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THE JOURNAL OF JEWISH LIFE NETWORK/STEINHARDT FOUNDATION

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Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation is dedicated to strengthening and transforming American Jewish Life to ensure a flourishing, sustainable community in a fully integrated free society. We seek to revitalize Jewish identity through educational, religious and cultural initiatives that are designed to reach out to all Jews, with an emphasis on those who are on the margins of Jewish life.

Photographs in this issue appear courtesy of contributors and Photos.com.

Jewish Jobs, Jewish Careers, Jewish Life

At a recent dinner attended by young people working in the Jewish community, talk turned, as it often does, to the topic of Jewish professional life. Conversation focused on a lay leader active in both Jewish and general nonprofit organizations. On the boards of the general nonprofits, the philanthropist had developed a reputation as a kind-hearted, patient and humane leader. He was said to treat his professionals with the utmost respect, deferring to their experience and applauding their expertise. In the area of Jewish philanthropy, however, his demeanor became authoritarian, impatient and sometimes even menacing. Employee morale was low.

This is not the venue to parse the sociological factors motivating such Jekyll/Hyde behavior. It is worth noting, however, that tales such as this one are not rare. At a time when lay leaders are exerting ever more influence on the direction of American Jewish life, we have not given sufficient attention to the complex and often fraught relations between the professionals who guide our programs and the donors who ensure that the programs exist. In many instances, a dysfunctional culture becomes the norm for lay leaders and professionals alike, leaving no level of Jewish organizational life immune to tension, contention and, in some cases, outright abuse.

This issue of **CONTACT** explores the current state — in terms of both hazards and hopes — of Jewish professional life. It will be difficult to revitalize American Jewish life if we cannot revitalize our own professional culture. An underlying question is: why do people choose to work in the Jewish community? Given current compensation levels, financial security is not a major motive. Many of those who have devoted their lives to Jewish jobs share a deep and abiding love for Jewish culture and life; a longing to contribute something to the community; an urge to explore their identity and to help others do the same; and a desire to live a life of values. The last point is often the most difficult to surrender amid the pressures of working in the Jewish community, and burnout rates remain high. Intrinsic Jewish values such as respecting human dignity and fostering community are sometimes absent from our organizations. And yet, without these values, Jewish professional life loses its meaning.

Perhaps it is time to concede that whereas a hierarchical command structure might be efficient in running an organization, it is not necessarily the most effective method of transmitting a commitment to Jewish life. As the community struggles to revamp its professional infrastructure, it would do well to concentrate on the recruitment and retention not only of people, but of the values and ethics that inspired so many of us to enter the Jewish profession to begin with. Only then will the real crisis of Jewish professional life have a chance at resolution.

Eli Valley
Eli Valley

Please see our new website, which includes information on the programs created and supported by Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation, as well as past and current issues of *Contact*.
www.jewishlife.org

The April 2004 issue of **Sh'ma** (www.shma.com), focusing on the partnership between lay leaders and professionals, includes a roundtable discussion with key Jewish communal leaders; essays on The Rabbi and Synagogue Governance; Social Change & the Professionalization of the Field; and New Models for an Old Partnership. For a free copy of the issue, or to order multiple copies for your nonprofit board, contact Heather at: HHolmes@JFLmedia.com (877) 568-SHMA.

What Do We Mean When We Speak of a Personnel Crisis?

by SHAUL KELNER, Ph.D.,
MICHAEL RABKIN,
LEONARD SAXE, Ph.D.,
CARL SHEINGOLD, Ph.D.

The future of the North American Jewish community stands on several legs. One is human resources — the availability of skilled personnel to carry on the work of vital communal institutions. Leaders of synagogues, schools, federations and a host of other Jewish organizations in communities large and small feel they are struggling to recruit and retain qualified professionals.

Both inside and outside the Jewish community, much is known that can inform efforts to address this challenge. Over the past year, we compiled the findings of research on professional recruitment and retention in order to assess the current knowledge base. We reviewed employment statistics, employee surveys, program evaluations, task force reports and more to determine what is known — not only in the Jewish community, but also in the private and not-for-profit sectors. Our goal has been to determine what past research has

already established so that future research (our own included) might extend what we know rather than merely replicate what has already been proven. We offer here some highlights of what we have learned.

1 Recruitment is not retention, and retention is not recruitment, although the two may sometimes be linked. A personnel shortage can result from a failure to keep existing employees, or a failure to attract new employees, or both. By and large, the Jewish community does not have good data that would allow it to diagnose where and to what extent it suffers from a recruitment problem or a retention problem. Clearly determining whether staffing challenges stem more from the former or the latter can help policymakers adopt appropriate strategies and avoid responding in ways that leave underlying issues unaddressed. The prevailing sense among Jewish communal leadership is that we have a crisis in recruitment and retention, but there

Leaders of synagogues, schools, federations and a host of other Jewish organizations in communities large and small feel they are struggling to recruit and retain qualified professionals.

are no systematic data to tell us the extent of this problem.

2 People are attracted to non-profit work because they care. Some are driven out because they care too much. National surveys of workers in not-for-profits find that they are less cynical, more intrinsically motivated to work, and more satisfied in their jobs than are their counterparts in the for-profit sector. At the same time, they are more likely to experience burnout, which entails feelings of fatigue, cynicism and lack of a sense that one's work is worthwhile. Nonprofit workers are willing to sacrifice private sector wages for the opportunity to do meaningful work.



The authors are affiliated with Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Leadership Development in Jewish Philanthropy. With support from the funders of the Professional Leaders Project, they are conducting research on the pushes, pulls and pathways into and out of careers in the Jewish community. Reports from their research will be posted at www.brandeis.edu/cmjs.



Remove this sense of meaning, and what reason have they to remain in the field?

3 The Jewish community can learn from the private sector... up to a point: The private sector tends to treat recruitment and retention as issues faced by individual organizations competing with each other to attract personnel. The Jewish community, on the other hand, sees these as common challenges to be addressed cooperatively by the Jewish communal sector as a whole. Health care and education are two of the major fields that have also adopted this sectorwide perspective.

