

International business careers in the United States: salaries, advancement and male-female differences

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Abstract

This paper uses a survey of 514 professional employees to analyse salaries and careers in international business in the United States. Internationally oriented skills are inconsistently rewarded, and persons in internationally focused occupations are compensated at about the same level as their domestically oriented counterparts. Women receive smaller pay-offs than men for qualifications, including international ones. Thus, the human resource management practices of many American firms may not be consistent with these firms' strategies for competing in global markets.

With each passing year, international trade and investment increasingly integrate the United States into the world economy. Between 1980 and 1989, US direct investment abroad increased from \$215 billion to \$373 billion, and foreign investment into the US increased from \$83 billion to \$401 billion (US Department of Commerce, 1991: 797, 794). Over the same decade, US exports rose to nearly 11 per cent of Gross National Product, and they accounted for 25 per cent of the growth in private employment between 1986 and 1990 (US Council of Economic Advisors, 1992: 196, 298-9). Financial markets, supplier relationships and technological development increasingly transcend national borders.

Reflecting these developments, academic thinking on management and management education in the United States now commonly argues that managerial expertise in international business is increasingly key to firms' performance (Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1992; Prahalad, 1990; Tung and Miller, 1990). However, little systematic empirical information is available on the extent to which American firms incorporate this emphasis in their human resource policies.

The present paper addresses this information gap through an anonymous mail survey, conducted in 1991, of 514 US professionals

in internationally related occupations such as international lawyer, international sales representative, customs broker, freight forwarder, international banker and trade analyst. The survey's sampling frame for female respondents consisted of members of the Washington, New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Dallas chapters of Women in International Trade, a professional association. From this source, 349 responses were obtained, a response rate of 46 per cent. Each female respondent was asked to enlist a male respondent in an internationally oriented position equivalent to her own, by this method, 165 male responses were obtained.

A profile of survey respondents

Table 1 presents data on the personal and professional characteristics of survey respondents. These data portray a group of professionals predominantly in early mid-career (their average age is 36) occupying positions of mid-level responsibility (the average respondent supervises half a dozen persons). They bring to these positions substantial credentials (an average of twelve years of experience, more than half hold graduate degrees). Their average annual salaries - \$63,673 for men and \$55,771 for women - place them in the highest 5 per cent of American earners (US Department of Commerce, 1991: 458).

Table 1 Average characteristics of survey respondents, by gender

Characteristic	Males (N = 165)	Females (N = 349)	Difference (male-female)	Standard deviations
<i>A. Personal characteristics</i>				
Average age (years)	36.0	35.9	-1	0
Native-born US Citizens	90.3%	91.7%	-1.4%	.5
Racial/ethnic minority	11.7%	8.4%	+3.3%	1.1
<i>B. General professional preparation</i>				
Education				
Not college graduate	7.9%	15.5%	-7.6%	
College graduate	29.7	33.2	-3.5	
Graduate degree	62.5	51.3	+11.2	2.4*
Field of highest degree				
Business	41.9%	35.7%	+6.2%	
Law	20.6	17.3	+3.3	
Liberal arts/other	37.5	47.1	-9.6	2.1*
Highest degree from 'prestige' school†	30.5%	23.2%	7.3%	1.7

Characteristic	Males (N = 165)	Females (N = 349)	Difference (male-female)	Standard deviations
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Years of experience				
All professional	11.8	12.0	-2	.0
International	8.3	7.9	+4	.0
<i>Occupational††</i>				
Analyst	29.3%	32.9%	-3.6%	.8
Lawyer	19.5	14.1	+5.4	1.5
Ex-Im	15.8	11.6	+4.2	1.4
Sales	10.4	7.8	+2.6	.9
Manager	9.1	12.4	-3.3	1.1
Banker	1.8	2.9	-1.1	.3
Lobbyist	4.3	6.6	-2.3	.8

C. International preparation

Highest degree				
Had international focus	43.2%	53.2%	-10.0%	2.1*
Can speak one or more languages in addition to English	48.8%	50.7%	-1.9%	.4
Have lived overseas	47.3%	53.6%	-6.3%	1.3
Deliberately sought employment in international	42.3%	48.3%	6%	1.3

