

# What would a man do differently?

**What can facilitate the path to the top of the corporation for women? A range of capabilities and competencies such as knowledge, motivation and networks are needed by all individuals aiming for a top-level position. . What makes the success story of Slovak top finance women?**

While finance is often seen as a male profession, a new report "Women in Finance; a Springboard to Corporate Board Positions?" commissioned by ACCA and the ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) from Cranfield School of Management shows that a financial qualification or a background which demonstrates substantial financial acumen are seen as catalysts for women getting onto the boards of FTSE companies. The analysis of the report says:

- Proportionally, women appear more successful in attaining executive roles where they have a financial background: 45% of female executive directors are financially qualified and 65% in total have a financial background, while 26% of their male colleagues are financially qualified and 44% have a financial background.
- More than half of new female Non-Executive Director appointments have a background in finance.
- The finance function is seen by the groups interviewed for the research – executive search consultants, chairmen, and women who have made it to the board – to be more facilitative for women's progress to the top of corporate organizations.

If more women with finance backgrounds are succeeding today to the top positions, then they may serve as role models for future aspirant female directors. Three of these Slovak financial role models share their success stories:

- 1. What has been crucial for your current career?**
- 2. How do you manage your work-life balance?**
- 3. What in your opinion would a man do differently in your job position?**



*Agata Waterloos, FCCA  
- Finance Director,  
Microsoft*

1. There are many moments in my life which helped me to get where I am now: choosing the finance direction of my studies, deciding who would be my first employer, accepting new challenges and, most importantly, constantly having people around who trusted and supported me.
2. There is a perception that women cannot be successful at work without sacrificing something from their lives. I tend to disagree. You have to set your priorities. You cannot rely on the world around you to do it for you.
3. I personally do not like dividing the world between a men's world and the women's world. Every person is different and any other man and woman would probably, or most certainly, do many things differently from how I do them.



*Eva Krajčířová, ACCA  
- EMEA Technical  
Accounting and  
Projects Senior Manager, Dell*

1. Support and trust of my managers and my family throughout my career. Also my passion for accounting, learning, personal development and interacting

- with people.
2. Work-life balance is very important to me. I have a four year old son and a great husband. As I live in a remote location away from the city, I work two days a week from home. That allows me to spend some extra quality time with my family on weekdays. I must admit that I could not do what I do without my husband's strong presence and support.
  3. Not sure. Certainly men are usually more competitive and less emotional. But in my opinion, it's not about gender but rather about personality



*Katarina Kaszasová,  
FCCA - Director General of State Reporting Section, Ministry of Finance of SK, Member of the EU Investment Bank's Board of Directors, Member of the EU Stability Mechanism's Board of Auditors, Member of the Slovak Audit Oversight Authority's Board*

1. My current career has been influenced by three important events. Firstly, it was the Velvet Revolution in 1989, which made me change my qualification of a chemical engineer into an economic/financial one. Secondly, by a position in KPMG Slovakia, during which I gained an ACCA qualification as well as Slovak auditor licence and finally, by giving birth to my daughter.
2. I think the more mature you get, you are more aware of the fact that no one is truly irreplaceable and it is your family that is suffering because of your absence, not your boss. This

maturity allows you to set better lines between the work life and private life and gives you the strength to say "No".

3. From the feedback of several of my colleagues I've learned that I think and manage with a "male logic" and thus I think that a man would have acted the same. The only difference I might find a man at my post would possibly have not personally known all of his 50 employees.

**What trends do you see in placing female candidates to top positions?**

*Executive search,*



*Katarina Pipová – Hudson  
Global Resources*

In the last few years we have noticed a different approach in many companies and female candidates. Nowadays, companies are more willing to accept female candidates to top positions and are more willing to plan for women in their management teams. This is in part driven by a more intense debate in society on gender discrimination, but also by women looking more for such opportunities than in the past.

Diversity is one of ACCA's core values. We believe that no matter what background, gender, race or religion you are, any career should be open to you. ACCA has recently become a supporting member of the Global Board-Ready Women Initiative. This project offers to companies an online comprehensive list of international women who are experienced and ready to immediately take on mandates in listed companies. ACCA membership includes an impressive pool of such talented qualified women around the world.



*Kateřina Benešová  
Head of ACCA CZ, SK, HU*