilman, 2001). Studies have

affirmed that women and men are associated with different characteristics; men are linked with more directly to leadership traits while women tend to be associated with communal qualities, such as compassion for others, tenderness and affection (Eagerly & Carli, 2007). Men, however, are associated with qualities such as aggression, ambitious, self-confidence and control (Eagerly & Carli, 2007). According to Meyer (2006), women may shy away from assuming more challenging objectives because they have been enculturated to perceive assertiveness as a quality common to males. The problem occurs for women leaders when they display qualities typically associated with men, or lack the “typical” female qualities. A quote by Kim Campbell, Prime Minister of Canada in 1993, sums up this argument.

“I don’t have a traditionally female way of speaking...I’m quite assertive. If I didn’t speak the way I do, I wouldn’t have been seen as a leader. But my way of speaking may have grated on people who were not used to hearing it from a woman. It was the right way for a leader to speak, but it wasn’t the right way for a woman to speak. (Nov. 30, 2007).

Historically, gender stereotyping has led to fewer opportunities for women with regards to advancements in their careers and it continues to be of concern today (Kottle & Agar, 2002). While there has been a decrease in *overt* negative attitudes toward women leaders, Kottle and Agar (2002) argue that powerful negative feelings are still prominent in workplaces; however, they are more subtle. For some women leaders, overcoming the negative attitudes continue to be a daily struggle (Erkut, 2001), but they consider it to be a requirement for career advancement.

Workplace Culture

As more women enter the workforce, jobs that were once dominated by males and viewed as non-traditional for women in the 1980’s are no longer considered non-traditional today (Meyer, 2006). These include occupations such as sales and marketing (Meyer, 2006). However, in certain occupations which are non-traditional for women, there is still a reluctance to accept them in a managerial role. Non-traditional careers are defined as occupations with less than 30% of the same sex. These include science, engineering and trades (Perrone, 2009). In these settings, women often have to prove themselves as being “one of the boys”, and may be over looked for promotion simply because the position is not typically occupied by a woman.

An interesting article by Ryan & Haslam (2005), suggest that when women *are* provided with career advancement, they are often left standing on a “glass cliff”. The terminology “glass cliff” was suggested as they found that companies most often appointed women to their boards after they had consistently experienced poor performance for the previous five months. Therefore, they suggest that women are most likely to be fulfilling leadership positions in situations of general financial recession and downward spiral in performance

(Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Since their leadership appointments are often made during problematic times for the company, the leadership role is frequently more precarious.

Implemented Workplace Policies

There have been numerous initiatives and policies that have been implemented in order to address women's inclusion and advancement in the workplace. Examples include legislative policies such as Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. Other organizational practices include implementing flex-share programs, gender diversity initiatives, and mentoring programs (Kottle & Agars, 2001). However, Kottle & Agars (2001) argue that the success of these programs depends on how they are perceived by the companies' employees, both men and women. They provide a model for organizational change that suggests there are four underlying processes that can have an effect on the advancement of women in workplaces. These include: 1) Social cognition 2) Justice 3) Threat-rigidity and 4) Utility (Kottle & Agars, 2001).

Social cognition refers to gender stereotypes and social identity in the workplace. As we mentioned previously, how women are perceived in their workplace, along with the attitudes/behaviours of their co-workers, can have an impact on the advancement of the women's career. Kottle and Agars (2001) suggests that the management of social cognitions is critical for the success of implementing a new initiative in the work setting.

The term *justice* refers to whether the organizational participants perceive the new initiative to be fair or unfair. If the new gender initiative is deemed unfair, it may lead men (and some women) to refuse to accept the administration of gender initiatives, and finally, resist gender integrations (Kottle & Agars, 2001). This is similar to the term *threat-rigidity*, which suggests that new gender initiatives may be seen as a threat by certain groups. According to Kottle and Agar (2001), "*perceived threat would lead to greater reliance on formalized policies and practices, unwillingness to emphasize developmental efforts, and an absence of support for new policies related to gender, including any among the variety of so-called "family-friendly" policies*" (Kottle & Agars, 2001, p.194). Again, proper management of these views may help organizations with the implementation of advancement efforts.

The final term suggested by Kottle and Agars (2001) for successful implementation of gender initiatives is *utility*. Utility refers to the costs and benefits of the proposed gender initiative. In other words, the company needs to *buy in* and understand the value associated with the initiative. Unfortunately, if the perceived utility of the proposed program is low, the company may be less inclined to endorse it. Without the support of the company and demonstrated utility, the women's advancement initiative will rarely see success beyond the first step (Kottle & Agars, 2001).

2.1.2 Family Obstacles

Over the past two decades there has been a significant increase in the number of women in the workforce. Many women are pulling double duty in managing their home and business (Meyer, 2006). In 2006, women accounted for 47% of the employed workforce, up from 37% in 1976 (Census, 2006). This has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the percentage of working mothers. The Canadian Census (2006) reports that 73% of all women with children less than age 16 living at home were part of the employed workforce, up from 39% in 1976. While the dramatic increase in women employees is a bonus for the feminist movement, working mothers are often faced with more obstacles than their male counterparts, which may limit their advancement opportunities. For example, while men increasingly share household work and child-rearing, the bulk of the domestic duties are still carried out by women (Eagly & Carly, 2007; Bu & McKeen, 2001). This was demonstrated by a report written by Colin Lindsay in 2008. While he argued that the gap between the amount of time men and women spend in non-paid activities (i.e. household duties, childrearing etc.) is decreasing, women still spent more time than their male counterparts. In fact, in 2005, women spent an additional 2 hours per day on non-paid activities compared to men. On the other hand, men spent an additional 2 hours per day on paid work activities (Lindsay, 2008).

The extra time men are allotted to spend on paid work activities may provide some explanation on why men tend to advance more quickly up the corporate ladder. A study cited by Eagley and Carly (2007), sought to understand why female lawyers were less likely than men to hold leadership positions in large law firms. It was discovered that while female lawyers were less likely to begin their careers at such firms, they were more likely to leave them for the public sector in order to successfully achieve work-life balance. Of those women who did attain partnership, 60% were childless and the minority had delayed childrearing until they had attained this status (Eagley & Carly, 2007). Due to the extra pressures of family responsibility, women continue to be the ones who interrupt their careers, take more days off and work part-time to attend to family matters (Eagley & Carly, 2007). Therefore, it is evident that because women have fewer years of employment experience, their career progress is slower and their earnings reduced (Eagley & Carly, 2007).

Overcoming the obstacles faced by women leaders in their workplace is not easy. As we have noted, some companies chose to address the issue through policy legislations such as Equal Employment Opportunities and Affirmative Action programs. However, according to some women leaders, the successes they achieved came not from these company policies, but their own optimism, tenacity and drive for success (Erkut, 2001). In some cases, the women were forced to push their way to the top, while others had the benefit of following trails blazed by previous women in their fields (Erkut, 2007).

The value of harnessing the drive and determination these women leaders possess and teaching their skills to other women is beginning to be recognized in some companies. Therefore, another strategy aimed at career advancement for women is providing the women with leadership development program designed specifically for this gender. The benefit of providing women-only leadership programs was noted by Vinnicombe and Singh (2003) in their paper title *Women-only management training: An essential part of women's leadership development*. They argue that women have different ways of knowing and developing from men, however, many of the management/leadership development courses/programs are based on the male model of learning. Therefore, it is possible that the techniques taught in leadership development courses/programs are not created to be used effectively by women. Before this assumption can be made, however, it is important to understand how women leaders are utilizing the leadership development tools that are taught in these programs. This will allow the facilitators to adopt and adapt the tools so they can be used effectively by this gender group, thus, providing the women with valuable skills to overcome the obstacles in their workplaces.

2.2 Women's leadership development

Leadership is not based on merely the strength of one's position of authority or on the ability to be persuasive through a charming personality. Truly great leadership- enduring and authentic leadership- is achieved only by cultivating one's unique, internal attributes of personal leadership Paul Meyer, 2006 (Lesson 1, p 1).

