

VIEW FROM THE TOP



Breaking barriers

How to overcome adversity in a male-dominated industry

Recent market research findings suggest that women globally make up less than 20% of executive-level positions within the transportation industry. As more and more women enter into logistics careers, they are increasingly challenging the prevailing gender imbalances historically seen in the transportation marketplace. While bridging the gender gap is still a significant concern for women working in this industry, I also believe that it has served as one of the catalysts to their career success – including my own.

When the industry found me in August of 1997, I immediately discovered that I would have to work extremely hard to earn respect and recognition in order to break down many of the barriers with which women contend in this male-dominated environment. I was hired during the infamous UPS strike, when AIT was scrambling to service the unprecedented influx of customers the company suddenly experienced overnight. The entire auditorium at AIT's corporate headquarters in Itasca, Illinois, was filled with paper invoices – it was total mayhem.

From the moment I walked through the door, my strength of character and convictions were put to the ultimate test. While these barriers could absolutely be considered a detriment, I considered them an advantage, particularly from a motivational standpoint.

In the face of the so-called “boys club” aspect of this business, I took many arrows and faced countless roadblocks in my personal quest for success. However, dodging those business hurdles and challenging the adversity quickly became the driving force behind my accomplishments – they ignited the fire within me to deliver results, prove the naysayers wrong, and elevate my career to new heights.

Since my tenure with AIT began 12 years ago, the accounting services department at AIT has virtually gone paperless and we have made countless enhancements to our AS400 operating system. These enhancements have enabled the structure for an automated communications process, which has dramatically transformed the ways in which we conduct our day-to-day business.

Unfortunately, the “glass ceiling” concept has not vanished from our business. Women still struggle in trying to land leadership positions within the highest ranks of logistics organizations, where the disparity between men and women is most often seen.

However, more and more forward-thinking, driven and visionary women have entered into the field, and recent years have shown signs of progress in making logistics more gender-equitable industry. There is no reason why women should be discouraged from pursuing their career ambitions in logistics professions, as evidenced by the millions who are flourishing in their jobs each and every day.

we deliver.

Sheri Wozniak is director of accounting services for AIT Worldwide Logistics.
www.aitworldwide.com

