

A NATIONAL STUDY
OF DEAF ENTREPRENEURS AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS :
IMPLICATIONS FOR CAREER COUNSELING

By

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ABSTRACT

This national study was undertaken to learn about the characteristics and demographics of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. Descriptive research methodology was to obtain data from a clearly defined population comprising Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The researcher designed a questionnaire to answer six research questions. Study results were based on nationwide responses from 86 deaf men and women. Implications for career counseling were generated from participant responses and the researcher's extensive career counseling experience with the Deaf population. Data collected from participant responses determined the characteristics and demographics, and provided the basis for developing recommendations for counseling, training, and educational tools that could be used by others with similar career aspirations.

Study results showed that the majority of respondents started their business before the age of 35, had been in business for more than 10 years, came from residential and/or mainstream school settings, and had earned at least a Bachelor degree from a vast range of accredited colleges and universities

Most respondents were born deaf to hearing families and used American Sign Language. However, in business the majority used voice and writing with hearing people. The most frequently used communication aids in business were telephone relay services, electronic mail systems, and sign language interpreters.

The study sought insight into respondent's career development and identified influential role models and mentors at various career stages. In the early stages of career development family

and teachers served as the most influential role models. However, respondent's identified "friends" as the most influential role model when it came to starting their business.

Entrepreneurial data revealed that types of businesses varied, with the majority of business owners employing hearing people. Most respondents invested their personal savings to launch their business and conducted business in the private sector. Two frequently reported motivations for going into business were "desire to be their own boss" and "to earn more money." In the start-up phase of their business, most needed more help with marketing, advertising, writing business plans and identifying funding sources. When asked to express, in their own words, their greatest challenge in starting their businesses, frequent responses included "proving to hearing people that a deaf person can run a business" and "communicating with hearing customers."

The following summarizes the implications for career counseling. Based on the results of the study it was suggested that Deaf women be given special attention; counselors encourage clients to continue their education beyond high school, and to work before launching their business. Participants in the study suggested that developing strong interests and skills were essential, and that voice was used as a primary communication tool in business. When appropriate, counselors may hold this population as a model to others, demonstrating that deafness alone is not a barrier to career aspirations. An additional technique career counselors may find helpful, is describing the characteristics of the typical Deaf business owner who participated in this study. The typical Deaf business owner who participated in this study was an entrepreneur who raised his/her own money from personal savings, had hearing employees, and conducted business in the private sector with mostly hearing people.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Deaf people have always worked. Until about twenty years ago, the prevailing view of deaf workers was that they were only suited for unskilled or semiskilled types of employment or as teachers of other deaf people. Generations of deaf youth grew up learning from well-meaning parents, teachers, and counselors that their career options were limited. The result was chronic under and unemployment.

The 1973 passage of the Rehabilitation Act was designed to promote employment accessibility in governmental programs and required all Federal agencies to submit affirmative action plans for the employment of persons with disabilities. However, deaf college graduates employed in the Federal government experienced little job or career mobility. While there are a few striking exceptions, as recently as 1993, A. . . 7.1% of civil servants with college degrees and no disabilities reached management levels . . . these levels were reached by none of the college graduates who were deaf. (Compton, 1993, p. 381).

The most recent statistics reported by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (1995) reveal that, 6.8% of the Deaf federal employee population has reached professional levels. In comparison, 23 % of all federal workforce employees are in professional positions. While it is encouraging that a few Deaf people have attained professional levels in the federal government, they still have not caught up with the mainstream.

Other studies have shown that deaf people lag behind hearing people in their ability to convert their educational attainments into higher status occupations, and that deaf professionals are still found in a limited number of occupational areas (Crammatte, 1987; Shroedel, 1987). Most of the higher status occupational attainments have been the deaf sector and clustered in administration of the educational fields for example, school superintendents, coordinators of special programs, college vice presidents, and deans. While educational fields are widening into computers and mathematics, there is still very little representation in the legal, medical, and dental fields.

However, the picture is far from entirely bleak. Indeed, in recent years something new and exciting has occurred within the Deaf community---the appearance of successful Deaf

entrepreneurs and small business owner-operators. Breaking away from the stereotypical arena of deaf employment and establishing businesses in the highly competitive and dynamic private sector, these entrepreneurs point to new career paths and may serve as powerful role models for the Deaf community. In order for the examples offered by their journeys to become useful tools (i.e. models and mentors) for counselors, educators and others, the entrepreneurial experiences of Deaf business owners was explored and documented, something that had not been done. This was the challenge addressed by this dissertation.

Background of the Problem

Since this study focuses on a special population, it is appropriate to give the reader an overview of Deaf culture to serve as a guide of what is to follow.

In anthropological terms, the study of culture, while complex, is not a hard science, A culture does not have the tidiness of cellular division or the definitiveness of a mathematical equation (Preston, 1994, p.14). Isolating a few major themes including self-definition, family structure, and the transmission of culture, language, and work socialization may derive a useful working definition of Deaf culture.

Self-definition: Almost without exception, Deaf people believe that they belong to a distinct culture with its own allegiances and boundaries. This sense of self finds expression in their dominant forms of association. It has been estimated that Deaf people have an 85 to 95 percent endogamous marriage rate (Preston, 1994). Deaf people primarily socialize with other Deaf people and they draw a sharp distinction between being deaf and hearing. Moreover, in the last twenty years, the Deaf community has been characterized by an increase in activist behavior. AThe recent Deaf rights movement [late 1980s] realigns the messenger with the message: to speak for the deaf, you must be deaf. (Preston, 1994, p.200).

Family structure: Ninety percent of profoundly deaf people have hearing parents who also have hearing children. This seemingly unchangeable pattern sets in motion unique family dynamics. In a family where parents and children cannot often talk with one another adequately or at all, this lack of communication and interaction frequently screens out the family's cultural and religious heritage that would have been passed down from the parent's family of origin. In immigrant families, for example, gradual acculturation often alters language so that grandparents are dissociated from their grandchildren with the parents serving as a bridge. This sequence is

very different for hearing children of deaf parents, where the hearing children serve as the bridge between their hearing grandparents and deaf parents, because they usually learn to communicate in both languages.

Transmission of culture: Deaf culture is transmitted to other deaf individuals through deaf peers, replacing the importance of the family in social and emotional development with a circle of deaf friends. Most of today's deaf adults attended state-funded residential schools for deaf children. Typically, students returned home only for weekends and holidays and they spent large portions of their youth at these schools surrounded by deaf people. It was at these schools, and especially in the informal environment of the dormitory, that deaf children learned both sign language and the content of Deaf culture. Thus, the schools preserved the culture from generation to generation. This pattern of influence explains why it is common practice among Deaf people meeting another deaf person for the first time to ask: What school did you go to? and not Where are you from? It is the answer to the former question that best reveals the cultural origins of the new person.

In American Sign Language, there are two common signs used for residential schools: A school and A institution. Institution does not have the same negative connotation that it sometimes does in English. Until the uprising of mainstream education in the 1970s, deaf children were almost always sent away to state institutions, now called residential schools. Residential schools became a haven for the development of the deaf child's cultural identity and sense of belonging. Deaf children came to understand that public schools were a place where they did not belong. The way Deaf people feel about traditional public school can be seen by the sign used for public school. It is the identical sign as for A hearing, a place only for hearing people.

Language: American Sign Language (ASL) is the native language of most lifelong deaf people in the United States. At least 500,000 deaf people and some hearing people use it. ASL is not a visual representation of English: it has its own distinct structure. Language connects speakers in at least three important ways: it is a medium of social interaction, it archives knowledge of the culture, and it is a symbol of social identity (Lane, Hofmeister and Bahan, 1996). It is precisely because language has these multiple and far ranging functions, that the deaf community is so fiercely devoted to ASL and its preservation. It is, perhaps among the Deaf that

language and culture achieve an unparalleled relationship. In deaf culture, language is the integral feature: both its soul and its demon, both the barrier to and the means of social interaction (Preston, 1994, p.220).

Deaf work socialization: One aspect of Deaf culture with special implications for career counseling is the way this special population experiences the workplace. Traditionally, Deaf workers tended to believe they were best suited for, and entered occupations that did not involve continuous and complex communication with the hearing world. For example, the printing profession has been and continues to be a prominent deaf occupation: the U.S. Treasury Department Bureau of Engraving employs more than 140 deaf workers; the Washington Post, more than 60. Moreover, Deaf workers have frequently been employed at levels incommensurate with their skills or education, and as a group, have been employed in a more narrow range of occupations than hearing workers (MacLeod-Gallinger, 1992, p.320).

The civil rights movement of the 1960's and subsequent affirmative action programs and legislation opened doors to federal and corporate employment for deaf people and other special populations. Danek and McCrone (1989) have reviewed the rehabilitation legislation affecting the transition of deaf people from school to work. Their review included recommendations from the National Conference for Coordinating Rehabilitation and Education Services for the Deaf held in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in 1967:

The National Conference for Coordinating Rehabilitation and Education Services for the Deaf held in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in 1967: is still considered pivotal for its recommendations for effective working relationships. The conference called together over 200 leaders in the fields of education and rehabilitation and in deaf organizations. It was the first time such a conference was jointly funded by the United States Department of Education and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The Las Cruces conference struck an optimistic note, buttressed perhaps by the largesse of federal financing in the 1960s and the vision of unlimited expansion that characterized that era of America's history. [The Las Cruces conference raised several issues which still seem quite current including] . . . the stereotyping of deaf youth for certain jobs and premature tracking of deaf students into particular trades in schools [and recommendations of the conference pertaining to education included the following statement] . . . Deaf students should be permitted job exploration rather than job selection and training (Danek & McCrone, 1989, p.18).

Several subsequent conferences echoed the issues and recommendations of the Las Cruces conference. However, no attention was given to entrepreneurial activities or self-employment of deaf persons.

Later legislation focused on eliminating federal discrimination practices. Among its many provisions, The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibited federal employment discrimination based on disability. It was not until seventeen years later, that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) extended this prohibition to the private sector and state and local government. For the purposes of this study the most important feature of the ADA is that by July of 1994 all employers of 15 or more people were prohibited from discriminating against deaf people.

The chief result of these enactments was the expansion of career and employment opportunities afforded to deaf people. However, just as new doors were being opened, the American economy saw the emergence of strong currents suggesting that these doors did not necessarily lead to the most promising and exciting career opportunities.

One such current was the rise of entrepreneurial and small business activity. At any given time, more than seven million people in the United States are in entrepreneurial activity, a number that is greater than annual marriages or births (Reynolds, 1995). Another current was the downsizing of large public and private employment and the growth of small business. Traditionally, deaf people have found employment in the public sector and large corporate, and manufacturing firms. However, it is small business that has become the real engine of job creation and career opportunities. Between 1980 and 1987, Fortune 500 companies eliminated a net 3.1 million people from their payrolls. Between 1976 and 1988, 37 percent of all new jobs in the U.S. were created by firms of twenty or less (Schein, 1989). At the end of 1993, about 54 percent of all payroll employment were in firms with fewer than 500 employees (The State of Small Business: A Report of the President, 1994). Moreover, Small firms are expected to contribute about 70 percent of the new jobs in the nation's fastest growing industries between 1990 and 2005, and about 66 percent of jobs projected to be created between 1990 and 2005 (Handbook of Small Business Data, 1994, p.1). Most important, most of these small firms were not in fact covered by the ADA at all.

A third major current, with significant implications for all workers and professions, especially deaf people were the new demands imposed on the American workforce by a rapidly emerging

global economy. This global economy has been described in many ways, but the broad outlines are clear:

1. The United States is an integral part of this increasingly more competitive world economy.
2. There is an acceleration of the shift from a manufacturing to the service-based American economy.
3. Rapid advances in communication technologies are leading to further decentralization of economic activity.

Szymanski & Parker (1996) reviewed the literature on the work implications of this economy, in their book Work and Disability: Issues and Strategies in Career Development and Job Placement. They described the workforce of the emerging global economy as being characterized by three new broad categories of work and asserted that these categories will be the source for every three out of four American jobs. They are routine production services, in-person services, and symbolic-analytic services.

Routine-production services involve repetitive tasks, are governed by a large measure of standardization and make few intellectual demands on those who perform them. Although about one quarter of the American workforce in 1990 fit this category, routine production work is declining.

In-person services include sales workers, cashiers, real estate agents and hospital attendants. While such services are characterized by rather simple and repetitive tasks, they also contain significant interaction with the general public. This work sector is rising rapidly as we move from a manufacturing to a service-based economy.

Finally, although only about 20 percent of the workforce fit this category, symbolic-analytical services make up the most dynamic, lucrative and promising paths for the American worker. These services require advanced stages of formal education, involve considerable analytic skills, and are done by research scientists, software engineers, investment bankers, and the like.

Szymanski & Parker (1996) drew several conclusions emphasizing that current work trends portray increasing challenges for workers, including those with disabilities, and for professionals who assist them. They pointed out that the rapidly changing economy will continue to contribute to downsizing, offering most workers little job security. They advise that all workers must expect to change jobs with increasing frequency and learn to compete fiercely for available jobs.

Clearly, in a fluid economic environment the availability of new models, new options and the mental and psychological flexibility that flows from thinking about work in new ways becomes essential for all people, especially those who are Deaf. The challenge is heightened by the fact that negotiation for traditional employment (jobs), has now become even more difficult particularly for Deaf people. Thus far, it is not apparent that Deaf people have had the essential preparatory work and career information about nontraditional types of employment (entrepreneurial activities/small business ownership), often resulting in restriction of their career choices. Given these workplace and economic conditions, and lack of information about Deaf entrepreneurs/small business owners, career counselors working with Deaf clients cannot adequately explore and support career options well known by the hearing population.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to learn whether there are characteristics and demographics among Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners that could be used to develop counseling, training, and educational tools to help others with making similar career voyages.

This study comprising deaf entrepreneurs and small business owner/operators has produced many valuable results, some purely intellectual and some of a very practical nature. To begin with, it broke new ground by answering the question recently posed by Schein: "What about Deaf entrepreneurs? Can Deaf people . . . enter business for themselves? A few have tried, and with notable success. Unfortunately . . . studies of Deaf entrepreneurship have not been undertaken. What we are left with, then, are anecdotal accounts that may mislead more than they inform" (Schein, 1989. p. 169). For the deaf community itself, the story of its entrepreneurs opens an important gateway to new career role models and thinking about new employment possibilities. This is especially important for a community whose adolescents are not aware of their own capabilities. For example, McCarthy (1988) has shown that when presented with a list of 515 specific occupations that deaf individuals could do, deaf adolescents chose only 31 that they considered possible for men to do and a mere 14 for women.

This study also reveals practical information about the discrete steps associated with the development of deaf entrepreneurial or small business activity, for example, capital formation, marketing techniques, and communication strategies. Finally, this study provides career

counselors and others working with this community an essential foundation that must lie at the basis of informed counseling and the development of training and educational tools.

Background of the Study

The study follows upon the work conducted by Alan B. Crammatte and his colleagues in the 1960s (Crammatte, 1968), and revisited in a subsequent study published in the 1980s, (Crammatte, 1987). The first of the Crammatte studies was concerned with deaf persons employed in professional occupations in the American workplace, and concluded that A. . . only 6.6 per cent of all the 7,920 employed deaf respondents to be in professional, technical and kindred occupations as compared with 10.6 per cent of the general United states population so employed (Crammatte, 1968). Reviewing that state of the art in the 1960's, Crammatte wrote:

Educational, vocational training and job placement have emphasized the lower levels of employment rather than optimum accomplishments . . . Yet some deaf persons, despite the double handicap of deafness and of stereotyped views of their abilities by the general public, have managed to make their way into occupations demanding higher skills and offering greater rewards than the manual trades . . . [But] the impact of the demonstration is dulled by the fact that it has been recognized only in subjective, inspirational writing of limited circulation. Definitive knowledge of these occupational potentials has been virtually nonexistent, despite increasing interest in the full utilizations of deaf manpower (Crammatte, 1968, p. vii).

He hoped that knowledge of the deaf professional experience would be valuable for deaf persons with such aspirations, and for career counselors, trainers, educators and others connected to the deaf community. Significantly, he pointed out that his sample excluded professional entrepreneurs.

The second Crammatte study (1987), yielded several insights about the intervening years. While the 1980s group of respondents held a greater variety of occupations than did the 1960s group --54 compared with 28, deaf professionals continued to work in a narrow range of occupations. Crammatte found that 63% of deaf professionals held positions in education. In comparison, estimates cited in the Career Guide to Industries (1994), a U.S. Department of Labor publication, shows that less than 10% of the general population is working in the education sector.

The present study continues the work of Crammatte and his colleagues by also adopting the definition of deafness used in their study:

The study group was limited to persons deaf to the extent that their communication was visually oriented; that is, their reception of communication was through the eyes--reading written messages, reading the lips, observing gestures and clues or using the more formalized sign language and manual alphabet. This criterion of visual communication limited the group to those loosely described as profoundly or severely deaf. Persons who were able to receive communication through the ear were excluded. This does not mean, however, that the respondents had no residual hearing whatsoever. A few had sufficient residual hearing to aid them with lip reading, but none could use the telephone unaided (Crammatte, 1968, p. x).

Crammatte and his colleagues did not include deaf entrepreneurs or self-employed small business owners. At the time of Crammatte's studies, identifying Deaf business owners was difficult, because there were no Deaf business organizations. Additionally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) did not categorize Deaf owned businesses and, the focus of state vocational rehabilitation programs is on job placement, not entrepreneurship or starting a small business. Overall, Deaf people were not encouraged to go into non-traditional employment sectors.

Writing more than two decades after Crammatte's original study, an accomplished deaf entrepreneur, Robert I. Harris, wrote that A. . . deaf people have very limited access to career education and career planning about the opportunities as entrepreneurs . . . there ought to be a percentage of people with hearing impairments who may have . . . personality traits that would prepare them for successful entrepreneurship (Harris, 1989, p. 6). Harris was accurate in his assessment. Beyond his own article there was little known about deaf entrepreneurs and small business owner/operators though such people now appeared for the first time. In fact, the very same year Harris published his article, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Entrepreneurs Council (DHHEC), was established. By 1996, the DHHEC had grown to more than 100 members and had identified another one hundred deaf entrepreneurs who were invited to join. These Deaf entrepreneurs serve as the sample population for this study. This study explored several themes and questions listed below.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this exploration:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Deaf business owners?
2. Are there consistent patterns in the degree of hearing loss among Deaf entrepreneurs?
3. What are the most common communication methods used by Deaf entrepreneurs in their relationships with both Deaf and hearing populations?
4. Who were the key role models, mentors, most important in the decision to launch, plan, and actually begin the business?
5. What are the salient features of Deaf entrepreneurial activity in terms of motivation, type and size of business, capital requirements, number and type of employees, and consumer market?
6. What are the most significant challenges identified by Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners?

Definition of Terms

1. A Career is the totality of work and leisure one does in a lifetime. McDaniels (1965) is credited with formulating an equation: Career = Work + Leisure (C=W+L).
2. Career Development--the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any given individual over the life span (McDaniels & Gysbers 1992).
3. deaf--This study adopts the definition of deaf used by Crammatte. Persons are deaf A . . . to the extent that their communication . . . [is] visually oriented; that is, their reception of communication . . . [is] through the eyes--reading written messages, reading the lips, observing gestures and clues or using the more formalized sign language and manual alphabet. This criterion of visual communication . . . [limits] the group to those loosely described as profoundly or severely deaf. Persons who . . . [are] able to receive communication through the ear [. . . are] excluded. This does not mean, however, that the respondents . . . [have] no residual hearing whatsoever. A few [may have] sufficient residual hearing to aid them with lip reading, but none . . . [can] use the telephone unaided (Crammatte, 1968, p. x).
4. Deaf --Whenever capitalized the word Deaf refers to members of the Deaf community. The definition of Deaf community used in this study follows the suggestion of Rosen (Schein, 1989, p.11): AThe Deaf community is a microcosm of any community of people, a cross-section of

society at large, in its heterogeneity of physical builds, races, religions, intelligence, interests, and values. The common denominator is the inability to hear and its ramifications.

5. Entrepreneur--several commentators have drawn a distinction between the entrepreneur and the self-employed or a small business owner. These are useful distinctions for advancing our understanding of these enterprises and the people who start and own them. However, the present study is informed by a different focus and set of concerns: interest is in a special population--deaf people--and, more specifically, in deaf people who have ventured out on their own to start something new in the private sector. This study should not be bound by the terminological disputes of economists and business scholars. For the purposes of this study, it is useful to adopt flexible definitions. Accordingly, an entrepreneur is someone who: (a) creates something new, (b) has the vision to see opportunity, (c) possesses the skills needed to marshal the necessary resources (money, essential information, expertise), (d) is willing to take calculated risks of a personal and financial nature, (e) is willing and indeed eager to devote unlimited personal effort to make the enterprise a success (Hornaday & Aboud, 1972).

6. Occupation-- can be described as a definable work activity that occurs in many different settings. When drawing a distinction between the terms career and occupation, McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) call an occupation simply Awhat one does.

7. Small Business --According to the Small Business Administration, a small business is independently owned and operated with less than 500 employees, and is not dominant in its field (The State of Small Business: A Report of the President, 1994).

8. Small Business Owner-- A small business owner is someone who takes over the management and ownership of a small business for the main purpose of furthering personal goals. AThe business must be the primary source of income and will consume most of one's time and resources. The owner perceives the business as an extension of his or her personality, intricately bound with family needs and desires (Carland, Hoy, Boulton & Carland, 1984).

Assumptions and Limitations

This study rests upon three fundamental assumptions:

1. The membership of the DHHEC points to the existence of many successful Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners.
2. Isolating the private sector activities of this population as a focus for study is possible.

3. The selection of entrepreneurship and small business ownership by Deaf people is a viable career option for this special population.

This study was voluntary, self-reporting, and limited to those self-identifying Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners.

A second limitation has to do with the relationship between the purpose of research and the behavior of entrepreneurs. Research seeks to discover patterns and develop generalizations. Entrepreneurs tend to be free spirits, often creating new ways of doing things as they go along. They inhabit an ever-changing, highly competitive environment and they change with it, or they go out of business. This study was limited to those entrepreneurs who were currently in business at the time of this study.

Another limitation is that this study breaks new ground in an attempt to discover significant realities that may be useful in helping other Deaf people consider entrepreneurship as a viable career option. As a ground-breaking study of uncharted territory, there is no map. Deaf entrepreneurs have not been formerly surveyed on their business ventures, limiting the study with only new data from which to make generalizations.

Finally, from early childhood Deaf people are subjected to countless testing and questionnaires. Consequently, some members of our sample resisted responding to yet another questionnaire, reducing the response rate.

Summary

Career options for the Deaf population has expanded over the years. For generations Deaf youth grew up believing that they were suited for a limited number of occupations. Limitations for career choices are now minimal. This career development study has been undertaken to evidence and document the demographics and patterns of behavior of the entrepreneurial activities of Deaf business owners. By understanding the discreet steps associated with the development of entrepreneurial activity, this study provides career counselors and others working with this community an essential foundation for informed counseling, training and the development of educational tools.

The following chapter provides an overview of the literature that includes the study of the Deaf world, Deaf culture, the Deaf work experience, entrepreneurship and the place of business in the U.S. economy, the entrepreneurial and small business experience of special populations.

Subsequent chapters provide information on the survey research methodology used to collect the data, analysis of the data, and a discussion of the findings with implications for counseling and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter consists of five major sections. It opens with some general remarks about the study of the Deaf World. Section two reviews the literature on the salient features of Deaf culture and the centrality of American Sign Language (ASL) in this culture. Next, the focus turns to review the literature concerned with the major work and career-related issues among deaf people. The fourth section covers the literature dealing with entrepreneurship and the place of small business in the American economy. The last section reviews the literature on the small business activity of special populations.

The Study of the Deaf World

The study of Deaf culture and the place of American Sign Language in this culture opens a rich world to explore. However, the study of this world is complicated by several factors, one of which we encounter at the very outset--the question of deciding exactly what we mean by the designation Deaf. As a leading demographer of the deaf population in the United States, Schein, has pointed out, "Any attempt to determine the prevalence of deafness . . . must contend with the lack of uniform definition" (Schein, 1989, p.31). To date there is still much indecision about how to define deafness. Wright (1980), a scholar in the field of Rehabilitation Counseling differentiates deaf from hard of hearing. The former being those people born with a medically defined type of hearing loss or who lost their hearing before language was developed.

All others are classified as hard of hearing. According to Martin (1991) using audiological terminology, hearing is measured on a decibel (dB) scale and the term Profound is applied when hearing loss is measured at 96dB or greater. A person with a hearing loss of this amount may be referred to as deaf. However, in auditory rehabilitation there may be considerable residual hearing. Thus, the issue becomes how one uses residual hearing that may contribute to

overall functioning in society including interaction at work. For example, some people with this type of hearing loss may choose to use a hearing aid to help them with sound awareness while others may choose to forgo amplification. More recently, we see repeated reports of deafness defined in terms of deaf culture whereby an individual becomes interdependent and socially accepted by the larger group (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996; Preston, 1994; Sacks, 1989; Schein, 1989). Crammatte (1968) adopted a straightforward definition based on physiology; deaf people cannot use an unaided telephone and are visually oriented. Later, Crammatte (1987) turned to self-identification as the single most determining factor in defining deafness.