D. Current position

Number of persons supervised	7.1	5.1	+2.0	.1
% time spent on international	80.0%	77.9%	+2.1%	.1
International travel days per year	15.0	9.5	+5.5	.3
Employed in private sector	65.3%	71.9%	-6.6%	.9
Employer >100 employees	66.3%	63.4%	2.9%	.4

E. Salaries

Annual salary in 1991				
Average	\$63,673	\$54,771	\$8,902	.3
% >\$100,000	14.1%	5.4%	8.7%	2.9**
Expected maximum annual salary	\$217,894	\$184,340	\$33,554	.1

Notes

- * Difference statistically significant at the .05 level.
- ** Difference statistically significant at the .01 level.
- † 'Prestige' schools are those (e.g., Harvard Business School) with strong nationwide recognition in the field of study in which the respondent obtained her/his highest degree.
- †† Occupations are defined in Table 4.

The occupations of survey respondents include international trade analysts (32 per cent); internationally oriented lawyers (16 per cent); customs brokers, freight forwarders and others engaged in the international movement of goods (13 per cent); corporate and public managers with international responsibilities (11 per cent); sales representatives, buying agents and others engaged in the international sale of goods (9 per cent); lobbyists focusing on trade issues (6 per cent); and international bankers (3 per cent). They average eight years of experience in international work, and internationally focused duties occupy an average of 80 per cent of their work time.

Given their international focus, it might be expected that respondents would have substantial international orientation in their personal backgrounds and professional preparation. While this is true for some, it is uncharacteristic of many. More than 90 per cent of respondents are native-born US citizens. Slightly less than half had selected an international focus for their highest degree (e.g., international relations or international business), speak languages other than English well enough to use professionally or had deliberately sought employment with an international focus. About half have at some time lived outside the United States.

As Table 1 indicates, male and female respondents to this survey display similar personal characteristics and levels of professional preparation. The two groups are within approximately ten percentage points of each other in terms of the proportion who hold degrees in business or law, hold graduate degrees or have received their highest degree from a 'prestige' school; while men have a fraction of a year more total international experience, women have a fraction of a year more total experience. In parallel, Table 2 indicates that men and women respon-

Table 2 *Strategies for career advancement, by gender*

Characteristic	Males (N = 165)	Females (N = 349)	Difference (male-female)	Standard deviations
Ever been designated 'fast track'?	53.7%	57.5%	-3.8%	.8
Had mentor(s)	72.0%	75.6%	-3.6%	.9
Found present job via net-working or personal contacts	64.2%	63.4%	+ .8%	.2
Negotiated for salary	41.4%	47.0%	-5.6%	1.2
Move that most advanced career involved switching employer	44.6%	50.4%	-5.8%	1.2
Average years between change of employers	4.0	4.0	.0	.0

dents have sought to advance their careers through similar techniques. Approximately 50 per cent or more of both men and women reported having been designated for 'fast track' professional development by their employers, forming relationships with mentors, finding their present job through professional networks or personal contacts, switching sectors or employers to seek advancement, and negotiating for salaries rather than accepting the compensation offered.

Both the investment in credentials displayed in Table 1 and the use of career-advancing techniques reported in Table 2 are consistent with indications of respondents' serious commitment to their careers, presented in Table 3. When survey respondents were asked to identify their highest priority personal goal, 73.2 per cent of men and 67.3 per cent of women responded in terms of career advancement or financial success rather than in terms of personal flexibility or family-related activities. A majority of both men and women are the primary or sole earner in their households (64 per cent of men and 54 per cent of women). Commitment is also reflected in the number of hours worked per week (averaging 49 hours for men and 47 hours for women) and participation in international business travel (as reported in Table 1, an average of 15 days per year for men and 10 days for women).

Salaries in internationally focused occupations

Table 4 profiles annual salaries (as of 1991) reported by survey respondents, classified by sector, location and years of experience. The

Table 3 *Indicators of career commitment, by gender*

Characteristic	Males (N = 165)	Females (N = 349)	Difference (male-female)	Standard deviations
Priority long-term goal				
Career/financial	73.2%	67.3%	+5.9%	1.4
Flexibility/family	26.8	32.7	+2.0	.2
Average hours per work week	49.0	47.0		
Are primary or sole earner in household	63.6%	54.5%	9.1%	2.0*
Ever constrained career for spouse?	9.5%	20.3%	-10.8%	3.4**

Notes

* Difference statistically significant at the .05 level.

