



WOMEN IN BUSINESS



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Expemo code:
1FLF-A1L8-557

1

Key words

Match the underlined words and phrases with their correct definition below.

1. The overwhelming majority voted for the candidate. He won the election easily.
 2. Girls tend to outperform boys at school.
 3. The whole team performed very well. I don't want to single out any employee.
 4. The scandal will undermine people's confidence in the government.
 5. They attribute their success to hard work.
 6. I try to judge products on their own merits, and not on what the ads say.
 7. Mike is ill-equipped to lead the company. He's very young and doesn't have enough experience.
-
- a. based only on their qualities and not on what other people say about them
 - b. choose one person or thing from a group to criticize or praise
 - c. do something better than someone or something else
 - d. make someone less confident or make something weaker
 - e. not having the necessary ability or qualities to do something
 - f. say that something is caused by something else
 - g. very strong in effect or large in amount



2

Find the information

You are going to read an article about women in business in the UK. Read the statements below and decide if they are true or false. Then check your answers by reading the article.

1. More than 25% of small companies are led by women.
2. According to studies, women outperform men in senior positions.
3. Start-ups led by women tend to lose more money than those led by men.
4. According to a survey, the main reason why women decide not to launch businesses is lack of self-belief.
5. When women succeed in business they tend to attribute their success to luck more than men do.
6. Women bosses tend to pay themselves higher salaries than male bosses do.





Women benefit business — so we must rethink how to attract them

At larger companies, there is overwhelming evidence that getting more women into senior positions leads to superior performance.

1. There is certainly a problem here. Government statistics suggest that fewer than one in five smaller companies are led by women. That's not enough — not just because social justice demands equality of opportunity, though of course it does, but also because there is every reason to expect women-led companies to outperform. At larger companies, there is overwhelming evidence that getting more women into senior positions leads to superior performance, and an increasing number of studies suggest that the same is true of smaller companies. Research published last week by the business software group Xero, for example, found that women-led start-ups tend, on average, to lose less money and have more success in winning new contracts.
2. How, then, to get more women small business leaders? Well, the typical answers to this question centre on better support structures for women — think mentorship and networking, for example — as well as policies that address some of the practical problems that have held women back, such as issues around childcare provision and flexible working.
3. However, there's a problem with that approach; if one of the reasons women aren't starting businesses is because they lack confidence, singling them out as a group in need of special treatment risks undermining that confidence even further.
4. In fact, of the women surveyed in Xero's research, a third said a lack of self-belief had been the biggest barrier standing in the way of them launching their small business, the single reason most often given. This is a well-documented trend: all the academic evidence suggests that women are far more likely to suffer from "imposter syndrome" than men. This is the condition where people attribute their success to luck, rather than their own intelligence and hard work. Sufferers routinely feel as if they have deceived people into thinking highly of them.
5. The problem with imposter syndrome is that it's very difficult to attack. Praising people suffering in this way reinforces their self-doubt — tell someone they really do deserve their success and they end up feeling even more fraudulent. Also, many policies that encourage more women to take on high-achieving roles can fuel the syndrome — women begin to feel they've made it because of positive discrimination, rather than on their own merits.
6. But this analysis doesn't mean that policymakers should not be thinking hard about how to boost the number of women who start their own businesses, or that the initiatives and policies adopted so far should be abandoned. It is simply a warning that this may be a far trickier problem than it might first appear.
7. It's also worth making the point that some of the factors that play a part in women's disposition towards imposter syndrome may also be part of the explanation for why they so often make better business leaders. At the risk of slipping into easy stereotypes, men are encouraged from an early age to take the lead, even if they are ill-equipped to do so. They're more likely to be poor listeners and to make hasty decisions. These aren't qualities to be encouraged in someone trying to build a small business with potential to deliver sustainable growth.
8. Finally, there is one other piece of evidence that stands out in the argument over whether women make better entrepreneurs than men. A recent Goldman Sachs report into 10,000 small businesses found that women bosses paid themselves just 80 per cent of the salaries their male counterparts were enjoying. Goldman concluded this was because women needed to develop the confidence to value their own time more highly: might an alternative thesis be that women prefer to channel profit back into their business, in order to build a more valuable enterprise over the long term?

Adapted from The Independent



3

Checking understanding

What do you remember? Answer the questions below in your own words.

1. According to the writer, how can the government encourage women to start their own businesses?
2. What is the problem with these approaches?
3. What is 'imposter syndrome'?
4. Why does this make it difficult to encourage women to get into business?
5. Why are men more likely to be worse business leaders according to the writer?
6. How does the writer's opinion on why women bosses pay themselves lower salaries than men differ from Goldman Sachs' conclusion?

4

Collocations

Match the words on the left with the words on the right and complete the sentences below.

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. overwhelming | a. decisions |
| 2. senior | b. discrimination |
| 3. superior | c. evidence |
| 4. flexible | d. growth |
| 5. positive | e. performance |
| 6. hasty | f. positions |
| 7. sustainable | g. working |

1. A good manager looks at all the options in order to avoid making _____.
2. In order to achieve _____, we need to invest some of our profits in the business.
3. Everybody felt that Kamilla didn't have the skills for the job. They believed that she got the promotion because of _____.
4. Not everybody believes that higher salaries lead to _____.
5. The government is trying to get more minorities into _____.
6. Employers can help women with children by offering _____.
7. There is _____ that companies become more successful when they pay attention to the needs of their customers.

5

Talking point

Discuss any of the questions below.

1. Do you agree with the opinions in the article? How does the situation compare to your country?
2. Do you think positive discrimination at work is a good idea?



Key

1. Key words

Students can work individually and check in pairs.

1. g 2. c 3. b 4. d 5. f 6. a 7. e

2. Find the information

1. F 2. T 3. F
4. T 5. T 6. F

3. Checking understanding

1. through support structures (networking, mentoring) and policies that address childcare issues etc.
2. They single out women as a special needs group which undermines women's confidence even further.
3. a condition where people attribute their success to luck, rather than their own intelligence and hard work
4. Anything done to encourage women will make them feel even more that they don't deserve their success.
5. He believes they prefer to invest profits in their businesses whereas Goldman Sachs attributes it to lack of confidence.

4. Collocations

Note: the term 'positive discrimination' (giving preferential treatment, especially in employment, to minority groups of society that have been prejudiced against in the past) is known as 'affirmative action' in the States, 'employment equality' in Canada and 'reservation' in India.

1. c 2. f 3. e 4. g 5. b 6. a 7. d

1. hasty decisions
2. sustainable growth
3. positive discrimination
4. superior performance
5. senior positions
6. flexible working
7. overwhelming evidence