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IDENTIFYING THE CHALLENGES AND SUPPORT NEEDS OF BABY BOOM
MOTHERS MIDDLE MANAGERS

A Research Project
Presented to the Faculty of
The George L. Graziadio
School of Business and Management
Pepperdine University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Organization Development

by
Audrey Sloofman
March 2011

This research project, completed by

AUDREY SLOOFMAN

under the guidance of the Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has
been submitted to and accepted by the faculty of The George L. Graziadio
School of Business and Management in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the challenges, development needs, and support needs of Baby Boomer middle manager women who have children and plan to continue working for the next 10 years. Baby Boomer women have played the role of groundbreakers for other women in the workplace and must continue to do so, as many organizations are still male-dominated at the uppermost levels. As mothers and managers, they have developed a holistic view of the world, which can add insight at C-suite levels.

This study involved in-depth interviews with 12 Baby Boom generation women (born between 1946 and 1964) with children, who held middle manager positions in corporations. The interviews explored the women's training and development needs required to reach their career goals as senior leaders.

Key challenges the women face include lack of time, lack of support, and gender bias. Participants in this study believed they had taken care of their development needs throughout their careers and had few of these needs remaining at this time. However, they believed they could use a mentor or sponsor to receive more support in finding and securing career opportunities. The primary organizational support they valued and needed was flexibility in their schedule and work arrangements, as well as improved career opportunities. Additional support they needed to promote success were reliable support systems at home such as childcare and housekeeping help, as well as emotional support from their partners.

As Baby Boomer women rise to the top of the organization, they are in a position to create new structures and systems that support a balanced work life for themselves and others. In addition, they can mentor other younger mothers (and possibly fathers) who are managers looking to successfully advance as leaders. Boomer mothers who are leaders should leave a legacy of family-friendly systems for ambitious leaders, and mentor others who are currently facing the challenges of balancing parenthood, work, and life—challenges they have overcome themselves. The findings can be used to support companies in developing the talents of mature, experienced women already in middle management who are anxious to make greater long-term contributions to their company.

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Introduction

Authors and researchers have warned organizations for more than a decade about the impending war for talent that would ensue once the 76 million Baby Boomers started retiring (Axlerod, Handfield-Jones, & Welsh, 2001; Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998; Dohm, 2000; Gutheridge, Komm, & Lawson, 2008; Paton, 2009). Of particular interest to this research are Baby Boomer middle management women who have children. By 2009, 37.4% of managers and 23.4% of chief executives were women (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). These women broke the mold and pushed through barriers, creating new opportunities for themselves and all women who followed them (McCracken, 2005). They found ways to enter previously all-male careers and excel at them (Vinnicombe & Bank, 2003). They raised families before computers, smart phones, flextime, telecommuting, and adequate support systems (e.g., quality childcare options) were readily available. Despite these challenges, these women found a middle ground between the black-and-white choice of the day to either abandon their careers or abandon their families. Losing these proven leaders to retirement would result in significant organizational memory loss as well as loss of talent and skill (Massingham, 2008).

The current financial crisis, however, has shifted the retirement plans for Baby Boomers and many are choosing to stay with their careers for the foreseeable future (Johnson & Johnson, 2010). With retirement on hold, new issues arise for these workers and their organizations. What challenges do they face moving forward? What are their development needs? What can and should

these workers do to support their own success? This study examined these questions specifically for Baby Boomer middle management women with children who intend to continue their careers for at least the next 10 years. The following sections review literature related to middle managers, Baby Boomers, women in management, and the support needs of female Boomer middle managers.

Middle Managers

Understanding the challenges, development needs, and support needs of Baby Boomer middle management women begins with understanding the nature and demands of the middle management position. Middle managers are those professionals who are two levels below the chief executive and one level above front-line employees (Huy, 2001). Due to this position, they act as important liaisons between the strategic and operational levels of the organization (Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Embertson, 2006). Embertson explained that middle managers' abilities to represent, translate, and convey the meaning of organizational strategy has helped organizations enhance their performance.

In recent decades, efforts to cut costs and streamline operations have resulted in middle managers being denigrated as the "fat" in a bureaucracy that needed to be flattened. The result was that the few middle managers remaining were tasked with the responsibilities of the others who had been terminated (McConnell, 2005).

Middle managers require a number of skills and competencies to be successful in today's complex corporate environments. Mintzberg and his colleagues (Gosling & Mintzberg, 2004; Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn, & Ghoshal, 2003) explained that contemporary middle managers must be skilled in dealing

with the range of organizational, individual, and team-oriented issues that may arise. Review of the literature on middle managers suggests that seven skills are particularly important for their success: (a) leading change; (b) managing and leading others; (c) providing oversight, expertise, and guidance; (d) effectively communicating; (e) recognizing and quickly solving problems; (f) providing stability through effective management of multiple organizational goals, budgets, and objectives; and (g) leading and following for the purpose of managing, persuading, and influencing others.

The first skill concerns leading change (Munkeby, 2003). Handy (1996) emphasized that change has become the ongoing reality for organizations; therefore, it is essential for middle managers to remain flexible and to adapt to rapidly changing environments (Munkeby, 2003). Additionally, the shift toward flatter organizations has meant that those middle managers who survived the restructuring often were tasked with managing projects rather than managing people. Munkeby pointed out that this shift has changed the skills required of middle managers.

The second skill is managing and leading others (Munkeby, 2003), which involves persuading, influencing, and developing others as well as dealing with conflict and assuring that smooth vertical communication is occurring within the organization. Middle managers can achieve these aims by applying their strategic knowledge, leveraging their close relationships with executives and front-line workers, and relying on their informal social networks to get things done (Pappas, Flaherty, & Wooldrige, 2004). Additionally, it is important for managers to be approachable; to strive to know their employees' needs, challenges,

preferences, and potential as individuals; and to develop the insight and adaptability to deal with employees' emotional well-being. Thompson, Purdy, and Summers (2008) added that middle managers need to be champions, where they “grasp the broad vision of the organization and apply it daily in a practical way” (p. 66). Middle managers must sell ideas and influence the beliefs and the actions of senior management and gain the commitment of subordinates. This requires the ability to synthesize, interpret, evaluate, and frame information to provide the senior leadership with insights and new ideas for accomplishing the strategy and vision of the organization.

A third skill is providing oversight, expertise, and guidance. Middle managers achieve this by completing administrative duties such as keeping records, managing budgets and resources, and providing technical expertise developed through their education and experience (Embertson, 2006).

A fourth skill is communicating—including passing on appropriate information and tailoring messages to the appropriate audiences. When communication is done well, people across the organization are motivated to collaborate and share information (Huy, 2001). Clear and compelling communication helps middle managers achieve their other tasks of influencing and gaining commitment and support for organizational strategies. Listening, a key component of communication, helps build trust among employees (Thompson et al., 2008).

A fifth skill is being entrepreneurial, in that the middle manager needs to recognize problems and generate quick solutions on the frontlines of the organization. They need to be familiar with operations, employees, and

customers (Huy, 2001). This also means having a strong understanding of the organization's culture, solid relationships with employees, and an intimate knowledge of the competitive environment (Pappas et al., 2004). All of these components enable the manager to comprehend the strategic picture, appropriately interpret information, and generate workable solutions (Embertson, 2006).

