

Empowering enterprises: Young female entrepreneurs in Australia

2021 *Research Report*

Commissioned and conducted by

are media

In July-August 2021, we engaged over one hundred female business-owners who identified as under-25, in an unprecedented study to capture the current status of Australian female entrepreneurs.

Their feedback has illustrated the opportunities and challenges that young women commonly face across a range of industries, and the importance of digital platforms in launching their businesses, and continuing to upskill and develop as they evolve their enterprises.



Female Entrepreneurs in Australia: 2021 Pulse-Check

With few previous studies dedicated to understanding the current state of female entrepreneurship in Australia, this research sought to develop an overall picture of the types of businesses founded by young women, along with their reasons and means for launching their businesses.

The sectors female entrepreneur's businesses fall under ¹



"I pitched a project to my former boss - running their social media as they weren't on any platforms. Rather than doing it as his employee, I suggested starting my business and having him as my first client. He fully supported this and now here I am :)"



The young female business-owners we surveyed said:



33%



This business is my main source of income ²



67%



This business is my 'side hustle' ²



78%



Almost 4 in 5 spend less than 40 hours working on their personal business ³



49%



Almost half have been spending their nights and weekends working on it ³



51%



Said wanting to be their own boss was a key driver to starting their own business ⁴

While traditional definitions of success such as reaching financial/business stability (49%) and reaching the right customers (53%) are important, giving back and helping others (34%) and having better work life balance (47%) are also seen as key goals in having a successful business. ⁵

Source: Are Media, Research, Young Female Entrepreneurs Survey 2021

1) n=>73

2) n=>78

3) n=>87

4) n=>82

5) n=>73

COVID-19 & Other Challenges

The feedback received during this research painted a clear picture of the impact of COVID-19 on how and why many women launched their own businesses, along with identifying the biggest challenges that many female entrepreneurs continue to face.

62%

Have been operating their business for less than 12 months ¹



72%



Don't feel that there is enough diversity in their industry ²

87%



Feel that sexist attitudes still exist in business ²

42%



Say that not having enough time is one of the biggest challenges they are currently facing ²

57%



Struggle with having their opinions / ideas taken seriously by their peers ²

When encountering business problems or challenges, many respondents jump online and use different digital resources (58%) or reach out on online communities/social media (37%), signifying the importance of access to the digital medium for this demographic. ³

“I’m having a really hard time as a young female founder getting access to startup capital, mentors and getting in the room with big companies.”

“I started painting in lockdown, realised I could paint. Started an Instagram and it all started rolling along nicely from there!”

“A lot of smaller businesses were struggling during the COVID-19 lockdowns and had not established an online platform so I wanted to help create and maintain one for them to keep them going.”

“I wanted to help prevent burden on the health care system and work in preventing chronic diseases rather than just treating it.”



Source: Are Media, Research, Young Female Entrepreneurs Survey 2021

1) n=>89

2) n=>224

3) n=>71

Business Development & Training

There is an undeniable sense of optimism amongst the research group, with entrepreneurs harnessing a strong belief in the potential for their businesses. There's also a significant reliance upon digital platforms for support, learning, and continued business development.



84%

Believe their business has potential to be more successful ¹



79%

Are intending to upskill or increase training in order to run their business ¹

“With only having the guts to start my side hustle only a few months ago, I’m not yet at the point of being where I ‘want my business to be’. I know that it has the potential to be amazing and will be unique. Though getting to that point is daunting and I hope I have the resources and knowledge to get there!”



“As I’m still a student with insufficient funds, and therefore I am struggling to start up, however, I can see potential if I progress my experience and knowledge.”

“I have honestly been so lucky that people have just liked what I’m creating. Instagram and social media is a wild thing and I think an idea and some form of marketing skills is all you need to get started.”

This younger business owner often relies on modern digital resources to develop their business further, such as:



79%

Podcasts/Videos ²



55%

Online courses ²



53%

Business Seminars/
Specialised Training Courses ²

Source: Are Media, Research, Young Female Entrepreneurs Survey 2021

1) n=>73

2) n=>84

Connecting with Customers in the Digital Age

Female entrepreneurs proved to be at the forefront of technology usage—with many launching their businesses with minimal costs thanks to digital platforms. Social media was widely recognised as a core channel for young entrepreneurs to build their brand and engage their customer base.



92%

Of respondents marked Instagram as a very important marketing channel, even more than a digital website (91%)¹



2 out of 3

Respondents agreed that social media is a key driver for building their business' network and customers¹



Respondents rely on various digital marketing channels to reach their audience, with social media channels being heavily used¹



Instagram (79%)



Facebook (61%)



Almost 4 in 5

(79%) believe marketing and branding is important to the success of their business, leading to respondents dedicating up to a quarter of their budget (44%) and a quarter of their time (50%) to marketing based activities²



88%

Say they create all their brands' own marketing content¹



80%

Spent less than \$10,000 to start their business¹

Source: Are Media, Research, Young Female Entrepreneurs Survey 2021

1) n=>64

2) n=>68