

HSBC Cookie Policy

We use cookies to give you the best possible experience on our website. Full details can be found here (</en/utilities/cookie-policy>)

Unapologetically Ambitious: How More Women Are Becoming Successful Entrepreneurs

By Jennifer Ting

Global Head of Marketing - HSBC Private Bank

18 Nov 2016

Recent high-profile stories about female business owners thriving in previously male dominated environments – or carving out new markets entirely – have confirmed a trend that shows no signs of slowing down.



In the words of Sallie Krawcheck, CEO of Ellevest and chairman of Ellevest, 2016 was "the year in which the forces of entrepreneurialism and feminism converge. Together, they will drive a long-wave, golden age of female entrepreneurship, which will be a positive for all of us: positive and empowering for the women who make the leap, good for the economy, good for consumers, and good for society." ¹

Data from our [Essence of Enterprise \(/en/bank/essence_of_enterprise\)](/en/bank/essence_of_enterprise) research of over 2,800 entrepreneurs also highlights encouraging trends for women looking to make it on their own. Undeterred and unapologetically ambitious, they are rewriting their own rules.

Do what's right for you

A desire for flexibility, purpose and a more meaningful lifestyle has motivated many women to reconsider traditional careers and ways of working. Our research found that 80 per cent female entrepreneurs start their venture because they, unashamedly, want to be their own boss and do things their own way.

Take Alex Daisy D'Arche, for example – an ambitious London-based designer who launched her 'Made in Britain' label in the midst of the 2008 recession.

Her approach was deliberately provocative at a time when the industry was cost-cutting and a great deal of production was moving to Asia.

"I wanted to bring it back to Britain and create high-quality designs, the production of which I could oversee myself," she says.

Being close to her production team has certainly paid off. Her designs have caught the attention of high-end stores, as well as independent boutiques globally.

Yet it hasn't all been plain sailing, she explains. Competition and the fashion industry's relentless focus on the bottom line have kept her on her toes.

"You have to be creative, efficient, and learn quickly on the job," she says, adding, "but being in control and having the freedom to grow and lead the development of ideas is what makes it worthwhile."

Turning challenges into opportunities, while maintaining unyielding confidence in the future success of their venture, are qualities many female entrepreneurs share.

Building on the success of others

Building on her early success, Alex is now a freelance consultant, print-design collaborator and, most recently, a teacher. She launched a digital textile printing course at London College of Fashion in 2015. Her aim is to inspire the next generation of designers and printmakers by sharing what she has learnt so far.

Entrepreneurs understand all too acutely that nobody succeeds on their own, so giving back must go beyond profits. Indeed, our research finds that aside from board members, one in three women turn to other entrepreneurs in their network for advice.

Moreover, 67 per cent believe it is their duty as business owners to go beyond maximising value for shareholders, while one in three, actively volunteer knowledge and expertise to further social causes. By developing skills and values in others, women ultimately nurture and amplify each other's success.

Ready, set, go!

And so we find that through the support of others, today's female entrepreneurs are being encouraged to shed their anxieties and take the entrepreneurial leap.

In the words of entrepreneur Sara Blakely – founder of Spanx, the shapely underwear maker, women entrepreneurs must "not to be intimidated by what [they] don't know. It can be [their] greatest strength and ensures [they] do things differently from everyone else".²

Alex certainly understands this sentiment having felt the pressures of a competitive industry when she launched 'Made in Britain'.

"I knew it was going to be risky and a huge challenge, but I have genuine passion for what I'm doing and I have the right people around me – which means, whatever happens, I can enjoy the process."

Changing attitudes and evolving business practices have seen a growing number of women starting multiple enterprises. Despite often being inexperienced at the beginning, these women are undeterred, passionately engaged and don't apologise for, nor compromise their ambition and ultimate goals. Success is often about a mind-set, and female entrepreneurs are showing that they have everything they need to succeed.

¹ *Why the Force will be with women in 2016*, Geri Stengel, *Forbes*

² *50 Motivational Quotes From Disruptive, Trailblazing, Inspiring Women Leaders*, Kristy Rampton, *Entrepreneur Magazine*

Risk warning

It is important to note that the capital value of, and income from, any investment may go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount invested.