

SARAH HARAN

Style Confidence Survey

2019



SARAH HARAN

Introduction from Sarah Haran

Feeling confident at work is a personal thing, and the results of our confidence survey bear that out. We spoke to more than 350 UK-based women between 25 and 74 on everything from rating self-confidence at work, to how they make an impact, and the importance of workplace style on confidence.

While the good news is that the majority of women we spoke to feel 'very' or 'extremely confident' at work, nearly as many admitted to only feeling 'somewhat confident'. And 70% said they'd lacked confidence regularly - at least once a month - over the past year.

But confidence can be worked on. And the truth is, no one's 100% immune. All of us feel twinges around confidence on different days and it's to be expected if we're regularly pushing ourselves out of our comfort zone.

We've put together this report to support you whatever your confidence level. Not only by lifting the lid on the way other women are feeling right now, but by sharing tips on what has made women feel confident in their daily life.

I created the Sarah Haran brand to offer women accessories that are both beautiful and functional to support them in their day, whatever life throws at them. Getting ahead by feeling confident in the way you look, as well as being organised and on top of things allows you can to make your best impact on life - whatever that means for you. I hope that you find this report as interesting as I have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Haran". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large, elegant loop for the letter 'S' and a long, sweeping tail for the 'n'.



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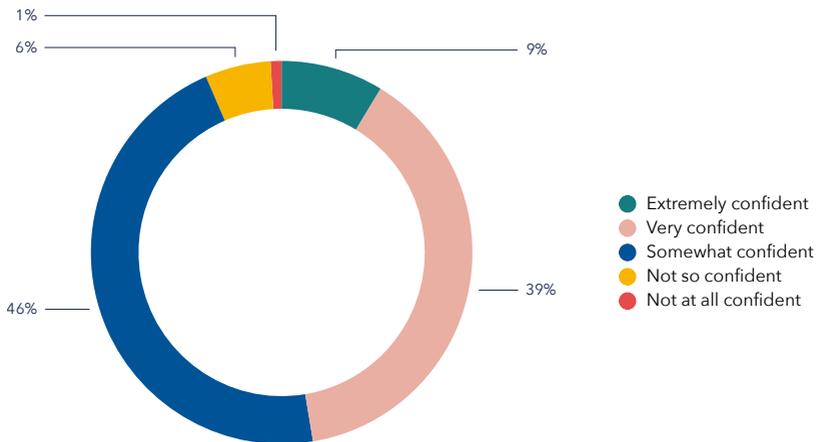
**How would you rate
your self-confidence
at work?**

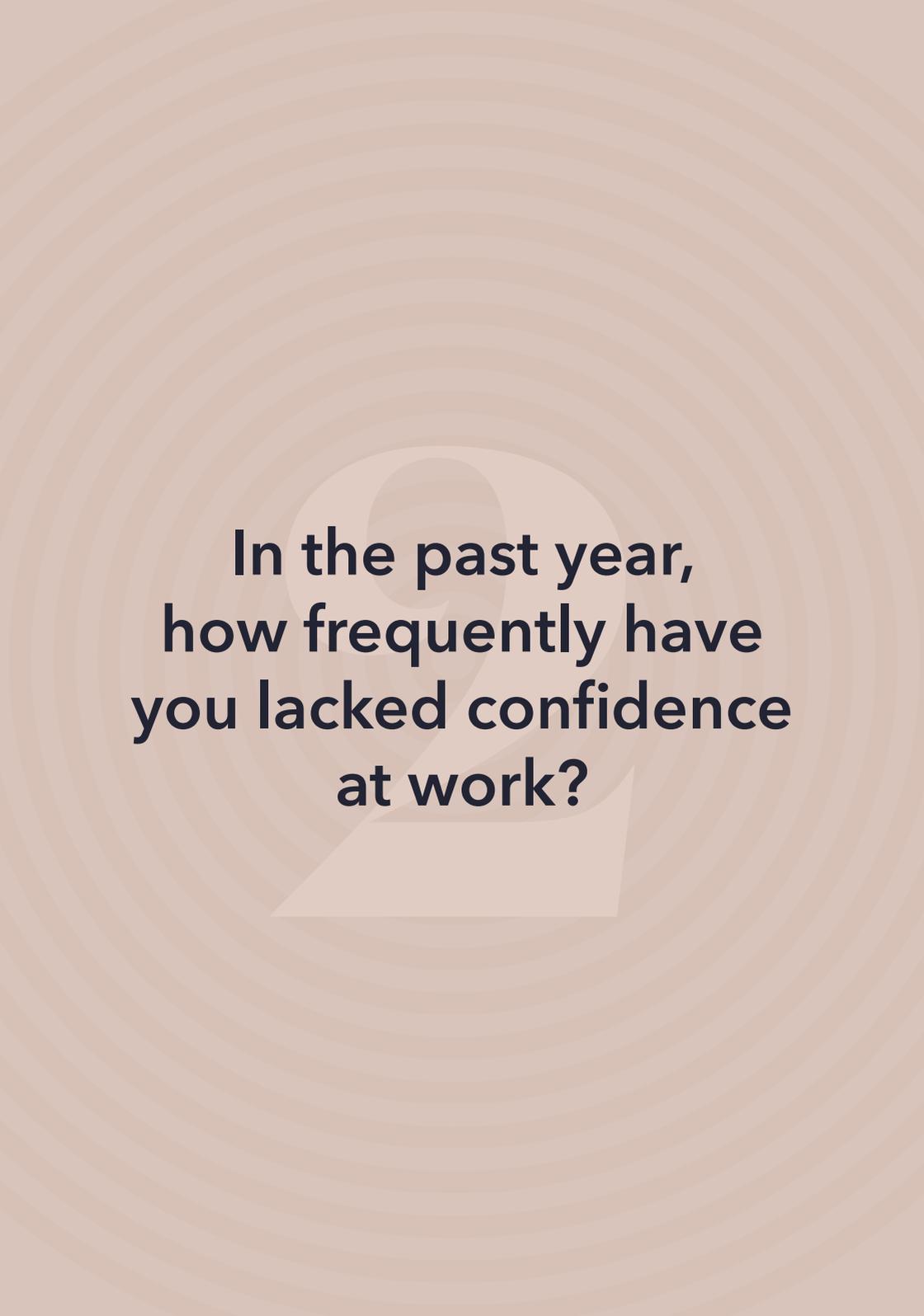
1 - How would you rate your self-confidence at work?