With more and more women entering the workforce and tackling positions traditionally held by males, the development of a strong personal leadership philosophy is essential. Personal leadership refers to women's confidence in establishing exact directions in their lives, the commitment to move in that direction and the ability to take the required actions to acquire, accomplish or become whatever that goal demands (Meyer, 2006). Leadership development courses/programs are available for both men and women and are designed to teach effective management skills that can be utilized in their workplaces. For women leaders, these programs provide an excellent opportunity to network with other females in senior management positions and exchange ideas and experiences. Leadership development programs typically address skills that revolve around effective planning, listening and verbal communication skills. Goal-setting, the act of setting a target within a specific time frame is another essential skill that is taught routinely at leadership development programs. It is recognized as a crucial skill that drives both personal and business success. When an individual clearly defines and sets a goal, the obstacles and barriers that once held them back are severely diminished. Therefore, it is important to understand the impact goal setting has on the development of women leaders.

2.1.2 Goal setting theory

Before we can understand the impact of goal setting on women leadership development, it is important to understand the concept behind the Goal-Setting Theory. The Goal Setting theory describes a goal as the object or aim of an action usually targeted towards attaining a specific achievement within a specified timeframe (Locke & Latham, 2002). The theory is an amalgamation of empirical research that has been conducted over the past four decades. According to Locke and Latham (2002), the theory is based on Ryan's (1970) premise that "*conscious goals affect action*". The theory suggests that goals influence action via four mechanisms: 1) They serve as a directive function by directing actions towards goal-relevant activities and away from goal-irrelevant activities; 2) They have an energizing function (i.e. high goals lead to greater effort than low goals); 3) They affect persistence; and, 4) They indirectly lead to the arousal, discovery and/or use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies (Locke and Latham, 2002).

Along with the four mechanisms are moderators which determine whether the goal will be successful or not. These moderators include goal commitment, feedback, and task complexity (Locke & Latham, 2002). According to Locke and Latham (2002) the goal-performance relationship is strongest when the individual is committed to their goal. They state that this commitment is strengthened through self-efficacy and when the individual places importance on the goal. Persons with high self-efficacy set their goals high as they are not satisfied with anything less (Latham & Locke, 2006). The second moderator, feedback or progress, is important for goal setting as it provides the individual with a progress report on how they are doing. Without feedback, the individual would not be able to adjust their strategy or level of effort in accordance to what the goal requires. Lastly, task complexity refers to the difficulty of the desired goal. Goals that are more complex require the individual to discover the appropriate strategies to complete the tasks (Locke & Latham, 2002). In other words they require greater effort, focus and persistence from the individual (Latham & Locke, 2006).

The moderators crafted by Locke and Latham's work provide a framework for person's facilitating workshops on goal-setting; however, the concepts are typically presented in a more user friendly manner. The SMART acronym is one such example. While there are some variations, the acronym stands for a number of ideal criteria that should be considered when setting goals (Siegart and Taylor, 2004). One variation of the acronym states that goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-specific. This simple acronym provides goal-setters with a manageable way to monitor their progress and achieve their desired targets. The use of the acronym has been applied to many different settings such as athletics, rehabilitation (Siegart and Taylor, 2004) and business. Similarly, in Paul Meyer's (2006) program titled *Leadership for Women™*, he

states that “the practice of achieving personal and leadership success relies on five important goal-setting principals; 1) Crystallize Your Thinking 2) Develop a written plan with deadlines for its attainment 3) Possess a burning desire 4) Develop supreme confidence 5) Keep an iron-willed determination (Lesson 5, p.5). However, the effectiveness of these concepts, more specifically, the effectiveness of goal-setting for women in leadership positions, has not been widely explored. Therefore, the next section will discuss how women utilize the goal-setting process and try to determine if it is an effective practice for the development of women leaders.

2.2.2 Women leaders and goal setting

If one were to type the words “Women Leaders and Goal Setting” into an Internet search 700,000 links to different sites ranging from leadership development courses/programs to motivation speakers to newsletter articles would be discovered. There are vast amounts of information on the web claiming to help women develop into better leaders by teaching them how to set and achieve their goals. However, if one were to type the same words into an academic search engine, the number of articles found would be drastically reduced as compared to the general Internet search. This undeniable gap of evidence-based research supports the need to investigate how women leaders are utilizing the goal-setting technique and whether the exercise is actually beneficial for their personal and professional leadership development.

Motivational Theories

The ability to set and achieve goals has been identified as a key characteristic of leadership (Edwards, 1994). Even young girls recognize peers who possess the ability to set goals and more often selected to fulfil leadership roles (Edwards, 1994). The question becomes then, why are some women more successful at achieving their goals as compared to others? Some theories suggest motivation is the key component to achieving one’s goals. For example, the *Goal Achievement Theory* developed by Nicholls (1989), states that there are two types of orientations that will either facilitate or impede the realization of one’s goals. The two orientations are: 1) *ego or performance* and 2) *task or mastery*. In *ego-orientation* individuals are competing against others where *task orientation* emphasizes personal development and internal competition (Allain, 2010).

Meyer (2006) suggests that self-motivation, the ability to motivate and inspire oneself to action, is an essential ingredient in developing one’s personal leadership skills. He suggests there are five basic human needs that influence self-motivation: 1) physical needs (i.e. food to eat, water to drink, air to breathe); 2) safety or security needs; 3) social needs; 4) self-esteem needs; and, 5) self-fulfilment needs. He also points out the two traditional methods used to motivate people, namely fear motivation and incentive motivation. Fear motivation involves “attempting to compel others to act out of the fear of the consequences that may

arise from not doing so (Lesson 4, p.5).” Incentive motivation is considered the opposite of fear motivation. It involves the promise of awards to get people to act. However, Meyer (2006) states that neither form of motivation produces any change in the personality or behaviour of the individual, and if a change is to occur it needs to involve and change in the individuals’ attitude (Meyer, 2006).

In 2008, Jean Whinghter and colleagues examined the role of goal-orientation in the workload-frustration relationship. Their results showed that workload was positively related to frustration in individuals with high avoidance goal-orientation (ego), compared to those with high mastery orientation. They provided an explanation for the findings in that individuals who experience higher levels of mastery goal orientation are more inclined to assess quantitative work demands as challenges rather than threats (Whinghter, Cunningham, & Christopher, 2008). Persons in leadership positions, however, may be drawn to more *ego-performance* goals in order to project a certain image of competence. This may be the case for both men and women leaders; however, Ely & Rhode (2008) suggest that the particular identity challenges women leaders face amplifies their concerns on how other perceive them, increasing their tendency to implement *performance-oriented strategies* (Ely & Rhode, 2008). Furthermore, they suggest that while performance-seeking goals can be self-defeating for anyone, they may be particularly so for women, who seek external validation for images that are in conflict with the feminine attributes (Ely & Rhode, 2008).

Similarly, Deci and Ryan’s (2000) *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT), states that goals are not all equally motivating because the content of the goals matter. Their theory makes a distinction between *intrinsic motivation* (eg: personal well-being) and *extrinsic motivation* (ie: wealth, power, status). Research has shown that pursuing and attaining intrinsic goals relates positively to psychological health, while attainment of extrinsic aspirations relates positively to indicators of ill-being (Niemiec, Ryan & Deci, 2009). The basis of the SDT states that in order to attain positive psychological health, three basic needs must be met: 1) autonomy, 2) competence and 3) relatedness. Autonomy refers to a need for personal freedom and the ability to make choices that affect one’s own life, while competence refers to the need of recognizing and utilizing personal gifts to attain personal goals. Relatedness is best described as a need for connectedness and closeness with one’s family, peers and significant others (Deci and Ryan, 2000). According to Deci and Ryan (2000) “social contexts or individual differences that support satisfaction of the basic needs facilitate natural growth processes... whereas those that forestall autonomy, competence or relatedness are associated with poorer motivation, performance and well-being” (p.236).

In workplace settings, the SDT has been used to examine managerial traits with respect to employee satisfaction (Baard, Deci & Ryan, 2004) and employee burnout (Fernet, Guay, & Senecal, 2004). Results have shown that managers who provide their employees with a

sense of autonomy, increase work satisfaction (Baard et al, 2004) and decrease employee turnover (Richer, Blanchard & Vallerandi, 2002). Similarly, one study reported a three-way interaction that occurs between job demand, job control and work self-determination in that job control reduces the unhealthy effects of job demand in individuals with high self-determination. The SDT theory relates to women leaders as they tend to choose jobs and set goals based on intrinsic motivators such as wanting a balance between their personal and professional life. However, women in leadership positions are often working in areas that place value on extrinsic motivators like profit lines and climbing the corporate ladder which may lead the individual to use extrinsic motivation to attain the goals. If their work environment does not allow the satisfaction of the three basic needs, it may impact their motivation towards achieving their goals which in turn may negatively affect their mental health.

