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International Women's Day

by interactive
leaders around
the globe



Identifying, celebrating and increasing visibility of women's achievements can help forge equality.



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Camilla Zampolini

Co-Founder & Creative Director of Adoratorio

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

My vision may be banal but when I think about what influenced me more, I really cannot stop going back to my childhood.

My mother never stopped repeating "When you'll grow up, your biggest achievement, as a woman, will be freedom. You must pretend to be free in your mind and in your pockets."

That became a sort of mantra for the adult Cami.

Our roots strictly depend from what we are pushed to learn when we are young and I think that many girls, unfortunately, are not encouraged to build a personal project or realize themselves.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Leadership is very different from "power", and there are still many people used to overlap those concepts. Being a leader to me, means someone is able to remain human even when put in a position of power.

Remaining "human", consequently, means a lot of things: it means to understand your team-mates needs and see them as equals; it means being able to listen if someone thinks differently and change your mind when needed.

It means to have a sustainable vision of what "working" should mean in someone's life, and also always paying attention to issues like mental health, well-being, feelings or balance.

In general I think that remaining "human", means to embrace a kind attitude towards work.

And kindness is the perfect nest for inclusion. Isn't it?

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Even if I'm very young, the past ten years haven't been easy for me.

I've had a son in my early twenties all alone, I had to stop studying and had to leave the Design master course of my dreams cause I really needed to earn money, I've been stalked and assaulted for years from the person I loved, I've gone through a ten-years-long legal cause to defend my son. And these are only some of the details of what really happened.

I like to show the dark side of my past: things – usually – are not how they appear on the surface. When things get difficult and you have the feeling that the entire world is falling apart: never give up on your dreams.

I am the living demonstration that – if you really, really, really want something – impossible doesn't exist

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

The courage to express an idea, even if it's different from what others think.

The strength to remain confident even when – and unfortunately it happens often – you are discredited because of your gender.

The ability to be multitasking without even showing stress or fatigue.

The ability to remain kind and true to ourselves whatever happens.

Zhenya Rynzhuk

Art Director & Co-Founder of Synchronized Studio



Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

At present, there still might be a case of fewer female CEOs/Founders but I see this situation changing and changing quite rapidly, especially in my social circle. I am very positive about these developments since I am convinced that having such a balance and the representation of different points of view is always a good thing.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

This is another positive tendency that I see evolving these days. I believe that the lockdown we've all gone through can result in more opportunities for inclusivity due to the fact that many companies had to reorganize their working process leading to the increasing number of people working from home. What's more, a big percentage of companies have found such a form of daily work to be effective enough to continue in this manner even after the lockdown. Working from home seems to be more convenient for people with some disabilities since, for example, some of them won't have to commute to work and can have a very comfortable working space at home. Companies can contribute to this by means of helping with the set up of such home offices so that people can fulfill their potential to an even greater extent.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

I believe that the best advice would be to believe in yourself, be brave to try, and don't be afraid of possible failures since they are an integral part of success. I am also convinced that now is the best time ever for women to explore their potential and achieve success in so many different spheres of life. The key is to be passionate and truly committed to what you do. At the same time, it is crucial to understand that with success comes greater responsibility and it is paramount to find the right balance between the business and personal life to make these spheres supplement

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business

In general, I think that entrepreneurs or C-level executives share a similar set of competencies and traits of character. From what I've noticed in my professional life, women are generally very good at so-called interpersonal or soft skills. They are usually more empathetic, caring, and attentive to details in the way they run their businesses as well as in decision making. This is an important aspect that can help in building an economically successful yet people-first business.



Mélanie Hubert-Crozet

Co-Founder & Creative/Art Director of Monopo London

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

First, there is a vicious circle where we don't have role models that could give us the confidence to try something new. Men tend to be better at the whole "fake it until make it", while women will tend to feel they have to be fully skilled to start something. When founding an agency, it's all "faking it until you make it" - nobody is ever fully skilled to create an agency for the first time. There is no school for that. Even being an experienced employee doesn't prepare you for all the things you suddenly have to think about when you start something new. From an external point of view, it feels like CEO/Founders totally know what they do and have so much confidence but in reality they have to figure it out along the way. Everyday I have to do things I have never done before and it took a long time to get comfortable with that.