A sixth skill is providing stability through effective management of multiple organizational goals, budgets, and objectives. Middle managers also need to be able to create harmony among various stakeholders and balance continuity with change (Jamieson, 2003). To deal with an ever-changing environment, they also must constantly develop new skills (Embertson, 2006). Potter and Balthazard (2002) explained that middle managers in conventional organizations, for example, might need a different set of skills and knowledge than middle managers in virtual organizations. Therefore, as organizations shift and evolve, middle managers also must evolve.

Finally, middle managers must be both leaders and followers (Kerry, 2003). Their various leadership tasks have been discussed throughout the previous tasks. For example, they must be able to manage, persuade, and influence others. However, their role as followers is more subtle. As followers, they must seek to learn and understand the vision of top management. This involves establishing an understanding of what needs to be accomplished by interpreting and comprehending top management's directives and change initiatives.

Munkeby (2003) conceptualized the middle management role as requiring process and personal skills, with process skills being dominant. Process skills are those activities required to enact actions and changes and to achieve results, whereas personal capabilities are associated with interactions, preparations, and planning.

This review of the middle management role suggests that this position requires significant amounts of leadership, management, technical, and interpersonal competencies if they are to be effective in supporting organizational aims and working with individuals throughout the organization. It appears that these competencies take time to develop and these individuals would be highly valuable to an organization. Therefore, it is important to understand how middle managers can be supported for the good of these workers as well as for the good of the whole organization.

Baby Boomers

This study specifically focused on Baby Boomer working mothers. Born between 1946 and 1964, members of this generation dominate today's workplace (Dohm, 2000) and are characterized as idealistic, individualistic, and competitive, with high expectations for and a strong focus on self-improvement (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 1999). As they grew up with 76 million peers, they learned to be competitive, work hard for their achievements, develop good relationships, and become team players. At work, they tend to be committed and loyal and demonstrate a strong focus on decision making, authority, and moving up. Many sacrificed their family and personal lives for their careers, thinking they could "have it all." It is not unusual for Boomers to operate as if their work was

their life. They have adjusted to many dramatic changes in the workplace, including advanced technology, globalization, diversification in the workforce, flattening hierarchical structures, teamwork, and mass layoffs (Galinsky, 2007).

Female Baby Boomers broke through significant boundaries in the workplace. After growing up in a world of few gender-appropriate roles (e.g., mother, secretary, teacher, nurse), they broke *glass walls* and *glass ceilings*, establishing themselves as equal partners to men in every industry, role, and level in the work world (Morris, 1995). They are the first generation of women to aggressively pursue advanced education to develop their careers (Keillor, 2007).

However, their successes did not come without challenge or sacrifice. The business world of their time was highly patriarchal and the *good ol' boy network* acted as a powerful gatekeeper that prevented women access to higher levels in the organization (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Boomer women struggled to find a way to be heard and taken seriously. Further, because childcare options were limited and working from home was not accepted, many Boomer women took time off to care for their children, thus, losing developmental experiences, networking power, and earning potential. When they returned to the workforce, they found it difficult to get back into the “game” and have their maturity, experience, and perspective recognized.

Across their personal and professional pursuits, Baby Boomers grew up with a drive to make a difference in the world. They were part of the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, and were the first to join the Peace Corps and to focus on environmental issues. This is a group that is not afraid to

question authority and has demonstrated a deep desire to make the world a better place (Zemke et al., 1999).

Women in Management

Heidrick and Struggles' (1986) study of corporate women officers in the largest American Fortune 1000 industrial and service companies found the average woman in the upper ranks was married without children and spent no more than 10 hours each week on tasks at home. These women held college degrees (some had advanced degrees) and had no interruptions in their career. Since this time, companies have made more concerted efforts to recruit and promote women to executive positions (Goodman, Fields, & Blum, 2003) and the numbers of married female managers and executives is increasing (Catalyst, 2008).

In general, women have faced slower promotion and advancement as compared to equally qualified or educated men (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Terms used to depict the challenges women face in trying to advance in their careers include *glass ceilings* (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993; Goodman et al., Powell, 1999), *glass cliffs* (Ryan & Haslam, 2007), and *labyrinths* (Eagly & Carli, 2002).

The obstacles women face fall into three key categories:

1. Personal barriers, consisting of individual factors affecting workers' performance and career decisions. Such factors include one's family demands and work-life balance issues; personal career cycle and departures from the workforce (e.g., to take care of children); and personal communication style. For example, if a particular woman needs to leave exactly at 5:00 p.m. each day to pick up her children from daycare, this might preclude her from attending

important after-hours work meetings and force her to miss career-enhancing opportunities. Hewlett and Luce (2005) observed that women experience career interruptions and constraints due to family responsibilities to a much greater degree than men. These interruptions impact women's qualifications, wages, and promotability.

2. Situational-organizational barriers, consisting of group and organizational factors that affect the hiring and promotion of women. For example, Gilligan (1982) suggested that women and men favor different ways of communicating, leading, and negotiating. Other researchers have built upon this work (Kolb, Williams, & Frohlinger, 1994; Rosener 1990; Tannen, 1994). Tannen's research, for example, showed that men tend to communicate with the intention of preserving their status in group settings while women aim to gain intimacy and closeness through their communications. Generally, managers attempt to provide employees equal status to resources, but women tend not to ask for those resources as readily as men and they tend to negotiate less overall (Babcock, 2003). Women fear being seen as too aggressive; therefore, they often appear to lack negotiation skills and assert authority at work (Bowles & McGinn, 2005). Eagly and Carli (2007) also hypothesized that men and women use different leadership styles. When the organization discourages or diminishes women's ways of communicating, relating, or leading, women's advancement could suffer accordingly. Consumer expectations and preferences—particularly in male-dominated industries or professions—also can undermine women's advancement. Finally, any biases, discrimination, and stereotyping in the

organization (whether intended or unintended) can affect the recruitment, rewards, and promotion procedures for women. Eagly and Carli emphasized,

Both experimental studies and correlational studies show a general bias against women at all levels with about the same strength. A “sum of discrimination” occurs at every level of management, not just at the top. The blocks are more diverse and complex than a “glass ceiling.” (p. 3)

These biases originate from different perceptions of men and women, despite equal performance, and women’s exclusion from critical social networks wherein contacts, socialization, and development opportunities are cultivated. Catalyst (2005) found that women tend to be evaluated more harshly than men in performance reviews. Women also face more negative beliefs and judgments from coworkers about their levels of commitment than do men in the same positions (Lane & Piercy, 2003). Even when women are given opportunities, a *glass cliff* can occur, where women are assigned precarious leader positions that have high risks of failure. When they fail, it is then considered a fault of their gender and deeper consideration of the history or surrounding circumstances is rarely given.

3. Social system barriers, consisting of the social, economic, political, and governmental factors that affect the hiring and promotion of women (Powell, 1999). These barriers occur when women are perceived to have violated their traditional female roles and endure repercussions as a result of others’ judgments and negative attitudes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In light of social barriers, women either monitor their behaviors to avoid them, or risk others’ criticism.