It's an incredibly positive thing that at 48%, the majority of women surveyed said they were either "Extremely" or "Very" confident at work. 9% defined themselves as "Extremely Confident" and over 1 in 3 (39%) said they were "Very Confident".

What's interesting, though, is that it's still a fairly even split, with 46% of women saying they were only "Somewhat Confident" at work, showing there's room for improvement. Only 7% of women asked said they were "Not So Confident" or "Not At All Confident".

If you're one of the women who identifies with feeling only 'Somewhat Confident' then take comfort that you're not alone, and in fact, that this was the most common response with nearly half of women saying they felt this way.





**In the past year,
how frequently have
you lacked confidence
at work?**

2 - How frequently have you lacked confidence at work?

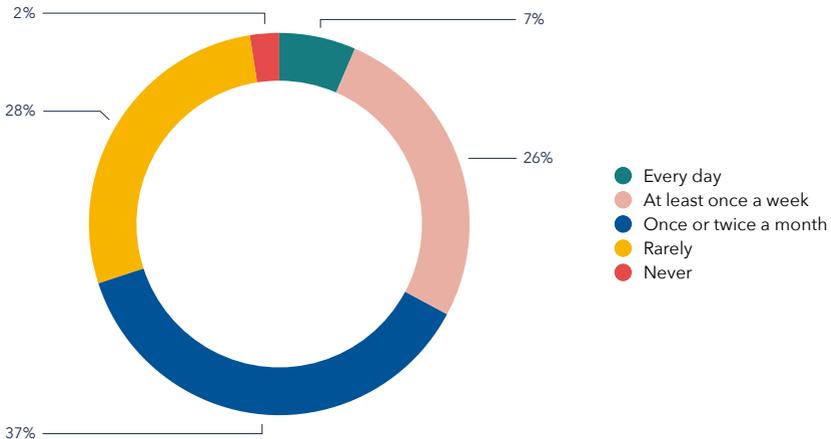
Proving that confidence is fluid and that even women who identify as "Very Confident" or "Extremely Confident" have moments where they feel less self-assured - the majority of women asked admitted they've lacked confidence over the past year.

70% of the women we asked said they lacked confidence more than once or twice a month, with 1 in 3 (33%) saying they lacked confidence as much as once a week or more.

Only 2% of women say they "Never" lack confidence at work, and 28% describe it as happening "Rarely".

The interesting thing for us is that this shows it's possible to have moments of low confidence, but still identify as a "Very Confident" person. And that nearly everyone doubts themselves from time to time, even confident people!

The moral we took is not to let a handful of individual moments dent how you feel overall.