** Difference statistically significant at the .01 level.

Table 4 Average annual salaries (including bonuses), by location, sector and experience

Occupation	Location ^a	Sector ^b	Years of experience	Annual salary (in \$000s)		
				Average	Minimum	Maximum
Lawyer	DC	Public	All	61	37	106
			< 5	83	67	90
	DC	Private	5-10	90	60	—
			11-30+	91	60	140
			All	90	60	150
			1-10	75	60	125
	Not DC	Private	11-30+	81	43	185
				—	—	—
Manager	DC	Public	All	78	43	185
			All	51	29	104
	All	Private	< 5	52	30	70
			5-10	64	29	150
			11-30+	66	26	160
			All	—	—	—
Analyst ^c	DC	Public	All	63	26	160
			< 5	49	30	66
	DC	Private	5-10	47	21	—
			11-30+	45	22	76
			All	46	21	100
			< 5	42	24	60
	DC	Private	5-10	51	26	82
			11-30+	49	25	83
			All	48	24	83
			1-10	44	35	54
	Not DC	Private	11-30+	61	23	100
			All	54	23	100
Lobbyist	DC	Private	All	69	33	115
			< 5	45	21	108
	DC	Private	5-10	53	21	—
			11-30+	47	29	126
Ex-Im ^d			All	49	21	185
			< 5	48	26	77
	Not DC	Private	5-10	48	26	65
			11-30+	46	21	87
Sales ^e			All	47	21	87
			11-30+	—	—	—
Banker	All	Private	All	50	30	71
			11-30+	—	—	—

Table 4 Notes

- ^a Where sample size permits, estimates are provided for the Washington Metropolitan areas ('DC') and all locations other than Washington ('Not DC'), rather than all locations covered in the survey ('All').
- ^b 'Public sector' includes federal and state US government, governments of other nations, multinational organizations and non-profit organizations.
- ^c 'Analyst' includes trade analyst, policy analyst, management analyst, economist, accountant.
- ^d 'Ex Im' includes custom brokers, freight forwarders and others engaged in the international movement of goods.
- ^e 'Sales' includes sales representatives, buying agents and others engaged in the international sales of goods.
- Suppressed for confidentiality.

range represented is from \$20,000 to \$375,000.¹ The average full-time salary is \$57,867, and the median is \$50,000.

Table 4 illustrates four patterns among these salaries, each similar to those for occupations not internationally focused. First, some occupations command higher salaries than others. Among the occupations examined, average salaries for lawyers, lobbyists and managers are substantially higher than those for analysts, bankers, sales and export-import specialists. Second, within an occupation, salaries vary substantially between the public and private sectors. For example, in the Washington, DC, area, the \$61,000 average salary for lawyers in the public sector contrasts with \$90,000 for their private sector counterparts. Third, salaries generally increase with increasing experience. For example, among analysts in the private sector outside Washington, salaries for persons with less than ten years' experience averaged \$44,000, while those for comparable persons with more than ten years' experience averaged \$61,000.² Finally, salaries vary by location, with Washington-area salaries averaging \$10,000 more, and salaries in New York \$5,000 more, than those in the remaining localities in the sample (Chicago, Atlanta and Dallas).

How do the salaries profiled in Table 4 compare to those for similar jobs that are not internationally focused? While the overall level of salaries in internationally oriented occupations is high compared to those of the majority of US workers, these occupations do not appear to command compensation substantially different from their domestically oriented counterparts. Table 5 compares selected salary ranges from Table 4 with those from other recent surveys of persons who are not international specialists (Morris and Siegel, 1991). There is not a perfect match between categories in these two sets of data.³ Nevertheless, what is most striking in Table 5 is the general overlap of salary ranges between domestic and international samples. For example, international bankers are reported to earn between \$30,000 and

Table 5 Comparison of salaries in Table 4 to salaries of comparable professionals not internationally focused, 1991

	International (this survey)	Not specifically international (Morris and Siegel, 1992)
Banker	\$30,000-\$71,000	\$30,000-\$75,000
Analyst	\$30,000-\$100,000	\$43,000-\$111,000
Law partner	\$43,000-\$185,000	\$55,000-\$177,000
Lobbyist/public relations	\$33,000-\$115,000	\$29,000-\$85,000
Sales	\$26,000-\$87,000	\$28,000-\$58,000

\$71,000 annually, while their domestic counterparts are reported to earn between \$30,000 and \$75,000.

