

## WHAT'S NEW

## MW



## WOMEN LEADERS MORE PERSUASIVE

A study which set out to discover what qualities distinguish women leaders found them to be more persuasive, assertive and willing to take risks than their male counterparts.

Carried out by US-based management consulting firm Caliper with UK business-women's network Aurora and involving women leaders from both sides of the Atlantic, the study found women were also more empathic and flexible as well as stronger in personal skills.

What boosts their persuasive capability is a willingness to see all sides of a situation and to come at a subject from their audience's perspective – so the people they lead feel more understood, supported and valued. Male leaders were more inclined to start from their own point of view and convince through the strength of their position.

Another finding was their different response to knockback. Although slightly less resilient than men and prone to self-criticism, women learn from adversity and carry on with a refuelled determination to succeed. They're also more likely to ignore

rules, engage in greater risk-taking and come up with innovative solutions.

Women are generally seen as having a more inclusive, team-building approach to problem solving and decision making – because they're more willing to share information, they talk decisions through with many more people than their male counterparts.

All of which suggests women may be creating a new paradigm of leadership that is, the study says, "more conducive to today's diverse workplace where information is shared freely, collaboration is vital and teamwork distinguishes the best companies".

More information from [www.caliperonline.com](http://www.caliperonline.com)

## IN THE ZONE

Young women tend to show higher stress levels than men; individuals suffering highest stress say its sources are both work and home; and older workers have developed resilience levels that make them better able to handle stress.

These survey findings are from Wellington-based organisational psychologists Winsborough. Its analysis of 486 employees who've completed the company's stress and resilience programme highlights the importance of feeling "in the zone" – ie, alert, attentive and in control. Workers with higher levels of resilience are more optimistic, feel more in control and have more positive feelings about their work.

Winsborough says employers need to be on the front foot in providing staff with the simple skills to make them stronger in dealing with stress in a positive, healthy way.

## NO LONGER "FRINGE"

Offering employees work/life balance options is now a business imperative rather than a fringe benefit given the skills shortage that's afflicting both New Zealand and Australia, according to a report released here last month by Hudson.

*The Case for Work/Life Balance: Closing the Gap between Policy and Practice Report* shows organisations that have well-integrated work/life policies will be better able to both attract and hang onto talent. They'll also enjoy increased productivity, higher levels of employee engagement, positive employer branding and better use of skill sets.

It's not enough to pay lip service to the concept or labour under the misapprehension that such policies apply only to women. But one of the key perception changes that needs to be made is that visibility equals productivity, says Hudson.

The report suggests a range of flexible work options employers can consider ranging from flexi-time, job sharing or telecommuting to paid maternity leave, on- or near-site childcare, phased retirement, sabbaticals and paternity leave.

## DIARY NOTES

A two-day course designed to help women integrate the practical and intellectual aspects of effective leadership into their own authentic leadership style is being run at Wellington and Auckland venues in September. Leadership for Women is based on the premise that it's not what you know but who you are as a person that provides the anchor of true leadership and the example others are willing to follow. More information at [www.brightstar.co.nz](http://www.brightstar.co.nz).

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