Continuing on the vicious circle, because female CEOs/founders are so rare, we don't even think about it or consider it as a life option. It feels very normal for guys in our industry to fantasize about starting their own business and it's a common thing to discuss. I've heard this so many times. Among women however, I have rarely heard similar conversations. We don't seek each other out to discuss business opportunities. We don't have this culture and don't grow up with this idea in mind. Somehow it's just not considered a realistic option. Women should help each other more and discuss business with each other more often.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

As a leader, we have a duty to amplify the quieter voices so that we don't just hear the loudest ones. You have the power to give more visibility to everyone. We need to hear a bigger diversity of voices and points-of-view and should make an extra effort to make sure everyone is given a physical spot in conversations by being an ally to them. This can be the voices of women, but also shyer members, other minorities etc... The workplace should feel like a safe space to speak for everyone.

Behaviours like mansplaining or misplaced arrogance should not be tolerated. They shut out valuable voices that we want to bring into our work and they kill the confidence (and hence, growth potential) of other members.

If you are in a leadership position but you never experienced being an unheard voice, perhaps you don't have the reflex to avoid this. The more unheard people we get into leadership positions, the more inclusive the workplace will become.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Don't hesitate to tell your superior about your ambition and ask what you can do to achieve this role. If you are not talking about it, it might look that you are not interested in more leadership positions. I feel like men are better at asking for it and making their intentions clear.

The road towards leadership is not instant, it's something you have to work towards. Rather than asking for a promotion, start asking for a path towards your goal. This can feel easier to ask and more natural. Signal it early and start working towards it.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I think women can drive to another kind of leadership. Women can naturally have more empathy and care for their team members which are personality traits that should be celebrated.

Women leaders should be themselves and not try to just act like what society is expecting from a leader. In our society, we picture a leader as someone who should be dominant, ambitious, strong, somehow dangerous and slightly arrogant. It feels like a leader should be someone who is not scared of anything, and doesn't get impacted by others's feelings. I believe you can lead teams in other ways, by being an inspiration, a support and giving the confidence to your team so they can unlock their full potential. You don't need to be that scary person to be a leader. The more approachable you can be, the better it is.

I also feel like showing some vulnerability and being human to your team is not a bad thing and should be celebrated. This is when relationships become more authentic and human. By all showing we are humans and we don't know everything, much better relationships and collaborations happen. We don't need to fake who we are.



Tamara Lah Momčilović

Managing Director of Infinum

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

Computer science has been dominated by men because it was perceived as a guy thing, so there was a lack of interest among women. But with a huge development of digital in the last decade and more diverse study programs at universities, the interest for digital development has grown among women. That's why I believe we will see more women in leading positions in the future.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Leadership must have a vision and share that vision with employees, letting them know they are a part of it. They have to lead by example. Having experienced and professional people in leading positions is also very important, as they know their employees best, giving them assignments that suit them and motivating them to learn and grow further.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

If you believe that you have leadership potential and if you are an ambitious person that does not give up until you get what you want, then your gender should not stop you from going for it. It has been proven by now that women at leadership positions can be as equally or even more successful than men. Just take a look at countries that have been run by women, like New Zealand or Finland. They have been much more successful in dealing with Covid-19 crises than others. It is the same in business. Cultivate your leadership skills, and learn how to manage people. Learn to delegate; you will not be able to do everything by yourself. Decide what you want to do, and then do it!

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I believe that personality differences between women and men have a more sociocultural background than gender. The personality traits model should include the traits of a person such as knowledge, honesty, wisdom and openness. But still, I would say that women have some extrasensory perception or "sixth sense". Perhaps we are, by nature, simply more intuitive. Maybe that's the reason why the HR profession is dominated by women.

