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CAREER...

It's no secret that some industries are great for women while others are... hmm... frankly rubbish. Before you make that career move, find out what your dream industry has in store for an ambitious woman like you >

Stuck for career ideas or considering a change? It's smart to find out how women fare before you commit, to save yourself some nasty surprises later on. Here, we've spoken with top female engineers, hairdressers, journalists and tax advisers to bring you some ideas you may never have thought of, plus pros and cons on pay and working hours. Be inspired!

➡ Retail ⬅



SERENA FIDGETT, 31, joined luxury chocolatier Hotel Chocolat as a PA and is now director for special projects

Serena works on store openings, organising press events and personally road-testing the company's luxury plantation hotel in St Lucia. "Working on projects is amazing – and now we're expanding in Europe I get to travel more," she says. This is proof that retail can offer a really fulfilling career.

How many women does the industry employ?

Retail is the largest private-sector employer in the UK and 60% of the workforce are women.

Prospects?

Retail doesn't just mean stacking shelves in Asda. A 2010 study found that people make it into managerial retail roles at a younger age than in many other industries.

And the lifestyle?

Despite its image, retail can be pressurised and you need to love communicating. It can range from executive supermarket roles to shop

floors of designer boutiques; different skills – and wardrobes – are clearly needed. "The highlight of the job is having the chance to meet famous people and knowing ahead what the new collections will look like," says Maria, 27, who works at a top French couture fashion house.

So what's the catch?

If you're customer facing you might have to work most Saturdays, and if you're back office you'll often be juggling lots of jobs for not brilliant benefits or pay.

Money?

High-street retailers are frequently criticised for paying low wages.

Where do I start?

Arcadia operates the Fashion Retail Academy, which trains people up for the industry, while some local colleges offer merchandising and buying courses.

Hairdressing



LEAH WALTON, 23, is technical director at The Colour Room in Stockport

"It's about having a good salon behind you and putting in the effort," says Leah. "Not being asked to stay behind at work, but wanting to."

How many women does the industry employ?

Industry expert Habia says hairdressing and beauty employs almost a quarter of a million people; 88% of whom are women.

Prospects?

"Hairdressing can no longer be considered a 'dead end' as it was by my school careers adviser," says Hellen Ward, managing director of Richard Ward Hair, who also squeezes in writing books and lecturing.

And the lifestyle?

Flexible hours are pretty standard – there are 55,000 self-employed hairdressers working in the UK.

So, what's the catch?

There are few women salon directors, and the coveted Hairdressers Journal Hairdresser Of The Year award is mostly won by men.

Money?

Peanuts at first – apprentices are entitled to £2.65 an hour from 1 October – but, once qualified, you could make £70,000 annually in London.

Where do I start?

Get your NVQ or SVQ (in Scotland) Level 2 or 3 to get started and do a paid apprenticeship. ▶

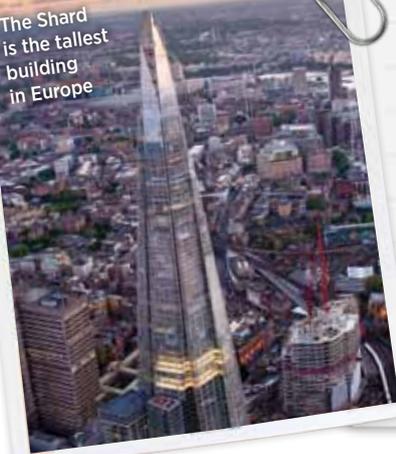
Researchers found that female hedge-fund managers aren't given as much guidance or training in the job as their male counterparts. Not fair!

4 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT INTERNSHIPS

By Tanya de Grunwald, author of *How To Get A Graduate Job In A Recession*

1. **INTERNSHIPS ARE NOT THE SAME AS WORK EXPERIENCE** Some industries offer students unpaid, short-term work experience, but don't confuse this with a longer internship.
 2. **MOST INTERNS ARE ENTITLED TO THE MINIMUM WAGE** The only places that can legally accept unpaid labour of this kind are charities and voluntary organisations.
 3. **YOU SHOULD HAVE FAITH IN THE VALUE OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION** Be aware the work you're doing is probably worth a lot more in real terms than your employer is paying you – it's just that it's a 'buyer's market' right now.
 4. **PLAY HARDBALL** Often employers string interns along for months with the hope of a (non-existent) paid job. Don't let this happen to you – line up your next internship asap.
- For more info see Graduatefog.co.uk

The Shard is the tallest building in Europe



Engineering



ROMA AGRAWAL, 28, is a structural engineer for WSP Group. She designed the concrete base for new London landmark the Shard

Engineering is a very male-dominated industry. "I still get emails or letters titled 'Mr,'" says Roma. "But it's satisfying knowing I've made a contribution to the world's most iconic skyline."