Goal setting and gender

Some research has suggested that there are differences on how men set goals compared to women. A study by Bu and McKeen (2001) examined the difference in work goals among male and female business students in Canada and China. They found that while both genders were concerned about their career success in terms of materialistic and intrinsic rewards, Canadian and Chinese women gave higher priority to the goals of balanced life and simplicity/routine in comparison to their male counterparts (Bu & McKeen, 2001). Similarly, a Swiss study researching how the life goals of resident doctors impacted their choice of speciality found that male residents tended to specialize in surgery, a field related to power and career achievement. However, female residents most often chose gynaecology, obstetrics, paediatrics, or anaesthesiology, which were specialties associated with life goals aimed at having satisfying social relationships and careers that could be part time (Buddeberg-Fischer, Klaghofer, Abel, & Buddeberg, 2006). Overall, the research tends to suggest that women prioritize work goals such as relationships with others, fairness, and job security more so than their male counterparts (Worthly et al, 2009; Buddenberg-Fischer et al, 2006; Bu & McKeen, 2001).

Goal setting and personality traits

Personality traits of women leaders may also have an impact on setting and achieving goals. A common trait among women leaders is perfectionism - the disposition that anything short of perfection is unacceptable (Bickel, Wara, Atkinson et al, 2002). An explanation for this trait suggests that women may use perfectionism as a protective response in order to deal with certain challenges at their workplace (Bickel et al, 2002). How perfectionism affects goal-setting depends on whether the trait acts as a positive quality or a maladaptive characteristic. Studies focusing on perfectionism in individuals state that a positive striving perfectionism may facilitate a successful performance if they have high expectations for themselves (Beiling, Isreali, Smith & Antony, 2003) and may also provide an extra sense of

motivation (Stoll, Lau, & Stoeber, 2008). However, if perfectionism is taken too far, the individual may become overly self-critical, leading to an increase in anxiety, which will ultimately have a negative impact on their performance outcomes (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Similarly, women leaders who positively strive for perfection may be able to set and achieve goals more effectively than those who are negatively influenced by their perfectionism.

2.3 Better practices with goal setting

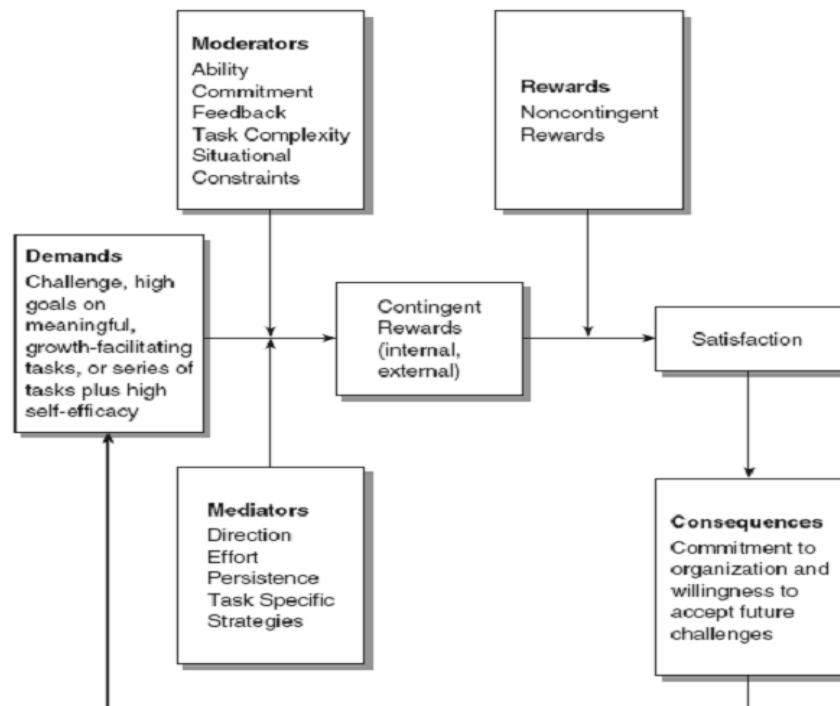
2.3.1 Increased self-efficacy

When setting goals, if goals are set high and the commitment and work success is present, then goals are realized (Craver, 2002). But how high is too high, or is there such a thing? While goals should be challenging to an individual, in accordance with the SMART acronym, they should also be both realistic and attainable. As Linda Babcock and Sarah Laschever state that research on the relationship between goal-setting and performance outcomes among dieters and recovering addicts has discovered that setting specific goals that are challenging improves results in almost every case. Research supports these findings to be true in the area of negotiation as well. Babcock and Laschever (2003) suggest that people who go into negotiations with more ambitious targets tend to get more of what they want than people who go in with more moderate goals.

If expectations are too high the successful realization of goals can be impeded. Modest expectations allow individuals to be surprised by outcomes, and may lead to change in goals (Schwartz 2004). While there are correlations between high expectations in goal setting and the achievement of these outcomes, there may be an emotional cost (Freshman & Guthrie, 2009). They do not suggest that one should lower expectations in terms of goal setting or lose focus; rather, one should break long goals down into their short term component parts, and attend to one's emotional reactions by being accepting and forgiving of self (Freshman and Guthrie, 2009).

Research has shown that setting and attaining high goals requires the individual to have high self-efficacy (Locke & Latham, 2006). If an individual with low self-efficacy attempts to attain a high goal and are unsuccessful, they may exhibit feelings of defeat or dissatisfaction. The *High Performance Cycle* (HPC) supports this concept. The HPC is a framework (Figure 1) that is used for understanding motivation in the workforce and is based on Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory (Latham, 2007). The HPC states that an individual's motivation is impacted by certain challenges and demands that may include setting high goals (Latham & Locke, 2007). Those employees with high self-efficacy are more likely to choose or commit to high goals.

Figure 1- High Performance Cycle



Latham, G.P. (2007). *Work motivation: History, theory, research and practice*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

2.3.2 Collaboration and self-set goals

There is some debate in the literature regarding whether performance changes depending on how the goal was set (i.e. assigned, collaboratively set, or self-set). While there may not be any *performance* distinction between the three types of goal setting, it has been suggested that collaboratively or self-set goals provide an internal motivation compared to goals set by external pressure (i.e. manager) (Bodenheimer & Handley, 2009). A study by Erez and Earley (1987) examined the effects of cultural values on the relations among goal-setting, goal acceptance and performance for moderate to extremely difficult goals. Their results showed that participative strategies (i.e. collaboration) in goal setting led to higher goal acceptance and performance compared to assigned goals strategies, regardless of the culture (Erez & Earley, 1987).

A more recent study by Debra Byrne (2009) compared students using a *participative goal-setting (PGS)* strategy along with an *aggressive intervention program* to students just utilizing the aggressive intervention program. The results showed that students using the PGS and aggressive intervention program achieved higher levels of progression, and reported feeling more competent in transferring their learned skills to other academic and

social settings (Byrne, 2009). The results from these studies suggest that goals should be intrinsically motivated to achieve the best performance.

2.3.3 Tracking progress

Research has shown that setting proximal (short-term) goals, in addition to distal (long term) goals is more beneficial than simply setting distal goals (Bodenheimer & Handley, 2009; Latham and Locke, 2007). Proximal goals tend to be more specific (i.e. replace soda with water) compared to distal goals which are usually more general (i.e. lose 30 pounds) (Bodenheimer & Handley, 2009). According to Latham and Locke (2007) when individuals receive feedback on or track the progress of their short term goals it allows them to see whether or not their long term goals are realistic and attainable. There is an increase in feedback when short term goals are set in addition to a long goal. According to Meyer (2006) receiving feedback is an important aspect of goal-setting practice as it provides the individual with a sense of focus. It can either reaffirm the steps the individual is taking, or provide them with information to help get back on track. Simply writing down one's goals, and recording the steps that have been taken, is a form of feedback as it holds the individual accountable for their decisions and provides a concrete reminder of the target they are striving for. Through the practice of written goals and tracking progress can assist an individual in staying focused and reducing possible external distractions.

