

EMGT 835 FIELD PROJECT:

Are the Factors Impacting Women's Success in Avionics Industry  
Different from Other Male Dominated Industries?

By

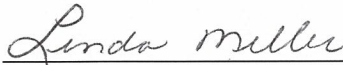
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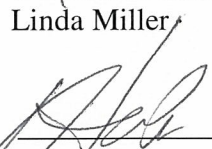
Master of Science

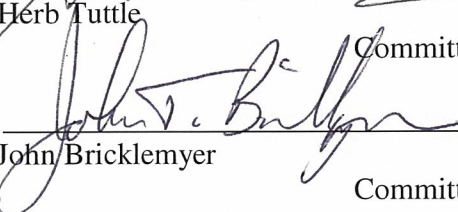
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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to determine if the factors impacting women's success in the Avionics Industry are different from those in other male dominated industries. This paper is written in order to help women in male dominated industries understand how they can succeed in their career, and how they can overcome the challenges they are facing on daily basis. Four successful women were selected from the Avionics Industry, and they were interviewed for about 30 minutes. They were asked to talk about the challenges they faced in working in the male dominated Avionics Industry. These challenges were compared to the challenges faced by women in various other male dominated industries through secondary research. As expected, the challenges faced by women in the Avionics Industry were no different from the challenges faced by women in other male dominated industries. The women that were interviewed shared how they overcame the struggles they faced and how they succeeded. These success stories were compared with suggestions to succeed given by women in other male dominated industries. This paper is intended to enlighten and educate women who are struggling to succeed in male dominated industries by giving various examples and suggestions.

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## Introduction

The Aviation Industry has a high numerical preponderance of men. Women represent less than 14 percent of the Aviation Industry. The percentage of women who make their way to top management is less than one percent. In this era of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where women make up almost half of the workforce, it is interesting to see in depth the challenges women face in the male dominated industry. The success stories of strong women in top management in Aviation Industries give courage, guidance, and assurance to all women professionals in male dominated industries. It also helps a woman professional validate and verify if she is fit for such challenge.

Four women from the Aviation Industry were interviewed; and they were asked to talk about their challenges in working in a male dominated industry and how they succeeded. These challenges were studied in detail, and they can be grouped into three categories. First and foremost is the struggle for women to find balance between their work and personal life.

Women in male dominated fields have to work much harder to make it to the top. Therefore, it is a major struggle for them to manage their time productively at work and at home with their kids, spouse, family, and friends. Another struggle faced by women is overcoming male chauvinism and earning the respect of their male counterparts. It is a challenge for women to be themselves at work, prove what they can offer, and be recognized. The third major struggle women (and many men) face at their work place is in the communication differences between genders. These three challenges are described in depth in the literature research. If women understand these challenges and learn to overcome these differences, they can earn respect and be successful in their career path.

## Literature Review

Fifty years ago, the term “women in business” referred to secretaries, low-paid office workers, and retail store clerks. Today, more and more women are taking on leadership positions as entrepreneurs, business owners, in politics and government positions, as corporate leaders, and in the non-profit sector. Many of these women work in heavily male-dominated fields or nontraditional careers (Houlihan n.d.).

The US Department of Labor (DOL) defines nontraditional careers as those in which women comprise less than 25 percent of the workforce -- this includes everything from Aerospace Engineers to Wood Machinists (Runnheim n.d.). Although women have made headway into certain industries and occupations, there is still a gap between women and men in many industries and occupations. Despite shifts in the labor force over recent years that have desegregated certain occupations from being dominated by one gender, women continue to be highly over represented in clerical, service, and health occupations, while men tend to be over represented in craft, operator, and laborer jobs (Women in Male-Dominated Industries and Occupations in U.S. and Canada 2010).

Male-dominated industries provide particular challenges for women’s advancement. Catalyst research has found that talent management systems are frequently vulnerable to pro-male biases that inevitably result in less diverse employee pools. Because senior leadership teams, which tend to be dominated by men, set the tone for talent management norms, masculine stereotypes can creep into human resource tools. All employees are inevitably affected by these tools; employees who meet criteria (potentially based on masculine stereotypes) are selected for

promotion and/or tapped as future leaders and/or offered development opportunities. Because male-dominated industries and occupations tend to be particularly vulnerable to masculine stereotypes due to lack of diversity, women may find excelling in these industries or occupations to be particularly difficult (Women in Male-Dominated Industries and Occupations in U.S. and Canada 2010).

The graph below shows the breakdown of women's occupations in the United States (Quick Stats on Women Worker 2008).



**Figure 1**

The following occupations are the most male-dominated occupations in the U.S. Less than 2% of the employees in all these occupations are women (Quick Facts on Nontraditional Occupations for Women 2008).

<b>10 Most Male-Dominated Occupations in the U.S.</b>		
<i><b>Occupation</b></i>	<i><b>Total Number of People in Occupation</b></i>	<i><b>Share of Women Employees</b></i>
Dredge, excavating, and loading machine operators	60,000	1.2%
Heavy vehicle and mobile equipment service technicians and mechanics	217,000	1.1%
Tool and die makers	71,000	1.0%
Electricians	874,000	1.0%
Logging workers	73,000	1.0%
Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists	358,000	0.9%
Millwrights	60,000	0.9%
Structural iron and steel workers	77,000	0.9%
Maintenance workers, machinery	55,000	0.7%
Brickmasons, blockmasons, and stonemasons	230,000	0.4%

Table 1

Other examples of non-traditional careers for women are (Runnheim n.d.):

- *Auto Service Technician*: Experienced service technicians can earn between \$70,000 and \$100,000 a year, according to the DOL. Training programs range from less than a year to two years. "Although women can definitely be successful in the automotive service industry, it is important for them to get a job working around vehicles as soon as possible while going to school," says Chuck Bowen, head of automotive service



technology at Dunwoody College of Technology in Minneapolis. "A good place to start without experience would be as a lube technician [changing oil]. Many shops will help train for this position. Also, get to know good, positive technicians who are willing to mentor you and give you some of their knowledge."

- *Truck Driver:* Tractor-trailer driver training programs typically last less than one year and are offered at many private and public technical schools. Many employers require applicants to be at least 25 years old and have a commercial driver's license (CDL). Employers prefer a high school diploma or GED and a good driving record. According to the DOL, the median wage for truck drivers is \$31,000 per year, although some drivers get paid by the mile.
- *Plumber:* Plumbers provide practical, hands-on solutions to problems by repairing and installing water, waste, drainage, and gas systems in all sorts of buildings, from homes to power plants. They also install and service fixtures such as showers, sinks, toilets, dishwashers, and water heaters. Good math and science skills are a must. The median wage for plumbers is about \$38,000 per year, according to the DOL.
- *Electrician:* These professionals install, test, and maintain electrical systems. An electrician is considered to be one of the high-paying jobs coming out of the stimulus, and according to the DOL, the median wage for electricians is \$19.29 per hour.

