

Women in Business Survey – Overview

Ask any woman – or enlightened man – and they'll tell you that women in the workforce are treated differently than men; and women's experiences are generally different from men's.

Besides the well-publicized wage gap what are those differences?

The Women in Business Survey from synergize! sheds some light onto this question.

The survey was created in part to develop programs to meet the needs of women in the workforce, including the creation of an adult mentor program, the Kee to Your Future Mentor Program, a partnership between synergize! and the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce & Industry. This program, which will be introduced at the Professional Women's Forum on 10/6/11, is for women over the age of 30 who:

- Are entering or re-entering the workforce.
- Want to go back to school.
- Are unemployed or under-employed.
- Would like to explore a totally different career path or grow in their current career.

The Women in Business Survey was deployed using direct e-mail to 971 contacts and via links posted on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Approximately ten percent of those who received personal invitations – 101 individuals – completed the six-question survey along with nine people who accessed it via links for a total of 110 individual responses.

1. Are there women in your organization (including perhaps yourself) who you think are satisfactory employees that you believe could be stellar employees?
2. What traits do you think are necessary for a stellar employee? (Respondents were asked to choose five from a list with 16 options. Additional space was provided to add traits that were not on the list.)
3. Is your current role fulfilling and satisfying?
4. Are there women in your organization (perhaps including yourself) that you believe could benefit from working with a mentor?
5. What challenges do women in the workforce face that men do not face?
6. Are you male or female?

As with any survey there are additional areas to explore:

1. Differentiating between male and female owned businesses and how they view women's needs.
2. Differentiation between male and female responses.
3. How do employers view the need for men to have mentors?
4. Is the need greater for men or for women to have mentors?

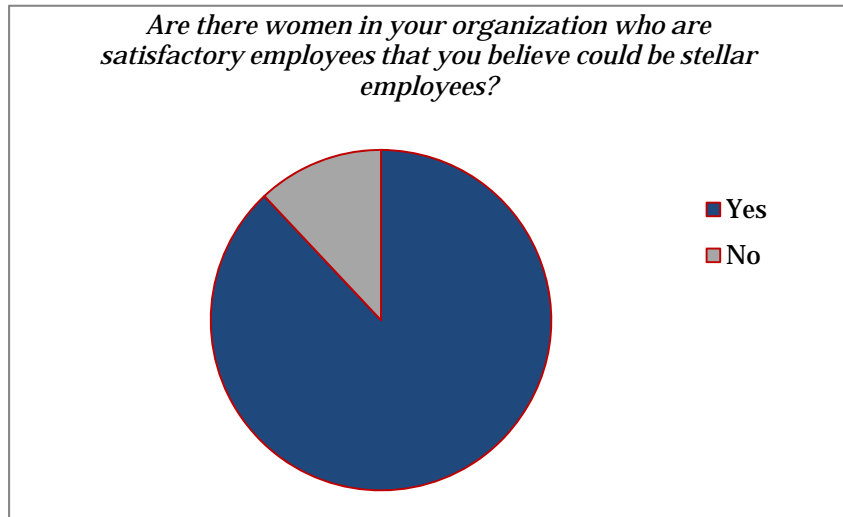
A review of the results follows.