2.3.4 Positive goal framing

Research on goal framing has shown that individuals whose goals are framed positively will have a significantly higher performance than those whose goals are framed negatively. For example, Roney, Griggs, and Shanks (2003) as cited by Latham and Locke (2007), found that a negatively framed goal (*Try not to miss the deadlines for three out of the five projects*) led to worse performances than those goals that were framed positively (*Try to meet three out of the five project deadlines*).

2.4 Conclusion

The number of women in leadership roles has increased dramatically over the past 30 years. While the numbers are still not at par with their male counterparts, there has been significant progress in the representation of women in roles such as company CEO's, entrepreneurs, doctors and lawyers, along with many other high level jobs. Achieving these positions does not come without some sacrifice, as outlined by this section. The current literature on women leadership is saturated with research focusing on the struggles associated with women in the workplace and the differences in leadership styles between men and women. With these areas being highly targeted, it is important to move on and shift the focus to how highly effective women leaders achieved their positions and the strategies they used in promoting their business and personal lives.

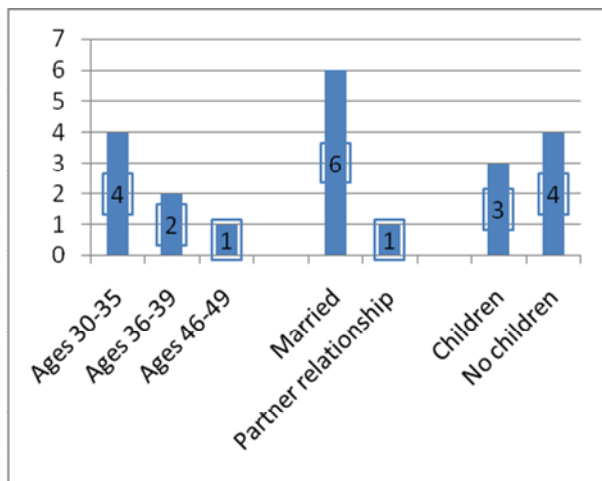
There are multiple strategies for attaining leadership roles that women have identified and incorporated into their daily lives. These include developing effective verbal communication and listening skills, and establishing an effective career path. This literature scan chose to focus on developing effective and efficient goal-setting techniques, as this was the area of interest. As previously mentioned the majority of research on leadership characteristics focuses on the ability to set and achieve goals. However, the ways in which women leaders utilize and incorporate these techniques into their workplace settings has not been well documented.

The primary focus of this literature scan was to outline the challenges and barriers associated with women leaders and provide information for better goal-setting practices with respect to women's leadership. The four key points that emerged included 1) women with high self-efficacy pursue and attain higher goals; 2) self-set or collaboratively-set goals provide intrinsic motivation; 3) proximal and distal goals that include feedback mechanisms ensure a clear focus; and 4) positively framed goals result in enhanced performance. Future research should expand on these ideas and provide empirical evidence on the ways in which women leaders utilize the goal-setting techniques and other leadership strategies, in their personal and professional contexts.

3.0 PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

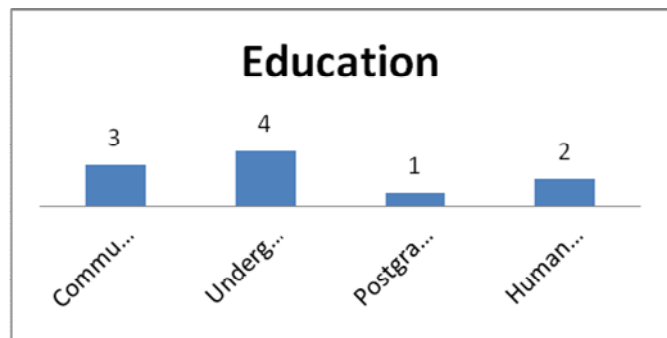
Initial interviews were conducted at the beginning of the program for the purposes of constructing base line profiles of the women. Interview questions elicited demographic information, identified how participants became aware of the program, outlined the women’s perceptions of the purpose of the leadership program, and summarized their goals setting practices and leadership responsibilities. These initial profiles provided a basis for identifying areas of change at the end of the program.

3.1 Demographics



The *Leadership for Women™* Program had an enrolment of eight. All eight of the women participated in at least one data collection activity (journal entries and informant interviews). Seven participants agreed to take part in two interviews each. The participants ranged in age from 30 to 46; four of the women are in their early thirties, two in their late thirties and one in her forties. All participants are married or in partnership relationships; however, only three have at least one child.

Five participants have post secondary training including community college and university courses. The chart indicates the range of educational experiences.



Workplace	Number
Civil service	2
University	1
Medical/health	1
Business	2
Self employed	1

The workplaces of the participants were diverse. Of the seven participants who took part in the interview process, four reported having supervisory responsibilities for teams or groups of individuals.

3.2 The Leadership for Women™ Program

3.2.1 Getting involved in the program

It is interesting to note that the ways in which the seven women became aware of and interested in the leadership program involved relational connections. These relational connections were usually made within the participants' immediate personal or professional networks. The participants' decision to pursue the leadership program represents a conscious choice to develop tools to meet a need or fulfil a future desire. Their reasons for taking the program included:

- Struggling with their present careers and feeling trapped
- Grappling with traditional perceptions of roles of women
- Dealing with feelings of burn-out
- Seeking the tools to help achieve personal and professional potential
- Seeking networking opportunities with other women

In Meyer's (2006) definition of personal leadership, he outlines three actions that define personal leadership. In making the choice in enrolling in the program the women have demonstrated their ability to establish the exact direction of their lives and the commitment to pursue it. The last action in Meyer's definition is the ability to take the required actions to acquire, accomplish or become whatever that goal demands. In the fourth section of this report this aspect of the definition will be considered in light of the women's accomplishments.

3.2.2 Purpose of the leadership program

When women were asked about the purpose of the leadership program it became evident that there was a wide variation in the way they each defined *leader and leadership*. For some, the notion of leader and leadership was applied predominately to the workplace. In this context the purpose of the program was to acquire tools essential to become a more effective leader. The women defined these tools as the ability to:

- Develop, enact, and successfully achieve goals
- Develop habits and routines that lead to successful leadership
- Assert decisions in ways in that would not be perceived as "bitchy." One could look at this from a gendered perspective. A man who is assertive is defined as being clear-thinking and motivated by a well-defined goal. On the other hand, a woman making the same statements might be perceived as being aggressive, or pushy – certainly unfeminine characteristics.

“When people were asking me what course I was taking, I would say, ‘I am taking a course on women’s leadership development’. I don’t like the leadership role so I would say, ‘I am doing a women’s development course.’ And that’s how I see my explanation really changed me. It is a personal leadership course. I see where it can develop my leadership with people and my leadership to myself. There is a lot of doubt in here. I need to get that out and focus on my strengths.”

- Commit to the processes that allow one to become a more effective leader
- Find and maintain balance

Maintaining balance was a concept applied not only to the work place, but also to the ability to balance personal and professional responsibilities.

One participant defined leadership in terms of developing a personal leadership style. This involved discovering “one’s unique personal style”, assessing strengths, and identifying areas for improvement. One woman stated,

“It is about discovering things about yourself ... your weaknesses and your strengths”.

Leadership was defined by another in terms of “self perception”. In this context, it is perceived as a tool to develop confidence, and sense self worth; in other words, *self-efficacy*.

Another purpose of the program was to develop and set goals and become accountable for following through.

3.3. Goal setting practices prior to the *Leadership for Women*™ Program

All but one of the participants asserted that they set goals prior to the program. For some women, goals were set in both their personal and professional life. One woman had a well-honed intuitive process for setting and achieving goals that involved inner dialogue as an integral component of the goal setting. Generally, the goal setting process was preceded by recognition of a *need for change*. When the specifics of the change became clear, a goal was set and researched. The enactment of the goal involved waiting intuitively for the *right* time to make a move.

Several women commented that well-developed practices for goal setting could be railroaded when their decision making abilities were challenged by colleagues or by the “unknowns” of a new position or situation.

“So I did not have a goal written down but in my mind I was like - if I want to do that then I have to do something about it. It’s not just going to fall on my lap so I started to take steps without even knowing that I would be applying for the job. The job was not going to come knocking at my door so I needed to go through the hoops.”

“Those are the only two people that do that to me – they shake my confidence. I make myself feel that I am not at their level. They don’t make me feel that way, I do.”

