



THE COLLEGE OF
WOOSTER

"There's No Room for Mediocrity": Finding Discussions of Barriers, Resilience, and Community Through A Rhetorical Analysis of Business Media Portrayal of Women in Entrepreneurship

Purpose

The goal of my research is to examine how business media outlets depict women entrepreneurs. More specifically, I analyze articles from *Forbes*, *Business Insider*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

"Relentless 24/7 workdays and glorification of sacrifice can be daunting and unattainable for many women"

-Gayatri Panda

Method

To carry out this study, I use ideological criticism and, more specifically, a particular form of ideological criticism: feminist criticism. Ideological analysis looks past the surface of an artifact to understand the assumptions and values behind it whereas feminist analysis looks at how persuasive narratives depict men and women differently



<https://www.forbes.com/sites/melissahouston/2025/08/10/are-things-really-getting-better-for-women-in-business-in-2025>

By: Emma Hetkey

Advisor: Denise Bostdorff

Department: Communication Studies

Major Conclusions

- Business publications tend to discuss how women entrepreneurs have a lot of barriers to overcome. While some articles thoroughly examined the barriers women entrepreneurs face, others merely skimmed the surface or even largely disregarded the barriers.
- Media continuously explain that women entrepreneurs are resilient. The concept of resilience is constantly shown in these business publications. The articles show how resilience is both a requirement and how it is often acquired through years of overcoming barriers.
- Media depict women as emphasizing the importance of creating community and building connections. Media will often paint women entrepreneurs as continuously finding ways to build their communities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor Denise Bostdorff for always pushing me to better myself. Additionally, I'd like to thank my friends for their continued help and encouragement. Lastly, I would like to dedicate my Independent Study to my family for always believing in me and giving me the tools and support to enable me to succeed in all my dreams.



<https://www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2025/02/06/15-strategies-for-navigating-male-dominated-industries-tested-by-women-entrepreneurs/>

"Women are powering America's entrepreneurship boom not because they want to but because they have to."

-Ortakales Dawkins & Madison Hoff

Full Research Paper

