

Professionally Speaking

the voice of Australia's Professional Women

THE
growth
DISTILLERY



what this report *isn't*

How to advocate FOR professional women

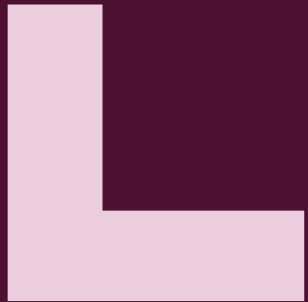
- Yet another body of research that talks to the gaps between men and women intended to drive advocacy
- Blaming, shaming or victimising anyone for the situation or for their choices
- Saying that men/non-binary Australians don't feel exactly (or partially) the same

How to engage WITH professional women

- A focussed synthesis of the voices of Australia's professional women
- Intended to illuminate what 'good' and ideally 'great' might look like for the many individual Australian professional women
- A reminder for employers, partners, brands and media to pause and consider, with route guidance to better support the important women in their world

what this report *is*

Who are we talking about and
why does it matter?



01

Professional women present a substantive growth opportunity for employers, brands and society.

And this powerhouse is *just getting started.*

6.2 Million

or 1 in 4 Australians defined as “professional women” (university educated and in white collar careers).

In fact there are MORE professional women than professional men (at 5.9M).

+67%

the percentage increase of working women in Australia over the last half century.

Australian women are some of the most educated in the world, with the 4th highest level in the OECD.

+\$30.7 Billion

potential growth to Australia’s GDP by 2050 if women’s workforce participation matched men (currently 62.5 vs 71.1 – 8.5% gap).



The aspirations of professional women are more potent than ever

Proud and prepared

9 in 10 are proud of the achievements they've made so far.

80% enjoy leading and mentoring others.

Goal directed

67% aspire to be wealthy and/or own property.

66% strive to be fit and healthy.

Forward looking

60% feeling optimistic for the future.

85% agree they can bounce back from difficult times.


66% believe they are better off now vs 10 years ago, and **71%** believe this will get even better into the future.

But being
'professional'
is more than
just *what* you
are. It's also
who you are

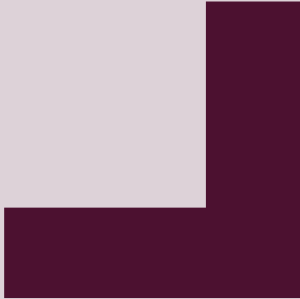



“ A professional is to do with career
and having expertise in your field.
Anyone can be a professional.

Whereas *being professional* is all about
how well you conduct yourself - not
just at work, but in life [Lyn, 45+ Executive]




Professional Women have
a different idea of, and
therefore path to, success





It takes them
*more time &
more feedback*
to get where
they want to go



Feeling self assured

in life

Confidence grows with life experience...from under 35 to over 55, **women's sense of self increases by half.**

Feeling self assured

in work

This filters through to the workplace, with **professional confidence also tripling** from the beginning to end stages of career.

3 in 5

Professional women say having a calibrated life/work scorecard is a top success goal for them.

... even more so than all other cohorts (average <50%).

“

“Overall I want a **full and well-balanced life** with work, family, friends and hobbies.” Abby L

I want to be happy and content grown up enjoying a **balance of work and family**” Alison D

”

And they are measuring their success against **more** criterias.

In essence, **having it all ... all the time**



So then.

What does it mean to
'have it all'?

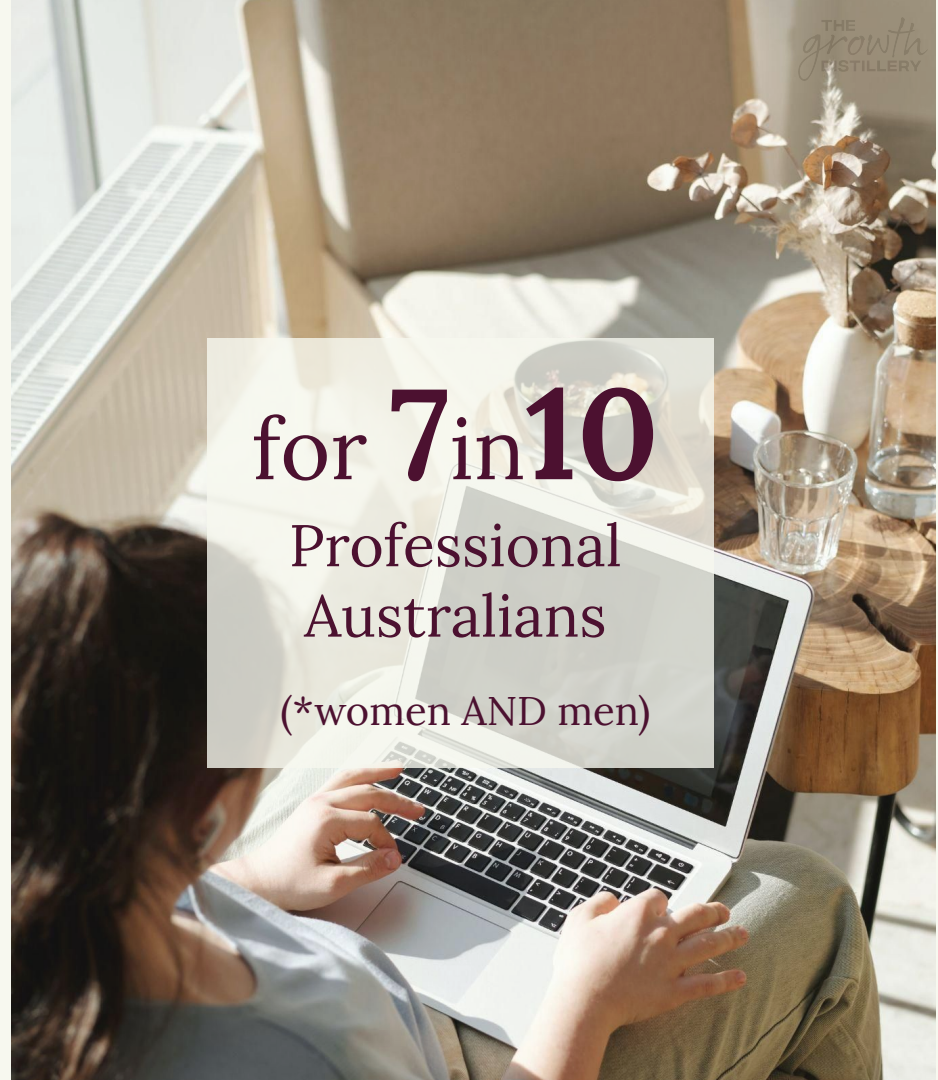


Firstly...