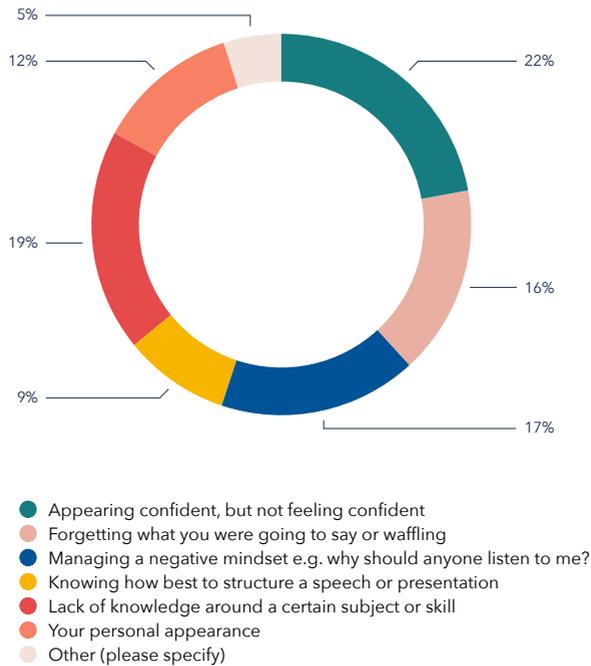
**Over the last few months,
which of the following
challenges stopped you
making the impact you
wanted at work?**

3 - What challenges stopped you making the impact you wanted

The majority of women we questioned (42%) said “appearing confident, but not feeling confident” has stopped them making the impact they want at work.

36% said a “lack of knowledge around a certain subject or skill” has held them back at work, while “managing a negative mindset” and “forgetting what you were going to say or waffling” has affected 30% of the women we spoke to.

23% of women feel their “personal appearance” has held them back.



Barbara Brown, Consultant at Positive Momentum, focusses on delivering no-nonsense business advice and often coaches on confidence as part of her role. Here she gives her insight on how to get around some of these challenges.

What to do if you don't feel confident

Don't 'fake it 'til you make it'. You often hear people say 'fake it 'til you make it', but there are actually much better approaches than putting pressure on yourself to camouflage the problem, which can be damaging.

Aim to get to the point where you don't feel the need to pretend. Find ways to be true to yourself, really work on increasing your self awareness.

Be authentic. And don't be afraid to ask for help through positive interventions like looking for mentors or coaches, either in your workplace or outside. Actively look for sponsors and support from people who can assist you to influence your career and be specific in asking for what you want or need.

Don't focus on your weaknesses. Women in particular have a tendency to do this, rather than looking to their strengths. Do you default to look at the one thing you got wrong, rather than the ten things you got right? Look at what you're great at instead and find ways you can strengthen this.

Give yourself permission to leave if it doesn't feel good. Females often remain in situations where they feel bad, instead of side-stepping them. Look at ways of breaking out of that cycle, give yourself permission to move on or out of an environment that's not healthy for you.

How to upgrade your skill set if you feel a lack of knowledge is holding you back

Unlock your curiosity. This means constantly looking for opportunities to learn and having the confidence to say, I don't know enough about this or I need help with that, and then taking action around it. Signposting can be a healthy way of asking for support, putting in benchmarks that will help you know if you're on the right track.

Look at things from a completely different angle. Seek out individuals and groups where you can see a positive growth mindset in action, where curiosity and learning are priorities. Take an experiential approach and test and feel how that mindset helps you.

How to get around your own negative mindset

Build your growth mindset instead. Growth mindset is a state where you're pragmatic with a positive outlook, which benefits the professional environment with more positivity and productivity. You can build on it by thinking about creative solutions where the initial position might be more negative than positive and investigating why that negativity is there, then dealing with the root cause - rather than the symptoms of the problem.

Celebrate success. Females are hard on themselves, so work on giving yourself permission to celebrate the small milestones, not just big ones. Give yourself permission to focus on what you do well and say "I'm good at that."

Sarah Haran's advice on how to not be held back by your personal appearance

"Download our '[Guide to Style Confidence](#)'. We've written a handy guide which incorporates my style tips along with choice advice from two of the best style experts out there.

Because style is a skill that can be practised, there's no reason to let your personal appearance stop you from getting ahead. Taking care over your appearance is an investment in yourself and your career that will pay dividends."



What typically makes you nervous at work?

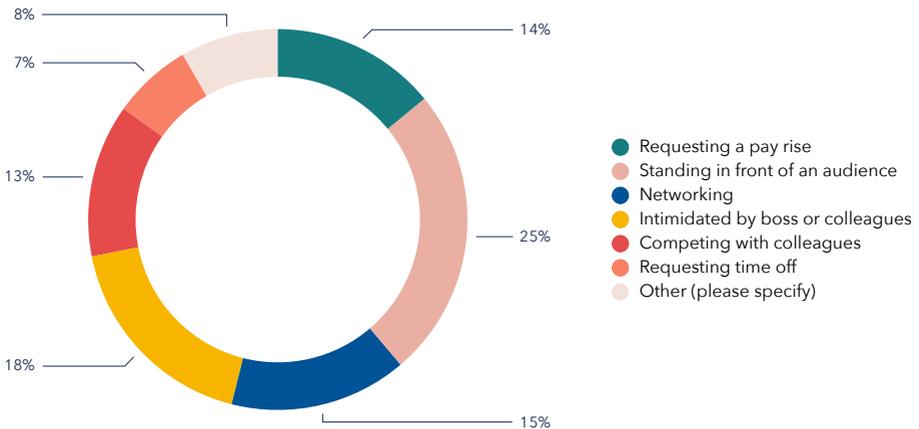
43% of women said 'standing in front of an audience' made them feel nervous, while 31% said that being 'intimidated by a boss or colleagues' puts them off balance. 'Networking' (26%), 'Requesting a pay rise' (24%) and 'competing with colleagues' (23%), all rated highly as contributing to women's nerves.

