

# DowntownWomensClub.com Spring 2007 Survey "Women in the Workplace – Generationally Speaking"



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**Downtown Women's Club**

# DowntownWomensClub.com 2006 Online Shopping Survey

## Introduction

In March 2007, DowntownWomensClub.com, a women's network and career website, surveyed 650+ businesswomen across three generations about some of the issues facing women in the workplace. We then compared the responses from the three generations – Generation Y, Generation X and Baby Boomers.

## Key Findings

- Less than 2% of women in our survey are contemplating opting out permanently from the workplace. Moreover, less than 10% even plan to opt out for a few years. All three generations are in agreement in their top three responses:
  - Women earned the right to choose
  - Most women don't opt "out;" they opt "differently"
  - Corporations are too inflexible.
- The idea of "Mommy Wars" does not fit the reality that most working moms do not have schedules that allow them to even meet stay at home moms.
  - Only 2% of working moms feel inadequate when compared to stay at home moms.
  - But, we are seeing an emerging trend that women without kids are disgruntled over having to pick up the slack for working parents.
- Despite recent studies that the gender gap starts in the first year of college, and increases for college graduates, many women still do not recognize this.
- The majority of all generations believe that overt discrimination has been reduced, yet subtle discrimination still persists, and it's more evident at the higher levels.
- When asked to give advice to the other generations:
  - The Generation X and Y women's advice centered around having the Boomers change their attitudes (i.e. stop labeling them as slackers, expecting them to fight their same battles, or resenting them for making different choices), as well as building bridges, mentoring and learning technology.
  - Interestingly, nearly 40% of the Boomers would not recommend that the younger women follow their path. Despite their reluctance to mentor, they also gave much of the practical advice that the younger women are seeking from mentors.

## Conclusions

1. When it comes to the top women's issues, the generations are mostly in agreement.
2. The majority of all generations feel that the media-driven "trends" like opting out and mommy wars do not reflect reality.
3. The majority of women, especially in the younger generations, do not recognize that there is a gender gap.
4. There is a clear communication problem across the generations.

## Methodology

We surveyed the members of DowntownWomensClub.com, who are professional businesswomen ranging in age from 22 to 62+. Of the 650 women we had respond: 220 were Baby Boomers (b. 1946-1964); 317 were Generation X (b. 1965-1976); and 113 were Generation Y (b. 1977-1993).

- 60% of respondents don't have children; and
- 87% were white; 6% Black; 2% Asian; 2% Hispanic; and 3% other.

## Table of Contents

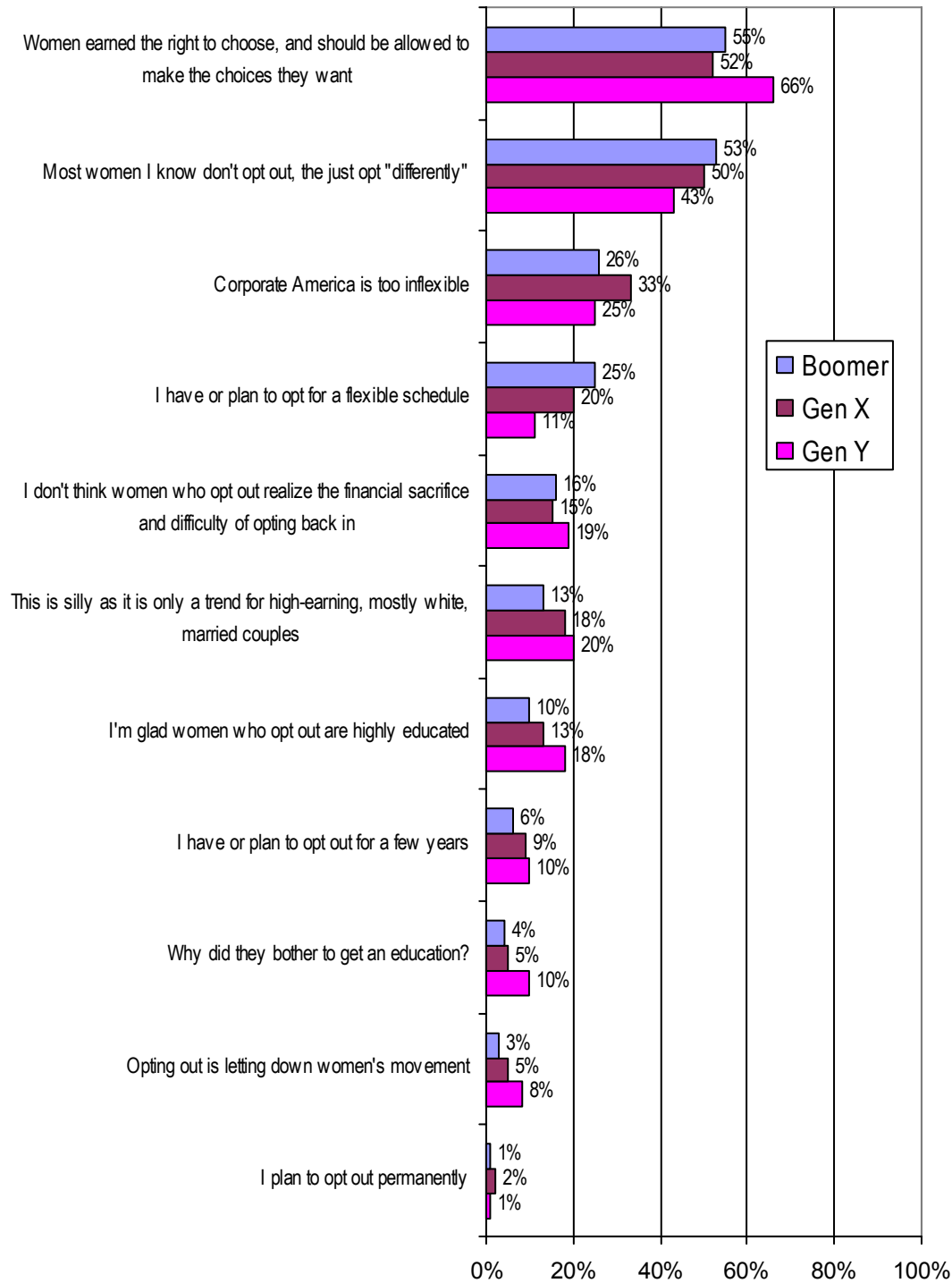
<b>Part I – Debunking the “Opting Out” and “Mommy Wars” Myths</b> .....	4
1: Which statement(s) best represent your feelings about women “opting out” of corporate America? (Choose up to three.) .....	4
2: Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about the term, “Mommy Wars,” which the media uses to pit stay at home moms against working moms? (Choose up to three.) .....	6
3: Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about work/life balance? .....	7
<b>Part II – Life in the Office, From the Female Point of View</b> .....	8
4: Do you think the glass ceiling still exists for women in the workplace? The following answered “yes.” .....	8
5: If you answered “yes” to the last question do you think it will disappear in your lifetime? The following answered “yes.” .....	8
6: Do you think sometimes women have a “sticky floor” issue (i.e. they hold themselves and other women back)? The following answered “yes.” .....	8
7: Over the past decade, what do you think about the number of instances of sexual harassment/discrimination of women in the workplace? .....	9
8: Do you feel the gender wage gap (men earning more than women for the same work) is affecting your current job/position? The following answered “yes.” .....	10
9: Do you think the gender wage gap will affect you in the future? The following answered “yes.” .....	10
10: What do you think about expressing your feminine side at work, either through fashion or with women-focused networking events (i.e., salon nights, shopping events, etc.) .....	10
11: How would you describe your current work environment? .....	11
<b>Part III – What Do Generations of Businesswomen Think About Each Other?</b> .....	12
12: Which statement(s) best represent your feelings about high achieving women in the workforce from the generation that precedes you (i.e. came before you)? (Respondents can choose up to three.) .....	12
13: Which statement(s) best represent your feelings about high achieving women in the workforce from the generation behind you? (Respondents can choose up to three).....	13
14: Have you ever had a female mentor? The following answered “Yes.” .....	14
15: Generally, how would you describe your experiences working with a female boss? .....	14
16: What advice would you give to members of the other generations? While much of that advice will be published in a separate publication, for purposes of this survey we categorized the advice to give us a bigger picture of the generations’ attitudes about their colleagues.....	14
17: What’s your current personal status? .....	16
<b>About DowntownWomensClub.com</b> .....	18