Having it all is
not about having
a work-life
balance

The need to achieve equilibrium and alignment of the different parts of our life.

for **7in10**
Professional
Australians
(*women AND men)



Instead, Australians are
moving towards...

Life+Work 'prioritisation'

The ongoing, active consideration of where
and how things go together, what is
important, which evolves and changes.

“ Incidents that happen that make
me change my direction along the
way. I used to **prioritise work way
above my life.** (Now) I put my **life,
my health, and my happiness
above any career opportunities** ”



There is a *long and variable* list factors which underpin a professional woman's idea of success...

- Job
- Family
- Relationship
- Friendships
- Health/Wellness
- Appearance
- Travel
- Finances
- Property
- Knowledge
- Retirement
- Hobbies
- Spirituality
- ...



“ I think women have that **imposter syndrome a lot more**. I think that the media likes to paint successful women as these big strong things. *Like it's both, not either-or*. Strength in the stay-at-home mother is equal to the executive who archives in business

“ I'm a **mum, a daughter, sister and friend** who is mostly happy and easy going! When I grow up, I want to be a happy and content grown up enjoying a balance of work and family. I don't want to compromise for me or my family, and lucky we don't struggle

They are however furthest away from their goal *'life-work prioritisation'*

The gap between what most Professional Women idealise for themselves, compared to what their situation looks like now is significant.

- In contrast, women working in non-Professional fields are significantly closer to their ideal, HALF say they have almost exactly the calibration that they want.
- Professional working men are also notably closer, with more than 2 in 5 having a close to their ideal.



64%

of professional women **don't have** their ideal prioritisation.

(for most, not all, that means more *personal* in their life)

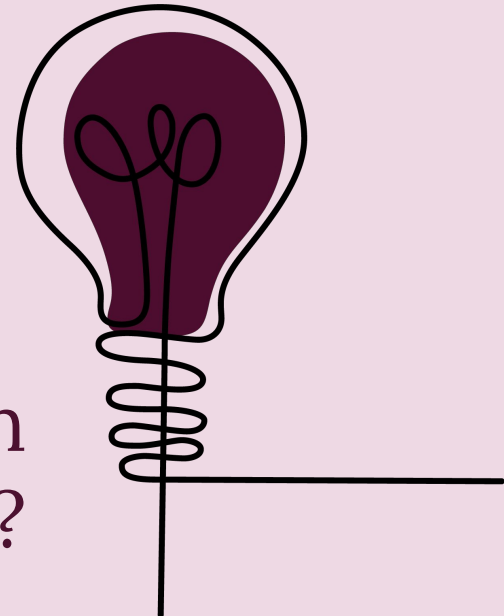
What we know about Professional Women so far...

There's *more of them* than you think

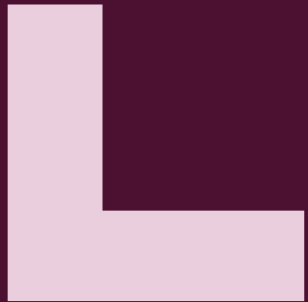
They're *more aspirational* than you think

They have *more complex goals* than you think

So how do we help them reach
their ideal success?



What do they need to help
them better prioritise?



02

Professional Women demand *more* return on investment from content

They are less likely to pay based on what is presented to them now

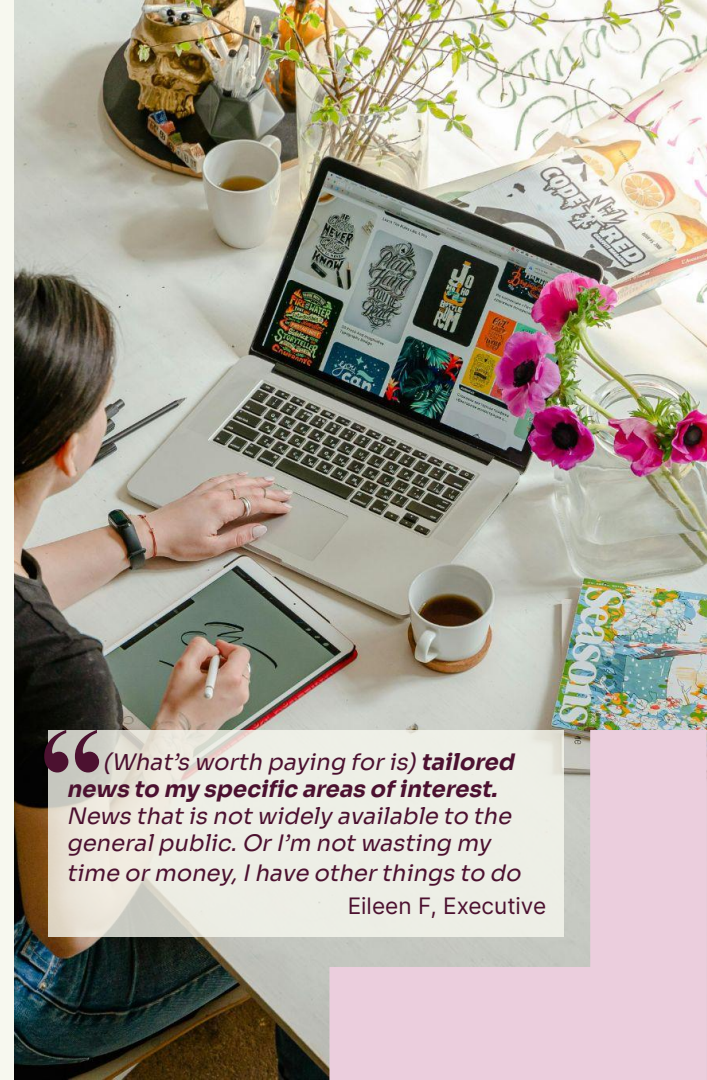
... but they might if it was seen as *more relevant to their specific needs*.

1 in 2

don't feel like media is reporting enough on **topics/issues specific to women**.