Women in Business Survey – Results

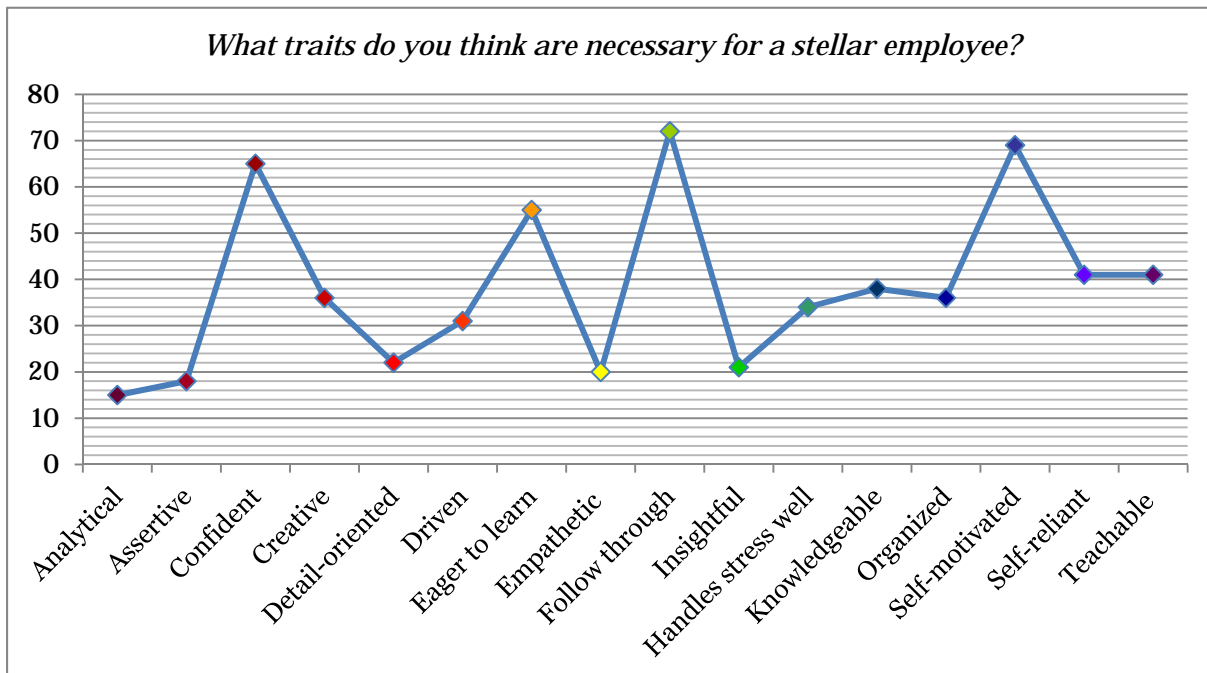
1. Are there women in your organization (including perhaps yourself) who you think are satisfactory employees that you believe could be stellar employees?

Yes: 88% No: 12%

(For future study it would be good to differentiate between companies that were sole proprietorships and those that had more than one employee.)



2. What traits do you think are necessary for a stellar employee? (Please choose up to five.)

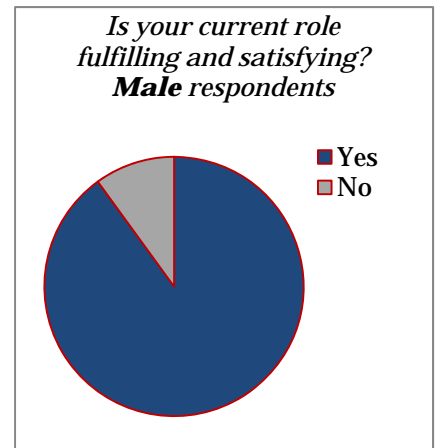
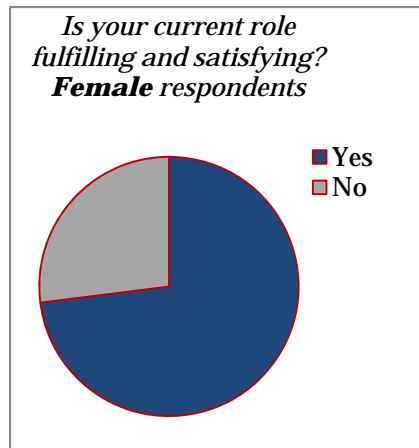
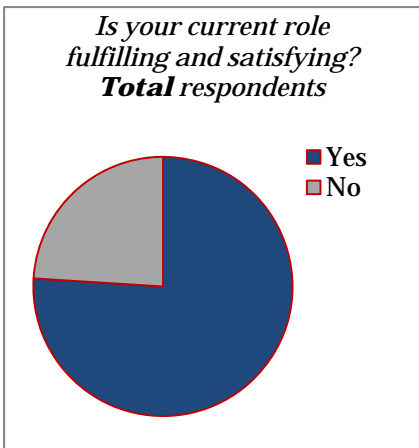


Other:

- Ability to take risks; to assume responsibility/accountability roles without being told = initiative.
- Even a knowledgeable person must be teachable to respond to the specific needs of each new situation. Don't you hate when you hear over and over how something was done somewhere else or with a different group of people?
- Good critical thinking skills.
- Honest / ethical.
- Innovative, team player, self-starter, assumes ownership/responsibility.
- Intelligent.
- Resourceful, strategic
- Responds well (not defensively) to input or criticism.
- Someone who wants to learn is a far better asset than one who thinks they already know everything.
- Visionary – these people do not let status quo suffice. They are always looking beyond for better ideas and ways to do things. They are innovative, driven and love to learn. Few people in my organization have this trait.

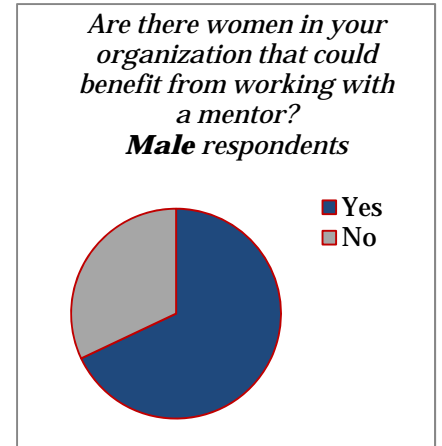
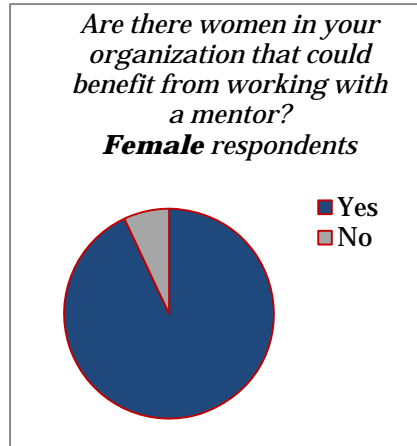
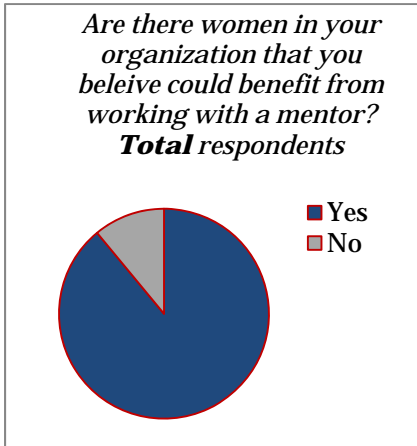
3. Is your current role fulfilling and satisfying?

Overall: Yes: 76% No: 24%
 Females: Yes: 73% No: 27%
 Males: Yes: 90% No: 10%



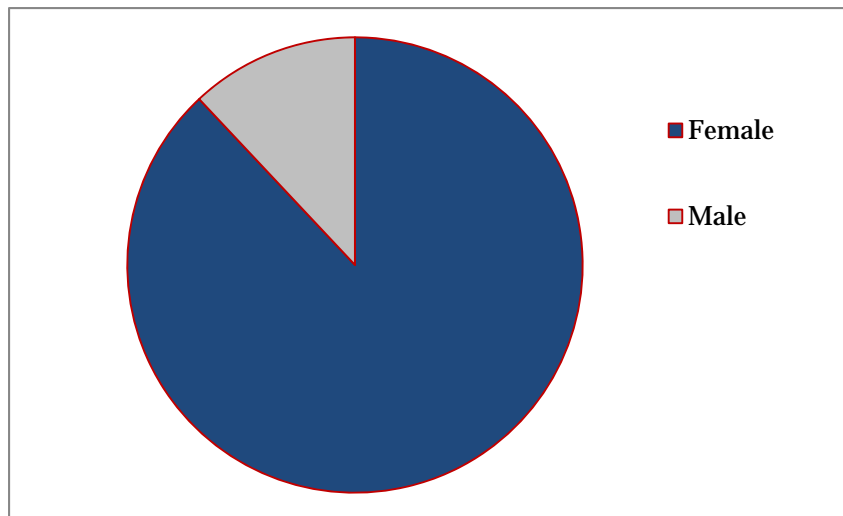
4. Are there women in your organization (perhaps including yourself) that you believe could benefit from working with a mentor?

