

6 Work Traits to Score Now

Wanna be a girl who runs the world? Start taking notes.

By Andrea Bartz

Despite the fact that women hold a paltry 4.2 percent of Fortune 500 CEO positions, and nationwide only 24.2 percent of chief executives are female, you don't need a pin-striped suit (or a penis) to get ahead in the work world.

In fact, trying to blend in with the boys is a big mistake many women make. Those at the top—Yahoo! CEO Marissa Mayer and Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, for instance—have gotten there in part by *not* trying to act like men and instead carving out their own blueprint for success. Read on for advice on how to follow their lead.

Boys' clubs are as outdated as fax machines.



STEPHANIE RAUSSER/TRUNK ARCHIVE

Know It All



• Pretty can be powerful.

1/ When you make a misstep, banish *I suck!* thoughts and shake it off.

“We internalize the negative messages we get throughout our lives—the messages that say it’s wrong to be outspoken, aggressive, more powerful than men,” Sandberg writes in *Lean In*, her new guide for making it to the top. “We lower our own expectations of what we can achieve.”

Consider Mayer’s situation when she was given what some said was a demotion at Google: Had she quit, she wouldn’t be running Yahoo! today. Instead, “she was a trooper,” a friend told *New York* magazine. “She worked through it.” And at Yahoo!, after only six months on the job, Mayer increased the company’s revenue for the first time in four years.

2/ Look the part...of a woman.

Buh-bye, boxy pantsuits and pallid faces. If you happen to be a beauty junkie, don’t abandon makeup in the boardroom.

In fact, a 2011 study found that women who wore makeup were perceived to be more competent. (This is a shift from a few decades ago, when the thinking was that playing up

your womanly side was antifeminist or made you look like a bimbo.)

Mayer likes to show off her fashionable taste (two reported designer faves: Oscar de la Renta and Erdem), and Dreamworks CEO Stacey Snider has honey-hued hair so pretty, a style editor at *Variety* was once quoted saying, “I know for a fact that her highlights are highly coveted in this town.”

3/ Own your achievements.

Observe: “I had a very strong work ethic and was willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done.” That’s what Heather Bresch, CEO of pharmaceutical manufacturer Mylan, told *The Wall Street Journal* about how she fueled her success. How much less impressive would she have sounded if she’d demurred, saying that she was just at the right place at the right time?

“Career progression often depends upon taking risk and advocating for oneself—traits that girls are discouraged from exhibiting,” Sandberg writes in her book *Lean In*.

As Nicole Williams, a career expert for networking site LinkedIn, points out, “If you don’t talk yourself up, nobody else will. If you’re not

espousing your accomplishments, you’re doing your employer or client a disservice by not telling them how you’re helping the company succeed.” And obviously, your boss is more likely to give you that promotion or raise if she knows how indispensable you are.

4/ Sniff out the right company culture.

Many hot young female executives are at hot young companies that really jibe with their way of thinking and doing. “Many successful young female executives work in up-and-coming companies, like those in Silicon Valley,” says career expert Tammy Erickson, author of *What’s Next, Gen X?*

And then they work hard to make it work. For example, Sandberg leaves the office at 5:30, then answers e-mail late into the night to show her dedication. And Mayer took a two-week (!) maternity leave, by choice, before returning to Yahoo!—reflecting the always-on ethos of an Internet job.

Suss out what really matters to you in terms of the day-to-day, Williams suggests: Do you love big group brainstorming? Later mornings and late-ish nights? Regular feedback? Make that as important as other variables when considering a new job.

5/ Show your softer side.

Female powerhouses can ball-bust with the best of them, but they bring their fairer-sex traits, like being nurturing and inclusive, into the office too. “As a leader, I strive to create an environment different than the one I faced, an environment where good ideas can come from anyone,” Bresch told *The Wall Street Journal*.

Research backs up her approach: McKinsey & Company found that companies with women in management do better financially

You’re doing your employer or client a disservice by not telling them how you’re helping the company succeed. /

because female managers let others weigh in on decisions and reward good behavior more frequently than male leaders do.

6/ Sweat a little.

No fat cats here: Female execs find time to work out, even amidst their crazy schedules. *Forbes* reported on Mayer’s routine of working an 11-hour day, hitting the gym, and then returning to her computer to send more e-mails until 11 p.m.

For one thing, “exercise requires discipline, so sticking to a workout routine develops discipline in other areas of your life,” says Williams. You know 20 reps are going to hurt, but you also know you’ll get stronger—not a bad metaphor for those tough projects at work. Attach a work goal to a physical one (say, a 5-K around the time a big project is due) to keep yourself motivated on both fronts.

Need more inspiration? New research by the Center for Creative Leadership found that managers who are overweight or obese are thought to have less stamina and be worse leaders. In fact, as executives’ waist circumferences increased, their performance ratings decreased. That’s as good a reason as any to leave your job in time to make spin class. ■

Pick Your Power Place

What would you rather be responsible for: a work presentation or what your family has for dinner? Your answer may explain why you’re not higher up at work. Researchers at Emory University found that women who were

the CEO at home—i.e., in charge of everything—were less interested in having that same power in their jobs. “It’s tempting not to pursue power at work when you have it at home,” explains lead study author Melissa

L. Williams, Ph.D. She suggests sharing the head-of-household role equally with your partner. Let him pick out the new sofa and you just might up your shot at a promotion.

—Faye Brennan