2 in 5

would **take out a subscription** targeted to working professionals or professional women.



“ (What’s worth paying for is) **tailored news to my specific areas of interest**. News that is not widely available to the general public. Or I’m not wasting my time or money, I have other things to do

Eileen F, Executive

They are actively looking for *more and better* content in three intersecting areas



Life admin

2 in 5 want it, but don't believe the media is doing a good job with utility based tasks such as **tax** 61%, **car ownership** 66%, **insurances** 61%.



Career

3 in 10 seek it, but want more attention to help them **navigating workplace relations** 64% or ensuring their **career progression** or path 63%, also learning and development 48%.



Relationships

2 in 5 are seeking more, however feel news and media fall behind in delivery of advice to navigate **social circles** 60%, **intimate relationships** 60% and **aged care** options for self/loved ones 60%.



We need to overcome a *lack of trust* to connect and support Professional women

Lower trust

Only **3 in 10** (29%) Professional women trust the media to tell them the truth (vs 41% of Professional Men).

Less impactful

Less than **1 in 2** (47%) view the news as a major part of their life (compared to 63% Professional Men).

Only **1 in 4** (26%) rate the media as influential to how they operate their daily life (42% Professional Men).

Under, and misrepresented

1 in 4 say brands and media are doing a poor job of diversity generally.

1 in 6 Professional Women feel women specifically are underrepresented in the Australian media.

All professional women are calling for *more* authenticity from brands and media

Representation of *real* and *diverse* women through media and advertising

It is obvious, however professional women note a significant gap and aren't fully engaging with current offerings. Think about:

- Featuring inspirational women in write-ups / case studies
- Ensuring we employ and feature exceptional women in our brands
- Ensuring a diversity of age, culture and profession are visibly and authentically included.

Delivery of content through channels and platforms which elevate accessibility

Professional women are busy prioritising their lives and also their loved ones. Think about:

- Mobile platforms so they can reach for it when it suits (and dark mode for when they're up late with babies/kids)
- Alerts, synopsis and bullet-points to give them the need to know, on the go
- Fill their cup with both advice and entertainment.

Reporting on topics in such a way they guide women in their specific situation

Utility issues as well as gendered ones, making them most relevant. Think about:

- Superannuation balances, when women tend to be out of a full-time workforce more
- Taxation and welfare, where incomes may be more variable
- Managing family health and wellbeing at all stages.

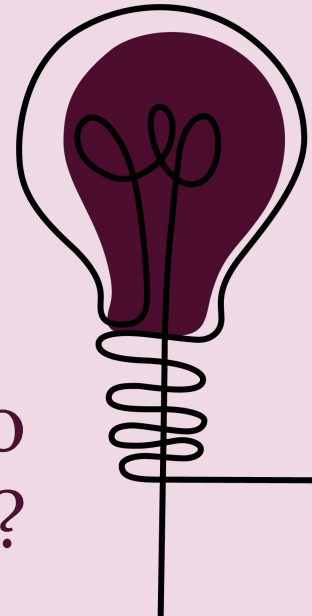
What else we know about Professional Women so far...

They want to be ***guided and inspired***

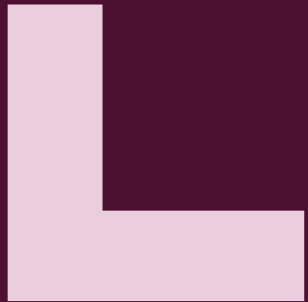
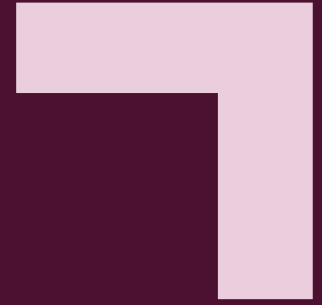
They are actively looking for ***greater relevance***

They demand content that is ***more authentic***

So what can we ***do better*** to
connect with these needs?



How to win with Australia's diverse professional woman



03


We continue to speak to all professional women as a unified audience



... but perhaps we shouldn't

Having meaningfully relevant conversations with professional women requires *bringing together* the two halves of their own prioritisation...

Life and Work

A photograph of three women of diverse ethnicities (Asian, White, and Black) in professional attire, shown in profile from the chest up, looking towards the right. The woman in the foreground is wearing a grey knit sweater and a long gold chain-link earring. The woman in the middle is wearing a white blouse. The woman in the background is wearing a red blazer. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

There are **four dominant professional contexts**, where women's needs are most distinct in both life and career

Young Professionals



Working Mums



Executives



Older Professionals



They are laying the foundations


Career isn't everything, but it is a lot. They have clear definitions of success, with financial and titular aspirations high on the list.

Starting out in their careers, their focus is growth and getting themselves on a fast track to 'success'. But they can find it tough to get ahead, and are often hesitant to take risks for bigger rewards.

Willing to make some personal sacrifices, they are still conscious of the other holistic goals in life, like family houses and travel.



Young
Professionals



Working Mums

It's a real juggling act

Life has changed which they love, but they want to get back on track with their career, whether the same or a new path.

However, more responsibilities at home mean they are more risk averse and have lower confidence in the workplace - the idea of having it all manifests as trying to please everyone in all situations all the time.

Consequently they put themselves last and feel guilty for having these other aspirations.

New mums especially are feeling conflicted with new and more considerations in their home life to consider, but are more determined than ever to win at the prioritisation - they just don't know how



Executive Roles

Redefining what success really means

Having proven themselves with titles and remunerations, they are feeling like they have ticked the career boxes and are confident around their professional success.

They have pioneered and battled, they're proud and enjoy leading / mentoring.

However, this achievement has potentially come at the expense of personal success, which they now seek to reconcile.



Older Professionals

Winding down, but far from done

They're actively looking for 'what's next' with a drive for continual learning and growth, and paying it forward.

Broadly satisfied with work and not keen to disrupt, they have a shifting focus and a strong emphasis on personal life - enjoying family (grandkids), travel, home and hobbies.

This leaves them at a crossroads, they still have aspirations both professionally and personally, but are unsure how to turn them into reality (financially, practically, emotionally).

A woman with dark, wavy hair is seen from behind, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. She has a tattoo on her left arm and is wearing a brown, ribbed sleeveless top. The laptop screen displays a website with images of people. In the background, there is a framed picture of a flower on the wall. The image is framed by four dark blue L-shaped corner brackets.

