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# 5 Ways to Leverage Your Female Advantage in Business

By Catherine Kaputa, Author of *You Are a Brand!* and *The Female Brand*

The conventional wisdom has been that women have trouble succeeding because they don't act like men. But playing it like a man doesn't work because it brands you as tough and aggressive. And it's stupid for the most basic reason. We're not men. And that's an advantage.

It's common sense to be authentic, and it's smart branding. Your personal brand must come from who you are and what makes you tick – including your strengths and aptitudes as a woman. Here are my top five ways to leverage your female advantages.

## 1. Turn up your empathy quotient (EQ).

Women are strong in empathy thanks in part to higher levels of estrogen and oxytocin. So it's no wonder that when President Obama cited “empathy” as a key factor in his selection of a Supreme Court justice, the four finalists were women.

**How to leverage empathy:** Be approachable and empathize with the feelings of others. People will feel understood even if you are giving them bad news! You can use empathy to build consensus around a common goal.



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## 2. Create an appealing package.

Attractive people not only make more money, they are viewed as smarter, more productive and even kinder than others. Women have an advantage because we have more “visual packaging tools.”

**How to package yourself:** Don't mimic the male model – that's so 20th century. Use the French women's model: dress like a woman and accentuate your best features. If you don't have the body of a fashion model, do something wonderful with your hair and clothing. Develop a distinctive look with a signature color, accessories and so on. Work on your posture and how you move.

## 3. Reach out and connect.

Women have the social gene and an innate ability to build relationships and connect with people studies show. Women are natural born networkers, team builders and relationship mavens.

**How to use people power:** The larger your network, the more career capital you'll have. So don't just use your people power to develop deep relationships with a few, use it to also develop a broad network of more superficial acquaintances with all types of people.

## 4. Speak with panache.

Women routinely outscore men on oral and written tests because they use both hemispheres of the brain – left and right - to process verbal and emotional messages.

**How to use your verbal agility in the workplace:** Use your verbal skills to speak up: Ask great questions and listen actively. Hone your business conversation



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and presentation skills. Pitch yourself for a move up or a lateral move with interesting “stories” about your past performance.

### **5. Be inclusive.**

Choosing inclusion over exclusion is a powerful female strength. In today’s modern, global companies, the ability to work well with diverse groups will set you apart.

**How of leverage inclusiveness:** Encourage different perspectives and offer goodwill to everyone – friends and foes. Cultivate strong alliances and be loyal.