A second complicating feature is the highly charged and at times polemical environment surrounding the discussion of Deaf culture and ASL. Consider, for example, the concern faced by parents of deaf children: where and how is the best way to educate their children. The earliest reports of attempts to educate deaf children date from the 17th and 18th centuries, in England and France (Wright, 1980). Educators argued then, as they still do now, on the best teaching methods. The controversy continues over two methods, oralism where students are taught through speaking and reading lips, versus manualism where students are educated by means of a visual sign language.

In the previous chapter, reference was made to the special place of the residential school in Deaf culture. It was early in the 19th century that sign language was brought over to the United States from France by Dr. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, and the first residential school for the deaf was established in Hartford, Connecticut. This is where the roots of American Deaf culture can be traced. Most Deaf adults in America acquired their knowledge of ASL, Deaf culture, and formed their identity as Deaf people in the residential schools that were founded throughout the nation during the 19th and 20th centuries (Gannon, 1981; Lane, 1984; Riekehof, 1987; Sacks, 1989; Wright, 1980).

Public law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, declared that deaf children are entitled to an education in their local school district. The result was that many parents of deaf children opted to mainstream their children by enrolling them into public schools rather than the traditional residential school environment.

In a democratic society the idea of integration and inclusion has broad appeal. Nevertheless, today many people within the Deaf community view this mainstreaming as a serious threat to the

very core of their culture (Mowry, 1994; Supella, 1994). To coin a descriptive phrase, Deaf cultural preservationists, believe that since 90 percent of deaf children are born to hearing parents, who do not know ASL and have no knowledge of Deaf culture, it is only at residential schools for the deaf that a child joins the Deaf world.

Realizing the strong connection between a Deaf person's cultural development and educational background is essential to understanding the career choices within the Deaf population. These influential factors have been well documented in the career theory literature, dating from the early work of Parsons (1909) with Trait-Factor theory. Parsons recognized that a clear understanding of one's self, aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, and limitations were essential in career choice and development. Later, Super (1932 -1994) published almost 200 articles emphasizing an ongoing lifespan approach to career development. Super's development of the Life-Career Rainbow brought lifespan and lifespace into a model. The Archway Model, depicting the person, psychological characteristics, and societal influences, is an example of a segmented-synthesized approach in which the individual functions as a unit in society, pursuing educational, familial, occupational, civic and leisure careers. More recently, McDaniels and Gysbers (1992) stressed the importance of including leisure in career development theory by bringing a holistic approach to career development across the lifespan with his formulation of an equation: Career = Work + Leisure.

This brief mention of some instrumental career theory supports the view that occupational choice is influenced by many factors including past and present experiences, of which education plays a major role (Brown & Brooks, 1990; McDaniels & Gysbers, 1992; Super, 1994). Therefore, deaf culture needs to be identified when discussing deaf entrepreneurs to understand the major influences on an individual's career choice. To that end, the study of deaf entrepreneurs can only be understood in the totality of deaf culture.

Deaf Culture and the Centrality of American Sign Language

A non-biased and general introduction to Deaf culture is Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf, (Sacks, 1989). Three years ago . . . , the opening sentence of his preface begins A . . . I knew nothing of the situation of the deaf, and never imagined that it could cast light on so many realms, above all, on the realm of language. In the following pages the reader makes this voyage along with the author and experiences his sense of discovery. Sacks traces

the French roots of much of the American deaf experience; the development of ASL; the struggle with oralism; the dramatic events in March of 1988 at Gallaudet University when a student protest resulted in the appointment of the University's first Deaf president; all with great empathy. Much of what Sacks writes is based on personal observation giving the reader a sense of immediacy.

In 1988, two deaf scholars Padden and Humphries (1988), published a book portraying the lives of Deaf people. This book contains a very interesting discussion of ASL, a variety of stories imaginatively interpreted as myths, tales, and parables. It offers insights into what it means to be a Deaf person, a unique chapter dealing with "The Meaning of Sound for Deaf people, Deaf poetry and theater, and a chapter called A Different Center" which offers the reader an appreciation of how Deaf people may perceive the world differently from hearing people.

In 1960, Stokoe, a professor of English at Gallaudet College (as it was then called) published a monograph entitled Sign Language Structure. The thesis of the monograph was that ASL was indeed a language with grammar, structure and syntax all of its own. It is a summary of the state of the art in 1960 for which both deaf and hearing colleagues criticized Stokoe.

Five years later, Stokoe and his deaf collaborator, Croneberg included an appendix on The Linguistic Community in their scholarly work Dictionary of American Sign Language On Linguistic Principles, the Dictionary (Stokoe, Casterline & Croneberg, 1965). This appendix may be the most remarkable 14 pages ever written about Deaf culture, for it points to all of the issues which were to emerge in the years to come, not only in our understanding of deaf culture but also in the Deaf rights movement. Thus, Croneberg (who is credited as the actual author of the appendix) touched on what it means to be a >native signer of ASL, the deaf population as a >minority group=, how this group was formed and sustains identity, the general economic and work conditions prevailing among deaf people, and, above all, the centrality of ASL in Deaf culture.

Looking back from the perspective of 23 years, Stokoe wrote, AI would like to think anyway--when the student leaders stood in from of TV cameras in March of 1988 and said . . . [Gallaudet] University needed a deaf president now because the language and culture of deaf people must be respected--that the germ of that idea was presented in the dictionary twenty-three years earlier (Stokoe, 1994, p.334). To support his theories further, a leading Deaf political

activist, wrote in an essay honoring Stokoe: A Once I learned that ASL is my native language, I developed a strong sense of identity as a deaf person and a more positive self-image (Kannapell, 1980, p.105).

During the past quarter century, Lane has written prolifically, with deep emotion and intensity about the Deaf World. His works bear the twin characteristics of all of extensive research and an explicitly stated and unapologetic point of view. Lane (1984), tells his readers exactly what he thinks of the prevailing view of the Deaf community, a theme he would continue to address (Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan, 1996).

Using the medical model, our society is irresponsibly tearing many deaf children from the social fabric of the signing community in which their lives are interwoven and casting them willy-nilly into mainstream schools, as if pretending that they spoke would make it so . . . The mainstreaming movement is proceeding with near total disregard of the wishes of the signing community, which has always been at odds with its hearing benefactors--otologists, audiologists, speech pathologists, special educators (Lane, 1984, p.xiv).

In contrast to the 1984 publication, which is a historical account culminating in 1900, the one in 1996 is a far-ranging exploration of the Deaf world. What makes this a remarkable book is that it can be read not only to learn about this world, but also as a practical guide for parents, educators, and counselors. Part I consists of an exploration of the DEAF WORLD: who its members are, its language, culture and customs. Part II considers the interface between the hearing world and the deaf world--especially the education of deaf people and the adverse consequences of defining them as disabled. Part III examines the points of collision between the two worlds.

Five years before Lane (1984) published his influential book, the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), chose Jack R. Gannon to write a book about the history of Deaf America. It became a classic reference tool, and is a book with a clear intent from the outset:

Many goals were envisioned for the book. Perhaps the most important one was to present in a cogent form the legacy left us by the deaf people of generations gone by. It would remind our young deaf people that deafness need not be a barrier to what they can do to enrich the quality of life for deaf citizens everywhere. More

importantly, it would make them aware of the rich heritage that has cumulatively been bestowed on them (Gannon, 1981, p. xv).

Gannon (1981), is a balanced and highly readable history touching on every aspect of the deaf experience in America. The narrative is interspersed with many photographs and brief biographical sketches and it moves easily from sports to the arts to education to the Asilent press. The reader can open this book at virtually any page and read with pleasure and profit.

Finally, two overviews deserve special attention: Schein (1989), contains a very comprehensive, nonjudgmental overview of the Deaf world. One recurring theme is how the developments in modern telecommunications may shape the work prospects of Deaf people and the nature of these prospects as we move further into a new economic environment. He contends that we cannot automatically assume that the recent dramatic growth of telecommunications will turn out to have a beneficial effect on Deaf people. In the past, technological developments have not turned out that well, AThe introduction of telecommunications--television, radio, telephones--placed Deaf people at a disadvantage (Schein, 1989, p.67). He is equally cautious about the implications of the long-term economic trends:

Unemployment rates continue to favor the physically unimpaired, and there is little to suggest that Deaf people will achieve parity, either in the amount or level of employment. The earnings discrepancies between the Deaf and general populations have worsened over the last half century. A major factor has been the decline of skilled occupations in which Deaf workers excelled and of comparative earnings of semi-skilled workers. The increase in service, sales, and clerical occupations with their emphasis on communication has worked to the disadvantage of Deaf people (Schein, 1989, p.177).

Preston (1994), presents a personal account. The hearing son of two profoundly deaf parents relates: AHearing children of deaf parents have been raised on the peripheries and often within the heart of an exclusively Deaf community. As children, and as adults, they are poised on the brink of this remarkable world, which is often only superficially accessible to those who can hear (Preston, 1994, p.13). To illuminate this world for the hearing reader, Preston traveled across the country and interviewed one hundred and fifty men and women who were the children of Deaf people.

Possibly, the outstanding virtue of Preston's work is that it combines the learning of a trained anthropologist and the art of a skilled story teller who is telling his own story. Preston is simultaneously scholar and part of the sample, and throughout the book there is a kind of dialogue, a self-conscious and interesting tension between these two perspectives. The following quotation illustrates this tension:

Distance is also important in anthropology. From the synergy of temporary insider as well as the eventual return to your own culture come insights about yourself and those who have been studied. But what about those of us who began as members of the group? How does our intimacy affect not our entry, but our leaving? How do you create distance in order to explain these experiences to outsiders? For myself, distance was sometimes measured by intervening periods of travel, by geographic distance, by births, by death. Leaving, of course, is a misnomer. I can never leave being the hearing son of deaf parents. It is part of who I am. I also have a very faraway place within myself--I am also hearing. It is my dual heritage which I draw upon to tell this story (Preston, 1994, p.241).

The Deaf Work Experience

Over the past thirty years or so, a large body of research has been devoted to the Deaf work experience. This literature has been especially concerned with the following questions:

1. What kind of work are Deaf people doing and where is this work done?
2. How do Deaf people make career decisions and choices?
3. How do hearing employers feel about hiring and promoting Deaf people?
4. What is the impact of the recent cluster of work-related legislation on Deaf workers?

In 1899, James L. Smith, who taught for fifty years at the Minnesota School for the Deaf, informed the convention of the National Association of the Deaf that deaf people were engaged in as many as 300 different occupations (Gannon, 1981). Virtually every employment or career-related study of Deaf people since the landmark survey of the Deaf population by Schein and Delk in 1974 has drawn attention to the fact that deaf persons are employed in all occupations from professional to domestic (Allen 1989; Boone & Long, 1988; Crammatte, 1968, 1987; Eggleston-Dodd, 1977; Fritz, 1986; McCarthy, 1988; Phillips, 1975; Schein, 1989; Schein & Delk, 1974). However A . . . There are fewer deaf lawyers, doctors and dentists--though there

are some of each--than would be expected from their numbers in the general population (Schein & Delk, 1974, p.81).

To answer the question of where deaf people work, Crammatte (1987) reported in his classic study of Deaf professionals, that the great majority, 63%, held positions in education, 17.8 % worked in government, 14.4% in private business, and only 2.3 % were self-employed. Perhaps even more significant, Crammatte found that 76.8 % of respondents were employed in the deaf sector, where sign language is an accepted communication mode. This illustrates that though deaf people have been found in all occupations, greater numbers are found in certain fields of study and employment sectors.

In attempting to account for this pattern, students and researchers in the field of Deafness have sought answers in most directions, one being the study of how deaf youth think of themselves, their work, and career options. For example, an attitudinal survey of teachers and parents of young deaf people enrolled at a school for the deaf in England found significant differences in the advice provided to deaf and hearing persons. Those occupations requiring a great deal of contact with people, for example, physician, shop assistant, manager, were judged to be more appropriate for hearing than for Deaf people (Decaro, Evans & Dowaliby, 1982). This finding is especially important for the counseling profession, because the deaf child's career and work aspirations are profoundly influenced by the advice given by significant others.

A similar stereotyping of what is appropriate for deaf people has prevailed in the United States. For example, the printing trade became an extremely popular career choice with the advent of the Linotype in the latter part of the 19th century. Deaf schools across the country purchased Linotype machines for vocational training purposes (Gannon, 1981). According to the 1972 census (the latest available census data in which deafness is a distinguishable category) more than 60% of deaf white males were employed as machine operators (Schein & Delk, 1974).

In the hearing world, studies have shown, that fathers level of education and occupational status has been significantly related to the educational and occupational attainments of their sons and daughters (Schroedel, 1987; Sokol, 1982). Yet these correlations are much weaker in the Deaf community. One assumption is A. . . that hearing parents, because of their poor communications skills, cannot clearly convey to their deaf children the values and attitudes that influence academic achievement, pursuit of further education, and formation of career aspiration (Schroedel, 1987, p.95).

Additional evidence (Eggelston-Dodd, 1977) shows that at least until the recent past, the hold of perceived roles and limitations on Deaf people, even the most highly educated, was long-lasting. The majority of deaf students at Gallaudet University and The National Technical Institute for the Deaf were enrolled in programs traditionally thought to be gender-appropriate. More recently, a study of deaf adolescents found that of 515 listed occupations the subjects chose only 31 that they considered possible for men to do and 14 for women (McCarthy, 1988).

Once employed, how are Deaf workers doing? Several studies have addressed the issues of employment, underemployment, job mobility and career advancement. For example, Phillips (1975) explored employer attitudes toward the hiring of deaf people in 33 firms in the Rochester, New York area. He found that jobs involving taking or giving special orders or engaging in specific job activities which require the accurate communication of specific information leading to a precise understanding of the job demand were not considered appropriate for the deaf worker (p. 4). This study reached two major conclusions: (1) employability of deaf persons is restricted and (2) little information regarding specific difficulties that the deaf worker may encounter in seeking or performing employment duties is available.

Fritz (1986), examined attitudes of supervisors in technical/professional fields regarding: (a) career paths judged most probable for hearing and deaf employees and (b) employee skills and characteristics needed by hearing and deaf employees to experience upward mobility. The focus of this study was the role of supervisors in promoting or hindering the future career advancement for deaf employees. One of its major conclusions was that supervisors perceive the deaf employee as having relatively limited upward mobility with respect to managerial job positions (p. 102).

The passage of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was aimed at promoting accessibility in employment, colleges, and governmental programs. It required that all federal agencies submit to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) affirmative action plans for the employment of persons with disabilities. Naturally, there has been considerable interest both within and outside the Deaf community in judging the impact of this legislation on Deaf workers. This is precisely what Compton (1993) set out to do. Compton found what many had sensed before: that Deaf people were having a difficult time leveraging their considerable recent educational gains into economic gains. Seven percent of civil servants with no reported disabilities attained management levels (GS-14 to GS-18), but not one deaf college graduate had

reached these levels by the time of her study. Also, Compton's study showed that deaf federal white-collar workers were not promoted at the same rate as most other civil servants.

In the past few years, there have been some positive developments. According to the latest Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Report (1995), Deaf white collar workers have begun to attain higher grade levels: 9% of the Deaf federal workers have achieved the GS-12 level, and 11% of the Deaf federal workers have achieved the level of GS-13 to 15. However, the picture is not uniformly bright. The EEOC evidence shows that less than 1% federal workers with targeted disabilities, which includes all Deaf workers, received promotions in 1995 as compared to 15% of the general federal workforce.

Entrepreneurship and the Place of Small Business in the U.S. Economy

The recent literature devoted to the themes of entrepreneurship and small business falls into three broad generic categories: biographies, academic studies, and federally funded small business research (Fucini & Fucini, 1987; McClung & Constantin, 1982; Silver, 1994).

This literature deals with a variety of themes. The following paragraphs touch on those themes that are integral to the background of this research, specifically:

1. Defining what we mean by an Entrepreneur (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, Carland, 1984; Timmons, 1989).
2. Depicting the psychological makeup of the entrepreneur (DeCarlo & Lyons, 1979; Gasse, 1982; Hornaday & Aboud, 1972).
3. The social dimensions of entrepreneurship (Hornaday, 1982; Reynolds, 1995; Sokol 1982).
4. The role of entrepreneurship and small business in the economy (Storey, 1994).

It is generally acknowledged that the origins of the modern study of entrepreneurship can be traced to the work of Joseph Schumpeter, the Austrian-born economist and economic historian who taught several generations of students at Harvard University in the 1930's and 1940's (Livesay, 1982). It was Schumpeter's view, and the one adopted in this study, that innovation was the distinguishing characteristic of the entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1939). Schumpeter noted

that, historically, the entrepreneur was not a uniform type: he could emerge from the peasantry, the artisan class, the aristocracy, or a profession. Moreover, Schumpeter pointed out that this innovative activity in the life of an individual was not all encompassing. On the contrary, he wrote that: ANobody is ever an entrepreneur all the time, and nobody can ever be only an entrepreneur (Schumpeter, 1939, p.77).

Since Schumpeter's initial work, his definition has been modified and refined, particularly through attempts to develop psychological portraits of Atypical entrepreneurs. For example Hornady and Aboud (1972) attempted to use a structured interview to characterize successful entrepreneurs. A decade later, Hornady (1982) reported on the recent literature on contemporary entrepreneurs and observed that the most prominent characteristics attributed to them were: confidence, perseverance, determination, energy, diligence, ability to take calculated risks, initiative, and independence.

The study of the sociological background of entrepreneurial conduct has significance for this study because of the unique family structure experienced by most deaf people. In an overview of this literature Sokol (1982), showed that in the United States about 50 percent of new company founders had parents who were company owners, free professionals, independent artisans, or farmers. In Northern Italy, 56 percent of entrepreneurs had parents who were self-employed and these percentages rose to 80 and 89 in similar studies conducted in Kenya and Nigeria, respectively.

While interest in the nature of entrepreneurship remains high, even more attention has been directed to the place of small business in the economy. Increasingly, it is small business that is recognized as a key to both job creation and innovation. In the United States, the government's interest in the small business sector is attested to by the existence of a special agency (The Small Business Administration) charged with fostering the growth of small business. Moreover, the U.S. government has produced numerous studies devoted to the place of small business in the national economy.

Not surprisingly, these studies tend to be primarily statistical in nature. Typical findings have been that: (a) at the end of 1993, about 54% of all payroll employment was in firms with fewer than 500 employees, (b) it is projected that the importance of these small firms will increase in the coming years, i.e., they are expected to contribute about 70 percent of the new jobs in the nation's fastest growing industries between 1990 and 2005, and about 66 percent of jobs

projected to be created between 1990 and 2005 and (c) these firms are responsible for 55 percent of manufacturing product innovations and produce twice as many innovations per employee as large firms (Handbook of Small Business Data, 1994; The State of Small Business: A Report of the President, 1993, 1994).

The literature strongly suggests that small businesses make up a dynamic part of our economy. They are constantly experimenting with new products and new services, at new locations, and with new and different methods of distribution. These characteristics keep the U.S. economy vital, competitive, and responsive to change.

The Entrepreneurial and Small Business Experience of Special Populations

Entrepreneurship offers special opportunities for women and minorities because they can build their own firms and not have to fight their way up through entrenched corporate or bureaucratic structure. Or at least, they can work in a smaller and less structured setting that offer entrepreneurial opportunities (McDaniels, 1989, p. 109). More than twenty years ago, Schwartz (1976), described entrepreneurship as a new female frontier. Between 1991 and 1994, the number of women-owned businesses increased by 9.1 percent bringing the total to 7.7 million and the number of people employed by these businesses reached some 15.5 million, 35 percent more than Fortune 500 companies worldwide (Hisrich, 1986). Between 1982 and 1987, the number of businesses owned by black Americans increased 37%, compared with a 28% increase in the number of all U.S. companies (Butler, 1996). Small business ownership among persons of Asian ancestry also grew rapidly during the 1980s: according to the Census Bureau, the gross revenues of Asian-owned small businesses nearly tripled from 1982 to 1987 and the number of firms grew from 187,691 to 355,331--an 89.3 % increase (The State of Small Business: A Report of the President, 1993).

These special populations have become a potent economic force in American society, and, naturally, they have attracted considerable attention from government agencies, scholars and the popular press. They also warrant the attention of students of deaf entrepreneurs, for the study of the entrepreneurial and small business experience of special populations provides a suggestive context within which to explore our topic. To begin with, some parallels can be drawn between the deaf and other special populations:

1. Just as the deaf entrepreneur confronts a business world dominated by hearing people; women, minority, and immigrant entrepreneurs face a business environment dominated by white men. For example in the small business sector nonminority male-owned firms outnumber firms owned by special populations by more than 50% (State of Small Business, 1993).
2. Like Deaf entrepreneurs, special population entrepreneurs have had very few role models upon which to draw.
3. Entrepreneurship and small business ownership are important avenues of mobility for minority and immigrant populations whose employment opportunities have been blocked by discrimination, language and cultural barriers. It is likely that entrepreneurship might fill a similar role within the deaf community.

Beyond these parallels, the literature on special populations yields a number of specific questions and issues to be explored in the study of deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. For example, role models, particularly fathers (Sokol, 1982), have been pointed to as important contributors to entrepreneurial aspirations, but Roberson-Saunders (1991) has advanced contrary findings, showing that for African-American automobile dealers, fathers did not play a significant role in shaping the career decisions of their sons. This study suggests some striking similarities between the special population of African-Americans and Deaf people. In Deaf family dynamics, non-family members such as counselors, teachers, and peers often play more of a decisive role in the deaf person's career planning than family members.

Tseng (1995), offers another example of the suggestiveness of this literature. Immigrant entrepreneurs have often been described as members of supportive peer and community networks which assist them by providing social resources in the form of customers, loyal employees and financing. Indeed, students of immigrant economic conduct have been particularly interested in enclave economies, that is, the interdependency between coethnic suppliers and customers. For example, Korean retailers receive some benefits and special services from Korean suppliers: extended credit terms, lower prices and easy access to information. Tseng presents evidence that the success and survival of Asian immigrant firms

owe much to large investments of financial capital and the impressive educational credentials of the business owners. In contrast, heavy use of social support networks typifies the less profitable, more failure-prone small businesses.

The relationship between a special population or an ethnic grouping and the business conduct of some of its members is clearly a very important subject in the study of Deaf entrepreneurs. Greene & Butler (1996) compare two methods of business implementation: the formal business incubator and a natural incubator in the minority business community of Ismaili Pakistani. Formal business incubators, usually associated with community, state or federal economic development projects, are designed to give the newly created business a nurturing environment. The incubator typically offers essential space, business assistance and support services: shared office space, computers, bookkeeping, business plans, external financing. The natural business incubator grows from the special population and is not dependent on community, state or federal support. Figure 1 depicts how it functions within the Ismaili Pakistani community. This is precisely the kind of framework within which we can explore the relationship between Deaf entrepreneurs and the Deaf community.