Young Professionals



“ I try to **conduct myself professionally** and emulate the characteristics that I've identified as being professional: being composed and nuanced in my approach. However sometimes, **I think I could be better** at being professional.

[Arampo, Melbourne]

Who are they?

Young professional women (under 35s) that are either just starting out or in the earlier stages of building their careers.

Living in share house, singles or couple without children.

What's important?

They are more focused on **learning**, **growth** and **setting themselves up** for future success than older professional women.

Career is the main priority, but they still want to feel progress towards broader **life goals**.

What are their aspirations in life right now?

They are laying the foundations - career isn't everything, but it's a lot

Building their career is their first and immediate priority

They are career focussed and ambitious, **prioritising their work life** above their personal life more so than any other cohort.

Specifically they are more likely to see success as;

- Starting side business/hustle 23%
- Career advancement/ seniority 20%.

Career success is the enabler of broader life aspirations

A second key marker of success is being **financially wealthy** or **owning property** (76%), with career the way they see to achieve it. This helps them to lay the foundations for further life goals;

- 1 in 3 (32%) see having a child/children as a key goal
- 41% Being in a committed relationship with a partner.

What's holding them back?

They find it tough to get ahead, and are often hesitant to take risks for bigger rewards.

Young professionals are finding life and workplace progression more difficult than other cohorts. They are the least satisfied with career or workplace overall and say they are finding it difficult to get ahead.

1 in 5

Say they are **unsatisfied with their career or workplace**, the lowest satisfaction of all cohorts.

They highlight many areas outside their comfort zone may be hindering their progress. Young professional women say they are uncomfortable...

- 55% - Asking for a pay rise
- 57% - Taking a pay-cut for better/different working conditions/environment
- 46% - Changing careers entirely
- 37% - Taking leave for own mental health / stress
- 36% - Giving feedback to my leader, or people in higher positions.


The impact this has

Stalled progress heightens their anxiety and can also undercut confidence

A lack of progress creates feelings of anxiety. They are waking up much more **stressed** and **anxious** when thinking about work compared to others and especially their U35 professional male counterparts.

In their personal lives, they are grappling with a lack of positivity and confidence, particularly in areas crucial to their sense of security and self-worth.

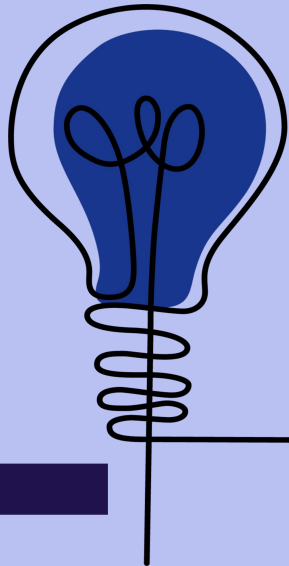
- This includes their **finances**, **mental health**, and **body image**. They find managing aspects like **property ownership**, and navigating financial intricacies like **taxes** especially daunting.



“ Sometimes if I am **feeling quite anxious** or **overwhelmed**, I will notice that my sleep is impacted or my productivity levels at work are affected. I do tend to internalise/ keep things to myself

[Verity, pre-kids]

Nurture young professionals' confidence with **mentoring** and **goal-setting** to reach their personal and professional ambitions.



Role to play ... in the workplace:

- Offer encouragement and guidance to step outside their comfort zone
- Build confidence through setting and achieving early goals
- Encourage social networking events
- Connect them with role-models that can challenge their cynicism
- Act as a mentor, sharing experience and guidance to navigate their professional paths
- Foster a foundation self reliance by equipping them with the resources to manage the responsibilities of adulthood.

Role to play ... in the media

Orienting towards utility knowledge and increasing confidence will have a significant benefit with this cohort

Currently media channels and content are serving this audience well with lifestyle content, in particular, Meals/cooking, Fashion, Beauty and Parenting.

However, there remains low levels of trust and relevance. Offering practical advice and utility content tailored to their specific professional and life goals and ambitions can help bridge this gap.

29%

Say they **trust the media** to tell them the truth

25%

Say they try to **avoid media** all together

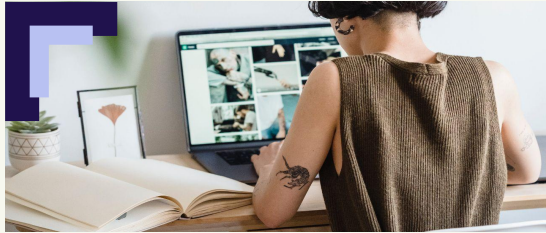
Utility content opportunities

Where the media is not seen to be doing a good job for them

- Insurance - 64%
- Car ownership 64%
- Taxation and benefits - 64%
- Workplace relations - 61%
- Career Progression - 57%
- Finances - 53%
- Property -51%

Role to play ... with winning content

Winning with young professionals is about giving them the know how and assurance to set goals



Setting up for success

Intro to worklife and the workplace, to help them know what to expect and start on the right foot:

- LinkedIn profile setup and tips
- Resume writing and leveraging references
- Workplace etiquette - email and messaging, meeting protocols, guide to hot desking, shopping guides etc.

Taking the next steps

Career building advice and professional guidance to help them step out of their comfort zone:

- Networking, role-models and building professional contacts
- Salary and promotion negotiation
- Dealing with conflict / tough conversations
- Personal and professional boundaries at work.

Building confidence

Act as an advisor by equipping them with the tools, resources, and knowledge to make informed decisions:

- Financial literacy - taxes, insurance and mortgages
- Mental health - self-reflection, mindfulness, and stress management
- Personal development - approaching goal setting and KPIs.



Working Mums



Who are they?

Women with dependent children in the household whom they are solely or jointly responsible for.

Newer mums and those with younger children have notably different lifestyles and needs compared to those with school-kids and teens.

“The constant juggling of priorities, **feeling like I'm doing a bad job of everything at times**. The funny, unspoken norms and rules of motherhood that you don't always know about until you break one”.

[Abby, Melbourne]

What's important?

They are **juggling the pressures and expectations** of being a mother, and an employee/er - the ideal of having it all is especially relevant to them.

Career is still a priority, but they are much more pragmatic - they actively choose to focus more on their **family success over their own**.

