Mission Imposter: Myths Female Executives Tell Themselves

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Behavioral Dimensions

- Problem Solving Style
- Work Habits
- Motivational Factors
- Self-Awareness
- Human Relations
- Coping Strategies
- Lifestyle Priorities
- Vocational Incentives
Sample of Traits Measured

PROBLEM-SOLVING STYLE
• Common Sense
• Analysis
• Intuition
• Innovation
• Street Sense
• Experiential Learning
• Theoretical Reasoning
• Linguistics
• Quantitative Orientation
• Reflection

SELF-ASSESSMENT
• Self-Sufficiency
• Self-Development
• Self-Confidence
• Self-Respect
• Self-Understanding
• Self-Acceptance
• Self-Fulfillment
• Self-Realization
• Self-Expression
• Self-Actualization

HUMAN RELATIONS
• Popularity
• Presence
• Visibility
• Humour
• Empathy
• Patience
• Cooperation
• Tact
• Political Acumen
• Assertion
• Negotiation
• Delegation
Some of the *Myths*
True or False

Female Executives are less Decisive than Male CEOs
Decisive - preference for being the final decision-maker
True or False

Female Executive’s are less Innovative than Male CEOs
Innovation—
desire to generate or recognize creative, imaginative solutions
True or False

Female Executives are less Politically Astute than Male CEOs
Political Acumen
- degree one appreciates and uses politically appropriate Judgment
True or False

Female Executives are more Intuitive than Male CEOs
Intuition – insightful; wise; knows or understands with few tangible facts
True or False

Female Executives do not work at the same fast-pace as Male CEOs
Stamina – Ability to operate with an energetic and quick pace
True or False

Female Executives Have a Lower Work Ethic than Male CEOs
Work Ethic –
degree to which one views full commitment and 100% effort at work as satisfying
True or False

Female Executives place higher importance on traditional Family life than Male CEOs
Family - importance of having an active and traditional family life

- Percentage of cases in 8 portions of the curve
  - $-4\sigma$: .13%
  - $-3\sigma$: 2.14%
  - $-2\sigma$: 13.59%
  - $-1\sigma$: 34.13%
  - $0$: 34.13%
  - $+1\sigma$: 13.59%
  - $+2\sigma$: 2.14%
  - $+3\sigma$: .13%

- Standard Deviations
  - $-4\sigma$ to $+4\sigma$

- Percentiles
  - 1, 5, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 95, 99
True or False

Female Executives are not as Smart as Male CEO’s
Traditional IQ

Percentage of cases in 8 portions of the curve:

-4σ: .13%
-3σ: 2.14%
-2σ: 13.59%
-1σ: 34.13%
0: 34.13%
+1σ: 13.59%
+2σ: 2.14%
+3σ: .13%

Standard Deviations

Percentiles:

1 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 95 99

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True or False

Female Executives are More Dependent & Seek More Support Than Male CEOs
Self-Sufficiency –
Preference For independence & avoids seeking support From Others
True or False

Female Executives are More Dependent & Seek More Support Than Male CEOs
Wealth – Motivated By Desire to Seek High Personal Financial Wealth

![Normal Distribution Chart](chart.png)
True or False

Female Executives are less motivated by **Money** Than Male CEOs
Power – Motivated By Desire to Seek a strong Influencing Control Over Others
The single biggest differentiating factor between men CEOs and female Executives is found in their inner belief system:

Negative self talk & Lower self-Assessment

- **Self-Confidence**
- **Self-Respect**
- **Fear of Failure**
- **Fear of Success**
True or False

Female Executives have as large an “Ego” and as much **Self-Esteem** as Male CEOs
Self-Respect – Sense of inner self-worth and holding one’s self in high regard
Self-Respect

- Male Executives Self-Respect of 55%ile reflects that they hold themselves in higher regard based on their perceived “natural” talents, abilities and behavioral qualities they believe they possess … and what they “actually achieve” with these natural talents is secondary to the value they hold for their natural talents, abilities and behavioral qualities.

- Female Executives Self-Respect of 35%ile reflects that they evaluate their Self-Worth based almost solely on what they believe they have achieved to date. To maintain their level of Self-Worth they are forever trying to “earn it” their Self-Respect everyday and prove they are not what they believe… an impostor… what they achieved yesterday hold little value for enhancing their Self-Worth today!
True or False

Female Executives Demonstrate as much Confidence as Male CEOs
Self-Confidence –
The Level of Inner Confidence and Faith in One’s Self to Succeed
Self-Confidence

- Male CEOs 65%ile Self-Confidence, sense of Adventure 55%ile, Competitiveness of 55%ile and Risk-Taking of 55%ile suggests they approach each new challenge accumulated from previous successes and that they typically have faith in their ability to succeed at new tasks … Analogy: assume the man is on the 10th floor of an office building and they are given a hang glider and told there is a 65% chance of safely making it down without injury – what are the odds they will take the chance and have confidence you will succeed … having little self-doubt they will view the challenge as exciting and if there are 3 other men on the roof they are going to beat everyone else by jumping first? Typically every male VP has made it clear that he expects to have his hat in the ring for the CEO opening though all his peers know he has plateaued; yet he is confident he could do the job as well as anyone else.