In addition to facing slower or restricted advancement as a result of these barriers, women also tend to earn less than men. The U.S. Department of Labor (2010) reported that in 2009, female full-time wage and salary workers earned about 80% of their male counterparts in similar positions. Although this is up from 1979's figure of 62%, a discrepancy still exists in women's versus men's earning power. Women with children appeared to face even more economic disadvantages: unmarried women without children earned 14% more than those with children (compared to unmarried men without children earning 8% less than married men with children). However, it is unclear whether education was controlled for in these figures.

Review of the literature on women in management reveals that although more women have reached the middle and upper ranks of organizations, they continue to face challenges to their advancement, including personal, organizational, and societal barriers. These findings suggest that female Baby Boomer middle managers with children (who are the focus of the study) are likely to face continued challenges in their careers. A *Time Magazine* poll revealed that managers feared losing good workers if businesses did not find a way to support the complexities of running a modern family and managing a job (Shriver, 2009). This is a significant risk, as organizations stand to gain several benefits from assuring that women are supported in their careers and advancement. Diversity has been shown to improve decision-making and team effectiveness due to the variety of perspectives and increased range of information and solutions it affords (Stuart, 2008). Additionally, businesses have experienced success by having managers who understand their customers. Because 88% of all purchases in the

United States are controlled by women (Kasser & Kanner, 2004), women managers and leaders can offer important insights about other women's purchasing decisions. Third, a 19-year longitudinal survey of Fortune 500 companies conducted by researchers at Pepperdine University revealed that the companies that had "the best record of promoting women outperformed the competition by anywhere from 41-116%" (as cited in Shipman, 2009, p. 1).

A 2004 Catalyst study showed that Fortune 500 companies with the highest number of females in upper management experienced a 35% higher return on equity, and their return to shareholders were 34% higher than those companies with few or no female senior managers (Catalyst, 2005). Due to the importance of retaining women managers and leaders, it is important to examine what support needs they may have moving forward so organizations can maximize these women's contribution.

Support Needs of Female Boomer Middle Managers

Literature on women in management has suggested five tactics for supporting women's careers. Although these were not discussed with specific regard to Baby Boomer middle manager women with children, it is likely that these tactics have some applicability to this population.

One important tactic is to support women in building the informal networks and mentoring relationships critical for their continued development. A study by the Corporate Leadership Council emphasized that the most effective strategy for realizing employee potential is a professional, information-rich network. Catalyst (2005) called this type of network an *employee interest group, network, affinity group, or caucus*. These different names all describe a group of employees

within an organization that act as a source of social support, sounding board for dealing with challenges, and a resource for leadership development and management experience opportunities. Northcraft and Guiek (1993) emphasized that women must gain entry into men's networks "to gain the leverage for promotions into the power positions in corporations" (p. 219). Beyond the power of informal networks, surrounding employees with high-quality direct managers, colleagues, and direct reports can boost an employee's potential to succeed in more senior, critical positions by 20% or more. Finally, women executives have mentioned that mentors and role models, especially from or in the form of other women leaders, have been a key source of support in their path of career advancement (Stuart, 2008).

A second support tactic for women leaders is for organizations to support non-linear career paths. Catalyst (2005) found in a study of senior executives that an organization's talent management approach typically focuses on workers who climb the career ladder in a lock-step manner without veering sideways, declining, or moving at different paces. However, many leaders—in particular, women—follow more complex paths. For example, a large number of women (especially those in the Baby Boomer cohort) took time off from their careers to care for their children at home and later returned to the workforce (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Now, as life expectancy increases and as the economic recession deepens, people also are working well into their traditional retirement years (Johnson & Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, as the importance of work-life balance increases and its forms evolve, workers do not always desire or choose a straight and narrow career ladder (Hewlett & Luce, 2005). Part of revising the talent

management approach should include giving greater attention to mid-career workers (Johnson & Johnson, 2010). Many companies focus their talent management programs on employees when they are first hired and then on their senior leaders, leaving a gap during the early and prime career years (Rosen & Jerdee, 1990). Mid-career is an important time to focus on employees, as this is a period when a serious loss of key talent occurs.

A third tactic is to expand engagement and reward practices beyond the scope of compensation and benefits. For example, employees' changing attitudes about work-life balance have prompted them to be more concerned about the nature of their work (Klie, 2006). Catalyst (2008) also urged companies to ground their talent management practices in a base of research and theory of how best to manage and engage people in their own success and in their company's success.

A fourth tactic is to eliminate forms of gender stereotyping in the organization. One way to do this is to increase the numbers of women throughout the organization. Catalyst (2005, 2007) studies have suggested there is a clear, positive correlation between the percentage of women board directors in the past and the percentage of women corporate officers in the future. Women board directors appear to have a greater effect on increasing the percentage of line positions held by women than they do on staff positions held by women. Put simply, the number of women board directors is a reliable predictor of the number of women corporate officers. However, the researchers concluded that simply hiring more women is not the solution if stereotyping remains unrecognized and unmonitored. Therefore, they recommended educating managers and executives

about latent stereotypes that may exist in the organization and helping to eliminate them through shifting cultural mores and other practices within the organization.

A final tactic discussed in the literature is shifting government policies to support more working women. Beyond Affirmative Action and Family Leave, the federal government has done little to support the success of women in the workplace and their ability to take on the same career challenges as men at work. Much of what women have accomplished is the result of their own efforts. Of all of the industrialized nations in the world, the United States remains the only one without a childcare policy (Shriver, 2009).

In summary, Boomer middle manager women with children represent a valuable population of workers and many of them are choosing to defer retirement and continue in their careers. However, these workers continue to face challenges such as personal barriers, organizational barriers, and social barriers to their success. Literature on women in management has suggested that helping them build informal networks and mentoring relationships, allowing for non-linear career paths, expanding engagement and reward practices beyond the scope of compensation and benefits, eliminating explicit and implicit forms of gender stereotype in the organization, and shifting government policies to better support working women would be helpful means for supporting these workers. This study sought to add to this knowledge base by conducting in-depth interviews specifically with Baby Boomer middle management women with children to uncover the particular challenges they face, their development needs,

the types of organizational support they need, and what they do to support their own development.

Methods

This study utilized a qualitative interview research design to investigate the training, development and support needs of female middle managers who are Baby Boomers with children and wish to advance their careers over the next 10 years.

Qualitative studies enable researchers to develop a deep understanding of participants and the nuances of their stories (Creswell, 2003). Kvale (1996) argued that through qualitative methods, researchers can record the depth and breadth of human experience in its most authentic form. This deep understanding is made possible by including a relatively small sample (compared to quantitative studies) and exploring the multiplicity of variables that arise. The in-depth interviews with participants focused on their perceptions of their success and challenges in achieving their goals.

Participants

The researcher has 30 years of experience consulting in corporations worldwide. As a result, she has built a network of business colleagues. She issued a solicitation for participants to her colleagues (see Appendix A) and also contacted them by phone to request qualifying participants. One colleague posted this request on Linked In, which greatly expanded the potential participant pool.