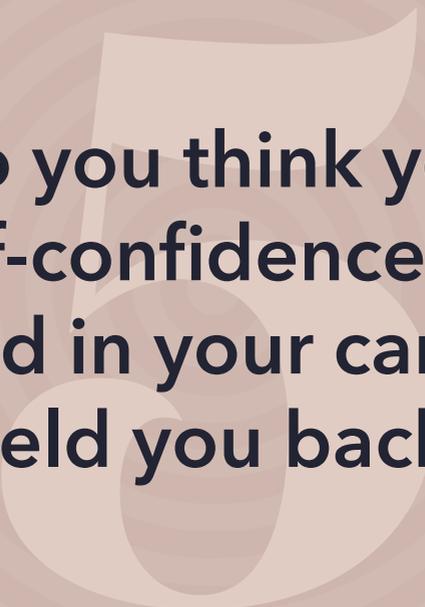
Barbara Brown on how to build great relationships at work and manage intimidation and competition

Show genuine interest. Building great workplace relationships at all levels helps increase your impact and personal brand; you can do this by showing genuine interest in getting to know a wide range of people. Focus on how you can build a reputation for getting things done, and seek out opportunities that will help you increase your network.

Don't suffer in silence. If you find yourself in a position where you feel intimidated or undervalued don't suffer in silence. Speak out, find a way to talk about how you are feeling with a supportive person in or out of your organisation to help you work through the situation. Never allow yourself to feel isolated.

Communicate the value you bring. How do you cope when you feel you're up against competition? Be confident in your own abilities, concentrate on the value you bring and develop your confident edge to communicate this with clarity and confidence.

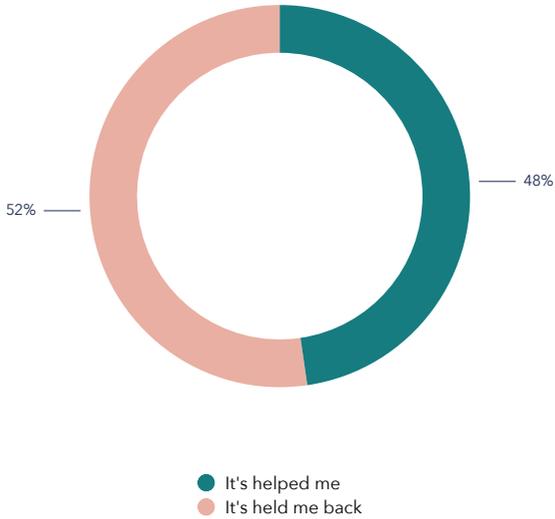




**Do you think your
self-confidence has
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held you back?**

5 - Do you think your self-confidence has helped in your career or held you back?

Again, we saw a pretty even split between the women polled, though slightly more women (52%) felt they could have done better in their careers if their self-confidence was higher, compared to 48% of women who felt their self-confidence had been an asset in their career.



Women who describe themselves as confident talking on how their career's been boosted by their confidence said...

"I'm good at appearing confident and relaxed in situations even if I don't feel that way, which has helped me to make a good impression in interviews."

"Although sometimes I doubt myself, I get a lot of feedback that I appear confident and that, although I may feel nervous, I don't show it."

"Having confidence made me try new things and accept challenges."

"I may appear to be self-confident but I'm really not, I think I must have a very good poker face, I'm winging it!"

"I'm not fearful of facing uncomfortable situations."

"I've pushed myself on to make sure I ignore the imposter syndrome."

"I think believing in what you do really helps."

"Feeling the fear and doing it anyway has helped me to feel more confident in my abilities and knowledge."

"Presenting the real me, sharing how nervous I am, has made me seem more approachable to others."

"Sometimes a bit of self-doubt helps you prepare more."

"When I relax and trust in my own abilities, then others feel confident in my ability to deliver results."

"In the end, I have always thought nothing ventured nothing gained. And mostly gone for it."

"When I was in a new role, I found wearing a jacket helped signal I was there for a purpose."

Women who describe themselves as not being self-confident talking on how they feel it's held their career back said...

"I haven't put myself forward for jobs that I would've been capable of."

"Typical imposter syndrome has perhaps seen me hang back in putting myself forward or making my views known."

"I never believe I'm good enough even though people tell me I am. I always think I'm going to be found out for not being good enough."

"Would go self-employed if I had more confidence in myself."

"Feel confident before a meeting but confidence evaporates when it is my turn to speak."

"If I believed in myself more and felt more confident I'd probably be in a better paid and more suitable position for my skills."

