



# A career as a female entrepreneur

Successful female entrepreneurs report on their experiences as part of the WOMEN Entrepreneurs initiative

Female? Thinking about a career as an entrepreneur? More and more women in Germany are taking the decision to become their own boss. Yet there is still a large number of women who have never considered the option of becoming an entrepreneur.

Only one in three companies is run by a woman. As for technology-based start-ups, the statistic is even lower. The self-employment rate (percentage of self-employed persons in the active workforce) among women is 7 % – just half the figure among men. This highlights the level of potential still to be leveraged.

## The WOMEN Entrepreneurs initiative

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy wants to encourage women to use their abilities, talents, and skills to realise their business ideas and to build up successful companies. This is why the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy launched the WOMEN Entrepreneurs initiative back in October 2014. The aim is to encourage more women to become self-employed and to raise the interest of young girls in a career as an entrepreneur. The initiative is also designed to make the work undertaken by female entrepreneurs more visible – to present their courage, dedication, and success. It serves to highlight the contribution that female entrepreneurs make to competitiveness and economic growth in Germany.

As part of the WOMEN Entrepreneurs initiative, round about 200 successful female entrepreneurs have been mobilised to act as role models for female entrepreneurship. The women entrepreneurs that make up this network come from right across Germany. They include one-woman businesses as well as female entrepreneurs that employ several hundred staff. Almost every different branch is represented within the network.

Going forward, the initiative is seeking to have an even broader impact. It is therefore currently looking for new female entrepreneurs especially from STEM, the digital sector and industry as part of this drive.

## Role models: Female entrepreneurs with experience

“Why did I decide to become self-employed?”, “What is it like to be an entrepreneur?”, “What is so good about running your own business?” It is not only exciting to hear what female entrepreneurs have to say about their job, but when they share their experience, the effect is often very powerful. Indeed hearing about entrepreneurship first-hand frequently sparks the interest of other females in starting their own business. This is why female entrepreneurs are the ideal role models and multipliers.

The female entrepreneurs chosen to act as role models within the WOMEN Entrepreneurs initiative seek to inspire and ignite a passion for entrepreneurship in other females. They speak about the opportunities and challenges of setting up a business at events attended by schoolgirls, female apprentices, students, and graduates as well as with other women who are interested in starting their own business. This gives the women and girls present a realistic and highly personal insight into what daily life as an entrepreneur is really like.

## Central point of contact

As they carry out their activities, the female entrepreneurs serving as role models receive support from a coordinating office.

The office also serves as a point of contact for anyone who is interested in the initiative and/or would like to invite a role model who is based locally to speak at an event. Requests are especially welcome from schools, universities and other educational establishments, from regional and municipal actors such as chambers of commerce, business development agencies, equal opportunities officers, district and mayors' offices, as well as from the media and business associations.

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