

Female tradeswomen: can she fix it? Yes, she can

Do you remember growing up watching Wendy from Bob the Builder, being raised on the belief that girls can do anything, be anything even when it comes to male-dominated spaces?

Today, an increasing number of women are breaking barriers and entering the trades industry, a field traditionally dominated by men (Access Training UK)

In 2021, the Direct Line found that 21% of women in the UK considered a career in trades.



Yet, women, according to the Office for National Statistics (2020) currently make up less than 6% of the construction and building trades.

With the growing availability of apprenticeships and other supportive programs, now is the time to encourage more women to join the trades industry.

Barriers + solutions

Getting the job

Even though access into the trades is increasing for women by the year, there's no denying that the difficulty lies with

securing the job. Tradeswomen will often share stories of being rejected for a job for being female, which doesn't help the fact that women are underrepresented in trades.

Working in the trades is often seen as masculine with the public traditionally perceiving the trades to be too risky or too complicated for women.

You can hear more about these women who face gender bias whilst working a trade on [Taskher.co.uk](https://www.taskher.co.uk).

A study by Rated People found that [1 in 3 tradeswomen face discrimination from their customers, and 1 in 10 admit that sexism is one of the biggest challenges they face.](#)

However, the study found that 46% of customers would hire a tradeswoman with 43% having no preference.

With 87% of tradespeople agreeing that it would be good to have more tradeswoman in the industry it is necessary to spread awareness through education.

Educating women into the trades

It starts with the grassroots; women need to be told about trades being inclusive of gender from a young age.

With parents discouraging their daughters from entering the trades the education system has a lot of work to do.

Diversifying the workforce might take time despite the growing trend of tradeswomen, as currently 9 out of 10 trades apprenticeships are occupied by men (2023 UK Trade Skills Index).

It's up to the education system to raise awareness in schools, colleges and universities making sure that the trades are an option for all women.

Lack of representation

Another barrier to women in trades is the lack of representation in the industry. The lack of representation in trades can put women off from working as tradeswomen. Plumbing is the second worst female representing trade. Being the first tradeswoman in your family can be intimidating, especially as recent data from B&Q reveals that only 2% of skilled tradespeople are woman

So, what is the solution?

The first step to addressing the gender disparity is working on attracting a diverse workforce through job descriptions, career advisors, career fairs, and conferences.

Secondly, we must employ inclusive language and use the terms 'tradeswoman' as well as tradesman and tradespeople.

Finally, we need to create inclusive, safe places in the workplace and out on the job. All you need to do is google 'Tradeswoman harassment' to hear about tradeswomen being belittled and reminded that they are 'not bad for a girl.'

The rich life: tell them they'll be making it rain

Most of us will need a little bit of motivation; making money might just be enough to convince women who are thinking of taking up the trades to take that step.

We're not saying that our main motivation should be money but at least think about it.

The national average pay for electricians is £34,963 and locksmiths earn £51,059 on average.

So maybe these figures will tempt you into becoming a [local locksmith](#) someday.

Low-earning trades

Not to spoil the good news, not all trade jobs will pay well,

with plastering being one of the lower-paying jobs.

However, part of that could be attributed to the gender pay gap, Rated People (2022) found that tradeswomen are paid up to 60% less than men.

However, the research also shows that women in general are drawn towards jobs that pay less, making up less than 2% of electricians in the UK.

On the other hand, 1 in 4 women would consider working in skilled trades.

So, the solution is to encourage more women to become licensed professionals.

And even though there are a few licensed tradeswomen they are in high demand. In [a 2022 survey](#) it was found that a third of respondents would prefer hiring a tradeswoman.

Final thoughts

To balance out the trades sector with more women there will need to be constant efforts to raise awareness throughout schools, workplaces and communities.

Exploring a trade might be intimidating at first if you happen to be the only woman you know considering working in trades.

It's time to welcome more women into trades and the only way women can successfully thrive in the sector is by inviting discussions of gender within the trades.

Increasing visibility is a matter of making what's traditionally male-dominated open to women.