4 Small communities face unique challenges. To better understand the personnel challenges faced by small Jewish communities, we may look to an analogous situation where small communities struggle to recruit and retain nonprofit professionals with specialized skills. Guided by the experience of rural areas trying to attract medical personnel, we propose that recruitment and retention issues in small Jewish communities may be conceived in terms of a) the general lifestyle issues that make their community appealing or unappealing to potential recruits; b) the Jewish lifestyle issues that tend to be of particular concern to Jewish communal professionals; c) the way that work environments differ in small Jewish communities versus larger ones; and d) the competitive environment vis-à-vis Jewish institutions in other communities.

5 A problem is perceived to exist in both the quality and quantity of the

Nonprofit workers are willing to sacrifice private sector wages for the opportunity to do meaningful work. Remove this sense of meaning, and what reason have they to remain in the field?

labor pool available to the Jewish community. Community leaders express concern that too few people are choosing to enter Jewish communal professions. They also express concern that a disproportionate number of those who do choose to enter these fields lack a *dual skill-set* of combined Judaic and professional/managerial competencies. This dual skill-set is widely believed to be necessary to perform Jewish communal work successfully. Issues of quality posed by Jewishly committed but under-skilled young hires differ from those posed by mid-career switchers whose professional skills may outpace their knowledge of Jewish culture and the workings of Jewish organizations.

6 The root of the Jewish community's "personnel crisis" is ascribed to three distinct sources: People, organizations and systems. Each diagnosis prioritizes a different target for intervention.

Person-centered approaches argue that not enough people are interested in entering Jewish communal work, and those who are interested are not qualified enough. When seen as a *lack of quantity*, a commonly proposed remedy is to market Jewish communal work to people making career choices. When seen as a *lack of quality*, the accepted response is to encourage training. In both instances, interventions are directed at existing or would-be professionals to improve their willingness and ability to serve.

Organization-centered approaches argue that Jewish organizations (individually or collectively) have failed to create work environments that inspire loyalty and commitment. Focusing on retention rather than recruitment, this conception is associated with reform efforts to address low salary, low status, unprofessional demands on time, family-unfriendly policies, poor career ladders,

problematic lay-professional relationships, lack of mentoring, inadequate supervision and other issues.

Systems-centered approaches see personnel shortages as a result of personnel flows through a system in which a) career advancement is a desirable element of professional life; b) mobility is limited within organizations; and c) Jewish organizations and communities compete with each other to attract talent. Seeing inequities in the distribution of labor as unavoidable, systems-centered approaches focus on the question of who wins and who loses under different intervention scenarios.

7 Gender bias in Jewish organizations, still widespread, is seen as detrimental to recruitment and retention. Gender-based salary gaps and glass ceilings for women persist in Jewish communal work. Efforts to redress the status of women seek many of the same organizational reforms that are suggested to improve retention overall. Paradoxically, in spite of the inequities women face, the field continues to disproportionately attract women into its ranks.

8 Along with consensus about technical means for improving recruitment and retention in Jewish community organizations, there is dissatisfaction with "technical" responses. Widespread agreement exists that certain personnel challenges can be addressed by improving recruitment efforts, training, salaries, status, time demands, family-friendly policies, career ladders, lay-professional relationships, mentoring, supervision and similar issues. At the same time, these are seen as alleviating symptoms of the problem rather than addressing deeply-rooted cultural challenges that lie at the heart of the issue.

To answer the question posed in the title, "What do we mean when we speak of a personnel crisis," different people mean different things. Unfortunately, they do not often realize this and carry on the conversation assuming that their understanding of the situation is shared by those with whom they speak. We have tried to isolate some of the usually-muddled dimensions of the problem in the hope that it will enable progress to be made in areas that have heretofore confounded policy-makers. ✨



Empowering NEXT- GEN Leaders

by RHODA A. WEISMAN

Why aren't more young adults choosing the Jewish sector to make a difference? Some don't know it's an option. Others feel disconnected because their own Jewish community institutions have not made them a priority. What's more, the secret is out that as employers, many Jewish organizations aren't up to par with their secular counterparts.

The Jewish people are commanded to flourish from generation to generation. So who is this next generation, and how can we tap their talents and vitality to strengthen Jewish life in America?

The majority of Jews in their twenties are in college, planning to attend graduate school, or entering the workforce. In their adult lives, they've been witness to the Enron fiasco; the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal; the Bush-Gore fall-out; the September 11 tragedy; the war in Iraq; and the boom and bust of the

high-tech sector. They are cynical, but privileged. They have grown up with more opportunity than any previous generation. But recent events have led many to believe that security and happiness may begin with opting out of a lifestyle that focuses solely on material gain. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that community service has become a core value for this generation. They are probably the first generation to have had mandatory service requirements in high school — and this is the payoff. Reflecting this trend, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* recently noted that the nonprofit sector houses one of the fastest growing career tracks in America. Increasingly, twenty-somethings are favoring careers that blend work and meaning.

Rhoda A. Weisman is Executive Director of the Professional Leaders Project. She is the former Chief Creative Officer of Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life, and the former Director of Hillel's Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps.

So why aren't more of them choosing the Jewish sector to make a difference? Some don't know it's an option. Others feel disconnected because their own Jewish community institutions have not made them a priority. What's more, the secret is out that as employers, many Jewish organizations aren't up to par with their secular counterparts.

Some outstanding young professionals who do reach our doors are turned off by what they encounter — a lack of remuneration, respect, role models and well-defined career paths. With poor word of mouth, is it any wonder that more of our best and brightest aren't choosing to work for Jewish organizations? And with too few professional leaders waiting in the wings, who will step to the forefront to guide this generation and its children?

These issues are at the heart of the Professional Leaders Project (PLP), a new initiative envisioned and supported by William M. Davidson, The Charles

and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation. Spearheaded by Robert P. Aronson, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, PLP will forge a concerted national effort to identify, recruit and train top-notch young professionals and entice them to choose the Jewish sector. Summer camps, youth groups, birthright Israel trips, Hillel programming, Jewish study classes and more have been successful wellsprings for developing Jewish identity. The Professional Leaders Project will target these primary sources of talent to enlarge and enhance the pool of outstanding young Jewish professionals available to Jewish communal organizations in America. While there are a number of twenty-somethings who self-select to enter this field, the future of Jewish communal life in America will significantly improve with the recruitment and training of new leaders.