Overall: Yes: 89% No: 11% (50% of these are “solopreneurs” or sole proprietorships)
 Females: Yes: 93% No: 7%
 Males: Yes: 68% No: 32%

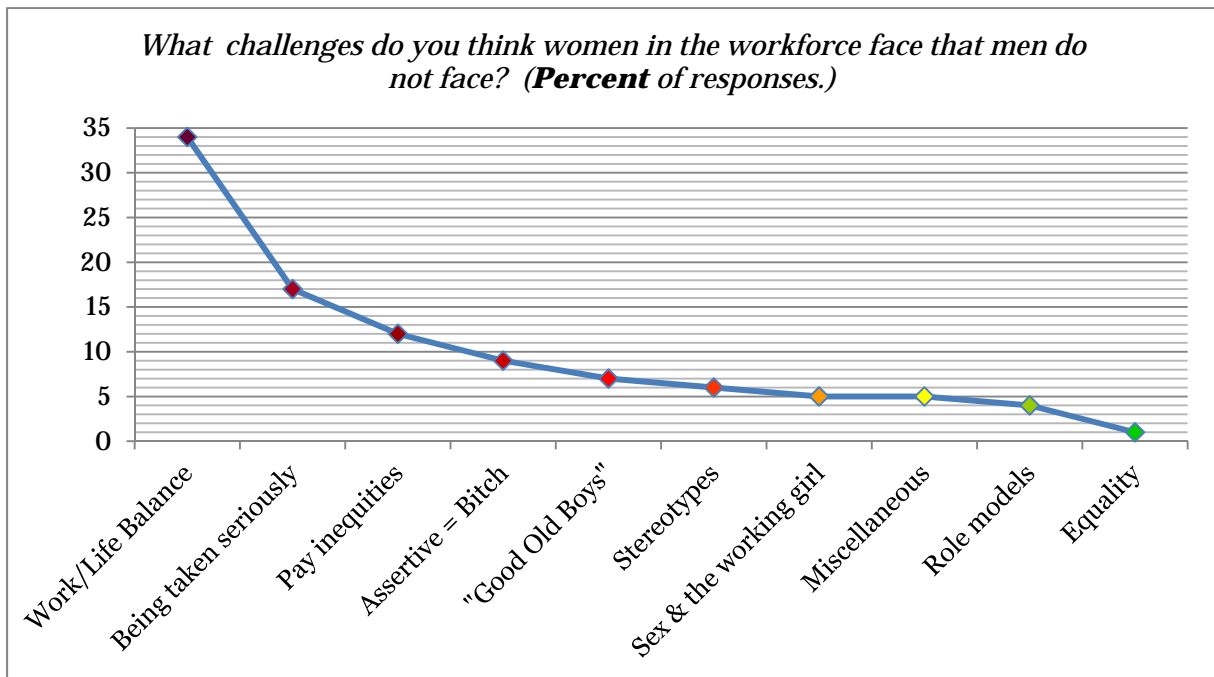
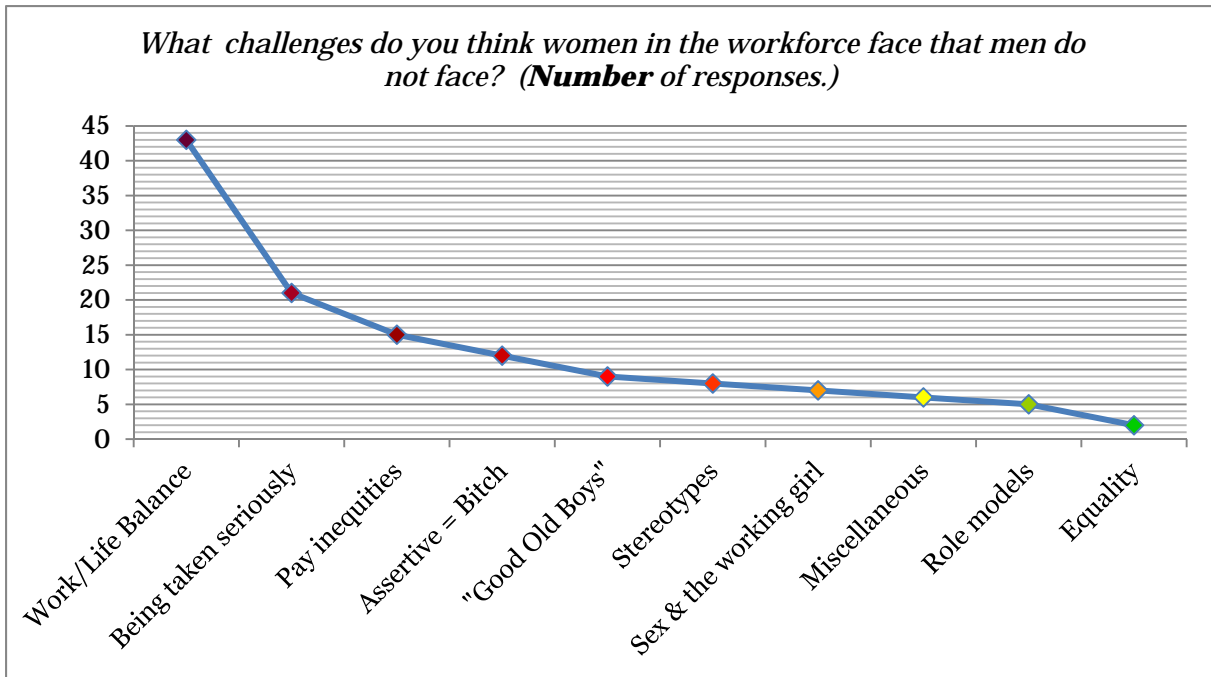