Differences in opportunities for men and women

An operational definition of equal employment opportunity is that workers with comparable credentials and career commitment enjoy comparable current salaries and expectations about future opportunities. As Tables 1 through 3 report, male and female respondents to the present survey display generally similar credentials, histories of career management and attitudes towards their careers. However, our data indicate that these similarities are not reflected in similar salaries and expectations.

The most basic indicator of this gender gap is presented in Section E of Table 1. There, the average annual current salary of men is reported as \$63,673, while that for women is \$54,771, a difference of \$8,902 or 16.2 per cent of the women's average salary. That table also reports that the proportion of persons earning \$100,000 or more is nearly three times greater among men than among women (14.1 per cent versus 5.4 per cent).

Some of these differences are attributable to differences between men and women in the variables examined in Tables 1 through 3. The statistical technique of multiple regression analysis can be used to quantify the effect of each of these factors while 'holding constant' the effect of other factors. Table 6 presents figures representing the average impact on annual salaries attributable to each factor.⁴

The first column of this table estimates annual salary pay-offs for men. According to that column, for example, the average male respondent to our survey possessing a bachelor's degree earns \$28,100 more

Table 6 Pay-offs to career preparation and career advancement techniques, by gender

Characteristic	Pay-off to males (N = 165)	Pay-off to females (N = 349)	Difference (male- female)
<i>A. General professional preparation</i>			
Get bachelor degree	\$28,100	\$9,000*	\$19,100
Get graduate degree	7,400	5,300	2,100
Major in business or law	5,600*	4,100	1,500
Get degree from 'prestige' school	11,500	-2,400*	13,900
Add one year of non-international experience	1,600*	700*	900
<i>B. Career advancement techniques</i>			
Do not constrain career for spouse	\$21,900*	\$1,700*	\$20,200
Get designated for 'fast track' development	10,900	200*	10,700
Work 8 hours additional per week	7,300**	4,300**	3,000
Negotiate for salary	-5,600	3,500	-9,100
Use personal networks for job search	5,200*	3,000	2,200
Travel ten more days per year	3,200	6,300**	-3,100
<i>C. International preparation</i>			
Major in international field	-\$13,400*	-\$100	-\$13,300
Have lived outside the United States	9,200	-7,700*	16,900
Deliberately choose international work	5,300*	-4,200	9,500
Speak language(s) in addition to English	2,600	-5,100	7,700
Add one year of international experience	2,500*	1,300	1,200
Shift 20% of time from domestic to international work	-2,100	-800	1,300

Source: Based on multiple regression analysis; see Note 4.

Notes:

- * Coefficient statistically significant at the .05 level.
- ** Coefficient statistically significant at the .01 level.

per year than an otherwise identical man who does not hold a college degree. A man who earns a graduate degree increases his salary another \$7,400 per year. If that man's highest degree is in law or business, his salary increases another \$5,600, and if that highest degree was earned at a 'prestige' school, then his salary increases another \$11,500.

The first pattern revealed in Table 6 is that, in general, the actions generally believed to lead to career advancement and higher salaries – investing in educational credentials, employing standard career advancement techniques, working long hours, supervising larger staffs and working in the private sector rather than the public one – are, on

average, associated with higher salaries. These patterns generally hold for both men and women.

