

Small Enterprise Research Report

Management & Gender Differences

July 2005



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Small Enterprise Research Report

Management & Gender Differences

July 2005 - Vol.2, No.3

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WEB VERSION: INTRODUCTION

The Lloyds Bank/TSB-sponsored series of small business management reports commenced in 1992, and concluded in 2009. In total, 53 reports were published over a period of 17 years.

Our target audience comprised the owner-managers of independent small businesses, typically employing fewer than 50, and based in mainland UK.

The series originated from a longitudinal study of small business management, undertaken by the Polytechnic of Central London (now University of Westminster), and culminating in: *The Management of Success in 'Growth Corridor' Small Firms*, (Stanworth, Purdy & Kirby, Small Business Research Trust, 1992).

THEMES

The themes were wide-ranging – including such as entrepreneurship, work & stress, employment strategies, and the environment – a full list is shown overleaf.

INSIGHT

In addition to asking questions and supplying the respondents with a range of answer options, the corresponding questionnaire was included as an appendix to each report so that readers would know exactly what questions had been put to respondents.

We also sought qualitative information – in the form of verbatim comments about the key theme – to help elaborate on whatever related challenges respondents felt they were facing at the time.

Finally, the findings are primarily intended to be indicative rather than definitive – partly due to the sample size, which is, on average, 111 for the 2003-09 reports.

PUBLISHING FORMAT

The reports were published in hard copy form, obtainable via subscription. Initially

by the Small Business Research Trust, and from 2003, by the Small Enterprise Research Team (SERTeam), both research charities based at the Open University.

Regrettably, SERTeam ceased operating in 2009, and so in 2010 the authors felt that the more recent reports would find wider interest if they were made freely available in Acrobat format via the Internet – especially with the UK economy set for a protracted journey out of recession, and with the government in turn refocusing on smaller businesses to aid the recovery.

It is worth mentioning that the series commenced as the UK economy emerged from the early 1990s recession.

In 2015, the earlier reports were also converted (1993 to 2003), with the full series made available at Kingston University: <http://business.kingston.ac.uk/sbrc>

SUPPORTING INFORMATION (WWW)

In later years – as the world-wide-web developed and an increasing number of sources of information became more readily available – suggestions for online sources of related material were included.

N.B. For reports 2003 onwards - where successfully validated, the web links (URLs) were enabled in 2009. And in the case of many invalid web links, an alternative was offered, but not where the organisation appeared defunct and an obvious replacement was not traced.

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Kingston University**
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- 3 Crime Against Small Firms June 2003

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2003-04 (Vol.1)

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- 1 Education & EnterpriseOctober 2004
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- 3 Management & Gender Differences..... July 2005

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- 1 The London 2012 Olympic And Paralympic Games..... April 2008
- 2 Competition: Small Firms Under Pressure.....January 2009

WEB VERSION PUBLISHING

<http://business.kingston.ac.uk/sbrc>

Certain content needed to be re-set, e.g., the figures in the earlier editions, but the report body content is intended to be identical to that in the printed original. This web version - an Acrobat document - is derived from the original DTP text and will permit searching.

LIABILITY DISCLAIMER

The information and analysis in each report is offered in good faith. However, neither the publishers, the project sponsors, nor the authors, accept any liability for losses or damages which could arise for those who choose to act upon the information or analysis contained herein. Readers tracing web references are advised to ensure they are adequately protected against virus threats.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Highlights	3
Background	5
Figure 1	Attitudes Towards Gender Differences: Disagreement With Given Views: By Gender	7
Figure 2	Attitudes Towards Gender Differences: Agreement With Given Views: By Gender	8
Figure 3	Self-Assessment Of Personal Skills Rated As 'Good' By Respondents	9
Figure 4	Self-Assessment Of Personal Skills Rated As 'Good' By Respondents: By Gender	9
Figure 5	Attitudes Towards Business Environment: Disagreements: By Gender	10
Figure 6	Attitudes Towards Business Environment: Agreement: By Gender	11
Figure 7	Perceptions About The Size & Sectors Of Female-Owned Small Businesses: By Gender	11
Figure 8	Attitudes Towards Equal Pay: Agreement With Given Statements: By Gender	12
Figure 9	Main Reason For First Going Into Small Business Ownership: By Gender	12
Figure 10	Main Aim With Existing Business: By Gender	13
Figure 11	Main Aim With Existing Business: 'Early Retirement': By Respondent Age	13
Figure 12	Attitudes Towards Business Environment: Women Running Businesses: By Sector	14
References	Sources Of Further Information (WWW)	14
Comments	Respondents' Verbatim Comments	17
Appendix 1	Additional Information About Sample	21
Figure 13	Profile Of Sample: Respondents By Industrial Sector	21
Figure 14	Profile Of Sample: Respondents By Region	21
Figure 15	Profile Of Sample: Respondents By Employee Size	22
Appendix 2	Survey Questionnaire	23

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The Small Enterprise Research Team is particularly pleased to acknowledge the generous support provided by Lloyds TSB in sponsoring the research, analysis and presentation of this report. However, it is important to note that any opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Lloyds TSB.

Report Author – Professor John Stanworth (University of Westminster)
Series Editor – David Purdy

HIGHLIGHTS

This is the sixth in a new series of small business management reports based on surveys of a panel of small firms, mainly in manufacturing, retail/distribution and business services. The focus of this survey was on **Management & Gender Differences**, and the principal findings were as follows:

- **Gender and different inherent traits – Female respondents disagreed quite strongly with the notion that men and women have different attributes/psychological traits:** 68%, compared with only 47% of males. Male respondents were fairly divided on the issue: 39% felt that there were differences, compared with 47% who disagreed.
- **Gender and decisiveness in business decision-making – Both sexes felt that there were no marked differences:** 68% of males indicated so, and, similarly, 89% of the females.
- **Perceived female superiority –** Women, after indicating the non-existence of inherent gender differences as a generality, **claimed major gender differences at a specific level, and very much in their favour.**
- **Perceived female superiority in specific areas –** On the issues of **women being better multi-taskers and more conciliatory managers, men were largely divided, albeit with a modest balance in favour of seeing women as good multi-taskers. Female respondents, by way of stark comparison, arguably reverted to radical feminist orthodoxy in claiming massive superiority over men:** with 93% claiming superior skills/attributes in **multi-tasking** and 80% claiming to see women as **more conciliatory managers** than their male counterparts.
- **Self-assessed skills of respondents –** Considering each of 7 key skills areas, respondents identified **finance/financial control** (59% said they were 'good') and **employee management** (55%, likewise) where they felt strongest. At the opposite end of the scale were **IT** (only 33% said they were 'good') and **new product/service development** (32%).
- **Comparison of self-assessed skills –** For 3 out of the 7 skill areas, **the sexes, when rating themselves as 'good', were almost identical: managing employees, purchasing and marketing/selling.** But in 3 further areas – **financial control, production/output of product or service and IT** – women were more likely to give themselves a high rating. Only in the area of **new product/service development** did men rate themselves appreciably more highly than women.
- **'In addition to running a business, are female owner-managers still expected to fulfil other major roles/commitments such as running their family home ?' – 93% of females and 71% of males agreed that women were less free to concentrate solely on running their businesses than men.**
- **'Why are female owner-managed businesses more likely than their male counterparts to be smaller in size and run on a part-time basis ?' –** The replies were as might be expected with two factors emerging: first, **the need to balance work and family commitments,** and, second, **the choice of business sectors which made this possible.**
- **Attitudes towards equal pay – More than 75% of respondents said that their businesses wholeheartedly supported the policy of equal pay for equal work.** There was no difference between the sexes here.