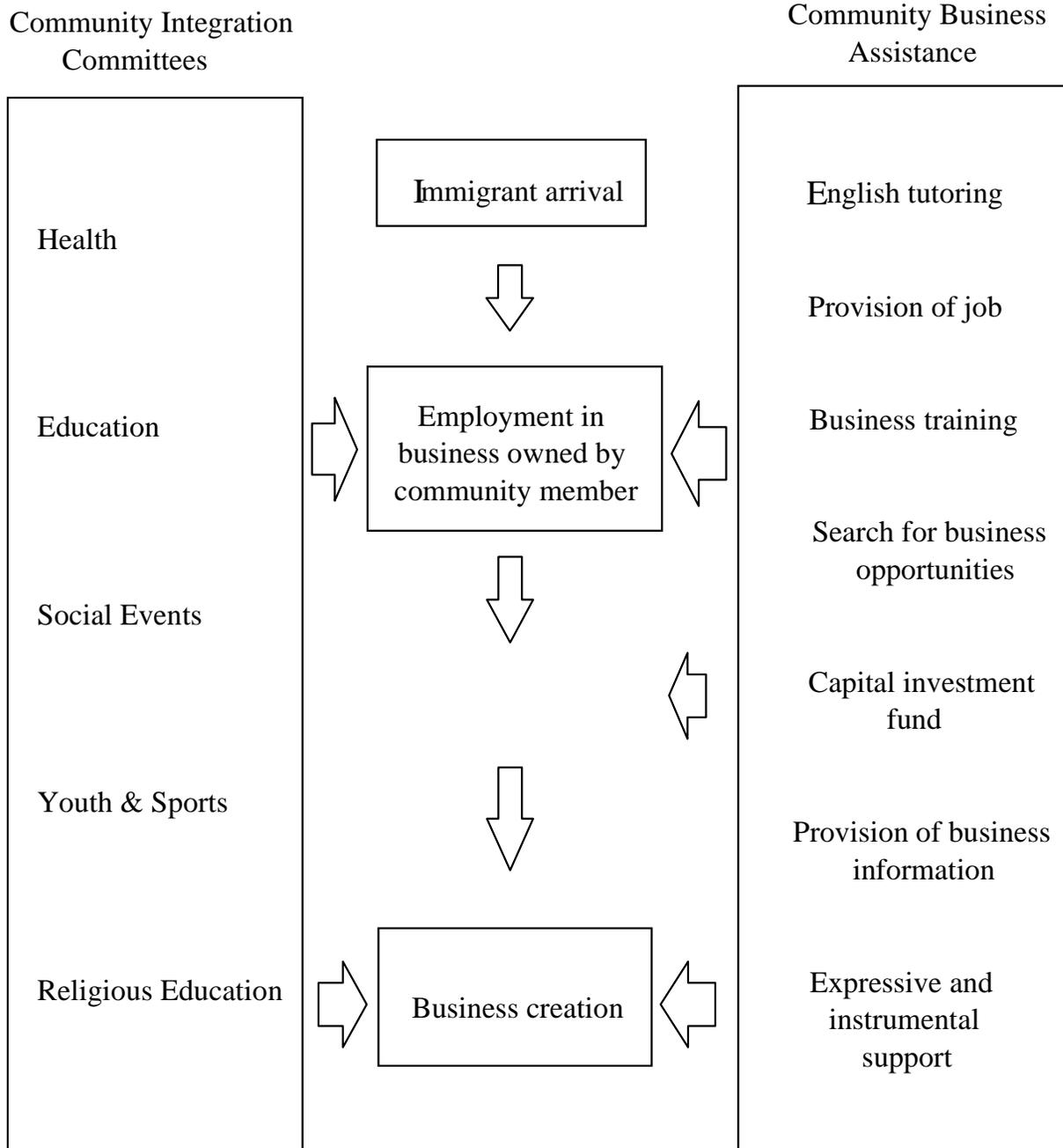


FIGURE 1. The natural business incubator in the Ismaili Pakistani community

¹ From, Greene, P.G. & Butler, J.S. (1996). The Minority Community As A Natural Business Incubator. *Journal of Business Research* 36, 51-58.

Finally, using a sample drawn from the Chinese-American business community, Sanchirico (1991), points out that families in small business transmit high aspirations to the next generation, thereby promoting their offspring's educational goals. Thus, he takes us in a different direction, away from the creation and operation of the entrepreneurial activity to its impact on the family and opens yet another area to be explored in the study of deaf entrepreneurs.

While the studies discussed above are enlightening in a variety of ways, we also need a strong statistical and factual basis for placing the experience of deaf entrepreneurs in the context of other special populations. Fortunately, this foundation has been created by the Small Business Administration.

The 1993 report of the President on the State of Small Business uses data from the 1987 Characteristics of Business Owners survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. The most recent data first became available in 1992. The survey covers five business subsets: black, Hispanic, other minority (Asian, American Indian, & Alaskan native), female, and male non-minority business owners. Some major variables examined were:

1. Work experience and age of business owners
2. Educational attainment of business owners
3. Amount of starting capital.

Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners were not included in this survey. However, using these survey results provides a foundation for understanding the participation level of the deaf community in the overall growth of the small business sector.

One major variable examined by the survey was the work experience and age of business owners. Profiles of Hispanic and black business owners were similar in that the majority had more than five years of work experience before launching their own businesses. Almost half of the other minority owners had five or fewer years of employment experience before business ownership. Demographic and career experience information about deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners will provide yet another dimension to our understanding of this community and how it has developed in relation to other special populations.

Table 1 shows the educational attainment of small business owners by race and gender. While the data on postsecondary education will serve as a very good basis for comparison, given

the unique distinction between residential and mainstream schooling approaches for deaf children, this study will develop fresh data on the elementary and secondary levels.

The last variable, shown in Table 2, is the distribution of starting capital requirements by each of the business population subsets. Given the centrality of the communication challenge in the Deaf world, we already know that deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners will require some special equipment and services (telecommunication devices, interpreting services, and assistive technology). What remains to be investigated is the impact of these special accommodations on the capital requirements of deaf entrepreneurs and how these requirements compare with the special populations analyzed in The State of Small Business (1993).

This study will explore for the first time, how deaf entrepreneurs fit into the prevailing view of entrepreneurship and small business conduct detailed in the literature noted above.

Table 1
Distribution of Business Owners by Owner's Level of Education

Owners Highest Level of Education Received	Hispanic Owners	Black Owners	Other Minority Owners	Women Owners	Nonminority Male Owners
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Elementary School	15.0	7.1	4.4	2.3	3.3
Not High School Graduate	14.6	14.1	7.2	6.1	9.1
High School Graduate	22.3	24.4	16.5	29.6	26.4
Not College Graduate	19.1	19.7	16.0	21.3	19.9
College Graduate	10.9	13.3	27.3	18.4	18.2
Graduate School	9.9	13.1	21.2	15.5	16.9
Not Reported	8.1	8.3	7.3	6.8	6.1

Source: The State of Small Business: A Report Of The President 1993. Adapted by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, from data published in the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1987 Characteristics of Business Owners (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, April, 1992), Table 3, 12.

Table 2
Distribution of Starting Capital Requirements in Percentages

Business Ownership:	None	\$1,000- \$5,000	\$5,000- \$10,000	\$10,000- \$15,000	More than \$15,000
Hispanic-Owned	30.6	35.2	10.4	9.7	14.1
Black-Owned	30.5	36.9	8.4	7.6	16.6
Other Minority-Owned	19.4	22.9	11.0	14.1	32.6
Women-Owned	32.0	35.0	7.6	9.1	16.3
Nonminority Male-Owned	24.7	32.1	10.3	11.9	21.0

Source: The State of Small Business: A Report of the President 1993. Adapted by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, from data published in the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1987 Characteristics of Business Owners (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), Table 15A, 98.

Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter reports the historical, cultural, and legislative issues that have influenced the occupational choice and career development of the Deaf community in the United States. Although studies have focused on the numbers of deaf persons employed in various occupations, with the exception of a few anecdotal reports, the literature also indicates a lack of information about the career choice and development, abilities and capabilities of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The areas reviewed in the literature--the study of the Deaf world, Deaf culture and the centrality of American Sign Language, the Deaf work experience, entrepreneurship and the place of business in the U.S. economy, and the entrepreneurial and small business experience of special populations--suggest that through understanding these historical and developmental issues, a new gateway to expanded career options through entrepreneurship and small business ownership will be opened for the Deaf community.

Information from a study regarding the characteristics of deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners, and the skills needed for entrepreneurial activities may be useful in (a) developing curriculum and training programs to prepare deaf students and adults for entrepreneurial ventures and self-employment, and (b) providing information for career counselors, educators, and trainers working with the Deaf community.

It is hoped that the career development of deaf people and other special populations will serve as models for career counselors and educators and that this knowledge about occupational choice and career development in the Deaf community will help others with their career decisions.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter details the methods and procedures used to obtain the sample developed for this study. The research design chosen was a descriptive survey method utilizing a questionnaire to identify the demographics and behavioral patterns of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into the following sections (a) research procedures, (b) population and selection process, (c) instrumentation, (d) the survey, and (f) summary.

Researcher's Background

Introducing the researcher's background and credentials is appropriate at this time, for it will show the relevance of her conducting research with the Deaf population. For more than twenty years the researcher has been actively involved with the Deaf population of the United States. Initially, she became proficient in American Sign Language and integrated with the Deaf community as a student, counselor, instructor, and administrator at Gallaudet University. In addition to twelve years of study and work at Gallaudet University, she obtained her knowledge by living with Deaf people and working throughout the country as a sign language interpreter. Her experience includes Sign Language interpretation in numerous settings: public, private and non-profit employment sectors, hospitals, theaters, court systems, congress, and the White House. She has taught beginning through advanced levels of American Sign Language (ASL) in the Federal government, schools, and university settings, including Virginia Tech and George Mason University. Currently, she is the only Career Consultant fluent in ASL, to contract with the Federal Government providing direct one-on-one career counseling and training to federal employees who are Deaf. She holds Professional Counselor licensure (LPC) in the District of Columbia, and certifications as a Counselor (NCC) and Career Counselor (NCCC) through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). It is the combination of educational preparation, experience, credentials, and the earned trust from the Deaf community that enabled her to conduct this study.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research methodology was used to obtain data from a clearly defined population comprising Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The purpose of descriptive survey research is to systematically describe the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest through classification of the collected data.

Isaac & Michael (1981) stated that:

Surveys are the most widely used technique in education and the behavioral sciences for the collection of data. They are a means of gathering information that describes the nature and extent of a specified set of data ranging from physical constants and frequencies to attitudes and opinions. This information, in turn, can be used to answer questions that have been raised, to solve problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and set goals, to determine whether specific objectives have been met, to establish baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount and in what context (p.128).

A questionnaire was designed by the researcher to answer the six research questions guiding the study. In their discussion of questionnaires versus interviews, Pedhazur & Schmelkin (1991) noted that questionnaires are generally less costly, less time consuming, and less demanding in terms of selection, training, and supervision of personnel. Mail questionnaires also have the advantage of wider coverage of the population of interest. Questionnaires are generally less susceptible to biases due to deviations from instructions, method of administration and possible interviewer effects. This is important to note, because American Sign Language (ASL) is not a written language, and is not uniform in its delivery. It is a visual-gestural language with many variances in the choice of signs to convey the same idea or concept. In contrast, written instructions in English are more precise and uniform, eliminating potential biases associated with interviewer effects, such as variances in the delivery and interpretation of American Sign Language. Finally, confidentiality and anonymity can be more effectively assured through questionnaires than interviews.

This study used the data collected from the questionnaire to determine the characteristics and demographics and among a sample of Deaf entrepreneurs. The following research questions were explored:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Deaf entrepreneurs?
2. Are there consistent patterns in the detection of hearing loss among Deaf entrepreneurs?
3. What are the most common communication methods used by Deaf entrepreneurs in their relationships with both deaf and hearing populations?
4. Who were the key role models, mentors, support groups, and others most important in the decision to launch, plan, and actually begin the business?
5. What are the most significant challenges identified by Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners?
6. What are the salient features of Deaf entrepreneurial activity concerning motivation, type and size of business, capital requirements, number and type of employees, and consumer market?

The insight gained from the data may be useful to counselors, educators and others for greater understanding of the population and developing lessons and tools that might help others in making similar career voyages. Additionally, career counselors will find the information useful when helping their clients make informed decisions.

Population and Selection Process

The researcher met with faculty and staff from Gallaudet University and the President of the DHHEC (then) to discuss the feasibility of doing a study to learn more about Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The meetings resulted in enthusiasm and support for conducting this research. The DHHEC provided the researcher with a nationwide mailing list of more than 200 names and addresses of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people who were thought to be self-employed. Currently, this mailing list is the most comprehensive listing of Deaf business owners known to exist. It is made up of members and nonmembers of the DHHEC. Over a period of several years, Louis Schwartz, President DHHEC (then), researched and developed the mailing list with the help of Gary Viall, a Deaf employee with the United States Small Business

Administration and others. Their initial intent for developing the mailing list was to identify the population and to solicit membership for the DHHEC. The mailing list had 213 clearly defined names and addresses of business owners at the time of this study. Because there was no previous documented data on the hearing status of those individuals on the mailing list, the questionnaire was mailed to the entire DHHEC mailing list. Eighty-six of the respondents met the inclusion criteria (Deaf and business owner) and were included in the study. Those respondents serve as a representative sample of the population for this study.

Instrumentation

The survey research method was chosen as the means of collecting the data for the study. Since no suitable instrument was available to collect the kind of data sought in this study, Crammatte's 1982 Professional Employment Questionnaire was used as the basis for developing a modified questionnaire tailored to Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The initial steps in formulating the questionnaire, once the research questions were established, were to review the literature and to identify the issues associated with career development for Deaf people. Following Crammatte's design, the questionnaire was kept relatively short and simple to encourage respondents to answer all items. Crammatte's questionnaire was designed to take about thirty minutes to complete. It was highly structured, permitting check marks for answers. The instrument used in this study, *Entrepreneurial Questionnaire*, and accompanying cover letters are printed in Appendix A. A copy of Crammatte's questionnaire is reprinted in Appendix B.

The questionnaire for this study was finalized after three phases of development. The first phase involved writing the initial questionnaire items and having the instrument reviewed by several sources. In addition to Virginia Tech faculty, the questionnaire and accompanying instructions were reviewed for content and literacy by several Deaf community members including a member of the DHHEC, a Deaf person whose primary method of communication is ASL, and by a faculty member from the Gallaudet University Department of Counseling. These individuals were asked to write comments and make suggestions for changes to instrument, which they felt, would enhance the understanding by the Deaf entrepreneurial population. The first phase resulted in developing the initial questionnaire.

During the second phase, the researcher sought the assistance of Ms. Norma Buemi, a Gallaudet alumnus and employee to distribute the instrument for the pilot study. Ms. Buemi distributed the initial questionnaire to ten members of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Area Deaf community. Every participant's primary method of communication was ASL in the pilot study. These individuals were asked to answer each item on the questionnaire and make suggestions for revisions or improvement that might help with language clarity for a Deaf population. The pilot questionnaire, instructions, and results are printed in Appendix C.

The third phase involved reviewing the results of the pilot study and making final changes to the questionnaire. The result is a highly structured instrument, permitting check marks for answers with only a few short answer items. The questionnaire was organized into six sections: (a) Criteria for Inclusion, (b) Background Information, (c) Education, (d) Communication, (e) Career Development, (f) Entrepreneurial and Business Activity. All items on the questionnaire addressed one or more of the six research questions.

The first section addressed the criteria for inclusion. Participants were asked identify their hearing status and to indicate if they owned a business. Those participants that identified their hearing status as Deaf and indicated that they owned a business were included in the study. It should be noted that several Hard of Hearing people filled out the questionnaire, however their responses were not included in the analysis.

The section on background information obtained basic demographic data including information on age, gender, parental occupation and hearing status.

The section on education investigated types of schools respondents attended (residential, mainstream). Levels of educational attainment and degrees earned were also investigated.

The section on communication investigated the most common methods of communication used in business and non-business settings with both the Deaf and hearing populations. Specific communication techniques and methods were identified for the respondent to check that included sign language, writing, talking, fingerspelling, and communication aids.

The section on career development investigated influences of role models, mentors, related work experience, and co-op and internship experiences. A question asking participants to briefly describe in their own words how they got into their business was also included.

The section on entrepreneurial activity investigated the salient features of Deaf entrepreneurial activity concerning motivation, type and size of business, capital requirements,

number and type of employees, consumer market, business classification, duration of business, employee size and challenges.

Administrative Procedures

Questionnaires along with a cover letter (see Appendix A) were sent to potential respondents. In order to maximize the response rate, the researcher worked closely with Louis Schwarz to develop the initial cover letter. Mr. Schwarz agreed to put the cover letter on his letterhead and co-sign the letter with the researcher. The content of the letter explained the purpose of the study, included a brief biographical description of the researcher, and emphasized the importance of responding to the questionnaire. The researcher also included her phone number, e-mail address, and facsimile number so those potential respondents who wanted assistance or who had questions about the instrument could contact her directly. It should be noted that Mr. Schwarz's street address was on the cover letter, however participants were instructed to contact the researcher with any inquiries. Additionally, potential respondents were informed that their responses would be kept confidential.

A pre-addressed, stamped envelope was included with the questionnaire. To maximize the response rate, potential respondents were given the option of returning the completed questionnaire through facsimile transmittal, rather than conventional mail. A tally was kept and later reported on which method the respondents chose to return the completed questionnaire.

Initial distribution of questionnaires was mailed out the first week of October 1997. A month later the researcher sent a follow-up letter to those who had not yet responded, urging completion of the questionnaire (see Appendix A). Approximately two weeks after the reminder letter was sent out, the response rate was only about thirty percent. In an attempt to learn why people had not responded and encourage participation, the researcher made 30 follow-up TTY telephone calls to local Deaf business owners. She also visited two business owners who expressed concerns via TTY conversation about responding to the survey.

Reasons for not returning the questionnaire included issues of time, lost questionnaires, and promises of filling out the questionnaire. Some were not current business owners, hence did not think it necessary to return the questionnaire. Several people were very supportive of the research, however made a conscious choice not to participate. Of these who chose not to participate, some gave no reason. Others were concerned that the research might be designed to

harm the Deaf community in some way and a few people were concerned about issues of privacy and were afraid that the research reporting method might reveal personal data that could easily identify respondents. Only a few of these people could be convinced to change their original decisions about participation. The first two mailings and follow-up phone calls brought in a 31% response rate.

In a final effort to increase the response rate, a third mailing with a new cover letter signed only by the researcher (see Appendix A), and another copy of the questionnaire was sent out the second week of December 1997. This third effort almost doubled the response rate to 61% from December to the cut-off date of February 1, 1998.

Method of Analysis

All returned questionnaires were examined to determine if they met the basic criteria for inclusion. Those respondents who identified themselves as Deaf and owning a business were included in the study. The respondents who did not meet these basic criteria were eliminated from the study.

All raw data was coded and entered into the SAS statistical analysis software system. The data collected to answer the six research questions was analyzed using descriptive statistics. A Descriptive statistical methods summarize, organize, and simplify data (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1991, p.5). Frequencies, means, and percentages were used to report the data in written, table, and chart format.

Summary

This chapter introduced the methodology and the background of the researcher. Descriptive survey research methodology was chosen to systematically report the facts and characteristics of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The population and selection process included a representative sample comprised of members of the DHHEC mailing list. Respondents were included in the study if they met the basic self-identifying criteria of being Deaf and owning a business. The instrument is a highly structured questionnaire that was designed to be filled out in thirty minutes or less and encouraged participation by permitting check marks for answers with only a few short answer items. Administrative procedures included mailings requiring return through the mail or facsimile transmittal. The SAS software analysis system was used to code

and interpret the data. The questionnaire responses provided data for establishing generalizations about the demographics and patterns of behavior of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. The questionnaire responses also provided data that can be used by counselors when helping their clients make informed decisions, and educators in developing training, and educational tools to help Deaf individuals in their career planning.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter includes the description and analysis of the data collected through questionnaire responses from Deaf business owners in the United States. The chapter is organized in four sections: (a) questionnaire responses, (b) the six research questions, (c) limitations of the instrument, and (d) summary.

Questionnaire Responses

Of the 213 questionnaires sent to the nationwide mailing list of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Entrepreneurial Council (DHHEC), 130 were returned for a response rate of 61 percent. Forty-four responses were eliminated for the following reasons: (1) 25 respondents did not meet criteria for inclusion because they reported that they were not currently in business, (2) 12 respondents self identified as hard of hearing, not deaf; it should be noted that half of these hard of hearing respondents did fill out the questionnaire, (3) seven respondents chose not to participate.

Figure 2, shows that 86 Deaf business owners from 27 states and the District of Columbia comprise the data presented in this study. It must be noted that the data shows heavy weighting toward Maryland business owners. Twenty-six people or 31 percent of the respondents were from the state of Maryland. Furthermore, 12 people or 46 percent of the Maryland respondents attended Gallaudet University.

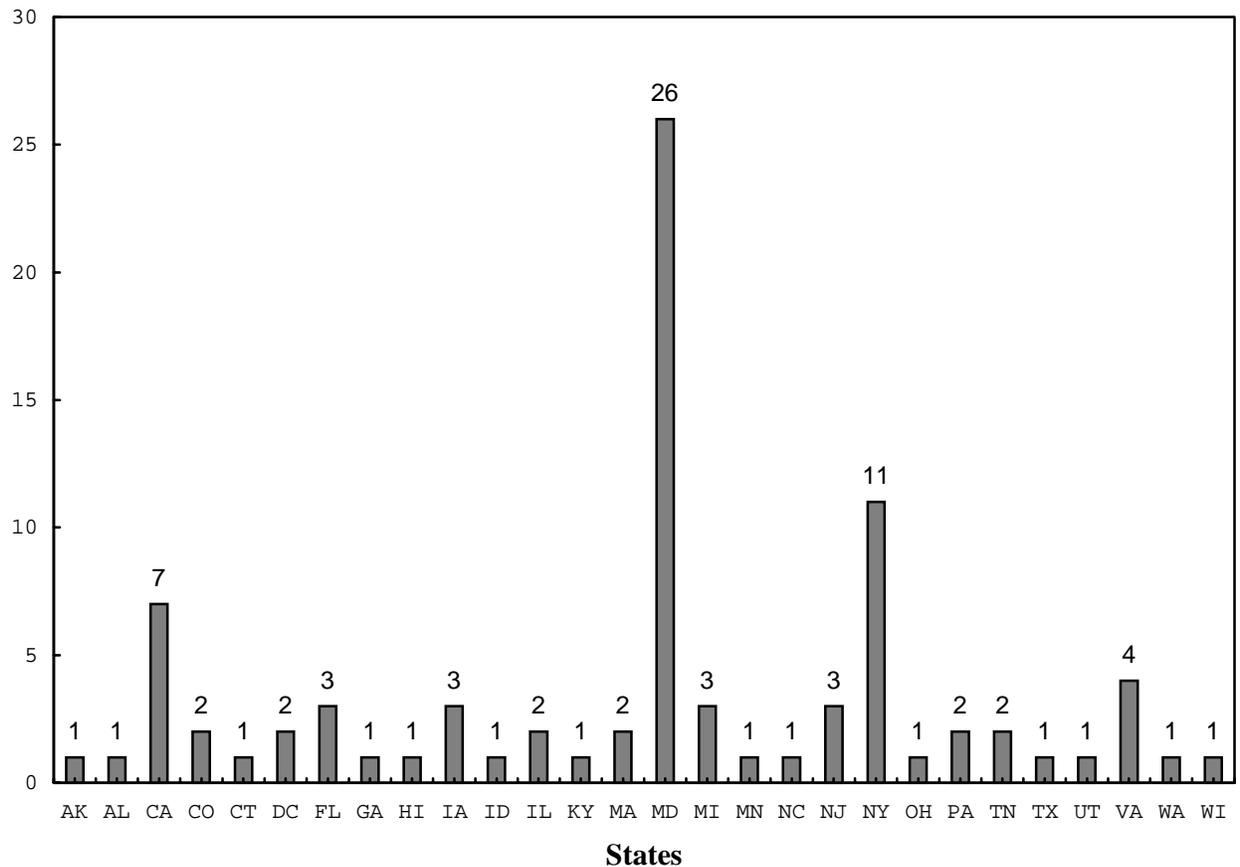


Figure 2 - Number of Respondents by State (N=86)

Research Question 1

The variables of gender, age, and education were explored to answer the first research question: What are the demographic characteristics of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners? Results of the study were based on responses from 86 deaf men and women from all regions of the United States. The majority of the respondents started their business before the age of 35 and, at the time of this study, had remained in business for more than 10 years. Most

respondents came from residential and/or mainstream school settings and over half had earned at least Bachelors degree from a wide range of accredited colleges and universities.

This sample comprises 71 men (83%), and 15 women (17%). Table 3 shows that 69 people (80%) of the respondents are currently between the ages of forty and sixty-nine. Upon starting their business, 25 people (29%) were below the age of thirty, 19 people (22%) were between the ages of thirty and thirty-four, 11 people (13%) were between the ages of thirty-five and thirty-nine, 16 people (19%) were between the ages of forty and forty-four, eight people (9%) were between the ages of forty-five and forty-nine, four people (5%) were between the ages of fifty and fifty-four, and only three people (3%) were older than age 54 when they started their business. Furthermore, Table 3 shows a median age of 34 years, with an interquartile range of 28 to 43 years of age for this group.

Table 3
Current Age of Deaf Entrepreneurs by Age of When They Started Their Business

		Age When Started Business								Total	
		<30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-69		>=70
Current Age	<30	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	30-34	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	35-39	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
	40-44	7	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	13
	45-49	5	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	13
	50-54	2	2	6	4	4	1	0	0	0	19
	55-59	1	1	0	6	3	1	1	0	0	13
	60-69	1	3	1	3	1	2	0	0	0	11
	>=70	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	25	19	11	16	8	4	1	0	2	86	

Figure 3 shows the type of elementary-secondary schooling each person attended. Thirty-seven people (43%) attended residential schools, 11 people (13%) attended mainstream schools, eight people (9%) attended public schools, and another 12 people (14%) reported attending other types of schools including oral day schools and private schools.