How many women does the industry employ?

There are 1.5 million engineers in the UK but, embarrassingly, the UK has the lowest percentage of female engineers in the EU: just 8.7%.

Prospects?

Improving the planet for starters. "Engineering is as much about getting clean water to sub-Saharan Africa as it is about building bridges or aeroplane engines," says Paul Jackson, chief executive of Engineering UK. Rebecca Lees, 27, is a materials engineer at Jaguar Land Rover in Warwickshire. "As a young female engineer, I've only seen

positives. It is easy for people to remember me," she says.

And the lifestyle?

More flexible than you'd think. "On big civil-engineering projects work can be packaged up, so it doesn't mean you're there five days a week if that doesn't suit you," says Paul.

So what's the catch?

The lack of other women! Roma's and Rebecca's employers have no women on their boards of directors.

Money?

An engineering graduate will earn 33% more than an average graduate over the course of her career.

Where do I start?

Basic qualifications in maths and science. Look into becoming an apprentice or check out the Open University's Engineering The Future introductory course.

Tax and accountancy



LUCY COHEN, 29, co-founded Mazuma seven years ago to help businesses do their taxes

"You can get into some exciting work when you're in the world of business – or you might even think about forensic accountancy: tracing frauds and money laundering," Lucy says.

How many women does the industry employ?

Almost half of all new accountants in the UK are women and 23% of women in the business are partners at their firm.

Prospects?

You can keep trying new things. Sarah Guerra, 40, started out as a tax adviser at HM Revenue & Customs, then had children, and now works in communications there. "To be a tax inspector you need an inquisitive mind," she says.

And the lifestyle?

Accountants lose a lot of sleep near the end of the financial year, when companies are preparing their final accounts. But this hard

work is well recognised – plenty of women win major accountancy awards.

So what's the catch?

Accounting firms champion flexible-working policies, but many women feel they're penalised later by being overlooked for promotion.

Money?

Decent. HMRC graduate trainees can start on £39,946.

Where do I start?

HMRC and the big accounting firms run graduate and some non-graduate trainee programmes. >

Journalism and PR



RACHAEL SINGH, 32, a senior reporter covering business issues in London, believes being female has its distinct advantages in the world of media

"I can be cheekier than my male colleagues when questioning contacts," says Rachael. So if you want an exciting, versatile and fun job, you'll love this industry.

How many women does the industry employ?

In 2011, there were 61,000 people working in PR, says the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA), 64% of whom are female. Meanwhile more than 40% of the National Union of Journalists' members are women.

Prospects?

PR can be exciting and glamorous but it depends on what you're promoting. Charity PR, for example, is less glam but more fulfilling. And for journalists? It's the thrill of chasing a story. "There's no switching off – you can't help but be engaged, especially if you're on to a story you think is great," says Rachael.

And the lifestyle?

PR professionals are starting to enjoy longer periods of maternity leave than the legal minimum, plus flexible working. But PR means late nights

entertaining clients or being on call. Big publishers may offer similar benefits, but the NUJ says women journalists pay the price for having babies later as the gender pay gap rises once you hit 30, from 3.3% to 11.2% for women aged 30-39.

So what's the catch?

While everyone still wants news and great stories, the media landscape is changing, and you must be prepared to work unsociable hours and do more than what's on your job description if you want to thrive.

Money?

One in 10 journalists earns less than £10,000 a year, although the average salary for a junior reporter is £20,080. A starting job in PR can earn you £25,000.

Any wannabe journo or PR needs to know their stuff inside out, so here are the top three sites you need to get acquainted with...

GORKANA.COM is the go-to source for job listings, news, events and an alert service users can sign up for. It's got all the latest info (and then some!)

TWITTER.COM is the place to air your triumphs (but try to keep your personal moans private) and updates, and contact people and companies.

PRMOMENT.COM has PR jobs and interviews with top PR professionals, plus upcoming training courses and conferences.

Even Accenture, one of *The Times'* 2012 list of top female employers, only has five women in its executive leadership group of 20

Where do I start?

You need to be social and good at communicating so you can sweet-talk your way into that scoop or get your client mentioned in the right publication. Journalism courses can be found at Ppa.co.uk, and for PR, check out introductory courses at the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, Ciplr.co.uk.

SIGN OUR PETITION FOR EQUAL PAY

Our research confirmed what we already knew – that many women find it tough to get the pay and flexible working they deserve, which is just not fair. So this year, *Cosmo* is fighting for women's right to equal pay (the gap currently stands at a scandalous 15%), and we need YOUR help to make it a reality. Simply go to

Cosmopolitan.co.uk/equalpay and sign our petition to make all companies with more than 250 employees carry out annual equal-pay audits. These audits would stop companies from being able to get away with this injustice. Signing up only takes two minutes, so please help us to spread the word! ♦