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- **The original reason for getting into business for themselves** – The replies were exactly in line with previous research: for male respondents, **the independence of not working for anyone else** (29%), followed by **'pushed by an unexpected/unwanted event'** (23%), were most prominent. Amongst female respondents, 39% had joined family firms.
- **The main aim with their business now** – was that of **early retirement**. This scored heavily for both sexes at 31% overall. **'Economic necessity'** also rated highly for male respondents (29%) and **'personal satisfaction'** for women at 41%
- **Industry sector differences** – **Manufacturing respondents were twice as likely to say that 'women running a business was still not an accepted norm'** (42%) than the business service or retail/distribution sectors (both 20%).
- Otherwise, the survey responses generally did not reveal large differences between industrial sectors, employee size-bands or respondent ages. However, **the lure of early retirement was strongest in the youngest age ranges**, and as high as 42% amongst those in the 35-44 years age group.

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MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The emphasis of the management reports is on monitoring the key management problems and practices of smaller business, with an emphasis on survival and success.

Accordingly, each issue of the report addresses one or more highly topical small business management issues. In this survey we focus on **Management & Gender Differences**. The report is produced three times a year.

THE SAMPLE

This report is based on the responses received from a panel of over 350 small businesses situated in the northern, midland and southern regions of Britain. Respondents are predominantly small firms with fewer than 50 employees, drawn mainly from the manufacturing, business services, and retail/distribution sectors of the economy. The precise distribution of firms varies from survey to survey, but typically over half of the participants employ fewer than 10 people.

RESULTS

The questionnaire completed by sample firms appears at the end of this report as an appendix. This survey was carried out between May and June 2005.

BACKGROUND

The report originates from a longitudinal investigation into the development of small firms undertaken by the University of Westminster (then the Polytechnic of Central London) on behalf of the Department of Education & Science, between 1988 and 1992.

PAST SURVEYS

2003-04 (Vol.1)

- No.1 **Small Firms and Politics**
- 2 **Pensions**
- 3 **Work-Life Balance**

2004-05 (Vol.2)

- 1 **Education & Enterprise**
- 2 **Made In Britain**

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MANAGEMENT & GENDER ISSUES

Do women really need men only as much as fish need bicycles ? Is there really one superior sex and have men inadvertently been wearing the crown for the last million years ?

It could be said that, for most of history, the history of the human race has been the history of men – women, through no fault of their own, have been confined to secondary, bit-part roles. Even today, in many parts of the world, women still struggle for the vote, rights to education, equal rights to property in the event of separation, let alone equal access to jobs and equal rewards for equal effort.

However, in the industrialised West, the genie is out of the bottle and the move towards equality appears irreversible. But how far have we really come ?

Does political correctness dictate that we all have to appear exactly the same now or can we 'celebrate' the differences ? Indeed, are women likely to be satisfied with gender equality or will feminist radicals strive for superior status to men ? This survey therefore sought to throw some light on these issues in the context of small business management.

GENDER ATTITUDES

The sample were quite vocal in attributing a range of behaviours and attitudes to gender differences, stereotypes and prejudices. For instance, one female respondent from a high-technology textile company claimed:

"Older females tend to be perceived as 'over the hill', whereas older males are valued for their lifetime of experience !"

Another female respondent working for a brewery said:

"Far too much of my time is spent dealing with piles of bureaucratic bumf. Being female, I feel obliged to

deliver. The others (men) would just let it pile up until they were forced to address the situation."

Other female respondents were more optimistic in their views:

"In the 25 years I have been involved in my family business, the attitude of customers and suppliers to women has definitely improved."

"There are still some areas where being a man is especially helpful to success in business – such as heavy engineering, the motor trade and some financial firms in the City – but women are more successful in the soft skill disciplines such as business consultancy, team building and marketing."

"As a (youngish) business owner, I find two contrasting issues – on the one hand I feel isolated in a sea of middle-aged men. On the other hand, I tend to get noticed at networking events, which can be quite useful."

And amongst the male respondents we found a range of views:

"Although men and women do have different psychological traits and attributes, this is also true for people of the same gender and does not necessarily equip one gender as a whole. It is much more down to the individual's capabilities."

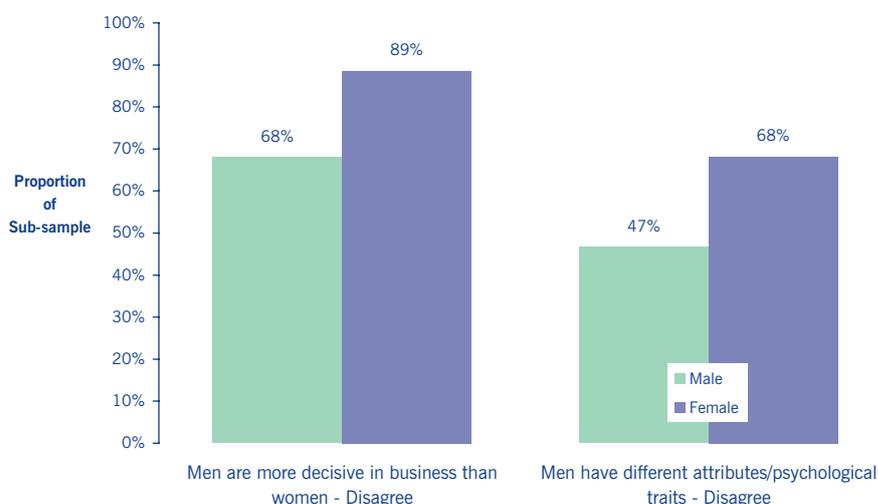
"I believe that young women with children, who go into their own business, are under merciless business pressure and home pressure."

"There are now equal opportunities in business for men and women. Why is it there are several 'women-only' business networking events ? Isn't this sexist ? There would be hell

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**Figure 1 - Attitudes Towards Gender Differences:
Respondents Disagreeing With Given Statements:
By Gender**



to pay if there were men-only events.”

In respect of the above circumstances, some could argue that ‘women-only’ events are addressing an imbalance in perceived areas of disadvantage.

Finally, another male respondent said:

“Small businesses must recruit the best person for the job. Unfortunately some government legislation insists that we disregard very important factors when recruiting women – most obviously home and maternity commitments. This should not apply to small businesses.”

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Perhaps before progressing with the analysis here, it should be pointed out that it has been suggested that there was a female bias in our questionnaire and that our questions were ‘loaded’ towards women. We are not sure we agree with this point. However, we might be tempted to agree that popular conceptions of gender might themselves be currently ‘loaded’. For instance, if a sample of male entrepreneurs claimed to be more

proficient or professional than their female counterparts, they might stand to be labelled ‘male chauvinists’, ‘dinosaurs’, or simply holding dated and anti-social attitudes. If, on the other hand, a sample of female entrepreneurs made the same claims, the headlines might be more positive - ‘women hit back’, ‘the sisters are doing it for themselves’, ‘women refuse to take a back seat any longer’, etc. There is perhaps a case then for saying that the lingering underdog status of women in our society combined with current forces of political correctness make this a battle (if that is what it is) that the top dog (in this case men) are unlikely to win.