Some nuances to consider

As their kids grow and change, so do the feelings and goals of our working mums

Mums with Little Ones (aged 0-4yrs)

The most overwhelmed and unsure group of working women, trying to find their way in a whole new life/work world.

Want and need most support managing day to day - from finances, to household, to wellbeing.

They feel the most guilt (68% vs 55% mums of older kids) and have a lower sense of self (51% vs 61% other mums).

Of all mums, are least 'balanced' and most life focussed now, but 41% want much more career focus than they have now (vs 22% amongst other mums).

Mums of Primary-kids (aged 5-12yrs)

Feel like they have found their groove, between kids who still need them and a career that does too.

They have higher self-rated mental and emotional health (62% vs 55% other mums) and feel most connected to a community (66% vs 62% other mums).

Also have the highest workplace satisfaction (75% vs 71% other mums).

Mums with Teens (aged 13-17yrs)

With experience and maturity, don't want as much support for themselves personally or professionally.

They are most proud of their life achievements (94% vs 88% mums of younger kids) and enjoy mentoring/sharing with others (86% vs 81% other mums).

However still need some guidance managing family issues e.g. kids education, technology confidence.

What are their aspirations in life right now?

More than anyone, working mums are focussed and winning the life-work prioritisation

Having balance/prioritisation is key to how they view success

The lines and expectations between work and home have blurred in recent years, and working parents have had to adapt... working mums seem to be doing a pretty good job.

- More than 1 in 3 (36%) only have a very small gap between their current and ideal prioritisation now
- 3 in 4 (74%) are satisfied with their career or workplace, the highest of all cohorts (*vs 62% non-mums, 65% of executives*)
- 93% describe themselves as “a professional” (*even more than professional dads 89%*).

Feel their life has a sense of purpose with family, but its not everything

3 in 4 (73%) agree their life has clear meaning, compared to 62% of non-mums.

For almost 1 in 3 (31%), having a child or children is a marker of success, and especially so for new mums (39%) (*compares to 21% of non-mums*) - but obviously not all women feel this way.

“*I feel like I've always been professional and this has held me in good stead ... I enjoy being a consistent and reliable team member. I do what I say and I say what I do, and try to focus time each week on planning and on learning. This also helps keep the imposter syndrome at bay*” **[Gemma, primary kids]**

What's holding them back?

Mum Guilt is real, and impacts their sense of self. They know they need some help

Working mums are *always on* and *always working*.

They feel the most rushed to start the workday, and have the biggest sleep-gap (unsurprisingly, new mums are the most sleep deprived).

Stress and rush doesn't end because the working week does, they still feel the most exhausted of all cohorts.

9 in 10 (88%) agree they **place the needs of others before themselves** (compared to 73% non-mums, and 80% of professional men).

53%

Say they **feel guilty spending time on themselves**, the highest of all professional cohorts (e.g. 33% of non-mums, 44% amongst executive women, and 42% of professional working dads)

With a lot to juggle, they **acknowledge a want/need for support**, and in notably more areas than other cohorts ...

- 38% Relaxation (vs 25% non-mums, 20% professional working dads)
- 44% Fitness & sport (vs 36% non-mums, 19% dads)
- 35% Travel/Holidays (vs 24% non-mums, 20% dads)
- 31% Diet & nutrition (vs 14% working dads)
- 27% Physical health & medicine (vs 21% non-mums, 14% dads)
- 26% Mental health (vs 18% dads)
- 23% Fashion & beauty (vs 12% non-mums, 19% dads)
- 22% HH maintenance (vs 17% non-mums, 11% dads)

The impact this has

Protecting their family means they are more risk averse in the workplace

“ I'm often a bit overwhelmed with kids/caring duties/home issues ... I can't be as dedicated and focused on my work as I was before I had a family. I would say I used to be extremely driven until my personal life became the priority

[Alison, Sydney]



Being more responsible for kids, mortgages, pets ... they are less likely to challenge the status quo at work.

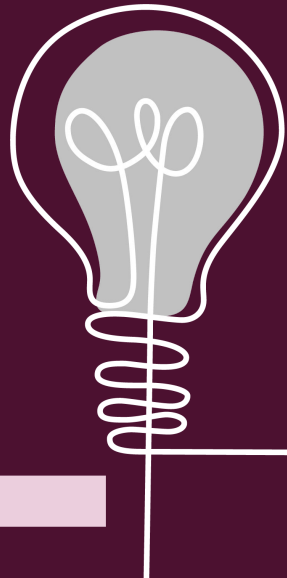
While not unsatisfied, many working mums are uncomfortable and unsure how to pursue their aspirations. While others have a shifted focus towards maintaining what is safe and agreeable.

Either way, they seek help and confidence to achieve their goals.

This is exacerbated for those with younger children (who were and actually still are those *highly aspirational young professionals*), they are notably more uncomfortable than other mums to:

- Take a **pay-cut** for better conditions or **change careers**
- To **report issues** which bother them, or **give feedback** to their leader
- They are also least comfortable with taking time off for their own **mental or physical health**, and when for caring for others.

Support working mums through the transitions and trade-offs to help them maintain career ambition



Role to play ... in the workplace:

- Celebrate ambition and success, and help battle the imposter syndrome that can creep in
- Initiate the conversation, don't wait for them to ask or expect them to know
- Recognise the significant life and career shift they are experiencing
- Offer guides to managing and compartmentalising all the things going on at work and at home
- Ensure workplaces are inclusive spaces, to allow for greater physical, mental and emotional participation of working mums
- Connect them with other working mums, to share and support.

How to win ... in the media

Mums are looking to media to fill the gap in career side of work+life ... not one or the other

Mums are guided by what they see and hear in media overall. And half say viewing the news specifically is a major part of life. But despite them being a regular and interested cohort, 31% of mums lack trust in the news.

The opportunity here is to talk to them via channels and in ways and with content that really talks to the unique circumstances of having children (and then more nuanced based on the age or needs of their family) and helps them with prioritisations they face as working mums ... not just as a working woman, and not just about motherhood, all of which they can find already.

57%

say the media is doing well at **guiding them on parenting**

56%

say media has had a positive influence on their **view of family and parenthood**

Utility content opportunities

Where the media is not seen to be doing a good job guiding working mums:

At work...

- Workplace relations - 59%
- Career progression - 57%

At home...