High wages and good benefits are two good reasons to look into working in a male-dominated industry. "You get a great sense of accomplishment when you can see the results of your work, which in my case is air-cleaning products," says Dawn Rogers, a senior designer. "I've worked as

a drafter, designer, CAD administrator, and drafting supervisor, all of which have been enjoyable. I can't imagine any better career for myself.” (Runnheim n.d.)

As a woman, working in a male-dominated field can be extremely rewarding. Many technology and industry-driven corporations are seeking to increase diversity in their workforce, particularly among their management ranks. Opportunities abound to both gain initial employment and to advance within such companies. This is good news, considering that such industries typically offer higher pay and greater benefits than traditionally-female industries. (McLaughlin n.d.)

While women have made great strides in the last fifty years, many still feel that the playing field in these industries is not yet completely level. They believe they must work harder, be smarter, and put in longer hours than their male counterparts to effectively compete. Whether this is completely accurate depends on the individual and the industry or company she is in; however, women do have unique challenges to overcome to succeed in business—more so if they are in a male-dominated industry (Houlihan n.d.). For many women, working with mostly male counterparts can be intimidating. Many men in these fields are still unaccustomed to working with women, and some may be wary or even openly resentful of their female counterparts. (McLaughlin n.d.)

It is common sense that to be a successful career woman, one should choose a company that has a woman friendly culture, and have a supportive family and husband. She must be able to balance her home and work life, have good time-management skills, and be able to prioritize. Many women struggle to find this balance of juggling a husband, home, and children with their professional responsibilities. Women have to try and maintain the equilibrium between her family life, her personal life, and her career (Women on Top 2007).

## Finding Balance between Work and Personal life

One of the big challenges faced by women in a male dominated industry is efficient time management. Because women in male dominated fields seems to be so busy with the extra load of work and fighting hard to prove themselves at work, sometimes they tend to forget all about their friends. They tend to not take time off to enjoy things that are not obligations but give them joy, like a cup of coffee with some cousins or traveling alone. But these things are much needed remedies and they are important for one's health. When there is no proper time for personal well-being and do things that provide peace, it reflects badly on health. After a certain time, many women will find that they are mentally and physically depleted, and to remedy that, they have to find balance (Women on Top 2007).

It is extremely important to keep life in perspective while trying to maintain a balance between work mode and family mode. When a woman is engaged in multiple endeavors and taking on various roles — working professional, wife, and mother — she should not forget to take a deep breath, relax, and embrace each day as a new challenge. The reality is that the issue is not so black and white — women in the male dominated industries can balance their work and home lives and still flourish in their jobs. It is successfully being done by millions of women each and every day (Wozniak 2009 ).

Balance is experienced differently by everyone and can be identified by some or all of the following feelings:

- Have enough time for family and work
- Life "flows" and feels relatively effortless

- When something in life breaks down (baby sitter gets sick, the car breaks), there are resources to cope
- On the right path, towards the right goals, both personally and professionally

Balance has some characteristics:

- It is not a constant, it comes and goes as things change in life
- It has to be worked at
- The process of seeking balance can be stimulating and a true learning experience about what is important to each individual

Creating a healthy balance between work and home is no simple task, especially in today's fast paced work environment. With the work life and home life out of balance, stress is running high in most families. If a woman spends more time at work, she will lose out on her family and personal life. Alternately, if she spends more time facing the challenges of her personal life, such as coping with marital problems, or caring for her aging parents on top of financial problems, she is unable to concentrate on the job. There will be a great need to reclaim control of her life.

Whether she focuses too much on her personal life, or her work life, the outcome is the same – Stress.

Millions of people are constantly struggling to maintain a healthy balance between their time in the office and at home. Advancement in communication technology has made people work from anywhere and at any time. In the hope of moving up the career ladder, women are working longer hours than is healthy for them. This makes it difficult for them to juggle the demands of their work and family life. At the minimum, eight hours a day is typically spent in the office, plus additional time for the daily commute. This leaves a very small amount of time for the

family. If a woman wants to spend more hours at home, she needs to make modifications to her work schedule, and make an objective assessment of her goals in life. This is called time management (Turner 2009).

Creating a balance in life is a continuous process. Balance does not mean doing everything; therefore, examine the priorities and set boundaries. One should be firm in what she can or cannot do; only she can restore harmony to her lifestyle. If a woman has a sense of self-confidence and can balance and can organize her time, she will succeed. Success is not related to gender, it is related to character. Success means knowing what a woman wants and working to achieve it, while not losing sight of everything else. “Think of your life as a flower, with you in the center. The petals represent things you are doing or want to do: family, friends, house, husband, children, social activities, charity work, fitness, and leisure time. How much time you give to each depends on the person, but to be successful you need to have a mixture of things. Everyone has duties, and making them enjoyable will help you be successful.” (Women on Top 2007)

## Overcoming Male Chauvinism and Earning Respect

Another challenge faced by women in the male dominated industries is breaking the barrier of male chauvinism and earning respect. Women have to work extremely hard to earn respect and recognition in order to break down many of the barriers with which women contend in today's male dominated industries. From the moment they walk through the door, a women's strength of character and convictions are put to the ultimate test. While these barriers could absolutely be considered a detriment, they may also be considered as an advantage, particularly from a motivational standpoint (Wozniak 2009 ). Women who have succeeded in a male dominated industry say that it is their attitude, determination to succeed, resilience, and personal belief that have taken them to the top.

Men and women often have preconceived notions of what is women's work. Women breaking into a male-dominated industry face many challenges, which may include sexual harassment and isolation. "When I started working as a mechanical drafter, I was the first woman hired in the engineering department at the company I worked for," says Dawn Rogers, a senior designer. "The men in the department were generally accepting of me, but there was some animosity directed toward me. To offset that, I decided to work twice as hard and take on any engineering challenge that was given to me." (Runnheim n.d.). In the face of the so-called boys' club aspect of this business, women take many arrows and face countless roadblocks in their personal quest for success. It is a constant daily challenge to maintain the respect they have worked so hard to earn while continuing to ensure their ideas and opinions are heard, honored, and valued (Wozniak 2009).