However, in nearly all instances, the size of the pay-offs to men and women are substantially different for making the same career-advancing choices. For example, comparing coefficients in the first two columns of Table 6, the average pay-off for earning a bachelor's degree is \$28,100 for men but only \$9,000 for women; working an additional eight hours per week yields men an additional \$7,300 per year but women only an additional \$4,300, using personal networks to find a job nets the average male \$5,200 but the average female \$3,000; and participating in an employer's 'fast track' management development programme is worth \$10,900 in annual salary to a man but only \$200 to a comparable woman. The third column of Table 6 calculates the difference in salary pay-offs for men and women for seventeen different career credentials or career-advancing actions; the pay-off for men is greater – typically, substantially greater – on fourteen of the seventeen examined.

Using the results in Table 6, we can divide the \$8,902 male-female salary gap reported in Table 1 into two components. The first component, attributable to differences in credentials held by men and women, accounts for approximately one-third of the gap. The remaining two-thirds of the gap – approximately \$5,800 per year, or 10 per cent of the average annual salary of women respondents to the survey – is attributable to differences in rewards allocated to men and women for identical credentials. In the reverse direction, if men's credentials were awarded the same pay-offs as Table 6 reports for women, then the average annual salary for men would have been \$3,145 (about 5 per cent) less than their actual salary.⁵

These findings concerning current salaries are amplified by findings on respondents' expectations concerning future salaries. Research prior to the present study demonstrates that the male-female earnings gap tends to increase with experience – the 'glass ceiling' effect (Catalyst, 1990; Fierman, 1990; US Department of Labor, 1991; Towers Perrin, 1990). Consistent with that finding, the average male respondent to our survey estimated the highest salary he expects to earn during his career at \$218,000, 18 per cent more than the \$184,000 the average female respondent expects to earn at her peak.⁶

Perceptions about women in international business careers

When asked to generalize about opportunities for men and women in international business, respondents to our survey generated the

responses presented in the first lines of Table 7. Nearly 71 per cent of women respondents stated that women's opportunities are somewhat worse or substantially worse than men's opportunities. In contrast, more than 61 per cent of men stated that women's opportunities are equal to or better than men's. Tables 1 and 6 suggest that the predominant women's perceptions match reality, while the predominant men's perceptions do not.

Stereotypical perceptions of gender differences in competence and work attitudes – particularly those held by males who are predominantly the managers making personnel decisions affecting women's careers – appear to underlie many of the gender differences in compensation and careers just described (Bielby and Barton, 1986; Dubno, 1985; Fierman, 1990; Schultz, 1990; Thomas, 1990). In the second set of results in Table 7, the majority of both male and female survey

Table 7 *Perceptions of opportunities for women, by gender of respondent*

Question	Males (N = 165)	Females (N = 349)	Difference (male-female)	Standard deviations
Compared to those for men, opportunities for women are:				
Better or equal	61.4%	29.4%	+32.0%	7.1**
Somewhat worse	33.1%	53.6%		
Substantially worse	5.5%	17.0%		
Women are perceived as less qualified than men on				
Interpersonal skills	8.1%	11.1%	-3.0%	1.1
Client relations	10.6	21.9	-11.3%	3.5**
Technical skills	22.4	32.5	-10.1%	2.5*
Management skills	31.3	37.1	-5.8%	1.3
Career commitment	38.8	55.1	-16.3%	3.5**
Initiative/risk taking	38.1	60.4	-22.3%	4.8**
If I were to leave my current employer, it would be to avoid barriers or change bosses.	6.7%	13.3%	-6.6%	2.5*
When I had a baby, I was perceived as:				
Less committed	8.2%	44.8%	-36.6%	6.1**
More committed	11.5%	1.0%	+10.5%	

Notes

* Difference statistically significant at the .05 level.

** Difference statistically significant at the .01 level.

respondents report that women and men are commonly perceived as equally qualified in interpersonal skills but that women are perceived as less qualified than men in managerial skills, career commitment and initiative and risk-taking. These attitudes reflect a common pattern in which women are viewed as capable in ways that make them good assistants and employees but unqualified for managerial and leadership roles (Adler, 1984b; Frank, 1988; Catalyst 1990). Table 7 also reports that, among survey respondents who had become parents, many employers perceived a woman as less committed to her career while assuming that a man's career commitment would be unchanged or increased.

When survey respondents were asked about the extent of such gender stereotyping, men consistently felt that the pattern is less widespread than did women. For example, Table 7 reports that, while more than 60 per cent of women felt that women are perceived as less qualified than men in terms of career initiative and professional risk taking, only 38 per cent of men felt that this is true.