Cristina Pineda

Strategy Head of Masclicks



Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

I think everyday born new female CEOs and Founders, and every time that this happens, the possibilities to increase the number of women in leadership positions grows. In past few years, many things have changed for women and that is fantastic, but many others are the same, we have still dealing with prejudice, discrimination and other barriers in workplaces, for that reason is important to keep spreading education around equality and inclusiveness, ¿how many times?¿for how long? Till the day that we don't need it any more.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Leadership is one of the most important keys in workplaces culture, we all learn and tend to integrate to our person, ideas, habits, values, ways of thinking, ways of doing, from people who we admire, people who lead us to a better reality, if we are those people who inspire, we can help to spread inclusive perspectives, we just have to teach by the example.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

You have all that you need inside you, never forget that, because when you start to aim for a leadership position, you tend to think that you don't have this or that and makes you feel self-distrust, but it's a trap, when you understand this, you are ready to show your value, and in this path don't be afraid to upset someone else if you are helping others, don't limit yourself just because others can't break their own prejudices.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I'm not sure if it is just one personality, I think that those women that inspire you to discover the power inside you and make you feel safe in your pathway, that should be applauded, because this contributes to the raising of new women in leadership positions.



Sarah Scott

Managing Director of Thinkingbox Vancouver

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

I think this goes back to the larger question of women in leadership positions in general. There's now more of a spotlight on changing this historical trend of male-dominated leadership roles, but it's not happening fast enough as we still see the numbers of senior management skewed to the male gender. I think traditionally, digital and tech have been more of a masculine environment, but that's not to say it's right. I work with unbelievable female talent who are born leaders, and I hope they continue to have the passion to grow into those leadership roles they deserve, but it's important that they are also supported to do so by their employer. Still too often I see women around me who don't feel empowered to speak up, to command a room, to feel that they deserve to lead conversations, which not only holds them back from growing, but their company is missing out on powerful insights, fascinating conversations, and disruptive thinking. We as leaders must recognize that some people in the room sometimes need support in growing into the true leader they are. From an external perspective, we also need to look to recruiters to put pressure on finding more women in tech, understanding the strategies to bring new perspectives, fresh thinking, and be part of balancing the current gap. Recruiters play a pivotal role in helping grow the female presence in leadership in the industry.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Listen to what matters to your team and prospective talent, and be prepared to pivot. What may have been desirable and a competitive advantage to a company 5+ years ago, likely isn't anymore. People change, their focus and priorities in life change, and companies have to allow for that to attract strong talent and retain the amazing talent that has grown up with them. That talent, which has adapted to a company's growing pains, deserves to feel that their company can adapt to their needs as they evolve. It's not only about how the industry can adapt, but it's also about celebrating the individuals that make up the workspace, outside of what they work on for the company, celebrate their passions and '5-9's' and cultivate ways to bring people together through passions outside of the projects they work on. I'm always blown away by the talent I see from my team members outside of what I work with day-to-day. Through this knowledge, I find ways to leverage their unique passions in the way we can also deliver to our clients - giving them more opportunities to infuse their work with their passions.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Understand where you want to go, what role you want to aim for, and be intentional with your path. I often hear the desire to be in a leadership position but not fully knowing what position. The more focused you can be, the greater your success at achieving those goals and that role quicker.

I'd recommend building your support system to help you get there. In the majority of leadership roles, there'll be requirements that are needed to move up, but many of those requirements need support from a senior to help you achieve them, whether it's leading an important pitch, presenting an idea to a room of C-Suite clients, achieving certain targets. Sometimes it needs people to believe in you and give you those opportunities, even take a leap of faith. It's not easy growing without that support system, so identify those people and be clear that you need their help. When people ask me for this type of help, I'm thrilled at the opportunity to be part of growing someone's career, and I will never forget the people who've helped me over the years.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I think there are traits that should be celebrated that I see a lot in women, traits that I believe men should listen to and learn from. Women are typically able to come from a place of empathy and humility, which encourages a relatable and trust built way of working, but they also have resilience and are solution orientated (resilience is an understatement with some of the situations I've witnessed some of the female leaders around me handle!). It's in no way to say that I don't see these traits in the men I work with, I'm lucky to work with incredible male talent that I learn from every day, but I'd say these traits come to the forefront with a lot of women I work with and continually teach me to grow and adapt to how I operate each day.



Samantha Dreyer

Lead Brand Strategist of Ruckus Marketing

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

I could cite statistics and facts about gender inequality, but to be honest I really don't know. I have the pleasure of working with some very smart, talented women. Women who can accomplish anything they put their minds to. Women who support one another. Women who if not given an opportunity, find ways to achieve their goals. There aren't more women CEOs and founders, but there should be.