On the other hand, some participants’ notion of setting goals was making a *to-do list*. These lists, both personal and professional, were frequently written in a daily planner. For one participant, the professional goal setting was a workplace requirement. For another, the *to-do list* was personal and frequently remained incomplete. Several women indicated that low self-esteem and lack of confidence were barriers to setting and enacting goals. Several shared that they often worked hard to present a confident image to others.

One outgoing participant defined goals as dreams, hopes and wishes that usually received instantaneous gratification. This definition of goal setting precluded the need to plan, and usually was applied to the acquisition of material goods or the carrying out of an activity.

3.4 Barriers that impeded the setting, developing and carrying out of goals

- **Tension created by lack of congruence between traditional and contemporary roles of women**

A number of women grew up in traditional environments where women worked in the home caring for their families. When a family member questioned a participant’s career choices, she began to reflect her motives, “*Maybe I should not be so career- oriented. What is wrong with me?*” Several women alluded to the fact that they struggled with an intrinsic sense of self worth, often relying on external assessments to define self value. In this situation, a number of participants were reluctant to share their authentic selves with others.

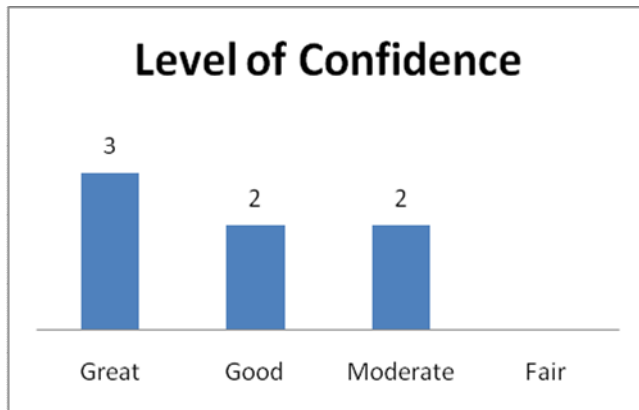
- **Taking time away from perceived responsibilities whether personal or professional.**

Women are enculturated to believe that when they take time for “self care” they are appropriating time that belongs to others. “*Just taking the course on Tuesday - I find it hard to go there because I have so much to do. I should be working and I feel guilty*”. Finding the balance between personal and professional responsibilities was an ongoing challenge for a number of participants.

- **Being taken seriously by work colleagues**

It was noted that all the women identified gender, age, and academic status as issues that often impeded their belief that they could set goals that would be accepted by others.

3.5 Leadership practices prior to the program



Participants were asked to rate their level of confidence in leading themselves or their teams. Three rated themselves as *great*, with one of the participants using the descriptor *very great*. Both participants who rated themselves as *moderate* explained that this fluctuates between *moderate* and *good* depending upon the context. One woman noted, “I

would say good to moderate because I have people second guessing me all the time while others feel threatened or jealous.” One woman commented on being confident at work in a professional context, yet feeling very insecure in making decisions with respect to personal issues. There was a lack of congruence for several women between their stated level of confidence in leading themselves and others and the practices in which they engaged.

“I feel pretty comfortable in what I do. I am the first one to say – ‘you know what – I do not know that answer but I will get it and get back to you’. ... I don’t need to know all the answers but I do need to know where to get them.”

Four women indicated that they had supervisory positions at work and described their leadership practices. One of the four participants stated that she was comfortable in her leadership role and could easily admit that she did not need to have all the answers. She describes her leadership style as being collaborative. “I got a new boss and it was a huge learning curve for her. So we were just working together to get the team set up.”

The initial interviews have assisted in creating a profile of the participants, their understanding and practices of goal setting, and the level of confidence they have in their leadership roles in the workplace.

4.0 LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN™ PROGRAM

One of the main purposes of the *Leadership for Women™* Program was to support the participants in setting personal and professional goals as a means to developing leadership competencies. Developing goal setting practices involved the articulation of personal and professional goals in written form. To achieve these goals participants:

- indicated level of importance of each
- identified barriers or challenges
- identified others with whom they needed to work
- outlined essential information and resources
- identified criteria to judge successful achievement

4.1 Setting personal and professional goals

Locke and Latham (2002) suggests that goals influence action by helping participants focus on goal-relevant activities, creating a sense of forward or positive energy, increasing persistence, and leading to the discovery and use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies. In the *Leadership for Women™* Program participants set personal and professional goals.

Goals	Participants	
1	3	The participants wrote between one and five personal goals which included family issues pertaining to relationships and having children, self care with respect to physical activity, travel, education, financial planning, and spiritual development as well as household tasks, in particular <i>de-cluttering</i> the house. While all seven felt that they had a target date in mind to achieve their goals, four set definite time-frames.
2 to 3	3	
4 or more	1	

Professional goals centred on workplace advancement, the development of leadership competencies (strategic thinking and planning, team building, and relationship building) and connections with the community (networking and public speaking). Four participants were supported by a mentor in setting these goals.

4.1.1 Setting the ground work for success

Establishing Importance

Locke and Latham (2002) purport, that the goal-performance relationship is the strongest when individuals are committed to their goals. As a means of strengthening commitment and self-efficacy, participants were asked to determine the importance of their goals.

The women's criteria for establishing importance were:

- Increased quality of life (health benefits, leisure time, building family relationships)
- Career development (gender equity, and advancement)
- Establishing priorities (starting a family versus focusing on career development)

Identifying barriers and challenges

Working through the steps of goal setting practices in a group setting allowed participants and the program instructor to provide feedback to one another. Latham & Locke (2006) note that feedback is important to goals setting as it provides participants with a means for assessing progress. Participants not only identified the challenges but shared strategies for problem solving and overcoming these barriers. Identified challenges pertained to issues of:

- *Gender*

Specifically the participants identified family responsibilities, maternity leaves, husband's work, and male-dominated workplace as issues that might keep them from achieving their personal and professional goals.

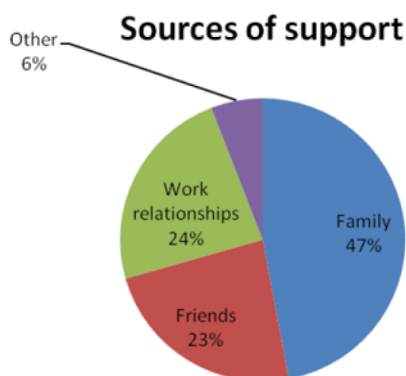
- *Work*

The challenges in the work place were identified as lack of support of the employer, lack of education, job assignment and commitments, salary, and competition from other businesses.

- *Life*

Life issues centred around personal and family health, emotions and feelings as their ability to balance work and home responsibilities.

Identifying people or groups with whom participants need to work



Participants identified family as the single most important source of support in terms of realizing their goals. Families were defined as spouse or partner, parents and in-laws. Work relationships with co-workers, employer supervisors as well as with friends were given equal weight in terms of being critical sources of support.

Outlining essential information and resources

Each component in the goal setting process involved intentional actions which kept participants focused on the goals. Information that was accessed through formal and informal research energized or motivated the participants

and helped plan task-oriented activities that would lead to goal actualization. From these resources, participants were to create action plans. Four participants reported that they created action plans with specific activities. One reported that what she had created was what she called *a work plan*.

Identifying criteria to judge successful achievement of the goals

When the women spoke of “knowing how their goals would be achieved” the criteria mentioned fit into two main categories.

- Personal sense of accomplishment – an increased sense of confidence, reflectivity and well-roundedness that would be evident to self and others.
- Development of personal and professional leadership skills – an increase of specific skills that open the door to more opportunities to realize goals.

5.0 IMPACTS OF THE *LEADERSHIP FOR WOMEN™* PROGRAM

During the second interviews participants were asked to reflect on their experience of taking the *Leadership for Women™* Program and identify areas of impact on their leadership competencies in the context of both personal and professional goals setting. Initially, participants were given a three point rating scale - positively impacted (PI), negatively impacted (Neg. I). None of the participants reported a negative impact. Within the positive impact designations, participants selected within the range of “somewhat impacted” (SI), “very impacted” (VI) or not impacted at all (NI).

Participants’ responses have been collated and results expressed in two graphs. The first graph represents the impact of the program on leadership competencies with respect to personal goal setting.