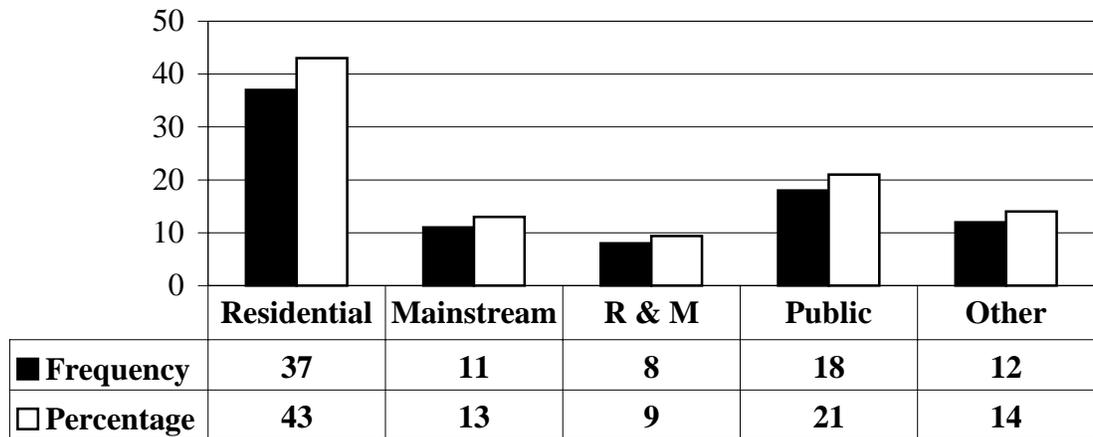


Figure 3 - Type of School Attended (N=86)

Table 4 displays the current age, arranged in age groups, for each type of school. Specifically, for the age group 60-69 more than half (55%) of the respondents attended residential schools. This contrasts sharply with the age group 30-39, in which less than 17% attended such schools. In fact, there is a consistent reduction in this percentage throughout the intervening age groups (50-59: 47% and 40-49: 46%). This data reveals a trend away from the residential schools across this approximate 30-year time span. It must be noted that the data in Figure 3 shows an increase in residential schooling for the age group <30. However, there are only three people in this age group. Thus, this anomaly can be attributed to the potential presence of outliers.

Table 4
Type of Schooling by Current Age Groups N=86

	<30		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Res.	2.0	2.3	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.2	7.0	8.1	5.0	5.8
Main.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.3	2.0	2.3	3.0	3.5
R & M	1.0	1.2	3.0	3.5	1.0	1.2	2.0	2.3	0.0	0.0
Public	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.2	2.0	2.3	5.0	5.8
Other	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.3	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

	50-54		55-59		60-69		>=70		Totals	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Res.	8.0	9.3	7.0	8.1	6.0	6.9	0.0	0.0	37.0	43.8
Main.	3.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	11.0	12.8
R & M	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.0	9.3
Public	4.0	4.7	3.0	3.5	1.0	1.2	2.0	2.3	18.0	20.1
Other	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.0	3.5	0.0	0.0	12.0	13.9

Levels of education for both men and women are shown in Table 5. Sixty-two people (72%) reported continuing their schooling to some form of training or higher education beyond high school. Of this group, seven people (8%) earned Doctoral degrees, 14 people (16%) earned a Masters degree or higher; 47 people (55%) earned a Bachelors degree or higher; 15 people (17%) received an Associate of Arts degree, attended college classes, or attended a vocational training program. Clearly, most of the respondents continued their education after high school and earned a college degree. Contrasted with the distribution of business owners by owner's level of education reported in the data, from The State of Small Business: Report Of The President 1993, (See Table 1, Chapter 2), for both the women and the nonminority male owners, only 18 percent in their sample were college graduates, as compared with 55 percent of the Deaf business owners in this sample. These findings may indicate that Deaf business owners are more likely to earn a college degree than hearing business owners [$t(1,84) = 6.4, p < .01$].

Highest Degree	Frequency	Percent
Apprenticeship	2	2.3
Technical Certificate	4	4.7
Associates of Arts	9	10.5
Bachelors of Arts	18	20.9
Bachelors of Elect.	1	1.2
Bachelors of Fine Arts	2	2.3
Bachelors of Science	11	12.8
Bachelors of Technology	1	1.2
Masters of Arts	1	1.2
Masters of Business Admin.	3	3.5
Masters of Science	2	2.3
All but Dissertations	1	1.2
Doctors of Philosophy	6	7
Doctors of Dental Surgery	1	1.2
No Degree	24	27.9

Table 6 shows that respondents attended a wide range of colleges and universities. Thirty-one people (36 %) reported attending Gallaudet University, the world’s only liberal arts institution for Deaf college students, 10 people (12 %) reported attending The National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID), located on the campus of the Rochester Institute of Technology. Beyond these two institutions of higher learning there were an additional sixty-five colleges and universities that respondents reported attending.

Table 6 – Colleges Attended			
College	Frequency	College	Frequency
Alexandria	2	NTID	9
American	2	NY Inst. Tech	1
Atlanta Area Tech	1	NYU	2
Cal Poly College	1	Oberlin	1
Cal State	1	Ohlone College	1
Catholic	3	Pasadena City College	2
Cincinnati	1	Pepperdine	2
Claremont	1	Physiology College	2
Columbia	1	Portfolio Center	1
Consejo Maciona	1	RIT	3
Cornell	2	Rock Valley College	1
CUNY	1	San Alejandro	1
Defiance	1	School of Visual Arts	2
Dental Tech College	1	Seattle Community College	1
Denver Community College	1	San Fran State	1
Florida	1	San Luis Morelfor	1
Florida Tr College	1	St. Ambrose	1
Gallaudet	31	State Tech Inst.	1
George Brown	1	Studio 5316	1
Golden West College	1	Suny	2
Goldsmith School	2	Tennessee	1
Guilford	1	Vanderbilt	1
Hisdatrut (Isreal)	1	Voc Tech	1
Hofstra	1	Washington	1
Jacksonville	1	Waubonsee Community College	1
John Hopkins	1	Wayne St. College	1
Lake Forest	1	Weslyan	1
Manattan Tech	1	Western Iowa Tech	1
Maryland	4	Western Kentucky	1
Maryland Inst Art	1	Western New England	1
McMaster Univ.	1	Western Washington	1
Milwaukee Tech	1	Whatcom Comm.	1
NC State	1	Wisconsin	1
New Mexico	1		

Research Question 2

The variables of age of onset, and parental hearing status were explored to answer the second research question: Are there consistent patterns in the degree of hearing loss among Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners? Results showed that most of the people in this study were born deaf thus never heard spoken language before learning any form of communication, and came from hearing families.

To establish an age of the onset of deafness, respondents were asked to identify how old they were when they became deaf. Figure 4 shows that sixty-nine people (80%) of the respondents reported prelingual deafness or were identified as deaf between the ages of zero and three years. Of this group, fifty-four people (63%) reported being deaf at birth. Ten people (12%) reported becoming deaf during childhood, between the ages of four and eleven. And, only two (2%) of the respondents reported becoming deaf over the age of 16 or as adults. This finding shows that most of the people in this sample were born deaf, thus never heard spoken language before learning any form of communication. Communication methods are reported in the analysis of research question number three. To further explore the attributes of these individuals, they were asked to identify the hearing status of their parents. Figure 5 depicts the parental hearing status of respondents. Fourteen people (16%) reported having deaf parents. Only one person (1%) reported having hard of hearing parents. Seventy-one people (83%) reported having hearing parents. This reporting deviates from previous findings where it has been noted that 91 percent of deaf people are born to hearing parents (Schein & Delk, 1974). The significance of this finding is further explored in the analysis of the fourth research question under parental influence.

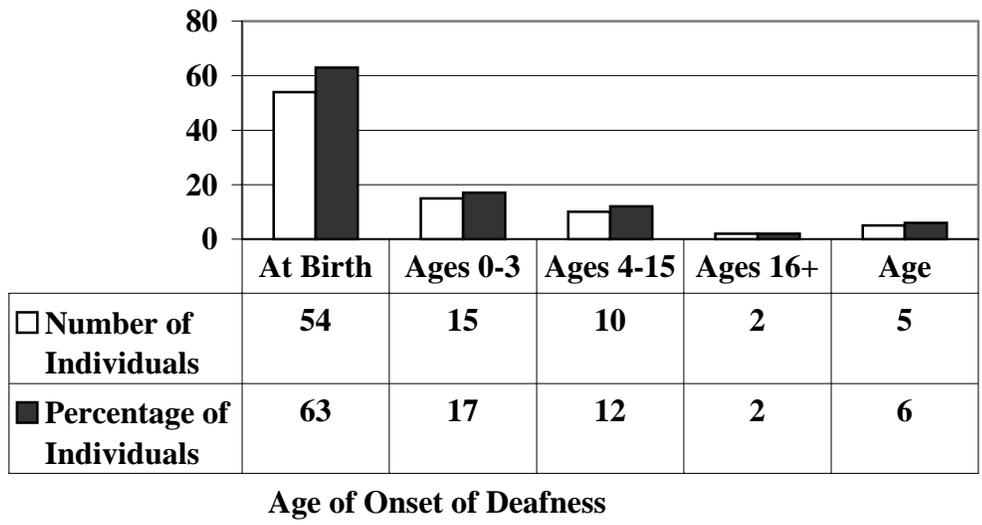


Figure 4 - Age of Onset of Deafness (N=86)

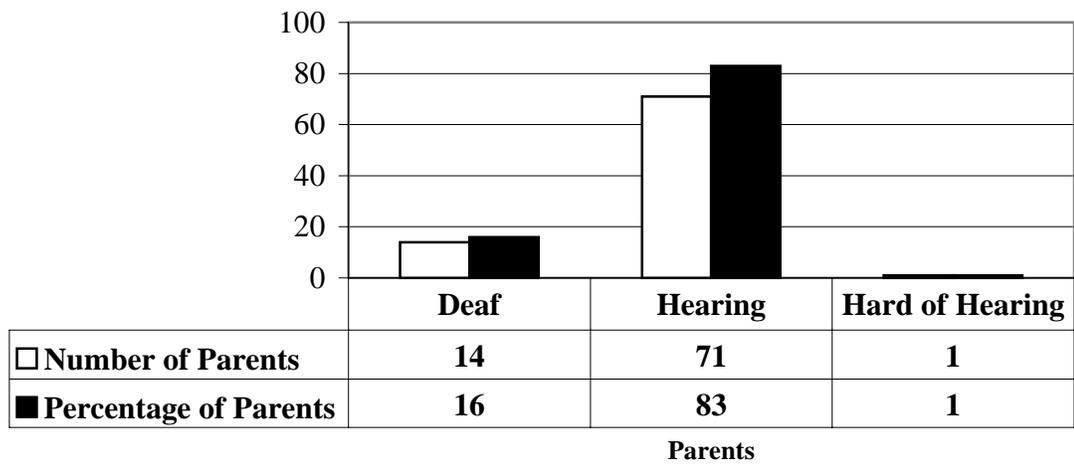


Figure 5 - Hearing Status of Parents (N=86)

Research Question 3

The communication methods of American Sign Language (ASL), voice/talking, cued speech, sign language with and without speech, fingerspelling, gestures, and writing were explored to answer the third research question: What are the most common communication methods used by Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners in their relationships with both Deaf and hearing people? Results showed that for most respondents, American Sign language was their preferred method of communication. However, in business with Hearing coworkers, suppliers, and clients Deaf business owners changed their preferred communication style to using voice, which was often coupled with writing. Telephone relay services, electronic mail services and sign language interpreters were the most frequently used communication aids

Participants were asked to identify the communication methods they used most of the time, and were allowed to check more than one answer. Figure 6 shows that the majority, 68 people (79%) reported using ASL most of time during communication. Forty-eight people (56%) reported using voice, and only four people (5%) reported using cued speech. Sixteen people (19%) reported using other forms of communication that included gestures and writing.

Figure 7 shows the communication methods used most often by Deaf respondents with hearing co-workers, suppliers, and clients. Fifty-five people (64%) reported talking (voice), 51 people (59%) reported writing, 25 people (29%) reported using sign language with speech, 11 people (13%) reported using sign language without speech, five people (6%) reported using fingerspelling, and 19 (22%) people reported using some other form of communication including gestures, TTY, and electronic mail systems.

Figure 8 shows the communication methods used most often by hearing co-workers, suppliers, and clients. Fifty-nine people (67%) reported using voice/talking, requiring the Deaf respondent to speech read, 49 people (57%) reported using writing, 17 people (20%) reported

using sign language with speech, 12 people (14%) reported using gestures, nine people (11%) reported using sign language without speech, and nine people (11%) reported using voice/talking with the assistance of a sign language interpreter, four people (5%) reported using fingerspelling. It should be noted that these findings are dissimilar for communication methods Deaf people use most of the time when compared to the methods used in business. Most of the time respondents use ASL (79%), however, in business, talking/voice (>63%) was the method of communication used most often by both Deaf and hearing people, see Figures 6, 7, and 8.

Communication aids that participants used in their work were also reported. Figure 9 shows that 70 people (81%) reported using telephone relay services, 47 people (55%) reported using electronic mail, 43 people (50%) reported using sign language interpreters, 27 people (31%) reported using hearing aids, 16 people (19%) reported using telephone amplifiers, 12 people (14%) reported using note takers.

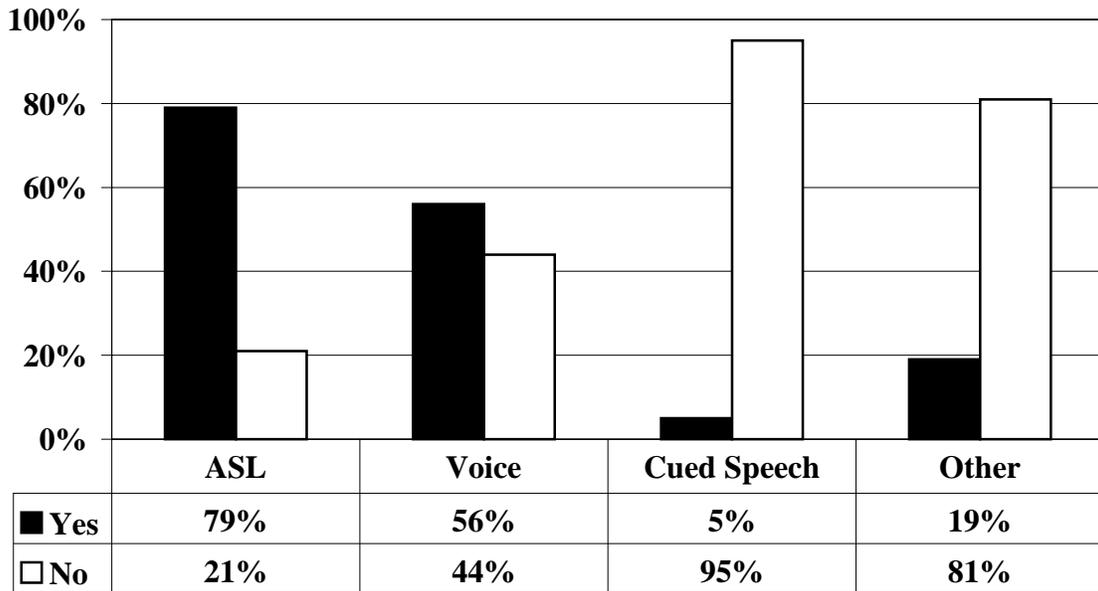


Figure 6 - Communication Methods Used Most of the Time

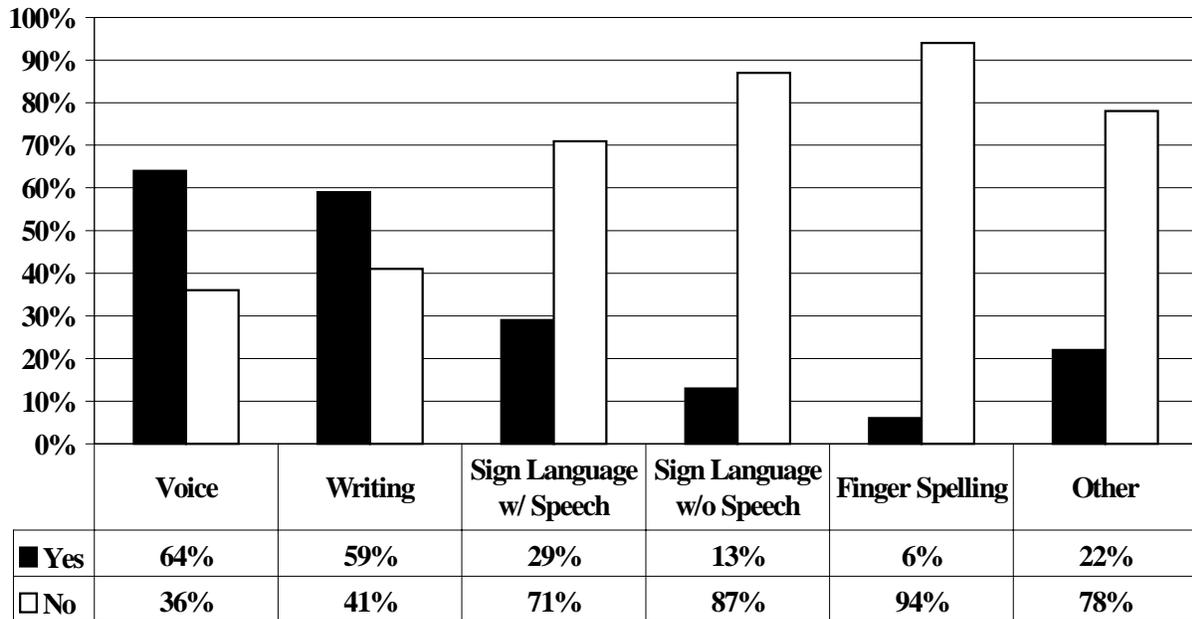


Figure 7 - Communication Methods Used Most of the Time with Hearing Coworkers, Suppliers, Clients

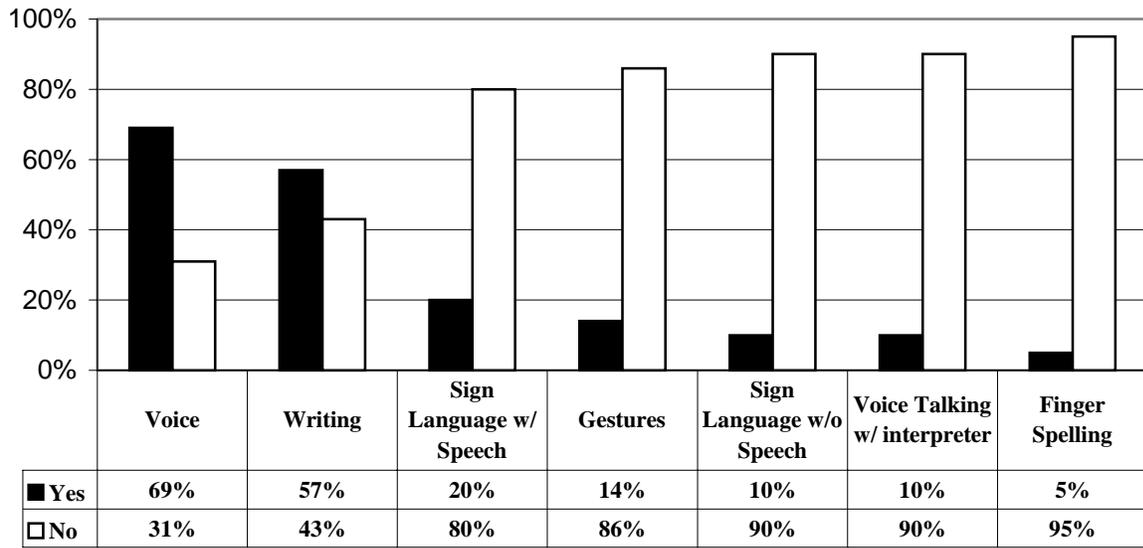


Figure 8 - Communications Methods Used Most of the Time by Hearing Coworkers, Suppliers, Clients

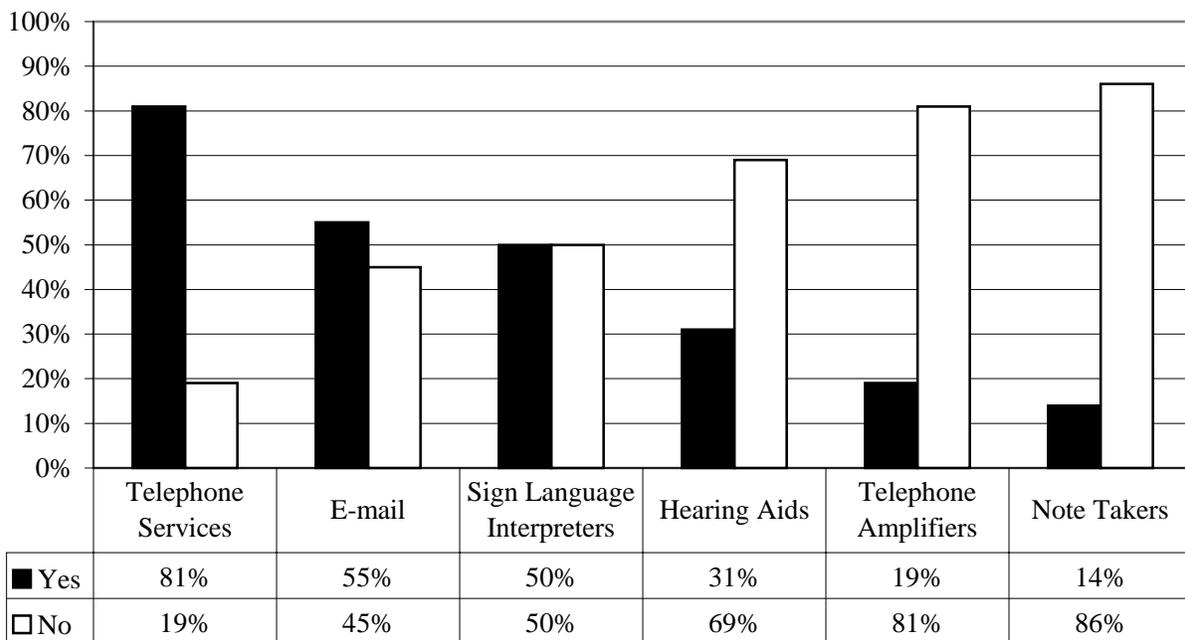


Figure 9 - Communication Aids Used in Work

Research Question 4

Career development issues were explored to answer the question: Who were the key role models, mentors, support groups, and others most important in the decision to launch, plan and actually begin the business? Respondents were asked to identify parental influence factors, mentors, role models at different developmental stages, internship and apprenticeship experiences, and in their own words describe how they got into their business. Results showed that most respondents came from hearing parents and the most frequently identified role models throughout the school years were family and teachers, almost equally. However that changed when it came to starting the business. A “friend” was identified by more respondents than any other single factor as the most important role model in helping to start their business. Furthermore, when describing how they got into their business, in their own words, the themes that emerged included having a dream, identifying and strengthening talents and skills, learning the business laws, and overcoming the fears of working with hearing people.

Approximately 83% of the respondents came from hearing parents. According to Schein and Delk (1974), this number appears to be less than the number of deaf individuals who have hearing parents in the general population (91%). While significance testing could not verify this result, it is slightly more probable than not that Deaf entrepreneurs are more likely to come from Deaf parents [$t(1, 84) = -1.02, p < .16$].

On the other hand, 36% of the respondents with deaf parents reported that a family member was the most important mentor in helping to start their business. This contrasts with 25% of respondents with hearing parents reporting such strong family influence in identifying a mentor. This finding concludes that for deaf entrepreneurs coming from families with deaf parents, a family member is a more significant mentor in helping to start their business [$t(1,84) = 1.66, p < .05$].

Respondents were asked to identify career role models at three different developmental stages in their lives. Responses are grouped according to age levels: ages 3 - 13, ages 14 - 19, after high school. Table 7 shows that for all three age levels, family members and teachers were identified as the most important career role models by the majority of respondents. The first level, ages three through thirteen had 35 respondents (41%) identifying family as the most important career role model. Twenty-eight people (33%) identified teachers. Seven people (8%) identified a friend. Four people (5%) identified a dorm supervisor.

Role	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	28	32.6
Dorm Supv.	4	4.7
Family	35	40.7
Bus Person	2	2.3
Friend	7	8.1
Other	6	7
Unknown	4	4.7

Table 8 shows the second age level, ages 14 - 19 had 23 people (27%) identifying family as the most important career role model. Thirty-three people (38%) identified teachers. Seven people (8%) identified a friend. Six people (7%) identified a counselor. One person (1%) identified a dorm supervisor, and three people (4%) identified a business person.