Women's roles in the digital leadership landscape are changing—just look at Whitney Wolfe and what she's accomplished with Bumble. When I see the stats about gender inequality, I view these numbers as a challenge, not an impasse. These numbers may be descriptive of the current climate, but are by no means predictive of what women can and will achieve.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

I think the biggest thing is acknowledging and celebrating differences. It's easy to focus on commonalities, but what makes a strong, creative workplace is giving every perspective a chance to be heard and letting the best ideas, no matter where or from whom they come, carry the day.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Play to your strengths and acknowledge your weaknesses. If there's something you know you can do and do it better than anyone else, speak up. Do it. On the other hand, if there's a skill you lack, surround yourself with people who have that skill. It's important to ask for help (even though it can be hard to do).

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

Determination and open-mindedness are key. It's so important to be focused on a goal. At the same time, when you are zoned in, it's easy to develop tunnel vision and miss opportunities. It's rare to have both traits. Women who can perfectly strike that balance inspire me.

Louise Boothroyd

Head of Client Engagement at Foolproof



Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

The numbers on this are shocking, particularly as there's no shortage of amazingly talented women in digital and I personally have found women in leadership roles in the companies I've worked for. However, bias does exist, even if it's unconscious. Whether that's gender stereotypes or perceptions around work-life balance, I believe these can influence leadership decisions. And whilst certainly not the only reason, I still experience women decision making with career and family balance in conflict. Women often fail to recognise their worth or ask for what they deserve professionally.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Change is a constant in the digital world therefore diversity and inclusion are vital (and not just for women). If leadership aren't developing management teams that represent the organisation and world around us, it will impact the quality of work delivered and ultimately their success.

My advice: talk about it, have a team that continually challenge the business and each other, and foster a culture which actively encourages discussion on these topics.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

I don't believe you need to do something specific just because you're a woman to become a leader. Calling out the challenges you may face, has the potential to become self-fulfilling. However, you might come across additional challenges or resistance, so it's best to prepare yourself and look for organisations that fit you culturally. If you don't think the organisation values your achievements, don't be afraid to voice your concerns and even move on. Many businesses actively support the progression of women or open to being challenged. If you feel uncomfortable doing this on your own, confide in other women and stand together. There's strength in numbers.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I don't think it's surprising that some of the world's most successful political leaders are women, and this translates to business in much the same way. Confidence without ego, the ability to support and nurture talent within teams and communication, are 3 traits I see every day that contribute to success.



Emma Allison

Head of Product Marketing of Apadmi

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

I don't believe there's one reason why there aren't more female CEOs/Founders in digital but rather lots of contributing factors. Women are traditionally less likely to study STEM subjects at school and more likely to have family commitments that impact their desire to go for a promotion or quit their job to start up on their own. I also think we have innate characteristics that can go against us in this regard, for example I've read that women are more likely to suffer with imposter syndrome and therefore less likely to feel confident going for that big promotion or starting that new business venture.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Leaders set the foundations of a workplace and so it's up to those in leadership positions to define company values that will create and encourage inclusivity. Driving behaviours like treating others with dignity and respect and offering platforms to voice ideas and opinions will help employees to feel valued and heard, but leaders should also regularly review their policies and procedures with diversity and inclusion in mind. For women thinking of starting a family, or parents with young children, a good maternity policy and the option to work flexible hours/ shorter weeks is an inclusive change that would likely produce higher morale and productivity in return.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Surrounding myself with women with similar aspirations as well as those already in leadership positions worked well for me. Sometimes we need reassurance and being able to confide in people who will push you to believe in yourself and help you to realise that you are capable of the things you want to achieve, can be the difference between succeeding and not. I'm lucky that I have a really supportive network, both personally and professionally, filled with women who regularly champion and help each other to overcome their challenges. If that isn't the case I would encourage you to fill your social feeds with women in leadership positions who share details about their own success stories, as well as reading books and listening to podcasts created by inspiring women.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

Definitely but that's not to say that all women who are successful in business have the same personality traits. The women in business who I look up to, for example, are fantastic communicators, are strong leaders but lead with empathy and understanding, are very resilient and are comfortable asking for support and guidance to further their own growth.

Cathy Lynk

Manager & Digital Strategy of One North



Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

Female CEOs and Founders across all industries are rare, and of course that includes digital. Both CEOs and Founders require a strong support system to take on incredible risk and responsibility as they lead their organizations. Such support systems can be harder for females to find until we reach an equitable mass in key network positions, such as corporate boards and venture capital management.