In informal discussions I had over

the course of several years with young Jews who meet the criteria for this project, the following questions arose:

Are the organizations that want to hire us forward thinking?

Will we have a place at the table to be heard?

Will we be able to utilize our training and ideas to help solve the problems the community faces locally, regionally and nationally?

Once recruited, how will we be compensated?

Will the pay scale allow us to plan for the future, buy a home, raise a family?

Is there a glass ceiling for women?

As a young mother, will I have some flexibility to work from home and to make up time if I need to leave early to take my child to an appointment?

My mother is a corporate president and all the executives in Jewish life seem to be men. This doesn't work for me. (24-year-old male intern)

Once in the system, will we have mentors to help us navigate it for optimal success?

What will our career paths look like in five years, ten years and more?

Will we have access to continuing professional development?

What are the best educational routes to a successful career?

Part of PLP's task in recruiting a new talent pool will be to work closely with existing organizations and find creative solutions to these challenges. PLP recruiting will focus on who the aspiring professionals are, what they will need in order to thrive in the long-term, and what organizations will need to do to embrace and incorporate them. The originators of the Professional Leaders Project are challenging us as a community to allow this highly educated, technologically savvy and globally-minded generation to make its meaningful contribution to Jewish life. Part of our generation's responsibility will be to grow and change with them, *l'dor va'dor*. 🌱

Team Building in the Training of Jewish Professionals

by **RABBI DAVID GEDZELMAN**

When I was on the faculty of one of the Jewish Community's academic and professional training institutions, I was struck by the disconnection between the rabbinical program and the masters program in Jewish education. In certain ways, the educators felt that they were treated as second-class citizens in relation to the rabbinical students. They felt that the institution sent a subtle message that if they had been more serious, articulate and capable, they would be rabbinical students. Rabbinical and education students were not encouraged to see each other as important counterparts in the work of Jewish life, bringing unique and different skills and training to a comprehensive field.

Unfortunately, if today one were to survey our professional leadership programs, whether in education, the rabbinate, Jewish non-profit management or Jewish communal service, one would still discover that no serious attempts are being made to sensitize students in the various disciplines to each other's strengths and skills and to train Jewish professionals in how they can support and learn from each other as colleagues. We do not train our professionals how to work together as members of a team, either across disciplines or even within disciplines. Consequently, we end up missing opportunities for maximizing the professional resources we invest in. I suspect one of the historic reasons for this has been that the model of the congregational rabbi as lone practitioner has been all too influential for the institutions we depend on to train our professionals. JCCs and Hillels, many of which do strive to create cultures of collegiality and teamwork, would be better served if our professional training institutions took a team building approach in how they prepare students for the field.

As we begin to contemplate how best to encourage a new generation of young people to consider careers of inspired service in Jewish life, those young people need to know that they won't be alone in their work. In fact, a picture of Jewish professional life characterized by professional peers working as teams with a sense of urgent mission might just speak better to the ethos and culture of the young people we want to engage.

Rabbi David Gedzelman is Executive Director of Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation and was the Founding Creative and Rabbinic Director of Makor.



The Community's Overlooked Resource: Young Jews at Jewish Jobs

by TOBIN BELZER

Ironically, tremendous resources have been dedicated towards efforts to engage young Jews who have no formal Jewish affiliations. Yet affiliation is subjective; even those who work in Jewish organizations do not feel engaged.

Jewish jobs are significant sites for the expression and development of Jewish identity among young Jews. Based on qualitative research of 48 Jews, ages 25-38, who work in Jewish jobs in Boston, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, I found that Jewish identities were affected by work in a variety of Jewish occupations. The research sample included an equal number of men and women who work either part time or full time for philanthropic foundations, federations, synagogues, periodicals, community centers, start-up nonprofits and political advocacy organizations. They work as executive directors, presidents, rabbis, youth directors and advisors, educators, education directors, development officers, program directors, journalists, writers, administrators and assistant directors.

Across job type and organization, young Jews described both positive and negative ways that their Jewish identities were affected. Some participants explicitly described the positive impact of their work. A man in Los Angeles explained that his work "helped mold [him] into a stronger, more educated Jew than when [he] started." A New York woman said that her job provoked "the beginning of a great Jewish growth experience."

Many more participants described the impact on their Jewish identity in negative terms. They described frustration with long hours, low pay and dysfunctional interpersonal dynamics. These characterizations are typical of work in the nonprofit sector or in service-oriented jobs in general. Likewise, young Jews responded to their experiences in many of the same ways that employees in non-Jewish jobs would. Most notably, they constructed psychological and tangible boundaries, distancing themselves from their organizations in order to preserve their sense of self.

Since young Jews have identity-related ties to their work, these standard responses had consequences beyond their profes-

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The Muehlstein Institute: Retaining Promising Leaders

by ANDREA HENDLER

For the last decade, the Jewish communal service field has struggled to stop the drain of quality professionals who leave the field after several years. Seminars on recruitment and retention have dominated the agenda of Jewish communal professional associations. In response, last year, UJA-Federation of New York launched the Muehlstein Institute, a multi-dimensional program designed to impact on this issue locally. The vision was to create a program for emerging professional leaders that:

- Builds community among a network of peers;
- Provides access to senior colleagues through networking and mentoring relationships;
- Provides a body of knowledge about nonprofit management and professional leadership practices; and
- Increases understanding of local and global Jewish communities.

"Developing the skills of young professionals and strengthening their commitment to our field is a critical issue on our communal agenda," said John S. Ruskay, CEO and Executive Vice President of UJA-Federation. "By establishing this program, UJA-Federation is taking the lead in transforming Jewish communal life."