"Always felt like someone knows more than me."

"I am nervous around managers, I stumble, make silly mistakes, struggle to get my words out."

"Not going for new job roles as I doubt I could do a good job."

"It's stopped me from applying for jobs when I've known for a fact I would be a better candidate than others."

"I haven't taken on high visibility or challenging roles due to fear of failure."

"I would love to start my own business but lack belief in my own ability."

More than anything, this question and these incredible quotes from real women grappling with real hopes and fears show us that so much of confidence is a mindset.

The 'confident' and 'less confident' women often share similar thoughts, the only difference is that 'confident women' don't hold themselves back because of them.



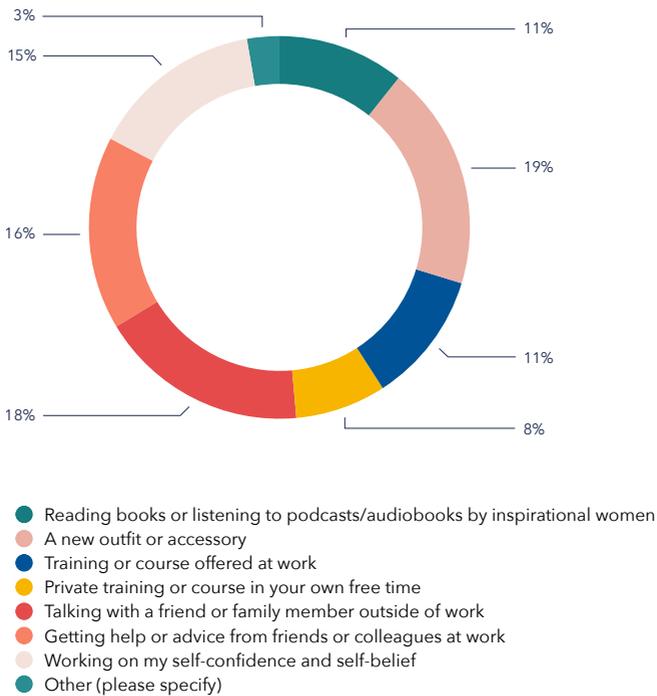
**What has helped you feel
more confident at work?**

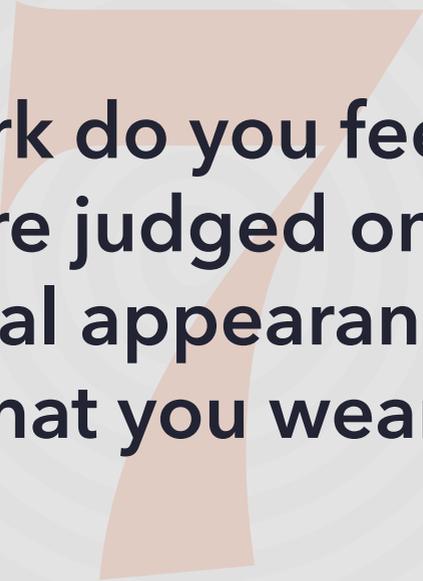
6 - What has helped you feel more confident at work?

Wearing a 'new outfit or accessory to work' has given the biggest confidence boost to the women we spoke to, with 58% saying this had helped them. This comes as no surprise to us as it's the basis of Sarah Haran's business: to support women with the confidence-boosting effect of well-made, well-designed clothes and luxury handbags.

Next up came 'talking with a friend or family member outside of work' (54%), 'getting help or advice from friends or colleagues in work' (50%) and 'working on my self-confidence and self-belief' (45%).

It's clear from this that style confidence matters and that what we wear affects how we feel about ourselves, which in turn can affect how we feel others view us and how we perform.



