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Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success

Sylvia Ann Hewlett

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Sylvia Ann Hewlett : Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Some really great data for career women and the companies they work forBy SF NativeIf you're interested in looking at the data behind women and careers, this is the book for you.

Hewlett has summarized a number of really interesting data. For example, 37% of women take time off at some point in their careers. 30% of women take advantage of part-time or other flexible programs. Hewlett's data illustrates a number of important reasons companies should care about gender diversity. After building the business case for women, she talks about how companies have created programs to make it work. One of the nice elements of this book is that she illustrates the data with personal stories. One of my favorite quotes underscores the importance of finding meaning in your job. A working mom comments, "when I walk out the door in the morning leaving my 2-year-old with the nanny, there's usually a bit of a scene. Tommy clings, pouts, and whips up the guilt. Now, I know it's not serious--most of the time he likes his nanny. But it sure makes me think about why I go to work--and why I put in a ten hour day. It's as though every day I make the following calculation: do the satisfactions I derive from my job (efficacy, recognition--a sense of stretching my mind) justify leaving Tommy? Some days it's a close run. One thing I do know. It couldn't just be the money. I need a whole lot of things to be happening for me to work." 13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. 5 Stars for another GREAT work! By Customer It is an honor to be the first to comment on this book. Sylvia Ann Hewlett is truly a visionary in the pressing arena of work-life programs and policies. Congratulations to Ms. Hewlett for reframing the "opting out" debate in to a much more useful discussion about non-linear careers. She challenged the assumption that most women leave full time employment because of pure family reasons, and sure enough, uncovered many other reasons that lie squarely on the shoulders of corporate America. Many progressive companies, especially Lehman Brothers, get it! They care about promoting, retaining, and recruiting female talent. Will others follow suit? Well now they have no excuse. Ms. Hewlett has given them clear strategies and I hope more women will hold the companies they work for accountable for implementing them. 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Not a lot new By Customer I had higher hopes for this book! Alas, not all were realized. We all know (and the author does fine background, in case we don't) that women are fairly easily derailed from career paths by family crises, discrimination, and just the logistics of daily life in America. So far, so good. The proposed "solution" is sad: Companies need to wake up and change their dated ways to retain talented women. The author seems to believe they (1) want to keep talented women and (2) will actually change to do so. As if.

With talent shortages looming over the next decade, what can companies do to attract and retain the large number of professional women who are forced off the career highway? By documenting the successful efforts of a group of cutting-edge global companies to retain talented women and reintegrate them if they've already left, *Off-Ramps and On-Ramps* answers this critical question. Working closely with companies such as Ernst Young, Goldman Sachs, Time Warner, General Electric and others, author Sylvia Ann Hewlett identifies what works and why. Based on firsthand experience with these companies, along with extensive data that provides the most comprehensive and nuanced portrait of women's career paths, this book documents the actions forward-thinking companies must take to reverse the female brain drain and ensure their access to talent over the long term.

From Publishers Weekly Despite advances in women's rights, as well as telecommuting, job sharing and flex-work, the components of corporate advancement have been largely unchanged since the 1950s; according to author and economist Hewlett (*Creating a Life*), these outdated criteria are decidedly stacked against women: lock step progression, face time, unreasonable hours, flattery and obeisance, golf and strip clubs and male bonding. The 60 percent of women workers who take a career-path detour ("off-ramp"), typically for family reasons, are welcomed back with un- or underemployment. Meanwhile, traditional male incentives--money and power--don't hold the same appeal for women, leading to substantial attrition rates among the business's upper echelons. Although Hewlett is admirably thorough in her research of "off ramping" as a strategy for women, and provides plenty of real-world examples, she's unconcerned with the larger implications for workers of either gender; though the female focus doesn't detract, it may leave readers with some unanswered questions (why should any employee withstand what resembles fraternity hazing just to get ahead?). Nevertheless, Hewlett looks at all areas of a constrictive work environment and offers intelligent solutions for reaching one's full potential within it. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist It is difficult not only to pinpoint the issues behind female "opt-outs" from the workforce but also to cite pragmatic, business- and women-friendly programs and policies that will retain female talent. Economist Hewlett, a workplace expert, author (*When the Bough Breaks*, 1991; *The War against Parents*, 1999; and *Creating a Life*, 2002), and recently cofounder of the Hidden Brain Drain Task Force, has blueprinted a new second-generation road map to success. Not content with merely chronicling the reasons for nonlinear discontinuous careers (ranging from motherhood to elder-care demands), she articulates the dramatic business case for diversity--retaining intellectual "goods," keeping an impressive amount of capacity, and diverse teams making better decisions--then identifies six elements critical to retention. Each of those six--flex-work arrangements, arc-of-career flexibility, reimagination of work life, continuation of ambition, harnessing of activism, and reduction of stigmas and stereotypes--is buttressed by actual corporate case studies, and a "toolkit" sidebar that captures the business case, how to begin, and critical elements. Barbara Jacobs Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved For reasons that range from a tightening job market to retiring baby boomers,

companies can't afford to lose experienced, well-qualified women. They aren't easily or cheaply replaced. --An interview with Sylvia Ann Hewlett, *The Wall Street Journal*, April 16, 2007" The author makes the persuasive case for a new competitive model that takes into account the pressing needs of women employees." --*The Financial Times*, May 24, 2007" Her calls for a rethinking have gained an audience in the corner office." --*The New York Times*, August 5, 2007