Made possible by the generosity of the Herman Muehlstein Foundation, Inc., a long-time supporter of UJA-Federation committed to offering young people a transformational experience, the Institute enrolled 21 professionals employed in Jewish communal agencies. Representing a diversity of agencies, including UJA-Federation of New York, JCCs, Hillels, health and human service agencies, national agencies and smaller entrepreneurial ventures, these young professionals bring a variety of backgrounds which add to the richness of the learning experience and provide for a dynamic exchange of ideas.

The Institute features a 14-day academic program in nonprofit management and Jewish communal service developed in partnership with New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Other highlights of the Institute include an overseas seminar, professional library, conference stipends and discussions with key lay and professional leaders.

UJA-Federation program administrators are gaining valuable lessons in the development and implementation of the Muehlstein Institute. We look forward to sharing this knowledge and fostering replication in other communities faced with the challenge of retention.

Andrea Hendler is the Program Manager of the Muehlstein Institute for Jewish Professional Leadership at UJA-Federation of New York's Wiener Educational Center. She can be reached at 212-836-1238 or hendlera@ujafedny.org.

sional identities. For example, long hours hindered their participation in social and religious Jewish life. A woman in Boston described a person who chooses a Jewish job as: "someone who first wants Judaism for themselves in a big way, but then has to work twice as hard to make the time for it as a Jewish professional." A man in Los Angeles explained that he would have no social life if his colleagues at work were not also his friends. A woman, also in Los Angeles, felt as though "the thing that's most keeping Jewish professionals from having a Jewish family is the Jewish community."

For some, employing work-related boundaries led to a decreased practice of religious rituals and Jewish social engagements outside of work. A Los Angeles woman explained that her job had "lessened [her] observance." She said, "I think because I'm doing Jewish all the time, when I'm at home, I don't feel like I have to do Jewish as much." A Boston woman asserted, "When Friday comes around, I'm like 'Oh my God, I don't want to go to services. I can't see another Jew. I'm sick of Jews.'"

Participants collectively constructed an archetype of "the Jewish community" which precluded their membership. A woman in Los Angeles described her view of the Jewish community in these words: "It's ossified institutions; it's old guys with lots of money running things, running very mainline boring programs aimed at the perpetuation of the Jewish people. It's politically conservative, and not very friendly to women, queers, people of color, or non-Jews." A number of participants sarcastically mentioned that: "Jewish jobs breed anti-Semitism."

Many actively constructed their own Jewish identities in opposition to the community they described. For example, a woman in Los Angeles said, "I don't feel part of it, even though I work in the Jewish community. It's weird; a lot of people would

consider me part of the Jewish community. I don't feel part of that. And I work in a building with them."



In San Francisco, another woman acknowledged, "The Jewish community would view me as part of it." However, she does not claim membership. She explained: "In my mind, the Jewish community exists so that I can respond to it. I'm thankful that it exists because it helps me clarify where I'm at, but I don't feel a part of it."

Like the majority of Jews in their age cohort, young Jews who work in Jewish jobs do not feel a sense of belonging.

Ironically, tremendous resources have been dedicated towards efforts to engage young Jews who have no formal Jewish affiliations. Yet affiliation is subjective; even those who work in Jewish organizations do not feel engaged. A woman in Los Angeles described this paradox: "organizations are certainly trying to reach young people but they aren't listening to us... and we're right here, under their noses."


Based on the understanding that employees can positively affect organizations, a great deal of time, energy and resources has been invested in recruiting and training Jewish communal professionals. Numerous graduate programs, fellowships and professional development programs are geared towards preparing employees to be effectual in their Jewish jobs. Far less attention has been paid to the ways in which Jewish jobs affect employees. This is a significant oversight, especially considering that the underlying motivation of Jewish organizations is the perpetuation of Jewish identity.

Jewish jobs have tremendous potential to engage young Jews in Jewish communal life and to enhance their Jewish identities. Unfortunately, without specific attention to the impact of Jewish jobs on the Jewish identities of workers, the opposite seems more likely to occur. 🌸



Leaky Pipelines in Leadership: Women and Careers in the Jewish Communal Arena

by SHIFRA BRONZNICK



It's no secret that the Jewish communal field has paid scant attention to professional development. Quick to react to external crises, we are less nimble in meeting internal challenges. Nowhere is this more evident than in our lackluster response to the paucity of women in professional leadership posts.

The statistics speak for themselves. Not a single woman serves as chief executive in the top nineteen federations. Women lead only three out of the twenty large intermediate federations. With one exception, men occupy the top executive posts in every major national Jewish agency that addresses public policy, advocacy, defense, education, arts, and renaissance and renewal. In the religious world, male professionals lead

the seminars and institutions that serve each of the denominations.

The gender inequity at the highest echelons is especially troubling given the preponderance of women in Jewish communal service. Women dominate the middle levels of large organizations and direct many intermediate and small sized federations, Jewish Community Centers and local institutions. Clearly, there is no shortage of women professionals in the "pipeline" who are capable of executive leadership at the highest levels. Rather, there is a "leaky pipeline" which perpetuates the Jewish gender gap.

Taking Stock: Our Prevailing Attitudes and Assumptions

In a recent study conducted by *Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community* in partnership with United Jewish Communities, we interviewed Federation CEOs, volunteer leaders and high potential

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women in fourteen communities. The research was designed to create a common set of understandings about the obstacles that prevent women from attaining CEO posts.

The following observations, drawn from our research, summarize the attitudes and assumptions that permeate the

Create an organizational conversation about new ways to enhance quality and effectiveness while promoting balance and flexibility.

system, and are consonant with our findings from hundreds of interviews with women professionals in the Jewish world.

1 An **old boys' club** was cited by virtually all interview respondents as a firmly embedded feature of federation life, affecting executive searches, promotions, salaries and overall career development. Given the persistence of this insider culture, it was no surprise that the majority of women reported experiences of explicit gender bias while many men revealed their bias, usually inadvertently, even as they expressed confidence in the meritocracy of the federation system.

2 A narrow definition of the required **leadership style** traps women in a Catch-22 position. For example, an aggressive leadership style is seen as a positive attribute in men, while an aggressive approach is perceived as a negative attribute in women. Paradoxically, the absence of women leaders is partly attributed to the notion that a woman might not be tough enough to execute the CEO's myriad responsibilities, nor forceful enough to secure major annual campaign gifts from male donors.

