

Women in Business

職場女性

Career women have come a long way since the 1980s, but do they really want to be at the top?
自1980年代起，事業女性的地位不斷提高，但她們真的想步步高陞嗎？

By Anna J H Fang 方靜華

Many people might say that I am an advocate of women in senior positions in government and in business; owning their own multi-million dollar enterprise or being at the helm of a multi-national, foreign or Hong Kong company. But are there barriers to women rising to the top of the corporate ladder? Are women playing on a skewed playing field in the business world? Or, have we finally smashed through the “glass ceiling” in the business world?

I recently attended a women’s business event and listened to the presentation by a woman who is a high ranking senior executive for a U.S. multi-national corporation. Her main goal in life is about continually rising in her career. Her every waking moment is spent continually networking to climb that career ladder to the top.

Some may say: “to the top of what?” Perhaps, she aspires to be the CEO of the company and sit on the board of directors one day. Her energy is focused on who she can impress, who she can meet and network with, and climbing up that “career ladder” to corporate heaven using whatever executive search person, senior executive, or CEO to attain her dream. Some people might say: “bravo for her – so ambitious, so driven, and working her way to the top.” Others might ask: “but doesn’t she have a life outside of the office?”

She is not alone. There are millions of ambitious women trying to rise through the corporate ranks. So that begs the question: why are there so few women in senior positions in government, universities, services industries, corporations and on boards and advisory groups in Hong Kong?

According to recent statistics compiled by the Women’s Foundation, women comprise 53% of the Hong Kong workforce. However:

- women make up 19% of the Legislative and District Councils;
- men hold 82% of the seats in the Legislative Council;
- 68% of the top-ranked civil servants are men;
- in law, women comprise 10% of senior lawyers;
- women comprise 17% of the judiciary; and
- in the Court of Final Appeal, there are no female judges.

In academia, women occupy 14% percent of senior jobs, however, there are no female presidents or chancellors in Hong Kong!

In business, women comprise 35% of senior managerial positions, but just 2% of the CEOs. Women hold just 9% of board positions of companies listed on the Hang Seng Index, with





one third of those companies having no female board members at all (the international average in 2011 was 16.1%).

In reality, this is not good news for women in business in Hong Kong. Are we making progress or going backwards in time in terms of progress? This is affecting the decision-making in business and in government – the policies and planning and this affects our society as a whole.

Are women in their 30s or early 40s forced or choosing to leave the workplace due to social pressure or other reasons? According to government data, women earn significantly less than men, even for the same position. And fewer women stay in the workforce long enough to attain top positions.

Being your own boss

Women bear double duty in our society – in the workplace and in the home. In Hong Kong, women are also expected to look after elderly relatives – a phenomenon which will increase as Hong Kong's population continues to age and our parents' generation lives longer.

Perhaps that explains why more and more women are choosing to become entrepreneurs. By being their own boss, they don't have to deal with office politics and can select their own corporate clients. They can also surround themselves with people they find to be a positive influence, which helps them to do what they want to do and love – being their own boss!

Tomorrow's Leaders 未來領袖

They say old prejudices and discrimination fade a little with each generation. So how do tomorrow's leaders feel about gender?

Dr Anne Peirson-Smith is Assistant Professor in the Department of English, City University of Hong Kong, said she has noticed that in the last five years, undergraduates are making the decision not to have a family.

"They feel having children hold women back, and that the best way to be independent is to have a good job," she said.

While well-educated women have that option, more challenged women in society may find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place. Their husband may hold traditional views on women and make their wife feel guilty if they don't take care of the family.

"So gender equality has to be built into the education system, because that is when children are forming their ideas. In school books the old illustrations were always of a man as a doctor and a woman as a nurse. That has changed, but it needs to be go into all areas," she said.

有人說，舊日的偏見和歧視會隨著每個世代逐漸消除。那麼，未來的領袖對性別有何想法？

香港城市大學英文系助理教授Anne Peirson-Smith博士說，她留意到在過去五年，愈來愈多大學生決定不組織家庭。

她說：「他們認為生兒育女會為女性帶來制肘，而獨立的最佳方法是找一份好工作。」

雖然受過良好教育的女性有這個選擇權，但社會上面對較多挑戰的女性，或會感到左右為難。她們的丈夫或會對女性的角色抱持傳統思想，如果她們沒有留在家中相夫教子，就會感到愧疚。

她說：「因此，性別平等應納入教育制度，因為兒童正是在此階段形成各種觀念。在教科書中，舊日的圖解往往是男人當醫生，女人當護士。男醫女護的情況已經不同了，但我們需要改變各方面的有關觀念。」

As the head of the company, do women make better bosses than men? Which sex is easier to work with or for – including clients? Looking back at my previous life in the corporate world in China and Hong Kong, and in my present line of work – media relations and public relations – I would say it depends on the individual.