5. Are you ...

Female: 82%
 Male: 18%



6. What challenges do you think women in the workforce face that men do not face?
 Total responses: 128



Additional Comments: Total responses: 128 (100%)
Work / Life Balance: 43 (34%)
Although it isn't as prevalent as it used to be, many women are still the main care givers in the family (children, parents, etc.) and the balance of home life and professional is difficult. Missing a meeting / event due to a sick family member, school event, because these are the priorities in your life (not work) is not always understood or condoned.
Balance between work life and home life.
Balance of home responsibilities.
Balance of work and life, especially motherhood. Women are short-changed in the workplace because they have prioritized family life and are typically the primary caregiver.
Balancing family responsibilities while trying to move ahead in a career which could require more time and more hours.
Balancing the demands of family life and work responsibilities. Having to multi-task every day. Men do not seem to have to juggle as many day-to-day responsibilities and seem to be able to focus more on work.
Balancing work / life.
Balancing work and family.
Challenge balancing needs of family with work schedule.
Challenges that men do not face AS OFTEN: work / life balance and the perception that women are the primary family nurturers.
Child care
Childcare for single moms.
Commitment to family and workplace.
Employment gaps due to job / family issues.
Expectation that she is the primary caregiver for children and elderly family members translating to presumption of more unplanned time off, less committed to career, etc. If she has taken time off from a career: outdated skills, lack of professional network, perception that all previous experience is worthless, lack of confidence.
Family and child care issues.
From what I have seen women still have the main responsibility for the family. It is more difficult for women to bond with co-workers due to perception about male-female relationships

