

## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW



Book Title: ***Thriving in a Male-Dominated Workplace***<sup>1</sup>

Authors: Harvard Business Review, Stacey Abrams, Lara Hodgson, Joseph Grenny, Michelle P. King

Publisher: Harvard Business Review Press

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Reviewer: **Tracy Gilmore, PMP**

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### Introduction

Women, you are not alone, although it may feel that way sometimes when you are outnumbered at work. Are you interested in a fresh perspective on the challenges women often face in companies where the leadership roles and positions at many levels are overwhelmingly filled by men? Read [Thriving in a Male-Dominated Workplace](#) to learn what women in similar situations have done to build successful careers and improve the work environment for everyone. This book will affirm your experiences and give advice you can apply to your own situation.

### Overview of Book's Structure

[Thriving in a Male-Dominated Workplace](#) from the Harvard Business Review Press' *Women at Work* series "Inspiring conversations, advancing together" contains some chapters adapted from the *Women at Work* podcast episodes and others from content on [hrb.org](http://hrb.org). There are 20 chapters in the book, by different authors, to give a wide range of perspectives. Readers can jump to specific topics of interest, or read the book straight through. While loosely connected by section, each chapter is independent.

The chapters are grouped into six sections:

Section One: The Challenges We Face

Section Two: Stop Competing, Start Connecting

Section Three: Grow Your Confidence

Section Four: Establish Your Authority

Section Five: Fight Back Against Bias and Macroaggressions

Section Six: Build a Better Culture -- Together

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The book concludes with a Discussion Guide which would be useful for book clubs, or for teams or companies who want to read the book and discuss it as a team building exercise.

## Highlights

Each chapter in Thriving in a Male-Dominated Workplace is independent and provides perspective from a different author or authors. The chapter titles are very descriptive, and allow the reader to hone in on areas of interest, or easily return to a favorite topic. Chapters based on podcast episodes are presented in a conversational style, with interviewer and interviewee questions and responses. Other chapters are essays which stand on their own merit.

Chapter 2 “To Succeed, Women Need More Visibility”, addresses ways to improve employee retention for women by having more “Visibility of Valued Skills”, “Visibility in Assignments”, and “Visibility in Networks”. The authors include specific steps on ways to close the visibility gap to “keep women in tech and build a diverse, talented cohort of leaders.”

Chapter 7 “Don’t Let Self-Doubt Hold You Back” has four strategies for women (and men) to “combat self-doubt and build confidence in the workplace.” Advice on how to “Channel an Alter Ego” is a quick way to re-frame your thoughts and boost your self-confidence. The author points out that not all feedback is constructive in “Tune Out Uninformed Feedback.”

Other chapters address specific workplace challenges such as , Chapter 13 “Feeling Underappreciated or Undervalued at Work?” Chapter 14, “How to React to Incidents of Bias at Work” and Chapter 15 “When People Assume You’re Not in Charge Because You’re a Woman”. These chapters let women know they are not alone in facing challenges like these, and give practical steps to move forward in situations like these.

The last section of the book “Build a Better Culture – Together” discusses how to improve organizational culture. It’s an expansion of the advice for individual situations to a broader context that if implemented can improve the workplace for everyone. The onus is not just on women, or leaders, but on all employees to create an inclusive, non-biased culture.

Although the book doesn’t have a formal chapter “Conclusion”, the Discussion Guide does help the reader synthesize the various views and advice. The questions in the guide are thought-provoking, and would be helpful to generate a lively discussion.

## Highlights: What I liked!

Having spent most of my career in male-dominated workplaces, this book resonated with me. I wish it had been available to me early in my career, to inspire me to be more confident and push harder for promotions to senior leadership.

My favorite chapter was “Two Entrepreneurs on Facing Fear and Making Change”. I loved Lara Hodgson’s take on being the only woman on a panel – instead of holding back, she says to herself “I’m the only woman on the panel. That is my superpower.” What an empowering perspective! I can remember many times when I was the only woman in the room and tried to blend in and be like one of the guys, when I should have been capitalizing on being a woman.

### **Who might benefit from the Book?**

This book would be beneficial for all working women and men. Women will feel validated that they are not alone in their experiences at work. Practical suggestions will help women in the workplace. Men will learn more about what women experience and how to be allies for them. The advice in the book is applicable for project managers, and women in any other roles.

### **Conclusion**

Thriving in a Male-Dominated Workplace should be required reading for college students heading into the workplace, and working women and men everywhere. The book gives perspectives on challenges at work, and tips and advice that will help women and men alike to improve their work environments for everyone.

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For more about this book, go to: <https://store.hbr.org/product/thriving-in-a-male-dominated-workplace-hbr-women-at-work-series/10596>

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### **About the Reviewer**



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**Tracy Gilmore** is a PMP®-certified Operations Director with more than 30 years of experience in Information Technology supporting clients in the financial and manufacturing industries for large IT companies in the United States. She has held a variety of roles including operations director, account manager, program manager, project manager, product manager, Y2K consultant, mainframe consultant, conversion manager, and mainframe developer. As a project manager and a developer, she has

participated in all phases of application development and support, including estimating, analysis, design, construction, and implementation.

Tracy is a member of the Project Management Institute having acquired her PMP certification in 2002.

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