Of course, we have all had to deal with demanding clients – both male and female – but in my own experience for my PR consultancy which has been in existence for 10 years – men and women have their own individual styles when it comes to management and communication.

When I worked for a U.S. multi-national corporation, I had free reign and used my initiative, motivation and hard work to get things done. I just had to show results and was encouraged to embrace the work lifestyle. In both the Hong Kong corporation and foreign multi-national where I worked, I was shielded from internal politics and any power struggles. There was a good company culture in both companies.

In today's Hong Kong, however, the reality is women are starting to make different career choices versus a decade ago. They are thinking about the consequences of spending too much time travelling on business, waking up in 5-star international hotels, attending endless meetings, lunches and dinners, being “up in the air” at 30,000 feet, in taxis, and in airports.

Many are asking themselves: is this the type of life I aspire to? Or are there other rewards to be found in the form of family, children, friends and not living such a hectic and frenetic lifestyle? What are the personal sacrifices which have to be made?

Of course each individual, both men and women are faced with the same questions, but can we truly have it all? Or do we end up losing our personal lives and privacy and a little bit of our humanity along the way on the climb?

80-120 rule

Do women have to work harder to prove themselves in terms of performance? It can be said that it's a man's world in Hong Kong, and that the top echelons of politics and business are mostly dominated by the males. As a result, women often have to put in 120% effort to get 80% recognition. But whereas a man has no qualms about walking into the boss's office to tell him or her their achievements, women tend to be more passive. They feel their work will speak for itself and they will earn the recognition and respect that they deserve. But unless a manager stands up and blows their own horn, no one will notice, be they a woman or man.

This is why some men rise up the ranks over their fellow males. Each person has their own personality, and in retrospect, both women and men have to find their own path to what makes them happy.

很多人或許會說，我支持女性擔任政府高官和企業高層；坐擁市值數百萬元之企業；或掌管跨國、外國或香港企業。然而，女性在登上事業階梯的頂峰時，會遇到甚麼障礙？女性在商業世界的競爭環境是否公平？我們又是否終於衝破了商業世界的無形障礙？

最近我出席一個女性商業活動，聽到一位在美國跨國公司擔任高級行政人員的女士發表簡報。她的人生目標是在事業上不斷晉升，時時刻刻都在建立網絡，希望攀上事業頂峰。

有人會問：「何謂頂峰？」或許，她渴望有天成為公司的行政總裁，加入董事局。她的精力專注在可以給誰留下深刻印象，可以與誰會面聯誼，利用獵頭公司、高級行政人員或行政總裁讓自己扶搖直上，達成夢想。有人或許會說：「太好了！她熱誠積極，勤奮上進。」但其他人或會說：「除了工作，她有自己的生活嗎？」

有此想法的並不只她一人，數以百萬的女性正雄心壯志，嘗試在事業上不斷攀升。這帶出了一個問題：為何香港政府、大學、服務業、公司、董事局和顧問團的高級職位中，女性人數寥寥可數？

根據婦女基金會近日編製的統計數字，女性佔香港勞動人口53%，然而：

- 在立法會及區議會議員中，女性佔19%；
- 立法會議席中有82%為男性；
- 男性高級公務員佔68%；
- 法律界方面，女性高級律師佔10%；
- 司法機構中，女性佔17%；及
- 終審法院並無女法官。

女性在學術界的高級職位中佔14%；然而，香港從未出現過一位女性大學校長！

商界方面，女性高級管理層佔35%，但女行政總裁僅佔2%。在恒生指數上市的企業之中，只有9%董事職位由女性擔任，而三分之一的

I believe this is reflected in the slight increase of women going into non-traditional fields – engineering, computer programming, nanotechnology, the sciences, etc. However, over the past 10 years it appears that for the senior positions, women are opting not to go further in their careers. In some cases, they decide to stay with the middle management positions or get out of the corporate world completely when they reach a certain age due to various reasons.

In my opinion, women are starting to make a conscious choice on whether that CEO rank is really worth the struggle, time, effort and work. And is battling the corporate boardroom really worth the effort? They are asking would making money in other ways be just as fulfilling?

In Hong Kong, many things are possible for women rising up the corporate ladder and being the CEO of a multi-national corporation or a Hong Kong company. But many women are choosing not to go that route, or have other priorities and commitments which come up in their life – like starting their own entrepreneurial empire. ✿



Anna Fang is Director of Anna Fang Public Relations, which she founded in 2002, and a key contributor to the Hong Kong Association of Business and Professional Women from 1995 – 2008.

