

Women must be confident AND caring to succeed in the workplace

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Women must be confident AND caring to succeed in the workplace, but men only need to display confidence to get ahead - according to new research.

Women must display 'pro-social' behaviour, in addition to confidence, to obtain leadership positions in business, according to the study (<https://knowledge.esmt.org/article/women-self-confidence-not-enough-workplace-success>) led by Laura Guillén, Assistant Professor of Organizational Behaviour at ESMT Berlin business school (<https://knowledge.esmt.org/>).

In contrast, the research found that men need only display self-confidence to achieve success.

Working with colleagues from IE Business School and INSEAD, Guillén studied 236 engineers from a multinational software development company, of which 22% were women, and assessed how self-confident each was perceived to be by their supervisors.

The results showed that there was no difference between genders in terms of the extent to which high performing men and women were seen as confident by upper management, but that women were not rewarded equally for their self-confidence.

In order to be rewarded equally, women had to also display 'pro-social' behaviour – or in other words, show that they care about others and take others' interests at heart.

Guillén says: "There are a number of studies that have shown that when women display behaviours consistent with being ambitious, it affects them negatively. In other words, they are not liked. Our research shows that women currently need to show pro-social orientation to counterbalance this negative effect – something men do not need to do to get ahead."

"People want to work in a friendly environment. They want their workplace to be diverse. But in order to create this environment companies need to think carefully about whether being pro-social is a job requirement and then treat women and men equally accordingly. Making sure this happens should not be solely women's responsibility - organizations need to take concrete steps to promote it actively."

ENDS.

For more information, to see the study or to speak to Laura Guillen, please contact Ian Hawkings at BlueSky PR – ian@bluesky-pr.com or call +44 (0)1582 790 704