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: : THE RISE OF LIPSTICK
ENTREPRENEURS

Report commissioned by AVON UK
With contribution from The Federation of Small Businesses
Carried out by The Future Laboratory

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- : Anna Segatti, president of Avon UK & ROI
- : Carole Stone, Author, broadcaster & businesswoman
- : Jeremy Baker, TV pundit, lecturer and consumer trend specialist, the ESCP Europe Business School
- : Julie Meyer, CEO Ariadne Capital & Dragons' Den star
- : Maxine Benson, co-founder, everywoman
- : Dr Patricia Lewis, senior lecturer, Kent Business School
- : Stephen Alambritis, head of public affairs, the Federation of Small Businesses
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Foreword by Anna Segatti – president of AVON UK & ROI

Avon has been providing women the opportunity to start their own businesses and achieve financial independence since 1886. With six million independent Avon Representatives across the world we have a bird's-eye view of female entrepreneurship globally.

Speaking from a UK perspective, during the last 12 months we have seen significant growth in the numbers of women starting their own businesses as a result of the changing economic climate. At Avon, we believe the economic empowerment of women that has been building for the last decade is reaching a tipping point and that, through desire and necessity, women are taking action and setting up enterprises across the country.

The exciting developments and growing movement of female entrepreneurship — or Femterprise — warranted investigation.

The report manages to capture what is undoubtedly an extremely important time for female finance in the UK today.

The resulting report, managed by The Future Laboratory, confirms our hypothesis that, not for the first time in history, a period of crisis has proven to be a catalyst for driving female progression and success — with this report confirming the Rise of the Lipstick Entrepreneur.

This makes for exciting reading for any woman with a glint in her eye and a business idea she's passionate about — it's time to get started.

Anna Segatti, president of Avon UK & ROI

With thanks to the following expert panel contributors

Dr Alexandra Beauregard, senior lecturer, London School of Economics

Dr Alexandra Beauregard is a senior lecturer in LSE's Department of Management's Employment Relations and Organisational Behaviour Group. She is a member of the editorial review board for Equal Opportunities International and specialises in gender in business.

Anna Segatti, president of Avon UK & ROI

Anna has been with Avon for more than 30 years, having started with the company in 1978 as an editor in the marketing department. Anna returned to her homeland of Italy in 1993, where she held senior positions in sales and marketing before becoming country manager for Avon Italy. She subsequently held the position of country manager for Avon Germany before becoming president of Avon UK and Republic of Ireland in 2007.

Carole Stone, MD, YouGovStone

Carole Stone is managing director of YouGovStone, the opinion leader research company. For many years, she produced BBC Radio 4's flagship discussion programme Any Questions? and, since leaving the BBC, she has developed her unique business based on her extensive range of contacts.

Jeremy Baker, TV pundit, lecturer and consumer trend specialist at the ESCP Europe Business School

Jeremy Baker is a consumer trend specialist at the ESCP Europe Business School and course leader in entrepreneurship. He has an MBA from Stanford University and his specialist areas include marketing, consumer behaviour and strategic communications.

Julie Meyer, CEO Ariadne Capital

Dragons' Den Online star, Julie Meyer, is chief executive and founder of the investment and advisory firm Ariadne Capital and founder of Entrepreneur Country and the networking company, First Tuesday. She has a weekly column in City AM and contributes regularly to BBC, CNBC and business publications.

Maxine Benson, co-founder, everywoman

Maxine Benson MBE is co-founder of everywoman, one of the leading global brands for women in business. Benson is responsible for growing revenue and strategic alliances for the UK's largest online network of women in business.

Dr Patricia Lewis, senior lecturer, Kent Business School

Dr Patricia Lewis is a senior lecturer at Kent Business School and specialises in the development and evolution of enterprise culture, entrepreneurial identity and gender and entrepreneurship.

Stephen Alambritis, head of public affairs, the Federation of Small Businesses

Stephen Alambritis is the head of public affairs at the 215,000 member-strong Federation of Small Businesses. He was formerly research secretary to the Association of Independent Businesses, responsible for the production of a wide range of influential reports and studies into the SME sector.

Suze Orman, personal finance author

Suze Orman is an American personal finance author, financial advisor, TV host and motivational speaker. Host of The Suze Orman Show on CNBC, she is also the world's most successful fundraiser in the history of public television.

The Rt Hon Theresa May, MP

The Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP, is Shadow Minister for Women, Shadow Secretary for Work and Pensions and Member of Parliament for Maidenhead. Having worked in the City before becoming an MP, starting off her career at the Bank of England, she has experience of life outside Westminster.

Executive Summary

Tipping Point of Femterprise

In this report, inspired and commissioned by Avon, we present a picture of independent businesswomen in Britain today. We have termed these women Lipstick Entrepreneurs and the movement that they are leading, Femterprise.

