

THE TRENDS BRANDS FUTURES AND IDEAS MAGAZINE

# VIEWPOINT:

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#23

THE  
EVE-OLUTION  
ISSUE

*Equality, simplicity,  
collaboration: the new rules  
of the female century*

'IN THE SPOTLIGHT' BY LORENZO VITTURI

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*'Millions of men and women all over the world now believe that all of us would be better off if women had stronger voices in companies and the other organisations of civil society.'*

*Peninah Thomson and Jacey Graham, co-authors of A Woman's Place is in the Boardroom*

The question is no longer about whether women are good for business (countless studies prove it), but whether business is good enough to attract and retain women. The future is about choice, flexibility and freedom, and future work will no longer drive or define people's lives in the way it once did. In the future, people, both women and men, will agree to be employed - on their terms, or not at all.

In the USA, females account for 37% of management jobs, 41% of purchasing managers and 60% of accountants and auditors - but only 14% of directors, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Norway is the first country in the world to introduce quotas on female non-executive directors at companies. Virtually all Norwegian companies have now complied with the 40% target, up from 7.2% in 2002. In the UK, 14.5% of non-executive directors are women, but one in four FTSE 100 boards includes no women at all.

This is not just bad for equality, but bad for business, too. For example, more women in senior management could 'play a key role in addressing the twin problems of population ageing and pension stability', according to a 2007 report by Goldman Sachs.

#### **CATCH-22**

Think tank Catalyst has published a list of the factors it believes are keeping women out of the top jobs. Top of the list is the very Catch-22 'lack of management experience'. Other reasons include women's exclusion from informal networks, stereotypes about women's abilities, a lack of role models,

## Karen Pearson

*Founder, Karen P Productions*

Insight into the new and niche has allowed Karen Pearson to develop a brand that depends on knowledge and keen technical know-how to stay ahead of the market. 'I'm a tech nerd and proud to say it,' Pearson says. 'If I was scared of technology I wouldn't be where I am now. I'm always on iChat, Skype, always on the look-out for the latest tech. It all comes from this desire to find out.'

Karen P Productions is a one-stop developer of branded audio content for internet radio and podcasting. She was formerly Radio 1's youngest producer, shaping Gilles Peterson's Worldwide broadcast show, and then worked at production company Somethin' Else. Now Pearson is ahead of the game in a growing niche. Virgin recently established a podcasting arm for its radio business, for example, and more brands are considering audio as part of their campaign strategy. Furthermore, podcasting to internet-ready mobile phones is around the corner, as is enhanced podcasting, which may involve, for instance, a visual element.

Pearson's expertise and her unique ability to apply BBC-standard

production values to this new broadcast medium have won her the industry moniker 'Queen of the Podcasts'. Clients include big brands from the Big Chill festivals to Fabric, Red Bull and the Roundhouse in London.

Pearson constantly DJs, networks and enhances her tech savviness to keep abreast of a quickly changing industry. Long hours and maximum flexibility are essential. Her age helps, she says, making her young enough to grasp new technology's potential, and just about old enough to be taken seriously by corporate men in grey (though being qualified in business management and media also helps).

Pearson cherry-picks industry experts on a project-by-project basis, and some 80% of the freelancers she employs are women. She increasingly receives work applications from women studying subjects such as sound design and studio engineering. 'I don't want to deal in clichés, but it is true that the techie end of broadcasting is not very female,' she says. 'But there is a gathering snowball effect.'



*Karen Pearson, founder, Karen P Productions*