Breaking into a male dominated world is a challenge for many; however it varies from technical field to technical field or from industry to industry. Overcoming the male domination and proving that they can handle roles that have been previously seen as too “technical” or “demanding” for women is in itself a challenge. Women have to face the challenge by putting in more effort than men, in order to be recognized. Women have many commitments to take care of. The amount of responsibility they have is often greater and many are often distracted and all over the place because they have to take care of many things. If women do not let their commitments overwhelm or hold them back, they can do perfectly fine (Women on Top 2007).

Another challenge for women is practical management of career breaks. Career breaks, taken from a few days to a number of years to raise a family, leave many women with childcare concerns (e.g. the desire for time off when childcare arrangements break down tends to be the most frequent concern) (Mucha 2009). Some women feel that the biggest fear that men have about women at the top is not that they do not like women or feel that they are incompetent, but that they fear women leaving in the middle of the project, or saying ‘I can’t work long hours,’ or ‘I cannot travel’ or ‘I don’t want to do this.’ “I never told them, “I have to go: I have a problem at home” this made them very cooperative and understanding, says Dawlat Hashem, a Computer Engineer (Women on Top 2007).

In a global context, one key challenge is the cultural differences between countries. It can be the case that “doing business” with a woman, particularly one who is the ‘decision-maker’ is quite alien and needs careful consideration and preparation (Mucha 2009). Unfortunately, the glass-ceiling concept has not vanished from many industries or businesses. Women are still struggling to land in leadership positions within the highest ranks of their organizations, where the disparity between men and women is most often seen. However, more and more women are employing

and asserting these attributes, and recent years have definitely seen signs of progress in making the higher leading positions more gender equitable (Wozniak 2009 ). The stress of combining work with family life can produce its own challenges. There will still be companies that view the employment of women as an economic burden that they cannot afford, and can therefore result in limitations in a woman's promotional prospects (Mucha 2009). The small percentage of women who never contemplate having children may unfortunately face the situation whereby these same companies make assumptions about their future lifestyle choices (Mucha 2009). Time and again, women at the conference complained that in order to work in IT consulting and sales, they were told they had to learn golf because this is where business is done. Or they had to hang out in the bar scene drinking or pretend to like sports because this is how customer relationships in a male-dominated world are sealed. "I eventually learned to like golf," said one conference attendee who asked not to be named, adding that she faced a golf-or-go mandate at her company (Messmer 2003).

Networking with other women who work in nontraditional jobs is a good way to receive and offer support. Many metropolitan cities have support groups for women who work in male-dominated industries. However, it is difficult for a woman to find a female mentor in similar industries with similar roles (Runnheim n.d.). Susan Choe, founder and CEO of Outspark, an online game publishing company, talks about her struggles in an interview. She says that, networking with other women executives in her field is difficult because so few exist. "It would be nice to have someone to talk to with a female perspective. I think female perspectives are valuable because guys more often than not think about things from the perspective of core gamers — the 18- to 34-year-old males that have so long represented the largest segment of our industry. But the market is changing rapidly and becoming broader." She also comments, "If



someone is offending you with a sexist remark, then try to ignore the comments and work hard – take them as fuel for the fire, and that will inspire and help succeed.” If she were to give an advice to a woman entering a male-dominated field, it would be to “seek out good examples or mentors to learn from.” “Try to be surrounded with good friends and colleagues with whom you can exchange ideas and help over the years,” she says. She recommends being clear about goals and timelines, and she advises women not to be afraid to make mistakes. “Just try,” she says. Ultimately, she points out, “No one but you is going to know better what you’re good at or what really drives you.” (Wilson n.d.)

Networking is the key to success. Women should research and get in contact with females who are working in similar industries. Female mentors and networking can add to a woman’s success. Mireille Gingras, founder, CEO and president of HUYA Bioscience international, suggests that it is important to move away from one’s comfort zone when networking. “Networking at industry meetings is one way to stay connected, as is joining specific organizations in one’s field,” Gingras says. In San Diego, where she lives, she singled out Athena, a networking group for women executives in the technology, life science, and health-care sector. “Network, but be careful not to limit yourself to same-gender networking,” she encourages. A woman should commit herself to build and grow her career. She should be motivated and focused on dedicating herself to things she is passionate about. “I’ve always been very motivated and focused on dedicating myself to those things about which I’m passionate. This dedication allowed me to put an enormous amount of time and energy into something I believe in,” says Gingras. Accordingly, she developed an innovative business model in the biotechnology space, bridging the gap between China and the U.S. (Wilson n.d.).

It is important for a woman to maintain a balance between drive and patience. Entrepreneurs are action-oriented and focused on making things happen. "The drive and initiative to get things done versus the need to be thoughtful and patient when challenges arise can be a struggle, so it's crucial to evaluate times when one may be more beneficial than the other," Gingras says.

Employers are more likely to advance a worker that is admired by her peers (Wilson n.d.).

While performing her job well is the primary factor in gaining peer respect, there are also a number of subtle dynamics that can influence how her male counterparts judge her (McLaughlin n.d.).

Men become nervous when they see women in groups, and many automatically think that women are talking about them or engaging in some form of anti-male gossip. When a woman is working with mostly men, she needs to demonstrate that she is comfortable being around men.

This is especially important if she is interested in gaining a management position where she will be overseeing the work of primarily male employees. It is best to be polite to the other women, and engage in brief, work-related exchanges. Rather than being seen as "one of the girls" who is automatically grouped together with the other women, she will be viewed as an individual, meaning that she and her accomplishments are more likely to stand out (McLaughlin n.d.).

As one of few women working with many men, she is a veritable celebrity, and she should consider that she is always on display. She will frequently be the only woman in a meeting room or office full of men. As such, it is only natural that her actions and appearance will be noticed and scrutinized more than those of her male counterparts. Therefore, she should be mindful of her posture, expressions, and gestures. She should maintain eye contact with the speaker at a meeting, and avoid the common female habit of nodding in agreement while others are speaking.

By focusing on her task or on the meeting, she will eventually cease to notice or worry that others are watching her (McLaughlin n.d.).

Another way to earn respect is to use a woman's difference to her advantage. It is unfortunate the extent to which humans judge each other based on appearance. It is, however, a reality, and the judgment of a woman's appearance can be the harshest of all. Employers often associate a worker's professionalism in appearance as an indication of the quality of his or her work. A female possess the distinct advantage of being able to stand out where her male counterparts cannot, and she should use that to her advantage. Just because she works with men, it is not necessary to attempt to look or to dress like men. If the nature of work is not heavily industrial, she can wear appropriate skirts and dress shoes. A good general rule to follow is to highlight one attribute at any given time. If she wears a skirt, she should pair it with a conservative top and/or jacket; conversely, she should match a more fitted top with her pant suits. A woman's hair and makeup are other areas where she can display a polished and professional appearance. Looking one's best can work to her advantage in all areas of her career, and displaying an attractive appearance is always appropriate. Bear in mind, however, that many male fields are also very traditional environments. Therefore, she must not dress in revealing or overly sexy attire or she will risk damaging her credibility (McLaughlin n.d.).