Candidates were then contacted by telephone or email to describe the study, verify they meet the participation criteria, and invite qualifying candidates

to participate. Some did not respond, some responded saying they would love to participate but were too busy to spare the time, and others volunteered to participate. Volunteers were given further information regarding the nature and time required for participation.

Twelve Baby Boomer manager women who are mothers were interviewed. Some of these women did not satisfy all the criteria (e.g., they might have been unemployed or in a higher level of management). These individuals were included because they were believed to contribute insights through their different experiences. The women were aged 48 to 64 (one third were age 46). All were born in the United States. Ten are Caucasian, one is African-American, and one is Arab-American. All participants hold high school diplomas. Three hold bachelor degrees, and five hold masters degrees. Nine lived and worked in California, while the remaining three were in Chicago, Denver, or South Africa.

The participants had been in the workforce for between 20 and 37 years (mean = 24 years). They had worked for their current organization anywhere from a few months to 25 years (mean = 10 years). Nine were in middle management, one was unemployed, one was self-employed, and one was president of her father's company. Of the 12 women, three worked for medical corporations, two for consulting firms, four for the government (one temporarily laid off), one in technology, one for a distributor, and one had quit her organization and was self-employed. Four worked for organizations with less than 100 employees. Two women worked in organizations with 100-500 people, two worked in organizations with 1000-5000 people, two with 5,000-10,000 people, and two with more than 10,000 employees.

Six women had been married once and were still married at the time of the study. Five had been married twice and one had been married three times. The remaining six women were divorced (four women), separated (one woman), or widowed (one woman) at the time of the study. All the women had children and all but two still had children living at home. As a result of her demanding work and travel schedule, one of these women has a daughter who moved to another state to live with her ex-husband and his new family. Two of these women have young married children living in their home with their own spouses and children.

Although one had recently begun a yoga business and another was unemployed, half of the women earned more than \$150,000 and half averaged \$100,000 annually. In 5 years, two thirds wanted to stay with their company and either continue growing where they were or advance. One third wanted to either change companies or change careers. In 10 years, half wanted to retire, with one third of all the women wanting to continue working. The rest saw themselves continuing to work while growing and advancing. All but one of these women saw themselves in the same organization doing the same line of work.

Data Collection

A demographic questionnaire was administered online to collect data about the women's marital status, education, career path, and places of employment (see Appendix B). This was followed by a semi-structured one-on-one research interview conducted with each participant. Eight open-ended questions with follow-up probing questions were used to learn about each woman's career path, challenges, off-ramps and on-ramps, and needed support (see Appendix C).

The interviews were conducted by phone, Skype, and in person for the convenience of both the participants and the researcher, and lasted an average of 1 hour. This approach also enabled the researcher to select participants from various locations without being bound by geography.

Data Analysis

Demographic data were tabulated from an online survey administered before the start of the interview. Madison's approach to data analysis was used to analyze the interview data (as cited in Creswell, 2003). This approach involved reviewing the interview data to identify emergent themes regarding career facilitators, career challenges, and support needs. Data then were coded and reorganized by theme. The resulting analysis was subjected to individual member checking with each woman interviewed to enhance the credibility of the study results.

Results

The interview data were analyzed for themes and other findings related to the women's key challenges, development needs, needed organizational support, and needed self-support. Analysis of the data showed strong consensus across participants. In many cases, 83% to 100% of the participants voiced the themes. Therefore, there did not appear to be any correlations to demographic factors such as culture or ethnicity, age, industry, position, or other factors. The following sections report the results of this study.

Key Challenges

Lack of time, lack of support, and gender bias were the three key challenges to career advancement voiced by participants (see Table 1). These

challenges are described in detail in the sections below. Additionally, all the women emphasized the great challenges they had managing the balance of family and work demands. One participant explained,

When women are successful, they are not relieved of mothering or household duties. It's different for the men. I have not seen a successful woman where the wife takes on the man's role and the husband then takes on the household duties. The woman just takes on more. No segmentation or shifting of duties. Primary family duties fall on women—in all generations.

Table 1

Key Challenges

Challenge	<i>N</i>	%
Lack of time	11	92%
Lack of support	11	92%
Gender bias	11	92%
Few opportunities to move up, assume more responsibility, and make use of their experience	10	83%

N = 12

Lack of Time

Eleven participants commented that the demands of work and family responsibilities proved challenging and stressful. The one who did not mention this theme had shared that she had strong emotional and practical support at home from her husband and strong support at work for her advancement and her work-life balance. This Caucasian manager of marketing for a San Francisco-based consulting firm was married to her second husband, had two teens at home, and had one adult child living independently. As a high school graduate, she worked as a manager for 15 of her 27 years in the workforce. Of the 12 women surveyed, 10 still have dependent children living at home. Those with dependents at home have challenges going to after-work activities, which is

when a lot of networking and other important career-building activities occur. One participant expressed,

Balance is a challenge for us all. We are being pulled in different directions. I cannot be a perfect friend, wife, mom, *and* employee. There is not enough time in the day to be everything. It is a constant balancing act and battle with everything demanding your attention. Do men share the same struggles?

All expressed the need to make hard choices. Many turned down jobs due to travel, relocation, or time demands over sacrificing their families. Others took the positions offered and negatively impacted their children, marriages, their personal life, health, or personal well-being.

Lack of Support

The support they received in handling home and family duties was closely tied to the issue of lack of time. Those who reported having the most reliable support systems also reported having the most successful careers, most satisfying family life, and the greatest personal satisfaction.

Table 2 shows the support they received in balancing family demands and professional growth during the course of their career. Their spouses were the greatest source of support for participants. A total of 67% to 75% of participants reported their spouses sometimes or always supported them in the areas of child-raising, household duties, and running errands. Roughly half the participants reported their spouses sometimes or always supported them in providing free time (50%) and career growth (58%). The least support was reported for educational development (58% reported receiving no support).

Table 2

Support Received for Work-Life balance

#	Question	Spouse	Other Family	Friends	Hired Help
1	Raising the children				
	Never	25%	41%	50%	50%
	Sometimes	50%	42%	42%	25%
	Always	25%	17%	8%	25%
2	Household duties				
	Never	25%	58%	83%	33%
	Sometimes	67%	42%	17%	42%
	Always	8%	0%	0%	25%
3	Running errands				
	Never	33%	50%	58%	58%
	Sometimes	67%	42%	42%	42%
	Always	0%	8%	0%	0%
4	Your career growth				
	Never	42%	42%	25%	75%
	Sometimes	50%	50%	50%	17%
	Always	8%	8%	25%	8%
5	Your educational development				
	Never	58%	50%	33%	83%
	Sometimes	17%	17%	42%	17%
	Always	25%	33%	25%	0%
6	Providing free time for you				
	Never	50%	33%	33%	42%
	Sometimes	42%	42%	50%	50%
	Always	8%	25%	17%	8%

$N = 12$

Participants were split regarding support from other sources, with roughly half receiving no support and half sometimes or always receiving support. Other family members were relied on for sometimes or always providing free time

(67%). Friends were most instrumental for sometimes or always supporting career growth (75%), education (67%), and free time (67%). Hired help was relied on for sometimes or always helping with household duties (67%).