Figure 1 shows that the female respondents disagreed quite strongly with the notion that men and women have different attributes/psychological traits (68%, compared with only 47% of males).

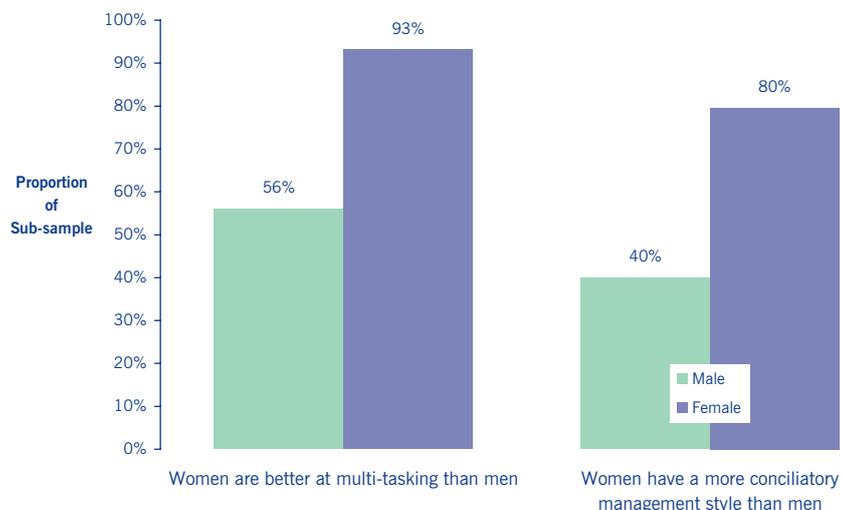
It is interesting to note that men were fairly divided on the issue: 39% felt that there were differences compared with 47% who disagreed. Women, on the other hand, strongly favoured the view – in a ratio of three-to-one – that such differences did not exist: only 23% felt there were such differences, compared with 68% who disagreed.

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Figure 2 - Attitudes Towards Gender Differences: Respondents Agreeing With Given Statements: By Gender

Collectively, female respondents rated themselves more highly than their male counterparts



On the issue of decisiveness in business decision-making, both sexes felt that there were no marked differences. However, whereas 68% of males felt this (by disagreeing with the questionnaire proposition that men were more decisive), the figure for females was higher at 89%.

Thus, the picture so far is that both sexes agreed with the view that the sexes are essentially similar rather than diverse.

However, **Figure 2** appears to show women not only claiming major gender differences, but very much differences in their favour.

On the issues of women being better multi-taskers and more conciliatory managers, men were largely divided, albeit with a modest balance in favour of seeing women as good multi-taskers. Female respondents, by way of stark comparison, having played down gender differences in Figure 1, arguably reverted to radical feminist orthodoxy in widely claiming a superiority over men with 93% claiming superior skills/attributes where multi-tasking was concerned and 80% claiming to see women as more conciliatory managers than their male counterparts.

This marked contradiction in views amongst the female respondents is nothing new to

social science research. We live our lives enmeshed in a web of contradictions and might not survive if we were more rational. What is interesting, however, is the sources and consequences of such contradictions.

The claims of gender superiority by our female sample would seem to indicate that women might be torn between two sets of values embedded in our society. The first is fairness and equality, and the second, competitiveness. Our survival as a society depends on the achievement of both social cohesion and also economic dynamism.

PERSONAL SKILLS

Respondents were asked to assess their skill levels on a range of areas. **Figure 3** illustrates the areas in which respondents rated themselves 'good'.

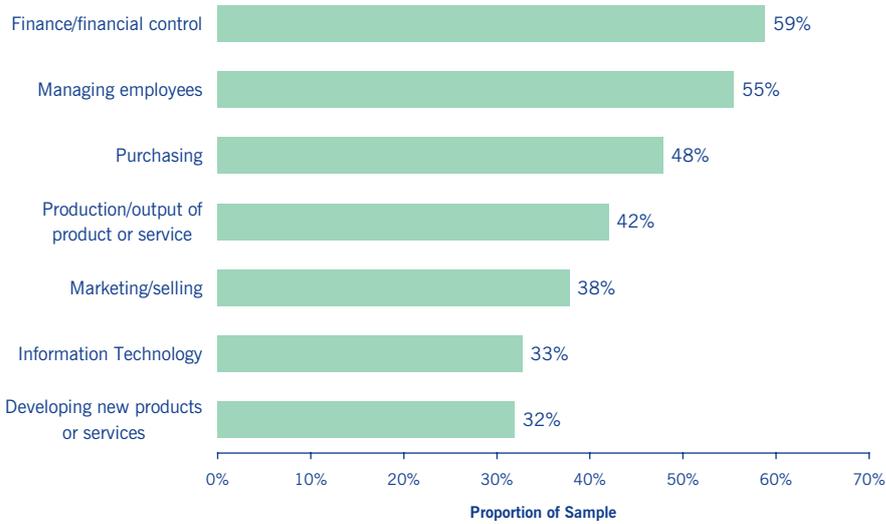
Looking at the 7 key areas, then financial control and employee management are the areas where respondents felt they were strongest, and at the opposite end of the scale were IT and new product/service development.

But when the responses are broken down by gender, as shown in **Figure 4**, there are some interesting differences. For 3 out of the 7 skill

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Figure 3 - Self-Assessment Of Personal Skills Rated As 'Good' By Respondents



Female owner-managers may have a 'blind spot' in developing new products or services

areas, the responses for the sexes were almost identical – managing employees, purchasing and marketing/selling. In 3 further areas – financial control, production/output of product or service and IT – women gave themselves higher self-ratings. Only in the area of new product/service development did men rate themselves more highly.

question of the nature-nurture debate rises its head. Women in the sample, for instance, appeared to regard themselves as strong on issues of multi-tasking and achieving conciliation. Men, on the other hand, appeared to feel on much stronger ground when it came to new product development. In both cases, these are arguably strengths based on socialisation. That is, people tend to become good at tasks they are familiar with and experienced at. What this does not point towards is innate differences.

Nature or nurture ?

On the issue of gender differences, the

Figure 4 - Self-Assessment Of Personal Skills Rated As 'Good' By Respondents: By Gender

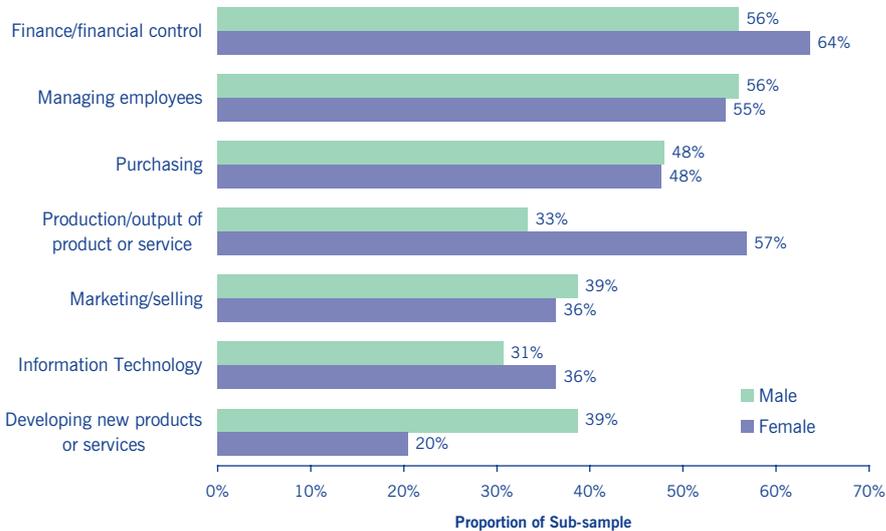


Figure 5 - Attitudes Towards Business Environment: Respondents Disagreeing With Given Statements: By Gender

Little doubt that women have to cope on two or more fronts



LACK OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ?

