

# THE MALE FACTOR

The unwritten rules, misperceptions and secret beliefs of men in the workplace



## survey

### Survey of How Men Think In the Workplace

Survey Data as of: 9/9/2008

[Click Here: View the Survey Methodology](#)

#### About the Book: [The Male Factor](#)

**Author Note:** The professional survey was designed with the guidance of Chuck Cowan of Analytic Focus ([www.analyticfocus.com](http://www.analyticfocus.com)), the former chief of survey design at the U.S. Census Bureau. The survey was conducted by Decision Analyst ([www.decisionanalyst.com](http://www.decisionanalyst.com)) and delivered a random, representative, national sample of 602 employed men (including 100 executives), ages twenty-five to sixty-five, with a relevant mix of demographics (white-collar/blue-collar, full-time/part-time, across a spectrum of occupations, size of company, and seniority). The survey ensured a proportional distribution across regions of the United States (northeast, central, south, and west) and across age groups. The survey also included a control group of 100 white-collar women ages twenty-five to sixty-five.

#### Question 1:

Stop and think for a moment about your view of working life and personal life. Which statement best describes your view? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. Things operate differently at work than they do in your personal life. You can adhere to the same values or personality in each place (for example, being honest, or compassionate), but the expectations and culture of each are simply different, so you adjust to each	Raw percentage	58%
	Tallied percentage*	100%
2. The way work life and personal life operate are not that different, so you can operate pretty much the same in both arenas	Raw percentage	42%

\* Tallied percentage is believed to be an even more realistic assessment, based on survey-takers answers to 'real-life scenario' question. (See [Endnotes](#) at conclusion of survey.)

#### Question 2:

When you are considering a work decision, should you change the decision, based on consideration of emotional or personal factors—such as the possibility that someone's feelings will be hurt if you go a particular direction? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. In general, you can't really allow your actual decision to be influenced by those factors. You can consider them after the decision is made—such as breaking hard news gently—but using them to change a decision would negatively impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the business		67%
2. You can change a decision based on those		

factors; doing so won't negatively impact the business		22%
3. You should change your decision based on those factors; doing so will improve the effectiveness of the business		11%

### Question 3:

Wherever a hypothesis was tested but not borne out in the survey, those subjects were dropped from further research for now. Those questions therefore are not included in this presentation of the survey. Any skipped questions are not missing but rather relate to the dropped subjects.

### Question 4:

Suppose you're in the middle of working on something and a colleague comes into your office. She mentions some family problems, and you sense she needs to talk for a while. Regardless of how you actually respond, are you likely to have the following feeling? "I should discuss it with her, to show that I care...but privately, I'd really rather not because I fear I'll get sucked into a personal conversation, and I just don't have time for that here." {Choose One Answer}

<b>Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men</b>		<b>602</b>
1. Yes, I may have that feeling		44%
2. No, I'm not likely to have that feeling		35%
3. Yes, I am likely to have that feeling		22%

Note: Due to rounding, some totals slightly exceed 100%

### Question 5:

Now suppose that a work associate approaches you and starts talking about a work issue, but doesn't first tell you the point of the question or the matter at hand. In general, is it harder to listen and follow what they are saying, if they don't state the point up front? {Choose One Answer}

<b>Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men</b>		<b>602</b>
1. Yes. I do feel like I have to work harder to listen if I don't know where they are going		60%
2. No. I'm generally fine with listening to the story or the details unfold without finding it hard to listen		40%

### Question 6:

Below are several quotes from various successful businessmen about how they privately feel at times. Do you sometimes find yourself instinctively feeling this way? (When answering, please consider how you actually feel, regardless of whether you think it is logical or whether you "should" feel that way.) {Choose One Answer For Each Statement}

Question	I feel like this regularly	I feel like this sometimes	I rarely or never feel like this
6.1 "It all depends on me."	25%	60%	16%
6.2 "If I have a work success (for example, I land a big deal), I don't feel like it gives me much breathing room to celebrate and relax. Business is all about 'what have you done for me lately?'"	25%	50%	25%
6.3 "If everyone doesn't pull together and keep things moving forward every single day, things will break down."	28%	52%	20%
6.4 "Work feels like a sprint from task to task and goal to goal; even during 'down times' I feel a sense of urgency."	27%	49%	24%