## Part I – Debunking the “Opting Out” and “Mommy Wars” Myths

**1: Which statement(s) best represent your feelings about women “opting out” of corporate America? (Choose up to three.)**

- With less than 2% of women in our survey contemplating opting out permanently from the workplace, one wonders why major newspapers and periodicals focus on this trend. Moreover, less than 10% even plan to opt out for a few years.
- All three generations are in agreement in their top three responses:
  - Women earned the right to choose
  - Most women don’t opt “out;” they opt “differently”
  - Corporations are too inflexible.
- When it came to towing the “feminist” line – it was the Generation Y women who were harder on their colleagues who do choose to “opt out.” Nearly 10% of them felt that these women are letting down the feminist movement and shouldn’t have bothered to get an education.
  - Their Boomer and Gen X colleagues were more sympathetic, but this might be attributable to the fact that Generation Y women have yet to face the difficult work/life choices.

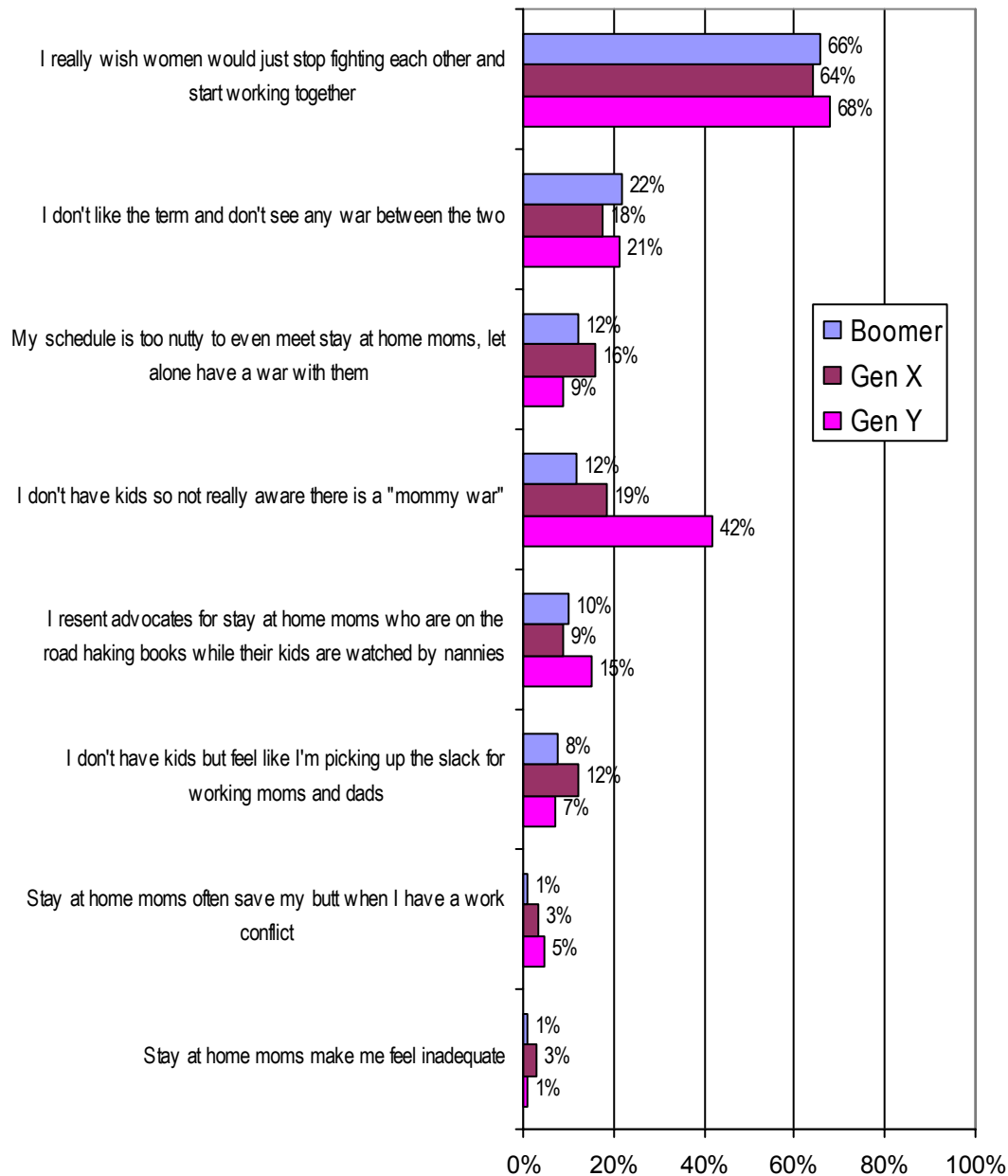
Which statements best represent your feelings about "opting out?"  
 (Respondents can choose up to three.)