For CEOs specifically, despite the constant rise of qualified women in the workforce, women today lead less than 6% of our top 3,000 companies in the United States, according to the Wall Street Journal. Much of that discrepancy is due to a limited pipeline of women in executive roles that often lead to CEO, such as business line heads with profit-and-loss responsibilities.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Inclusivity requires open communication and active listening. Everyone wants to be valued and accepted for who they are as people, and that sense of belonging starts with simply being heard and respected. Alongside reporting lines, leadership should make sure there are outlets for all employees to seek counsel for career growth and development.

When hiring and promoting talent, leadership should also find ways to guard against unconscious bias, such as practicing blind recruitment and succession planning by masking identifiable information when evaluating multiple candidates.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Reflect on where your interests and strengths intersect, lean into those attributes that make you exceptional, speak with conviction about what you know to be true, and bring others you believe in with you as you rise.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

It's hard to determine what feminine traits to celebrate in business, regardless of gender identity, because everyone is different; and maybe that is it. Those who recognize, accept and embrace differences in the workplace should be applauded. If successful businesses, with fairly homogeneous leadership teams today, continue to listen to, respect and invite different voices and views to the table, then tomorrow will be even brighter and more vibrant.



Ivelina Atanasova

Marketing & Business Operations of Newtrend

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

The easiest answer will be to mention that there are not enough strong role models that attract women in tech. But, if we go deeper, we'll see that there is a status quo that women in tech face on a daily basis and it's quite discouraging. In 2020, only 2.1% of venture capital dollars in the USA went towards female-founded companies. Even if we look at this as the "chicken and egg" problem, it needs to be addressed and more effort is needed to change this.

Male and female do business differently. Males are obsessed with speed – fast cars, fast food, fast datings, fast deals, money and company growth, they want to make money and they want to make it now. To build a company today and exit in 5 years, nothing can be a better proposal to any investor. But women are different. They think and they act differently.

Female entrepreneurs are driven by emotions, empathy and a cause. They dream to make the world a better place. Women care about people (not that much the money) and develop a cause – based business that is sustainable and transformative. None of this is interesting to the investors, especially compared to the fast company exits which males deliver constantly.

In order to overcome this gender inequality thousands of women globally unite in networks such as Women in Tech – Global Movement and support each other. This gives them a chance to access employers who are actively looking to employ more women in tech, to promote diversity across the workforce and of course to meet investors who are interested to make business differently. The Bulgarian Chapter of Women in Tech will be launched later this March 2021 and based on my experience as Growth Marketer and Consultant at newtrend.agency I see that women feel more comfortable to work with other women, because this makes their work easier and they are on the same vibe. Unfortunately, this makes the gender gap even bigger, but sometimes you have to choose the lesser of two evils.

If we'd like to have more female entrepreneurs and more women in tech we have to stop measuring their achievements with the same tools as men.

The female approach is completely different, the timeframes they feel comfortable with also. We, as a society, can't just insist on filling the gender gap without adapting the whole startup ecosystem and making it welcome to them.

If you ask five women who run highly technical companies at least three of them will share stories about the sexism they face from potential investors. It's same with male colleagues, managers, clients. Women are still not taken seriously as experts in their field and they have to go above and beyond to prove there's a market for their product or company – even if they are already making money or have paying customers.

And if we look at the problem historically, you'll see that for centuries, women didn't have many rights or an access to a quality education, they've been forced to be silent and subordinate to men.

Most of the great achievements in human history have been attributed to men and it's not a coincidence, even the word "history" reflects masculinity – it consists of two words, "his" and "story". Historically, we have been focused more on men and their stories. Their achievements. Their troubles. Their business.

Now we have the chance to make it different. Women in Tech is a great topic and the more we talk about it, the more possible it becomes to solve this issue. It's time to tell HER-story, it's time to become more open-minded and build OUR-story, which is gender neutral, but based on skills and personal strengths.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Being a marketing consultant, I'll answer you as a marketing consultant – it all depends on your values and what story you'd like to share with your clients.

There are companies, which focus on innovation. For them "leadership" means strategic thinking, self-managing and creative people. The formula "the more suggestions, the more opportunities" works well because among the large amount of errors there may be hidden also a great opportunity of success. It's the typical male leadership – the more, the better.