5.1 Impact on Leadership Skills

5.1.1 Impact on Leadership Skills in personal goal setting

Impact on Leadership Skills in Personal Goal Setting			
	VI	SI	NI
Set goals	7	0	0
Visualize goals	4	3	0
Motivate yourself	3	4	0
Manage time	6	1	0
Use affirmations with self	3	4	0
Communicate effectively with others	4	3	0
Set priorities	3	2	1
Plan accordingly to your priorities	3	3	1
Be self confident	7	0	0
Delegate to other team members	5	1	1
Be self-reflective as a leader	7	0	0
Motivate others	5	1	1
Empower others	3	4	0
Coach others	3	4	0

participant who reported no impact was unable to achieve her original goals.

The three areas of greatest impact identified by all participants were **setting goals, being self confident, and being reflective as a leader**. Six out of seven participants ranked **managing time** as an area of great impact. **Delegating to other team members and motivating others** were pointed out by five as being areas of greatest impact.

Three participants reported that **motivating self, using personal affirmations, setting priorities, planning accordingly to your priorities, empowering others and coaching others** as being very impacted. **Motivating self, using personal affirmations, empowers and coaching others** were considered to have impacted all participants in a significant way. Only the skills of **setting priorities, and planning according to your priorities** were deemed to have no impact by one of the participants. It is interesting to note that the



5.1.2 Impact on leadership skills in professional goal setting

Impact on Leadership Competencies in Professional Goal Setting			
	VI	SI	NI
Set goals	7	0	0
Visualize goals	4	3	0
Motivate yourself	3	4	0
Manage time	3	4	0
Use affirmations with self	3	4	0
Communicate effectively with others	5	2	0
Set priorities	4	2	1
Plan accordingly to your priorities	3	3	1
Be self confident	7	0	0
Delegate to other team members	5	1	1
Be self-reflective as a leader	7	0	0
Motivate others	4	2	1
Empower others	3	4	0
Coach others	3	4	0

Similar to the impact of the program on the leadership skills in the personal goal setting, the three top competencies chosen by all participants - **setting goals, being confident, and being self-reflective as a leader** – are connected to the success they experienced in setting professional goals throughout the program.

Communicating effectively with others and being able to delegate to other team members emerged as the second highest leadership competencies. These two competencies are relational in nature. When the second rating of “somewhat impacted” is considered, these two skills have a rating of 7/7 and 6/7 respectively.

Visualizing goals, setting priorities, and motivating others also rise to the top when both rating within the positively impacted category are merged, with ratings of 7/7, 6/7, and 6/7 respectively.



5.1.3 Key findings emerging from impacts of the program on the development of leadership competencies

The key findings are reported in this section and links are made to the aspects of the program process that have impacted the development of specific leadership competencies.

“We wrote down our big goals and Kathy encouraged us to write down our smaller goals and check off the little things. Any activity I did was related to this goal.

I was a little reluctant at first, but as usual I realized how important it was to see how much time I was spending on working towards [the goal]. I started counting not only the big events but tracking the smaller things on a daily basis really helped.”

Goal setting and personal perceptions of self

The act of writing down goals allowed participants to retain a clear focus, to maintain a commitment to personal and professional goals over time, and to discern what actions would result in the actualization of goals. Furthermore, the goal setting practices within the program allowed participants to develop a *habit* of personal and professional goal setting practice which has been integrated into their daily routines. Goal setting practices have led to increased self-reflection. Keeping a journal provided a written account of the journey and provided the participants with a tool to assess personal and professional progress, to evaluate next steps, and to make decisions. Visualizing goals was seen by some participants as being an essential part of the goal setting process, due to the fact that it was part of their personal repertory of skills. For others, it was a new skill that is recognized as being important but has not yet been assimilated.

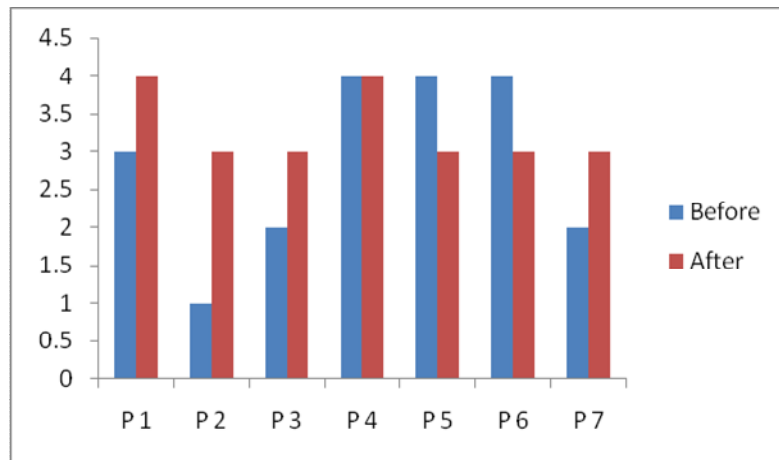
The women reported that the goals setting practices in the *Leadership for Women™* Program increased their sense of self confidence and gave them courage to voice opinions and beliefs in the workplace and in their personal lives. Interestingly, participants spoke of what it meant to *look confident* and the way that confidence is expressed in their stance and body language.

“When I finish one goal I set new ones. I am using the same process as I did in class. Why deviate when I know what works. I have changed and I have projected my new values and using them to set goals.”

Confidence Level

The participants were asked to rate their level of confidence level in leading themselves and their team or organization. A scale of *fair (1), moderate (2), good (3) and great (4)* was used. The participants were asked to rate their confidence level both at the onset and at the end

of the program. The following table/graph demonstrates the impact the program has on the participants' confidence levels:



This graph illustrated that self confidence increased for four participants. For one participant, it remained the same and two participants reported a decrease in self-confidence. These two participants responded that their confidence level fluctuated dependent on how they felt on a given day.

“It’s a tough question...I think it’s all about the day you ask [the question]. Today is good, but there is always room for improvement. I don’t know if it can ever be great.”

Relational skills

Their increased self confidence and self reflection influenced the ways in which the women interacted as leaders in relationship to individuals in their personal and professional contexts.

“When it did a breakdown of my personality, it showed me that I was very impatient and it gave me tips ... I am now very sensitive and aware of how impatient I can be and that I can come across as demanding to other people. ... I have learned that I can be assertive and there’s a way to approach it without being mean.”

Communicating effectively with others involved, not only the development of new strategies, but also an assessment of personal skills and the moving out of one’s comfort zone to practice new strategies. Participants reported that communications became more *honest, direct, and authentic*.

For the participants the act of communicating effectively with others resulted in a sense of confidence and trust in others and in their abilities to complete tasks effectively and efficiently. Trusting others to complete the task also

necessitated the relinquishing of control and the belief that all tasks had to be completed in a particular way. Delegating tasks to others allowed participants to prioritize workplace responsibilities, and make more efficient use of time and resources.

Leadership actions

Leadership actions can be divided into three categories:

- Leadership actions pertaining to self – *motivating and affirming self*

Motivating self was a leadership skill that most participants shared that was already part of their personality. The accountability into the program resulted in a higher level of motivation and energy in achieving goals. Participants stated that they recognized the importance of *personal affirmations* but their actions and comments indicated that they did not consider “care of self” as one of their first priorities. Lack of budgeted time to write or shying away from implementing personal affirmation as part of their daily practice points to this fact.

The writing of the affirmation was probably taking the most time in homework for me – it was an agonizing process.

“I have seen the benefit of it, but I am not committed to it!

- Leadership actions pertaining to *motivating, empowering, and coaching* others.

In the category of motivating others, six out of seven women reported positive impacts. In terms of empowering and coaching others, all participants reflected positive impacts and change over the course of the leadership program. One of the greatest factors was a lack of opportunities to practice new found strategies due to differences in personal and professional contexts.

- Leadership actions pertaining to time – *time management, setting priorities, and planning according to priorities*

Participants expressed changes in attitudes and actions with respect to time management. The quote by one participant -

“I now think before saying yes to someone. I am now thinking about it and have begun saying no” –

“I am still struggling with this. I fill out my day, for example on Thursday and I did not fill in an hour for the gym. I filled it up from 9 until 9 and did not even put in time for supper and lunch. I never do!

illustrates the role between self reflection and action. Several women made links between the leadership actions pertaining to time and the act of keeping a written record of their goals, and actions. How they set their schedule was indicative of the priorities they were setting in their lives. Several women attested to the fact that they were still having difficulty in attaining a work/life balance and considering their *self care* as a priority was a challenge.