**2: Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about the term, "Mommy Wars," which the media uses to pit stay at home moms against working moms? (Choose up to three.)**

- The idea of "Mommy Wars" does not fit the reality that most working moms do not have schedules that allow them to meet stay at home moms.
- Only 2% of working moms even feel inadequate when compared to stay at home moms.
- But, we are seeing an emerging trend that women without kids are disgruntled over having to pick up the slack for working parents.

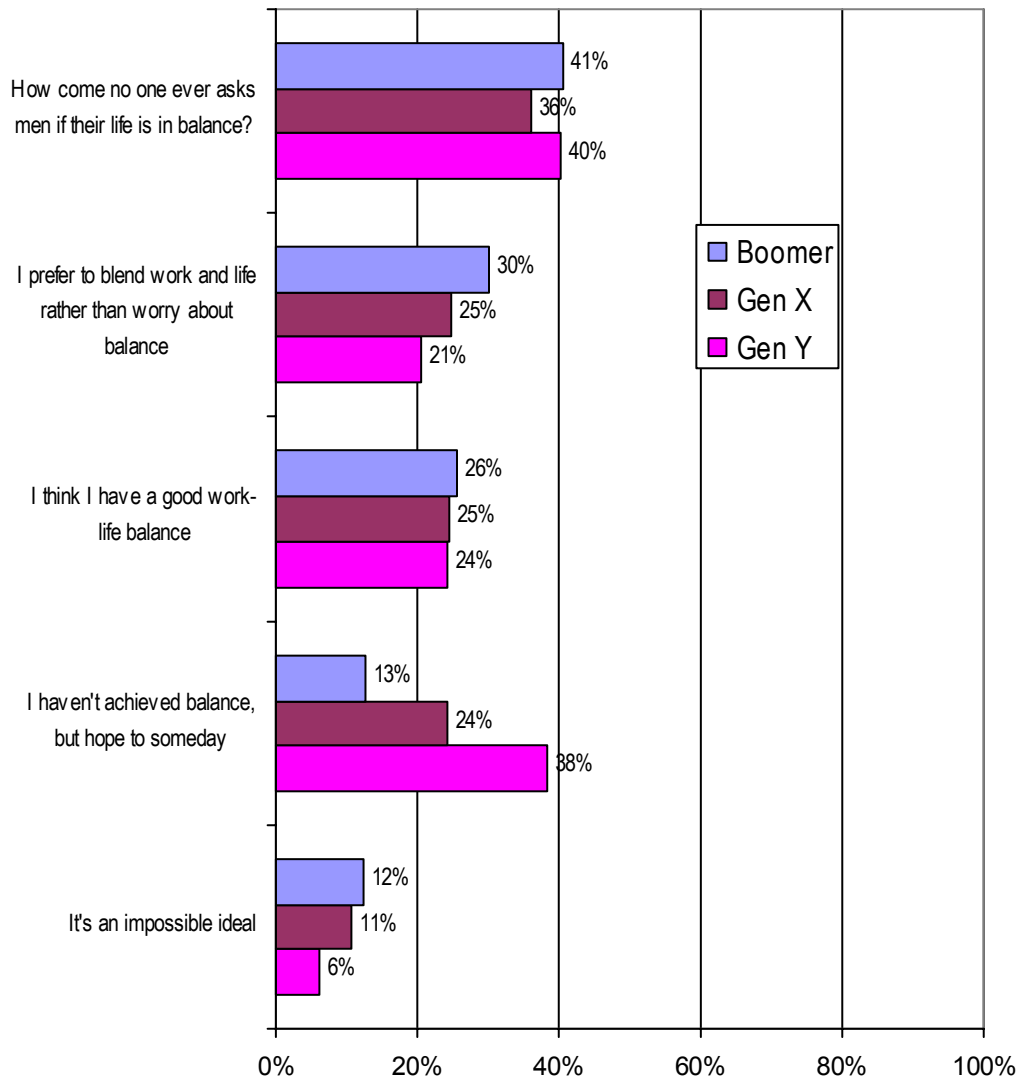
What do you think about the "Mommy Wars"?  
(Respondents can choose up to three.)



### 3: Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about work/life balance?

- It seems that work/life balance issues are starting to dissipate.
- Interestingly, it's Generation Y who feels the most "out of balance." This counteracts the widespread view that Generation Y doesn't want to work.
- It also might indicate that their interpretation of the "work/life" balance question equates life with having a family/kids.

Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about work/life balance?  
(Respondents may have selected more than one answer.)



## Part II – Life in the Office, From the Female Point of View

**4: Do you think the glass ceiling still exists for women in the workplace? The following answered “yes.”**

Boomers =	93.1%
Gen X =	91.1%
Gen Y =	82.1%

**5: If you answered “yes” to the last question do you think it will disappear in your lifetime? The following answered “yes.”**

Boomers =	24.1%
Gen X =	33.0%
Gen Y =	38.9%

**6: Do you think sometimes women have a “sticky floor” issue (i.e. they hold themselves and other women back)? The following answered “yes.”**

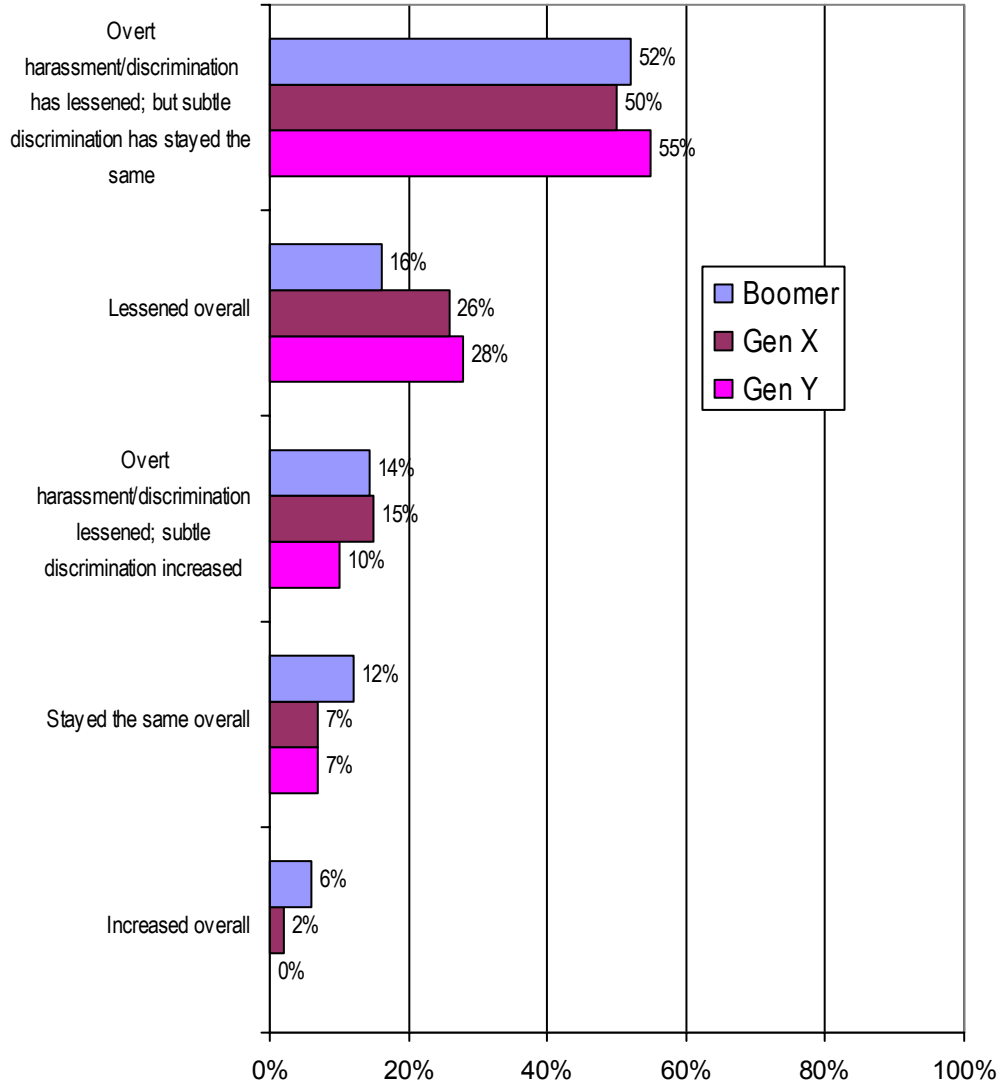
Boomers =	73.7%
Gen X =	75.7%
Gen Y =	73.9%



**7: Over the past decade, what do you think about the number of instances of sexual harassment/discrimination of women in the workplace?**

The majority of all generations believe that overt discrimination has been reduced, yet subtle discrimination still persists, and it's more evident at the higher levels.

What do you think about discrimination/harassment of women in the workplace?



**8: Do you feel the gender wage gap (men earning more than women for the same work) is affecting your current job/position? The following answered “yes.”**

Despite recent studies that the gender gap starts in the first year of college, and increases for college graduates, many women still do not recognize this or feel that they are affected.

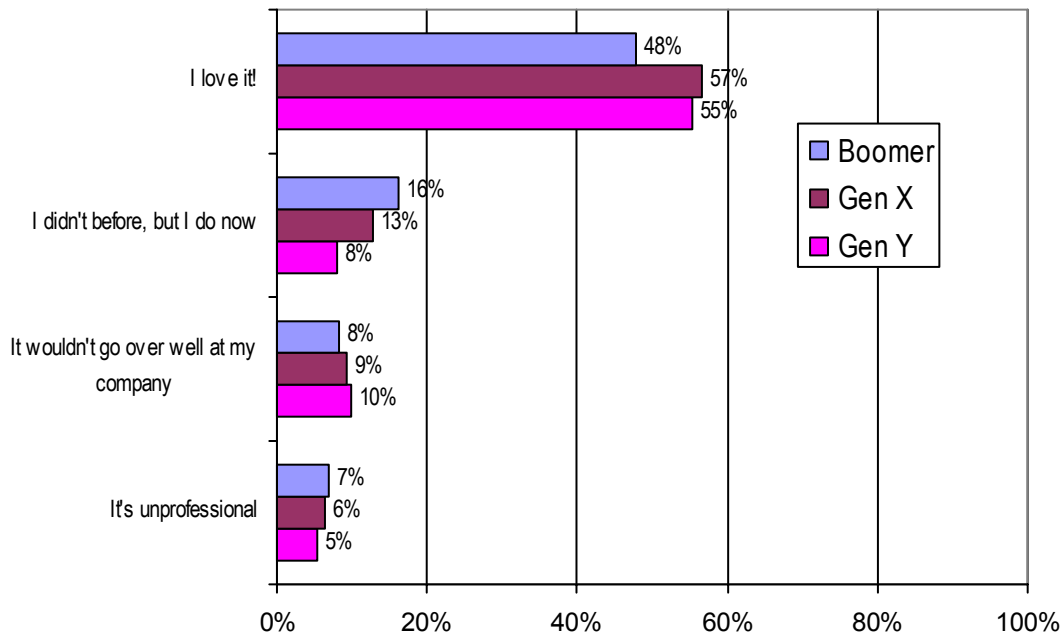
Boomers = 50.5%  
 Gen X = 39.7%  
 Gen Y = 38.1%