Another easy way for a woman to impress the male counterparts is to learn the male lingo. When a woman shows that she has knowledge in typically-male subjects, it will help increase men's comfort level with her. The most obvious choice is to become well-versed in one or more of the major sports. Demonstrating that she is genuinely interested in and know something about their area's sports teams will instantly give her something in common with her male coworkers.

Many typically-male industries have a strong tie to the military, and a woman may find the culture in her workplace studded with military lingo and mannerisms. Some women may be tempted to avoid using this system to show that the times and dynamics are changing. They may make a point to not use this language or to make light of it. This tactic is not advisable because it can seem disrespectful of their company's history and tradition. If one's industry often uses military time, the phonetic alphabet, and/or numerous acronyms, a woman can impress her male coworkers and employer by learning and using this same nomenclature (McLaughlin n.d.).

## Effective Communication between Genders

Men and women are not created the same; they have innate differences. Therefore, they should not strive to be the same. Instead, they should understand their differences and learn to use them to their best advantage (Sedacca 2002). A Few decades ago, the roles of both men and women were clearly defined. Men were the breadwinners; they nurtured the family by working outside the home. Whereas, women were the homemakers; they nurtured the family by working inside the home. Women tended to be more relationship-oriented, and men tended to be more work-oriented. Prior to the sixties and seventies females had only a narrow range of job possibilities. They were primarily teachers, nurses, secretaries, and sales clerks. However, in the sixties and seventies, thousands of females fought for women's rights to have equal opportunity in the workplace. They tried to prove that there are no intrinsic differences between men and women other than the physical aspects. They won the fight and it opened door for many occupations and executive positions for women. However, as women rushed to these positions, it became more and more evident that women and men are not the same. They do have innate differences in their thinking, acting, communicating, and many other behaviors. By understanding these differences, both men and women can respect each other, broaden their perspective, gain valuable insight into being more productive, and also improve the quality of life in the workplace (Gray 2002).

Although gender differences are often not as obvious in the technical sales profession, they are there and are often misunderstood. The ability to better understand men and women gives both individuals and companies a much appreciated competitive advantage. By understanding the different ways men and woman communicate and approach problem solving in the industry,

women will have an extra edge to earn the respect, support, and trust they deserve. They can also increase the awareness and skills that enable them to accelerate through the business hierarchy and excel in customer interaction with minimum stress and maximum success. Increasing success comes with the ability to switch back and forth according to what is most appropriate (Gray 2002).

From early childhood, it is evident that both boys and girls communicate differently. Girls generally speak earlier than boys, and at the age of three, girls have twice the vocabulary of boys. As adults, women speak between 22,000 and 25,000 words a day; whereas, men speak between 7,000 and 10,000 words a day. The physical reasoning for this is the way the both male and female brains are wired. When men talk, their speech is located in the left side of the brain; whereas, when women talk, their speech is located in both right and left hemispheres of the brain. This is the reason why men talk in a linear and logical manner; women talk more freely mixing logic and emotions (Garner).

Men use communication primarily to solve problems and get a task done; however, women use communication to solve problems, to minimize stress and feel better, create emotional bonds to strengthen relationships, and as a means to stimulate creativity and discover new ideas. The differences are broken down as shown below (Gray 2002).

- Women communicate to make a point:
  - Men primarily use language to convey content, while women use words for other reasons as well.
- Women use communication to grieve and receive emotional support:

- Men often minimize a problem to reduce stress, and women build it up and then reduce stress by relating to each other.
- The secret of earning trust for women is to demonstrate whenever and wherever possible the messages that they care, understand, and respect.
- For women, trust can be earned by being caring, understanding, and respecting.
- Women communicate to relieve tension:
  - For women, talking about problems relieves tension, because the discussion helps her to sort things out. Sharing a series of stressful experiences in no particular order helps her to make sense of her situation. As she talks, she may begin to realize that some things are not really as important as she thought. She may talk about what she has to do in the future. This can be an effective tool for relieving pressure. By reviewing what is required of her, she can be more relaxed and capable of getting things done.
  - By talking about what she has to do a woman can relieve normal job pressures.
  - When a man hears a woman venting, he may misinterpret his colleague's behavior by assuming she is trying to get out of doing more.
  - A man internally plans a strategy of action to relieve his stress and feel more confident. A woman finds the same confidence simply by expressing her feelings, and then a clear plan begins to emerge.
  - Most men don't understand this process or relate to it.
- Women discover points as they communicate:
  - Men generally know what they are going to say before they speak, but a woman may just begin talking and gradually discover what she wants to say.

These above distinctions create lots of misunderstanding and misinterpretation between the genders. As women understand this point they will begin to realize how they may be unknowingly losing the respect of men. As men understand this point they can begin to understand how they may be losing the trust of women. When men speak it is generally to make a point in order to solve a problem or to gather information to solve a problem. When men confidently speak to the point, they are assured of earning the respect of other men in the workplace.

A woman is capable of solving problems, but her style of communication can give the impression to a man that she doubts in her abilities. In the process of finding or proposing a solution, women tend to be more relationship-oriented than men. Her words will convey not only content but feelings as well. If a woman sounds uncertain or appears open and interested in what others think, she is perceived as non-confident in her ability to solve the problem at hand. In reality, her inclination to seek approval is not a measure of her insecurity, but rather a useful attempt to create consensus. Her tendency to gradually build up to her solution rather than get right to the point not only frustrates a man but can motivate him to disregard the validity of her suggestion.

Women use words to express feelings as well as content. They will express more feeling in their expression to 'gather in' or include the listener in their experience. This personal touch increases connection. Before arriving at her point, a woman may wander around to build interest and give substance to her relationship with the listener. This style increases personal connection and generates trusts among the females. However, using extra words to make a point causes them to be viewed as less competent among males.