and the majority of the workforce is still male dominated.
Having jobs instead of careers. Women have a lot more to juggle in their daily lives than men do whether men admit it or not. "Going to work" gets put into a box and everything else into those respective boxes and then time is split accordingly based on what that woman can handle on that particular day as opposed to focusing strongly on career.
I think that women are expected to perform highly at work and also at home where they often bear the brunt of the responsibilities. I think that some of this is self-inflicted and that women feel the need to be "super women / moms." Because women so often multi-task it becomes expected of them. My last male boss would breeze in, drop off a pile of partially completed work and expect it done immediately regardless of other obligations. I felt like I was often cleaning up his messes.
It's difficult to find the balance between work and mom obligations. You always feel pulled in many directions. Work life balance ends up being relative to what you are willing to compromise on without feeling guilty.
Juggling family responsibilities.
Juggling personal life and responsibilities at home and working.
Managing a balance between home and work.
More demands placed on women to balance career / mobility and family life.
More frequent struggles with schedule due to being a primary caregiver at home.
More job / family balance challenges and resultant perception of less commitment, dedication.
More responsibilities outside of the workplace than males.
Need for more flexible scheduling.
Obligations related to care-giving for older relatives.
Pressure to excel at work while also fulfilling all the responsibilities of home and family
Some, not all, women who are parents experience the stress of working outside the home while also working inside the home.
Struggle between family commitments and work commitments.
The family life of husband and children. Being the taxi driver and yet the business owner / stellar employee.
The role of Mother and career women. Most dads do not have to worry about taking off when the kids are sick or when they need rides, etc. Moms usually do it all.
They have to deal with more family-related issues.

Time off for family, family obligations in addition to work, intrapersonal skills.
While gender roles are changing in society I continue to see the challenges women have with the balance of work and family. We have a largely female staff. Those with young children continue to be the ones in the family who take their time-off to care for sick children as opposed to their male partners.
Women juggle much more on a daily basis: family, home and work. Men must balance these things as well, but I think women have a harder time separating these things. We're inherently multi-taskers and that is both good and bad.
Women seem to face the challenges of work / life balance. Women with children must juggle the schedule of their children with their own work schedule. They are not able to be as flexible and available at work when necessary.
Women still juggle a large portion of childcare, homecare, family care roles in addition to their career / job.
Work / home balance issues.
Work / life balance issues.
Differing expectations / Being taken seriously: 21 (17%)
"Fitting in" as one of the boys due to still a lower number of women in management.
Being assertive can translate differently for men and women and impacts women being taken seriously.
Being in a male-dominant environment and fighting to be heard. I believe it takes longer to earn the trust of men when you are a woman.
Being seen as credible and being taken seriously.
Being taken seriously.
Being taken seriously.
Different standards and expectations of performance.
I do feel that women are not taken seriously in the work force. I am in marketing and I feel that I am not heard by the male population.
I have seen many women in management overcompensate in some areas, as if to prove they were able to be as "tough as a man." Women often have innate abilities that are lacking in some men, and they should feel free to utilize those gifts / insights in the workplace without shame or feeling "weak." I believe that at times this is a challenge due to the perception of a weakened position when a woman embraces her softer side.
I think it depends on the career track. Male-dominated careers make it tougher for women to be

deemed equal, but men have the same issue with women-dominated fields like nursing. The biggest difference is if women leave the workforce to raise a family, getting back in is tougher than just staying in.
Not always taken seriously even when in management positions.
Not being given the same opportunities as men.
Not being seen as capable as a man to do the same job.
Respect and being taken seriously!
Some men do not respect women in roles of knowledge and power.
Unintended discrimination – not being taken as seriously as a man.
We have to fight harder to maintain a seat at the table, prove ourselves and receive respect.
Women are interrupted and / or dismissed more often than men in the workplace.
Women can be seen as “mothering” rather than as leaders. Women are treated as potential partners, but not always in the positive sense. Women are treated as if they need to be taken care of to be sure the men feel good about themselves.
Women face the challenge to be seen as being just as knowledgeable as men without having to portray themselves as interested in “manly” activities. (e.g. it is hard for men to see a woman engineer with the same degree as a man being just as qualified to complete the same project he has, even if she is not interested in sports or rebuilding cars.)
Women have to work twice as hard to gain the respect and confidence from their male colleagues.
Pay inequities: 15 (12%)
Disparity in salary.
Expected to perform at a higher level and receive less pay.
Inconsistent accountability. Women are held to a higher standard and get paid less.
Less pay than our counterparts.
Lower wages, not being seen on equal level as male counterparts.
Often lower pay, although this varies by industry and position.
Pay expectations.
Salary differences. Most positions are low paying even though they are very important to the success of the company.

