



English for Everybody

Der NZ-Sprachkurs
mit Wayne Lempke



Atlanta's Working Women

In the coming weeks, I will be writing about topics which readers have asked me to discuss. Over the past few months, some excellent ideas have been proposed, and this week I'd like to present the first of the series. If you have an idea for this column, send your proposal to the NZ (Nürnberg Zeitung, Redaktion Themenseiten, Stichwort: English for Everybody, Marienstraße 9, 90402 Nürnberg. Oder: nz-redaktion@pressenetz.de).

I will begin the series by introducing you to a reader named Susanne Bohn, who spent time in Atlanta (Nürnberg's American sister city) last August interviewing several women. She went to study women in business there, and experience their American lifestyle firsthand.

Successful women in Atlanta had some good advice: work hard and well, take part in continuous job training (Fortbildungen), present yourself confidently, and use "female" talents to your advantage. Examples of female talents include skills which women often develop as mothers, like organization, "multi-tasking" (doing a lot of things at once), and communication.

Formal Style

Two of the women interviewed offered insight into the differences between German and U.S. companies. One woman first worked for a German bank in Atlanta, then switched to an American bank. At the German bank, the hierarchy was stiffer, style was more formal, and everybody was called "Mr." and "Mrs.". At the American bank, contacts to bosses were more relaxed, everybody called each other by their first names, and she was asked

about her personal goals and interests in banking. She was then given the training necessary to reach her goals. In short, it was more fun working at the American bank, and her company helped her to reach her potential.

Susanne Bohn also interviewed a German woman working in Atlanta.

She felt that women in the U.S. job market have an easier time finding a position, especially mothers who decide to go back to work after raising a family. Many working mothers find it difficult to find time for career and family. Some of the women interviewed solved this problem by starting their own businesses to have more flexible working hours. If you are your own boss, nobody can tell you when you have to work.

Bohn's study focused on the way women "network" in Atlanta.

Networking includes making business and social contacts, but also helping women to solve problems, finding jobs with companies which are "female-friendly", and learning skills like public speaking. As is the case everywhere in America, especially in the South, churches play a big role in networking - many people go to church not just to pray but to make social and business contacts.

Bohn is interested in encouraging networking between women in Nürnberg (and Atlanta). One of the organizations she works with is the DAI (Amerikahaus), which is a good place to contact if you're interested in America and/or the English language. They have an excellent library and show films, offer courses and seminars, have an interesting cultural program - and are active in networking!



Wayne Lempke