You’re Overlooking This Hidden Workforce — And It’s Costing You

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What if I told you that there’s a huge pool of potential employees who have mastered multitasking, are remarkably resilient, emotionally intelligent and well-trained? And they rarely complain? Also, they are easy to find. Sounds like a dream, right?

Those people are moms. Moms are patient and hard-working. We, women, are expecting it from ourselves.

Women remain underrepresented in leadership (still less than 30% in C-suite roles in the US). Women are often sidelined not because of a lack of skill or ambition, but by systemic and internalized barriers.

The invisible weight

As a mom of two, for many years, I lived with the illusion that feminism had already won. They gave me, as a woman, all the rights to work and build my own career, right? I didn’t understand why it felt so hard.

I thought that I was the problem, and nobody else felt how I felt. I didn’t recognize how deeply internalized misogyny shaped my own perception of myself. How I self-censored that I was a startup founder, a strategist and a product builder. But I always wanted to have kids, and just as I began raising my neurodivergent daughter, I fully understood how invisible,

unpaid labor reshapes your view of worth and self-worth.

In a recent piece I wrote for *Entrepreneur*, I described how building a support system for my daughter mirrored the structure of my startup: managing a team, setting milestones and adapting quickly to change. Yet no one sees a mother creating a schedule for her child caregivers as a founder. And that's the problem. We don't frame caregiving (even for neurotypical children) — deeply complex, managerial work — as leadership because we've been taught not to.

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Internalized misogyny: The quiet enforcer

Patriarchy is not over, it's simply gone underground — and women often enforce it themselves. Internalized misogyny tells us to downplay our success, to self-edit our voices, to view nurturing as separate from leadership, not a strength of it.

I was at a tech conference in Las Vegas, and noticed something weird. There was no line in front of the women's restroom. Meanwhile, the men queued up. Usually, it's the other way around. That small observation hit me hard. Women are still so few in my industry.

And let's talk about expectations: women are expected to perform in their jobs, maintain the household, raise children and stay emotionally available. And on top of it all, keep manicured hands. The double burden is real, and it's draining.

Why it's a business issue, not just

a social one

It’s not just unfair. It’s inefficient. Businesses lose when they ignore how gendered expectations exclude half the talent pool. Even in 2025, women are less likely to apply for leadership roles if job descriptions skew masculine. And when AI image generators are asked to create a “CEO,” the result is always a white, middle-aged man (try it!). That bias isn’t the machine’s fault. It reflects the data (and the bias) we’ve fed it, which means if we want to change the output, we need to change the input.

That includes our own minds.

Related: **How Moms Build Empires with Love and Grit**

Why I hire women and moms specifically

At my company, 80% of the team are women, and most are moms. I hire them not as a favor, but because they’re some of the strongest professionals I’ve ever worked with. Motherhood teaches you how to prioritize fast, manage chaos and keep moving no matter what because you have no time to waste.

Mothers are disciplined, emotionally intelligent and deeply committed. My own mom told me, “I wouldn’t have built my career without you.” And I feel the same. My kids didn’t slow me down; they gave me a whole new sense of purpose. I see that same fire in the women I hire. And when they’re supported, they shine.

What can businesses do right now?

This isn’t about rewriting your entire corporate structure overnight. But here’s what you can start doing today to unlock an incredible workforce:

- **Audit your job postings for gendered language.** Research shows that ads emphasizing traits like “aggressive” and “competitive” attract dramatically fewer female applicants than those highlighting “enthusiasm” and “innovation.”
- **Offer flexibility not just as a benefit, but as a baseline.** Women offered high flexibility are far more productive and loyal — 66 % say they’d stay with a flexible employer three-plus years, compared with just 19 % when flexibility is absent.
- **Mentor — and sponsor — upward.** A lack of influential sponsors, not skills, is a primary reason women stall before the C-suite.
- **Challenge the bias.** Whether in AI tools, team feedback, or hiring panels, be proactive in asking, *“Who’s missing here?”*

Because when we include more women, we don’t just create equity. We build better businesses.

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