3 **Executive search processes** typically involve very few women candidates. Researchers find that minority candidates in any given applicant pool are judged more harshly than others. Studies from other professional fields — including medicine, business, academia and law — reveal that women are evaluated less favorably than their male counterparts. Assumptions about gender and professional capacity can be particularly detrimental to the small number of women competing for significant Federation posts.

4 The **24/6 demands** of the executive job track are increasingly unattractive to men as well as women, but affect women disproportionately. Our findings show that women see these top jobs as incompatible with personal and family life, for which they still assume $\frac{2}{3}$ of responsibilities. Corporations and other professional

institutions have created flexibility initiatives, both to reduce turnover costs — estimated at 150 percent of an annual salary — and to expand the number of women in top posts. By contrast, the Jewish world lags behind the curve in addressing work-life conflicts.

Waiting for Change: Stuck in the "Know-Do" Gap

We are all familiar with the habit of seeing what needs to be fixed without taking the first step to correct the problem. This "know-do gap" surfaces frequently in our gender equity work, even as organizational leaders ask us to suggest our "Top Ten Ways to Help Women Reach the Top." While we can offer discrete nuggets of wisdom gleaned from the best efforts in every profession, the most successful interventions are home-grown. The goal of our research report is to launch a conversation and collaboration to develop effective ways of rooting change within our own culture.

Making Change: How What We Think Affects What We Do

A toolkit of technical solutions, including leadership programs, mentoring projects, guidelines for executive search processes and ongoing data collection will be developed. The United Jewish Communities has already announced that it will increase the recruitment of women for its new Mandel Executive Development Program, and it will gather data annually to track the advancement of women.

But equally important in making change is shifting your mindset. We invite you to try these simple strategies to encourage new behaviors.

1 **Test your own assumptions** when you are evaluating candidates for a posi-

tion or a promotion. Research shows that women are judged by their achievements while men are assessed for their potential. Try using this notion as a lens. Does it give you a different perspective about a woman candidate's capacity?

2 **Open the "club" doors** to ensure equal access by women professionals to public gatherings and meetings of your top executives and volunteers. One troubling effect of the "old boys' club" is the inability of women to gain visibility among the leaders who serve as executive referral sources. Examine every public forum that you are involved in shaping. Have invitations been extended to talented women for plenaries and presentations? What can you do to change the composition of all-male professional groups?

3 **Invest in recruitment efforts and search processes** that bring more women to the table. By actively encouraging women to apply, you will diversify the applicant pool and generate a more receptive environment for women. Design relocation packages that provide an incentive to women — and increasing numbers of men — who live in dual career households. Finally, what special training for volunteer search committees would level the playing field for women candidates?

4 Experiment with **working smarter, not harder**. Consider the benefits of an agency that values task-oriented professionals over time-oriented professionals. Look at the way work is structured and challenge the belief that excellence always requires relentless schedules. Create an organizational conversation about new ways to enhance quality and effectiveness while promoting balance and flexibility.

Conclusion

To unleash women's leadership potential in the Jewish professional world, we need to proceed from a new assumption, one that moves away from *that's the way things are* and moves toward *this is the way things should be*. Closing the "know-do gap" and bridging the gender divide depends on our willingness to acknowledge our behaviors and our readiness to visualize a more equitable, enlightened and productive Jewish workplace. 🌟

Getting The Rabbis We Need

by RABBI BRADLEY SHAVIT ARTSON

The Challenge

We have all seen the miracle: a moribund Jewish institution — perhaps a school, synagogue, agency or Hillel — trapped by habit and floundering without vision. Desperate for leadership, the institution hires a new rabbi, and within a few years that same agency begins to blossom. The key to Jewish transformation is the right rabbi.

Jewish life is no longer fueled by nostalgia, ethnicity or even the continuing need to demonstrate solidarity with Israel. As North American Jews have reached an enviable state of material prosperity and social acceptance, many of us find the general culture alluring and ours for the asking. In our situation, what remains compelling about Judaism is the meaning that it can add to life, its structure of belonging that enhances moments of joy and consoles in times of sorrow, the inherited wisdom of a tradition that has always valued the life of the mind in the service of the good, the abiding link to transcendent holiness. These Jewish riches have propelled a continued growth for synagogues of all denominations, the expansion of Jewish studies at universities across the continent, a growing demand for Jewish day schools and summer camps, and an openness to an interior spiritual discipline that is new for many Jews.

All of these tasks require rabbis. Why

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rab-
bis? Only rabbis balance extensive immersion in the sacred texts of Judaism with equally extensive training in caring for today's Jews. Only rabbis receive instruction on integrating *mesorah* (tradition), *mitzvot* (commandments) and *middot* (virtues of character). Other Jewish professionals receive training in parts of that background, and academic scholarship is vitally important for analyzing and sharpening our understanding of the past and its writings. However, enlightening the present with the insights of the past, finding God and meaning in Torah and Judaism — that is the exclusive purview of the rabbi, and the need of all Jewish institutions, secular and religious, denominational and communal. Rabbis are on the front lines of Jewish significance.

Yet even as the Jewish world has begun to recognize the necessity of rabbinic leadership, it faces a looming challenge: Across denominational lines, transcending geographical regions, contemporary Jewish life is constrained by a lack of rabbis. This shortage is not just a problem for synagogue life. Jewish agencies, federations, JCCs, hospitals, schools and camps have realized that the old "cold war" between the secular agencies and the synagogue/rabbinical school institutions is over. If the Jewish people are to survive and thrive, then we must all work together. As a

result, institutions that used to tolerate rabbis at best, have recognized that they need the dynamism, depth and authenticity accessed by rabbinic wisdom and training.

The shortage of rabbis, then, is partly due to the success of rabbinic Judaism (in all of its contemporary groupings). Rabbis are now being hired in more niches than in the past. But there are other reasons for the shortage. As contemporary Jews turn to spirituality, learning, and observance, they require more individual time from their rabbis. Synagogues that previously managed with one rabbi are now hiring two, three, even four to service congregants more intimately. Finally, the Jewish community continues its migration — this time out of the Northeast and into new communities throughout the Sunbelt and West. As new communities emerge, their need for rabbinic leadership also strains the supply.