If you look at a female led company, you can see the collaboration, empathy, sensibility within the team and at first sight it looks like people do more talking than working. In the long run, these people feel empowered to build on their strengths and show the way for others, because they have communicated the direction. Data shows that companies with female founders perform 63% better than those of their male peers, but it doesn't mean that ultimately everybody will be more happy in a female-founded/led company.

The inclusive workspace is a place where everybody feels welcome and accepted and I believe it all starts with the leader.

To be a leader makes you powerful, but also responsible, and I'd like to see more responsible leaders who care about sustainability, social responsibility and people than about their ego. If this happens, the rest depends on tools and the personal approach, with no right or wrong answers.

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

First of all, women have to accept that they deserve nothing less than any man. We all have same rights and freedoms. And same responsibilities. If you don't ask for a promotion, you won't get it regardless of whether you are a man or a woman. Dare to stand up for your value and get opportunities.

Second, leadership and tech are not any more an area reserved for men. Yes, they are male dominated. Yes, males can be sexist and yes, women will be underestimated more often than desired probably, but these are the facts. The reality is how we accept them and how we react on them. I don't believe, neither accept, that any women should refuse to fight based on her gender. It's a human right to be evaluated based on your professional skills – anything less than this is unacceptable, and no women should admit staying in such a toxic environment. If there is a will, there is a way.

And last, but not least, never, ever, ever excuse yourself for being a mother and don't make any career compromises because of this. Kids are not a problem; they are an opportunity. An opportunity to become more flexible, to be more organized, to value yourself better and to choose your priorities differently.

To be a mother and a leader doesn't make any woman a worse leader, it makes her a human and humans care for each other. So, it's fine to feel unwell when pregnant. It's fine to be tired, because of the sleepless nights and it's fine to work from home. Please, stop blaming yourself and start asking for help.

Within the years I've worked with so many women while their babies were sleeping or while playing on the playground. I've scheduled and rescheduled thousands of meetings because of any child being sick or according to its midday sleep, and that's fine. Life is going on and children are growing up, enjoy any opportunity and be flexible. And don't overthink anything, there is never just one proper answer.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I don't like the label "strong woman" that most of the female leaders are supposed to embody. Neither I agree the business etiquette that insists women be dressed like men – in dark colors, trousers, short or tidy hair style in order to justify their personality to be among the gentlemen. It's ridiculous. We cannot dilute anybody. Women should look like women and feel comfortable in a dress, high heels, with a bright lipstick and a scattered hair. You are either a good leader or not, it's not a gender privilege.

The new type of leaders are open-minded, confident and focused on personal development, they are flexible, always learning and tech savvy. And because we live in the Tech Revolution time, it's good to remind ourselves that it's a matter of very little time to start competing with the androgynous robots over most of the jobs we do today. Let's be smarter and stop teasing each other like young children, united we can achieve much more... because of the gender differences we have.

Iva Majstorović

Employer Branding Director of Degordian



Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

There are many layers to this topic, so there's no simple answer to this question. But, I feel like we are moving forward and we can already see some positive changes, locally and globally. By that, I mean that we can see more and more great female leaders working in the top positions within the digital area.

Regardless, many factors are indicating that we still have a long way to go. I think the main challenge is that we are still trying to figure out a way to organize work-life balance, and many female leaders face the same problem. I also think that men should be more involved in this topic if we really want to solve this issue, which is, unfortunately, still perceived as a mainly woman's problem.

We also need to encourage young girls to start thinking about the business as something they can be equally good as men. And the best way to do that is by talking about it and supporting them through education, which would bring change in the future.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

Leadership is truly responsible for creating a culture where everyone has an equal opportunity to grow based on their hard work, qualities, passion, and determination. Without the leader's support, you can't build that kind of atmosphere, and every good leader that cares for their team should know that. I am lucky to work in such an inclusive environment, and I feel this is a way all companies should operate nowadays. It's not a benefit; it's "hygiene".

