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Seniors are finding a place in startups but face unique problems
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BEDROOM TALES**

Leave the laptop and BlackBerry at the office. How wireless technology is ruining sex lives. **PAGE 23**



AT DEADLINE

ONE OF MANHATTAN'S MOST FINANCIALLY troubled hospitals, Cabrini Medical Center, is considering turning itself into a long-term acute care facility. The 116-year-old hospital lost \$2 million in 2003. Cabrini and Mount Sinai Medical Center, with which it is affiliated, are discussing a plan for a facility to serve patients who are too sick for nursing homes but do not need the intensive and more expensive care offered by acute-care hospitals. Nursing homes have traditionally opposed such efforts.

EXPECT J.P. MORGAN CHASE TO FOLLOW Citigroup's lead and settle a class-action suit over its role in financing Enron. Citi agreed to pay \$2 billion Friday, more than four times the combined amount already paid by other banks. A Merrill
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CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

'My wife gives me dirty looks ... but to sit in bed and surf the Web is my idea of utopia.'

-Scott Testa, Mindbridge Software
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SPOTLIGHT

Up against bamboo ceiling

Cultural miscues keep well-educated Asian-Americans out of top ranks

BY SAMANTHA MARSHALL

WHILE CONVERSATION flowed between her colleagues and a prospective client, Elisabeth Choi sat quietly. As a newly hired consultant, she thought it would be respectful to listen and observe during the meeting, but the client wasn't impressed.

"He told my boss he didn't think I wanted to be there, because I had nothing to say," recalls Ms. Choi, who is now a partner at DeLoitte & Touche.

She stayed on the account, doing most of the work, while her white male colleague led the team and took all the credit. Looking back, the executive attributes her reserve to the way she was raised by her Korean parents, who taught her to know her place in the hierarchy and never disagree with her elders. But she learned her lesson, vowing to never let herself be put in that position again.

Such subtle cultural miscues are keeping many Asian-Americans from reaching the executive ranks. Dubbed in media reports as the "model minority," this highly educated and hardworking

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TOO POLITE: "Some Asian values are at odds with what it takes to get ahead," says Jane Hyun, a diversity expert.

Mayor plots West Side after Jets

Javits Center on track; other projects may be spurred by incentives

BY ANNE MICHAUD

MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG is vowing to push ahead with the development of Manhattan's first West Side for office towers and housing, despite suffering an embarrassing defeat in his years-long effort to build a football stadium there.

Last week, a day after Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver killed the stadium deal, Mr. Bloomberg said he would proceed with a plan for 24 million square feet of office space on the West Side. Such a move would defy the repeated demands of Mr. Silver, who has objected to West Side de-

velopment because he claims it would compete with the commercial revival of his lower Manhattan electoral district.

"My basic role as the city's executive requires that the zoning that (the City Council) voted gets used and the development they wanted gets done," Mr. Bloomberg said in Harlem last Tuesday. "We were counting on the stadium to act as a catalyst, but now we will have to find another catalyst to make the West Side attractive."

The mayor promised to offer tax breaks and other incentives "so developers will look over there."

The call for further West Side growth raises the specter of another political showdown.

The stadium deal, though years in the making, came down to political bartering: The mayor offered to stall the office towers planned for the West Side in exchange for

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ACRES
Parks and open space under the West Side zoning plan

Lazard is sinking under its own weight

Bloated firm requires cuts, as stock drops, debt junks its rating

BY AARON ELSTEIN

LAST MONTH, legendary Wall Street deal-maker Bruce Wasserstein did it again. In a transaction that many veterans swore would never fly, he managed to raise \$855 million in an initial public offering of shares of Lazard Ltd., the investment bank that he has led for the past three years.

