

# Is Equal Opportunity For Women Really Working?

Women's Liberation and equal opportunity employment regulations are combining to create some interesting variations on the traditional workweek for women, explains Lon D. Barton, president, Cadillac Associates, Inc., Chicago, one of the nation's largest executive placement organizations.

"Companies are taking equal opportunity far more seriously,"

especially for women, but the simple fact is that there's a genuine shortage of qualified women workers in many fields," he points out.

That leaves several alternatives: don't hire more women and run the risk of legal action, hire unqualified women as window dressing, or use innovative workweeks to draw more women into the workforce.

Companies are innovating, and they're finding it a lot easier than they had expected, the Cadillac president explains.

The basic problem is a simple one: many women don't want full-time jobs. They have families and homes to take care of, although they would like to do some good part-time work. In the past, though, that has meant taking menial part-time jobs stuffing

envelopes, selling by phone, or typing letters.

Most companies, Mr. Barton points out, have always felt that more responsible positions demand full-time employees who can bring continuity to their work. As a result, they limited the responsibility assigned to part-time workers, no matter what valuable skills those workers might have.

Today, of course, Women's Liberation, government regulations, and many other factors are forcing companies to hire more women—and not just in those menial jobs either.


"As a result, companies are adjusting employee schedules to draw qualified women back into the workforce, and it is working. A few firms are splitting jobs so that two women work alter-

nate days, while others have split jobs into morning and afternoon shifts," Mr. Barton explains.

The Cadillac president is quick to add that "firms are making these changes on higher level jobs than they've ever done before." They aren't just typing or clerking jobs where one woman works her way through half a pile of letters and the other takes over when she comes in.

"Companies are trying workweeks at the technician and even some administrative levels," he adds.

What about the cost? Obviously, there's some waste while the women familiarize themselves with what their working partners have accomplished but it doesn't take as long as you'd expect.

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