5.2 Impacts on goal setting practices and achievement of goals

As previously stated in the literature scan (Meyer, 2006; Locke & Latham, 2002; Latham & Locke, 2006; Siegart & Taylor, 2004) various practices can either impact or thwart the successful achievement of personal and professional goals. These practices can include: writing or crystallizing goals, using affirmations, visualizing, tracking the progress, etc. As a means to capture these behaviours and practices used to help achieve the goals, actions or behaviours were examined and included the following:

Writing the goals

All seven participants wrote their goals. While most participants could see the benefits of writing down a goal, two respondents felt that they were *forced* to write the goals as a program expectation. It was noted that all participants wrote their goals in the *program daily planner*.

“As soon as I wrote everything down, I was like “why not”, let’s get it done...the action plan really helped”

Tracking progress

A common practice in goal setting) is the ability to track or receive feedback of the progress (Locke & Latham, 2002. As a program expectation, participants were asked to track their progress. Five participants used the program resources (daily binder and/or the barometer) while the other two tracked their progress using non-program related techniques (bank account print-out or mental checklist).

Action plan

All participants had some type of action plan in order to achieve their goals. Although the literature (Meyer, 2006) suggests that the plan should be followed in order to successfully achieve one’s goals, five out of seven deviated somewhat from the plan. This deviation did not appear to distract the participants. They felt the need to alter the plan somewhat as circumstances had changed (job opportunities, waiting to consult an expert in a particular field, staff changes, etc). Interestingly enough, the two participants who “stuck” to their plan felt that this was the *key to their success*.

“You do not set goals and not take the steps to achieve them!”

Support from others

Part of the goal setting process is to identify supports and resources. In order to capture the level of support or collaboration, the participants were asked to identify people who provided significant assistance in the realization of their goals. All participants responded that the successful achievement of one or more of their goals was dependent on themselves and others. These people included: family members, spouses or partners, co-workers and supervisors/employers.

Assigning meaning to goals

It is crucial that goals have a level of meaning or personal significance to the goal setter. When goals have a higher level of meaning, one can assume that the level of importance will further facilitate the successful process (Meyer, 2006; Schwartz, 2004; Freshman & Guthrie, 2009).

In order to assess this level of importance or meaning, all participants were asked to assign a level to their goals. Using a scale of 1 (not important) to 7 (very important), participants reflected on the importance of their goals. For their personal goals, four participants assigned a level 7, while the other three responded level 6, 5 and 4, respectively. Professional goals were assigned more importance than personal. For professional goals, four responded with a level 7; two assigned a level 6 while one awarded a level 5. A question that arises from the results is why did these women assign greater to their professional goals as compared to their personal goals?

Interestingly enough, the participants who assigned a level of 7 to their goals were most successful in realizing their goals or *fully attaining* them. For these two, the goals were achieved before the set deadline and over- exceeded their desired results.

“I have achieved my goal...I tripled my net profit!” and “I was able to get it (goal) done and then start contributing to RRSP’s which in the long run is very important to me”

When participants assigned lower levels of importance, they often modified or completely changed their beginning goals. This notion further supports the concept that goals must be meaningful in order to attain them fully (Meyer, 2006; Schwartz, 2004; Freshman & Guthrie, 2009). Some of the responses included:

“At the time, it (goal), was important but looking back now, in the grand scheme of things, it’s not very important”

“I just let the goal slide. I really didn’t focus on it as I would have liked to.”

“It’s part of my job and I am expected to do it, so it has less of a personal meaning”

As Schwartz (2004) stated that high expectations may be counterproductive in setting and realizing goals. This may have been the case for one of the participants.

“I think I misrepresented my goal...I think that I just reached too far”

5.2.1 Personal and professional lessons learned

In reflecting upon their experience, specifically related to the goal setting process, participants were asked to share lessons learned throughout the journey. Some of these lessons included:

- Taking time to self-reflect is critical in determining what is important
- Committing to goals by writing them down is essential to realization or completion
- Believing in oneself and being persistent and patient is essential to self-care in the goal setting process.
- Tracking progress to measure success or to set new priorities is a step that cannot be omitted.
- Creating an action plan is required to set direction and maintain focus.
- Accepting and letting go of what is not in one’s control is essential to be able to move forward.
- Having the right approach and state of mind is instrumental in staying positive and realizing one’s goals.

5.2.2 Personal vision as related to personal and professional goals

As part of the program expectations, participants were asked to reflect upon and to develop a personal mission. Meyers (2006) state that goals are often determined by one’s purpose in life as this will most probably allow for an individual to set priorities. Consequently, participants were asked to reflect upon their personal mission and share it with the interviewer if they so desired. Interestingly, only one participant could recite her personal mission; whereas, four could not remember their mission and the last two did not have a personal mission. While participants could remember discussing their personal mission and writing it down, this aspect of the program did not seem to have a lasting impact.

5.2.3 Barriers encountered

Often the process of realizing goals demands a need to overcome both expected and unexpected obstacles and barriers (Meyers, 2006). All participants were able to recall specific challenges. These barriers have been categorized and include the following:

Personal:

- Relationship with family members
- Thoughts and emotions such as: self-doubt, negative personal outlook, lack of confidence, fear, frustration and stress
- Work-life imbalance

“I was always on pins and needles when (family member) was over, but now I am living how I want to live my life”

“It took me a long time to overcome that one (changing a goal) as I am a very strong pleaser. I felt that I really let myself down. When you set a goal, you need to do it, but I didn’t”

“When I first started the course, I was really stressed out with work and life.”

“I was the biggest obstacle, because I am letting other people run my day!”

“So the barriers were timing and the balance between personal and work time”

Organizational:

- Organization’s strategic plan and priorities
- Lack of support by supervisor and co-workers
- Co-workers’ performance and work ethic
- Organization’s policies and programs such as sick leave and maternity leave (disruption in career)
- General resources, programs and services available at work

“Professionally my barrier is timing and developing patience...I am waiting for that door to open...”

“I did have to prove to myself as I am young...but now he (supervisor) is challenging me more.”

“Work was too overwhelming and I thought that I had taken on a too big of a problem”

5.3 Recommendations for future Leadership for Women’s Programs

5.3.1 What works?

The participants were asked to point out highlights of the program. The format and delivery of the program was important because:

- Working with women, hearing their perspectives, voicing opinions, learning from them, and seeing their growth was very empowering.
- Working with women in a group resulted in the formation of strong authentic relationships.
- Getting to know yourself and engaging in self-reflection led to heightened self awareness
- Being accountable encouraged participants to *do their homework* and led several to secure mentors.
- Taking time to focus on goal setting practices in personal and professional settings was life changing.

This [*Leadership for Women™* Program] was pivotal in my life. ... I always need a dream, but did not know how to do it. This is not intensely deep, but it does take time to figure out your dreams and to figure out what your goals should be. There needs to be a certain process that needs to take place and it’s taken for granted that you know how to do it. I believe professionally that if employers knew their employees’ dreams they would have much better workers ... I am in my late 30’s and this is a life skill that I am just learning now.

5.3.2 Recommendations for the future

When asked what they would change about the program, many participants responded by restating the things that were positive for them. These recommendations are included in the first section below. Participants suggested that the leadership program should continue to:

- Use the current facilitator who has the relational skills necessary to connect with all participants.
- Be offered in a six month time frame. It allowed time for the women to internalize the skills that they were learning.
- Focus on women's issues with respect to leadership

A few women offered some suggestions for future programs. Their suggestions are listed below. It is important to note that one participant did not understand why the program needed to be gender specific. She reported some difficulty in relating to other women in the group.

- Use mentors who are able to meet as frequently as possible
- Make the program a little more affordable
- Offer the program more frequently and use former participants to promote it. They will be your best advocates.
- Offer the program in different locations so as to be more accessible to more women.
- Use more electronic format. The Black binder/daily planner could be made available electronically.
- Develop a stronger introduction at the beginning of the program so that all participants understand the program purpose and content.
- Offer this program in high school.

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the impact of goal setting on the development of women's leadership competencies. Insights gleaned from the interviews and the journals (see Appendix a) have assisted in identifying the outcomes and areas of impact resulting from the overall program. These insights specifically included the women's perceptions of their growth with respect to personal and professional goal setting and their development of leadership competencies. The women's outcomes are consistent with the

research literature and indicate that the *Women in Leadership™ Program* positively impacted the participants on multiple levels. Their satisfaction and recommendations for future programs indicates the program was an overwhelming success from their perspective.