**9: Do you think the gender wage gap will affect you in the future? The following answered “yes.”**

Boomers = 59.4%  
 Gen X = 57.0%  
 Gen Y = 68.1%

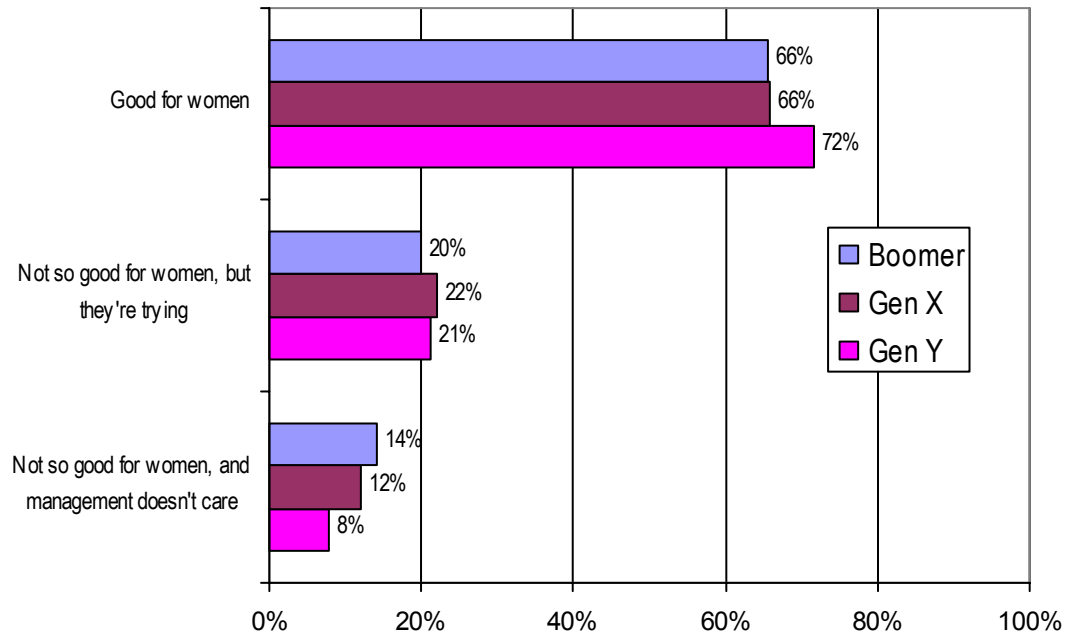
**10: What do you think about expressing your feminine side at work, either through fashion or with women-focused networking events (i.e., salon nights, shopping events, etc.)**

What do you think about expressing your feminine side?



### 11: How would you describe your current work environment?

How would you describe your current work environment?