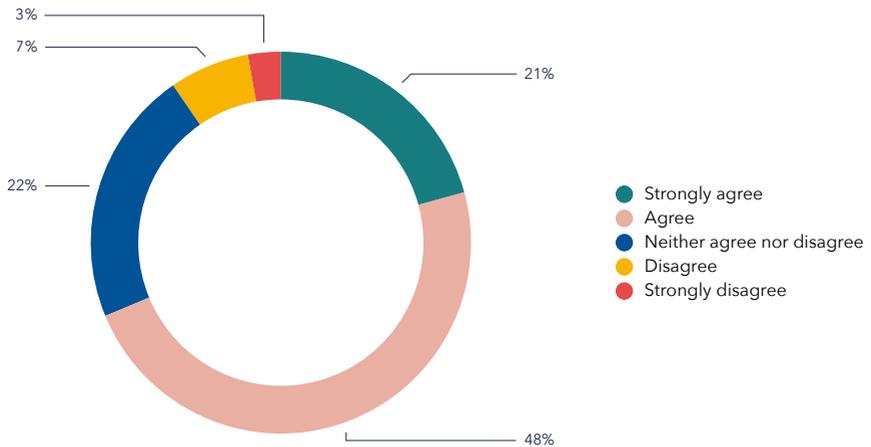


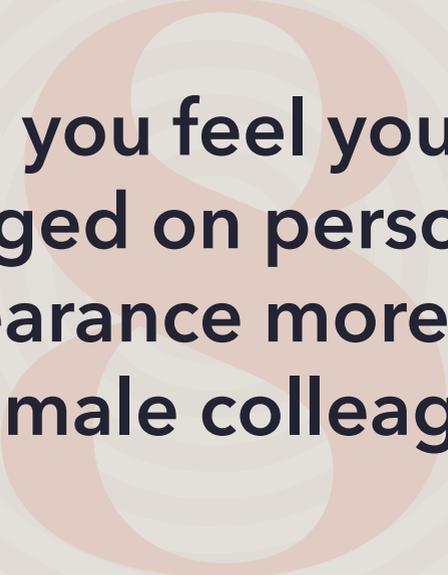
**At work do you feel that
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7 - At work do you feel that you are judged on your personal appearance and what you wear?

69% of the women we spoke to feel they're judged on their personal appearance and their clothes. Only 10% don't think it's an issue, compared to 21% who 'strongly agree' that they are judged on how they look.

If you feel you're being judged on your appearance but aren't happy with the way you look, it can create tension that distracts you from focusing on your job and the work at hand. For us, this question makes yet another case that investing time and money into your appearance at work isn't a luxury, but an integral part of your career.



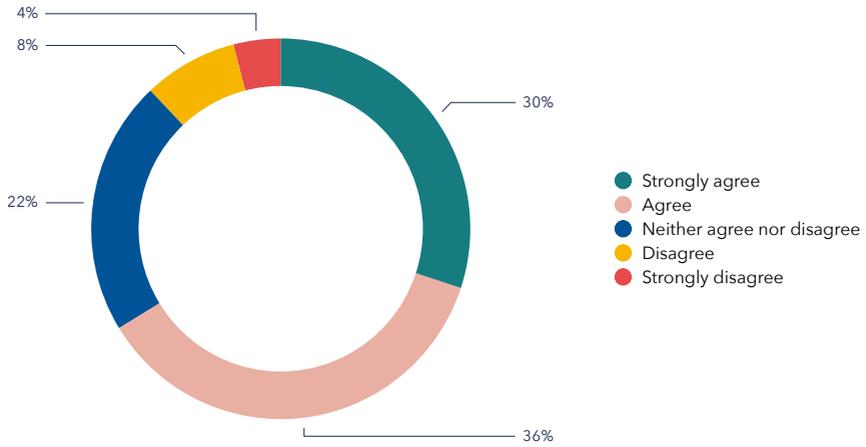


**Do you feel you're
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appearance more than
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8 - Do you feel you're judged on personal appearance more than your male colleagues?

2 in 3 of the women we spoke to (66%) believe they are judged more on their appearance than male colleagues, with 30% 'strongly agreeing' and 36% 'agreeing'.

Only 12% didn't think this was the case.



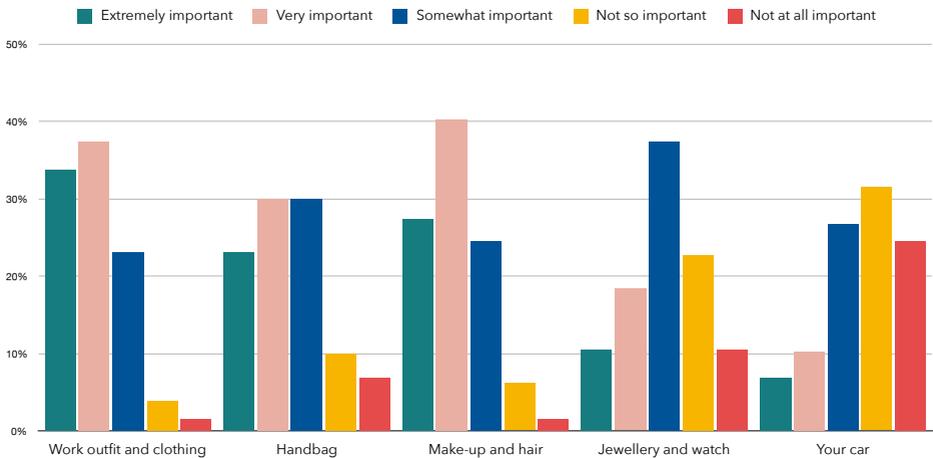
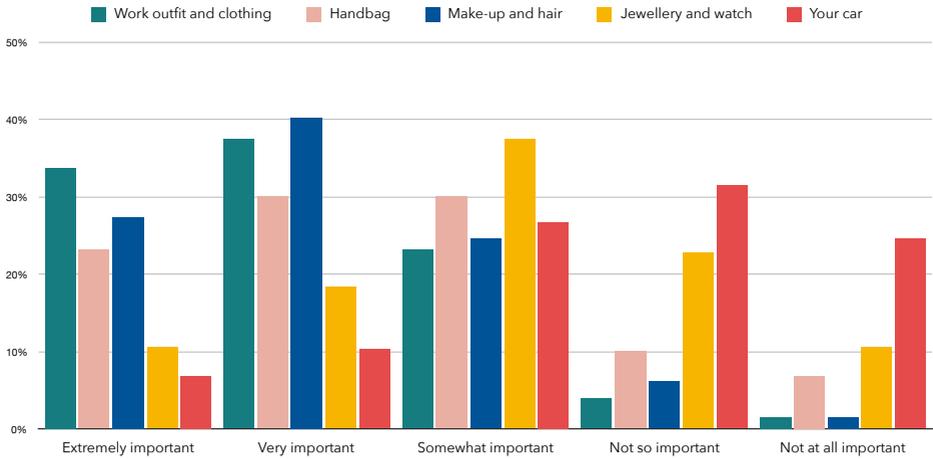