Findings that women are disadvantaged in the job market compared to equally qualified men, that these disadvantages are based on stereotypes held by male managers and that males do not perceive that discrimination exists are not unique to internationally focused occupations.⁷ However, careers in international business may pose such issues in particularly significant ways.

A principal instance involves overseas assignments, which in an international business career can often be a key step in upward mobility. As of the early 1980s, only 3 per cent of American managers assigned overseas were female (Adler, 1984d). One likely source of such under-assignment is the assumption, held by many managers, that women, especially married women, would generally not be willing to undertake such a relocation. Another is the belief that women cannot effectively represent their firm among customers from cultures where gender equality is less a cultural norm than in North America (for example, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East).

Contrary to these assumptions, Tables 1 through 3 indicate that, for the majority of female respondents to our survey, career commitment did not differ substantially from that of their male counterparts. This suggests that it is inappropriate to prejudge individual employees' reactions to career opportunities based on gender or family status (Adler, 1984b; Bielby and Baron, 1986). Simultaneously, research indicates that adverse reaction to women as international representatives of American firms is less than is commonly assumed. When women are assigned to markets in which local women are not viewed as managers, the expatriate women are treated more as foreigners than as

women and therefore can conduct business in ways that local women cannot (Adler, 1987).⁸

The pay-off to international credentials

Certain types of career preparation are of particular relevance to business professionals who, like the respondents to this survey, focus their work internationally. Examples of such credentials include international living experience, degrees in international fields of study, command of multiple languages and international work experience.

Do the employers of our survey respondents reward their employees for possessing such internationally related backgrounds? To some extent, they do. For example, the first column of Section C of Table 6 indicates that men who had lived outside the United States earn on average \$9,200 more per year than comparable men without this background; men who had deliberately chosen internationally focused work earn an extra \$5,300; and men who speak more than one language earn an extra \$2,600. Concurrently, each additional year of professional experience that is internationally focused earns a male an extra \$2,500 in salary, \$900 per year more than the \$1,600 associated with a year of professional experience not internationally focused.

However, in a number of cases, international credentials are associated with lower, rather than higher, salaries. According to Section C of Table 6, if a man's highest degree carried an international focus (for example, international business), that reduces his annual salary by \$13,400 per year; and a man who spends only 80 per cent of his time on international work earns \$2,100 per year more than a comparable man whose work is exclusively international.

Employer ambivalence about international qualifications is also evident when possession of a credential leads to higher salaries for male employees but lower salaries for females. As noted above, for male survey respondents, having lived outside the United States has a positive salary effect of \$9,200 and speaking an additional language a positive pay-off of \$2,500. But for female respondents, the second column of Table 6 reports that having lived outside the United States is associated with a \$7,700 lower annual salary, while speaking a foreign language is associated with a \$5,100 reduction. Such patterns may again reflect stereotypical thinking by managers making personnel decisions. For example, an employer who assumes that all males are 'business oriented' might consider a man's command of a foreign language a valuable supplement to his business skills; the same employer, assuming that all women are 'liberal arts' oriented, might

interpret a woman's language skills to indicate that she is not business oriented.

Implications for human resource management

AS NOTED at the start of this paper, the United States economy is undergoing a major, long-term transformation from a domestically oriented, stand-alone economy to one pervasively involved in the global economy. At the level of individual firms, international product and service markets are the cutting edge of corporate revenue growth, and financial markets, production processes, supplier relationships and technological development increasingly operate across national borders. It seems inevitable that the work of corporate managers and professional employees increasingly involves international activities periodically; that more employees will be required who are international specialists; and that even persons who are not international specialists will be required to make decisions on issues and using information that reach beyond domestic markets.

Our survey findings suggest that the human resource management policies of many American employers reflect these new global realities only in preliminary and inconsistent ways. This pattern is indicated in two principal ways. First, according to Table 5, employees engaged in international activities are paid on the same scale as their domestically oriented counterpart. Second, as reported in Table 6, international skills and credentials command often limited salary premiums, and sometimes even negative ones.

