



The Battle of the Sexes

Sarah Blinco meets Amanda Rose - popular Australian radio presenter and commentator on women in business - to discuss whether it really is still a 'man's world' out there in the workforce, and what she thinks we should do about it...

Why do you perceive it's still a 'man's world'? Men are often the ones who sign on the dotted line. They fill boardrooms and take a lot of the risk in both business and in life. Most women still look to or ask a 'man' for his advice or guidance in life - that is because it is natural to do so. We shouldn't change that.

What in your opinion are the main challenges we as women face in the workplace? There are a few challenges for women, the first is a woman's lack of understanding on how to deal/work WITH men. Men are simple creatures that like women to 'help' them. If we take this approach then we can help men all the way up our corporate ladder. It is smarter to make the males in the workforce your ally and not your enemy. As women like men to be masculine, men like women to be feminine. I am not saying women should be weak creatures, on the contrary they should be firm although still remain a woman. Too many women feel the need to act like a man to succeed in business.

Another issue is that women go off and have children and on their return find they are still in middle management. This is reality. If a man took 5-10 years off it would be a similar story. Women need to either keep their finger on the pulse (with other men in the industry) and contract whilst having children or realise that it will take 5-10 years longer for them to reach the top than a man who hasn't taken the time off.

Have you ever experienced issues of inequality or challenges as a 'woman in a man's world'? Yes. Inequality occurs all the time and in a range of circumstances. There is a definite wall that men have in business and at first this can be frustrating until you master the art to work with them rather than against them. You will always have men that want nothing to do with you, just remember,

there is more than one way to skin a cat. If that particular path (man) doesn't work (listen or give you a chance) then try another. I have had just as much resistance from women also. Work often being such a competitive environment, I find that women can be harder



Another great tip is to stand there and listen. You can learn a great deal in a men's club type scenario from listening. You may find their passion; they may have something in common with yourself or someone you know. Above all, always remember that men want people to do something FOR them. What's in it for him? What do you have as a women, knowledge wise or expertise wise, that would make his life easier?

How would you suggest 'women can help women' in this man's world?

Be realistic. Women's groups are great to share ideas and to learn although it won't help break through into the 'man's world' so to speak. Stop competing with other women. Look at the males in your life and how their networks could help other women in your life and vice versa. We all have a male in our lives in one way or the other - we should be sharing their networks, skills and knowledge. Buddy up and go to business events/functions that are male dominated and work the room together if you aren't confident enough to go alone.

What advice would you give to the aspiring young 20-something girl who is yet to experience these issues? Be professional, be a woman. Find someone you admire in business and watch them/follow them in the news etc. Know what you are good at and then don't be afraid to approach men at functions or just in general and ask them to give you a go.

to deal with than the men. Men as a whole don't often see you as competition, well, until it's too late and you are.

What strategies do you suggest are best for women to remember when playing in a 'men's club' type scenario - or even general tips that we should consider? First and foremost be a woman. Dress like one, act like one, after all you are one. Don't try and be one of the boys, show them your area of expertise and your interpretation of a situation when the opportunity arises in a conversation.

Amanda Rose realises your business and/or personal potential with clever, cutting-edge ideas; establishing critical connections to make it happen. Radio presenter at My Business Help at Alive 90.5 FM and commentator on women in business, personal branding and life. www.amandarose.com.au / Follow on Twitter @TheAmandaRose.

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