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For Career Lift, Female Executives Try Flying

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WeNews correspondent

If more businesswomen could fly airplanes, they would use the confidence it engenders to steer their careers higher. That is the premise of a New Jersey company that turns female executives into pilots.

PITTSTOWN, N.J. (WOMENSENEWS)--Linda Castner, a no-nonsense kind of woman with a pair of both aviators and reading glasses hanging around her neck, leans back in her lawn chair on the edge of the runway and watches a Cessna take a pass through the overcast sky above.



Linda Castner

Credit: Nikala Johnson

"That Sue up there?" she asks no one in particular. Without waiting for an answer, she continues, "She's really got that pattern down. Thatta girl."

Castner isn't training new instructors for her family-owned airport in the middle of New Jersey farmland.

Nor is she supervising an end-of-the-summer scenic flight for vacationing families, though both are part and parcel of her normal duties as the president of Alexandria Field Airport. These days, Castner is doing something she never thought would be in her job description: turning female executives into small-craft pilots.

Leaders Take Flight is the brainchild of Caster and Sue Stafford, a philosophy professor at Boston-based Simmons College. They train women in business to fly as an experiential metaphor for developing leadership.

"We use the flight experience to teach these women about managed risk, because that's so much of leadership: being aware of your options, being in touch with yourself and making solid decisions," Castner told Women's eNews.

Three 'Competencies'