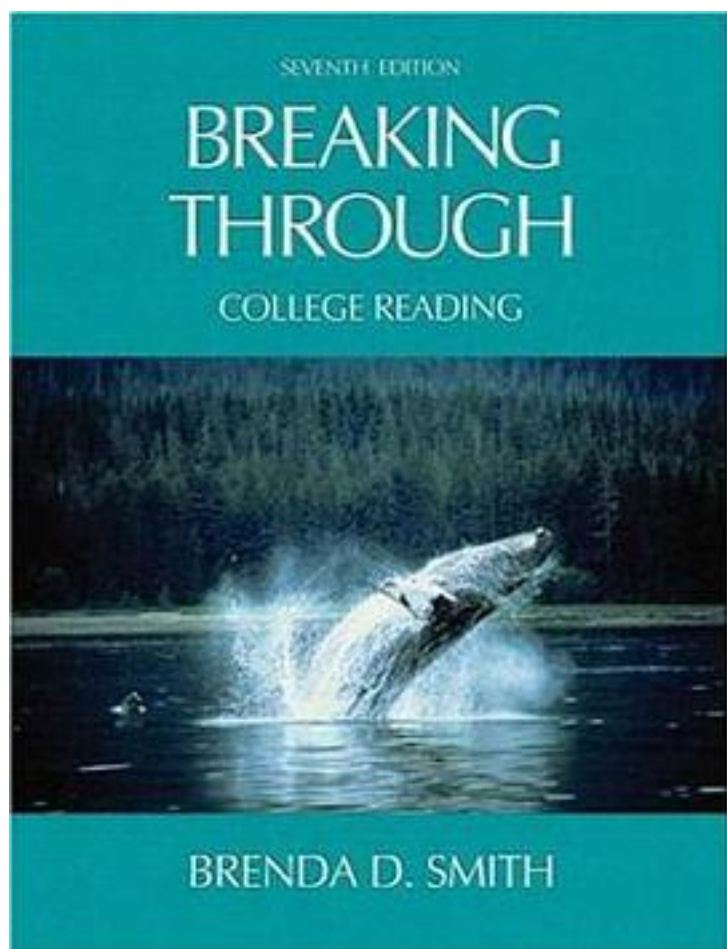


# Breaking Through



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American companies may tout their equal opportunity initiatives, but with 95% of all executive-level positions in the US held by white males, most of these programs clearly fall far short of their goals when it comes to diversifying upper management. Yet, even

in the face of such overwhelming odds, some minority executives do break through to the highest leadership ranks. What can we learn from these success stories? In one of the first in-depth studies to focus on minorities who have made it to the top, "Breaking Through" examines the crucial connection between corporate culture and the advancement of people of color. "Breaking Through" profiles minority executives at three different firms who encountered -- and conquered -- barriers throughout their careers. From these compelling stories a distinct pattern emerges in the way minorities advance. The message is clear and startling: the path that leads minorities to the top is fundamentally different from the route followed by their white peers. Here are the determining factors -- both individual and organizational -- that correspond to the advancement of minority executives to the highest levels. Pathways to success do exist for minorities, say Thomas and Gabarro, and breakthroughs can happen -- if individuals and organizations understand the roles they play in creating the opportunities that enable minority executives to reach the top.

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