**What aspects of your
personal appearance
are most important in
boosting your confidence
at work?**

9 - What aspects of your personal appearance are most important in boosting your confidence at work?

A huge 71% of the women we spoke to said that their outfits and clothing are important for their self-confidence at work, with 34% saying it was 'Extremely Important' and 37% 'Very Important'.

Makeup and hair were deemed 'Extremely or 'Very Important' by 67% of women, and 53% said that a good quality handbag was also 'Extremely' or 'Very Important'.





10

**What are your top
style tips for work?**

The women we polled know a thing or two about styling. Here's a selection of their excellent tips.

"A good quality blazer will make most outfits more formal and smart."

"A good quality handbag, classic tailoring, comfortable footwear."

"Be yourself. Instead of black I now wear pink, orange and green. Know what suits you."

"Being comfortable and practical. You wear the clothes and accessories, not the other way around."

"Buy non-iron, functional, comfortable clothes. All my tops contain Elastane so they don't lose their shape and I always wear one statement item to create interest in an outfit."

"A handbag is super important; it gives a snapshot of your personality and work ethic! Also, if your hair looks good you can get away with almost anything."

"Comfort and fit will help you to look and feel better. Good underwear will make clothes look better. Smart accessories will polish the look."

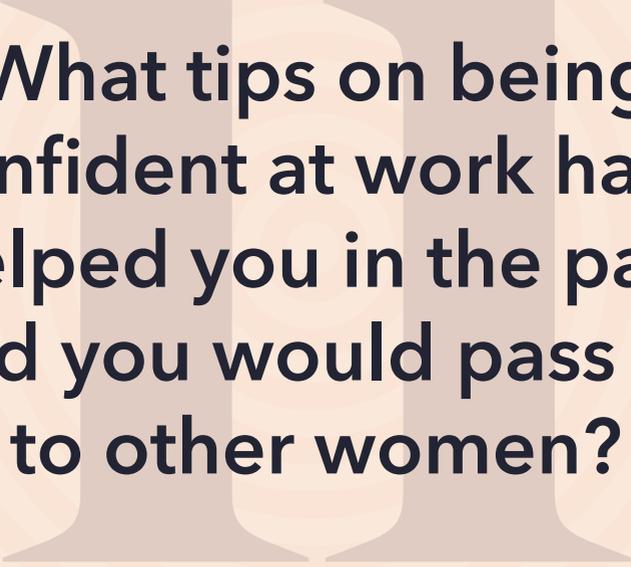
"Don't be tempted to wear too much black - it looks smart but shows no personality and can be quite dreary."

"Feel comfortable and dress for your own style."

"I work with a wide range of businesses so tend to echo the style of my individual clients."

"Look presentable but be comfortable and you'll be confident."

"Wear what makes you feel confident - not what you think you should wear."



What tips on being confident at work have helped you in the past and you would pass on to other women?

Here's a selection of incredible confidence tips from the women we polled.

"Act confident even if you don't always feel it. Go out of your comfort zone. You might surprise yourself."

"Allow yourself to accept you cannot be right all of the time and be willing to learn from what you could have done better."

"An old chestnut, but faking it until you make it really can make a huge difference when you lack confidence."

"Avoid gossip in the workplace. Know your facts. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Share your knowledge."

"Be comfortable in what you wear - find things that reflect your personality and make you stand out. I've got some bright red glasses I put on when I need to be extra confident!"

"Be confident being you, don't try to be someone else. If in doubt, ask for help, as this isn't a sign of weakness."

"Being true to yourself and acknowledging what you would like to improve (then working on that). You don't need to tell anyone that you're doing it but just keep practising."

"Being well-groomed helps. Rehearsing key points before important meetings."

"Believe in your abilities and don't compare yourself to others - trust your gut instinct."

"Breathe and talk slowly."

