

# A Look at Women in the Workplace

*Editor's Note: Buffy Simoni, President of Paper Mart and Harriet Mills, Founder and CEO of Wine & Design are providing insight into the issues facing women in the workplace.*

**What do you think is the biggest issue for women in the workplace?**



Buffy Simoni



Harriet Mills

**Buffy Simoni:** Sadly, I think women are still not consistently treated equally as leaders in the business world. The number of female CEOs has increased significantly in my lifetime, and more women are at the highest level of their industries. The

dynamic has improved exponentially. The respect issue should be in the past. But I could list many situations when, after having introduced myself, a new potential supplier or business partner will primarily direct conversations to the men in the room, rather than me. It's amazing that there are still professionals out there who respond like that, consciously or not.

**Harriet Mills:** Being founder and CEO of Wine & Design, I had many bumps in the road when starting my business. One of which was a lack of support from male advisors. They unfortunately thought that a paint and sip business would never achieve more than 1 location. Wow.. did I show them. Wine & Design is now a recognized industry leader as well as one of the best franchise businesses for women and men wanting to start a paint and sip business.

## **What advice can you offer to women who want a career in your industry?**

**Buffy Simoni:** Understand what is your unique space in the market. The E-commerce world can be crowded. It's vital that you have clarity on how to bring an experience that is different or better. At Paper Mart, we built our company on providing quality packaging solutions at low prices. What we do differently, and the reason our customers are so loyal, is that we also provide excellent service, which customers don't always find online. That model of low prices and high quality service has set us apart in our industry. Finding your own magic formula is key to jumping into ecommerce successfully.

**Harriet Mills:** Always stand up for what you believe in, even if someone thinks it's not a good idea. Go with your gut and never doubt yourself. Reach out to other women that are in higher rankings than you, most will love to help and give free advice. Women helping women is what it's all about in my book!

## **Why do women make great leaders?**

**Harriet Mills:** Women face a set of challenges different from men that contribute greatly in strengthening qualities great leaders must possess. Women are more empathetic, have stronger traits that help inspire and motivate, and possess a desire to connect with groups and individuals with different perspectives and backgrounds. Women convey objectives effectively and command respect. Women, in particular achieve this through their innate ability to communicate, which can help to express expectations clearly. Their empathy and their willingness to collaborate also contribute to a very important facet of constantly developing strategic perspectives.

**About the Authors:** *Buffy Simoni is the President of Paper Mart, the largest discount packaging supply company in the U.S. From humble beginnings, Paper Mart began in 1921 in a garage behind the Frick family's home in rural Los Angeles. Today, Paper Mart operates out of the largest building in all of Orange County and employs hundreds of local residents. See Buffy's insights below.*

*Harriet Mills is the Founder and CEO of Wine & Design, a recognized industry leader as well as one of the best franchise businesses for women wanting to start a paint and sip business. Leaving her corporate job, she launched a business that allowed her to create a business not only for herself but others who wanted to start their own in a fun and family-focused industry. I'm currently pending her responses to your questions provided so stay tuned! Meanwhile, here's a soundbite of her in terms of why women make good leaders.*