方靜華是Anna Fang Public Relations董事，該公司由方女士於2002年成立。在1995至2008年期間，她亦為香港商務及專業婦女協會貢獻良多。

這類上市公司更完全沒有女性董事（2011年的國際平均數為16.1%）。

事實上，這對於香港的職業女性來說並非好事。究竟我們正向前邁進，還是往後倒退？這個現象正影響商界和政府政策規劃上的決定，繼而影響我們的整體社會。

30至40歲左右的女性是否因社會壓力或其他原因，被迫或選擇離開工作崗位？根據政府數據，即使同一職位，女性的收入遠低於男性。此外，愈來愈少女性會長期留在職場，以攀上更高職位。

自己當老闆

女性在社會上兼兩職，既要努力工作，又要照顧家庭。在香港，人們亦期望女性照顧年老親屬。隨著香港人口繼續老化，父母一代更加長壽，這個現象將會有增無減。

這或許解釋了為何愈來愈多女性選擇成為企業家。她們自己當老闆，無需處理辦公室政治，又可以選擇自己的公司客戶。她們亦可以安

級國際酒店內長期留宿，出席無窮無盡的會議、午餐和晚餐聚會，經常在30,000呎的高空、的士和機場之間穿梭。

很多人會問自己：這是我所渴望的生活嗎？我可以在家庭、子女和朋友間得到其他回報，不用再過著這種緊張忙亂的生活嗎？有甚麼個人犧牲是必須作出的嗎？

當然，人人（男女也好）都面對著相同的問題，但我們真的兼顧得來嗎？抑或在我們不斷往上爬時，結果喪失了個人生活和私隱，以及一點點的人性呢？

80-120規條

女性要加倍努力，來證明自己的表現嗎？鑒於在香港這個男人天下，政商界的高層大都由男性支配，這個說法的確成立。因此，女性經常要投入120%的努力，以換取80%的認同。但由於男士並不羞於走進老闆的辦公室，向他們訴說自己的成就，女性就顯得較為被動。她們認為自己的努力會不言而喻，並會獲得應有的認同和尊重。然而，除非某位經理



排一些有正面影響力的人在身邊，協助她們做自己喜歡做的事，就是自己創業做老闆！

作為企業老闆，女士的表現會比男士優勝嗎？甚麼性別較容易合作和效勞（包括客戶）？回顧我在中港兩地的商業經驗，以及我現時在傳媒及公共關係方面的工作，我會說這取決於個人因素。

當然，人人都要應付苛刻難纏的客戶（不論男女），但根據我作為公關顧問的10年親身經驗，男女在管理和溝通方面，都有自己的個人風格。

我在一家美國跨國公司工作時，有很大的自主權，可以運用自己的進取心、推動力和努力去完成任務。公司只要求我做出成績，並鼓勵我投入職業生涯。在我任職過的香港公司和外地跨國企業，都未有遇過內部政治和任何權力鬥爭，兩家公司都有良好的企業文化。

但在今時今日在香港，實情是女性所作出的事業抉擇，開始有別於10年前了。她們會有很多顧慮，例如花太多時間在外地公幹，要在5星

站出來自吹自擂，否則沒有人會留意得到，不論這位經理是男是女。

這解釋了為何有些男性比其他男同事晉升得更快。人人都有自己的個性，因此，男女都要尋找自己的快樂泉源。

我相信女性投身工程、電腦程式、納米技術、科學等非傳統行業的趨勢輕微上升，正反映了這個說法。但在過去10年，女性似乎不想在事業上更進一步，晉身高級職位。在某些情況下，她們決定在到了某個年齡後，因各種原因留守在中級管理層，甚或完全脫離企業世界。

我認為，女性開始有意識地選擇，究竟是否值得為了行政總裁這個職級，捲入公司的鬥爭，付出大量時間、精神和努力。此外，她們是否真的值得費勁與董事局作戰？她們會問，以其他方式賺錢，生活是否同樣充實？

在香港，女性絕對有條件攀上事業階梯，成為跨國公司或香港企業的行政總裁。然而，很多女性並不選擇這條路，她們的人生或有其他重要任務和責任，例如打造自己的企業王國。✿

Note: Statistics compiled by The Women's Foundation from the Census and Statistics Dept 2011; Hong Kong Bar Association 2011; University Grants Committee, 2011; Community Business' Women on Boards Report, 2012; and Grant Thornton International Business Report 2011

附註：統計數字由婦女基金會編製，參考自政府統計處2011年；香港大律師公會2011年；大學教育資助委員會2011年；公益企業2012年《女性董事概況》報告；以及均富《國際商業問卷調查報告2011》