"Believe in your self-worth, you're there because you deserve to be. Be confident in your abilities, focus on your achievements, strive to learn and smile."

"Don't try to be perfect, nobody is perfect! Just try your best and be as prepared as possible."

11 - What tips have helped you in the past and you would pass on to other women?

"Buy the best quality you can afford."

"Don't be like a man. Be strong in a female way. We are inclusive. We create environments around people so that they can be great. Autocratic power is so old hat now."

"Don't worry too much about what other people think."

"Dress for the job you want, not the one you have."

"Fake it 'til you make it because no one has everything as figured out as it sometimes appears they do."

"I pretend I'm an actress playing a role."

"Investing in good clothes and accessories will boost your confidence and create trust in you."

"Know that to be where you are you've probably had to work twice as hard as the men so be confident, you are already brilliant."

"List your skills out to yourself. Remind yourself the company hired you, they believe you."

"What people show you on the outside is often not how they feel on the inside. Most people lack confidence at some stage, they are just good at hiding it. If people don't like you - that's their problem, not yours. Be yourself and not who you think people want you to be."

Final word from Sarah Haran

Having a community of like-minded women, also juggling things like family, career and work life balance - can be a source of incredible strength. In the 'My Confidence Matters Survey', 'being part of a community' was the service most selected by women (57%) as being helpful to them in building up their confidence at work.

Women supporting other women with advice, tips and frank discussions about 'how they feel the fear and do it anyway' is an important part of how we'll reach a place where all women identify as 'Very Confident' or 'Extremely Confident', not just half of them.

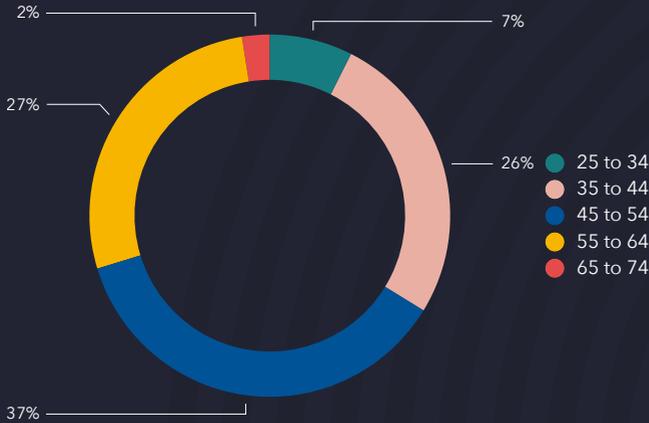
This report is an extension of the community of incredible women building up through our network of Sarah Haran customers and friends, with the aim of supporting each other to feel confident, organised and ready to face the world.

Listening to the wisdom of other women give their style confidence and work confidence tips has been eye-opening for me, as I hope it has been for you.

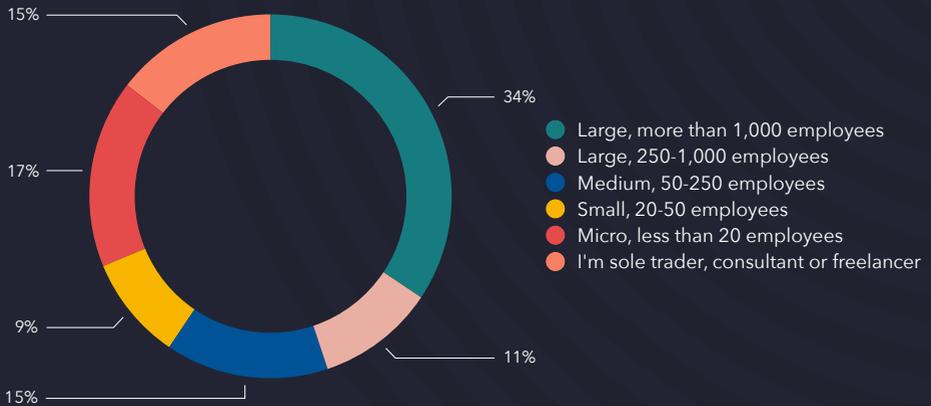
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APPENDIX: SURVEY BACKGROUND

The age breakdown of our survey respondents.



The size of business or organisation our respondents worked at.



About Sarah Haran

As Founder, Creative Director and Mum of two, what started as a hobby for Sarah Haran after teaching herself how to make handbags, became a passion that she turned into a career.

Previously the Chief Operating Officer of iomart, an AIM-listed cloud computing business, Sarah was frequently flying all over the World and needed a stylish bag for business, travel and personal time. A bag that would keep her organised during a busy day but look stylish and chic at night.

Unsuccessful in her search for the perfect bag, she learned how to design and produce handbags in her spare time and came up with the idea of a bag-in-a-bag that could be easily restyled, the Dahlia Tote. This beautiful & functional leather tote bag soon became her everyday bag and as friends and colleagues began requesting their own, the Sarah Haran brand was born.

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