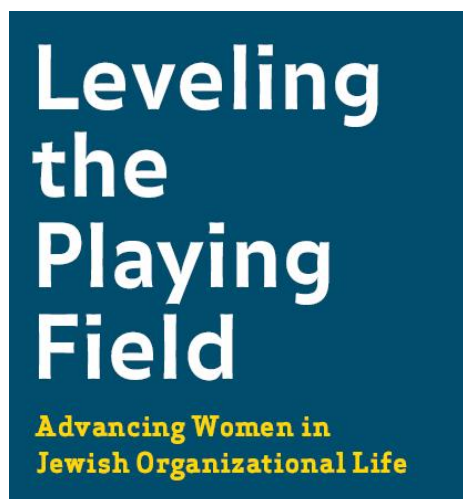


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By: Shifra Bronznick
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“People recognize societal problems, but they need something to do...one step to take...to make change. Leveling the Playing Field takes this lesson to the limit. The book fully, clearly, and enjoyably lays out each step to advancing women’s leadership in Jewish life and enriching organizational life in the process.”

— **Marie Wilson**, president, The White House Project and author of *Closing the Leadership Gap*

New Book Tackles Gender Equity in Jewish Organizations; Provides Road Map for Change

— *Leveling The Playing Field* available on April 7 —

New York — March 24, 2008 — This election season has put the issues of diversity and gender on the national radar. Now, a new book looks at gender equity through the lens of North America’s Jewish organizations, where 70 percent of professionals are women, yet few hold top positions.

In ***LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD: Advancing Women in Jewish Organizational Life***, three experts in organizational change provide strategies and tools for those who want to champion gender equity in the workplace. This “how-to” book draws upon best practices in leadership theory and human dynamics to tackle gender inequity, a deep-rooted problem that has been discussed for years by Jewish leaders; however, little has been achieved.

Authors [Shifra Bronznick](#) and [Didi Goldenhar](#) are consultants on organizational and social change. Ms. Bronznick is a leading advocate for gender equity in the workplace and founder & president of the not-for-profit [Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community](#). Ms. Goldenhar serves as the Senior Program Director of Advancing Women Professionals. Author [Marty Linsky](#) has been a faculty member at Harvard's Kennedy School since 1982 and is cofounder and principal of [Cambridge Leadership Associates](#).

In *Leveling the Playing Field*, the three authors paint a compelling picture of gender bias in North America's Jewish organizations, and explain why more equitable environments are essential to the success of these organizations and the long-term health of the Jewish community. Then, they present comprehensive strategies for anyone – executives, staff, lay leaders, volunteers – who wants to build an action plan for change within their own organization.

“Imagine how much stronger Jewish organizations would be if women truly shared leadership with men,” said Bronznick, co-author. “Until now, there have been too many platitudes about closing the leadership gap, but few resources actually devoted to serious initiatives. *Leveling the Playing Field* will give people the tools to move the community from rhetoric to real change.”

Using the most current studies and data from the Jewish world, the authors explain how recent efforts to address gender equity in the workplace, while encouraging, are still largely superficial and ignore the underlying factors that perpetuate gender bias (e.g., antiquated models of workplace success, unfair policies, inflexible environments and misconceptions about women's potential.)

The narrative is punctuated with a wealth of profound firsthand accounts from individuals throughout Jewish and secular organizational life, including **Ruth Messinger**, president of American Jewish World Service, **Barbara Dobkin**, prominent philanthropist, **Rabbi Elliot Salo Schoenberg**, international director of placement and associate director of the Rabbinical Assembly, **Barbara Balsler**, the first woman to become president of the Anti-Defamation League, **Mark Terrill**, CEO of the Associated in Baltimore, and many others.

The book tackles the issue of gender equity with an eye toward organizational effectiveness, making its lessons appropriate for any sector: “An organization with overwhelmingly male leadership, despite a majority of female staff, is not likely to be operating as a meritocracy and therefore is not taking full advantage of its talent pool.” However, the conversation is particularly relevant to Jewish organizations – federations, nonprofits, foundations, and religious institutions, which have been slow to address the problem: “There are fewer women at the high echelons in the Jewish communal arena than in comparable organizations in academia, philanthropy, and the secular nonprofit sector.”

Leveling the Playing Field includes a complete section of exercises, empowering readers to convert the lessons in the book into real-world action. The resources allow readers to assess gender equity (or the lack thereof) within their own organizations and build concrete action plans to create positive change.

“The book is not about pointing fingers,” said Linsky, co-author. “*Leveling the Playing Field* addresses a systemic problem in a way that will elicit real action and meaningful change throughout Jewish organizational life. The strategies and tools that we lay out in the book are field-tested and have yielded great success in Jewish and secular organizations alike.”

Timed with the book launch, the authors are releasing a “Conversation Kit” for people across the country who want to facilitate their own dialogues about advancing women and creating gender equity in the workplace. The free packet of materials enables groups to explore the challenges women face in organizations, brainstorm opportunities to advance women leaders, and develop an action plan for change. Conversation Kits can be requested at info@advancingwomen.org.

According to Goldenhar, co-author: “The Conversation Kits are a natural extension of the book. Both provide the tools and strategies that will convert talk into action. Whether the setting is an informal dinner party among friends or a workshop with colleagues, change in the workplace starts when members of the community make this issue a priority.”