Figure 5 illustrates the responses to statements concerning women’s experiences in running businesses. Interestingly, a majority of both women and men disagreed with statements negative to women. That is, they disagreed with statements to the effect that women suffered a lack of support in business today, that female involvement in business was not accepted as a norm and that women faced greater discrimination than men. It should be noted that, in addition to respondents who took the opposite view, some simply said they had no views either way on one or more of the statements.

Figure 6 shows that 93% of females and 71% of males agreed that women were less free to get on with running their businesses than men. Here the thinking centred on the dual roles of work and home, particularly with caring responsibilities. Relevant comments included:



“Women should be treated equally within the constraints of their family commitments. We already have a massive burden of red tape to deal with, without further complicating matters.”

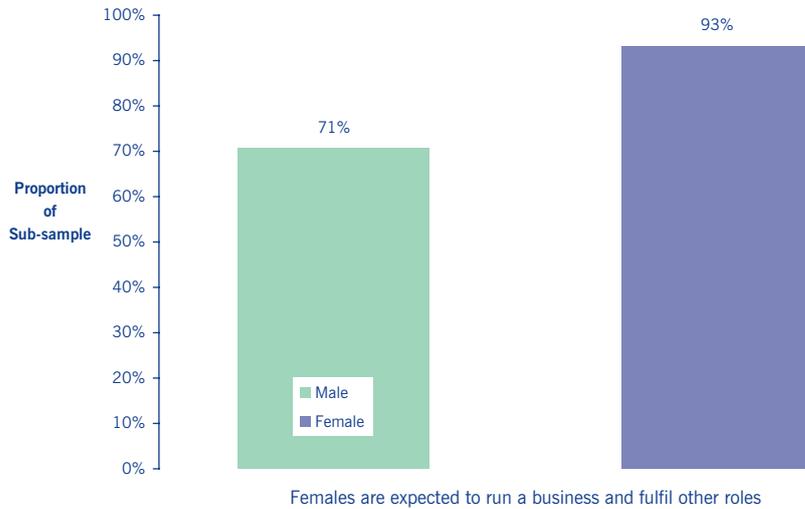
“Of course there has to be more flexibility with female staff, but women are generally more loyal and conscientious.”

“I have always run a firm that takes the needs of parents into account. I give employees flexitime and sick leave for their dependent children as well as themselves. This meant that mums could come to work but still care for their family.”

“On a number of occasions, important senior women staff have ‘announced’ that they are pregnant and leaving. This is sometimes difficult to square with their crucial roles in business and the opportunities that they have been given and well-rewarded for.”

“I am concerned about the government’s plans to increase the maternity pay period and make businesses pay for this themselves instead of being able to claim it back. I feel as a small business owner that this would make young women too expensive to employ.”

**Figure 6 - Attitudes Towards Business Environment:
Respondents Agreeing Given Statement: By Gender**



Interestingly, this last comment was made by a female small business owner concerning female employees. It nonetheless serves to inform the wider issue of women facing competing pressures from both work and the home environments.

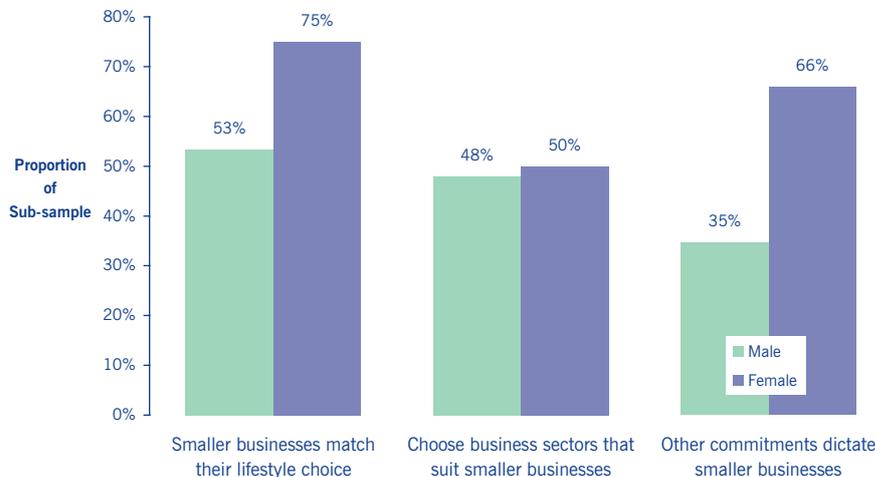
managed businesses are more likely than their male counterparts to be smaller in size and run on a part-time basis.

The replies were as might be expected with two factors emerging. First, the need to balance lifestyle commitments (work and family) and, second, the choice of business sectors which made this possible.

**SMALLER AS A RESULT OF
DICTATING CONDITIONS ?**

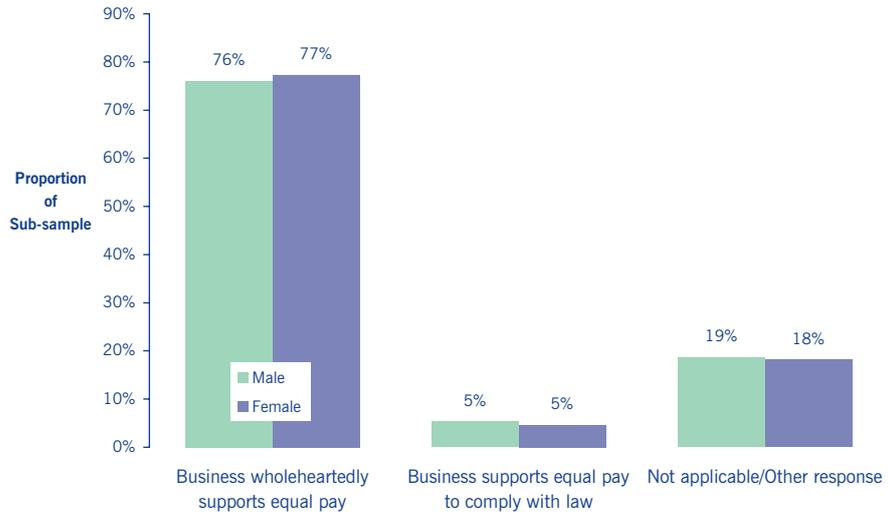
Figure 7 indicates the responses exploring perceptions as to why female owner-

**Figure 7 - Perceptions About The Size & Sectors
Of Female-Owned Small Businesses:
Respondents Agreeing With Given Statements: By Gender**



**Figure 8 - Attitudes Towards Equal Pay:
Respondents Agreeing With Given Statements: By Gender**

Some respondents may have considered their business too small to express a view



EQUAL PAY

Figure 8 shows the responses to a question seeking to investigate the attitudes of respondents towards equal pay and benefits for women. More than 75% said their businesses wholeheartedly supported the policy of equal pay for equal work. There was no difference between the sexes here.