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7.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A

Journal Entries Data Collection Effort

Introduction

The purpose of this aspect of the research initiative was to collect and synthesize the participants' journal entries (September 30, 2009 to December 8, 2009). For this endeavour, participants were invited to submit their journal entries to the research consultant on a bi-monthly basis.

Methodology

An initial list of possible participants was provided to the research consultant by the *Women for Leadership™* (WFL) program coordinator, Ms. Kathy Watt. In order to guide the participants' thoughts, the *Women for Leadership™* program instructor sent open ended questions to all participants on a regular basis (bi-monthly). Prior to submitting journal entries, participants were asked to sign a consent form to participate in this research endeavour.

An informal group meeting was held with the participants in order to explain the research initiative, including the journal entries and the expectations of the research initiative. Subsequently, group and individual e-mail contact was made with these potential informants to explain the purpose of this specific proposed data collection endeavour and their potential participation in this research effort.

A total of 36 journal entries, which reflected a response rate of 50%, were completed and submitted by the program participants. The average journal entries per participant were 4.5 and the range of responses varied from 0-7.

Areas of inquiry included:

- *Personal Leadership Views and Qualities*
- *Perceptions and Lessons Gleaned from the WFL program*
- *Impact of WFL program material and workshops*
- *Personal and Professional Goals (Dream List)*
- *Growth through Changes*
- *Personal Mission Statement*
- *Personal Success and Achievement*
- *Time Management*

Journal entries ranged from a single paragraph to a full page in length (8.5 x 11). Journal entries were subsequently merged to provide a unified data set. Content analysis was used to identify emergent theme categories (Steimer, 2001) and descriptive methods were employed in the presentation of findings to highlight specific trends from the data collection (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

The following sections provide a summary of the findings of the journal entries data collection effort. The specific names or identifiers of individuals including their work organization or initiatives are not included to ensure confidentiality.

Journal Entries- Emerging Themes

- Career possibilities- unsure of career possibilities and future personal and professional opportunities.
- Personal development- working on personal skills such as setting and achieving personal and professional goals, time management, and managing expectations and emotions.
- Leadership awareness- unsure if the term *leadership* is clearly understood (professional and personal).
- Leadership development- working on specific skills to become a more effective leader, including but not limited to effective listening, time management, emotional composure and authenticity.
- WFL initial expectations - unsure of the purpose and expectations of program. Generally optimistic to participate in a new learning opportunity. Nervous about personal leadership qualities and speaking about them in a group setting. Hopeful that the WFL program will assist and clarify personal growth and career path.
- WFL program impact up to date –feeling supportive by group and program coordinator; group discussions and lessons can be very thought provoking; exposed to practical tools in leadership development (time management, setting and achieving personal and professional goals, setting an action plan, etc) ; personal reflection and self-awareness (level of personal satisfaction and contentment versus lack of personal direction); mapping a future master plan; formulating a dream list; reduction in wasted time/procrastination; focus on level of control based on issues/changes; clearer direction of career and personal future possibilities; making self a priority; and sense of growth and accomplishment.
 - Difficulty in adapting to the program expectations (mainly writing goals, completing journal entries and using daily planner); tracking leadership development progress (goals, time management, maintaining composure, etc.); and unsure of personal mission statement (lacking purpose).
- Setting and achieving personal and professional goals- generally excited and motivated about setting goals, but felt that by writing the goals down was a demanding and onerous task. Once a routine was set (writing in the “planner”) it can become addictive. Respondents found writing their goals was a helpful task in setting and maintaining their focus, incorporating their goals it into their daily routine and monitoring or measuring their sense of accomplishment. Feeling that professional goals are easier to achieve versus personal goals.

- Goal setting process- *WFL* program suggest goals are to be written. Respondents felt that by writing their goals, they were more accountable, committed and motivated to achieving the goals. Initially, writing and monitoring personal and professional goals was challenging. When respondents were asked to assign a grade to their goal setting process, the grades varied from a C to a B + (C, B, B, no grade assigned).

Appendix B

Key Informant Interview Questions – Fall 2009

Participant Demographics

1. Professional/Career Role (leadership/management level) – What role do you currently assume for your employment- career?
2. Background of career (years in the present job, career path, etc.)- Tell me a little bit about your career path- what has brought you to where you are today?
3. Personal Life (mother, wife, partner, family, etc.)- Can you tell me a little bit about your personal life (family- partner, married, children- live in a rural area- urban area- have a dog, etc.)
4. Age- do you mind if I ask your age?
5. Educational background (what diploma, certification do you currently have or possess)
6. How did you become involved in the *Leadership for Women™* program? How did you find out about it?
7. From your own perspective, what is the primary purpose of the *Leadership for Women™*?
8. How would you rate your level of **confidence level** in leading yourself and your team/organization right now? (fair, moderate, good, great) Would you comment on the reasons why you have chosen this particular self-rating?

Goal Setting Questions:

1. Prior to enrolling in the *Leadership for Women™* program- did you set goals- either professional or personal goals? If so- what were/ are they? Did you write them down?
2. Have you thought about or written any personal or professional goals since the beginning of this program? In other words- as a result of participating in this program- have you set new goals? Would you consider these new goals for you since the program began?

New goals or exiting goals:

1. Where do you want to go? What specifically do you want to achieve?
2. Why is this/these goal(s) so important to you? (why did you select this /these goals)?

3. When exactly do you want to achieve this/these goal(s)- personal or professional - by (date)?
4. What are the barriers/obstacles that you must overcome to achieve this/these goals (what may interfere or get in the way of achieving these goals?)
5. Who are the people and groups you must work with to achieve this/these goals?
6. What information or knowledge must you obtain to achieve this/these goals(s)?
7. How will you achieve this/these goals(s)? Do you have a plan of action (detailed steps)?
8. How will you know that you have achieved your goal(s)?
9. How will this/these goals impact your leadership abilities (will this/these goal(s) make you a better/least effective leader)? Will this/these goal(s) make you a better/worst person?
10. Do we have permission to incorporate your *Team Leader Assessment Scale* (as conducted by program leader)?

Appendix C

Key Informant Interview Questions – Spring 2010

Participant Demographics

1. **Professional/Career Role** (leadership/management level) - What role do you currently assume for your employment- career?
2. **Background of career** (years in the present job, career path, etc.) Tell me a little bit about your career path. What has brought you to where you are today?
3. **Personal Life** (mother, wife, partner, family, etc.) - Can you tell me a little bit about your personal life (family- partner, married, children- live in a rural area- urban area- have a dog, etc.)
4. **Age** - Do you mind if I ask your age?
5. **Educational background** - what diploma, certification do you currently have or possess?
6. How did you become involved in the *Leadership for Women™* program? How did you find out about it?
7. From your own perspective, what is the primary purpose of the *Leadership for Women™* program?
8. How would you rate your level of **confidence level** in leading yourself and your team/organization right now? (fair, moderate, good, great) Would you comment on the reasons why you have chosen this particular self-rating?

Goal Setting Question:

1. Prior to enrolling in the *Leadership for Women™* program- did you set goals- either professional or personal goals? If so- what were/ are they? Did you write them down?
2. Have you thought about or written any personal or professional goals since the beginning of this program? In other words- as a result of participating in this program- have you set new goals?
3. Would you consider these new goals for you since the program began?

New goals or exiting goals:

1. Where do you want to go? What specifically do you want to achieve?
2. Why is this/these goal(s) so important to you? Why did you select this /these goals?

3. When exactly do you want to achieve this/these goal(s)- personal or professional - by (date)?

Barriers and challenges:

1. What are the barriers/obstacles that you must overcome to achieve this/these goals (what may interfere or get in the way of achieving these goals?)

Goal setting:

1. Who are the people and groups you must work with to achieve this/these goals?

2. What information or knowledge must you obtain to achieve this/these goals(s)?

3. How will you achieve this/these goals(s)? Do you have a plan of action (detailed steps)?

4. How will you know that you have achieved your goal(s)?

5. How will this/these goals impact your leadership abilities (will this/these goal(s) make you a better/least effective leader)? Will this/these goal(s) make you a better/worst person?

6. Do we have permission to incorporate your *Team Leader Assessment Scale* (as conducted by program leader)?