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Just be brave and don't be afraid to stand for what you believe. You know the best way to live your life, how much effort you want to put into your career, and how important it is for you, so don't listen to people telling you what you should or shouldn't do. Don't look at being a woman as something negative and be persistent. In the end, the success will be sweeter. With every new female leader out there, we are breaking old standing points in which we see leadership positions through the prism of males, and by that, we are one step closer to the equality that we truly seek.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I don't think any particular personality traits would only concern women. I have already mentioned persistence and the ability to focus on success, but these should be every good leader's traits. I recently read a study showing how women in leadership positions care more about the company's culture, they also have a greater understanding for their teammates, and still successfully run the company. These qualities are undoubtedly good and desirable and will only contribute to a better atmosphere at work, which will lead to better work results. But, as I said, these traits aren't necessarily only female traits - they should be nourished by everyone who wants to be a good leader and develop healthy company culture.



Victoria Cole

Argentina CEO of Wunderman Thompson

Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

It's a real shame! From my point of view this is a crazy industry with male codes and male energy where it is not easy for women to fit. In my experience, women sometimes need to pretend to be more masculine so as to fit in. Which is really crazy because we are losing the power of diversity. A real shame!

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

*Having an inclusive mind, believing in the power of diversity with heart and brain.
Encouraging spaces with exchange of ideas.
Being active listeners.
Promoting a culture of continuous learning.*

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

Be yourself, don't try to fit in a masculine world changing your essence. Be open as the digital mindset is, based on an open code and be collaborative at your heart. Be emphatic. Speak up.

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

We always hear that: empathy, collaboration, personal skills, passion, care for others and for a better world are women traits. And the strategic thinking, being competitive and revenue oriented are men traits. I feel all this are people traits. We should stop saying that women are organizational, caring and men are passionate and good negotiators. Is all this about gender? We must evolve changing our biases.

Jessica Clements

Head of Strategy & UX of Jam3



Why aren't there more female CEOs/Founders in digital?

I want to start by saying that my answers to these questions are my personal opinions and are 100% biased by my lived experiences.

Having said that...

I think my answer to your first question differs depending on if we are talking about CEOs or founders. For the sake of this article, I'll focus on founders as I previously was one. I think founding a company can feel incredibly risky. In many cases, one needs to leave their full time job and take a leap of faith that they will be able to make ends meet. This requires significant confidence in oneself and their abilities. I think we women (speaking very generally here) are more risk averse than men. Entering that situation can therefore be more uncomfortable for us.

In addition, as there are relatively a few female founders, I think we struggle to see ourselves reflected in these positions, which negatively impacts our level of confidence that we can succeed. Men on the other hand, see others like them in these positions all the time.

Furthermore, as a company scales, the founder typically pays employees' salaries and becomes responsible for their livelihood. I think we women (again, gross generalization here) are more empathetic and concerned with caring for others. Consequently, I think we likely struggle more with the risk of potentially letting others' down if the business fails. This struggle can be a barrier to even getting off the ground.

How can leadership create and then cultivate an inclusive workplace?

The short answer is... hire a diverse group of employees and ensure women and BIPOC individuals are represented at leadership levels. Being a designer, I firmly believe that a diverse group of leaders will redesign a company to better address the wants and needs of all employees.

The longer answer is... Change doesn't happen easily and overnight. To create and cultivate an inclusive workplace, a company must be intentional and introduce new practices and policies. Some of these might include:

- Actively search for and hire diverse candidates.*
- Have strict salary bands; don't reward those who are better negotiators and self promoters.*
- Build on employees' individual strengths; don't focus on their weaknesses and try to develop cookiecutter performers.*
- Hire diverse leaders so employees can better envision themselves at all levels.*
- Train employees to help identify and address any biases they might have.*

What advice do you have for women aiming for leadership positions?

I have 3 bits of advice:

- 1. Find other smart, driven women who aren't intimidated by others. Without a doubt, I wouldn't be where I am today if it hadn't been for the support and camaraderie of other females I met along my career journey. And when you can help each other- do it.*
- 2. Don't expect to be a perfect leader. You will make mistakes; you're only human. Use those moments to learn and grow.*
- 3. Don't underestimate the value of having the right people around you.*

Do you think there are particular personality traits of women in business that should be applauded?

I might be biased, but I would say the ability to listen, empathize, and advocate for others are traits that should be applauded. In addition, patience is oh so very important in my opinion.

“Identifying, celebrating and increasing visibility of women's achievements can help forge equality”

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