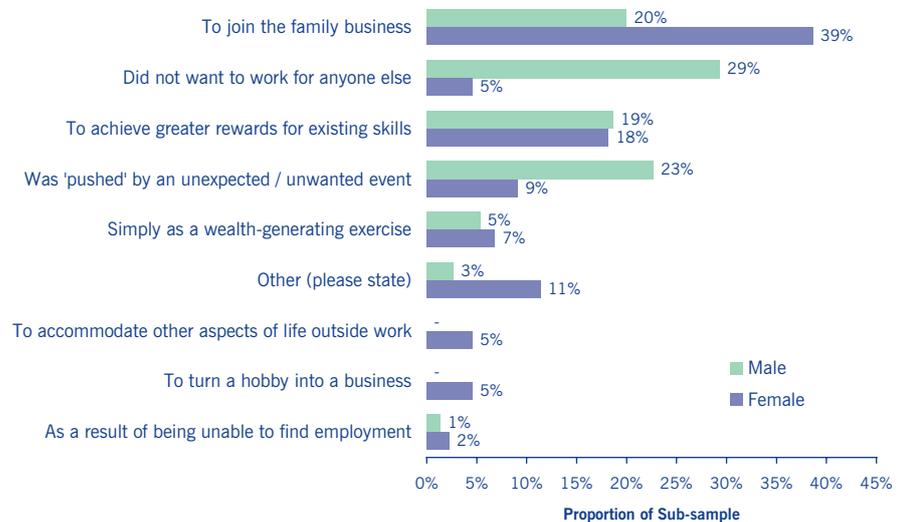
Interestingly, nearly a third of the retail/distribution respondents (29%) felt that the

issue was 'not applicable' to them, as did 15% of those in the 20-49 employee size band.

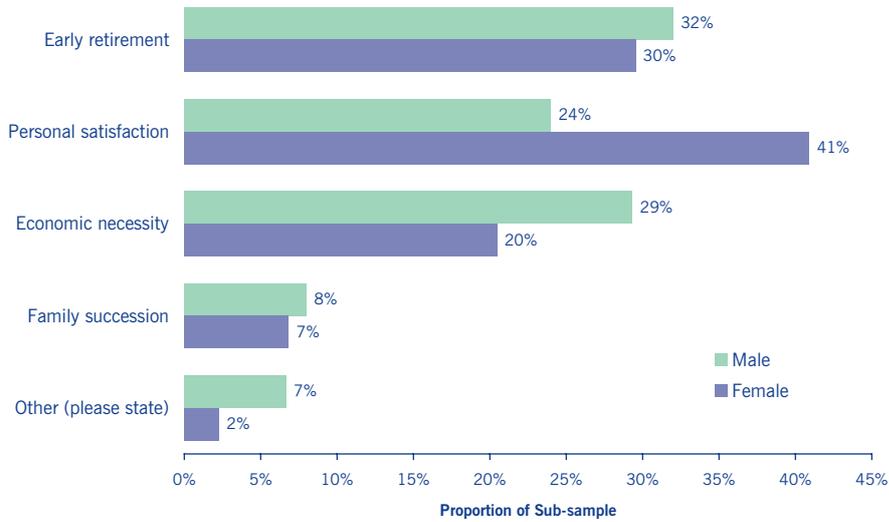
REASONS FOR FIRST GOING INTO BUSINESS

When asked the main reason for first going into business for themselves, the respondents' replies were exactly in line with previous research. For male respondents, the independence of not working for anyone else,

Figure 9 - Main Reason For First Going Into Small Business Ownership: By Gender



**Figure 10 - Main Aim With Existing Business:
By Gender**



A high proportion of female respondents are staying on simply for 'personal satisfaction'

followed by 'pushed by an unexpected/unwanted event', were most prominent. Amongst female respondents, 39% had joined existing family firms (Figure 9).

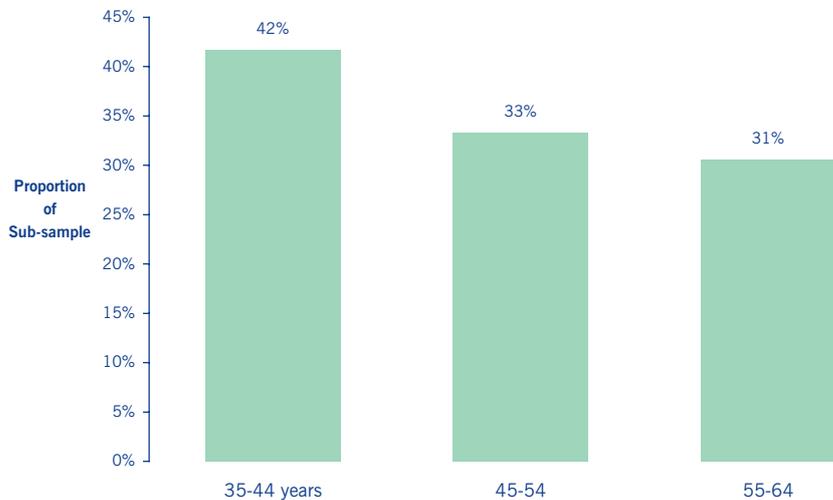
Respondents offering 'other' reasons said:

- Government recession
- I wanted to run a better agency with high standards so I opened my own
- My husband and I started in business together after the war

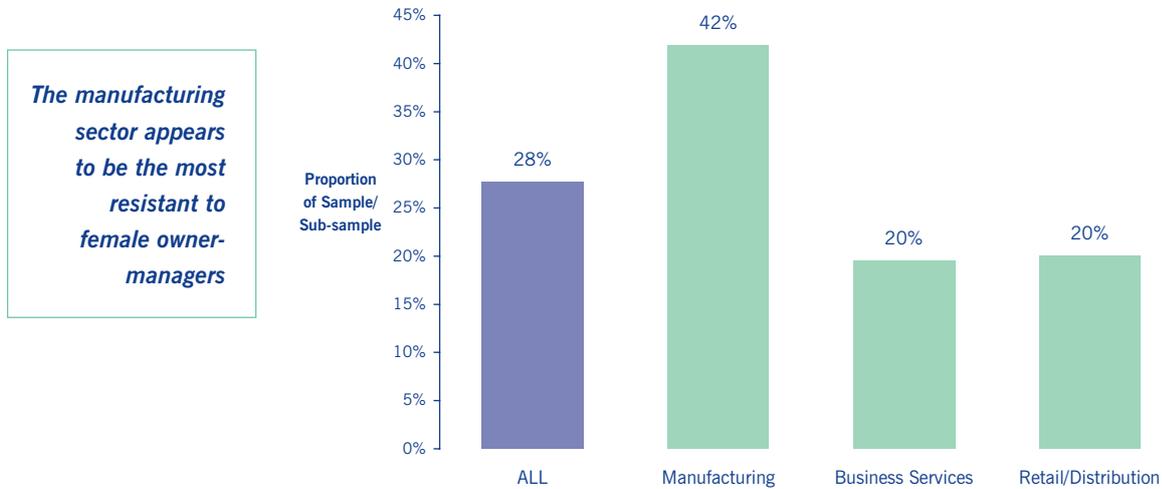
- Retirement of previous owner
- To keep my brain active while working when and where I like
- To prove I could
- Took over when my father died

Figure 10 illustrates the main aim that respondents have for their business currently. Over all, the strongest motive appeared to be that of achieving early retirement – this scored heavily for both sexes at around 30%. Following that, 'economic necessity' rated

**Figure 11 - Main Aim With Existing Business:
Respondents Selecting 'Early Retirement':
By Respondent Age**



**Figure 12 - Attitudes Towards Business Environment:
Respondents Agreeing That Women Running Businesses
Is Still Not An Accepted Norm: By Sector**



highly for male respondents (29%) and 'personal satisfaction' for women at 41%

The responses to most of the questions in the survey did not reveal large differences between sectors, business size-bands or business-owner ages. However, it is interesting to examine **Figure 11** which shows that the lure of early retirement is strongest in the youngest age ranges, scoring as high as 42% amongst those in the 35-44 years age group.