The consequence of this pervasive shortage is that schools often cannot implement programs of Jewish learning, synagogues cannot help their members rise to



Across denominational lines, transcending geographical regions, contemporary Jewish life is constrained by a lack of rabbis.



We must provide far greater financial support for our rabbinical schools — not for new programming, but to do what they do even better.

new levels of Jewish living, and agencies cannot implement compelling programs because no rabbi is available to serve.

What's a Jew to Do?

The midrash speaks of two paths — the “short/long road” and the “long/short road.” The short/long road is one that appears easy when first surveyed, yet choosing that path actually delays arrival at the destination. The long/short road, on the other hand, seems fraught with challenges, requiring much greater effort, but results in a quicker path to one’s goal. In considering how to face the shortage of rabbis, the American Jewish community has thus far taken the short/long path: we leave it to our rabbinical schools to produce more exciting brochures and to hire staff to work exclusively on recruitment. Those rabbinical schools rely on active rabbis to identify potential students. As tempting as this path may seem, it does nothing to

address underlying issues that limit the number of candidates for rabbinical school. How can we transcend this

quick fix to create an expanded pool of rabbinic candidates and hold on to the rabbis we have? I would plead for a comprehensive threefold plan:

1 Rabbis Don’t Come Out of Nowhere, They Are Raised.

To be able to successfully pursue a rabbinic education requires significant background, years of participating in Jewish communal life, exposure to Hebrew and Jewish study, and habituating oneself to mitzvot and observance. The catalysts for this preparation are the synagogues and their affiliated youth groups, day schools, and religious summer camps. These agencies desperately need funding, not for glitzy new programs but to pay their staffs dignified living wages so they can even more effectively reach a new generation of potential rabbis (and knowledgeable Jews).

2 Rabbis Don’t Come Out of Nowhere, They Are Taught.

We must provide far greater financial support for our rabbinical schools — not for new programming, but to do what they do even better. These rabbinical schools provide generous scholarships and need to retain additional faculty to continue to provide future rabbis with solid

grounding in Jewish studies, as well as in pastoral counseling, chaplaincy, homiletics, education, administration and other areas a rabbi must master.

3 Rabbis Don’t Come Out of Nowhere, But They Do Disappear.

The final area that requires our collective attention is the high burnout rate among practicing rabbis. As the head of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, I travel broadly as teacher and speaker. In community after community, I hear good rabbis bemoan their burden — endless hours (often with no day off), work that far outstrips any possibility of completion, lay people who are angry or offended, little time for their own continuing learning and growth, angry family members who feel that their spouse/parent is always there for the community but never there for them — the list goes on and on. Rabbis cannot solve this problem alone. Can we muster a convocation of rabbis and lay leaders for honest conversations about the way rabbis can occasionally infantilize (and the way lay people can occasionally demand infantilization); about the sometimes-excessive rabbinic need to be adored and needed (and the sometimes-excessive lay need to be adored and attended to); and about creating room for balance — both in rabbinic life and in lay expectations? Can this convocation explore a more modest partnership between rabbis and laypeople that allows the laity and the rabbis to derive satisfaction from their partnership while also allowing them to cultivate an inner life and a private life?

The time to meet and talk is now. 🌸

SUMMER CAMPS AND PROFESSIONAL RECRUITMENT

by RABBI RAMIE ARIAN

According to a study spearheaded by Steven M. Cohen and Sylvia Barack Fishman, 67 percent of applicants to graduate programs in preparation for service to the Jewish community cited experiences in Jewish overnight camps as a major factor in their career decision.

While this finding appears astonishing at first glance, observers of Jewish camps are not surprised. Every summer, some 10,000 college students serve as counselors at not-for-profit Jewish overnight camps in North America. For these young Jews, camp provides a first taste of Jewish professional life. In the struggle to recruit and retain high quality professional leaders for the Jewish community, camp is a powerful and under-utilized resource.

The Foundation for Jewish Camping (FJC) has undertaken several initiatives that actively motivate young adults to consider building their careers in Jewish education. The FJC encourages camps to view their staff as Jewish role models and, in a meaningful way, as Jewish educators. Two of the FJC’s programs, in particular, provide powerful incentives for camps to strengthen the educational expectations they place on their counselors and to provide the counselors with the tools to fulfill those expectations.

The FJC’s *Aseh Lecha Rav* program, funded by a grant from the Covenant Foundation, provides a methodology for counselors to identify and react Judaically when “teachable moments” arise spontaneously in camp, as they do dozens of times each day. After two years of piloting, the FJC is training senior staff to bring the Jewish Teachable Moments Methodology to six camps in 2004.

The FJC’s Cornerstone Fellowship, funded by a

grant from AVI CHAI, provides cash bonuses and an intensive training seminar to encourage counselors to return for a third summer to selected camps. More than 150 veteran counselors from 20 different camps across the geographic and denominational spectrum meet together at the Cornerstone Seminar to hone their skills. Counselors learn to view every activity area of camp — from the waterfront to the dining hall, from the classroom to the arts shed — as a powerful venue for Jewish education. Most important, they learn to view *themselves* as Jewish educators, empowered to teach the minds and touch the souls of the children they supervise.

Like their campers, counselors come to camp to have fun. Associating the fun of camp with the power of Jewish education helps these young adults to see that service to the Jewish people can be enormously rewarding. Little wonder that so many Jewish professionals credit camp with inspiring their career choice. 🌸

Rabbi Ramie Arian served as Executive Director of the New York-based Foundation for Jewish Camping from its inception in 1998 until 2004. For more information, visit www.jewishcamping.org.



The acute need of Jewish education in North America is for trained, passionate, intelligent and open-minded faculty for Jewish schools.

Creating a Teaching Cadre

by RABBI DANIEL LANDES

When a need and an opportunity converge, the results can be amazing. The Pardes Educators Program (PEP) began in 2000 in response to an urgent need of the American Jewish community and a unique human resources opportunity at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. Fortunately, the need and opportunity coincided with a long-held desire of Pardes as well as the focused vision of a sponsoring Foundation.