- Car ownership - 62%
- Relationships with partner - 58%
- Social circle - 57%
- Mental health - 52%
- Household maintenance - 50%

Financially...

- Taxation & Benefits - 58%
- Government entitlements - 56%
- Insurance - 58%, Utilities - 56%
- Budgeting - 56%



How to win ... in the media

This gap is **exacerbated** for mums with young kids, and they're actively searching not finding

They are engaged, regular consumers of total media - and feel well served currently by platforms, format and tone.

However, 30% say they would pay for media targeted at the needs of professional women (+7% vs other mums), and feel more authenticity of female representation is needed.:

- Featuring inspirational women in write-ups/case-studies (51% vs 36% other mums)
- Reporting on topics/issues specific or exclusive to women (52% vs 43% other mums)
- Portraying real women / situations in advertising 58% vs 45% other mums)
- Featuring women from diverse backgrounds and experiences (62% vs 45% other mums).

65%

say the media has had a positive influence on their view of **family and parenthood** (+8% vs other mums)

64%

say the media is doing well at **guiding them on parenting** (+10% vs other mums)

2in3

say media is **not** doing well around **career and/or workplace guidance** (+10% vs other mums)

Utility content opportunities

Where mums with young kids (0-4y) feel media is falling behind in advising them, notably more so than older mums:

At work...

- Workplace relations - 65% (+10%)
- Career progression - 63% (+9%)

At home...

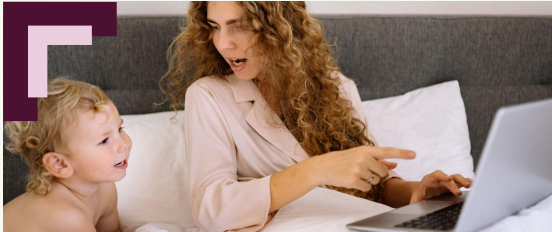
- Car ownership - 70% (+12%)
- Schooling - 61% (+13%)
- Relaxation - 60% (+16%)
- Mental health - 58% (+11%)
- Household maintenance - 56% (+8%)
- Personal learning - 53% (+15%)

Financially...

- Taxation & Benefits - 72% (+14%)
- Property - 55% (+13%)
- Insurance - 68% (+13%)

How to win ... with messaging

Capture their attentions by showing them just how they can manage to have it all



Leaving and returning

Helping new mums feel safe, and also inspired when navigating this significant life change:

- Understanding leave/entitlements
- Determining workload, pay and hours (e.g. returning p/t)
- Easing back into team and office space
- Office etiquette reminders
- Including “maternity leave” on a CV or LinkedIn
- Requesting facility and tech needs (breastfeeding rooms).

Navigating work vs home

Advice for managing their prioritisation, and protecting their personal and professional identity:

- Tips on flexible, remote/mobile and hybrid working structures
- Guides/tools for setting boundaries
- How to ask for pay rises, promotions, more/different responsibilities
- Childcare options, kids schooling ... associated entitlements / taxation
- Tips for keeping kids busy when wfh
- Accessible formats and discoverability.

Staying on track

Be the advocate for working mums to not lose sight of their aspirations and interests:

- Personal development - approaching goal setting, KPIs, passion projects
- Salary and promotion negotiation
- Training and upskilling opportunities
- Networking, mentoring
- Mental health - self-reflection, mindfulness, and stress management
- Financial health - banking, superannuation, property ownership/investment.

A person wearing a brown coat is seen from the back, carrying a black briefcase. They are also holding a newspaper. The background is a blurred city street with orange traffic lights. The word "Executives" is overlaid in a dark purple box with white text. There are four pink L-shaped decorative elements in the corners.

Executives



Who are they?

Executives, managers and women in senior leadership roles, who have built successful careers.

They tend to be high income families with primary or high school aged children.

What's important?

They are satisfied and confident in their career achievements and enjoy their leadership positions.

Whilst **career** remains a **key focus** they are focusing more so on achievements in **personal life**.

What are their aspirations in life right now?

Having achieved in their careers they are focusing on a more holistic idea of success

Proud of their achievements, work remains a focus

They wake up **feeling confident about work**, have high satisfaction and enjoy the aspects of their **leadership** role.

Specifically

- 75% say they are satisfied with their career
- 93% say they are proud of the achievements they have made so far
- 90% say they enjoy leading and mentoring others (vs 75% female non execs).

They are seeking better harmony between work and life

They are **prioritising goals in their personal lives**, indicating a broader perspective on success that goes beyond career.

The goals they are setting themselves include

- 60% highlight having better work life balance as a key success goal
- 68% see being fit and healthy as a success goal (+11% higher than exec men)
- 39% Being able to travel internationally as a success goal.

What's holding them back?

Their confidence in the workplace doesn't always translate to confidence in their personal life

Executive women rate themselves highly in work-centric attributes like tech confidence, financial acumen and workplace relations, paralleling their male counterparts. However, this self-assuredness notably diminishes their personal spheres, where they perceive themselves to be managing less well.