MANUFACTURING RESISTANT TO FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

When inspecting the analyses of sector differences, it was noted that respondents in manufacturing were twice as likely to indicate that 'women running a business was still not an accepted norm' than those in either the business services and the retail/distribution sectors (**Figure 12**).

RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS

These commence in verbatim form on p.17.

REFERENCES: MANAGEMENT & GENDER ISSUES

The following references are offered as an aid to readers interested in seeking further information via the world-wide-web. The coverage is not intended to be definitive, and inclusion here should not imply either agreement or disagreement with the views expressed via these sources. Some web sites have appeared before, but there is usually a section noted with interests relevant to the theme of this report.

Special care should also be taken with material obtained from **outside** the UK, for example, the USA, where different legal issues may apply.

N.B. Some pages may contain links to other WWW pages offering related material. Tip: The WWW links were functional at the time of going to print, but the world wide web is in a state of constant change. So if later problems arise with a link, edit the link back to the 'home page' – e.g., truncate <http://www.bized.ac.uk/fme/xyz.htm> back to <http://www.bized.ac.uk/> – and look for a similar topic heading there.

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- **Accelerating Women's Enterprise (AWE)**

"The Accelerating Women's Enterprise Development Partnership brings together a number of leading agencies operating at the cutting edge of women's enterprise development (several of whom are cited as examples of innovation and best practice in PAT reports), spanning the English regions. The Development Partnership will focus attention/support on excluded groups of women e.g. ethnic minority, lone parents, women returners, unemployed and low income women, disabled women, young and third age women and women from deprived rural and urban areas."

www.awe-uk.org.uk/index.html

- **Association for Women in Science and Engineering (AWiSE)**

"A multi-disciplinary membership organisation composed of individuals, businesses, associations, institutions and other organisations, all of whom share the common goal of advancing the interests of women in science, engineering and technology."

www.awise.org/

- **British Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAWE)**

Founded in 1954, it "encourages the personal development of member entrepreneurs and provides opportunities for them to expand their business through: Informal and Formal Networking; The BAWE Website for Marketing and Advertising; National and International Trade Missions and Conferences; Mentoring, Training and Accessing Capital."

www.bawe-uk.org/

- **EUROPA Women entrepreneurs and co-entrepreneurs**

European Commission Enterprise Directorate-General B/3: "The Fourth Annual Report (1996) of The European Observatory for SMEs includes for the first time a theme study on the position of Women in SMEs. In this study attention is paid to (1) the areas in which female

entrepreneurs encounter particular difficulties, (2) the legal status of assisting spouses and social protection, (3) actions taken to rectify problems regarding legal status and social security, and (4) support and developmental programmes for women entrepreneurs."

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/craft/craft-women/women-dgentr-activities.htm>

- **Female Europeans of Medium and Small Enterprises (FEM)**

Umbrella Organisation representing 35 associations of women entrepreneurs from 9 European countries.

www.fem-pme.com/

- **Prowess**

A UK association of organisations and individuals who support women to start and grow businesses. "Here you can find key statistics regarding women and entrepreneurship. This is an ongoing resource which will be continuously updated. The reports referred to here are available in our online research library, where you can find hundreds of reports categorised by theme and region." A useful source of statistics and publications online.

www.prowess.org.uk/

- **UNIFEM**

"The women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality."

www.unifem.org/

- **Women and Equality Unit**

Part of the Department for Trade & Industry: "The Ministers for Women, supported by the Women and Equality Unit (WEU), are responsible for promoting and realising the benefits of diversity in the economy and more widely. This includes taking forward proposals on civil partnerships and the future of our equality bodies. They develop policies

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relating to gender equality and ensure that work on equality across Government as a whole is co-ordinated.”

www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/

- **Women in Rural Enterprise (WiRE)**

“A dynamic networking and business club which aims to help rural women in every way possible towards starting and maintaining their own rural enterprise ... Regular networking events and seminars are held in different regions of the country and information is made available to members via newsletters and the website.”

www.wireuk.org/

- **Women’s Employment, Enterprise & Training Unit (WEETU)**

Its primary purpose is “to assist women in Norfolk and Waveney to develop their economic prospects and to improve access to the local labour market through the provision of high quality employment and enterprise support services.”

www.weetu.org/

- **Women’s National Commission**

It is the “official, independent, advisory body giving the views of women to the Government. It is the only organisation of this kind in the UK. It ensures that women’s views are taken into account by the Government and are heard in public debate.” Offers an extensive range of links to other web sites.

www.thewnc.org.uk/

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MANUFACTURING

Brewers	Female	<i>Far too of my much time is spent with piles of bureaucratic bumpf ! Being female, I feel obliged to deliver ! The others (men) would just let it pile up until they were forced to address the situation. Someone's gotta do it !</i>
Colour Cosmetic Products Manufacturer and Retailer	Female	<i>Things are changing slowly, but still must high-profile successful women have a financial man in the background. Men still have the power in the form of money.</i>
Custom Curtains Drapery; Soft Furnishings	Female	<i>If we want a man's job, we must be better than him. No amount of help will change this. The drive is within ourselves.</i>
Design, Printing & New Media	Female	<i>As a (youngish) female business owner, I find two contrasting issues - on the one hand I feel isolated in a sea of middle-aged men. On the other hand I tend to get noticed at networking events, which can be quite useful. The main problem is - of course - childcare, but I suppose that will go away in a few years.</i>
Furniture Restoration	Male	<i>There is too much made of this [gender differences].</i>
Graphic Design & Printing	Male	<i>The ideal of equal pay/opportunity for women can never work totally in practice. The disruption of maternity is always going to influence some managers (male normally) in deciding on applicants.</i>
High-tech Contemporary Textiles	Female	<i>Ageism for older females - funding is generally age-related with a cut-off barrier of 35 years of age. Older females seem to be perceived as 'over the hill', whereas older males are valued for their lifetime experience !</i>
Labelling For Cosmetics & Toiletry Industries	Male	<i>Although men and women do have different psychological traits and attributes, this is also true for people of the same gender and does not necessarily equip one gender as a whole. It is much more down to the individual's capabilities.</i>
Manufacture & Sale Of Printer Consumables	Female	<i>I am concerned about the government's plans to increase the maternity pay period and make businesses pay this themselves instead of being able to claim it back. I feel as a small business owner that this would make young women too expensive to employ.</i>

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MANUFACTURING continued

Medical Electronic Instruments	Male	<i>Be careful of creating gender bias. The questions were 'loaded' towards women. I doubt the validity of the exercise</i> <i>[Editor's note: see the comments on p.7 about female bias in the questionnaire]</i>
Steel Stockholders & Processors	Male	<i>Women should be treated equally within the constraints of their family commitments. We already have a massive burden of red tape to deal with, without further complicating matters.</i>
Sub-contract Engineering Machining & Light Fabrication	Male	<i>There are gender differences in business, and in my experience women do not like working for other women. In the end, the free market decides regardless of opinion !</i>
Textile Printing	Female	<i>I cannot understand why gender differences are an issue. Surely the greater need is the best person for the job regardless of gender - or age/colour/creed for that matter.</i>