To Order *LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD*

Leveling the Playing Field: Advancing Women in Jewish Organizational Life can be ordered online at www.advancingwomen.org or at Amazon.com. Single copies are \$15.00 plus shipping and handling. Bulk pricing is available for purchases of 25 or more copies. Bulk order requests should be sent to info@advancingwomen.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Shifra Bronznick

Shifra Bronznick is the principal of Bronznick & Co., LLC, a consulting firm that specializes in launching new initiatives and helping not-for-profits navigate change. She has consulted to a wide range of organizations, including the American Indian College Fund, the Public Education Network, the Fresh Air Fund, Hebrew Union College-JIR, American Jewish World Service, Medicare Rights Center, the Charles H. Revson Foundation, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, United Jewish Communities, and the White House Project. Shifra designed the WHP National Women’s Leadership Summits, which convened the most influential women in business, government, the nonprofit sector, and academia. Her newest initiative for the White House Project, “Women Rule,” is a groundbreaking leadership program for women that will be launched in partnership with O, the Oprah magazine. Shifra is also the founder and president of [Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community](#). Previously, Shifra served as executive vice president of Swig, Weiler & Arnow, one of New York’s premier commercial real estate firms.

Didi Goldenhar

Didi Goldenhar is a senior consultant to Bronznick & Co., LLC and is Senior Program Director of Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community. She has provided organizational expertise to foundations, corporations, and nonprofit organizations, including the Lila Wallace-Readers Digest Fund, the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Citicorp Private Bank, Synagogue 2000, United Jewish Communities, the Fresh Air Fund, PEN American Center, the Harlem Educational Activities Fund, and the White House Project. Most recently, she has consulted to the NYC Department of Education’s Leadership Academy and to the Green Group, a consortium of thirty national environmental organizations.

Marty Linsky

Marty Linsky is cofounder and principal of [Cambridge Leadership Associates](#), a leadership consulting practice serving public, private, and nonprofit clients in the United States and abroad. Linsky has been a faculty member at Harvard’s Kennedy School since 1982, except from 1992 to 1995 when he served as chief secretary to the Massachusetts Governor. A graduate of Williams College and Harvard Law School, Linsky has been a journalist, lawyer, and politician. He was the assistant minority leader of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, a reporter and editorial writer for the *Boston Globe*, and an editor of the *Real Paper*. His most recent book is *Leadership on the Line*, co-authored with Ronald Heifetz.

ABOUT THE BOOK

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD:

Advancing Women in Jewish Organizational Life

By Shifra Bronznick, Didi Goldenhar, and Marty Linsky

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About Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community:

Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community (AWP) is a national not-for-profit organization. Its mission is to advance women into leadership positions in Jewish life; stimulate Jewish organizations to become more equitable, productive and vibrant environments; and promote policies that support work-life integration and flexibility for professionals and volunteers. AWP seeks to leverage the talents of women professionals on behalf of the Jewish community, and to act as a catalyst for change in the field. By eradicating the systemic barriers that prevent women from advancing, AWP can help Jewish organizations establish policies and practices that expand opportunities for everyone.



Cambridge Leadership Associates

www.cambridge-leadership.com

About Cambridge Leadership Associates:

CLA is a leadership consulting services firm specializing in developing leadership cultures for changing organizations. Through consulting and training in the skills and behaviors of Adaptive Leadership™, the firm works to expand and enhance the leadership that organizations need to change and thrive in complex environments. Professional services include leadership consulting, workshops, training, and keynote presentations. Headquartered in Cambridge, Mass., the firm has an extensive client list nationally and internationally.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD*

In the process of creating Take Our Daughters to Work Day, I learned my most profound lesson about social change: People recognize societal problems, but they need something to do...one step to take...to make change. *Leveling the Playing Field* takes this lesson to the limit. The book fully, clearly, and enjoyably lays out each step to advancing women's leadership in Jewish life and enriching organizational life in the process. Based on road-tested research and organizational experience, and validated by moving testimonials, it is a map to profound change that will take Jewish daughters and sons to a new Jewish world.

— **Marie Wilson**, President, The White House Project and author of *Closing the Leadership Gap*

Leveling the Playing Field is a valuable tool and an inspiring read. Through personal experiences and practical responses, this book clearly makes the case for gender equity in Jewish organizational life. Its tone is one of fact – yet provocative when appropriate. As individuals whose professional lives have been in the Jewish community for decades, we encourage managers, lay leaders, CEOs and young professionals to read this book. *Leveling the Playing Field* is an invitation to reflect on our beliefs, organizational styles and leadership, and to take the steps necessary to create workplaces of both excellence and choice in the Jewish community.

— **Audrey S. Weiner**, DSW, MPH, President and CEO, Jewish Home & Hospital Lifecare System, and **Jeffrey R. Solomon**, Ph.D., President, The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies

Perhaps more than ever in the history of the Jewish community, our adaptive success depends on new and more effective models of authority and influence, models that women are particularly well-placed to provide, if only because they have been left out of traditional authority structures, know their dysfunctions intimately, and bring fresh wisdom. This book provides a treasure of practical guidance and insight as women seek to lead the renewal of Jewish communal life.

— **Ronald A. Heifetz**, Founding Director, Center for Public Leadership, John. F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University and author of *Leadership Without Easy Answers*