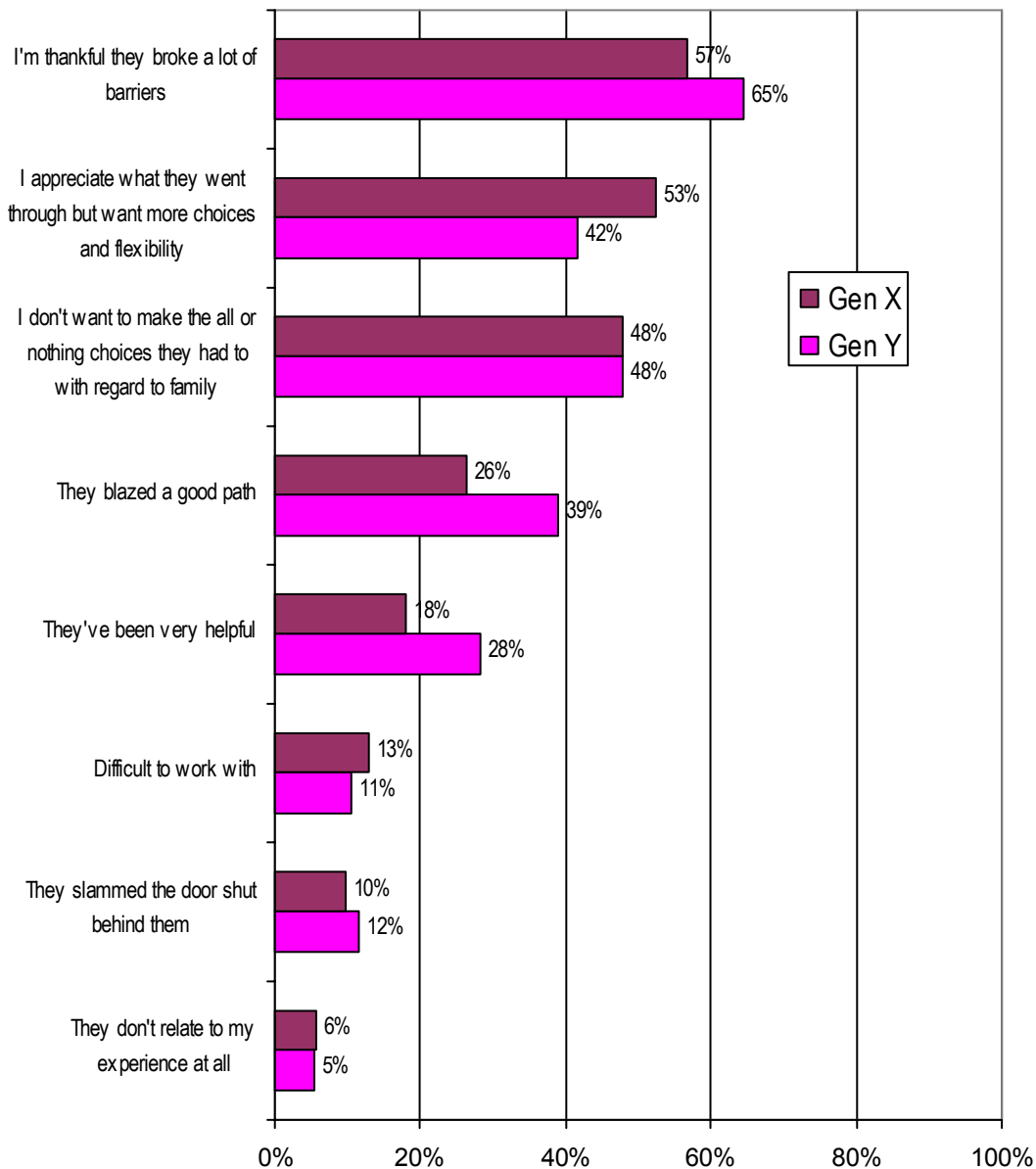


### Part III – What Do Generations of Businesswomen Think About Each Other?

**12: Which statement(s) best represent your feelings about high achieving women in the workforce from the generation that precedes you (i.e. came before you)? (Respondents can choose up to three.)**

- Both Generation X and Y women clearly appreciate the Boomers. (Compare this to the Boomer responses in the next question).
- The big difference is when it comes to work/life issues. Generations X and Y want more choices and flexibility than their Boomer counterparts.

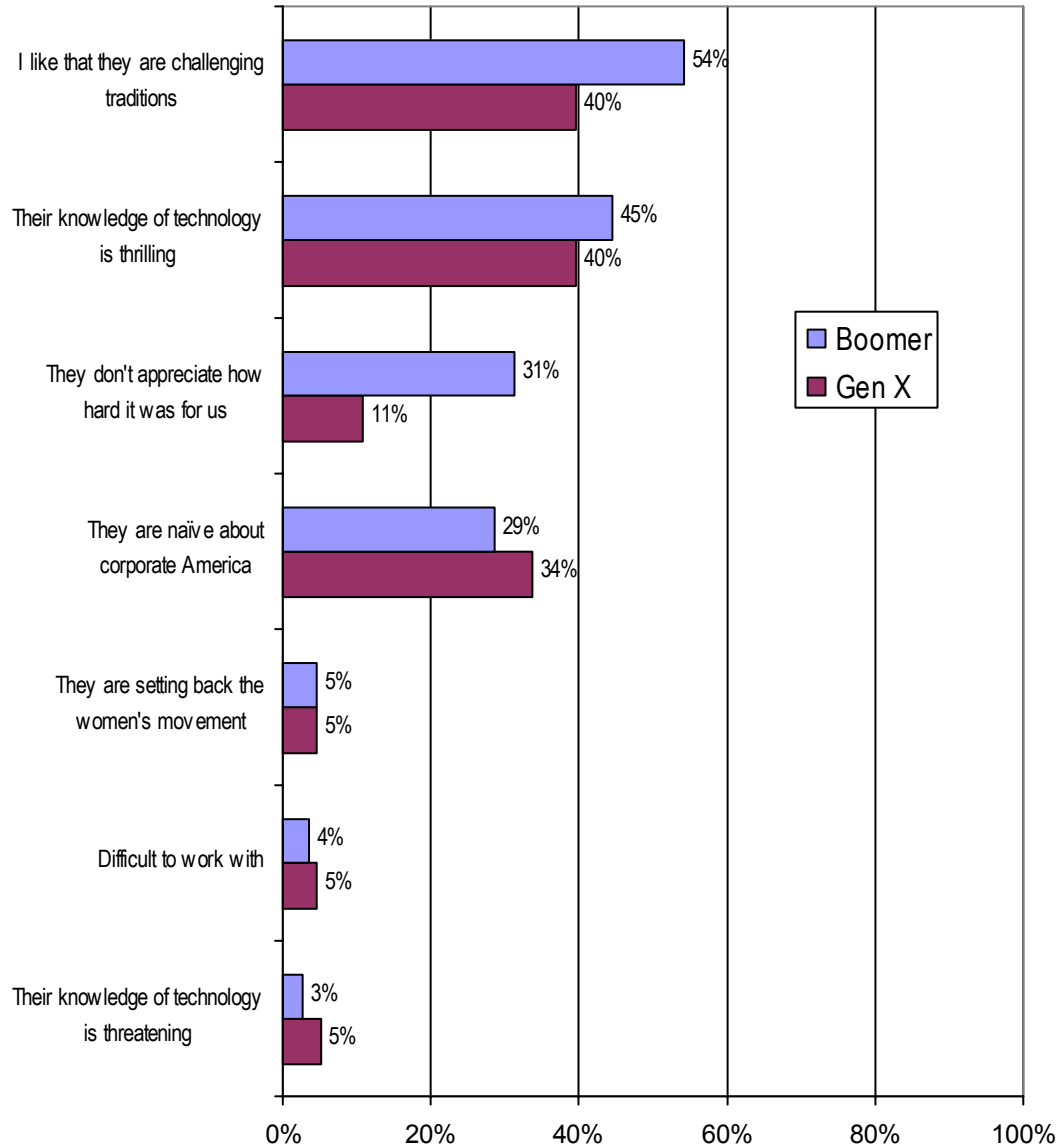
Which statements best represent your feelings about the high-achieving women in the workforce who came before you?  
(Respondents can choose up to three.)



