

Orlando Sentinel

BUSINESS

June 8, 2006

Report profiles women in business

Lynn Thomasson | Sentinel Staff Writer

http://www.orlandosentinel.com/business/orl-womenbiz0806jun08_0,6474315.story?coll=orl-business-headlines

White, married with two kids, 51 years old, with a bachelor's degree -- that's a snapshot of a Florida woman who runs a business, according to a new study by the Center of Leadership at Florida International University.

The report used responses from 161 Florida women who owned businesses or held a CEO, president or general manager position.

Carmen Dominguez, like 70 percent of the women in the study, started her own business. Homes by Carmen Dominguez, based in Orlando, sells custom homes from \$600,000 to \$5.5 million.

Dominguez, 57, calls herself "a late bloomer" because she was older than 40 when she got her contractor's license.

The study questioned women on how they balanced their work and family life. The majority of women (61 percent) said they had outside help with child rearing and half of the women surveyed said they were satisfied with how much time they spent on personal affairs and work.

Dominguez, one of the women polled, compares the balancing act between work and family to slicing a pie.

"When you cut a pie, typically you cut it equally. You've got to balance it. In order to do well in business, you have to be happy inside, and family is a part of that," she said.

But leading a business, especially in the construction industry, can have its challenges for women. "The hardest part was to have my peers acknowledge that I knew what I was doing," Dominguez said.

The women-led businesses included in this survey contribute more than \$12 billion to the Florida economy and employ 30,000 people, the study reported. Minorities led 15 percent of the businesses polled.

Mayra Beers, director of the Center of Leadership at FIU, said her organization hopes to use the study as a beginning point to building a more complete picture of Florida's women-led businesses.

"We are going to annually replicate the study. We also hope to do a more extensive study to capture the nonprofits being led by women and we also want to take a look at men in similar positions and do some comparisons," she said.

Lynn Thomasson can be reached at lthomasson@orlandosentinel.com or 407-420-5277.