

# Gender Equality In Business

By Alvin Apple

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The state of gender equality has vastly improved in the past few decades. Career, education and business opportunities have really opened up for women, and we are seeing successful females in many different situations. But have we truly reached equality? Even with all the improvements made, the answer is still, unfortunately, "no."

For every hard-working female executive, there is a working mother who has been passed over for a promotion. For every respected female professor, there is an educated woman somewhere whose knowledge is not being taken seriously. The people who discriminate against these women may not even be conscious of the fact that they are doing it. Gender bias is deeply rooted in our collective psyche, but that is no excuse. We must constantly remind ourselves to be aware of how we are perceiving and treating others.

Remember the recent furor over Jane Swift, the pregnant governor of Massachusetts? Pages and pages of newsprint were devoted to the debate on whether or not she could be an effective mother and still run the state. This would never have happened to a man, not even a single father.

It is amazing to me that, in this new millennium, such basic gender stereotypes are being perpetuated. Are gender roles so stamped into our brains that we can't conceive of the fact that a woman can successfully raise a family while maintaining a high profile career? Mrs. Swift is probably perfectly capable of handling both jobs, or at least of delegating responsibility so that everything is taken care of. Sure she'll be busy, but lots of very busy men manage to make things work every day without ever having their qualifications questioned.

As people working in small home-businesses, we can help to make change in these areas. By stepping out of the brick and mortar business world we have already effectively said no to corporate

politics. Already, far more women are having success with online and home businesses than with regular corporations. Just look at Meg Whitman of Ebay and Abbie Drew of DEMC. Although Meg came into Ebay later in the game, she has made it the most successful online retail auction business in the world. Abbie Drew started from scratch, and now DEMC, the Internet's very first business ezine, provides advertising and expert small business advice for hundreds of thousands of people.

This is all great, but why not take it a step further? Take a stand for gender rights and commit to treating men and women with absolute equality in all your business dealings. When making a decision to use someone's services or ask for someone's advice be open minded. Remember, it's your colleague's track-record, qualifications and personality that make them the great businessperson they are, not their gender.

Alvin Apple helps everyday people start businesses they will enjoy. Then he teaches them how to succeed. Read all his helpful strategies, including his latest article, "How to Write the Perfect Classified Ad" at <http://AlvinApple.com> . Reach Alvin at 801-328-9006 or [alvin@drnunley.com](mailto:alvin@drnunley.com).

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