6.5 “Whether or not my actual job involves juggling multiple tasks, I feel like a juggler who is trying to keep a dozen balls in the air; if I lose my focus, it will all come crashing down around me.”	31%	45%	24%
6.6 “No matter how successful I get, I still feel a bit like I’m pushing a rock uphill—gravity is still there, working against me. I have to be vigilant or I’ll slip backwards.”	27%	48%	25%
6.7 “I’m not always as confident as I look.”	21%	55%	24%
6.8 “I can be doing great in business, enjoy a challenge, and still at times feel like, okay, I hope I can figure this thing out before someone realizes that I’m not sure what I’m doing!”	16%	54%	30%

Note: Due to rounding, some totals slightly exceed 100%

### Question 7:

**Note:** Several questions were worded only slightly differently for the female control group and those questions are not included here.

The relevant questions that were substantively different or were only asked of female survey takers (and thus discussed in the book) are appended at the end of this presentation of the survey.

### Question 11:

Imagine you are in a business meeting, and a woman with a great body stands up to give a presentation. She is all business, but she is wearing a suit and blouse that shows off her figure in some way (for example, a low-cut blouse or tight skirt). Which answer below most closely describes the likely impact of that on your ability to concentrate on her presentation? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. I’m instinctively drawn to look at her body, and sneak in peeks when she won’t notice—so I’m missing quite a bit of what she says		14%
2. I try to concentrate, but I’m distracted from trying to look at her face and not her body—so I miss some of what she says		50%
3. I’m not affected; I can concentrate fully on her presentation		36%

### Question 12:

When you see a woman dress in a way that shows off her figure, which (if any) of the following thoughts might you have about why she is dressing that way? {Choose One Answer On Each Row}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. She wants the men around her to look at her body		74%
2. She probably wants to use her curves to sell the deal (or create some business advantage)		66%
3. She’s advertising or saying “come and get it”		20%
4. She’s conscious of the fact that she’s showing off her body, and she’s doing it on purpose to create an advantage		70%
5. She must not understand how she’s being perceived—and it’s not a perception she would want		39%
6. She does understand how she’s being perceived—and she doesn’t care		67%

Note: The answers for each row above were 'I might think that' and 'I would not think that'. This is only the percent of men who answered 'I might think that way' for each answer.

### Question 13:

Thinking about the working women you see during the course of the workweek, how often do you encounter, or see, a woman wearing clothes that you consider distracting for showing off her figure in some way? This includes presumed 'unintentional' cases, such as a button-up shirt that isn't buttoned up as high as usual, and so on. Which choice below comes closest to describing how often you see a woman dressed in that way, in the working environment? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question – Among men who work with women and do not have a uniform*		551
1. Every day, multiple times a day		12%
2. Once a day, on average		12%
3. Several times a week		21%
4. Once a week		13%
5. Once every few weeks		13%
6. Once a month		6%
7. Rarely or never		23%

\* 9% of male survey takers said they work with very few women or have a uniform.

### Question 17:

Which statement about trust and respect do you agree with most? If you agree with both, which is most important to you, to be able to instinctively trust and respect someone in the workplace? {Choose One Answer}

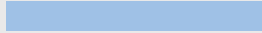
Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. I trust and respect someone most when they are being themselves instead of trying to create a certain persona (for example, trying to come across as a hardened personality, when, in fact, they have a compassionate personality)		77%
2. I trust and respect someone the most if they get the job done, period, even if in the process they put on the persona of someone they absolutely are not		23%

### Question 18:

Consider times in your working life when you have seen two co-workers have a work-related conflict and then begin to express annoyance with each other over time. Did you have any of the following perceptions about the situation and those co-workers? {Choose One Answer On Each Row Below}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. Getting personal in the workplace is not appropriate		77%
2. This is wasting time and hurting the organization's efficiency		82%
3. It makes me think they are choosing to not set this aside		73%
4. It makes me think that they are incapable of setting this aside		61%
5. Handling things this way could limit their professional opportunities		79%
6. Whatever else I think about it, I do not want to get dragged in		74%
7. It won't negatively impact the business, so it's		19%





fine if they process things this way

8. If people become annoyed with each other, it's important for them to be able to express it openly, in their own way		49%
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Note: The answers for each row above were 'I did think that' and 'I did not think that'. This is only the percent of men who answered 'I did think that' for each answer.