Most times, men lose respect for women when they seem to complain about nothing. When women share negative feelings in the workplace, men view it as whining, blaming, or complaining. When a woman is sharing a man thinks she is complaining, and thus the respect he has for her diminishes. This is because most men cannot discern the difference between complaining and sharing, as they are not good at sharing feelings. By understanding that women share feelings, men can learn to be more patient and push aside the judgments that come up. On the other hand, women can recognize that men are not adept at these different ways of communicating. To effectively manage stress, both men and women need to make sure they are not looking to the workplace for all their emotional support. If they have stress they need to make sure that outside the workplace they create opportunities to relieve stress.

Women lose trust for men when they grumble and seem to resent her requests. When he grumbles, she mistakenly concludes that he is not willing to be supportive. Grumbling indicates that a man is considering her request. If he was not considering her request, then he would instead simply say no. By understanding the way men think and react, a woman can more correctly interpret a man's willingness to be supportive.

If men and women choose to be just themselves at work, then there is a potential to feel offended, frustrated, or excluded for both men and women. Therefore, they have to make a genuine effort to understand and learn the appropriate behavior to interact and work with the opposite sex. To learn this appropriate behavior, it takes intuition, tact, flexibility, and wisdom. In situations, choosing appropriate behaviors and responses can be developed by greater awareness of how men and women are different. This expanded awareness, can lead to an equal respect for both men and women. For example, when a mistake is made, instead of having to defend the approach, they can learn from their mistake and adjust to the other's behavior.

Likewise, when others make mistakes they can be more tolerant and compassionate because they understand the difficulty in determining the appropriate behavior with the opposite gender.

Every interaction in the workplace for men and women requires adapting their instinctive approaches. It is not necessary for either men or women to over-accommodate, or change who they are, but they do need to make some adjustments. Understanding how men think, feel, and react differently will give women the insight needed to make small but significant changes in the ways they communicate and thereby gain more support. Every person has a natural blend of masculine and feminine characteristics. However, a woman's challenge in the workplace is much greater than a man's, since she has to break into an already existing hierarchy of control and power (Gray 2002).

Unfortunately, prejudice exists, and in many situations, a woman will be prejudged until she has the opportunity to prove herself and earn the respect she deserves. For this reason, it is still more difficult for a woman to get ahead than a man. Therefore, women have to break through the glass ceiling by making men their allies and not their enemies. Instead of giving up all characteristics of women, they need to change the way they communicate. Women do not have to change their inner reactions, but they do have to change how they respond to others. They do not have to change how they feel about things, but they do have to change their attitude. They do not have to sacrifice authentic self-expression, but do have to adjust their expression to what is appropriate in different situations. With this new understanding of how men and women are different, they will gain the wisdom and flexibility to make these changes. By improving communication they will get the respect they deserve and the trust that supports increased success (Gray 2002). A fundamental principle of psychology notes that people are more readily influenced by those they see as similar to themselves. Men always had other men to look up to

in the business world. However, dissimilarity has become a major challenge for many career women who have trouble assimilating into the business world or corporate culture because they do not always know how to “play by the rules.”

Overcoming the barriers of communication between genders is not always easy. It takes lots of determination to understand and recognize the differences. Recognizing the differences can bring more clarity in understanding why people react the way they do. It will also help the confusing and frustrating interactions with the opposite gender to make more sense, and will help to accept each other better.

## Procedure and Methodology

The published theories and analysis described in the literature review provide women in the Avionics Industry with the suggestion on how they should balance their work and personal life, how to win over male chauvinism, and how to communicate with their male coworkers. In order to prove true the theories and research, interviews were conducted with women in top management positions in the Avionics Industry.

A file that contained close to a thousand business cards was obtained from a particular business development manager in the Avionics Industry. Then, business cards of women were picked out from the pile; there were eleven business cards that pertained to women in Avionics. Out of the eleven, only four women responded to the interview request. Since all their phone numbers and email address were easily available, they were contacted through both phone and email. First, the phone call was made, and if they were unavailable, it was followed up by an email.

Questions were directed in a way to understand and validate the information gathered in the literature review without leading the interviewee. Each interview lasted about 20-30 minutes, and it was scheduled mostly for late afternoons to accommodate both the interviewer and the interviewee. Since the women were enthusiastic to talk about their experience to another female in the Avionics Industry, they did not need a set of questions. However, a few questions were used to start and guide the interview process due to time restrictions. These questions are listed in the Appendix. Questions were asked to find out what it takes for a woman to succeed in the Avionics Industry. They were also directed in a way to understand the characteristics of such

women – can any woman succeed, or do they need to have a certain type of male characteristics to succeed?

All the women that were interviewed were very professional and excellent communicators. The challenge was to find time from their busy schedule to conduct the interview. Once the interview time was set up, these women were enthusiastic and energetic to share their experiences about working in the male dominated Avionics Industry, and how they try to overcome the challenges they face on daily basis.

## Findings

The interviews with top women in the Avionics Industry corresponded directly with the literature review. All the women that were interviewed were in their late 40's or early 50's. A couple of the women stumbled into the Avionics Industry in their path to career advancement. It was not something they pursued intentionally. They were both engineers, who loved math and science, and came from a family of engineers. They moved from company to company, eventually landing in the Avionics Industry. On average, they worked in one company for seven to eight years before they moved on to another company. One of them is now the Vice President and General Manager of a billion dollar Avionics test equipment company. She is well respected within the company. In her physical appearance, she is not considered an alpha female. She wore mostly masculine cloths, and stood tall, 5 feet 11 inches, and was around 200lbs. The two other interviewees' were exposed to Avionics through parents and grandparents in the Military and Air Force. One of them was infatuated with airplanes, and wanted to become a pilot. However, she was persuaded to join the Marine Corps, while waiting to talk to the Air Force recruiter. In the Marine Corps, she worked on airplanes and that was her beginning into the Avionics Industry. Another one said she was always interested in Aviation, but the Aviation Industry was something she stumbled upon when she moved to join her husband. Once she got into the industry, she was very interested and really enjoyed it, and wanted to learn more about the industry.

It was evident from talking to these women that they were all hard workers, determined, and had desire to learn more. All of them believed that they had to work harder and put in longer hours than their male counterparts to effectively compete. One of the senior Vice President and

Business Development managers said, “Job performance was always tough! You had to be prepared to not put in 100% but 125% to 130%. Men are not judged at the same level as their female peers. Males are judged at lower standards for job performance. Therefore, women have to be determined and work extra hard to prove themselves.” In order to be successful, a woman may choose a company that has a woman friendly culture. It also helps to have a supportive family or husband. The interviewees who were married praised their husbands for the support they received. “It is very important to have an understanding husband who is willing to carry some load,” says an interviewee. If a woman is able to balance her home and work-life by prioritizing and using good time-management skills, she will be more likely to succeed.