**13: Which statement(s) best represent your feelings about high achieving women in the workforce from the generation behind you? (Respondents can choose up to three).**

In contrast to the appreciation expressed by Generations X and Y in Question #12, note that 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Boomers feel that they aren't appreciated.

Which statements best represent your feelings about the high-achieving women in the workforce who are coming behind you? (Can choose 3)



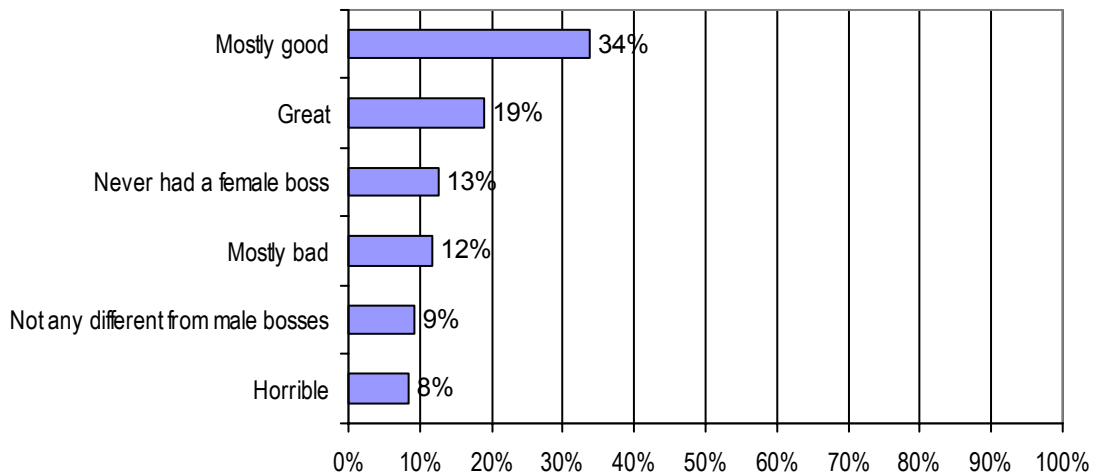
**14: Have you ever had a female mentor? The following answered “Yes.”**

Boomers = 53.5%  
Gen X = 62.9%  
Gen Y = 67.0%

**15: Generally, how would you describe your experiences working with a female boss?**

It seems that the majority had mostly good experiences, but when they were bad, they were right off the pages of “The Devil Wears Prada.”

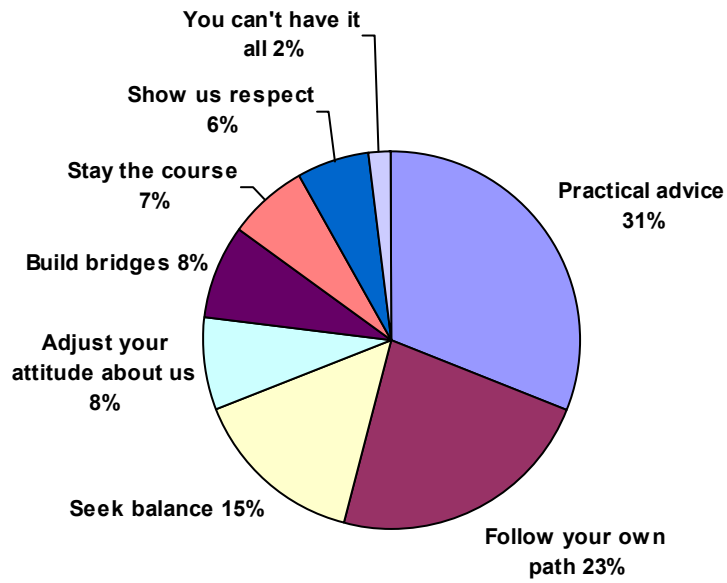
Describe your experience with female bosses (all generations combined)



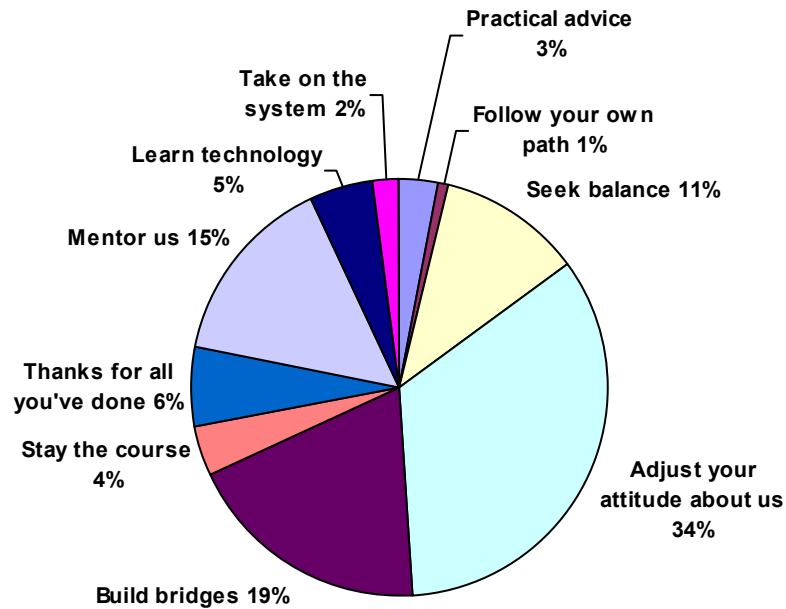
**16: What advice would you give to members of the other generations? While much of that advice will be published in a separate publication, for purposes of this survey we categorized the advice to give us a bigger picture of the generations’ attitudes about their colleagues.**

- The Generation X and Y women’s advice centered around having the Boomers change their attitudes (i.e. stop labeling them as slackers, or resenting them for making different choices), as well as building bridges, mentoring and learning technology.
- Interestingly, nearly 40% of the Boomers would not recommend that the younger women follow their path. They also gave much of the practical advice that the younger women are seeking from mentors.