### Question 19:




In the previous situation, what do you think they should have done, from the moment the annoyance began? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. They should have never allowed themselves to have the feelings of annoyance, to begin with		9%
2. They should stuff the feelings of annoyance and put it behind them immediately		14%
3. They should address the issue directly, and then stop bringing it up or displaying annoyance		74%
4. They should express the feelings of annoyance as they have been doing and let it naturally run its course		4%

Note: Due to rounding, some totals slightly exceed 100%


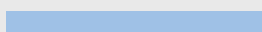

### Question 20:

Now, this is a sensitive question, but your anonymous input will be helpful. In the type of scenario you recollected for the question at the top of this page, in your experience what is more likely to be the gender of those expressing annoyance? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. It is more likely that both will be women		49%
2. It is more likely to be one man and one woman		29%
3. It is more likely that both will be men		22%

### Question 23:

Suppose you are in an important meeting that you know you and your team will need to evaluate afterwards. One of your female colleagues contributes well to the discussion, but also gets quite emotional and upset about some criticism of your team's project. Which of the following feelings are you most likely to have? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. I fear that her emotion could draw others into it, and make it a more emotional, less productive meeting		26%
2. I agree with (1), above, and as a result, feel I would need to filter the emotional stuff out so I can think clearly		49%
3. I don't fear the meeting becoming more emotional; if it did, it wouldn't impact me at all		25%

### Question 24:

Now, suppose that you are leaving the meeting in which your female colleague was emotional and upset. As you prepare to review the meeting, what thought is most likely to be your first reaction? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. She's emotional, so unfortunately she's probably not thinking very clearly right now; it		

casts a doubt over whether I can trust her judgment of this particular meeting		60%
2. She's emotional, but her ability to think clearly is not impaired by that; I can fully trust her judgment of this particular meeting		40%

**Question 25:**

Suppose for the past year you have been part of a 10-person team working on a big project. Everyone contributed well to the end result. During the year, for family reasons, two team members arranged to work from home on Fridays. And during intense deadlines they couldn't stay at the office late or on weekends with the rest of the team, but made an effort to work from home. All team members were supportive and agreed that those two individuals had great value, even if they couldn't put in as many hours or be available at the same times. When it comes time to be individually evaluated, compensated and promoted, however, how do you feel about your contribution versus theirs? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. I view it as exactly the same		44%
2. I don't view it as the same. There's just no substitute for the fact that I was willing to spend more time at the office to get the job done. I should be recognized for that		36%
3. I agree with (2), above, and would probably be a bit frustrated or even angry if we were evaluated and compensated exactly the same		20%

**Question 26:**

Now, suppose the two team members who worked a different schedule did, in fact, receive somewhat lower bonuses, and they protest not being equally compensated with the rest of the team. Management explains that they simply didn't work as many hours as the others, and weren't always available at the same times, but the two workers tell you and the others that it still wasn't fair. How is that most likely to impact your view of those two team members, if at all? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. I'd view them as brave and fighting for their rights		15%
2. It wouldn't impact how I viewed them either way		37%
3. I'd be puzzled why they don't seem to understand that there was a reason for the lesser bonus, and view them as a bit out of touch with reality		31%
4. I agree with (3), above, and believe that their complaints about unfair treatment will be viewed more negatively than the disparity in their hours		16%

*Note: Due to rounding, some totals may slightly be less than 100%*

**Question 27:**

In which of the following areas, if any, do you sometimes feel less than confident, or question how others view you? {Choose All Correct Answers}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. Whether I'm smart and good at what I do		24%
2. Whether I'm expendable		28%
3. Whether I will be able to get another good job if this one goes away		36%
4. Whether I am likeable		20%

5. Whether others view me as successful		19%
6. Whether I measure up to my colleagues		22%
7. Whether I'm viewed as capable—especially by my boss		28%
8. Whether my ideas are being accepted		27%
9. Whether I am influential/whether others listen to me		29%
10. None of the above; I rarely struggle with confidence in any of these areas		26%

### Question 29:

Suppose you're making a proposal in a group meeting, and a female colleague begins asking you "why" questions (for example, "Why did you choose that approach?" or "Why is your project structured that way?"). What is your most likely first, gut-level reaction? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. It feels like she's questioning my judgment		8%
2. It feels like she's just trying to understand		38%
3. Both (above answers)		12%
4. Either (above answers), depending on the person		42%

### Question 30:

In your opinion, are there certain things that even skilled and talented women sometimes unintentionally do that undermines their effectiveness with men, simply because they don't realize how they are being perceived by the men they work with? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Men		602
1. Yes, I agree with that		66%
2. No, I don't agree with that		34%

### Question 31:

Please provide an example of something that even a skilled woman might unintentionally do that undermines her effectiveness or perception with men.