Table 8 - Role Model Aged 14-19

Role	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	33	38.4
Counselor	6	7
Dorm Supervisor	1	1.2
Family	23	26.7
Bus Person	3	3.5
Friend	7	8.1
Other	9	10.5
Unknown	4	4.7

Table 9 shows the third age level, after high school, had 19 people (22%) identifying teacher as the most important career role model. Eighteen people (21%) identified family. Fifteen people (17%) identified a friend. Thirteen people (15%) identified a business person. Three people (4%) identified a counselor and, one person (1%) identified a dorm supervisor. The data concerning career role models at different developmental stages suggests that family and teachers are important career role models throughout life, however as the individual ages friends and business people become more significant for these Deaf business owners. This finding is further supported when respondents identified who their most important career role model was in helping to start their business. Table 10 shows that 40 people (47%) identified a friend, 21 people (24%) identified family, and only five people (6%) identified teacher.

To further explore their career development participants were asked to identify whether they participated in an internship or apprenticeship that helped prepare them for their current business. Only 24 people (28%) reported participation in an internship or apprenticeship experience. These people were further asked to share any information that might help others e.g. name and length of the program. From their written responses, (see Appendix D) it was clear that several people participated in internships related to their college major and a few others participated in

apprenticeships where they developed skills through on the job training.

Others attended topical seminars and workshops where they learned business related skills.

Table 9		
Role Model After High School		
Role	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	19	22.1
Counselor	3	3.5
Dorm Supervisor	1	1.2
Family	18	20.9
Bus Person	13	15.1
Friend	15	17.4
Other	10	11.6
Unknown	7	8.1

Table 10		
Most Important Role Model in Helping to Start Business		
Role	Frequency	Percent
Teacher	5	5.8
Counselor	2	2.3
Family	21	24.4
Friend	40	46.5
Boss/Supervisor	4	4.7
Other	9	10.5
Unknown	5	5.8

Additionally, participants were asked to describe briefly how they got into their business so that young Deaf people could learn from their success. Seventy-two people (84%) answered this question in their own words. From their answers a few themes emerged which included: having a dream, identifying one's talents, polishing and strengthening one's skills, believing in oneself, developing the necessary business skills (accounting, math, business plan, supply and demand issues, researching the demography, tax law), overcoming the fears of working with hearing people in the business world, being a self-starter, and having guts. For a complete listing of their responses see Appendix D.

Research Question 5

Entrepreneurial activity was explored to answer the question: What are the salient features of Deaf entrepreneurial activity in terms of type of business, capital requirements, size of business, capital requirements, number and type of employees, consumer market, and motivation. Several variables (type, classification, and location) were looked at to determine the type of businesses represented in the sample. Participants were asked to identify in their own words the type of business they owned.

A vast range of businesses was reported that clustered into several definable categories. Most were home-based and classified as a sole proprietorship, used very little money to start their business and had fewer than 10 employees. Most of those that had employees hired hearing people. The vast majority operates in the private sector and serves more hearing than deaf people. The two most frequently reported reasons for going into business were "desire to be their own boss" and "to earn more money."

Table 11 shows the wide range of businesses reported.

Table 11 - Type of Business Identified by Respondent

Arts & Crafts

Antique Wicker and Custom Made Furniture
Art
Artist
Artwork Services
Craft Tiles for Home Interiors
Custom Engraving
Embroidery Sewing Services
Engraving
Fingers Mart
Glass Artist Manufacturer
Manufacturer Rubber Stamps &
Photography
Stained Glass Design
Upholstery
Wood Cabinet Maker
Woodworking Furniture Refinishing
Woodworking Services

Building Design & Construction

Architect
Architectural Consultant
Builder Design Remodeling
Construction
Construction Brick/Block Work
Construction, Home Improvement
Handyman Services
Home Designing & Construction

Computer & Technology

Computer Consultant & Real Estate
Computer Retailer Service
Computer Software for Communication over Phone
Computer Store
Graphic Arts
Web Design Service

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Related Services

Adapter and Assistive Devices for the Deaf & H of H
Communication Consultant
Deaf Collectibles Service
Disabilities Research and Training
Interpreting and Captioning Services
Mail Order Products of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
TTY Repair and Computers Sales
TTY Devices Etc.

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Related Services (cont.)

Sign Language Interpreter Services &
Video Remote Interpreter Services

Financial Services

Billing Services
Commodities Futures Trader
Financial Consultant
Financial Planning Services
Tax Preparation Services

Food Service

Bakery Owner
Restaurant Owner
Food Manufacturer

Healthcare Related Services

Counseling & Psych Services
Dental Lab
Dentist
Family Physician/Medical Office
Psychology Mental Health Services
Medical Health Services

Printing & Related

Address Labels, T-shirts, Mugs, Pads,
Desktop Publishing/ Writing
Directory Publishing
Editing/Research Service
Notebooks, Envelopes, Letterheads, Business Cards
Screen Printing

Retail/Wholesale

Garage Door Sales and Installation
Giftware
Jewelry Retail Store
Retailer
Retailer/Wholesaler
Wholesale Hardware

Miscellaneous & Entrepreneurial

Amway Distributor
Doggie Salon on Wheels
Farming
Fishing Charter
Magician, Author, Lecturer
Theater

Of these businesses, Figure 10 shows that 48 people (56%) classified their business as a sole proprietorship, 29 people (34%) as a corporation, 7 people (8%) as a partnership.

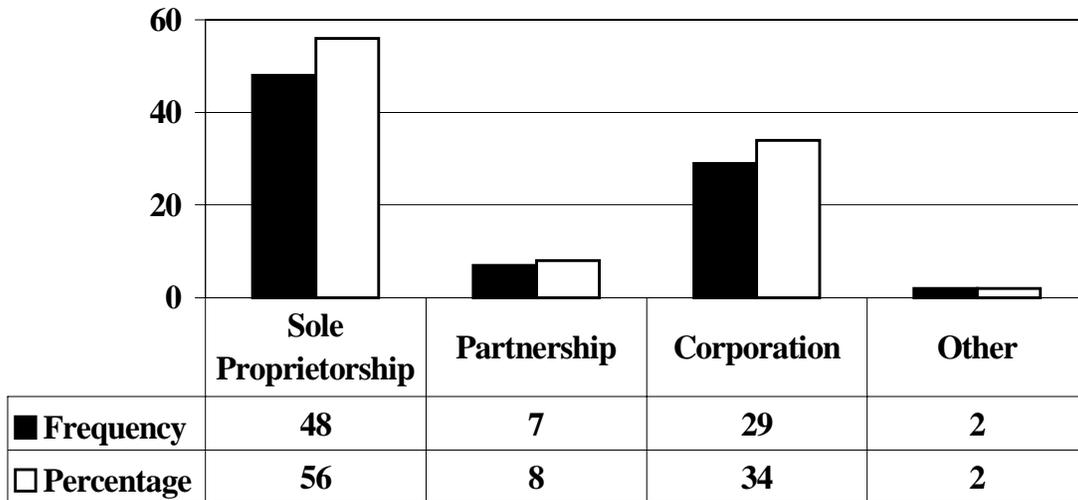


Figure 10 - Business Classification

Location of business is shown in Figure 11. More than half of the respondents, forty-five people (52%) reported having a home-based business, 15 people (17%) reported having their business in an office building, five people (6%) reported an industrial area, four people (5%) reported a shopping center. The remaining 20% reported other as their location of business. This data indicates that most of these businesses were either home-based or located in an office building (69%) and classified as a sole proprietorship or corporation (90%).

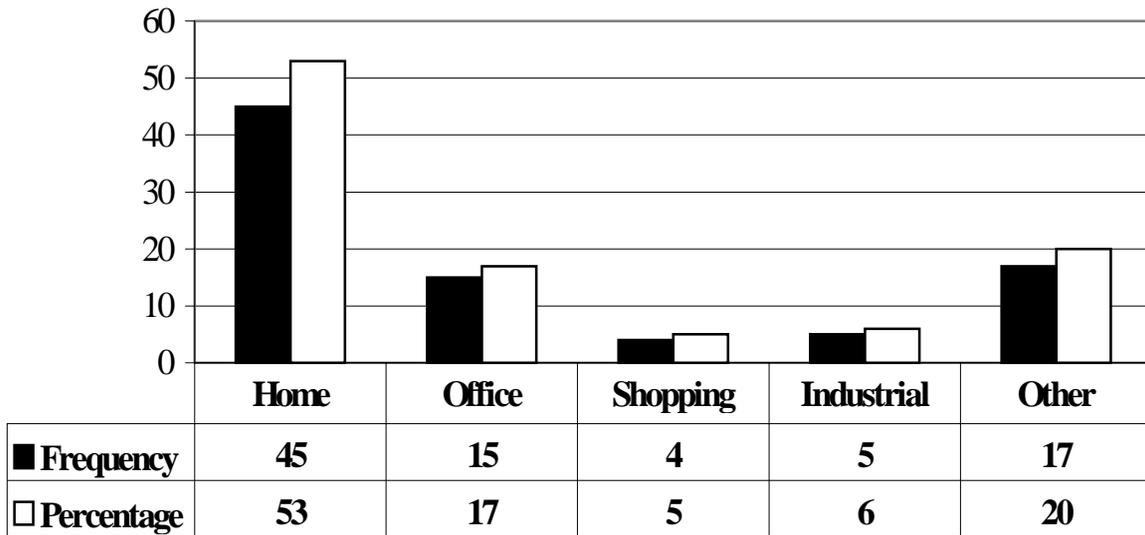


Figure 11 - Location of Business

To determine the source of initial start-up capital, participants were asked to identify where they obtained most of the money to start their business. Figure 12 shows that personal savings was reported by 40 people (47%), family by six people (7%), government assistance by six (7%), bank loan by 5 people (6%), and partners by 2 people (2%).

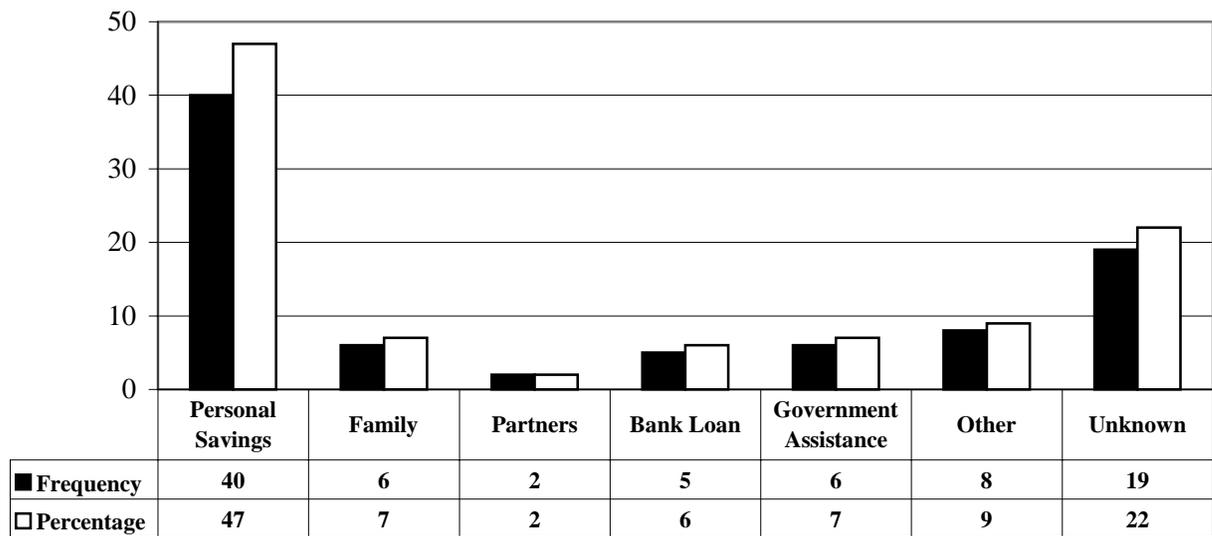


Figure 12 - Source of Start-Up Funds

To determine how much money was spent to start their businesses, participants were asked to write in the amount on the questionnaire. Figure 13 shows the amounts of capital respondents reported spending to start their business. Thirty-six people (42%) reported starting their business with zero capital, six people (7%) spent less than one thousand dollars, 11 people (13%) spent between one-thousand and five-thousand dollars, six people (7%) spent between five and ten thousand dollars, six people (7%) spent between ten and fifteen thousand dollars, four people (5%) spent between 15 and 20 thousand dollars, eleven people (13%) spent between 20 and 100 thousand dollars, and four people (5%) spent between 100 and 200 thousand dollars.

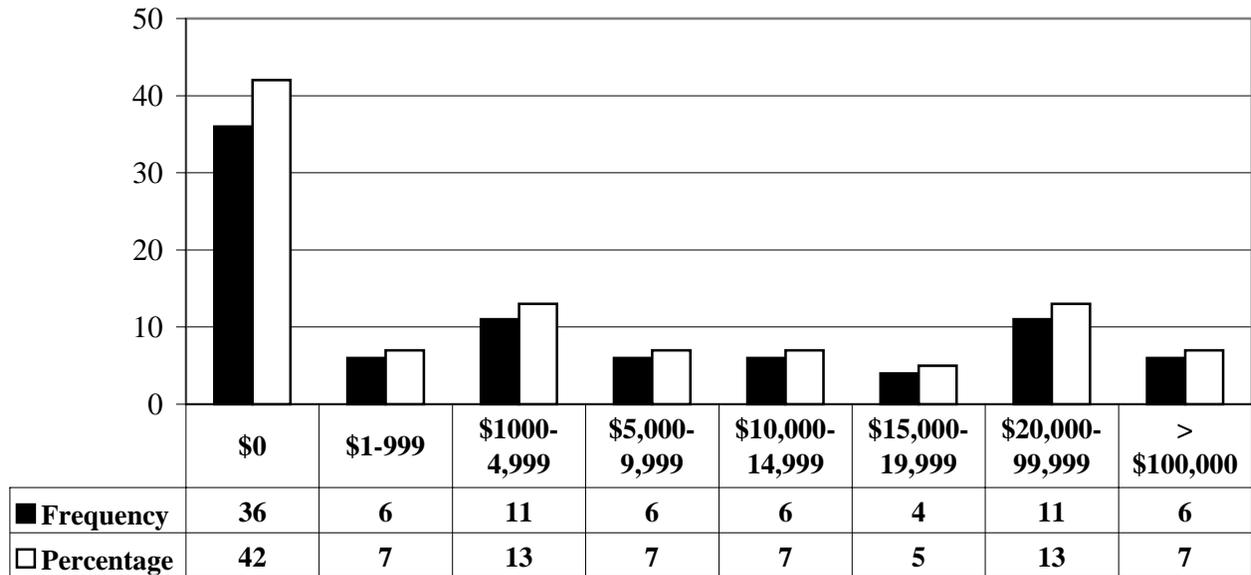


Figure 13 - Amount of Money Spent to Start Business

It should be noted that nine of the respondents, who reported starting their business with zero capital, identified a source of start-up funds.

Table 12 compares the amount of money spent to start the business with the location of the business. The findings reveal that of the 36 people that started with zero dollars 64% reported having a home-based business, 11% have businesses located in an office building, and industrial area. Furthermore, of the 42 people that reported spending a thousand dollars or more to start their business, 40% reported having a home-based business, 24% have their business located in an office building, 10% in a shopping center, and 7% in an industrial area.

Table 12 - Location of Business with Start-Up Costs

	Home	Office Building	Shopping Center	Industrial Area	Other	Total
\$0 Cost	23	4	0	2	7	36
%	64	11	0	6	19	100
\$1 to \$999 Cost	5	1	0	0	0	6
%	83	17	0	0	0	100
>\$1,000 Cost	17	10	4	3	8	42
%	40	24	10	7	19	100
Total	45	15	4	5	17	86
Cumulative %	52	17	5	6	20	100

To determine the size of the businesses represented, participants were asked to report the number of people they employed. Table 13 shows that 28 people (33%) had zero employees, 39 people (45%) had one to five employees, 7 people (8%) had six to 10 employees, 8 people (9%) had 11 to 70 employees, and 2 people (2%) had 450 to 600 employees. This data reveals that most of the businesses (86%) had ten or fewer employees.

Table 13 - Number of Employees		
<u>Employees</u>	<u>Business Owners</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0	28	32.6
1	11	12.8
2	8	9.3
3	8	9.3
3.5	1	1.2
4	10	11.6
5	1	1.2
6	1	1.2
7	1	1.2
9	3	3.5
10	2	2.3
11	1	1.2
12	1	1.2
20	1	1.2
23	1	1.2
25	1	1.2
36	1	1.2
45	1	1.2
68	1	1.2
450	1	1.2
600	1	1.2
Did not respond	2	2.3

Additionally, participants were asked to share information about the hearing status of their employees. Figure 14 shows that 27 people (31%) had hearing employees, 21 people (24%) had both deaf and hearing employees, eight people (9%) had deaf employees, and 20 people (23%) did not employ people. Further analysis of this finding reveals that of the 56 people who reported hiring employees, most of them, 48 people (86%) reported having both deaf and hearing employees.

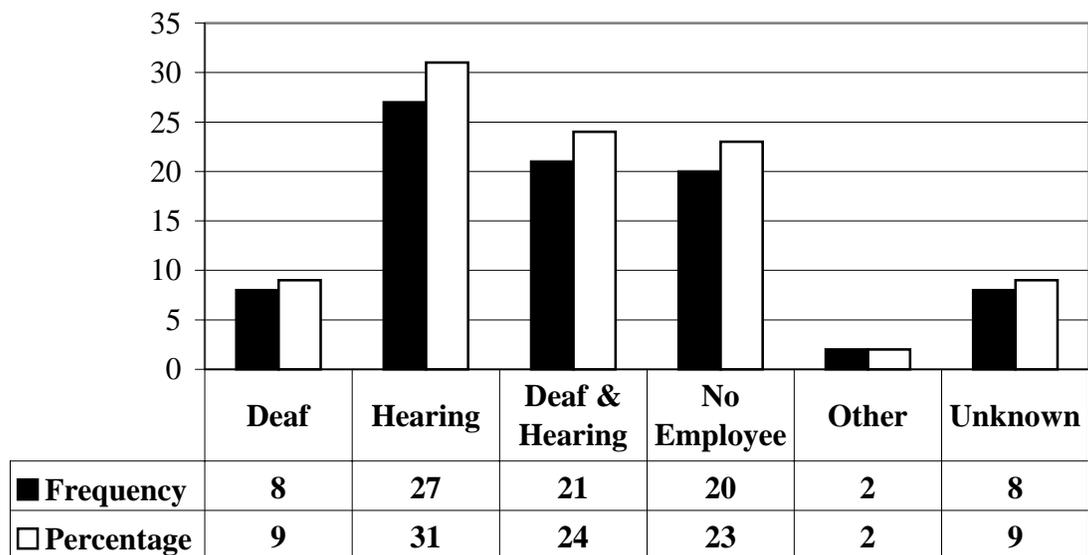


Figure 14 - Hearing Status of Employees

To understand their consumer market, participants were asked to identify the sector in which most of their business was conducted. Figure 15 shows that 65 people (76%) reported conducting most of their business in the private sector. Five people (6%) reported non-profit, and 2 people (2%) reported the public sector. Furthermore, participants were asked to share information about the hearing status of their customers. Figure 16 shows that thirty-two people (37%) reported having mostly hearing and some deaf customers, 22 people (26%) reported mostly hearing people as their customers, 14 people (16%) reported mostly deaf and some hearing, 10 people (12%) reported having the same number of hearing and deaf customers, eight people (9%) reported having mostly deaf customers. These findings indicate that most of the business owners are conducting business in the private sector (76%) with both deaf and hearing people (91%).

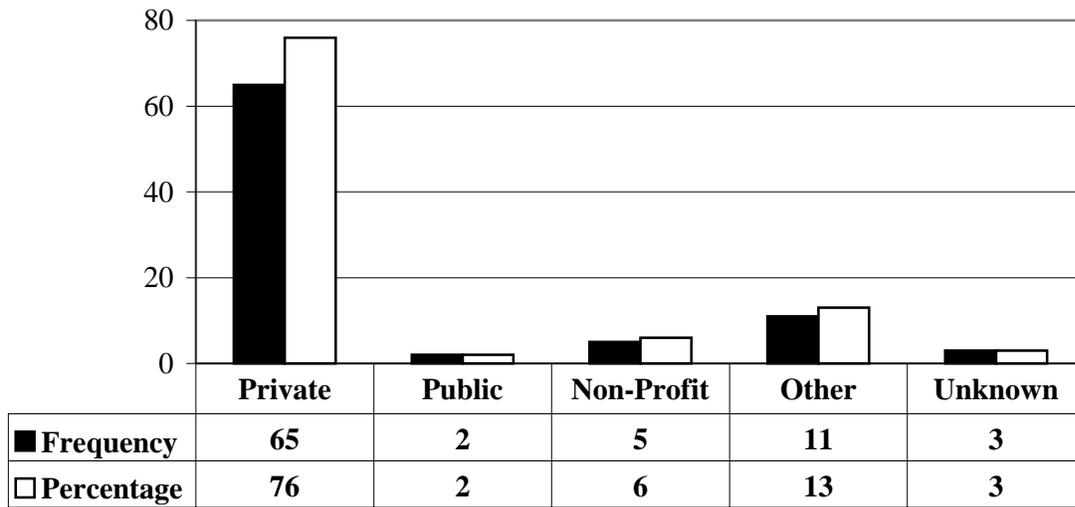


Figure 15 - Business Sector

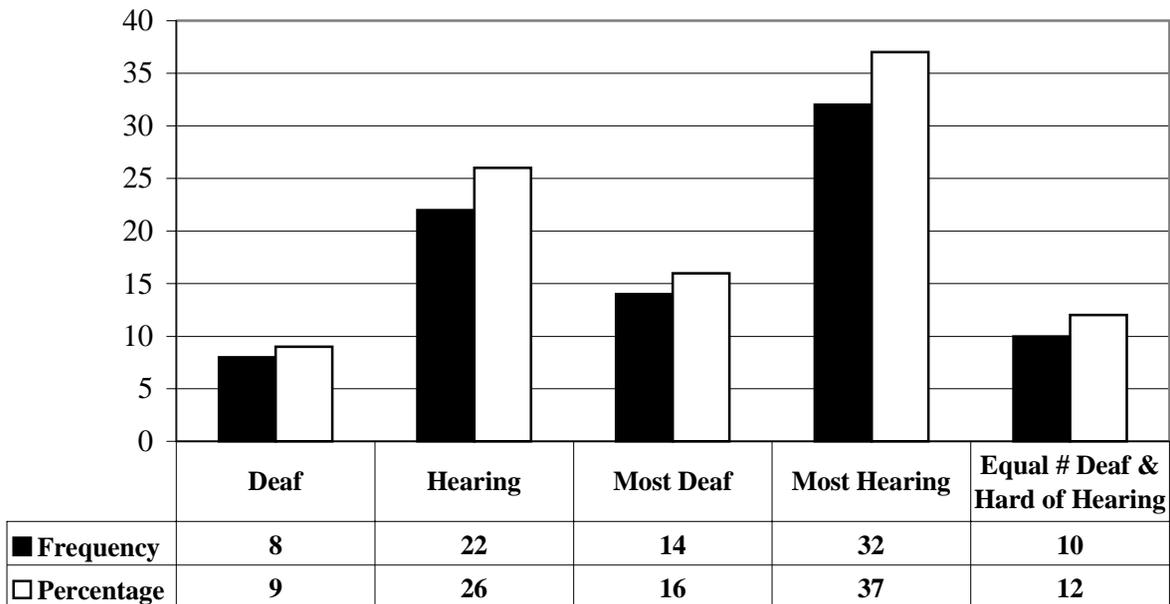


Figure 16 - Consumer Market

Motivation was explored to determine participant’s reasons for going into business. Over half of the respondents reported being their own boss and earning more money as the greatest motivational factors for going into business. Figure 17 shows that 51 people (59%) identified being their boss as the greatest motivational factor, 45 people (52%) wanted to earn more money, 31 people (36%) wanted to show that deaf people could succeed in private business, and 20 people (23%) believed that promotions were limited in their previous job.