## Boomer advice to Generations X & Y

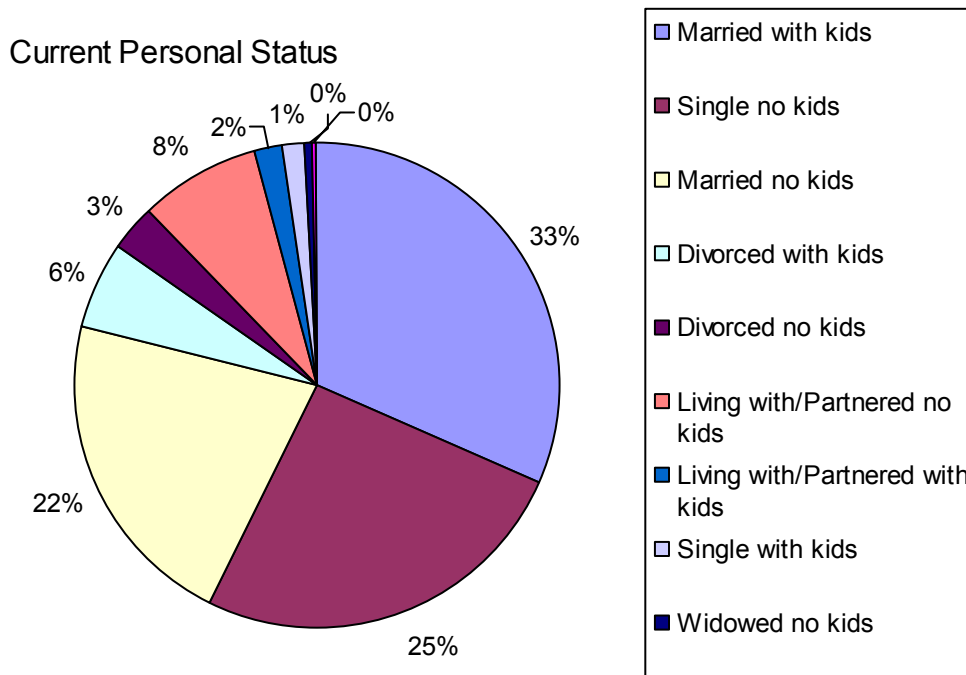


## Generations X & Y advice to Boomers



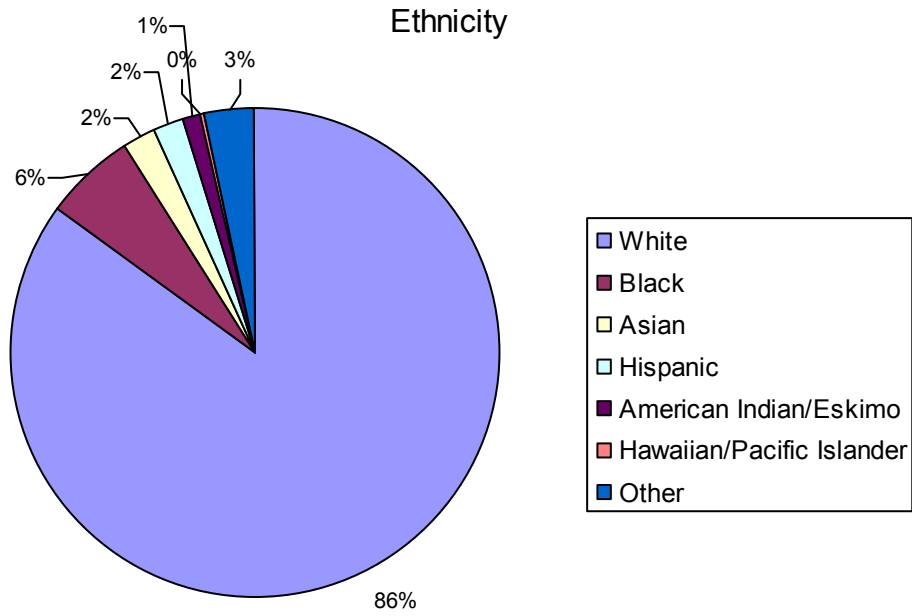
### 17: What's your current personal status?

- Consistent with earlier studies, approximately 60% of our respondents do not have kids.
- Interestingly, this question has always caused a lot of complaints as individuals felt they did not fit into these categories (we added more options this year, but still were asked to add “kids no longer living at home”).
- We also note that we neglected to ask whether they had older dependents (i.e. parents) living with them.
- Of all the questions, this one probably demonstrates best why companies have trouble implementing “one size fits all” policies.





18: What's your ethnicity?



## About DowntownWomensClub.com

DowntownWomensClub.com ([www.downtownwomensclub.com](http://www.downtownwomensclub.com)) is a leader in "Networking to Go" - 24/7 business and social networking that is convenient, pressure free and adaptable to today's varying work styles. It was founded in 1998 by Diane K. Danielson, whose credits include author, lawyer, entrepreneur and software developer. Its innovative "Clicks and Mix" model offers thousands of women an online and offline community using new and emerging technologies such as DWC Faces (a proprietary, Internet-searchable member directory for career women). Member-launched, custom tailored local chapters currently include Boston, Chicago, Washington DC, LA, NYC, Pittsburgh, Providence, San Diego, and Worcester, MA, with new locations in the pipeline. For a yearly membership fee of \$49.99, members access "networking to go," professional development, promotional opportunities, social events, discounts and more, anytime, anywhere and any way they choose.

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