

Flying through the Glass Ceiling

A local flight instructor puts women in the cockpit to develop their leadership skills

By Thomas Gaudio

FEAR NOT. CORPORATE LEGAL departments. Learning to fly small planes in Linda Castner's adrenaline-fueled leadership workshops is just as safe for workers as participating in earth-bound programs with the same goals.

At least that's what Castner, who earned her private pilot's license in 1967, says. She and her husband, Corky, offer the workshops for women and men through their company, "Up, Up, and Away in Hunterdon," based at Alexandria Field in Pittstown. The general aviation facility is owned by Linda and her brother, William Fritsche.

Last month marked the maiden voyage of the paid, all-female version of the workshop, Women Take Flight. Twelve women from various organizations participated, including New Jersey businesswomen from Muller Toyota in Clinton and Edison Press Police, Fire & EMS Bookstore in Cranford. Up until this run-through, the workshop had been free as a part of Castner's research into why women were much less likely than men to take flight instruction classes at her airfield.

Women Take Flight and its gender-blind



Castner, front left, and research partner Sue Stafford, front right, with participants in the airfield's first paid "Women Take Flight" leadership workshop.

equivalent, Leaders Take Flight, are offshoots of the airfield's flight instruction school. They are designed to forge leadership skills in people with no piloting experience. Castner hasn't firming up the ultimate price for the workshop,

but figures it could come to \$3,000. "No one has paid that yet," says Castner, because she is still trying to attract customers.

The programs take their cue from Outward Bound Professional, a division of non-

profit organization Outward Bound. OBP customizes programs for business using experiential techniques to help companies get the most from their employees. Co-workers are challenged to come together to solve prob-

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