BUSINESS SERVICES

Audit Accountancy and Taxation	Male	<i>The effects of maternity pay and maternity leave are not understood by government. This is a particular problem for those employing 20 people or less.</i>
Business & Marketing Consultancy	Male	<i>It's what you want to achieve, not what you are limited to. Often people use 'differences' as an excuse - make the time, put in the effort in the right business ! Local factors favour women unfairly.</i>
Chartered Accountants	Male	<i>There are now equal opportunities in business for men and women. Why is it there are then several 'women-only' business networking events ? Isn't this sexist ? There would be hell to pay if they were men-only events.</i>
Chartered Surveyor	Male	<i>This business has 1 male and 5 females in a male-orientated environment and is successful.</i>
Food Technology & Quality Consultant	Male	<i>I believe that young women with children, who go into their own business, are under merciless business pressure and home pressure. They would benefit from financial assistance for child care costs until their business has sufficient profitability.</i>

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BUSINESS SERVICES continued

Graphic Designers	Male	<i>Small businesses must recruit the best person for the job. Unfortunately some government legislation insists that we disregard very important factors when recruiting women - most obviously home and maternity commitments. This should not apply to small businesses.</i>
Insurance Brokers	Male	<i>Of course there has to be flexibility with female staff, but generally women are more loyal and conscientious.</i>
International Freight Forwarding Services	Male	<i>My experience of women in business is that they are just as able as men.</i>
Legal/Debt Recovery	Male	<i>Gender differences ? - thank God for them ! :)</i>
Public Relations and Marketing Consultancy	Female	<p><i>There are still some areas when being a man is especially helpful to success in business - such as heavy engineering, the motor trade and some financial firms in the City - but women are more successful in the soft skills disciplines such as business consultancy, team building and marketing.</i></p> <p><i>I have always run a firm that takes the needs of parents into account and right from the outset in 1975 (long before it was a legal requirement), I gave employees flexitime and sick leave for their dependent children as well as themselves. This meant mums could come to work but still care for their family.</i></p>
Recruitment	Female	<i>I totally disagree with all legislation on sex discrimination. Women should choose if they want to work or have babies, or do both and work very hard and manage their time. They should not expect time out of the workplace as and when it suits them !</i>
Textile Marketing	Male	<i>Better education has given women more opportunities, more interesting jobs and more earning power. However, we also need them to produce the next generation, a generation on which we will in due course depend ! Running a company and raising a family are both 100% full time occupations and hard choices are inevitable as to which is the most important for the individual; it is certainly not possible to do both at the same time successfully.</i>

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BUSINESS SERVICES continued

Training for PCs	Male	<i>On a number of occasions, important senior women staff have 'announced' that they are pregnant and are leaving. This is sometimes difficult to square with their critical roles in businesses and the opportunities that they have been given and well-rewarded for.</i>
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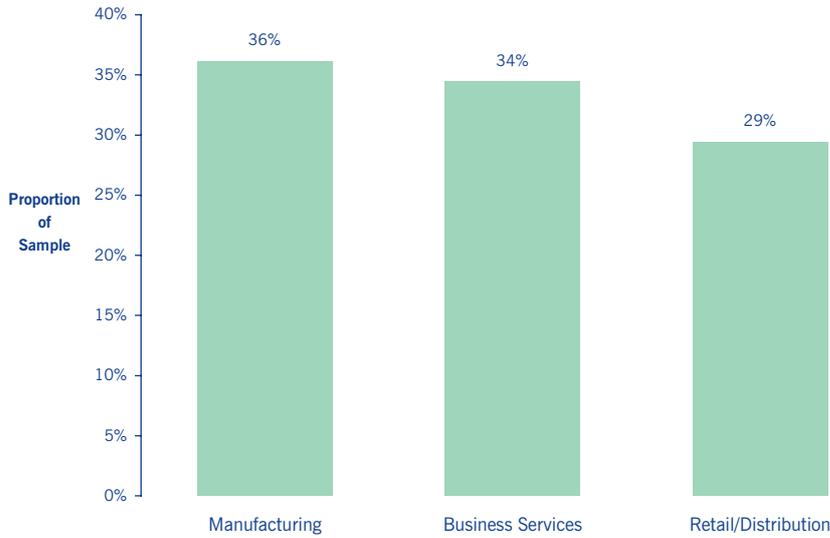
RETAIL & DISTRIBUTION

Computer System Reseller	Male	<i>Vive la difference.</i>
Hand & Power Tools, Fastenings, Outdoor & Industrial Clothing	Female	<i>In the twenty-five years I have been involved in my family business, the attitude of customers and suppliers to women has definitely improved.</i>
Hardware and Pet Store	Male	<i>Forget gender ! If you can do the job, then go for it - the world will have to fall in line eventually. Almost any job is 1% gender and 99% attitude or ability.</i>
Health Foods and Herbal Remedies	Male	<i>I think it is wrong to positively discriminate for any sector of the workforce or public. Jobs should be given on bases of suitability not because the applicant is female.</i>
Tank Container Haulage	Male	<i>Women in management are generally harder to deal with because usually they do not have a practical idea of [the] workplace. Manual: bad, office: good. Shop floor they do not understand.</i>

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**Figure 13 - Profile Of Sample:
Respondents By Industrial Sector**



APPENDIX 1 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

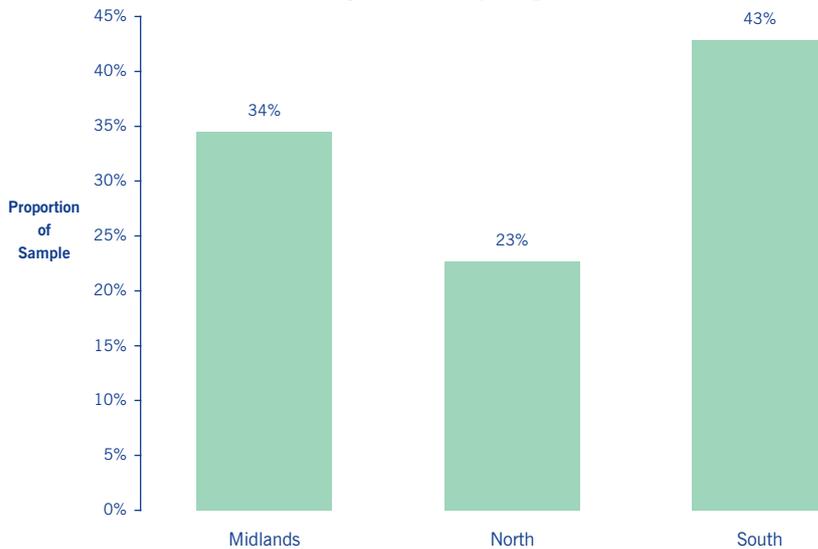
As an aid to the interpretation of the various figures (histograms), we have included some further information about the firms responding to this survey.

