**THE WOMEN-LED STARTUPS SMASHING THE GLASS CEILING**

Just 19% of serial entrepreneurs are women and business investment is controlled largely by men – but things are changing. The next generations are setting the pace – 38% of serial entrepreneurs under 35 are female

“What’s the appeal of entrepreneurship? Personally, it’s freedom. I don’t have to be at work at 9 am or take lunch at 1 pm. I can **opt out** of the things I don’t like,” says **Natalie Campbell**, serial entrepreneur and co-founder of consultancy “[A Very Good Company](http://www.averygoodcompany.com/)”. Campbell started her first venture, a franchise of fashion chain “Morgan de Toi”, while at university. Now, alongside her consultancy, she is a director and board member of a number of other companies.

Enjoying serial success in her early 30s, Campbell is among a successful cohort of women serial entrepreneurs – 38% of serial entrepreneurs under 35 are female, according to a report from Coutts and the Centre for Entrepreneurs. This age group **fares better** than women overall. When all ages are taken into account, women make up just 19% of serial entrepreneurs and they start both fewer and smaller companies than men. Why is there such a stark difference between the genders? Discrimination has undoubtedly limited the number of female role models in business. Perhaps this is only just starting to even out. As Matt Smith, director of the Centre for Entrepreneurs puts it, female entrepreneurs are “**playing catch up**” with their male counterparts. But could it also be that women and men have different motivations for launching businesses, which influences the number they start and how fast these grow?

Campbell certainly thinks so. “[For men] it’s about investment, it’s about money, it’s about being the best. They buy into the competitive nature of entrepreneurs. [Whereas] women go into it thinking how can I have a life that I really enjoy? How can I work with people I want to be around? How can I be creative and make a difference?”

Nonetheless, Smith notes that another Centre for Entrepreneurs report into women in entrepreneurship highlighted some clear gender divides. While women were shown to have just as much appetite and growth ambition as men, their risk-taking was more measured and few were willing to risk losing staff for the sake of growth. “This is perhaps a little bit of a healthier approach to growing a business,” says Smith. […]

<https://www.theguardian.com/small-business-network/2017/jan/11/women-led-startups-smashing-glass-ceiling-investment>

**Questions:**

1. What is the meaning of “glass ceiling”? Why can we say women are smashing it?

2. Point out the main differences between men and women leaders.

3. Who is Natalie Campbell?

4. Do you know any female leaders? What are their main qualities?

**Vocabulary**

Serial entrepreneur: créateur d’entreprises « en série »

Glass ceiling: plafond de verre

To opt out: se dégager

To play catch up: rattraper

To fare better: mieux s’en tirer