81%

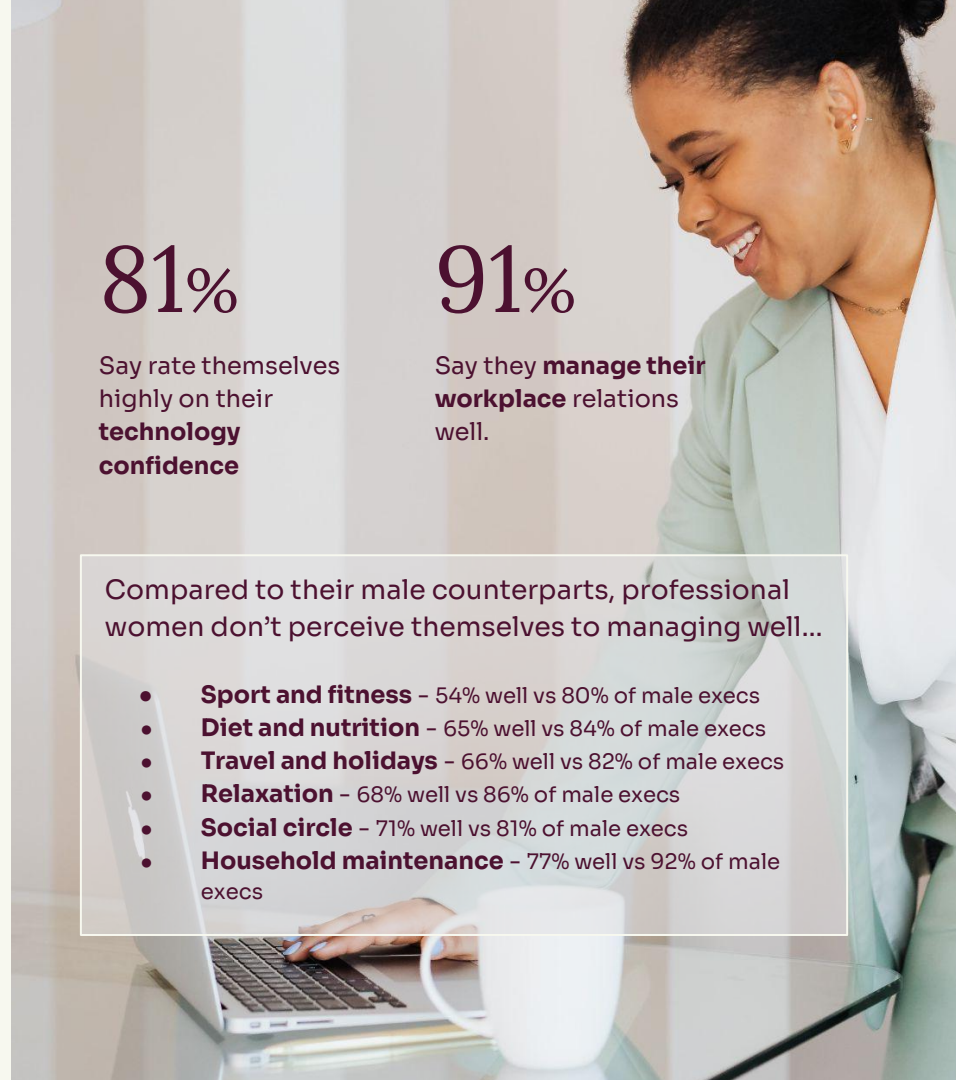
Say rate themselves highly on their **technology confidence**

91%

Say they **manage their workplace** relations well.

Compared to their male counterparts, professional women don't perceive themselves to managing well...

- **Sport and fitness** - 54% well vs 80% of male execs
- **Diet and nutrition** - 65% well vs 84% of male execs
- **Travel and holidays** - 66% well vs 82% of male execs
- **Relaxation** - 68% well vs 86% of male execs
- **Social circle** - 71% well vs 81% of male execs
- **Household maintenance** - 77% well vs 92% of male execs



What's holding them back?

They experience highest levels of discrimination

2 in 3

Executive women are **aware of** / **have experienced** **discrimination** in the workplace

1 in 4

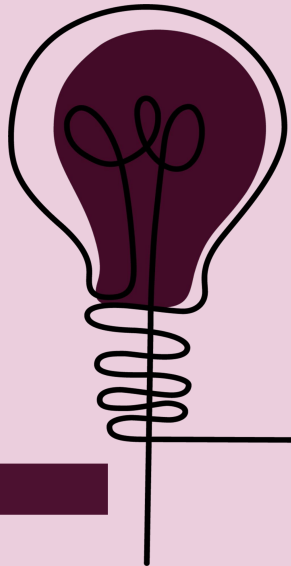
Executive women have **personally experienced** discrimination in the workplace

Executive women are the cohort most likely to face significant workplace challenges, including discrimination and rigid career dynamics.

Despite a strong desire for improved work conditions and environments, 44% are hesitant to accept a pay cut for such changes, and 43% are reluctant to change careers, indicating a complex interplay between professional identity and financial stability.



Support executive women to harmonize professional success with personal fulfillment



Role to play ... in the workplace:

- Focusing on holistic success that speaks to their specific level of seniority
- Provide resources, tips, and strategies for achieving better work-life harmony - health, fitness, and well-being alongside career goals
- Raise awareness and advocate for policies that address workplace discrimination
- Share the real life (non glossy) stories of other senior female execs, talking to their challenges as well as successes
- Help them translate their success into success for others, e.g. via mentoring, L&D.

How to win ... in the media

Champion and inspire a holistic ideas of success, tailored to their specific career phase

Currently the overall media landscape is seen to be providing the inspiration for some of their personal goals, with travel, diet and health and fitness all relevant.

There remains a an opportunity to help executives navigate the delicate balance of work and life specifically for women, with content that talks to their key challenges and inspires all aspects of their work/life ambitions.

Encourage them to translate their success into success for others.

1 in 2

Say they want to see more reporting on **topics/issues specific or exclusive to women**

45%

Say they want to be inspired by **write-ups/ case studies of inspiring women**

Content opportunities

The media is seen to be lacking in both work and personal life content for women of their positions.

Workplace (where not doing well)

- Workplace relations - 62%
- Career progression/ path - 62%

Personal Life (where not doing well)

- Social Circle - 61%
- Relationships with partner - 61%
- Budgeting - 61%
- Mental Health - 55%



How to win ... with messaging

Demonstrate a diversity of real life struggles and successes from other senior women



Showcase the challenge

Share the journeys and challenges of other senior female execs, to provide context and support:

- Talking to challenges as much as successes profiles
- Not rose tinted, or overtly inspirational in tone
- Challenges in both the workplace but also more holistically in life.

Show success diversity

Demonstrate different types of holistic success to inspire them on their own path:

- Advocate for diverse working and life prioritization - flexible working, part time plus education/ volunteering, purpose led.
- Case studies of female leaders, leaders in the not for profit or purpose space as well as corporate..

Tailored guidance

Provide resources, tips, and strategies for achieving better work-life harmony:

- Budgeting, investing
- Navigating personal life dynamics (e.g. teens, empty nests, grandparenting)
- Mental health - self-reflection, mindfulness, and stress management
- Relationship and social circles.



Older Professionals



Who are they?

More experienced and often senior professional women (over 55s) who have a high level of confidence in their careers and professional lives.

Tend to be empty nesters, or couples with older or adult children.

What's important

Personal life is a much bigger focus, through family, home and hobbies.

Their overall **satisfaction** and **comfort** in their careers means they are **prioritising themselves** and considering more aspects of their personal life.

What are their aspirations in life right now?