The acute need of Jewish education in North America is for trained, passion-

ate, intelligent and open-minded faculty for Jewish schools. Pardes, a post-graduate *beit midrash*, has consistently attracted diverse, enthusiastic and highly intellectual students. Through the years, many have turned to Jewish service as their vocation. Pardes graduates have been a major source of applicants to the Wexner Graduate Fellowship and have constituted an impressive percentage of its awardees. At the same time, many of our graduates have been interested in education, but relatively few have gone into Jewish education. We saw a potential resource for Jewish schools.

All this coincided with a dream of faculty and staff to create the “Pardes Educator,” imbued with the ethos of our Institute. Pardes is non-denominational and non-political. It fosters a diverse

student body with an attachment to innovation as well as tradition, a high level of *menschlichkeit* and a strong identification with the Jewish people and with Israel.

The central obsession of Pardes has been to create “a safe but challenging environment for the study of classical Jewish texts.” My interpretation of this core statement is: “safe” — one is accepted within whatever ideological or non-ideological definitions one has; “challenging” — the study of Jewish texts is meant to be transformational; “environment” — the *beit midrash* and classroom are both holy and dynamic spaces; “study” — we are very concerned to impart learning skills to make students self-sufficient in text exploration; “classical Jewish texts” — we do

Rabbi Daniel Landes is the Director and Rosh Yeshiva of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. He would like to thank Dr. David Bernstein, Dr. Susan Wall and Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield, the senior administrators of the Pardes Educators Program, for their input into this article.

the hard stuff, Tanach with Commentaries, Mishna, Talmud and the best of Halacha in the original. When it works, our students mirror their teachers: they are erudite, luminescent, honest, alive and, most important, they are passionate about sharing their learning and sharing within the learning process. In short, they are potential Educators.

The need and the opportunity for such a dream came together in a creative symbiosis with our funder and partner, AVI CHAI. During an intensive period of planning and recruitment of students and staff, AVI CHAI focused Pardes's dream. While we had originally envisioned that Pardes educators would serve in a number of settings, we were encouraged to think about contributing to communal day and high schools. This focus has helped to concentrate our energies. The concentration upon day and high schools brought many benefits, including a steep learning curve in a crucial area of personnel demand and a real feeling of shared purpose among students and staff. We have been able to concentrate our energies and, along with a steady, and sometimes painful, process of self and outside evaluations, adjust the program to newly discovered realities and opportunities.

The program itself works like this: Educators come from either Pardes or equivalent educational institutions so that they have the requisite skills and background for advanced Jewish text study. They have also experienced a mature process of reflection upon their Jewish identity. They stay in PEP for 24 months, during which they receive a full tuition waiver and generous living stipend. At Pardes, they concentrate upon eventually becoming either Talmud or Tanach teachers (although they study both). For three and a half days, their studies are augmented with classes in pedagogy, as they translate educational theory to the reality of the classroom.

The remaining day and a half of the week is spent with our educational partners, the Rothberg School and the Melton Centre, both at Hebrew University. At Hebrew Uni-

versity, educators study a range of educational theory and research methods and can select classes in philosophy, history, Bible and the like. Hebrew University has proven an ideal partner, rich in resources for our students. The meeting of *Beit Midrash* and University has led to a synthesis of content, thought and techniques in learning and teaching. Graduates emerge with an M.A. in Jewish Education and an Advanced Certificate in Jewish Studies.

Also crucial has been the University's requirement that students pass the *P'tor* examination, or the highest level of Ulpan. The benefit for our students has been maximum, dramatically increasing their learning and teaching potential.

Our major concern was to provide student-teaching opportunities with North American youth. Our educators therefore spend one month in North America as student teachers at schools from Boston to Toronto, from Atlanta to San Diego. Under the supervision of a mentor, they observe and teach classes. Their personal and shared experiences inform the discussion for the year.

With the creation of PEP, we have wagered that a diverse group of talented North Americans can be imbued in Israel with an enthusiasm for teaching Jewish ideas and values, and then brought to open and challenging communal educational settings in the Diaspora. Presently, however, not all graduates are working in community schools. We have one in an Orthodox school and four in Conservative schools. This year we graduate our third cohort, averaging eleven Educators a year. It's too soon to talk about success. Educators sign up for three years of teaching, but we want them to commit for a full career of service in North America. They are trained at Pardes, a "Gan Eden of learning" as one Educator put it, but how will they fare in the trenches? Reports have been very positive, but certainly time will tell. The journey thus far — taken with the partnership of Educators, teachers, staff, sponsoring and cooperating schools, the Hebrew University and Melton, and our Funder — has been exhilarating. 🌸

Recruiting And Retaining the Best: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

by JONATHAN S. WOOCHEER, PhD

It seems obvious: Great Jewish education starts with great Jewish educators. But, the challenge of recruiting and retaining such educators has vexed and frustrated the Jewish community for decades.

This, however, seems about to change. In February, 300 front-line educators, organizational heads, lay activists and philanthropists gathered in Florida for an unprecedented Jewish Education Leadership Summit convened by JESNA. They were given a clear charge: formulate specific, actionable plans to attract talented people into the field of Jewish education and to change the culture of the field to ensure that these individuals receive the professional development, support, recognition and remuneration that will enable them to thrive as educators. After three intense days, we had developed more than two-dozen concrete ideas, ranging from a national database of promising prospects for recruitment, to subsidized workshops for college-aged camp counselors, to executive coaches for day school heads, to universal "low cost" benefits packages for educators.

The real question, of course, is whether these ideas will lead to action. There is good reason to believe they will, because a mechanism already exists to refine these proposals, to carry them to funders and to market them aggressively to local communities and national bodies. This mechanism is called JERRI — the Jewish Educator Recruitment/Retention Initiative, a joint project of JESNA and the Covenant Foundation.