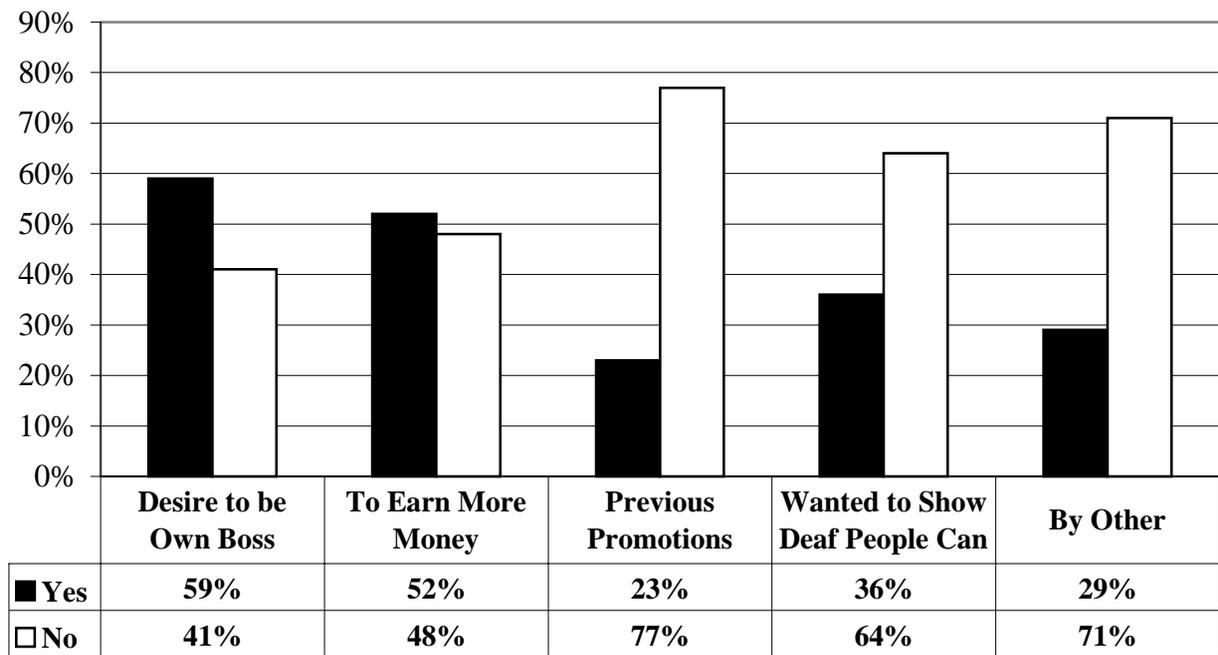


Figure 17 - Motivation

Research Question 6

Challenges in starting and managing their business were explored to answer the research question: What are the most significant challenges identified by Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners? Most respondents identified marketing, advertising, writing business plans and locating sources of funding as areas where they could have used more help in the start-up phase of their business. And, many included “proving to hearing people that a deaf person can run a business” and “communicating with hearing customers” as greatest challenges.

In both start-up and management phases of business operation participants were asked to look back and identify areas where they could have used more help and information. Figure 18 shows that 33 people (38%) identified marketing and selling their products and services, 26 people (30%) identified advertising their business, 26 people (30%) identified writing a business plan, 18 people (21%) identified basic accounting and legal information, and 12 people (14%) identified sources of funding.

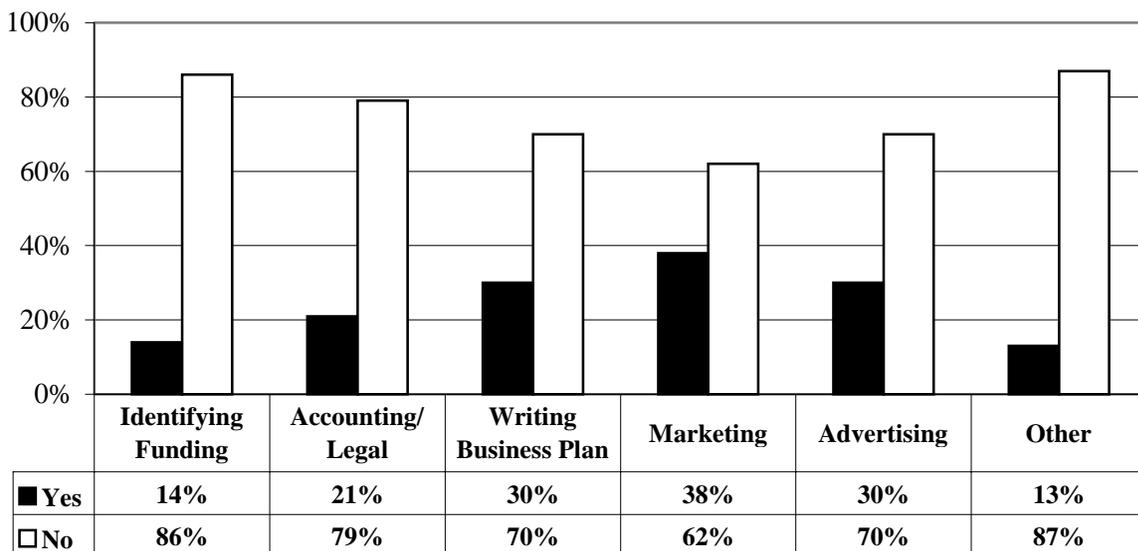


Figure 18 - Areas Where More Information Could Have Helped

Finally, participants were asked to share in their own words, their greatest challenges in starting their own business. Several themes emerged from their responses including (1) proving to hearing people that deaf people can run a business, (2) advertising and marketing their services and products, (3) developing networks and connections, (4) communicating with hearing customers, (5) developing both deaf and hearing customers, (6) starting and running the business, (7) paper work and time management. Appendix D contains a verbatim listing of responses.

Summary

This chapter was organized into four major sections, questionnaire response rate, the six research questions, limitations of the study, and the summary. Participants returned the questionnaires from 27 states and the District of Columbia for a 61 % response rate. Eighty-six respondents met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Although there were some females, the majority of respondents were males. Almost a third of the respondents started their business under the age of thirty. More than half of the respondents graduated from college. With the exception of two respondents, all reported prelingual deafness or being born deaf. Most came from hearing parents. American Sign Language (ASL) was the method of communication preferred by most outside of business, with a combination of methods including ASL and voice being predominant in business communication. Career development issues included data about influential role models and mentors at various developmental stages. Friends were identified most often as the role model in helping to start their business. Most respondents did not participate in internships or apprenticeship experiences, and when asked to describe in their own words how they got into their business, several themes emerged including having a dream, identifying talent, and the importance of polishing skills. Data on entrepreneurial activity revealed that almost half of the respondents started their business with one thousand dollars or less. Most were home-based, hired hearing people, and had both deaf and hearing consumers. The challenges described most often were related to complexities of deaf business ownership in a hearing world.

The following chapter will discuss these findings and will present conclusions and recommendations with implications for career development counseling.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is organized into five sections. It opens with a review of the purpose of the study and research questions guiding the study. Section two discusses the conclusions and implications for counseling. The focus then turns to a summary of implications for career counseling. The fourth section presents recommendations for training and future research. In addition, the last section provides a final summary.

Review of Purpose and Research Questions

The number and types of career fields that Deaf people enter has increased substantially over the years, including small business ownership and entrepreneurial activities. However, the research on Deaf business ownership has been limited to a few articles based on anecdotal evidence and profiles in newspapers, magazines and a few Deaf related journals. This study was undertaken to document, within the limitations of the sample, characteristics and demographics among Deaf entrepreneurs and business owners that could be used to develop counseling, training, and educational tools to help others who might be taking a similar career voyage.

The six research questions that guided the research explored information about the demographics; onset of the hearing loss; communication methods; career development; entrepreneurial elements; and challenges faced by Deaf business owners. The study was limited to a nationwide sample of 86 Deaf business owners drawn from the membership roster of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Entrepreneurial Council (DHHEC) based in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Conclusions and Implications for Counseling

The discussion of the conclusions derived from the questionnaire data is organized by a summary of the results and a discussion of the counseling implications. Each of the six research questions were considered and answered. The following results and conclusions were drawn from the 86 respondents representing 27 states and the District of Columbia.

Research Question 1: What are the demographic characteristics of Deaf business owners? The variables of gender, age and education produced the most significant findings.

Examination of the results of the gender variable showed a marked disparity between the entry of women into business ownership in the general population and the percentage of Deaf female

respondents in the survey. Deaf females do not appear to be making the same strides as women in the general population. In the general population, women have made great strides in establishing and maintaining businesses. The most recent data compiled from the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Bureau of Census, and The National Foundation for Women Business Owners (1996) reveals that women are changing the face of the economy. Today, women own almost 8 million U.S. firms (one-third of all U.S. businesses). The IBM Small Business Center (1998) reported that the fastest growing sector in American business is that of companies owned by women. The present study shows that only 17% of the respondents in this study were women.

The counseling implications of this disparity between Deaf male and female entrepreneurs for the career counselor are clear: Deaf women should be given special attention. They need to be made aware of the career possibilities ventured into by other Deaf women as well as Deaf males. When engaged in counseling dialogue, recommendations to the Deaf female client that include networking, interviewing, shadowing, and/or seeking a mentor with other Deaf women, in this case, Deaf female business owners or leaders might prove to be helpful. Also, since the results of this study showed limited access to Deaf role models, Deaf females should be encouraged to become a role model and/or mentor in order to share strategies for attaining career goals and work satisfaction.

Results of the age variable can be understood in the context of the literature review (Chapter II). The literature concerning the entrepreneurial and small business experience of special populations reported that AProfiles of Hispanic and Black business owners were similar in that the majority had more than five years of work experience before launching their own businesses. Almost half of the other minority owners had five or fewer years of employment experience before business ownership. The present study showed that 29% of Deaf entrepreneurs were below the age of 30 when they began their businesses and another 22% were between the ages of thirty and thirty-four. In this regard, the behavior of Deaf entrepreneurs mirrors the entrepreneurial career paths of other special populations: regardless of their age when starting their business, most have at least five years of work experience before launching a business.

The parallels between Deaf entrepreneurs and other special populations have significant implications for career counselors working with Deaf clients. Career counselors may use this insight as another strong indication that Deaf people have career paths that are similar to other special populations. More specifically, the career counselor can advise young Deaf clients who aspire to embark on an entrepreneurial venture that some previous work experience is highly desirable. However, this is not to imply that the work experience must be related to a specific kind of business. Participants from varying backgrounds with various work experiences launched all kinds of businesses. The key is to acquire work experience first.

The education variable revealed one of the most remarkable findings to emerge from this study: the educational attainment of Deaf entrepreneurs. More than 50% were college graduates and 72% of the respondents received some training and education beyond high school. This level differs sharply from the latest census data for both nonminority and minority entrepreneurs. The State Of Small Business: A Report Of The President 1993, showed that the largest percentage of the population (including nonminority males) to have graduated college was 27.3%. This striking difference between graduation rates is not fully understood yet. However, to offset any disadvantage, it appears that prospective Deaf entrepreneurs may have invested more time in their education than the population at large to reach similar career goals.

The implication for Counseling is that this data may be used by career counselors to point out to prospective Deaf entrepreneurs that a college degree is highly desirable, but not imperative, for an entrepreneurial career. The essential element is that some education and training beyond high school is necessary. A high school education by itself will not usually suffice.

Most Deaf entrepreneurs attended educational institutions not specifically dedicated to the education of Deaf students. In terms of higher education, Deaf business owners and entrepreneurs have clearly entered the main stream of American universities. While it is true, and not surprising, that almost half of the respondents attended the two premiere institutions devoted to educating Deaf students--Gallaudet University and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf--it is extremely important for career counselors to be aware of the fact that the Deaf entrepreneurs, in this study, also attended sixty-nine other colleges and universities throughout the country. Moreover, Allen (1994) estimated approximately 7,000 for the number of severely to profoundly deaf students enrolled in college programs for the 1992-93 school year. Approximately, 2500 (36%) of the students were enrolled in Gallaudet and NTID programs. What this implies is that the days when Deaf students were faced with limited educational choices are over: they can and do attend Cornell, Oberlin, Johns Hopkins, NYU, Pepperdine, and the University of Wisconsin, to cite just a few examples (refer to Table 6, page 57).

The counseling implication suggested here is that the career counselor can now safely say to Deaf students, parents, and teachers that Deaf people can attend any college or university they desire providing they meet common entrance requirements. Moreover, when the range of subjects studied is looked at, an equally rich picture emerges. When asked to identify their major in the college or university they attended, 10.5% of the respondents indicated that they had majored in accounting. However, what is notable about these findings is that in most cases Deaf entrepreneurs did not major in business-related subjects. Deaf entrepreneurs are majoring in all of the liberal arts areas from biology, to education, to psychology, to sociology.

Research question 2 determined whether there were consistent patterns in the detection of hearing loss among Deaf entrepreneurs. The age of onset helps to understand issues such as language development, self-identity, self-esteem, self-concept, and cultural identity. In this study, 80% of the respondents reported prelingual deafness--that is, they either were born deaf or became deaf before the age of three. Only two respondents indicated that they became deaf as adults. What this means is that the Deaf entrepreneurs in this study make up a truly deaf population. The relevance to counseling is that by holding up this population as a model, career counselors can convey to their clients that deafness is not a barrier in the pursuit of business (career) ambitions.

For the counselor, the age of the onset of deafness provides critically important information when making recommendations about educational planning. A person who was born deaf or became deaf before the age of three, when language development is normally established in the hearing population, often requires different speech therapy and voice recognition training than a person who became deaf after language was developed. The speech of a person born Deaf is usually unintelligible to the untrained hearing person. However, once hearing people are repeatedly exposed to deaf speech they can and often do communicate effectively with Deaf persons. The relevance to counseling is that by holding up this population as a model, career counselors can confidently convey to their clients that deafness is not a barrier in the pursuit of business (career) ambitions. This data becomes even more important when communication methods are examined.

Research question 3 investigated the communication methods used by Deaf entrepreneurs in their relationships with both Deaf and hearing people. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents reported that their preferred method of communication, when the other party is Deaf or is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), is ASL. ASL, a visual-manual language does not include the use of voice. The study showed that although ASL was the preferred method of communication, in business, most Deaf people use their voices to communicate with co-workers, suppliers, and clients. This held true whether or not they chose to couple their voices with other forms of communication, as in the method of total communication where voice is used with sign language, writing, fingerspelling or gestures

The explanation for this common phenomenon, coined here as Abusiness method of communication, anticipates the findings for some dimensions of the fifth research question: type of employees and nature of the market. Most Deaf entrepreneurs work with, and serve a predominantly hearing population, thus have developed communication strategies that are effective with this population, including the use of voice. Very few non-native signers understand ASL, a language with its own grammatical structure and syntax. The fundamental reality is that Deaf people have had to find ways to accommodate to the hearing world because most of the hearing world has not learned the language of the Deaf. This finding has a clear implication for career counselors working

with aspiring Deaf entrepreneurs: they should be encouraged to use their voices whenever possible, because in the world of business, voice is a primary communication tool, when meeting with hearing co-workers, suppliers, and clients.

Research question 4 explored the impact of significant others in one's career development. Key role models, mentors, and support groups who figured in the decision to launch one's business were reported. The most significant finding here was that different role models were prominent at different stages of career development. Family members and teachers were clearly the most important role models through the high school stage. However, in the period when respondents were about to launch their business ventures, family members remained important, but friends, as important role models, replaced teachers.

It must be noted that only three respondents mentioned a counselor as having played a role in this process. Since both career and rehabilitation counselors have not had any data on Deaf entrepreneurial activity available to them before now, their limited roles are understandable. However, this can now change. Both career and rehabilitation counselors can advocate entrepreneurial activity and business ownership, as a viable occupation, and thus help Deaf clients plan and prepare as they would with any career choice.

Research question 5 was concerned with the salient dimensions of the entrepreneurial activity: type of business, capital requirements, size, number and type of employees, and consumer market. A listing of the types of businesses owned and operated by Deaf entrepreneurs (refer to Table 11, page 68) mirrors the varied educational backgrounds of the respondents. The findings show that Deaf people are engaged in everything ranging from construction, to financial consulting, to desktop publishing, to writing, editing and research services. This is one of the more important findings to emerge from this study. A very important message for a career counselor to convey to a Deaf client might be: Ayou can do anything you want to do and be anything you want to be, but a more powerful and persuasive message to consider is that Ayou can do anything you want to do not only because of your interests, but also because Deaf people have already successfully done these things. The career counselor can also go on to point out that, finances do not necessarily stand in the way of business involvement. Many Deaf people received very little financial help from others in beginning their businesses. Forty percent relied on personal savings, while only 6% received government assistance and only 2% obtained capital from partners. Moreover, costs of accommodations such as interpreters, note takers, or telecommunication devices did not appear to affect starting capital requirements.

Another significant finding was that most of these entrepreneurs (76%) conduct their business in the private sector (refer to Figure 15, page 75). These results suggest that most Deaf entrepreneurs have gravitated toward the most dynamic part of our economy and have not relied on government

contracts to do their business. Moreover, 91% of the respondents reported that they conduct business with both deaf and hearing people, another indication that the Deaf entrepreneurs studied in this research are engaged in truly entrepreneurial activity: they have targeted the private sector and they have gone after the largest available market, the market consisting of both deaf and hearing people.

These findings reinforce some of the important implications previously mentioned. Aspiring Deaf entrepreneurs should certainly be made aware of the fact that those who have paved the way, have not as a general rule, sought out special aid or markets. Career Counselors are now in a position to help paint a picture of how other Deaf entrepreneurs have launched and established their businesses. This picture, for the most part, will portray a Deaf entrepreneur who raises his/ her own money to launch the business from personal savings, a Deaf entrepreneur who has both deaf and hearing employees, and a Deaf entrepreneur who conducts business in the private sector where most of the customers and suppliers are hearing people.

Research question 6 explored the overall challenges faced by Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. When business topics were presented to participants, the three most significant challenges identified were marketing, advertising, and the writing of business plans. However when asked in their own words to describe their greatest challenge, the most common written answer was Aproving to hearing people that deaf people can run a business.

These findings are extremely important for the Career Counselor who chooses to work with Deaf clients. Because while implications for training have been identified, perhaps the greatest need of Deaf business owners goes beyond the basic skills necessary to succeed in business to confronting the humanistic challenge of bridging two very similar yet different worlds.

Counselors now have a clear indication of the Deaf entrepreneur's greatest needs. It is hoped that counselors will be able to use this information to advocate and strengthen the bridge by listening and encouraging with realistic information. For the most part, those who chose to participate in this research have expressed their Acan do" attitude in the face of challenge. The message to career counselors, rehabilitation counselors, teachers, and parents may simply be that we should never become one of their obstacles but to look at these research findings as a guide for supporting the Deaf person's career aspirations.

Implications for Career Counseling

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following implications for career counseling are suggested:

1. *Deaf women should be given special attention.* When engaged in counseling dialogue, recommendations to the Deaf female client that include networking, interviewing, shadowing,

and/or seeking a mentor with other Deaf women, in this case, Deaf female business owners or leaders might prove to be helpful. Deaf females should be encouraged to become a role model and/or mentor in order to share strategies for attaining career goals and work satisfaction. This is no easy task. The counselor who has access to larger groups of Deaf women or female students such as those in school or college settings can aid in this process early, by developing mentorship programs and encouraging their clients to participate.

2. *Work experience first, is an essential factor.* Because, Deaf people have career paths that are similar to other special populations, the career counselor can advise young Deaf clients to gain some work experience before embarking on an entrepreneurial venture. Based on the experience of the participants in this study, learning about the world of work before launching a business was the route that most took. However, this is not to imply that the work experience must be related to a specific kind of business. Participants from varying backgrounds with various work experiences launched all kinds of businesses.

3. *The key to success often lies in higher education.* A high school education by itself will not usually suffice. Most respondents graduated from a college or university. The implication for Counseling is that a college degree is highly desirable, although not imperative, for an entrepreneurial career. The essential element, regardless of the college major, which did not seem to enter as a key factor, is that some education and training beyond high school is necessary. The Deaf entrepreneurs in this study majored in everything from biology, to education, to psychology, to sociology, to business-related subjects.

4. *Deafness alone is not a barrier.* The relevance to counseling is that by holding up this population as a model, career counselors can confidently convey to their clients that deafness is not a barrier in the pursuit of business (career) ambitions. Both career and rehabilitation counselors can advocate entrepreneurial activity and business ownership, as a viable occupation, and thus help Deaf clients plan and prepare as they would with any career choice.

5. *Voice is a primary communication tool.* This finding has a clear implication for career counselors working with aspiring Deaf entrepreneurs: they should be encouraged to use their voices whenever possible, because in the world of business, voice is a primary communication tool, when meeting with hearing co-workers, suppliers, and clients.

6. *Counselors can hold this population as a model.* They can now safely say to their Deaf clients: *Ay you can do anything you want to do not only because of your interests, but also because Deaf people have already successfully done these things.*

7. *Strong interests and skills along with other motivational factors appeared to be more influential than large quantities of start-up capital.* Finances do not necessarily stand in the way of business involvement. Most of the people in this study used very little money to start their business.

However, as a counselor one is often in a position to plant seeds and suggest further exploration of possible resources. Suggesting the exploration of some of the low interest funding sources available to special populations from sources like the U.S. Small Business Administration might prove to be beneficial for start-up ventures and open more possibilities.

8. *The typical Deaf business owner who participated in this study* for the most part can be described as an entrepreneur who raises his/ her own money to launch the business from personal savings, has hearing employees, and conducts business in the private sector where most of the customers and suppliers are hearing people.

9. To *advocate and strengthen the bridge* that leads to greater career satisfaction, it is hoped that counselors will use this information by listening, guiding and encouraging with realistic information.

Recommendations For Training

1. The first recommendation emerges from the fact that up to now very little was known about Deaf entrepreneurs. Consequently, career counselors, rehabilitation counselors, and teachers were not in a position to support entrepreneurship as a viable career option. The results of this study clearly indicate that we are now in a position to support and use the data to guide and teach future Deaf people with similar career aspirations. Therefore, it is recommended that secondary and postsecondary schools that are committed to educating Deaf students design and implement *Small Business Development and Resource Centers* where potential entrepreneurs, counselors, and teachers could go to learn and study from the experiences and successes of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. A clearly defined small business development and resource center on a college campus and/or school for the Deaf could serve as a clearinghouse for information about Deaf entrepreneurs, types of businesses, funding sources, demographics, hiring procedures, employees, communication methods, advertising and marketing techniques, record keeping and tax elements, advantages and disadvantages of owning a business, and other essential elements that would help aspiring entrepreneurs make informed decisions and at the same time serve as a guide and support to existing Deaf businesses.
2. Deaf women were underrepresented, compared to both women in general and male Deaf entrepreneurs. The reasons for this disparity are not yet understood. Nevertheless, it seems appropriate to recommend the development of a range of informational tools, which could be targeted at Deaf women. Specifically, it is recommended that a very useful follow-up to the current study would be the development and dissemination of:

- A. A series of captioned videotapes depicting the working lives of female Deaf entrepreneurs.
 - B. A series of captioned videotapes describing the business careers of both male and female Deaf entrepreneurs
 - C. A directory of Deaf entrepreneurs consisting of capsule biographies. This type of directory should be placed in every school where Deaf children are present.
Additionally, every Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf (RCD) should have a copy.
 - D. An electronic web page devoted to Deaf entrepreneurs.
3. At the age of 16, every Deaf individual becomes eligible for State Vocational Rehabilitation Services financed by the Federal government. It is at this crucial juncture that those who choose to participate begin their journeys towards eventual job placement. High school counselors and vocational rehabilitation counselors begin to play important roles in career decisions. Therefore, the second recommendation is the development of materials for transition planning, and the development and implementation of workshops with follow up materials for high school counselors and vocational rehabilitation counselors, on the subject of Deaf entrepreneurship. Moreover, in order to prepare Counselors to work with Deaf clients, who have entrepreneurial interests, it is suggested that higher education programs that offer school counseling, rehabilitation counseling, and community counseling training programs incorporate information about Deaf entrepreneurship in their curriculums.
4. The research question that focused on role models and key influences revealed that:
- a) Teachers play a crucial role until high school graduation, but then give way to friends and family; and b) the virtual total absence of Counselors in impacting Deaf entrepreneurs. Thus, further study is indicated to learn what role, if any, the counselor plays in a Deaf person's career development. Professional development materials and programs similar to those suggested for the rehabilitation counselor should be developed to keep counselors abreast of the latest career developments of the Deaf and other special populations.
5. The fifth recommendation is that organizations such as the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Entrepreneurial Council develop a continuing series of workshops addressed to those areas (especially marketing) where respondents indicated a need for greater assistance. More specifically, these workshops would deal with writing of business plans, strategic marketing, sources of capital, basic accounting and effective communication with a hearing world.

Recommendations for Future Research

To increase our understanding of their career development, it is recommended that further study of Deaf business owners be undertaken. The following is suggested:

1. When given the opportunity to write in their own words how they became involved in their businesses, several of the respondents reported the influence of leisure activities such as hobbies and special interests (refer to Appendix D). The influence of leisure activities on career development has been researched and discussed extensively by McDaniels (1977, 1984a, 1984b, 1989, 1992) and to a lesser extent by Liptak (1991), Pearson (1998), Mullins (1998), and others. However, research about the role and influence of leisure activities in the career development of Deaf people is lacking. Referencing the present study, the influence of leisure activities in the selection of entrepreneurship/small business ownership was brought to our attention by the respondents. Most research in the general population does not include Deaf people in their samples. For that reason, studies in this area specific to the Deaf population are suggested. Data about the influence and participation in leisure activities in both residential and mainstream school settings might yield information for identifying those activities that have lead to specific career selection and assist counselors and teachers with educational and extra-curricular planning.
2. Further study is needed to answer the question: What about the success and failure of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners? Clearly, the research in this area is lacking. Learning the real and perceived reasons for successes and failures of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners could help others with similar career goals in their planning.
3. Another area yet to be researched is the impact of Deaf entrepreneurship on the family. Exploring a range of issues (family involvement with the business, divorce and separation, businesses passed onto children, economic impacts) might benefit future deaf business owners and counselors in planning training programs and support groups.
4. Most Deaf children and adolescents are exposed to counselors in schools and vocational rehabilitation settings, therefore research is also indicated to learn what role, if any, the counselor plays in a Deaf person's career development.
5. This study was limited to Deaf business owners, hence research on Hard of Hearing business owners has yet to be explored. Are the career development issues for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people the same or are there differences? The present study lays the groundwork for future exploration.