The analyses involve key variables, and **industry sector** and **employee size** are those most frequently used as they are reasonably reliable indicators and less prone to

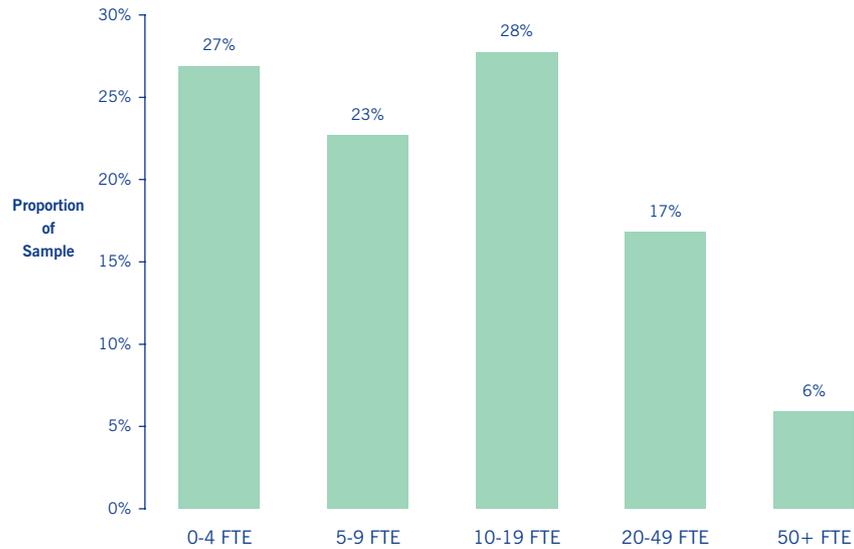
misinterpretation. Other variables have also included **region, sales growth, respondent age** and **sex**.

Industrial sectors – based on the descriptions supplied by respondents, each firm is coded according to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC 1980). Firms are then grouped into manufacturing, business services, retail/distribution. Firms falling outside these 3 bands – which would otherwise be classified as ‘other’ – are allocated

**Figure 14 - Profile Of Sample:
Respondents By Region**



**Figure 15 - Profile Of Sample:
Respondents By Employee Size**



to the foregoing sector which offers the closest match.

Regions - firms are also classified according to their physical location, namely, North, Midlands and the South.

Employee size - finally, firms are placed in bands according to the number of employees. Each part-time employee is assumed to be equivalent to 40 per cent of a full-time employee ('FTE' = full-time equivalent). All of the surveys to date have received only a small number of responses from firms with 50 or more FTE employees. These responses have been **included** in the breakdowns for the **sectoral** and **regional** analyses, but have been **excluded** as a '50+FTE' band in the **employee-size** analyses (the 'All' band in each histogram includes all usable responses regardless). This is because a percentage breakdown band based on just two or three firms may not be representative of this size of business.

Distribution of firms

The highest proportion of respondents is in manufacturing (36%, compared to 38% in the same sector for the previous report), see **Figure 13**.

The South region has the largest representation, with 43% of the sample's respondents (44% previously), see **Figure 14**.

Manufacturing and business services firms in samples can tend to be larger, in terms of employees, whereas the firms in retailing/distribution may have fewer full-time equivalent employees. Likewise, the sample is biased towards the smaller businesses – but not the very smallest (sole traders), of which there is a preponderance amongst the small firms population generally. The employee size distribution for the sample is shown in **Figure 15**.

In terms of respondent age, they are predominantly 35 years or older, with the bulk between 45 and 64 years' old.

Finally, the sample is predominantly male (63%, compared to 65% previously).

Abbreviation of questionnaire text

It should be noted that, for reasons of space and, hopefully, clarity, questions and response options are sometimes abbreviated in the report text and the accompanying figures. The exact wording used is shown in the following appendix.

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Small Enterprise Research Report MANAGEMENT & GENDER DIFFERENCES



Report No.6 - 2005 - Sponsored by Lloyds TSB

*This questionnaire will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete – most answers require only a single tick.
All information received will be treated in complete confidence. PLEASE RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.*

1a Workforce size - Please indicate the total number of people working in your business (including yourself):

Full-time A
Part-time (16 hrs/wk or less) B

1b Respondent age - Your age last birthday:

16-24 years A
25-34 B
35-44 C
45-54 D
55-64 E
65 or over F

1c Respondent gender - Your gender:

Male M
Female F

2 Business environment - Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following generalised statements:

Only one ✓ per row
Agree Disagree Don't Know

Women running businesses is still not seen as an accepted norm A
There is a general lack of support for women in business in all areas B
Women face greater discrimination than men when running their business (e.g., amongst customers) C
In addition to running a business, female owner-managers are still expected to fulfil other major roles/commitments such as running their family home D

1 2 3

3 Business constraints - Generally speaking, female owner-managed businesses are more likely than their male counterparts to be smaller in size and run on a part-time basis. Please indicate why you feel this might be:

Only one ✓ per row
Agree Disagree Don't Know

Other commitments - Women are forced to run smaller businesses because of other commitments/challenges they face A
Lifestyle choice - Women are choosing to run smaller businesses because it suits them/their lifestyle B
Business sectors - The chosen sectors or markets by women tend to suit smaller-sized enterprises C

1 2 3

4 Underlying differences - Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following general statements:

Only one ✓ per row
Agree Disagree Don't Know

Men are more decisive in business than women A
Women have a more conciliatory management style than men B
Men have different attributes/psychological traits to women, which makes it easier for them to succeed in business C
Women are better at 'multi-tasking' than men D

1 2 3

5 Personal skills - Please rate your personal skills in each of the following areas:

Only one ✓ per row

Good Ade- Would
quate Like To
Know More

- | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Developing new products or services | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A |
| Finance/financial control . | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | B |
| Information Technology... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | C |
| Managing employees | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | D |
| Marketing/selling | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | E |
| Production/output of product or service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | F |
| Purchasing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | G |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | |

6 Attitudes towards equal pay for women - Please indicate which one of the following options most closely matches your own viewpoint:

Just one ✓ only

- A My business wholeheartedly supports equal pay and benefits for female employees (for comparable work)
- or B My business accepts the principle of equal pay and benefits for female employees primarily to satisfy legal obligations
- or C Not applicable (e.g., the business is too small)

9 'Gender Differences' - If you have any strong views, especially if you feel that any aspect is not fully appreciated by important sections of the business community (such as the government help agencies or the financial services sector), then please comment:

7 Reason for first entering small business ownership - Please indicate the main reason for yourself:

Just one ✓ only

- A I did not want to work for anyone else
- or B To join the family business
- or C I was 'pushed', as a result of an unexpected or unwanted event (e.g., redundancy)
- or D To accommodate other aspects of life outside work (e.g., childcare)
- or E Simply as a wealth-generating exercise
- or F To turn a hobby into a business
- or G To achieve greater rewards for existing skills
- or H As a result of being unable to find employment
- or I Other (please state)

8 Ultimate aims - Which one of the following options represents your main aim now with the business:

Just one ✓ only

- A Economic necessity: a need to keep going primarily for income needs
- or B Family succession: a desire to pass the business on to son, daughter or other family member
- or C Early retirement: to achieve a 'payback' for time/effort/money invested in the business
- or D Personal satisfaction: obtained from either fulfilling customers' needs or employing others
- or E Other (please state)

Thankyou for your co-operation. Please return the completed questionnaire using the accompanying pre-paid envelope, to:
**Ms. Beverley Porter-Blake, SERTeam - Open University Business School
 Michael Young Building, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA**

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