

Are women less resilient than men in the workplace?



Our 2017 analysis of our Leadership Success Profile 360° (LSP360°) assessment data shows that women are seen to be less resilient than men in the workplace. We wondered why – and if perception is everything?

We analysed data from **148 New Zealand public sector leaders** who completed a Leadership Success Profile 360° (LSP360°) assessment between 1 July 2016 and 22 May 2017.

1,867 people provided their feedback on how the 148 leaders are demonstrating leadership behaviours across the LSP 16 capability areas. Feedback came from a leader's direct-reports, reporting managers, peers and other close-working colleagues, plus the leader's self-assessment.

By identifying common strengths and development opportunities, we can offer leaders the right support for their development.

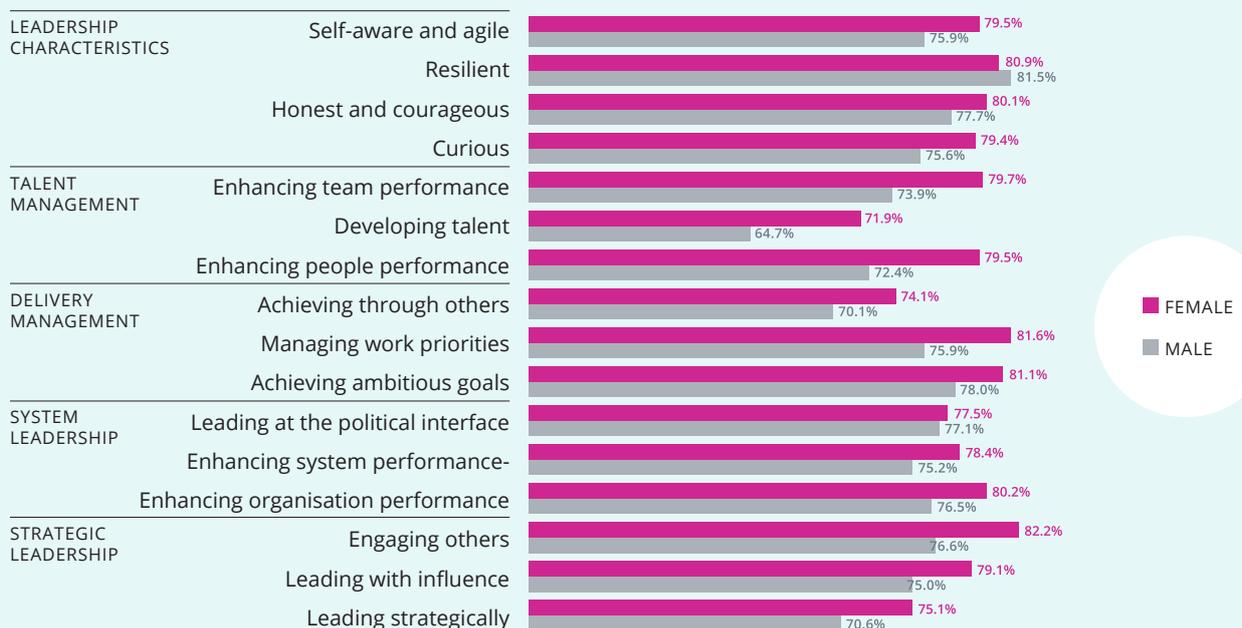


Resilience

Being resilient is a key LSP leadership characteristic and vital to being an effective leader.

Female leaders rated consistently higher (by more than 4% on average) than their male counterparts in all the LSP areas except one: resilience.

Why are women seen to be less resilient than men, especially when they **rate higher than men in all other LSP areas?**



■ FEMALE
■ MALE

Unconscious bias

Researchers Turban, Freeman and Waber (2017) looked at gender differences between how women and men behave at work. Instead of relying on what people observed, the researchers went further and gave male and female employees 'sociometric badges' to wear. They tracked and recorded employee communication patterns, movement, proximity to other people, and volume and tone of voice.

After four months of gathering and analysing the data, the researchers found there were no perceptible differences in the behaviours of men and women. They concluded that gender differences may not lie in how women act but in how people perceive their actions.



"Gender inequality is due to bias, not differences in behaviour."

This could help explain why in LDC's analysis, resilience didn't follow the same gender trend as the other LSP capability areas. **Are we biased towards recognising or associating resilience more frequently with men**, and unconsciously blind to it when females demonstrate the same behaviour? And, could perceptual bias influence how the other capability areas are seen?



Women and men talk about resilience differently

'Tough at the Top?' research (Bond and Shapiro, 2014) gathered insights into the resilience of women at the top of UK organisations. The research showed that women and men are both resilient but talk about it in different ways. "More women than men appear to equate resilience with the need to suppress their emotions at work."

Could we say then, that men are better at hiding their vulnerabilities and so appear resilient, which is why our LSP360° data analysis shows that women aren't as seen as being as resilient as men?

How resilient do you feel?

If you've got questions about resilience at work and would like support with your leadership development, please get in touch: info@ldc.govt.nz

Check out LDC's [Resilience toolkit](#). Increase your current resilience and manage your working life more effectively by understanding the attributes of resilience and why it's important.



References

Turban, S., Freeman, L., Waber, B. (2017) *A Study Used Senors to Show That Men and Women Are Treated Differently at Work*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from www.hbr.org.

Bond, S., & Shapiro, Dr G. (2014). *Tough at the Top?: New rules of resilience for women's leadership success*. Business Sake Consulting Ltd.

Unconscious bias

<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/how-combat-unconscious-bias-individual>

<http://women.govt.nz/inspiring-action-for-gender-balance/proven-strategies-addressing-unconscious-bias-workplace>



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