Salary that is equal to a man's and can support their families.
Under pay.
Unequal pay for equal work.
Unequal salaries and positions based on gender.
Wage differentials.
Wage inequality.
Women are not compensated for performance equal to or greater than the compensation men receive.
Assertive = Bitch: 12 (9%)
Women: assertive = bitch. Men: assertive = leader.
Being able to be assertive without being seen as aggressive.
Being heard / asserting themselves. Different ways of communicating are perceived as "bad" instead of "different" and equally valuable.
Gender biases including lack of appreciation of gender differences and how to work with those. Usually it is assumed that men are in control and women are automatically assumed to be emotional and not in control unless they present themselves a certain way.
If a woman is assertive or confident it is more likely to be perceived [as] negative versus [it is viewed] as a strength for men.
Judgments (not standards) are different in some businesses – especially male dominated ones which are still there today.
Pressure to overcome stigma with being firm / focused.
Some, not all, women may be concerned about appearing aggressive or emotional and are more concerned about being judged by their coworkers.
Subtle or unconscious behaviors that repress or discourage feminine characteristics and / or leadership traits.
The expectations that if they want to work in an organization populated with men then they should think and perform like men.
When you're assertive as a woman in business people think you're a bitch. Men are just aggressive.
Women tend to have more of a need for permission to do things. They also tend to feel guilty

about being assertive or they are considered “masculine” if they exhibit assertiveness, drive or competitiveness.
The “Good Old Boy” network & the Glass Ceiling: 9 (7%)
Actual or perceived glass ceiling in a male dominated field.
Available career progression / career development opportunities.
Many organizations still promote males before females and have a “boys club” mentality. This makes it challenging for women to advance at the same rate and enjoy the same promotions as men.
The Glass Ceiling.
Remnants of the “good old boy” networks, especially in small communities.
There is still a boys club in some industries and a perception of weakness of women by some of these men. If you are not a weak woman then you are difficult. A woman trying to advance her career can be mentored into finding a way to not play into gender roles.
Women in leadership still face challenges leading or collaborating well with other male leaders. The room is still filled with lots of dark suits at chamber functions, volunteer organizations, etc.
Workplace offering lateral vs. vertical growth to women. In some settings women are likely to attain increased responsibilities but less vertical promotions than men. Or they may be asked to retain some lower functions when promoted whereas men may step up unencumbered.
Yes it’s 2011 and it’s still the “sticky floor” that keeps many women from reaching the glass ceiling.
Stereotypes: 8 (6%)
Need to be super friendly and chatty with everyone all the time.
Not buying into the stereotypes about ourselves.
Outdated mindset on gender roles / expectations.
Some workplaces still include the “mommy factor” when considering women for training & promotion.
Stereotypes about looks, family responsibilities, and negative female / mentor role model relationships.
Stereotypes, sexism.
While I think things are getting better there are often assumptions about emotions, family and ability that hold women back and are unsubstantiated.

Women are generally seen as more “go with the flow” instead of being willing to “rock the boat” question decisions.
Sex and the Working Girl: 7 (5%)
Being judged many times on appearance and not largely on talent or skills.
Handling the effects of hormones on our responses / emotions.
I work with contractors and I am usually the only woman in most meetings. Many times it is difficult to form the personal relationships since it could be perceived as something else.
Monthly debilitating hormonal issues.
More frequent sexual advances.
Physical constraints. More likely to be harassed.
Sexual bias – men have these, too, but they are generally greater for women.
Miscellaneous: 6 (5%)
How to dress for different occasions. Men can essentially wear khakis and a polo to almost any event.
I don't know that I can answer that question. If all things are equal I believe it would be a matter of self-perception and management attitude toward women.
Leadership style is more empathic.
Often a less assertive style and different leadership style.
Reliable transportation
The same business as usual in America.
Role models / mentorship: 5 (4%)
Clarity in career management.
Lack of mentoring / sponsorship.
Lack of role models in their work place, inability to relate to men's issues.
The everyday working woman lacks enough female role models in leadership.
Women are not good supporters of other women in the workforce, generally. Don't know if men

experience the same thing.
Equality: 2 (1%)
Equality.
Some degree of discrimination based on gender.