The interviewees talked about their struggles to find balance between their personal life and work life. All of them stressed the importance of good organization skills and time management skills which led them to balance their life and to succeed in their career. Being able to organize time properly and having a schedule will help earn respect from coworkers. Many women find it very difficult to balance their work life and personal life. Women have to work extremely hard, be very focused, and organized in order to succeed. They have to be very organized in order to find a good balance between home and work. Women have to dedicate themselves fully at work, then come home and dedicate themselves fully at home. The work-life balance is something that may impede a woman’s professional growth. Sometimes a woman has to take a leave of absence, and at times she has to be there for her family. Unless the mentality of the top management understands, this will be a challenge. The women that were interviewed talked about the times they sadly regretted not being able to be there for their families due to work load. “I had to make many sacrifices in order to succeed in my career,” says a senior VP of an avionics

company. She also adds, “When my kid got a straight A award, I was away in business meetings, and those are times you will not get back.”

Time management is an important aspect of success, and it can be done by making modifications to the work schedule, and making an objective assessment of the goals in life. All of the women that were interviewed talked about how they strived to balance their work and personal life. They talked about setting goals and prioritizing each task they have to accomplish on daily, weekly and monthly basis.

- Evaluating work goals: It is important to have a healthy balance between the time a woman spends at home and at her work. Therefore, she should reevaluate if her career benefits are worth the time she spends away from her family.
- Evaluating time: It is important to take into consideration all the time spent at work and at home, when learning to manage time. Many employers are willing to compromise with individual requests. Some even let their employees work from home a few hours so they can spend more time at home. Therefore, women may talk to their employer and see if that is a possibility. A job that allows for a flexible schedule is the ideal option, as this will allow her to spend time with her family as she wants.
- Work Responsibilities: It is important for a woman in a high position to delegate tasks to her subordinates. The higher the position a woman holds in a company the more responsibilities she has. However, she does not need to do them all; that will only stress her out and consume all of her time.
- Checking Priorities: To create a working balance among the different aspects of life, a woman must first identify her highest priority – earning money or spending time with her



family. She can then adjust her schedule accordingly and work towards a more rewarding existence. Oftentimes, people get stuck in their jobs and are unable to get out even when they are not truly happy. For this reason, it is essential that one pauses from time to time to re-evaluate. This will ensure the maintenance of a healthy balance between one's career and family.

One of the interviewee added that she always believed it is important to have a good balance in life. Therefore, she encourages her employees to do so as well. She tries to be very understanding of her employees and her concerns. While talking to her peers in an informal setting, it was mentioned several times that she was the best boss they ever had.

Below are some ideas that were gathered from primary and secondary research to help women find the balance that is best for them at work and at home:

#### *At Work*

- Set manageable goals each day: Research shows that the more control an individual has at work, the less stressed she gets. Therefore, a women should make a “to do” list, and take care of important tasks first and eliminate or delegate others. It is important to be able to meet priorities, as it will help women to feel a sense of accomplishment and control.
- Be efficient with your time at work: When a woman procrastinates, the tasks often grow in her mind until they seem insurmountable. Therefore, when faced by a big project at work or home, she should start by dividing it into smaller tasks. She should complete the

first one before moving on to the next. She should give herself small rewards upon each completion, whether it is a five minute break or a walk to the coffee shop. If she feels overwhelmed by routines that seem unnecessary, she should talk to her boss. The less time she spends doing busy work or procrastinating, the more time she can spend productively, or with friends or family.

- Ask for flexibility: Research shows that employees who work flexible schedules are more productive and loyal to their employers. Many companies are open to flexible time due to new technologies and telecommuting. If a woman asks, they might allow her to work flexible hours or from home a day a week.
- Take five: Taking a break at work is not only acceptable, it is often encouraged by many employers. If a woman takes small breaks at work, it will help clear her head, and improve her ability to deal with stress and make good decisions.
- Communicate effectively: Most problems arise out of miscommunication. Therefore, if a woman learns to communicate effectively (both written and oral), she will earn the respect of her peers. Also, a woman should be honest when she feels like she is in a bind. Instead of complaining, she should suggest practical alternatives. Looking at a situation from someone else's viewpoint can also reduce stress. In a tense situation, she should either rethink her strategy or stand her ground, calmly and rationally. She should make allowances for other opinions, and compromise. She should retreat before she loses control, and allow time for all involved to cool off. This way, she will be better equipped to handle the problem constructively later.

## *At Home*

- Leave work at work: In today's global business mentality and with the technology to connect to anyone at any time from virtually anywhere, there's no boundary between work and home. Therefore, a woman should make a conscious effort to separate work time from her personal time. For example, she may need to turn off her cell phone when she is spending time with the family.
- Learn to say no: If a woman is feeling stressed when she glances at her calendar, she should learn to say 'No.' For example, if a co-worker asks her to spearhead an extra project or her child's teacher asks her to manage the class play, she should remember that it is OK to respectfully say no. When she quits doing the things she only does out of guilt or a false sense of obligation, she will make more room in her life for the activities that are meaningful and bring her joy.
- Find Ways To De-stress – A woman should take time out to do things that she enjoys doing, such as going for walks, listening to music, practicing yoga, reading, etc. She could set aside one night a week exclusively for her spouse and family. Put the phone off the hook, switch off the TV, and let her hair down. She could find activities that will rejuvenate her and her family.
- Ensure Enough Sleep - There is nothing more stressful than when one is sleep deprived. This will not only affect one's productivity, but can also cause one to commit potentially dangerous and costly mistakes. Therefore, a woman should make sure she ensures that she gets enough sleep every night.

- Seek Help – If a woman is stressed and feels that life is too chaotic to manage, she may need to seek help from professionals or from personal support systems such as her spouse or friends.
- Time Management - Time management is not only for office work. Manage and organize household tasks efficiently. For example: do laundry in batches instead of saving it all for the day off. A weekly family calendar of important dates and a daily list of to-dos will help you avoid deadline panic. Seek out courses in time management.
- Set your priorities - What is more important for you - your work or your family? At the crossroads you need to decide what is more important in your life - spending time with your spouse, kids, and extended family, or concentrating just on your work life?