All 12 women have been married at one time. At the time of the interviews, half were married and one was widowed. Participants voiced that spousal support strongly determined their professional success and work-life balance. Those spouses who supported their wives' career success and shared equally in home and family obligations reported the greatest work and family balance. These participants explained that they made career-advancing choices with the collaborative support of their husbands. They also expressed fewer disappointments overall and greater ultimate satisfaction with their careers than other participants.

Ten participants pursued education, training, and other growth and development opportunities, despite lack of support from their husbands. Six women reported that their husbands had thwarted their careers in some manner (unwillingness to relocate, unprofessional behavior at corporate dinners, unwillingness to share childcare or household duties to allow business travel). Those women who could afford to hire help for childcare and household duties created an important support structure for both career and family success. All of the women provided "downtime" for their husbands, but did not feel free to take it for themselves.

Gender Bias

Eleven of the 12 women described experiences of gender bias at the upper levels of their organizations (see Table 3). In all but two of these cases, the

highest levels of management were all or predominantly male. Unless they had a male sponsor who invited them into the all-male networking events, it was difficult to penetrate these groups. Three participants stated it was a challenge to go out after work with “the guys” without experiencing jealous responses from husbands or colleagues.

Table 3

Forms of Gender Bias Experienced

Expression of Bias	N	%
Extremely competitive and masculine upper management workplace culture	6	50%
Not invited to dinners that the men’s wives attended	5	42%
Not invited on out-of-town trips and other meetings	3	25%
Fired early in career following allegations of affair with a male peer	1	8%

N = 12; Eleven participants in total have reported experiencing workplace gender bias

One was fired early in her career, having been unjustly accused by her colleagues of having an affair with a male peer. Others experienced judgmental looks and sarcastic remarks from colleagues about having “fun with the boys.” Five participants also stated they were not invited to dinners that the men’s wives attended, as the women managers would either be there as a single woman or with a husband who was not comfortable in the situation. Three women mentioned they were not invited on out-of-town trips and other meetings and were told, “I didn’t think you would be interested because you have the kids.”

Further, half the women stated the upper levels have an extremely competitive and masculine culture. One participant explained, “It is less about teamwork and everyone succeeding and more about one’s own individual success.” Participants emphasized that they had to be cutthroat, aligned with the

right people, attending the right meetings, focused on their own (versus their team's) success, competitive rather than collaborative, masculine, and even unfeeling.

One successful manager found herself faced with significant professional jealousy as she was rapidly promoted:

People don't want to see that your promotion was due to your hard work and intelligence. Several men got [angry], one lied and verbally attacked me. One woman told the senior executive, "She is too young and will just be getting married again." I was not upset. She didn't attack my work. She couldn't. She was just jealous. Others would just get mad and say things like, "I will pour cold water all over your project." I worked with the [chief executive officer] and the jealousy went away. I ended up giving his entire group credit for a project and this guy said "I totally under-estimated you."

Other challenges concerned development opportunities (see Table 4). Ten participants voiced the challenge that their current organization offered few opportunities to move up, assume more responsibility, and make use of their experience. The two who did not voice this challenge were both Caucasian living in California. One, born in 1964, has a bachelor's degree in finance, worked for a large medical/pharmaceutical firm for over 18 years, and as a key account manager who earned more than \$150,000 annually at the time of the study. The other woman, a high school graduate and senior business analyst earned more than \$100,000 annually at a California governmental agency at the time of the study. Five participants expressed concern about being replaced by cheaper, less experienced, but more educated replacements. All Caucasian United States citizens, one worked for a United States governmental agency in South Africa, while the rest worked in California in a range of industries and departments. Born

between 1954 and 1960, they had worked between 27 and 37 years, and earned between \$100,000 and \$150,000 annually. Two were high school graduates, while three held master's degrees.

Table 4

Development Opportunity Challenges

Challenges with Development Opportunities	N	%
Current organization offers few opportunities to move up, assume more responsibility, and make use of their experience	10	83%
Concerned about being replaced by cheaper, less experienced, but more educated replacements	5	42%

N = 12

Development Needs

All participants perceived they had few development needs, as they had strong confidence in their skills and abilities as managers and leaders (see Table 5). All participants also emphasized they had the ultimate responsibility for their continued career growth. One explained, "You cannot sit back and think they will take care of you. Knowing new talent is always coming on, you have to continuously up your skill just to stay where you are." Six participants described themselves as smart, strong, and ambitious. Four of those who did not voice this explained that they felt a bit weary from fighting the forces working against them and dealing with the challenges stated in the earlier section.

Table 5

Stated Development Needs

Development Need	N	%
I have few development needs	12	100%
I have strong confidence in my skills and abilities as managers and leaders	12	100%
I have the ultimate responsibility for my own continued career growth	12	100%
I am smart, strong, and ambitious	6	50%

$N = 12$

Participants named a variety of goals for themselves (see Table 6). Seventy-five percent stated they wanted to broaden their current networks, 33% stated they wanted to fine-tune their contribution with continued feedback from their bosses, and 25% wanted to redefine their roles. Participants generally expressed concern about reaching their career goals due to the lack of opportunities to move up. Two of these women, both very aggressive and talented and born in 1964, planned to leave their organizations to pursue other opportunities. One was African-American from California the other was Caucasian and lived in Colorado. Two others were as high as they wanted to go in their organization and were not looking to move. Of these one was born in 1948 and planned to remain in her current job until she retired. The other, born in 1963, was happy and successful as the president of her father's company.

Table 6

Goals

Theme	<i>N</i>	%
Broadening their current networks	9	75%
Fine-tuning their contribution with continued feedback from their bosses	4	33%
Redefining their roles	3	25%

$N = 12$

Organizational Support

In general, participant satisfaction with organizational support was highly variable (see Table 7). Roughly equal numbers of participants reported feeling dissatisfied, neutral, and satisfied. Participants reported the greatest satisfaction with the flexibility in their schedule. During interviews, participants explained that

policies such as flextime, job sharing, and working from home have made it easier for women with children to manage their complex lives. The need for flexibility was not as great for those women who had a strong support system at home.

The least satisfaction was reported for their career opportunities, which they described as limited. Nine believed they were being overlooked and two believed others viewed them as potential retirees and not worth investing in. Seven found it difficult to penetrate the all-male senior executive groups at their organizations. Four expressed concern that their work experience was dismissed as “outdated” (by male or younger women superiors) and they were expected to move laterally or down to get “more current” experience. These women reported frustration with what they perceived as an impractical and unnecessary career move that dismisses the depth of their experience and capability to contribute.

