

Battle of the Bosses: Male vs. Female

UConn Professor sheds light on who is preferred, and who is more effective.

By LISA CARBERG

Updated 9:22 AM EDT, Tue, May 12, 2009

University of Connecticut Professor of Management Gary Powell has done extensive research on bosses and gender and has found the preference was overwhelming when people were surveyed.



Most people don't have a choice about working for a man or woman, but if they did, many say their preference is clear.

Which gender makes a better boss?

Alana Morales, of Hartford, prefers a male boss.

"Men are just more easygoing and understand women better, and they're not going to be catty," Morales said.

This is not the case for Lauren Redmond, of Manchester, who believes communication is easier when a woman is in the corner office.

"They probably would understand me a little bit better. In some aspects, I feel like I could go talk to them a little bit more," Redmond said.

University of Connecticut Professor of Management Gary Powell has done extensive research on bosses and gender and has found the preference was overwhelming when people were surveyed.

"Twice as many people state if they had to make a choice between working for a male or female boss, that they would prefer working for a male," Powell said.

People tend to associate male qualities including authoritativeness with male bosses, he said, and workers see men as more helpful in aiding their career advancement.

Employees might want to re-think their preference for a male boss however. Powell's research reveals that women bosses might be the fairest of them all.

"Most recent studies have found female leaders are higher in positive aspects of leadership, such as inspiring people, motivating them (and) articulating a vision which they can respond to," Powell said.

Women bosses also give more individual attention and reward good behavior, Powell said. But everything changes when employees are given a third choice of "no preference" on a boss' gender.

A Gallup survey revealed that 40 percent of people did not care whether their boss was a man or a woman. Men were the next choice, followed by females.

Powell does see a growing trend in employees having no preference on a boss' gender.