Furthermore, future researchers may want to consider selecting methodologies with promise for eliciting responses and data collection that allows Deaf entrepreneurs to tell their stories. Qualitative

interviewing using videotapes is one method that could foster story telling. Another alternative methodology to consider is using qualitative focus groups. More specifically combining focus group methodology with current and emerging technologies using group software, where each participant is seated in front of a computer and anonymously enters their responses and comments in real-time, allowing accessible and full participation. Finally, to chart the progress of respondents, and to determine what, if anything has changed in the intervening years, the same or similar instrument used in this study could be administered in the future.

Summary

This study sought to document the characteristics and demographics of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners that could be used to develop counseling, training, and educational tools to help others with making similar career voyages. Six research questions guided the study.

To answer the six research questions, survey research methodology was selected. A questionnaire was designed and sent to a nationwide mailing list of Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. Respondents from 27 states and the District of Columbia met the criteria for inclusion in the study and comprised a purposeful sample that provided responses to the questionnaire. The answers to the six research questions provided data that resulted in significant findings, implications, and recommendations for counseling and future research.

Based on the data collected from the sample, significant findings about the characteristics and demographic variables leading to entrepreneurial activities were reported. Career development and educational activities leading to entrepreneurship were described. Dimensions of entrepreneurial activity were reported that included areas where business owners could have used more help and greatest challenges.

Implications for career counseling were presented. Based on the results of the study it was suggested that Deaf women be given special attention; counselors encourage clients to continue their education beyond high school, and to work before launching their business. Participants in the study suggested that developing strong interests and skills were essential, and that voice was used as a primary communication tool in business. When appropriate, counselors may hold this population as a model to others, demonstrating that deafness alone is not a barrier to career aspirations. An additional technique career counselors may find helpful, is describing the characteristics of the typical Deaf business owner who participated in this study. The typical Deaf business owner who participated in this study was an entrepreneur who raised his/her own money from personal savings, had hearing employees, and conducted business in the private sector with mostly hearing people. Additionally, client advocacy by counselors through listening, guiding, and encouraging with realistic information was also suggested.

Recommendations were offered that included suggestions for establishing small business development and resource centers, disseminating information, and developing specific training and follow-up materials for Deaf business owners and counselors. It was suggested that future research be considered to study: (a) the influence of leisure activities, (b) reasons for success and failure and, (c) impact on the family, and (d) counselor's role in career development, (e) study of Hard of Hearing entrepreneurs. Finally, it was recommended that future research consider using qualitative methodologies along with current and emerging technologies.

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APPENDIX A

ENTREPRENEURIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

COVER LETTER

FIRST REMINDER LETTER

SECOND REMINDER LETTER

ENTREPRENEURIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Today's Date: _____

A. Are you? (Please check one) ___ Deaf ___ Hard of Hearing ___ Hearing

B. Owning a business is how you work and earn money to support yourself and/or family.

A business owner is a person who controls and makes decisions about the business.

Please check one:

Do you own a business by yourself? ___ YES ___ NO

Do you own a business with another person(s)? ___ YES ___ NO

If you are not Deaf or if you are not a business owner please do not answer any more questions. Return this survey in the stamped envelope that came in your packet.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and time.

If you are Deaf and own a business by yourself or with another person(s) please continue answering the rest of the questions below. Thank you.

1. What kind of business do you own (for example: computer, medical service, financial service, construction)?
Please write in your answer below:

2. What is your title? Please choose one: (1) ___ President (2) ___ CEO (3) Other (Please explain) _____

Background Information

3. What year were you born? _____

4. What is your sex? (1) ___ Male (2) ___ Female

5. How old were you when you became Deaf ? _____

6. Were your parents...? (Please check one) (1) ___ Deaf (2) ___ Hard of Hearing (3) ___ Hearing
(4) ___ Other (Please explain) _____

7. a. What was your father's work (occupation) when you were about age 16? Please write in your answer:

b. Did your father ever own his own business? (Please check one) (1) ___ Yes (2) ___ No

8. a. What was your mother's work (occupation) when you were about age 16? Please write in your answer:

b. Did your mother ever own her own business? (Please check one) (1) ___ Yes (2) ___ No

Education

9. When you were a child what type of school did you attend? (Please check one)

(1) ___ Residential School (A school for the Deaf)

(2) ___ Mainstream School Program (A public school with a Deaf program)

(3) ___ Both Residential and Mainstream School Programs

(4) ___ Public School/no mainstream program

(5) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

10. Did you graduate from a residential school for the Deaf? (1) ____ Yes (2) ____ No

11. Did you graduate from a public or hearing school? (1) ____ Yes (2) ____ No

12. If you did not graduate from a school, please check here ____.

13. If you went to college please provide the following information for each school you attended:

Name of college	Year Completed	Degree	Major
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Communication

14. How do you communicate most of the time? (Please check all that apply)

- (1) ____ ASL (3) ____ Cued Speech
(2) ____ Voice (4) ____ Other (Please Explain) _____

15. When you want to communicate **with hearing co-workers, suppliers, and clients** which method do you **most often** use? (Please check only those that apply)

- (1) ____ Writing (4) ____ Sign language with speech at the same time
(2) ____ Talking (5) ____ Fingerspelling only
(3) ____ Sign language without speech (6) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

16. When **hearing co-workers, suppliers and clients communicate with you**, which method do they use **most often**? (Please check only those that apply)

- (1) ____ Writing (5) ____ Sign language with speech at the same time
(2) ____ Talking (for you to lipread) (6) ____ Fingerspelling only
(3) ____ Talking (using an interpreter) (7) ____ Gestures
(4) ____ Sign language without speech (8) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

17. **In your work**, there are several communication aids listed below. Please check all that you use:

- (1) ____ Interpreter (5) ____ E-mail
(2) ____ Telephone Amplifier (6) ____ Telephone Relay Services
(3) ____ Hearing Aid (7) ____ Other (Please explain) _____
(4) ____ Note Taker for Meetings

Your Career Development

18. A **role model** is a person who is as an **example** for others to copy. For example, Gallaudet University President, I. King Jordan is a great leader. He serves both the Deaf and hearing world as a leadership role model. Dr. Jordan has shown that Deaf people can do anything that hearing people can do except hear.

Who were the **most important career role models** during your school years?

A. School years from about age 3 through age 13. (Check only **one**)

- (1) ____ A Teacher (5) ____ A business person
(2) ____ A Counselor (6) ____ A Friend
(3) ____ A Dormitory supervisor (7) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

- (4) ____ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)

B. School years from about age 14 through age 19: (Check only **one**)

- (1) ____ A Teacher
(2) ____ A Counselor
(3) ____ A Dormitory supervisor
(4) ____ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) ____ A business person
(6) ____ A Friend
(7) ____ Other (Please explain)_____

C. After high school e.g. vocational school or college years: (Check only **one**)

- (1) ____ A Teacher
(2) ____ A Counselor
(3) ____ A Dormitory supervisor
(4) ____ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) ____ A business person
(6) ____ A Friend
(7) ____ Other (Please explain)_____

19. Who was the most important **role model in helping to start your business?** (Check only **one**)

- (1) ____ A Teacher
(2) ____ A Counselor
(3) ____ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (4) ____ A Friend
(5) ____ A boss or supervisor
(6) ____ Other (Please explain)_____

20. A **mentor** is a person who is wise, trusted and shows you the way. An example of a mentor would be a person who helps another person learn specific skills, follows up, and continues to guide the person to make sure they become good at their work. Did you have a mentor in **helping to start your business?**

- (1) ____ Yes (2) ____ No

21. If you checked yes to the above question, who was the most important mentor in helping to start your business? (Check only **one**)

- (1) ____ A Teacher
(2) ____ A School Counselor
(3) ____ A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VR)
(4) ____ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) ____ A Friend
(6) ____ A boss or an employer
(7) ____ Other (Please explain)_____

22. Did you ever participate in an internship or apprenticeship (student training) program that helped prepare you for our current business? (1) ____ Yes (2) ____ No

If you answered yes, please share any information that might help others e.g. name and length of program:

23. In a few sentences, please describe briefly how you got into your business, so that young Deaf people can learn from your success. (If necessary, use another piece of paper to complete your answer)

Entrepreneurial and Business Activity

24. What year did you start your business? _____

25. Where is your business located? (Please check one)

- (1) ____ Home Based Office
- (2) ____ Office Building
- (3) ____ Shopping Center Store Front
- (4) ____ Shopping Mall
- (5) ____ Industrial area
- (6) ____ Other (please explain) _____

26. How much money did you use to start your business? \$_____ (If you answered \$0.00, skip question #27)

27. Where did you get most of the start up money for your business?

- (1) ____ Personal savings
- (2) ____ Family
- (3) ____ Friends
- (4) ____ Partners
- (5) ____ Bank loan
- (6) ____ Government assistance
- (7) ____ Other (please explain) _____

28. Is your business a . . . ? (Please check one):

- (1) ____ Sole Proprietorship
- (2) ____ Partnership
- (3) ____ Corporation
- (4) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

29. Please tell us about your customers or clients. Most of my business is with...? (Please check one)

- (1) ____ Deaf people
- (2) ____ Hearing people
- (3) ____ Mostly Deaf and some hearing people
- (4) ____ Mostly hearing and some Deaf people
- (5) ____ Same amount of Deaf and Hearing people

30. Is most of your business involved with the . . . ? (Please check one)

- (1) ____ Private Sector
- (2) ____ Public Sector (Government)
- (3) ____ Non-Profit
- (4) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

31. How many people work for you in your business? _____

32. Please tell us about the people who work for you. (Please check one)

- (1) ____ They are Deaf
- (2) ____ They are Hearing
- (3) ____ They are both Deaf and Hearing
- (4) ____ I have no workers
- (5) ____ Other (Please explain) _____

33. What motivated you to start your own business? (Check all that apply)

- (1) ____ Want to be your own boss
- (2) ____ Want to earn more money
- (3) ____ Believe that in your previous job promotions were limited
- (4) ____ Want to show that Deaf people could succeed in private business
- (5) ____ Other (please explain) _____

34. Looking back, in what areas of starting and managing a business could you have used more help and information?

- (1) ____ Identifying sources of funding
- (2) ____ Basic accounting and legal information
- (3) ____ Writing a business plan
- (4) ____ Marketing and selling my products & services
- (5) ____ Advertising my business
- (6) ____ Other (please explain) _____

35. What was your greatest challenge in starting your own business. Please share in your own words.

If you wish, write comments or further information on separate sheets of paper.

Thank you very much for completing this survey. Please return it to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed.

I may select some business owners for in-depth personal interviews. If you would be willing to participate in an interview please provide the following information:

Name: _____ Fax: _____

Address: _____ E-mail: _____

Phone Number: _____

The above information is for research purposes only and will not be distributed to anyone else.

Please feel free to use space below to provide additional information or write comments.

LOUIS J. SCHWARZ, CFP, RFC
Schwarz Financial Concepts
814 Thayer Avenue, Suite 301
Silver Spring, MD 20910-4500

October 3, 1997

Business Owner
Business Address
City, State, Zip

Dear XXXX:

We need your help! The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Entrepreneurs Council (DHHEC) has noticed there is not enough information known about Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners. Sue Pressman is doing this research to fulfill part of her Doctoral degree requirements at Virginia Tech, with faculty participation from Gallaudet University. Some of you may know Sue. Sue has been working in the field of Career Counseling with Deaf people for about twenty years. Sue met with me and has my full support for this research. I have helped her identify many Deaf business owners from the DHHEC membership and mailing list.

We ask for your support, and hope that by learning from your experiences, Sue will be able to educate teachers and families of young Deaf people, career counselors, and vocational rehabilitation counselors, and the DHHEC about entrepreneurship/ business ownership **as a possible career option for future Deaf entrepreneurs and business owners.**

Your participation is very important to the future of other Deaf people who want to look at all their options when making career decisions. **Please take about 15 minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by October 20, 1997.**

Your responses are confidential. No names or individual information will be used or released to anyone. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Sue Pressman at the number listed below.

Sincerely,

Louis J. Schwarz, CFP, RFC

Sue E. Pressman, LPC, NCC, NCCC

SUE PRESSMAN, LPC, NCC, NCCC
Doctoral Candidate, Virginia Tech
6200 N. 28th Street
Arlington, VA 22207
703-534-8797 TTY
703-941-7709 Fax
E-mail: SEPressman@aol.com

November 1, 1997

Business Owner
Business Address
City, State, Zip

Dear XXXX:

Please, don't be left out! You were mailed an entrepreneur survey with an enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope a few weeks ago. I have not received your answered survey yet. **Your responses are very important to future Deaf business owners.** I realize your time is very precious, but won't you please take about 15 minutes to fill out the survey and mail it to me, **today**, so that teachers, counselors, families and other Deaf people can learn from your experiences.

Your responses are confidential. No names or individual information will be used or released to anyone. If you threw away or cannot find the original survey I sent you, please get in touch with me at any of the numbers listed above and I will send you another survey.

Sincerely,

Sue E. Pressman

December 10, 1997

PLEASE HELP

I have not received your completed survey. **Don't be left out.** Please take this opportunity to be part of a group of business owners that will collectively help Counselors, Teachers, Parents and other Deaf people, through this research. Just in case the first survey has been misplaced or lost, another copy is enclosed for you.

All individual information and names will be kept strictly confidential. I have already received many answers to the surveys. However, your information is extremely important in order to provide the most accurate information possible. Please take this opportunity to be included so others may learn from your experiences.

As a Career Counselor in the Deaf community for twenty years, I am committed to providing the best and most accurate information to Deaf people seeking career counseling and guidance. Please help me do this by **filling out the survey and returning it TODAY.**

Thank you very much for your assistance. If you have any concerns or questions, please do get in touch with me.

BEST WISHES FOR A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!

Sue Pressman, LPC, NCC, NCCC
6200 N. 28th Street

Arlington, VA 22207

Fax: 703-941-7709

E-mail: sepressman@aol.com
Home Phone: 703-536-3663 V/TTY

APPENDIX B

**PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
CRAMMATTE (1982)**

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
Crammatte (1982)

Background Information

1. What year were you born_____
2. What is your sex? (1)___Male (2)___Female
3. What is your race? (1)___White (2)___Black (3)___Hispanic (4)___Asian
(5)___American Indian (6)___Other (Please Explain)
4. a. What was the name of your father=s usual occupation when you were about age 16?
If he had more than one occupation, name the one which was the most important.

- b. What were the tasks which he did on his job most of the time?

- c. What was the name of your mother=s occupation when you were about age 16?

- d. What tasks did she perform?

Hearing

5. How old were you when you began to have serious trouble hearing or became deaf?
(1)___Less than 1 year old (4)___6 and under 12 years old
(2)___1 and under 3 years old (5)___12 and under 19 years old
(3)___3 and under 6 years old (6)___19 years old or older
6. Extent of deafness (Please answer each question either Yes or NO by checking ONE choice per line. Answer the way you hear without a hearing aid.)
 - a. Can you usually hear and understand what a person says without seeing his face if he whispers to you from across a quiet room? (1)___Yes (2)___No
 - b. Can you usually hear and understand what a person says without seeing his face if he talks in a normal voice to you from across a quiet room? (1)___Yes (2)___No.
 - c. Can you usually hear and understand what a person says without seeing his face if he shouts to you from across a quiet room? (1)___Yes (2)___No.

- d. Can you usually hear and understand a person if he speaks loudly into your better ear?
(1)___Yes (2)___No
- e. Can you usually tell the sound of speech from other sounds and noises?
(1)___Yes (2)___No
- f. Can you usually tell one kind of a noise from another? (1)___Yes (2)___No
- g. Can you hear loud noises? (1)___Yes (2)___No

Communication

- 7. What percentage of your daily communication during working hours is with persons who do not use sign language?
(1)___0-24% (2)___25-49% (3)___50-74% (4)___75-100%
- 8. What percent of your social contacts away from work are with people who do not use sign language?
(1)___0-24% (2)___25-49% (3)___50-74% (4)___75-100%
- 9. When you want to communicate *to hearing co-workers*, which method below do you use?

Please check one method

- Writing _____
- Talking _____
- Sign language without speech _____
- Sign language with speech at the same time _____
- Fingerspelling only _____
- Other (Please Specify) _____

- 10. When hearing co-workers communicate to you, which method do they use most often?

Please check one method

- Writing _____
- Talking _____
- Sign language without speech _____
- Sign language with speech at the same time _____
- Fingerspelling only _____
- Other (Please Specify) _____

11. Which one of the sentences below best describes how well you understand the speech of hearing co-workers most of the time, during one-to-one conversations? (Check one)

- (1)___I understand almost everything they say, no matter how they say it.
- (2)___I understand a short conversation, when it is spoken carefully.
- (3)___I understand only a short, simple sentence spoken carefully.
- (4)___I understand only a word or two spoken now and then.

12. Which one of the sentences below best describes how well your hearing co-workers seem to understand your speech in your usual working environment? (Check one)

- (1)___They don't have to listen carefully to understand most everything I say.
- (2)___They understand almost everything I say but often ask me to repeat.
- (3)___They understand only a word or two now and then.
- (4)___None of these (Please describe)_____

13. From whom did you first learn to sign? (Please check one)

- (1)___Family (parents or siblings)
- (2)___Friends outside of school
- (3)___School staff or teacher
- (4)___School pupils
- (5)___At college
- (6)___Other (whom?)
- (7)___I do not sign

Education

14. Which of the following best describes the type of school from which you received your high school diploma? (Check one)

- (1)___Residential high school for deaf students only
- (2)___Day school with program for deaf students only
- (3)___General high school with program for deaf students as well as hearing
- (4)___General high school without a program for deaf students
- (5)___General boarding school or preparatory academy
- (6)___Other (Please describe)_____

15. Circle below the number which shows the highest level of education (by grade or year as usually measured) which you have completed. (Circle one)

Elementary and high school
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Undergraduate
13 14 15 16

MA/MS JD etc.
17 18 19

Doctorate
20 21

16. For each college degree or program which you have completed, please provide the following information:

	Major	Name of College	Year Completed
Certificate	_____	_____	_____
Associate Degree	_____	_____	_____
BA/B.S.	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____
MA/MS (1 year)	_____	_____	_____
MA/MS (2 years)	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____
Doctorate	_____	_____	_____

17. During your studies at college(s) other than at Gallaudet or NTID, what special aids did you have? (Check all that apply)

- (1)___ Interpreters
- (2)___ Note takers
- (3)___ Tutors
- (4)___ Counselors
- (5)___ Favorable seating
- (6)___ Speech and Hearing Centers
- (7)___ Professors who knew something about deafness
- (8)___ Attendance at some classes not required
- (9)___ Extra copies of lecture notes
- (10)___ Other (What?)_____

Occupation

First Professional Job: Now some questions about the first full-time professional job on which you worked after you had completed your first college degree.

18. When did you start your first professional job as described above?
(Year)_____

19. Who helped you the most in getting your first full-time professional job? (Check one).

- (1)___ College placement officer
- (2)___ Other college faculty or staff
- (3)___ Rehabilitation counselor
- (4)___ Employment office
- (5)___ Family
- (6)___ Friend
- (7)___ Found the job myself
- (8)___ Other (specify)

20. What was the title of that first professional job?

21. What were the tasks or duties that you did on this job most of the time?

30. There are a number of aids to communication listed below. How do you rate these aids as used in your working environment? (Check one for each line).

	Do not have	Very helpful	Fairly helpful	Not helpful
Telephone with visual display (T.D./TRY)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Interpreter	_____	_____	_____	_____
Telephone Amplifier	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hearing Aid	_____	_____	_____	_____
Secretary (notes for conferences/phone)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Co-worker (notes for conferences/phone)	_____	_____	_____	_____
Agenda to read before meeting	_____	_____	_____	_____
Summary of meeting given you afterwards	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Please describe)_____				

31. How many times have you been promoted to a new job at your present place of employment?

32. Have you received any merit raises or awards in the job you now have?
(1)___Yes(2)___No

33. How much do you like each of these situations? (Check one for each line)

	Like very much	Like a little	Dislike a little	Dislike very much	Does not apply
Chances for promotion	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
The kind of work you are doing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Like very much	Like a little	Dislike a little	Dislike very much	Does not apply
Your supervisors	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Colleagues who work with you	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
People who work for you	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Your salary	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

34. How often have you experienced unfair rejection by employers in each of the job activities listed below? (Check one for each line)

	Very often	Often	Some- times	Almost never	Never
Hiring	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Promotion	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Training on the Job	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication at work	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Salary	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Dream job. Many of us hope for a dream job. What are your hopes?

35. Write the job title that best describes your dream job.

36. Describe some of the tasks which you would do most of the time if you were working on your dream job.

Activities in Organizations

37. Write in below the names of the professional associations or societies to which you paid dues in 1982. For each organization check all the activities that you did. Please write out full names of organizations.

	Attended meetings	Served on committees	Was elected officer	None of these
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

38. Do the same for community organizations such as civic associations, service clubs, NAD, RID, state associations, and such.

	Attended meetings	Served on committees	Was elected officer	None of these
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

THANK YOU! If you wish, please write comments or further information below or on separate sheets.

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

RESULTS

July 17, 1997

INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to read and answer this questionnaire. I have designed this survey/questionnaire as part of my doctoral dissertation in counselor education and supervision at Virginia Tech with faculty representation from Gallaudet University. It is a brand new survey that is being developed for research purposes to study Deaf entrepreneurs and small business owners.

It is my hope that by learning from this special group we will be able to educate career counselors, vocational rehabilitation counselors, teachers and families of young Deaf people about entrepreneurship/business ownership as a possible career option for future Deaf entrepreneurs and business owners.

Procedures:

1. Keep track of approximately how long it took you answer the entire questionnaire and write it down in the space below.
2. Please read and answer the questions as if you were a business owner.
3. If you understand the questions, please answer it and move onto the next item.
4. If you do not clearly understand a question, make comments or suggestions about the language directly on or next to that particular item. Feel free to mark on the questionnaire.

Thank you very much for your input. I really do appreciate your help.

Sue E. Pressman, LPC, NCC, NCCC
Doctoral Candidate, Virginia Tech
Masters Degree, Gallaudet University
Bachelors Degree, University of Florida

Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this research with me.
703-536-3663 V/TTY
E-mail: sepressman@aol.com

How much time did it take you to answer all items? Starting time: _____

Ending time: _____

Date: _____.

Your Occupation: _____

Your Name: (Optional) _____

Education

9. When you were a child what type of school did you attend? (Please check one)

- (1) Residential School (A school for the Deaf) _____
- (2) Mainstream School Program (A public school with a Deaf program) _____
- (3) Both Residential and Mainstream School Programs _____
- (4) Public School/no mainstream program _____
- (5) Other (Please explain) _____

10. Did you graduate from a residential school for the Deaf? ___Yes ___No

11. Did you graduate from a public or hearing school? ___Yes ___No

12. If you did **not** graduate from a school, please check here _____.

13. If you went to college please provide the following information for each school you attended:

Name of college	Year Completed	Degree	Major
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Communication

14. How do you communicate most of the time? (Please check all that apply)

- (1) ___ ASL (2) ___ Voice (3) ___ Cued Speech
- (4) ___ Other (Please Explain) _____

15. When you want to communicate **with hearing co-workers, suppliers, and clients** which method(s) do you **most** often? (Please check only those that apply)

- (1) Writing _____
- (2) Talking _____
- (3) Sign language without speech _____
- (4) Sign language with speech at the same time _____
- (5) Fingerspelling only _____
- (6) Other (Please explain) _____

16. When hearing **co-workers, suppliers and clients communicate with you**, which method do they use **most** often? (Please check only those that apply)

- (1) Writing _____
- (2) Talking (for you to lipread) _____
- (3) Talking (using an interpreter) _____
- (4) Sign language without speech _____
- (5) Sign language with speech at the same time _____
- (6) Fingerspelling only _____
- (7) Other (Please explain) _____

17. There are several communication aids listed below. Please check all that you use **in your work**

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Interpreter _____ | E-mail _____ |
| Telephone Amplifier _____ | Telephone Relay Services _____ |
| Hearing Aid _____ | |
| Note Taker for Meetings _____ | Other (Please describe) _____ |

Your Career Development

18. A **role model** is a person who is an example for others to copy. For example, Gallaudet University President, I. King Jordan is a great leader. He serves both the Deaf and hearing world as a leadership role model. Dr. Jordan has shown that Deaf people can do anything that hearing people can do except hear.

Who were the **most important career role models** during your school years?