In some firms, these patterns may reflect a conscious disagreement with the contention of academic experts that globally oriented managers are important to American firms – or that the qualifications examined in these papers contribute significantly to the preparation of such managers. But, given the major change in organizational culture that internationalization represents for many American firms, it is likely to reflect less disagreement than inertia. In other words, in many American firms, human resource policies may be slower to reflect the new international orientation than firms' corporate strategies.

While employers are adapting their policies, what guidance emerges from this study for professionals seeking to advance their careers in American firms? The most general advice is to be cautious about investing only in credentials that are specifically international. Many employers appear to treat such qualifications as, at most, supplements to, rather than substitutes for, traditional business preparation.

Reflecting this reality, one American business school offering an MBA with a major in international business advises students who elect that major also to complete a major in a traditional functional field such as finance or marketing. In the same spirit, employees whose professional experience has been exclusively in international aspects of their employers' business might advance their careers by seeking experience in other aspects of their firms' operations. Even in the rapidly internationalizing American economy in the 1990s, the notion that the path to the executive suite leads through the international division continues in many firms to reflect rhetoric more than reality.

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Notes

1. Only three respondents reported earnings over \$200,000; for reasons of confidentiality, they were excluded from Table 4.
2. In some occupations in Table 4, salaries do not increase with increasing experience, or even decline. Such patterns sometimes arise in occupations that are rapidly expanding, where high entry-level salaries to attract new workers coexist with stagnant salaries for persons already committed to the occupation. Additionally, upwardly mobile individuals may obtain higher salaries by moving among different occupations. A person who tops out at an average of \$49,000 as an export-import specialist may seek to become a corporate manager (average salary \$63,000), or a public sector analyst may avoid topping out at an average annual salary of \$45,000 by becoming a private sector lobbyist (average salary \$69,000).
3. For example, Table 5 compares the category reported in Morris and Siegel as 'law partners, nationwide' to data from Table 4 for 'lawyer, private sector, not DC, 10+ years' experience'.

4. The figures presented in Table 6 are coefficients (rounded to the nearest \$100) from linear multiple regression equations estimated separately on male respondents ($N = 157$) and female respondents ($N = 341$). The dependent variable in each equation is respondents' current annual salaries, and the independent variables are forty variables from the survey (see Tables 1 through 3). For the equation estimated for males, $R^2 = .65$, and $F = 5.5$; for the regression estimated for females, $R^2 = .52$, and $F = 8.1$.
5. These figures are derived by estimating the expected salary of females using regression coefficients estimated for males, and vice versa.
6. A recent study of graduates of the University of Illinois (Blau and Ferber, 1991) reports patterns of expectations paralleling our findings. In that study, men and women graduates expected similar starting salaries. However, holding other factors constant, men expected about 18 per cent higher salaries than women ten years after graduation and 26 per cent higher salaries than women twenty years after graduation. See also Smith and Ward (1989), Spurr (1990) and Morrison and Von Glinow (1990).
7. They parallel the findings of numerous other studies (Bartlett and Miller, 1985; Bergmann, 1989; Bielby and Baron, 1986; Burstein, 1989; Fuchs, 1988; Gerhart, 1990; Goldin, 1990; Gordon, 1991; Groshen, 1991; Morrison and Von Glinow, 1990; Olson, Freize and Good, 1987; Reskin and Roos, 1990; Stroh, Brett, and Reilly, 1991). One study, for example, found that female MBAs from leading US business schools receive average starting salaries 12 per cent lower than males with identical qualifications (Business Week, 1990).
- These studies also document that male-female differences in professional and managerial fields tend to increase with seniority. Many of our survey respondents, at an average age of 36, are just entering the stage of their careers in which some employees experience rapid upward mobility while others' career progression levels off. Their experience of the 'glass ceiling' is likely to increase during the next several years of their careers.
8. However, when a woman represents a firm, 'outsiders' such as customers may initially question her competence and authority (Symons, 1986). Thus, women managers and professionals who have proven their worth and been accepted within their own firm are often, in effect, asked to re-prove themselves by foreign clients. Those women's supervisors and colleagues need to be aware of this pattern so that they can provide appropriate support when these challenges arise.

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