For Covenant and JESNA, JERRI represents the next big step in more than a decade of building and supporting innovative educator recruitment, development and recognition programs. JERRI's goal is systemic and systematic change. Armed with an Action Plan based on research and experience from within the Jewish world and beyond, enriched by ideas from the Summit, and able to call on a newly expanded "sales force" of Summit participants, JERRI is moving into action this spring along several fronts: implementing a major community-mobilization and marketing effort, mounting new "fast-track" projects to demonstrate the potential for success, creating a comprehensive online resource center, and building a coalition of organizations and funders, many of whom are already engaged with this issue, to sustain these efforts over time.

Recruiting and retaining a new generation of outstanding Jewish educators will require major structural and cultural changes, not to mention substantial financial resources. But, it's the key to achieving consistent excellence in Jewish education. And, if the turnout, energy and productivity that marked the Jewish Education Leadership Summit are any indication, this time, the job will get done. 🌸

Jonathan S. Woocher, Ph.D., is President of JESNA (Jewish Education Service of North America).

It was 1997, a time of seemingly limitless opportunities for enthusiastic young entrepreneurs. A recent college graduate, I came back to the U.S. after a year in Israel and found myself entranced by the emerging dot-com craze.

I was attracted to Silicon Valley by the promise of innovation, the feeling of joining a movement that would spawn the next generation of technology. A technophile, I am the product of a family which was the first among my friends' families to have a computer and all the latest gadgets. The high-tech world seemed a perfect fit for me.

In that context, then, my position as the Hillel Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps Fellow at the University of California, San Diego, was mostly incidental. It was a natural extension of my year in Israel on Project Otzma, which itself was a natural extension of my Hillel student leadership on campus. I needed a job, and I had heard about the JCSC Fellowship from a friend. It seemed like a comfortable way to ease back into the U.S. while I looked for opportunities up north. I saw it as a one-year engagement.

There were hints, however, that this was becoming more than just a job. Of course, I loved the creativity and autonomy that came with developing programs and working with students. But I was also doing something I could feel proud of, something that resonated with me deeply. One of my assignments was to work with Jewish students in Greek life, including the AEΠ fraternity. I got to know the members through various programs, including a memorable "eco-Jewish" camping trip we planned together. I hadn't been in a fraternity in college, and I was caught by surprise. These weren't your stereotypical "frat boys." Most of them were motivated by a search for meaning: what does it mean to be a group of Jewish men? Eventually, they started showing up at the regular Hillel Shabbat services and dinner - not just a few of them, but almost all of them. They were connecting to something deeper than I - maybe even they - ever expected. And when I realized that, not only about the AEΠ members, but also about other "engagement" students, it renewed my own search for Jewish meaning.

During the spring semester, in an effort to bolster my resume, I decided to take a mar-

keting class. One evening during class, contemplating how to apply a marketing concept to my Hillel work, I found myself thinking, "Wow, I really love what I do." Then, as I tried to envision myself using the same marketing tools as a dot-commer, the image was devoid of the sparks I had felt all year at Hil-

Why I Chose to Enter the "Jewish Business"

by MICHAEL RABKIN

lel. Suddenly, I had the stirring realization that my true passion lay in this Jewish work. I wasn't sure exactly what that meant, but I knew that I couldn't approach a dot-com job with the same passion and sense of satisfaction that I had with my Hillel work.

That night, I decided to apply for the Program Director position at UCSD Hillel. When I told my supervisor, she literally jumped out of her chair with excitement. After I was hired, I effectively began my career as a Jewish professional.

My professional path might seem predictable. A graduate of Cincinnati's Yavneh Day School, a child of volunteer (and now professional) leaders in the Jewish community, a student leader at the University of Colorado Hillel, and a participant on Project

If the community redoubles its efforts to create meaningful and nurturing opportunities for young professionals, many others who have sought dot-coms will similarly commit themselves to the dot-orgs.

Otzma - where else could I have ended up? Indeed, each of these elements played a critical role in the shaping of my career, but I never expected it. And given my choices and interests, why would I have chosen to stay in this line of work?

In considering appropriate communal policy decisions on professional development, my story may lend some insight. What follows are personal reflections about what has made me want to make a career out of Jewish life.

Inspired leadership. I was extremely fortunate that my first supervisor was Rabbi Lisa Goldstein. She encouraged a professional environment in which I could safely take risks and expand my horizons. She brought together an amazing team of professionals and infused clarity of vision and purpose into our work. That was only augmented by Richard Joel's extraordinarily resonant leadership.

Recognition. I mention this not to tout my achievements, but to suggest how meaningful recognition proved to be in my early professional development. When I was presented the Hillel Exemplar of Excellence Award in a room with 800 of my colleagues, I realized how much I am a part of a larger

community of Jewish professionals who nourish and cultivate one another.

Investment. There is the clear sense that the community is investing in my career, for which I am grateful. Two years ago, Hillel sent me to Israel to learn at Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies for the summer. Now, as a Hillel Steinhardt Scholar, I have a significant scholarship towards my graduate education and a seasoned Hillel director as my mentor. The Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation has granted me a fellowship at New York University. These financial investments speak volumes about the community's interest in my success.

The Notion of Career. We should consider that it may not be obvious to young people - even to those strongly connected to the Jewish community, as I was - that there are viable and varied career options inside the Jewish community. I never once contemplated working in the Jewish community as a career until near the end of my first Jewish job. I had to feel like I was able to

make an impact, that the work would challenge me creatively, and that I could grow professionally and even spiritually. At the same time, however, initiatives to promote Jewish jobs do not have to present the career as a lifelong commitment. For me, if I had gone into the job expecting it to be a much longer-term commitment, I might not have considered it. Letting people immerse themselves in Jewish professional experiences without forcing them into lifelong careers could serve to attract more unlikely candidates.

At a time of diverse and dynamic opportunities for young people, I chose to become a Jewish professional. If the community redoubles its efforts to create meaningful and nurturing opportunities for young professionals, many others who have sought dot-coms will similarly commit themselves to the dot-orgs. 🌸

After three years at Hillel of San Diego, Michael Rabkin worked at Hillel's Schusterman International Center in the Campus Strategic Services department. He is now an MPA/MA candidate at New York University in its program in nonprofit management and Judaic studies. He plans to return to Hillel work after graduating.



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