Who’s Wearing the Trousers in the Workplace Now?

Date of issue  13 March 2008
Publication number  511

London, 13 March: Women reluctant to venture into male dominated work sectors should take heart from successful female role models as inspiration to take the plunge, according to the Learning and Skills Council.

In traditional male dominated industries like construction, finance, engineering and politics women are starting to make their mark.

Property expert Sarah Beeny has made a name for herself in an industry where women make up only 10 per cent of the workforce, and encouragingly research reveals other women could be following her lead with one in eight females open to considering a career in construction*.

And fund manager, Nicola Horlicks’ success in investment banking should be a boost for women entering the banking and insurance industry, especially as this previously male dominated industry now employs 51 per cent women**.

Chris Banks, Learning and Skills Council, believes when we look at skills we should ignore traditional roles and perceptions.

“If you are a woman and your passion is plumbing, or a man who wants to get into nursing, then you should follow this dream, and not be limited by general gender perceptions.
“A new skill is a great thing to have, and the long term prospects of career progression and an increase in income are great benefits. The future really is in everyone’s hands to make this happen for themselves.”

Also in the political arena where there are more male representatives than women, success stories like Margaret Thatcher, Baroness Betty Boothroyd and Hillary Clinton, can only help change perceptions, and this seems to be the case with an increase of female UK MPs from 4.3 per cent in the 1970s to 20 per cent today.

In the engineering industry, Emma Harrison, one of the country’s most successful entrepreneurs, began her engineering degree, as one of only 2.6% of female learners, but her determination to succeed and use her skills led her to build a business empire worth more than £58 million.

Men are also doing it for themselves in female dominated industries, with the likes of Nicky Clarke, Charles Worthington and Trevor Sorbie being some of the biggest names in an industry where only three per cent are men starting hairdressing courses.

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Note to editors:

Case studies are available with women and men making the swap into non gender traditional sectors. A selection is below and photography and interviews can be organised.

Kaye Dewsnap – Motor Mechanic
Kaye’s interest in motor vehicles began in 1995 when her parents bought a classic car and as a family joined a local classic car enthusiast club. Throughout school, despite opposition from her family (who wanted Kaye to become a hairdresser), Kaye was determined to pursue a career in motor mechanics.

Kaye began her Apprenticeship in September 2003 on a fast-track programme at Tameside college. In March 2004, Kaye went on to take a full time placement at Renault Manchester’s dealership where she thrived in the predominantly male-dominated environment to become a popular and valued member of the team.

Hafida Sarachi – HandyGirl
Hafida Sarachi understands what it is to be a woman in a man’s world. Her business, HandyGirl, is an all-female home repair and garden maintenance company. Hafida’s experiences with intimidating and unreliable tradesmen inspired her decision to take DIY into her own hands. By creating HandyGirl, Hafida gained a lot more than just a new career.

“Running my business means I can fulfill my role as a mother and achieve the work-life balance I want,” said Hafida. “In addition to that, I discovered that I have other qualities embedded in me thanks to learning new ski

Matt Beety - Childcare worker
Two years ago Matt was struggling to find work in the childcare arena. He was being actively put off opportunities by other agencies who told him he had "no relevant qualifications". Matt persevered and eventually found his way to Kids Unlimited, started an Advanced Apprenticeship and has not looked back.

Matt has settled into his career very quickly. His presence is always appreciated by staff, parents and children alike. He is always professional in his approach and demonstrates his competence and knowledge to all he meets.

Equal Opportunities Commission 2005

**ONS Labour Force Survey 2005

Learning and Skills Council
The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England’s young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

Visit www.lsc.gov.uk/inourhands or call 0800 011 30 30 for more information.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
This press release applies to England only. Separate schemes are operated by the administrations for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

News released on 13.03.08
**What are the key features of EMA?**
Weekly payment bands of £30, £20 and £10 per week, depending on household income.
- Intermittent bonus payments depending on the programme of learning.
- Available for both academic and vocational study, up to level 3, which can include courses such as basic skills GCSE retakes, GNVOs, NVQs, as well as AS and A2s.
- No other household benefits are affected.
- Young people can still have a part-time job.

**Who is eligible?**
Young people are eligible to receive or to continue receiving EMA in the EMA year 2007/08 providing:
- They will already be 16, 17, 18 or 19 on the 1st September 2007;
- Household income criteria for 2007/8 applicants will be confirmed shortly;
- They are participating in full-time further education (as defined in EMA guidance) up to and including Level 3, or LSC funded e2e or a Programme led Apprenticeship

**14-19 area prospectuses**
14-19 area prospectuses are an online resource which provides information for young people on all learning courses and programmes available in each local area. They can be viewed via the national portal at: [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=41](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?sid=41). From 2008, learners will be able to access information on the new Diplomas being delivered in their area, through the online prospectuses.

**Diplomas**
The Diploma is part of a national programme to widen the choice of courses for young people to motivate them and encourage them to continue learning for longer. It will help them to gain the qualifications they need for success – at work, at college or at university.