Table 7

Developmental Support from their Employers

	Distribution**	Mean	SD
Career support from organization	Dissatisfied: 50% Neutral: 8% Satisfied: 42%	3.83	2.12
Formal training and development	Dissatisfied: 33% Neutral: 17% Satisfied: 50%	4.17	2.04
On the job development opportunities offered	Dissatisfied: 33% Neutral: 33% Satisfied: 33%	4.08	1.73
Manager’s support	Dissatisfied: 42% Neutral: 25% Satisfied: 33%	3.58	2.02
Flexibility in schedule	Dissatisfied: 17% Neutral: 8% Satisfied: 75%	4.92	1.83
Access to a powerful network*	Dissatisfied: 25%	4.25	1.82

	Neutral: 25% Satisfied: 50%		
Career opportunities	Dissatisfied: 50% Neutral: 25% Satisfied: 25%	3.58	1.98
Availability of good mentors	Dissatisfied: 42% Neutral: 8% Satisfied: 42% No answer: 8%	3.91	2.07

N = 12; Scale: 1 = very dissatisfied, 4 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 7 very satisfied; *participants reported they created their own powerful network rather than gaining access to one at their organization; **Dissatisfied means reporting a score of 1, 2, or 3; neutral means reporting a score of 4, satisfied means reporting a score of 5, 6, or 7

Participants identified three ways organizations could support the growth and development of Boomer women who are managers with families: flexibility, mentoring and sponsorship, and systemic changes.

Flexibility

Participants expressed their commitment and passion about their work as well as passion about supporting their families. They did not expect to do less work than their peers; instead, they simply wanted the flexibility to be able to determine the best and most productive time to do what needed to be done. Their leading recommendation was for organizations to create systems that would alleviate the stress of balancing family and career demands. "More hours put in do not equal more productivity or better results. You do not get people's best when they are tired, overworked, or preoccupied with guilt or conflicting priorities." The following are among the many recommendations they made to organizations so that women can contribute their best: job sharing and teamwork, flextime and telecommuting, no calls during personal time (e.g., dinner or bed times), one meeting-free day per 5-day week, career development opportunities

that do not require extended absences from home, “breather” times that people can use at their own discretion without having to report what they are doing, and accommodation for employees’ work-life balance.

Mentoring and Sponsorship

Mentoring and sponsorship from those in more powerful positions were especially important to these women. While formal mentoring systems were helpful, what seemed most important to these women was having someone who recognized their potential, was committed to their growth and success, provided feedback and learning opportunities, and who paved the way into areas that were previously all-male.

Systemic Changes

Participants observed that women with families tend to have non-linear, gap-filled careers that had not moved forward in an uninterrupted fashion. Thus, they were not considered when competing for jobs outside of their known network. One participant countered that their circuitous paths were not aberrations and could actually “provide great creativity and possibilities.” She emphasized that organizations need to “be forgiving of detours and different paths taken. Be flexible and adaptable.” Therefore, systemic changes were advised to accommodate the needs and talents of these managers. Their recommendations focused on instituting equitable evaluation processes, allowing for flexibility, eliminating sexism, and practicing open communication.

Self-Support

The Boomer women in this study identified five essential actions they must take to ensure their continued success as a business leader (see Table 8). The

first was to build a reliable personal support system to provide balance and the flexibility to meet the demands of the job and family (cited by all participants). One woman suggested, “Team up with other professional mothers in the same situation. Support each other. Coach each other. Help each other figure out the challenges around taking care of your family’s and your own personal needs while in a demanding career.”

Table 8

Self-Support Approaches

Self-Support Approach	N	%
Build a reliable personal support system	12	100%
Build a professional network	11	92%
Identify meaningful goals for oneself	11	92%
Engage in continuous learning	10	83%
Give back to society and the next generation of women	7	58%

N = 12

The second was to build a professional network in order to find job opportunities within or outside of their organization (cited by 92% of participants). Participants explained that relationships and recommendations with people in powerful positions were essential to success, especially at the higher levels where fewer positions are available. The one woman who did not name this as a theme was the senior business analyst mentioned earlier who had worked for nearly 2 years at a large California government agency and earned more than \$100,000 annually. She is a high school graduate and had 32 years of work experience (10 years in information technology) and had been a manager for the prior 2 years.

The third action was to deliberately identify meaningful goals for themselves (cited by 92% of participants). The senior business analyst described

in the previous paragraph was the only person who did not mention this as a theme. Many of the participants had been high potentials in their organizations as young women. As a result, others (usually more senior men) had recognized their capability and mentored them in certain directions. In turn, the women did not fully consider whether they wanted to pursue that direction nor what it would cost them to do so. One participant emphasized, “Be clear about what you’re choosing and what you’re giving up for that choice.”

The fourth action was engaging in continuous learning (cited by 83% of participants). These women reported being on a journey of self-propelled, continuous growth without role models to follow or prepared solutions for their challenges. These participants emphasized the need for comfort with one’s talents combined with openness to new knowledge, new experience, and change. One elaborated, “You need to use the strengths that have come with age and experience. Change is okay. Remember, both men and women become obsolete. You can fight to stay in it or choose something else if you want.” Another explained, “You don’t have to be like the young kids who have lots of time and technological savvy. Just be you. Bring your own strengths and deep experience, and look at your preferences.” Those who did not cite engaging in continuous learning were older Boomers (born in 1957 and 1946), had grown children living at home, and were content with their current positions.

The fifth and final theme was giving back to society and the next generation of women (cited by 58% of participants). The oldest of these Boomers expressed an interest in finding a way to contribute what they have learned. They believed their hard-earned wisdom and knowledge were valuable and they

wanted to share this with and mentor others. A participant expressed, “What can we leave for the next group of women?” Those who desired to mentor younger women were at all ranges of the Boomer spectrum and no commonalities were found in their demographics. The one thing they had in common was their strong self-confidence despite any prejudicial encounters they had faced due to being Boomer women.

Discussion

Findings from this study suggested that Baby Boomer middle manager women with children face three key challenges: lack of time, lack of support, and gender bias. Of these, the biggest challenge is lack of time, manifesting as difficulty balancing family and work demands. Similarly, past studies found that women encounter personal, organizational, and social challenges when pursuing management careers (Powell, 1999). For example, Shriver (2009) found that women’s family and work-life demands have a negative impact on their promotion to leadership positions.

Regarding their development needs, the participants interviewed in this study believed they had taken care of their development throughout their careers and were generally well developed at this point. They did believe they could benefit from a mentor and receive more support in finding and securing career opportunities. They did not, however, believe they needed more formal training.

When asked about organizational support they had received, they voiced varied satisfaction. They expressed the greatest satisfaction with having flexibility in their schedule through flextime, job sharing, and working from home. The need for flexibility was not as great for those women who had a strong support system

at home. Participants expressed the least satisfaction with their career opportunities, which they described as “limited.” They have been required to move laterally or even down to get “more current” experience. These women reported frustration with what they perceived as impractical and unnecessary career moves that dismissed the depth of their experience and capability to contribute.

A striking point was that the participants were asking for more flex time for the purpose of managing family responsibilities. As family demands have traditionally been the women’s responsibility, the women in this study were trying to figure out how to effectively manage their career and home lives rather than thinking outside that traditional paradigm. In contrast, alternative approaches are being used by Generation X couples (the next generational cohort after Baby Boomers). Increasingly, some couples in this later cohort have the women being the primary breadwinners, while the men stay home with the children. Boomer women seem to have made an assumption that they had to do it all (or it is their responsibility to manage the home), while Xers are questioning these traditional roles. Then, the men start worrying about the negative impact their careers.