Women should be diligent, put in much effort and focus on personal challenges, be persistent and never give up. With sheer determination and hard work in pushing the company to higher limits, and with the help of good work partners, women can achieve their goals. Even if a woman has little experience, but is persistent and passionate about her dreams, she may still achieve success if she is willing to take risk and focus on her goals. It is very dependent on the individual to grab the chance and perform beyond expectations. There are always other companies available in the market, those that will recognize one's value and achievements, regardless of gender. There will be women and men out there who might feel threatened that a woman is more successful than them. However, there are people who are willing to help and guide. Therefore, a woman should choose her allies wisely and work with people who are positive-minded. If a woman can find female mentors, that will also be very beneficial. It is a word of caution for females in a male dominated industry to be friendly but cautious; she cannot

be 100% herself, and she has to be very professional to earn the respect of her male peers. One of the interviewees commented on her relationship with other women at work. She said that it is very difficult to have girlfriends within the company. She added, “Once you make friends, they can come crying on your shoulder and you have to see them from company’s point of view, and they may not like your reply. It is a challenge to be professional and be personal at work.”

In order to succeed, a woman should know what business skills are needed in her company or industry, and sharpen those skills on a regular basis. Such skills can range from contract negotiation to customer service to purchasing to management. If she is not sure which specific business skills will help her, she should ask her supervisor for input. Some women are apprehensive about developing traditionally male-oriented skills, such as hard-ball negotiating skills, because they fear they will lose their femininity in the process. The key is to just be oneself. People can tell when someone is truly confident. Those who display confidence rise through the ranks quicker, earn respect faster, and lead more effectively—even if they are not the most knowledgeable person in the company or department. To project confidence, a woman should be proud of her expertise, and she should not be afraid if she does not know all the answers. If she does not know something, she should just tell the person she will find out the answer and get back with him or her later. It is important that women learn to speak directly and with confidence. It may sound obvious, but women are less likely than men to assume a loud, confident tone and are more likely to use equivocation — ending a sentence with a question mark, as though doubting their own words. However, there is nothing more powerful in business than the presence of a confident woman.

Some women report that men still talk down to them in the workplace or don't take them seriously. If this happens to a woman, she should try not to allow that negativity to affect her. Most of the powerful and secure men do not condescend to women and actually want women in the boardroom and everywhere else in the company. They know women have much to offer. Unfortunately, some men are still from the "good ole' boys club" and are scared of women in business. If a woman runs into one of these types of men, she should not give them any reaction at all. Any negativity they display toward women usually stems from their own insecurity. So stay poised and the more confident and authentic a woman is, the more others will respect her. For some of the women that were interviewed, it was very intimidating to work with men. They said that the men were unaccustomed to working with women. One of the interviewee worked in a company for 17 years and she was the first woman to be promoted to a manager role in the 1980's. During her first meeting as a manager, one of her male coworkers said that he has never taken orders from another woman, other than his mother. She replied saying, "Well, then, call me mom!" She claims that it broke the tension and she was known as the Mom. She also added that in order to get over the male chauvinism and to succeed in her career, she had to be strong headed, persistent, and resilient. Currently, she is the senior Vice President and Business Development and Program Manager of an avionics company, and she has been with this company for 14 years. While talking informally with people who have met her and have dealt with her, she was considered very professional, a high achiever, and ambitious. She was always seen wearing professional cloths such as business suits. When asked about her clothing style, she referred to it as "professionally fashionable clothes." She added that the professional female image is very important to her, since it will affect and set an example to her female coworkers.

A huge amount of success and professionalism comes from good communication skills and learning to listen well. For a couple of the women that were interviewed, communication with the opposite gender is still an ongoing challenge. Although they have learned a lot in the past years of experience, they still have issues due to miscommunication occasionally. One of the women talked about constantly trying to improve her communication skills by reading books, going to seminars, and taking classes. Another woman who was an excellent communicator, talked about how communication skills can help a woman get ahead of men. She said, “It is very important to improve both oral and written communication. Learn public speaking and learn to listen. This will put you ahead of men.” One of the interviewees says her secret of success was that she takes her time while communicating with her peers. After she delegates work, she confirms with her peers their respective delegated work. This will ensure that they heard her right, and she can correct them if there was a miscommunication. She also gave an example saying that when she has to delegate work to a person she has not worked with in the past, she is very direct. After going over what she wants the person to do, she tells them in a lower voice, “I’ve not worked with you. I’m direct. I’m not trying to dictate, do I sound as such?” “The fact that you ask others for their opinion, gives you more power – as compared to people thinking you lose your power by going to their level and asking their opinion,” she concludes. The women also emphasized that good communication and being open to constructive criticism led them to their path to success.

Here are some suggestions for women who want to bridge the business gender gap by using their own rules and making cross gender communication work for their benefit:

- Women should speak with authority. However, they should avoid raising their voices.

When the voice goes up, their credibility goes down.

- Women should not wait for their turn to speak in meetings. Men assertively speak out with strong voices. Women earn credit when they state their comments without waiting to be called upon.
- Women should be aware of the different listening styles. Women listen attentively with direct eye contact, nodding, and vocalizing which men often misconstrue to mean agreement. Be clear when expressing the difference between "I hear you" versus "I agree with you."
- Women should monitor their smile, so that their behavior is not misinterpreted. Women smile more readily in business contexts to be friendly. Men smile with women to flirt.
- When women have communication difficulties, they should get clarification using the REAP method: R = Repeat and review what you hear him say; E = Empathize with his feelings; A = Acknowledge the validity of his message, even if you don't agree; then P = Persist with patience until you can communicate -- and eliminate defensiveness -- with clarity and respect (Sedacca 2002).
- Women should get to the point quickly, when communicating with men. They should sound decisive, eliminate self-effacing phrases, and avoid qualifiers that may sound weak.
- Women should be direct with men. Women often try to avoid coming across as too direct or boastful. Consequently, they tend to use qualifiers that play down their authority or status. Men will take these qualifiers literally and if a woman says, "This may be a stupid question, but ...," they'll assume a stupid question is coming right up. As women's language tends to be more indirect, a woman might say, "It's really hot in here," which translates into "Turn down the thermostat." Women tend to be more intuitive and



typically understand the intent of the statement. Men tend to be more literal and less likely to read between the lines. They probably think she's complaining about the room temperature.

- Women should pay attention to not apologize excessively. When women say, "I'm sorry," they're often told, "Don't apologize; it's not your fault." But typically, they're not apologizing for having done something wrong, but rather feeling sorry that something happened. Women should apologize if they do something wrong. However, they need to monitor themselves for constant apologies, as men perceive it as a sign of lacking confidence and competence.
- Women may need to seek visibility for themselves, if they wish to be promoted. For example, they could volunteer to make a presentation, write a press release about recent accomplishments, network with company influencers, and also let key people know about their successes.

Another powerful thing a woman can do in business is make herself an asset to her company.