- Female Executives with 55%ile Self-Confidence, Competitiveness of 35%, Risk-Taking 40%ile and sense of Adventure of 45%ile are going to assess their ability to safely getting down with no injury to be less than 43% … with 57% doubt they could do it successfully … Analogy: What floor would they feel comfortable of safe using the hang glider to get down? Certainly not the 10th … 2nd or 1st floor? You can see how her level of Confidence acts as a “glass ceiling” to limit her success level. In almost every case where the woman executive is promoted from a middle manager role, it is at the encouragement or “pushing” by a male boss and not self-initiated.
True or False

Female Executives Have no more Fear of Failure Than Male CEOs
Self-Fulfillment -
Capacity to confront failure and overcome personal adversities with optimism
Self-Fulfillment

- Male CEOs Self-Fulfillment (i.e., lack of fear of failure) 55%ile, sense of Adventure 55%ile, Competitiveness of 55%ile and Risk-Taking of 55%ile suggests they approach each new challenge (promotion in this scenario) as an opportunity to rise to the occasion and they do not see the potential failure as “devastating emotionally” to their Ego … they are optimistic that they will learn from their failure as they grow into the new role and by trying it again and will do better the 2nd and 3rd effort.

- Female Executives with 45%ile Self-Fulfilment (i.e., 55% chance of failure … less than 50-50 chance of success), Competitiveness of 35%, Risk-Taking 40%ile and sense of Adventure of 45%ile are more prone to perceive failure as emotionally devastating for their Ego … self-fulfilling belief if you like and “If I fail at this promotion I will end up a bag lady on the street for no one will ever hire me again”.


True or False

Female Executives Have a Greater Fear of Success Than Male CEOs
Self-Realization – Prepared to make greater personal and lifestyle sacrifices to realize one’s full career potential
Self-Realization

- Male CEOs 50%ile Self-Realization, Drive to achieve 55%ile, Competitiveness of 55%ile and Risk-Taking of 55%ile suggests they do not see the personal and family or life style sacrifices required to succeed as onerous. In fact, they perceive that what ever sacrifices are required to succeed at the next level of leadership will be more than compensated by other rewards that off set the initial “price tag” of ambition (e.g., desire for Leadership 70%ile, Recognition 50%ile, Wealth 55% and Power 60%ile).

- Female Executives with 40%ile Self-Realization (fear of success) , Competitiveness of 35%, Risk-Taking 40%ile and Drive to achieve 40%ile are going to assess the “price tag” of succeeding at the next higher leadership rung as too high and whatever “rewards” (e.g., Recognition 35%ile) that accompany it will not off set the negative consequences for the other people in their life (e.g., Fraternity 60 Vs men CEOs of 45%ile) even though their Leadership desire (70%ile) and need for personal Power (55%ile) are equal to men CEOs.
Where does this leave the corporate need for more female executives?

There are highly competent women with the equal relevant behavioral qualities to succeed as well as male Executive level – but that success will and is exacting a greater emotional price from them.

There is a greater need to identify women with high executive talent earlier in their managerial career and provide them with coaching that enhances their self-esteem, inner confidence and optimism about their ability to succeed at the executive level.

There are highly competent women who clearly have executive potential **but**

– are opting out because of the perceived family and lifestyle sacrifice required.
The Challenge for Corporations

It’s not a women’s issue nor a diversity issue… it is about:

1. Creating and ensuring successful future businesses
2. Putting the most capable people in the right jobs
3. Supporting these most capable people to succeed
4. Making the executive suite a better place to work
5. Getting past the “Double no”
Sources & Details

- This research is based on SuccessFinder results, including 8 behavioral dimensions and 82 behavioral traits.
- The data set includes profiles of 97 female Executives (CEOs & VPs) assessed through 2016 & 89 male CEO’s assessed through 2011.
  - Canadian & US Companies
  - Sole proprietors, medium and large international companies
- For more information about SuccessFinder & our leadership audit & succession program, please contact us at info@successfinder.com
successfinder
the science of people
So What Now?

- What we know:
  - Not enough women in the corner office and the board room
  - Most women won’t get there on their own – they need to be identified, developed and encouraged
Leadership Audit from SuccessFinder

2 options:

» Executive development program – Goal: Getting female VP’s to C – suite. We start with 25 top performers. Cull to top 10%, these get detailed feedback, and development and coaching program designed to lead them to the corner office(s).

» Future leaders program - $3K/pp. Goal: finding and promoting future female leaders. We assess 50 women across first level managers (or other target groups). ID likely top performers, provide targeted group coaching (based on co-horts that would be segmented based on profile findings. For example, 6 ½ day workshops (competencies around self and around executive success).