But barely six weeks into its new life as a public company, Lazard is already in trouble. Its stock has slipped by 13% since the IPO, badly underperforming its peers' shares. Meanwhile, its debt is rated

PAY TO PLAY

Compensation costs as a percentage of revenues



Source: the companies

as junk—unbelievable for a financial institution of such pedigree. Even Lazard itself, which declined to comment for this article, has admitted publicly that it has problems—most notably, costs that are hugely out of line with industry

See **LAZARD** on Page 22

COMING NEXT WEEK

Who are the New York area's highest-paid chief executives? Keep tabs on millionaire bosses in the **FORTUNE 100**. Crain's report on compensation.

New York Business News Updated Throughout The Day at www.newyorkbusiness.com

Asian-Americans hit ceiling

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group is languishing in middle management. Differences in cultural style often lead bosses to assume that these workers don't have the necessary people skills, and many Asian-born employees fail to talk themselves up, hoping they'll get by on merit alone.

"Some Asian values are at odds with what it takes to get ahead in corporate America," says Jane Hyun, a diversity expert whose book, *Breaking the Bamboo Ceiling*, was published by HarperBusiness last month.

Asian men also underrepresented

WHILE 44% of Asians over age 25 have graduated from college, the highest percentage of any race, Asian women hold only 0.29% of corporate officer positions in Fortune 500 companies, according to a 2003 study by nonprofit Catalyst. Recent research suggests that Asian men are similarly underrepresented.

This group occupies only 1% of corporate board seats, according to a 2004 report card by the Committee of 100, an association of Asian-American business leaders.

The result is a large pool of untapped executive talent. Asians are the fastest-growing component of the labor force, and are expected to increase to 21 million workers in 2050 from 6.7 million in 2000, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. A large chunk of these workers will be based in the New York metro area, which had 787,047 Asian residents, one of the largest populations of people of Chinese, Indian, Korean and other Asian origins in the country, according to the last census.

There is such a dearth of Asian-Americans in senior positions that the National Association of Asian American Professionals hasn't been able to find enough people among its members to establish a mentoring program.

"The bamboo ceiling starts early, when people become an analyst, then senior analyst, then suddenly they see other people getting promoted while they're just making lat-

There is a dearth of Asian-Americans in top positions

eral moves," says Vincent Yee, NAAAP's national president.

These workers are often victims of subtle forms of discrimination. Positive stereotypes, of dedicated workers who are good at math, sciences and engineering, can exclude Asians from management roles.

Asian-Americans, even those whose families have been here for several generations, also suffer from what Ms. Hyun calls the "perpetual foreigner syndrome," with colleagues assuming their English-language skills are limited.

Taught to be humble

BUT INGRAINED cultural values, such as a respect for authority, a belief that hard work alone will be rewarded and a reluctance to network socially with peers and higher-ups, also explain why Asians are such a rarity on the executive floor, says Ms. Hyun.

Growing up in a household where she was taught to be humble and let her work speak for itself, Wanla Cheng, president of research firm Asia Link Consulting, had to learn early in her career how to be more assertive and sell herself. One year, she went on 100 interviews and failed to receive a job offer. Later, as a junior account executive, she noticed that dozens of her peers were leapingfrogging over her. She started taking note of how they behaved, and realized that they were benefiting from their ability to schmooze and make small talk.

"I didn't know the art of saying nothing and being charming," she recalls.

People like Ms. Cheng are pretty much left on their own to figure out how to get ahead. Even the most enlightened corporate diversity programs tend to offer little support to Asian workers, because it's assumed that their educational credentials give them a competitive advantage.

But often the barriers that Asians face are a result of misinterpreted cultural styles, and are easily remedied with some conscious effort on both sides, says Ms. Hyun.

Differences as slight as the failure to make eye contact, which is perceived as respectful among Asians but shifty among Americans, or the tendency to apologize, which in many Asian cultures is considered a polite way of taking responsibility but which U.S. workers regard as a sign of guilt, can also impede success.

"I'm constantly having to tell our members that, in an American company, you never admit fault," says Mr. Yee, recalling how one man, who was a little late faxing in a form, wrote "SORRY, SORRY, SORRY," on the cover sheet ■