Satisfied in their careers they are prioritising their personal growth

They aspire for ongoing personal growth

They have a high level of satisfaction in their careers - 76% say they are satisfied, and so are turning the focus to **bettering themselves beyond work.**

Specifically they are setting goals to;

- 74% Be fit and healthy
- 41% Travel internationally
- 33% Spend time on passion projects
- 35% Have strong ties with family/heritage.

Having gained confidence they want to give back

They are more likely to wake up feeling **grateful** 42% and **confident** 33%, and are keen to share their experience with others, **finding ways to give back.** The only cohort who see this as a marker of success:

- 16% Being a mentor to others
- 15% Contributing to charitable and/or social causes
- 19% Spiritual growth fulfillment.

What's holding them back?

They find it hard to reconcile their individual aspirations with existing work life expectations

This group is at a crossroads, satisfied with their careers but eager for personal growth beyond work. However, they face obstacles when pursuing passions outside traditional roles or advocating for themselves, with challenges like taking leave for volunteering or negotiating salaries highlighting a clash between their personal aspirations and workplace norms.

1 in 2

Say they are **not** comfortable asking for a pay rise

1 in 3

Say they are **not** comfortable taking leave for volunteering activities





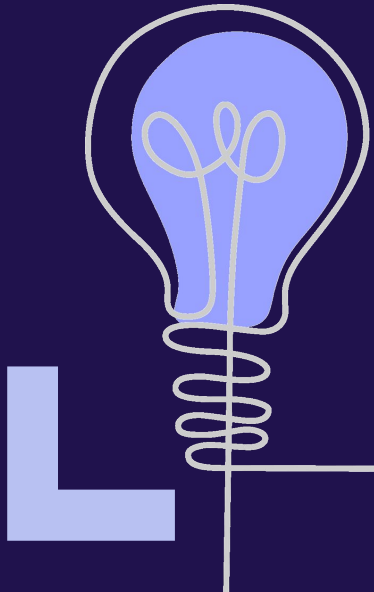
The impact this has

They have untapped potential as mentors and guides in the workplace

Older professionals, driven by community and giving back have an opportunity to share their own wisdom and encourage the confidence of the younger professional woman.

This not only helps them see/feel the positive impact they have within the workplace, but also helps them to reflect on their own achievements and confidence along the way.

Inspire and support their personal development in and beyond the workplace



Role to play ... in the workplace:

- Help them to navigate the balance of work and personal goals and advocate for themselves and their passions
- Encourage lifelong learning and help them acquire new skills or deepen existing ones.
- Acknowledge their success and create opportunities for mentorship
- Create a workplace culture that respects diverse viewpoints
- Help them to take risks, innovate, and pursue personal growth paths aligned with their interests and workplace objectives.

How to win ... in the media

Age-attuned content from trusted sources that can fuel their personal growth

The media is seen to support some of their personal aspirations, in particular delivering content on travel, cooking and arts and culture, that have high appeal to them.

There is an opportunity to harness our trusted brands and enhance relevance for older professional women by focusing on areas where there is a perceived lack of quality, insightful and age relevant content. These are areas, which are valuable to their continued personal growth.



1 in 3

Say the media is **underrepresenting diversity of age**

70%

Say they **avoid media that's not from a source I trust**

Age and lifestyle content opportunities

Where the media is not seen to be doing a good job for them

- Relationships - 87%
- Social Circles - 82%
- Budgeting - 78%
- Career Progression - 76%
- Organisation Planning - 73%
- Mental Health - 70%
- Relaxation - 62%

How to win ... with messaging

Inspiration to harness their strengths and highlight pathways for personal development



Work growth and pivots

How to navigate their desire for personal development with career:

- Keeping up to date with training and skills (e.g. LinkedIn learning)
- Options to upskill, re-skill, cross-skill
- Tips for advocating for oneself and pursue new goals in/outside work - projects, entrepreneurship, hobbies.



Personal development

Age and lifestage relevant content to fuel their personal goals:

- Mature Relationships
- Growing up and adapting to changes in family dynamics
- Health and physical well being
- Volunteering opportunities and how to guides.



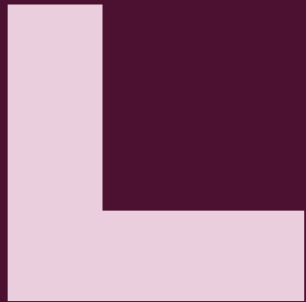
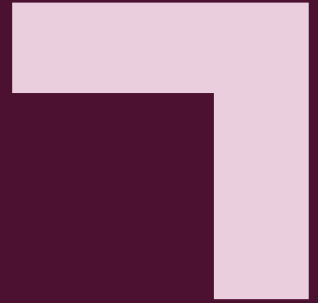
Harness their strengths

Help them to see and value their own experience and unlock potential:

- Mentoring programs, network groups
- Stories of intergenerational mentorship, and platforms
- Professional evolution stories - showcasing inspiring career trajectories, transitions into new roles or industries.

Where to from here?

Route guidance for managers, partners, peers, friends, marketers, etc. to better support the women in their worlds



04

Appreciating the needs and challenges of this dynamic cohort... as colleagues, companions, and customers

Professional women present a substantive growth opportunity now and in the future.

A growing powerhouse of consumers and shoppers, social and family contributors, and significantly... as participants and leaders in the workplace/economy..

A key thread which unifies all professional women is the idea of what we call a “life+work prioritisation”.

... not the outdated idea of ‘work-life balance’, but instead about understanding the many and nuanced factors which each woman defines as her ‘success’.

And while this unifying theme helps us start a better conversation, it can stall here.

To connect with professional women respectfully, that means taking a much more nuanced view of what it means to be a ‘professional woman’..

Professional context is the key, it's a mistake to treat all professional women as one group

Having meaningfully relevant conversations is about bringing together the two halves of their prioritisation: **life and work**

Young Professionals:

Coach them on setting goals and how to achieve them professionally and personally, with guidance on appropriate boundaries.

Working mums:

Provide practical solutions, spaces and the support they need to keep them participating, motivated and inspired.

Executives:

Enable them to translate their career success into more holistic success for themselves and for others in broader environments.

Older professionals:

Help them feel like life isn't over, it's just beginning and now is the perfect time for renewed focus on who/what matters.

THE
growth
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To download the full report
head to www.newtoninsights.com