The findings from this study generally were consistent with the results of the literature review, with some exceptions. Although the women interviewed in this study generally had not experienced significant career interruptions, other researchers found that many women’s careers had been interrupted or at least affected by needs to care for their children (Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Vinnicombe & Bank, 2003). Additionally, the literature on women in management (Porter, 2005; Stuart, 2008) noted that differences in communication styles and leadership

styles lead to biases that have undermined women's ability to advance. However, participants did not identify these as hindrances to their careers.

Implications

Baby Boomer middle manager mothers have developed an ability to manage an extraordinary breadth and depth of responsibility at home and at work. Those who experienced significant support from their spouses or who had established other strong support systems appeared to be happier, less stressed, less resentful of their husbands and workplaces, more satisfied with their careers and better able to raise successful children. Based on these findings, women who choose to have children and want to evolve as corporate leaders need to assure they have supportive spouses and a strong support system if they hope to achieve personal and professional success. This support allows them to better attend to their marriages, their children, and themselves while doing the best work for their companies.

Organizations have already begun to put systems in place to support women's needs for flexibility. Maternity and paternity leave, flex time, job sharing, and telecommuting are a few of the ways organizations have begun to adapt to the special needs of employees with families. A growing number of young couples are deciding that the fathers will raise the children and care for the home, while the mothers take on the breadwinner role. Organizations may soon find themselves providing more of this work-life balance support to men in the coming years. To accommodate the most talented leaders, it behooves organizations to continue to look for creative ways to accommodate the non-traditional needs of those with families to care for. If organizations do not address

this issue, they will be neglecting and often losing the benefit and full capability of many talented, responsible, and committed employees.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are evident for women based on this study's results: pursue clear leadership goals; create strong professional networks; continue leadership training and education; market themselves; establish personal support systems for family and homecare; select organizations with policies that support working mothers; and enlist sponsors and mentors. First, for their own professional growth and development, Baby Boomer middle management women need to clarify their goals and establish strong networks that will support them in accomplishing these goals. They should continue to educate and train themselves in leadership skills and in their area of expertise. If they are unable to move upward in their own organizations, they should consider leaving for another where their experience will be appreciated and utilized to the fullest extent. These women need to determine how to best market themselves, or they may find they have to settle for less pay and power. As they are freed up from childrearing responsibilities, they might spend more time collectively examining the legacy they leave and establishing support structures for the next generation of parents looking to lead in organizations.

Second, women should be sure to establish clear personal support systems when they plan to follow a leadership track and have children. They should be sure to clearly evaluate the policies and practices of the organizations they choose to work for to be sure they are joining a system that will support their needs and recognize their best efforts. They also should find and nurture

professional relationships with those in power who can serve to sponsor them. Additionally, love may not be a sufficient reason for an ambitious woman to partner with another person. It is important to consider the partner's ego-strength and determine the partner's willingness to support her equally in all domestic, personal, and career matters. Participants emphasized that the emotional support the partner provides is more important than other forms of support, as most other forms (e.g., cleaning, doing errands, babysitting) can be hired.

Organizations that want to fully experience the benefits and contributions of talented women should closely examine their systems and structures and eliminate or adjust those that create added burdens for leaders with families. For example, they should continue to look for creative ways to flexibly accommodate those with unconventional circumstances or work histories. Caution should be taken regarding assumptions about leaders' capabilities and willingness based on their age or personal circumstances. Biases also should be avoided. Great potential value is lost when career support and opportunities are not provided to the organization's most seasoned employees. Organizations should consider providing mentors and sponsors from the C-suites and boardrooms to Boomer mothers who are in middle management. Now that the "boys club" has successfully been opened up at the lower levels, it is time for the same to be done at the uppermost levels as well.

Professional organizations can help support these women by providing formal networking systems, specifically for Baby Boomer mothers who are managers and who want to continue to grow as leaders. Physical meetings and conferences are important for discussions and learning and support. Additionally,

practical support can be gained through blogs, webinars, and video conferencing. These virtual options better accommodate people's busy schedules, enabling them to connect more frequently with women with more diverse experiences and ideas. Support groups and peer coaching also would be helpful.

Limitations

This study provided an insight into the challenges faced and value offered by Baby Boomer women who are managing families and a leadership career in middle management. However, several limitations affected the results of this study. As stated earlier in this article, approximately half of those invited to participate claimed they could not spare the hour or two needed for the interview. Therefore, the participant group was quite small and did not result in a representative sample of the population. Therefore, the answers cannot be assumed to be applicable to every Baby Boomer middle management woman with children.

Additionally, not all the participants were currently working as middle managers. Two had already taken an off-ramp—one due to corporate politics (she is pursuing a consulting career) and another because she believed she had lost too much in her personal life in her efforts to climb the corporate ladder (she has opened a yoga studio). Another woman had been laid off due to the downturned economy. Yet another participant was the president of her father's company and had experienced more support on all levels than any of the other woman interviewed, although her life and career was not without their own challenges. The diversity of the sample might explain some of the variance in the data gathered.

For some of the questions, there was a lack of clarity in who and what was being rated. For example, some of the women who were married more than once answered the support questions with their ex-husband and the years their children were young in mind. Others completed this part of the survey with their current life situations and more supportive husbands in mind. Others had two marriages with husbands that provided no support and considered both when they completed the survey. In addition, three of the women who are not currently working rated their previous employer and one rated her current employer who is herself. This shifting of perspective resulted in a great degree of variability in the data. To prevent this, participants should have been advised about which period of their lives to consider when completing this section. They also may have been provided with the ability to rate the support they got during each marriage and when divorced, widowed, and single.

The Baby Boomer cohort itself is highly variable and the experiences of Baby Boomers at each end of the cohort vary dramatically. Those who were born closer to 1946 experienced more challenges in all areas than those born closer to 1964, due to evolving corporate policies and societal attitudes. Many of the older Baby Boomers shared times they had broken gender barriers in their companies.

As a result of these limitations, this study is not a representative sample of Baby Boomer women who are middle managers and mothers. If this study were repeated, efforts should be made to include the busiest managers, greater numbers of women should be included, only those actually working as middle

managers should be included, and the data collection procedures should allow for the distinction of who and what exactly is being rated.

Additional Research

The primary suggestion for additional research is to study organizations that accommodate working parents' needs and specifically support Baby Boomer women who are managers looking to grow in their profession. Additionally, it would be valuable to evaluate the effectiveness of these organizational systems and structures.

A secondary suggestion for research is to repeat the study, this time including the busiest managers, a greater number of women, and only those actually working as middle managers. Additionally, it is important that the data collection procedures result in clear, consistent data.

Conclusion

This study highlighted the highly developed capabilities of Baby Boomer mothers in management positions. All the women interviewed for this study were experienced and confident managers who had proven their talent in leading and producing results under extraordinary conditions. Through will and determination, they used their intelligence and talent to develop the skills they needed to achieve high levels of success as leaders. Many of these women were the first women to occupy middle and upper management roles and did so without role models to show the way. In addition, they prompted organizations to question and revise their approaches, systems, and structures to better accommodate the needs of working parents.