Women and men are wired different—no one can deny that. But rather than try to diminish her female attributes, a woman should be proud of them and use them to her advantage. Women have numerous natural qualities that make them more adept in the boardroom and in all areas of the workplace. For example, women tend to have better intuition than men. They understand emotion better. They are great communicators and listeners. Women tend to multi-task with ease. All these traits are essential for leading today's workforce. Therefore, she should use these traits to her advantage. If her intuition tells her something is not right, she should speak up, and she may just save the company from making a costly mistake. If there is a misunderstanding during a

meeting, she should use her communication skills to help clarify points. If the male-oriented logical way of thinking is not convincing a new client to sign the contract, she could put her emotional sales pitch to good use. Women should not buy into the stereotype that it is a man's world. Regardless of gender, each person brings a unique set of valuable talents to the table. If she is not sure of all that she can offer, a woman should do a personal inventory of all her strengths and areas of expertise. Then she should ask herself, "What level of success should someone with my experience be able to achieve?" She should believe in herself and should not let anything stifle her professional goals. She should stick up for herself and should not let her be bullied. However, she should be willing to pick her battles, but never let the quality of work suffer; and be willing to exceed customer expectations.

## Summary

More and more women are entering into careers that are highly male dominated. For a woman, working in a male dominated industry can be extremely rewarding, such as opportunities to gain employment and higher salary; however, it can also be very challenging and demanding.

The challenges faced by women in the male-dominated industry can be broken into three categories:

- 1) Time management or finding balance between work life and personal life
- 2) Overcoming male chauvinism and earning their respect
- 3) Effective communication between genders

Women struggle to find a healthy balance between their work life and personal life. This can be overcome by learning efficient time management skills. In order to obtain a healthy balance in life, it is important for women to do the following:

- Examine their priorities
- Set goals for each day
- Learn to say “No” to non-essential tasks
- Delegate tasks
- Take occasional breaks
- Live a healthy lifestyle by getting enough sleep, eating healthy, and exercising regularly

Women in male dominated industries struggle to break the barriers of male chauvinism and earn the respect of their male peers. They have to work harder and be more efficient at work in order

to earn the respect they deserve. In order to earn the respect of their male peers, a woman may use her difference to her advantage. As one of the few women among her male peers, she will always be on display. Since she stands out in a crowd, it would work to her advantage to look her best. She may display an attractive appearance by dressing appropriately and professionally. She should also be mindful of her posture, expressions, and gestures. When women are talking together in groups, they can be labeled as gossiping and viewed as 'one of the girls' instead of an 'individual.' Therefore, a woman should be cautious when she is talking to her female peers. She can also impress her male peers by learning the male lingo to communicate with them. If she shows that she had knowledge in typically-male subjects, it may help increase men's comfort level with her. In order to succeed, a woman should be resilient and maintain a good balance between drive and patience. It is important for women to research and find other women in similar industries. Networking with other women in the same industry is a good way to receive and offer support.

For many individuals, communication differences between genders have always been a challenge both in the work place and in their personal life. If women understand the communication differences between genders, they can learn to communicate effectively and efficiently. One of the main differences is that men use communication to solve problems. Whereas, a woman uses communication to solve problems, to minimize stress, to feel better, to create emotional bonds and strengthen relationships, to stimulate creativity, and discover new ideas. This difference can cause a lot of misinterpretation and misunderstanding between genders. If a woman learns to communicate efficiently with men, she can earn their respect and advance in her career.

Some of the characteristics of the women who have been successful in male dominated industries are:

- Hard workers
- Persistence
- Desire to learn
- Strong headed
- Good communication
- Friendly
- Professional
- Assertive
- Good time management skills
- Organized
- Resilient
- Open to constructive criticism
- Good Balance

## Conclusion

After interviewing four successful women in the Avionics Industry, it can be concluded that the success factors impacting the women in the Avionics Industry are not any different from success factors impacting women in other male dominated industry. The women in Avionics Industry as well as other male dominated industries are both capable of success. They need to identify their roadblocks to success, and learn to overcome them. If a woman is not able to communicate properly, she needs to research and learn how to communicate with the opposite gender. Similarly, if one is not able to balance her work life and personal life, she may need to take time management classes. Women can earn the respect of her male peers, if she is resilient, assertive, and learn to communicate efficiently and professionally.

Women have many extra added-values, like the ability to be more compassionate, and emotional. Rather than put up a strong front, they know when to appear more determined, and when to be softer. Having both men and women in a company, ensures that there is a good balance of “yin and yang;” therefore, more creative powerful ideas can be created. The opportunities for women to lead and influence are greater than ever before. Women in business innovate, persuade, integrate, raise standards, challenge, create policy, and ultimately change lives. Much of their success depends on their own level of confidence and self-belief. As a female employee, she can take certain steps to ensure that she thrives and reach the level of success she deserves, no matter what industry she is in or her role in her company.

Women should not give up their femininity to succeed in a man's world. Whatever she does in life, she should always be an authentic self and she will not go wrong. A lot of women feel that

when it comes to business, they need to be something different than who they really are. But when they try to fit some other image, they will hold themselves back. When a woman steps into her own power and just is herself, her true success will shine. So women must be confident and trust their instincts. They should learn all that they can about their industry, and dare to reach higher than they ever thought possible. By doing so, they will pave the way for future generations of women and attain the success they have always known was possible.

## Suggestion for Additional work

Due to time limitations, there were a couple of questions that were brought up during the primary research that went unanswered.

1) A challenge that was brought up by couple of the women was the fine line between assertiveness and aggressiveness. There is a delicate balance between assertiveness and aggressiveness. A woman needs the assertiveness to get ahead; however, she needs to make sure it does not backfire. If she is too aggressive, she will be labeled as “bossy.” Is there a way to overcome this other than by lots of trial and error, and getting critical feedback from your co-workers?

2) Another struggle that was mentioned was personal instinct vs. company history. This is a question of ethics. There are times where a woman has to make decisions, and she wants to go with her personal instincts. However, the company has a culture or history of doing certain things a certain way. Which do you chose?



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## Appendix

### Interview Questions:

- How did you get into this business? Was it something you stumbled upon? Or did you seek out to the Avionics industry?
- Do you find passion/interest in the Aviation Industry? If so, where does that come from? Was your Dad or someone in the military, pilot etc?
- What characteristics would you say a female would need to have to succeed in this industry?
- What is your secret of success?
- What are the struggles you face in this male dominated industry?
- Do you feel that females have to put in about 125 to 130% effort to be on the same level as men in job performance?
- How do you find a good balance in putting in extra effort at work and managing a family and having a social life?