A. School years from about age 3 through age 13. (Check only **one**)

- (1) ___ A Teacher
- (2) ___ A Counselor
- (3) ___ A Dormitory supervisor
- (4) ___ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) ___ A Friend
- (6) ___ Other (Please explain) _____

B. School years from about age 14 through age 19: (Check only **one**)

- (1) ___ A Teacher
- (2) ___ A Counselor
- (3) ___ A Dormitory supervisor
- (4) ___ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) ___ A Friend
- (6) ___ Other (Please explain) _____

C. After high school e.g. vocational school or college years: (Check only **one**)

- (1) ___ A Teacher
- (2) ___ A Counselor
- (3) ___ A Dormitory supervisor
- (4) ___ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) ___ A Friend
- (6) ___ Other (Please explain) _____

19. Who was the **most important role model in helping to start your business**? (Check only **one**)

- (1) ___ A Teacher
- (2) ___ A Counselor
- (3) ___ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (4) ___ A Friend
- (5) ___ Other (Please explain) _____

20. A **mentor** is a person who is wise, trusted and shows you the way. An example of a mentor would be a person who helps another person learn specific skills, follows up, and continues to guide the person to make sure they become good at their work. Did you have a mentor **in helping to start your business**? Yes _____ No _____

21. If you checked yes to the above question, who was the **most important mentor in helping to start your business**? (Check only **one**)

- (1) _____ A Teacher
- (2) _____ A School Counselor
- (3) _____ A Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VR)
- (4) _____ A Family member (Includes parents, brothers, sisters, relatives)
- (5) _____ A Friend
- (6) _____ Other (Please explain) _____

21. Did you ever participate in an internship or apprenticeship (student training) program that helped prepare you for your current business? Yes _____ No _____

If you answered yes, please share any information that might help others e.g. name and length of program:

23. In a few sentences, please describe briefly how you got into your business, so that young Deaf people can learn from your success.

Entrepreneurial and Business Activity

24. What year did you start your business? _____

25. Where is your business located? (Please check one)

- (1) Home Based Office _____
- (2) Office Building _____
- (3) Drive Up Shopping Center _____
- (4) Shopping Mall _____
- (6) Other (please explain) _____

26. How much money did you use to start your business? \$ _____

27. Where did you obtain most of the start up money for your business?

- (1) _____ Personal savings
- (2) _____ Family
- (3) _____ Friends
- (4) _____ Partners
- (5) _____ Bank loan
- (6) _____ Government Agency
- (7) _____ Other (please explain) _____

28. Is your business a . . .? (Please check one):

- (1) ___ Sole Proprietorship
- (2) ___ Partnership
- (3) ___ Corporation
- (4) ___ Other (Please explain)_____

29. Please tell us about your customers or clients. Most of my business is with...?
(Please check one)

- (1) ___ Deaf people
- (2) ___ Hearing people
- (3) ___ Mostly Deaf and some hearing people
- (4) ___ Mostly hearing and some Deaf people
- (5) ___ The same amount of Deaf and Hearing people

30. Is most of your business involved with the . . .? (Please check one)

- (1) ___ Private Sector
- (2) ___ Public Sector (Government)
- (3) ___ Non-Profit
- (4) ___ Other (Please explain)_____

31. How many people work for you in your business? _____

32. Please tell us about the people who work for you. (Please check one)

- (1) ___ They are Deaf
- (2) ___ They are Hearing
- (3) ___ They are both Deaf and Hearing
- (4) ___ No workers
- (5) ___ Other (Please explain)_____

33. What motivated you to start your own business? (Check all that apply)

- (1) ___ Want to be your own boss
- (2) ___ Want to earn more money
- (3) ___ Believe that in your previous job promotions were limited
- (4) ___ Want to show that Deaf people could succeed in private business
- (5) ___ Other (please explain)_____

34. Looking back, in what areas of starting and managing a business could you have used additional help and information?

- (1) ___ Identifying sources of funding
- (2) ___ Basic accounting and legal information
- (3) ___ How to write a business plan
- (4) ___ How to market my business
- (5) ___ Other (please explain)_____

35. What was your greatest challenge in starting your own business. Please share in your own words.

Thank You! If you wish, write comments or further information on separate sheets.

I may select some business owners for in-depth personal interviews. If you would be willing to participate in an interview please provide the following information:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____ Fax: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

The above information is for research purposes only and your individual responses will be kept confidential.

Results of the Pilot Study

Development of the Instrument

The pilot questionnaire was designed by the researcher to answer the six research questions guiding the study. The researcher met with Virginia Tech Faculty, Gallaudet University Faculty, The President (then) of the DHHEC, and other members of the Deaf community to elicit feedback on the content and language levels of the instrument. All feedback was considered in the initial design.

Administrative Procedures

Upon completion of the initial instrument, the researcher sought the assistance of Ms. Norma Buemi, a Gallaudet alumnus and employee who agreed to test and elicit feedback on the instrument within the Washington Metropolitan area Deaf community. Ms. Buemi identified 10 Deaf individuals whose primary method of communication is ASL and were willing to answer the questionnaire items and provide feedback on language clarity and length of time required to answer the questionnaire.

Results of the Pilot Study

All participants were able to complete the survey in less than 15 minutes. All items were understood by the respondents. However, there were several suggestions for minor changes that were implemented. These changes are as follows:

1. Item number 16: When hearing co-workers, suppliers and clients communicate with you, which method do they use most often? The term "gestures" was added as a communication method for respondents to check.

2. Item number 18, 19, and 21 were seeking information about role models and mentors during different life stages. The identification of "businessperson, a boss or supervisor, and a boss or employer" were added to the questionnaire as possible answers.
3. Item number 27: Where did you get most of the start-up money for your business? The term "Government agency" was changed to "Government assistance".
4. Item 32: Please tell us about the people who work for you. The term "No Workers" was changed to "I have no workers."
5. Item number 34: Looking back, in what areas of starting and managing a business could you have used more help and information? Two choices were modified to illuminate the "How to" and two components were added, "Marketing and selling my products & services, and Advertising my business."

Upon completion of the pilot study, revisions were implemented and then distributed to the DHHEC mailing list, which served as the sample for this study.

APPENDIX D

VERBATIM WRITTEN ANSWERS TO OPEN-ENDED SURVEY QUESTIONS

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNSHIPS OR APPRENTICESHIPS

HOW RESPONDENTS GOT INTO THEIR BUSINESS

GREATEST CHALLENGES

Verbatim written answers to the question:

Did you ever participate in an internship or apprenticeship (student training) program that helped prepare you for your current business? If you answered yes, please share any information that might help others e.g. name and length of program.

- By through my career of 3 colleges.
- NTID required internship for graduation worked for companies that make computer traffic controller.
- I attended Income Tax classes at San Francisco State University and took correspondence courses on Income Tax.
- S.C.O.R.E. (B.E.S.T. in Columbus, Ohio) workshop for handicapped Business people.
- 2 years business as partnership.
- An internship is of more than a training skill for me. As an Architecture student to learn in basic phases of architect's service.
- Three years in private architectural firm prior taking examination.
- Learning about between Hearing & Deaf world to face on the business world.
- Correspondence writing courses (self-paced). Private tutoring - Hofstra University (self-paced).
- Masonry training in 1979 to 1982. Don Hahn was my good teacher. He had own business before.
- Reed Gershwind - business occupations. Lecturer helped me to prepare my business (NTID)
- APA approved 12 month clinical psychology program at St. Elizabeths
- Learning the route with father
- Co-op Experience w/ other business
- SBA/SCORE workshops (too many workshops to name & length of program)

- yes: Sort of - had an internship/apprenticeship at Museum- hope to get in Smithsonian - learned a lot to start my own exhibit designs/graphics –
- Training from Russell Studio in Frederick, MD for 1 year.
- Co-op Ed, SBA
- National School of Dog Grooming in Silver Spring, MD
- Help is necessary from any body that will help is great.
- Worked for a group practice where I learned more on business aspect of Dentistry.
- To become a therapist required an M.A. degree and more than 2 years supervised experience. I had no training for running a private practice.
- While in school. I worked as a clerk. CPA training includes working under the supervision of a licensed CPA for 4,000 hours.

Verbatim written answers to the question:

In a few sentences, please describe briefly how you got into business, so that young Deaf people can learn from your success. (If necessary, use another piece of paper to complete your answer).

- Very good skillful to make good project.
- Went to work for company that serves Hearing-Impaired. I work with people solving Hearing needs and found it was satisfying and continues doing this (20 years)
- Started fixing household things for friends and from word of mouth got more business. I also had paid jobs in similar work and became a private contractor in the last one.
- Learned how to make Pierogi from a deaf friend. Decided to sell and market same.
- Last decided to start my own business & checked market & did research for 1 year then started out.
- When I got a dream of “Contractor,” then I met a deaf contractor and I joined his business. At last, it helped my business to set up.
- Give Deaf people to grab their dream. It’s OK if they make mistake, can learn much more.
- Unhappy with government job made me consider change of career.
- I have a good skillful artwork - Graphic Designs Illustrations...
- This part-time business was established to help the Deaf community with hard to get Deaf-related collectibles.
- Always wanted to have a biz of my own, but family kept saying you’re deaf-how will you communicate on phone & my customers - How will you kept abreast of... - So I said can do it like anyone else - They had strong doubts, but am still here since ‘82.
- Started into business as partnership. When the time arrived. I sold my shares to start my own business.
- Merely consulted with my CPA, became incorporated in my state, opened business account.
- My father, William Sparks, and uncle, John Yeh, both have always been my role models and mentors. I relied on them for guidance on starting my own business.

- To train under the supervisor for min. 3 years after the graduate, the experience has influenced me to become familiar with the business plan.
- You need to have guts!
- “Moonlight”.
- I guess I have the gut.
- Research on Demography, good skills and habits on the hobby are most important for me to develop my knowledge.
- Identify your talent is the first step.
 - Do whatever it takes to polish, strengthen, and advance this talent.
 - Every business has its ups and downs - steady going is your key to success.
 - Believe in your talent – don’t let anyone put you down.
 - Must learn with math - accountant. Must arrange to set business.
- Based on my experience - Decided to operate a business when I have enough experience relate my field.
- They learn about leadership and know how to handle the business.
- Learned from my wife’s friend telling the business start rubber stamps then later changed to Fingers Mart.
- First I talked to lots of people who were in private practice. Next, I lined up 1.) A supervisor, 2.) Support from my husband and 3.) A largish contract to start out my first year with some security. Doing this part-time also helped with the transition to full-time.
- Was laid off as a full-time psychologist; tried different business ventures (moonlighting) & ended up as a sole proprierter of my own business.
- My wife started the business to do conference planning. That didn’t work out well, so I joined the company and we switched forces.
- I am following with a friend who is main into business.
- Always wanted to be a psychologist - both public and private practice.
- Saw an ad in mechanic illustrate magazine - got information. Started in a shed behind of my house. I kept my full-time job until my business grew large enough that I could quit. It took patience and hard work but I now own the property that my business is on.

- Starting at fast food restaurant, learning as much as possible, not afraid of hard work & long hours. (Must have a labor of love.)
- Be yourself and you can do it positively!
- I was invited a meeting to start a business & the distributors there lead me on. Then I did it for a different business in Education.
- I started my business partly based on my 32 year experience with NASA as an engineer. By my own nature, I am an independent and self-studious person so I hardly seek outside help.
- Self-starter, self-want, self-taught by reading & trying - dare to do it. There are many books out on the market that you can find covering just about everything. All you do is step inside the store & spend several good hours checking out books check out libraries & other specialty book dealers - even college bookstores. Go out to (Check out schedules & call for interpreters) Expos, etc. Ask questions.
- Knows what products & services are needed (demands), not wanted (adding luxury). Understand business plan, financing, operation of business trade, & customer service.
- During my teen years I was already reading business materials - After achieving BS Degree in accounting, I taught for a while before working with IRS as revenue agent, specializing in business - after 15 years with IRS - I decided to get in business of my own.
- I started reading up on Tax Laws in 1978 after I finished tutoring CSUN and felt I could help others with their financial difficulties. Business has been grown by word of mouth and we now have more than 400 clients.
- I graduated Dental Technician from Roueauia, and I worked at another Lab Co. They hired my skill of work so I realized that I could open my own lab.
- Started to design and could own house, expanded into designing and construction.
- I started selling my artwork at tradeshows after years of getting my art known I started to become business at home therefore I started my own business selling artwork in my studio.
- I started my own after getting married. A lot of legging work and have contracts...I don't still had a good financial to support a family. Need something bigger like own store and more legging works with tile stores and Interior firms.
- It started out as a hobby & found out that I can enjoy it and make money at the same time. It's a lot of work but I take a great pleasure out of it.
- My mother suggested to open business.
- No one would hire me so I decided to start my own business.

- Was encouraged by a manager to start business when first employed by corporation.
- I have a lot of skills that enable me to start my business.
- Deaf people should read plenty business & marketing books.
- In public school or high school must study yourself without helper or using an interpreter to graduate. If deaf student using an interpreter, they will not learn themselves to communicate with hearing people.
- Save, save, save, save money for the future of owning a business. I also had the help of SBA's loans and workshops.
- Take risks; don't be afraid to lose. Limit your losses.
- The hearing parents need the honest business / deaf owned business, they encouraged us to have it. It enjoys us serving to any body.
- My son helped me open the storefront shop. He helps on the phone & speaking customers. I do the printing in the back!
- I was already working, as an upholsterer for small companies was an expert in doing my jobs. At the last place of employment fellow co-workers frequently blamed me for errors that I knew were not my doing. I could not defend myself. I was not even able to make suggestions to improve jobs. I no longer felt like a person. Had an excellent opportunity to buy an upholstery business from a well-known upholsterer who was retiring. However, banks would not give me the loan - family members did have the money, but a Deaf friend loaned us partial money and a bank finally gave us the rest of the money.
- Hobby turned to business.
- Mother & Father helped me start.
- Grew up with my parents that owned an operated their business (nursing home). Also realized no matter how well, I will always be discriminated in the work force.
- It will be more important to communicate with the dentist to get some contact w/ account, but my speech can control very well. The different w/ deaf can't talk & won't make it at all. Most dentists asked me so much questions & I answered most of it. I was very lucky that I can talk very well.
- By working as an associate for another practice.
- I wanted to provide services that were not currently available in my public sector.

- I enjoyed designing, layout, typing publishing on paper as well as the web. It started as a hobby and grown into a full-time business. Most of my advertising is “word of mouth”.
- I received a need for my services and decided that having my own company was the best way to present my skills to the public.
- Went to business school - Bookkeeping & accounting - began by doing small income tax return and small businesses bookkeeping.
- When I was close to graduating with my Bachelor’s degree, I was not able to obtain a job in human relations (my major) but there were many job openings in accounting. Since I graduated first in my class, accounting employers were interested in me because there was a shortage of women in the field back then.
- I am deaf and no college or university would hire me to teach. So, I had no choice but to hire myself.
- I was never satisfied with my management. I felt that there was more potential. I am always on the side of the customer.
- I just want a business. It was a challenge. Be aggressive.
- Think big, start small.
- The need - made survey of “Hearing Aid Dealer” not interested, 3 had catalogs, 2 sold “some” devices (none had items out for public viewing & were sold at above catalog prices.
- My design talent & people skills allowed me to grow my business from freelance to a corporation in a limited amount of time. I have had a company as large as 15 people and as small as 4.
- Reading magazines & books, etc.
- **WORK VERY HARD**

Verbatim written answers to the question:

What was your greatest challenge in starting your own business? Please share in your own words.

- Own my time to do work by myself than follow company!
Comments: Show to public what I can do things as people's way in world. But still learn new something is like challenge equal to people. I'm interested to do work the business development program. I prefer do my own comfort by myself. I need study how the specialty shop retailing in my future.
- Working under pressures and able. I get paid for services from difficult customers.
- Advertising and selling my services is a very big problem, due to costs and having a person man the phone. Nothing is available now for this.
- Many deaf clients were not satisfied with another Deaf Tax Preparer so that I decided to start my Tax Service to compete and successfully did it. I still thrive regardless two Deaf Tax Preparers compete with me.
- Raising capital. Communicating with Hearing people.
- \$
- Trying to improve my skills while I worked for a contractor. After I caught up more skills, I began to advertise my business. Finally, my business was greatly improved.
- Trying to communicate with hearing people, for them to understand me.
- Creative Design of Jewelries selling gems and gold. Can do general repairs of gold jewelries like I can restore old broken rings.
- Giving up job security!
 2. Financial Planning too new to Deaf
 3. Limited resources in year 1983
- Finding time. This business is not the main source of income.
- Selling the first AILY magnets was successful in 1982; then posters selling greatly.
- Proving to customers and vendors that my/our disability had no barrier in performing and/or running a business representing the project & performing top notch services.
- Wants to become the #1 in dental laboratory field.

- Juggling a full-time job and a part-time home-based business! Time management is essential!
- From my experience, I learned a great deal for over 7 years prior to start a business in partnership with two hearing architects. Afterwards, they helped me to market to get business for my own.
Comments: I will be more than happy to help some Deaf/HoH students who are interested to become Architects. Perhaps, I can give them some information about school, experience & communication for architects & business owners who are hearing impaired architects/designers.
- Opening the business and running it all by myself.
- It is fun.
- Most times, I felt that I was concern how their wow (hearing) to see and think about my deafness or running business such as they may never heard about Relay Services.
- Convincing hearing people that a deaf writer may even be better that a hearing one (I see words in shades and color - this makes my writing more effective)
- Took five years to convince coast guard I was fit to be on the water. I was first deaf person in the United States to have earned my coast guard boating license. Become sole proprietorship in 1994 after my partner has decided to quit the business. Story: Silent News in 1996 of June.
- To develop network and connections.
- At first, it was not so easy, less money for first year. Second year slow business then new business: Fingers Mart is not so bad for just papers much cheap! Profit lot!
- Marketing is still hard after ten years! Not something psychologists learn in school and doesn=t make an easy match with my personality.
- A deaf owner of a retail/wholesale business selling assistance devices and ttys cautioned me that there may not be enough market in the deaf community to make a full-time living. I had to overcome his pessissim.
- The first big contract!
- My small business is good expereince to develop good interaction with other people.
- Had too many clients.
- Our competitive, service, quality for 25 years make us #1!

- Being deaf was a big challenge in starting my business because I wasn't able to Aspeak to customers on the phone or wait on them. Few customers didn't mind writing what they needed to say to me while most were uncomfortable writing to me.
- Since I gained lots of experience working with father and then working with brother at two locations (Scotch n= Sirloin & Trio) which were closed, I was able to open a small restaurant in 1979 and it went successfully & then it was sold in 1990.
- Great challenge and respects from hearing employees and customers that any deaf can do it like Hearing!
- Always stay ahead by improve in everything I can find, also read from magazines (10).
- I liked the Products & knew as a teacher. I could teach others to see how good they were & to start their own businesses as well.
- Communications with hearing people! I find a TRS to be very bad way to reach the hearing relatives for business purposes. I don't have an
- Pricing the products to be sold (wholesaling & retailing), finding the right distributor, to consignment or not, & ESPECIALLY THE TROUBLING OF ANXIETY ATTACKS because I grew up under the iron hand of oppression.
- Developing new products require a lot of experiences, time-consuming, & money to burn to get it going. The program is technical complexity of its product that took more than what I originally thought, i.e. 6 month time frame, but it came out 2 2 years later!
- Sales: When I first started I was closing 1 out of 10 leads compared to 4 closings out of 5 on 80%!!! (Now) There us very high business failures (96%) in my line of business, mostly due to poor business knowledge/financial decision/financial management.
- Marketing has always been a problem along with telephone calls.
- High quality of product - Art of Teeths.
- Discrimination against deaf Aleaders (deaf as contractor) no one wished to refer anyone to me except in rare cases. Hence importance of Anetwork & contacts
- My biggest challenge was having patience as my art sales starting to improve.
- Moved to a new house with studio! Feel it=s not perfect yet. Beautiful studio with my 2 activities children! - Hope to find a better location or more networks!
- I would say the greatest challenge would be to get the hearing customers and not to rely solely on the deaf customers.

- Finding someone I could trust to speak for me to sell my product and to get accounts.
- Finding right location
2. Training staff
- Meet clients= demands; responsibility for the right materials; make clients satisfied & my work.
- Starting own business, after get the awards, certificates of appreciation, ribbons at Fine Arts or Craft Exhibits, Museums, Professional Gift Fairs.
- There really wasn't much of a challenge to start this type of business. I have so much confidence in myself maybe I should say pleasurey customer all I can.
- Making sales calls, facing rejection, getting discouraged with rejection.
- The deaf community needs us for positive attitude, excellent reputation, treat fairly, honest and etc. We got money compliments.
- Enter the AHearing world=s business opportunity by using qualified communication! Good network -
- Find customers and keeping them in a world of competition market and keeping update with technology.
- Recruiting hearing people.
- The frustration of not being able to get \$10,000.00 was the biggest challenge. This shop had nearly all the equipment needs as well as a customer list. The owner agreed to let me keep his old phone number but still the bank had cold feet!
- Time management - balancing regular job with business.
- It was an established business. My greatest challenge is keeping it going.
- Marketing, letting people know of my business. Also overcome resistance to trust me because of my deafness & worried about communication. Could not Anetwork because business associations don't provide interpreters.
- When I started to work for someone=s lab & learn that I won't make more unless I started my own business & did very profitable & comfortable.
Comments: A lot of people relaxed that I can talk very well. They don't believe that I am deaf, but I can control my speech very well. The only thing that I started w/ my business.

The only different w/ deaf people who can't talk w/ speech. I don't see any deaf people who do it. It is very rare opportunity for them.

- Proper marketing & advertisement of our service in the community.
- Finding professional peers to network with. Learning to managing the "business" (legal & financial) side of my profession.
- My greatest challenge is balancing all the necessary paper work, bookkeeping, taxes, deadlines. I enjoyed my customers satisfaction in my work. When they're happy, I'm happy!
- From the hearing disabled perspective, the unwillingness of SBA to consider people with disabilities to be a minority. Definition limited to race.
- Getting clients - no word of mouth advertising had started. Business is better. I'm getting a web page.
- The patience, it requires to find customers. I doubled the # employees I had for 7 years. 5-12-25-60-140-300-450. There is a change in Management Payments.
- Reading magazines - Books and talk with other people. I can do it means you can do it.
- Having faith to continue inspite of loosing money for a long time.
- Hard to separate business and private life (A Conflict of Interest) was President of Local Chapter of SHHH & Council member of Idaho State Council for Deaf and hard of hearing.
- Getting in the door to show the work. Talking to the decision-makers and not underlinings with no authority.
- Customers skepticism. Trusts were for rich people. They USED to be for rich people. Now they were very much for minor class people like AJONES .
- Facing a public that has never known / heard of / contemplated a deaf physician.

VITA

Sue Ellen Pressman was born January 28, 1953, in Miami Beach, Florida. She attended public schools in Miami and graduated from Miami Norland Senior High School. Sue's credentials include an MA in Rehabilitation Counseling from Gallaudet University, a BA in Speech Pathology from the University of Florida and an AA degree from Miami Dade Community College. She holds Professional Counselor Licensure (LPC) in the District of Columbia, National Counselor (NCC), and National Career Counselor (NCCC) certifications.

Sue Pressman has extensive experience in individual counseling and coaching related to personal and professional development and is an experienced teacher, trainer, facilitator, and organizational coach. Sue is one of only a few Career Counselors in America with an in-depth understanding of deaf and hard of hearing issues and the only Certified Career Counselor fluent in American Sign Language to contract with the Federal Government. With more than twenty years of experience working with deaf and hard of hearing populations she is clearly one of the leading experts in the country on life and career planning in the deaf community.

As a Career Development and Organizational Consultant between 1990 and 1999 some of the agencies and organizations Sue has provided services to include: The U.S. Department of Education, The USDA Graduate School, The White House, The U.S. Department of State, The Drug Enforcement Administration, The U. S. Marshall Service, The Federal Trade Commission, The U.S. Department of Commerce, The Government Accounting Office, The Internal Revenue Service, MCIWorldcom, The American Counseling Association, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Northern Virginia Community College, and Virginia Tech.

Previous experience includes employment with Gallaudet University between 1978 and 1990 where Sue was instrumental in designing and establishing Gallaudet's first Career Center. She held positions with Gallaudet as Career Center Director, Career Counselor, Placement Counselor, Summer Job Coordinator, Adult Basic Education Counselor, Cued Speech Teacher, and High School Dormitory Supervisor.

Sue is a member of the American Counseling Association, National Career Development Association, and was admitted to Chi Sigma Iota, an academic and honor society for counseling professionals.

Sue has lived in Arlington, Virginia for the past twenty-one years and is married to Dr. Allan G. Dosik, a practicing Optometrist in Northern Virginia and the mother of an eleven-year-old daughter, Lianna Rose Dosik whom attends public school in Arlington County, Virginia.

Sue Ellen Pressman