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# Playing Sports May Be The Secret To Women’s Career Success

Theme:  
Leadership



Co-authored by EY Women Athletes Business Network and espnW

Want to succeed in your career? Start playing sports.

When you joined the field hockey team in middle school or picked up skiing in college, you probably had no idea those experiences could later help you succeed in your career.

But if you're a woman in a leadership role today, there's a good chance they did.

New research by the [EY Women Athletes Business Network](#) and [espnW](#) found that female executives are more likely to have played sports than those in non-leadership roles — and they're also more likely to hire other women who have played a sport.

The research report, titled "Making the connection: women, sport and leadership," was conducted by [Longitude Research](#) across Europe, the Americas, and Asia-Pacific. It surveyed 400 female executives (49% in the C-suite; 51% in other management positions), and found that the majority (74%) believe that playing sports can help accelerate a woman's leadership and career potential.

Donna de Varona, a former competition swimmer and Olympic gold medalist who currently serves as the lead advisor to EY's Women Athletes Business Network.

"This study validates long-held theories that women who are athletes are well-suited for the business world and have tangible advantages," says Laura Gentile, vice president of espnW, in a press release. "From work ethic to adaptability to superior problem-solving ability, these women enter the workforce ready to win and demonstrate that ability as they rise throughout their career."

In total, 94% of the surveyed women participated in sports at some point in their lives, and 61% say it has contributed to their current career success.


The link, the report says, is that playing sports can help women develop motivational skills, team building skills, and the ability to see projects through to completion — and it equips women with the competitive spirit that's essential for success on both the playing field and in the workplace.


"These findings show that participation in sport not only influences leadership skills, style, and career development, but it is also a powerful motivator for female executives," says Beth Brooke-Marciniak, EY's global vice chair of public policy, and executive sponsor of the Women Athletes Business Network, in a press release.


Just 3% of C-suite women say they have not played any sports, compared with 9% of women at other management levels.

"This study confirms the significant role participating in sports plays in providing the tools necessary to succeed in the competitive world in which we live," says Donna de Varona, an Olympic gold medalist and lead advisor to EY's Women Athletes Business Network, in the press statement. "Yet again, these results underscore how critical it is for girls to have equal access to sport around the world. When they do, the positive results are undeniable."

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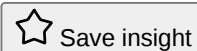
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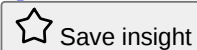


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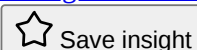
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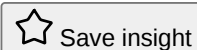


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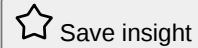
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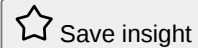
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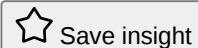


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