*Author's Note: The men's verbatim answers to this question, from both the professional survey and the follow-up survey, can be found [here](#).*

### Question 33:

Finally, if you could give one piece of advice to women in the workplace, what is the one most important thing you would say to them?

*Author's Note: The men's verbatim answers to this question, from both the professional survey and the follow-up survey, can be found [here](#).*

### Question 8:








How often would you say that you wear work outfits that emphasize or allow sight of your figure? This would include, for example, as low-cut shirt that shows some cleavage or a tight skirt. Only women answered this question. {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Women		100
1. I wear those frequently		4%
2. I wear those sometimes		22%
3. I wear those rarely		38%

4. I never wear those  36%

### Question 9:




When you wear those outfits, which (if any) of the following thoughts might be going through your mind? {Choose One Answer For Each Row}

Base = Those who answered: "that there are times they wear such outfits" - Women		64
1. I enjoy feeling good about how I look.		91%
2. I want those around me to notice my figure.		34%
3. I want the men around me to look at my body.		23%
4. I am frankly hoping to create some business advantage; for example, to sell the deal I'm pitching.		17%
5. I am advertising or saying "come and get it."		3%
6. I am conscious of the fact that I am showing off my body, and am doing it on purpose to create an advantage.		16%
7. My outfit isn't about trying to show off my figure at all; I'm just trying to look good and am wearing what is in style.		89%

Note: The answers for each row above were 'I might think that' and 'I would not think that'. This is only the percent of women who answered 'I might think that way' for each answer.




### Question 10:

Imagine you are in a business meeting, and a woman stands up to give a presentation. She is all business, but she is wearing a suit and blouse that emphasizes her figure in some way (for example, a low-cut blouse or tight skirt). Which answer below most closely describes the likely impact of that (if any) on your ability to concentrate on her presentation? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question - Women		100
1. This isn't something that affects me; I can concentrate fully on her presentation		69%
2. I am somewhat distracted by what she's wearing—so I miss some of what she says		29%
3. I am very distracted by what she's wearing—so I'm missing quite a bit of what she says		2%

### Question 20:

Now, this is a sensitive question, but your anonymous input will be helpful. In the type of scenario you recollected for the question at the top of this page, in your experience what is more likely to be the gender of those expressing annoyance? {Choose One Answer}

Base = Respondents Who Answered The Question – Control Group of Women		100
1. It is more likely that both will be women		73%
2. It is more likely to be one man and one woman		20%
3. It is more likely that both will be men		7%

## Endnotes

### Question 1:

The tallied answer represents an estimate of men who actually did or didn't expect different behavior in the workplace, based on their answer(s) to several later questions about more "real life" scenarios. (Experience has found that both men and women at times have difficulty understanding their real answer to a purely conceptual question such as Q1, and that providing examples and real life scenarios often helps get at the issue a different way.) The tallied answer is comprised of those who gave one or more of the following answers on the survey: (1) on Q1 (the original question noted here); (1) on Q2; (1) or (2) on Q4; (1) Q18.1,



Q18.2, or Q18.5; (2) on Q18.7; (1) on Q23 or Q23.

This tallied answer isn't a perfect comparison, since the questions were not able to compare a man's response to a "personal" situation at work to that of a similar situation in his personal life. However, those answer choices would commonly be the opposite of those considered appropriate in a personal setting (such as not considering another person's feelings when making a decision that affected them). Thus, while the comparison isn't perfect, the tallied answer is likely to be a somewhat more realistic representation of how a man actually feels about whether the work and personal worlds function differently.

*If you are a print publication or media representative, and would like to arrange to receive more detail on the methodology of the survey, the demographics of the responders, or cross-tabulation data, please contact the Multnomah Publicity Department at 719-590-4999.*