

# Female SME leaders more mentally resilient

Submitted by: Fugu PR

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New research\* from Paymentsense (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk>) has revealed that female business leaders are better at handling stress than their male counterparts.

Approaching half (45%) of male respondents said their clear thinking was affected by stress at least five times a day, compared with just 17% of females.

Although 64% of female SME leaders said they encounter a stressful event which stops them thinking clearly at least once a day, the proportion of male respondents reporting this was higher at three quarters (75%).

This trend continued at the other end of the scale. Almost a third of female business leaders (30%) said that such an event occurs just once a week or less frequently, compared with 19% of men. Only 7% of male respondents said that stress never prevents their clear thinking, compared with 11% of women.

The causes of this stress also varied by gender. Almost a quarter (23%) of female respondents listed customer complaints, compared with just 14% of males. Similarly, thinking about business finances was listed by 22% of female SME leaders, but only 14% of males.

Mindfulness expert and mentor to entrepreneurs, Jacqui Macdonald (<https://www.jacquimacdonald.com>), commented: "This study certainly chimes with my own experiences of coaching business leaders. Three-quarters of my clients are female, suggesting that women could be more open to stress-management techniques such as mindfulness. It's worrying to see just how often stress is damaging business leaders' performance, not to mention personal health.

"My advice to both male and female business leaders who feel frequently distracted by daily stresses is to acknowledge that it's impairing your ability to lead, and that you need support. You can't go it alone, and you can certainly learn to improve your focus and resilience."

The study suggests that female SME leaders can also deal better with common workplace stress, despite being more likely to juggle competing thoughts relating to responsibilities beyond the business.

For example, only 8% of male respondents listed childcare problems as a stress trigger compared with 15% of females. Worries about health affected almost one in six (16%) women, but just one in 10 (10%) men.

Guy Moreve, CMO at Paymentsense said: "Although the study suggests that female business leaders can handle daily workplace stresses better than their male counterparts, the overall picture is an alarming one. Those at the top of the UK's small businesses need real resilience to remain focused and resist unexpected distractions. Our research underscores the daily emotional burden of running a business, and the importance of having a plan to deal with it. While many SME leaders work hard to protect their employees' wellbeing, they shouldn't overlook their own.

"There are also serious productivity implications to consider. Even if a business owner is interrupted

or prevented from thinking clearly for just five minutes a day by stress, it will damage long-term productivity. Overall, almost one in four business leaders in our study said they are seriously distracted by stress at least five times a day, so this downtime can soon accumulate.”

Sectors most frequently distracted by stress (SME leadership)

More than five times per day: financial, communications

Five times per day: retail, manufacturing

Four times per day: hospitality, leisure and food service, construction

Least distracted by stress

Once a week: arts and entertainment, scientific

\*Study of 1,001 small UK businesses. Research took place in July 2018.

Headshot of Jacqui Macdonald available for download here  
(<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9m4khhw4wc651k4/Jacqui%20Macdonald.jpg?dl=0>).

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About Paymentsense

As Europe’s largest merchant services provider, Paymentsense enables over 70,000 SMEs to process over £6 billion worth of card payments per year. From card readers (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk/card-readers/>) to semi-integrated solutions and payment gateways (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk/payment-gateway/>), Paymentsense supplies small businesses with low-cost card processing solutions that allow them to take payments in store (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk/accept-card-payments/>), online (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk/accept-payments-online/>), over the phone (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk/virtual-terminal/>) and on the move (<https://www.paymentsense.co.uk/card-machines/mobile/>).