

When working from home is not all it's cut out to be

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Around the world, there are fewer woman entrepreneurs than males. Why do you think that is? Well, for many reasons really: motherhood, social expectations, religious customs, lack of opportunity, fear of failure and funding, to mention but a few.



The benefits of encouraging women to create networks and play an active part in the economy, should be top of mind for companies and society in general. There is a growing female entrepreneurial workforce that simply cannot be efficient in the current workplace culture. Hence, the change is coming and the sooner we accept it and move towards a female-friendly workspace, the better.

The lack of attention doesn't seem to be slowing down the momentum of these female entrepreneurs and in contrast to the five percent growth for the male counterparts, women may soon be more influential in business than anyone currently realises.

Let's face it being in your own business at first sounds fantastic. Your own space, no boss, time for the children and most important flexibility. The truth is, is that your clients become your boss, flexibility comes at a huge cost and time for children becomes a painstaking balance between getting your work done and the countless distractions that come with it.

If you currently work from home, then be honest – you're pretty fed up with trying to talk on the phone above the vacuum cleaner, as your housekeeper happily goes about her business, while yours goes from bad to worse! Let's face it, the vacuum is just one example – kids, pets, your partner and the constant shenanigans that are normal in a working home, will eventually drive you crazy.

Further to this, the kind of distractions you can suffer at home can be very detrimental to your output and your self-image. A private functional office space; bright, impressive boardrooms and a sleek, sophisticated business lounge with a relaxed atmosphere, speaks an enormity about your personal and business brand.

Do you identify with the feeling of walking into a room full of key players, and suddenly you feel like a sad 'one-man band,' probably as a result of your office address being in some strange suburb no one has heard of, and all your business card has to offer is a cell number? It's enough to make you want to pack it all in.

A decent work address is priceless. Women are already at enough of a disadvantage in the workplace, so to be seen as a working mom, working from home, is going to make things tough when you are competing in a business world that revolves around status and position. To have a prime location business address, however, will elevate your business status from 'Working mom' to 'I mean business!'

One of the most important elements for a successful business is technology, which is changing at break-neck speed on a continual basis. At home, you can't just call on the IT guy to fix the slow connection or find the pages of work you lost due to a power cut just before you hit save. 'Home sweet home' becomes far from sweet when you are working from there every day.

Running a business on your own, at home, can be very lonely. Human interaction, the basis of our existence, sees us reaching out to an environment that allows us to work in close proximity to other busy businesses and cool, energetic, high powered people can give you the biggest boost – and a great networking opportunity every day. Co-working, the new hype, offers common areas with a 'buzz' that will make you wonder how you ever worked in isolation.

Shouldn't everyone be part of a skill-sharing economy. You could be a freelance copywriter finding yourself working alongside a clothes designer, or a marketing exec collaborating with someone who's building their own app. Skill swapping taps into our sense of sisterhood and women are better at uniting to give each other a helping hand.

Regus has dedicated commendable time to studying this new wave and are passionate about entrepreneurship, which will, in the future, be key to the enhancement of the South African economy. "The most important thing for us is to remain committed to building a community that believes in supportive environments for woman, vital to creating business success. A beautiful workspace has been proven to make you feel more focussed and productive," says Joanne Bushell, IWG Managing Director for Africa.

Flexibility is without a doubt key, allowing woman the option to work from home as well as have access to professional spaces on an as-needed basis. Fostering a collaborative environment that encourages introductions and offers events that connect like-minded members, promotes education, self-development and a culture of lifelong learning.

Success breeds success and sharing that success seems to inspire woman to reach new heights. Regus has helped to create some of South Africa's most renowned woman entrepreneurs and continually strive to create spaces that inspire men and woman alike.

Co-working spaces are fast becoming very trendy in the workplace and a great way for start-ups to cut costs and risk when starting their businesses. Regus has identified a missing link in the workplace, that being, the need for economical, temporary workspace offering generator back-up and all-inclusive pricing by the hour, day, month or year. The current demand for shared office space is gaining momentum at an unprecedented rate and this extraordinary dynamic has led the way towards the future of the new-age workplace.



Simply being a female entrepreneur in a man's world makes you a tenacious human with unique qualities. Isn't it time to share them with the world?

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