As Baby Boomer women rise to the top of the organization, they are in a position to create new structures and systems that support a balanced work life for themselves and others. In addition, they can mentor other younger mothers (and possibly fathers) who are managers looking to successfully advance as leaders. Boomer mothers who are leaders should leave a legacy of family-friendly systems for ambitious leaders, and mentor others who are currently facing the challenges of balancing parenthood and work life they have overcome themselves. The findings can be used to support companies in developing the talents of mature, experienced women already in middle management and anxious to make greater long-term contributions to their company.

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Appendix A: Solicitation for Participants

My name is Audrey Sloofman and I am a master's student in organization development at Pepperdine University. I am conducting research to develop a better understanding of the training and support needs of baby boom middle managers who are mothers, feel the care of their family has impacted their career advancement, and plan to continue advancing in their careers for a minimum of 10 years. In this research, I will be interviewing a number of women fitting these criteria in order to learn about their career experiences and developmental support needs. I hope that the results of this research will help individuals and organizations understand more about the development and support needs of Boomer middle management mothers who have career aspirations.

It is easy to participate. Following a brief conversation describing the specifics of the study and a few questions to ensure the criteria for participation has been met, participants will be interviewed by phone, Skype, or in person at their convenience. Participants will use a pseudonym to maintain their anonymity for this research. Participants also will have the option to participate in a voluntary group conference call at the conclusion of the study to discuss the results. Participants will be able to maintain their anonymity for this conference call.

Desired participants are women who:

- Are born between 1946-1964 (between the ages of 46 to 64)
- Are currently working in a middle management position
- Want to move to higher levels of management
- Plan to continue working for the next 10 years.
- Have children
- Feel the care of their family has impacted their career advancement.

If you know any women who may meet these criteria, please forward their names and contact information in one of the following ways:

Email:	[contact information omitted]
Phone:	[contact information omitted]
US Mail:	Audrey Sloofman [contact information omitted]

If I contact anyone you recommend, I will not let her know that you recommended her. Her decision to participate or not will be kept confidential between her and me; I will not inform you of her decision. Participation in this research is voluntary. The participants' names as well as their organizations will be anonymous; the information they share will be confidential and, if presented, will be used without attribution or the mention of any individual or company.

This journal research takes place under the supervision of my Faculty Advisor:
Dr. Gary Mangiofico
[contact information omitted]

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

(To be completed by interviewee online prior to interview)

Date: *(to be filled in by me before the interview)*

Corporate Data:

Name of Company (Please use a pseudonym)

Location of site you work at

Employee population size

Annual corporate earnings

Maturity of corporate development (start-up, adolescent, mature)

Personal

Name/Pseudonym:

Age:

Year born:

Ethnicity:

Marital Status

Number of times married

Number of children

Ages of children

Number of children still living at home

Education

Highest level of education

Type of degree earned

Career Path

Current Job title:

Department:

Career goal 5 years from now

Career goal 10 years from now

What is the total number of years you have been in the workforce, minus any extended period you took off for personal reasons?

How long have you worked for your current employer?

How long have you held a middle management position with this employer?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Introduction:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. During this interview, I will ask you some questions about your work experiences. Please be open and candid with your responses and take the time you need to answer each question. If a question is unclear or uncomfortable to answer please tell me. I will audiotape this interview and will take some handwritten notes as well. I think you will find the interview interesting; but, if at any time you wish to withdraw from this research interview, please let me know.

Are you comfortable with me audiotaping and taking notes of our discussion?

If YES – turn on the recorder, otherwise do not use it.

Do you have any questions before we start?

First, do you have any questions about the content of the Participation Consent Form that you signed?

As mentioned in the Participation Consent Form, please select a pseudonym to ensure your anonymity. Pseudonym: _____

Next, I'd like to confirm the information I received from you the last time we talked. I have listed that you are: *(review demographics from first discussion)*. Is that correct?

Interview Guide

As you know, the purpose of this interview is to discover the training and development and other support needs of female baby Boomer middle managers who wish to advance their careers as leaders and do not plan to retire for next 10 years. My goal is to learn more about your own personal experience and needs. I have eight key questions to ask you with some specific questions to gather more details. Please take your time as you respond to these questions and cover anything you think may be important or relevant to my study.

Let's first briefly review some of your background questionnaire so we are on the same page together. *(Discuss key points as a warm up.)*

1. What do you enjoy most about your current job?

2. What helped you get to your current position?
 - a. Personal
 1. Qualities, skills, abilities, talents
 2. Personal experiences
 3. Relationships
 4. Other _____

- b. Professional
 - 1. Formal training or development programs
 - 2. Informal training or development; learning experiences
 - 3. Mentors
 - 4. Career coaches
 - 5. Sponsors
 - 6. Networks
 - 7. Other _____

c. Educational

d. Other

Probe items above with the following possible questions:

- ◆ At what point in your career did you get this support?
- ◆ How long was this /has this been available to you?
- ◆ Are you currently involved in using this support?
- ◆ Describe the critical elements of this support?
- ◆ How helpful (on a scale of 1-5) is this support?
- ◆ What part of this support is most valuable to you and why?
- ◆ What is least valuable and why?
- ◆ What is the gender of the key person providing the support?
- ◆ Was this support provided for you by your company or did you generate/find it yourself? Who pays for it?

- 3. What challenges have you faced in achieving your current position?
 - a. Personal
 - b. Professional
 - c. Educational
 - d. Other

- 4. What unique challenges do you think baby Boomer mothers have faced in becoming a manager and in continuing their development?
 - a. Personal
 - b. Developmental opportunities
 - c. Training
 - d. Gender issues, i.e., stereotyping, prejudice
 - e. Issues due to having children to care for
 - f. Sharing of responsibilities at home with spouse
 - g. Other

- 5. Regarding your “off ramping” from your career path:
 - a. How much time did you take off to care for your family?
Why?
 - b. How many years did you work before you took time off?
 - c. How long did you take off?
 - d. How many years have you worked since your return?
 - e. When you took this time off, how did you use your time?

1. Homemaker fulltime
 2. Part-time work related to my career
 3. Part-time work not related to my career
 4. Went back to school
 5. Earned a degree
 6. Other (explain)_____
- f. If you took time off, what was your job title when you left?
 - g. If you took time off, what was your job title when you returned?
 - h. Did you return to the same employer?
 - i. What impact do you think your time off has had on your current career options?
6. What do you need to achieve the career goals you have previously identified in the background information online survey?
 - a. Knowledge, skills, competencies, abilities
 - b. Training or development
 - c. Education
 - d. Professional relationships to establish or nurture
 - e. Professional support
 - f. Personal support
 - g. Other
 7. What unique needs do baby Boomer managers who are mothers have support their growth and career advancement? Is that support available in your organization?
 8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me or any other comments you would like to make concerning the topic of female baby Boomer middle managers looking to advance their careers?

Thank you for your input. Do you want to review a copy of your transcript?

If yes:

Please provide me with your postal or email address. I will send you a transcript for your review as soon as it is ready. *(If hard copy)* It will need to be returned to me within 10 days.

Do you have any final questions or comments before we end?

Thank you again for your time, insight and contribution to my study.