This report explores the emergence of Femterprise, and will detail the ways in which the current recession will support the growth of FMEs (Female Enterprises), creating a new female-owned business class and transforming the way we live and work. It will identify that 2009 has in fact seen a tipping point of Femterprise.

In the last decade, FMEs have enjoyed a period of sustained growth. 'The number of women setting up their own businesses has increased dramatically, due to the lifestyle fit that owning and running your own company provides,' says the Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP, Shadow Minister for Women. 'Women who want flexible hours and to be their own boss have been drawn to setting up their own businesses and there are now more than one million self-employed women — a 17% rise since 2000.'

The current recession has left the global economy seriously shaken. Recent redundancies have undoubtedly forced us to question established views on job security, leading many to come to the conclusion that self-employment no longer offers significantly less job security than full-time employment — and it could indeed offer more. This perceived reduction in the risk for business owner vs contracted employee has clearly contributed substantially to the growth of Femterprise, triggering the tipping point of the movement and the rise of the Lipstick Entrepreneur.

The Direct Selling Association, whose members of self-employed representatives account for 312,000 women across the UK, has confirmed a year-on-year increase of 15% for the year to date. This further demonstrates the exponential rise of female-owned start-ups in 2009.

The report demonstrates that the growth in female-led start-ups straddles the entire spectrum of age groups, from fresh graduates to young mothers and retired women, who increasingly have the impetus and confidence to set up their own business.

The Future Impact of Femterprise

In addition to exploring different types of Lipstick Entrepreneur, this report will also consider the ways in which FMEs will impact upon British society as a whole, redefining social, economic, familial, parental and domestic roles as women work their way out of recession.

As Lipstick Entrepreneurs become a force to be reckoned with in the business world, we will see more female board members and millionaires. The pay gap and glass ceiling will become obsolete, and the workplace will become more female friendly than ever before.

FMEs will also redefine when, where and how we work. A new flexibility, which focuses predominantly on output, will put an end to the part-time/full-time distinction, as work will become increasingly task-driven.

All of this will be achieved as a result of women being allowed to work their own way, rather than aping a macho business style. We can also expect to see greater gender equality; more women will become the main breadwinner, more men will opt to stay at home with the children, and will work together to reinvent the structure of the working day and working week.

In addition, Lipstick Entrepreneurs will raise a generation of children who have not been tied to outmoded gender roles or expected to work in a traditional way. This will not only impact upon the family structure, and change the division of labour within the home, it will also revise long-held assumptions about how, why and where we work.

Fledgling Lipstick Entrepreneurs are already displaying the confidence and can-do attitude that their mothers and grandmothers worked so hard to acquire. This suggests that, within a generation, we can expect to see more equality in the workplace as women and men work together to build a strong and sustainable economy.

Consumer trend specialist at the ESCP Europe Business School Jeremy Baker concludes: 'According to the growth rates in women-owned start-ups this year, the next 10 years could see a 100% growth, taking the number of self-employed, female-owned businesses to over two million.'

In addition to new female businesses thriving we also expect this movement to be reflected in current businesses.

Jeremy Baker predicts that the next 10 years could see a considerable shake-up in the ratio of female CEOs of FTSE 100 companies, with males considered by many shareholders to have taken too many risks over recent years. He predicts that the number of female MPs will double over the next 10 years from 126 to 252, and female CEOs in FTSE 100 companies increase from just five in 2008 to more than 50 over the next decade

Key Findings outlined in the report

Perfect conditions for rise of FMEs

: The current recession has created the ideal set of circumstances for Femterprise to thrive. Statistics show that men are more likely to have been hit by redundancy than women, meaning that economic and domestic roles have undergone a radical shift. Although most UK families have relied upon a dual income for a number of years, more women have now become the sole breadwinner as their partner takes responsibility for domestic and childcare duties. What's more, a redundancy payout — either their own or their partner's — combined with the extra time and flexibility generated by one or more partner at home, creates the perfect conditions to support a start-up. More women than ever before now have the time, support and financial backing to exercise their innate talent for business.

When going gets tough, women see opportunities

: Women thrive in challenging circumstances. History tells us that when the going gets tough, women see opportunities — and run with them. In the face of widespread redundancy, women's instinct to protect their family translates into a practical need to pay the mortgage and put food on the table. Driven by financial necessity, women have found the motivation and confidence to transform their working lives, fired by the belief that they have nothing to lose and things can only get better. In this respect, the recession has actually empowered women in business.

Internet networking — catalyst for growth

: The Internet has made it possible for women to set up micro-enterprises and/or work from home in a way that was impossible in the past. This is largely because all that is needed to run and grow a successful business is a laptop and a telephone. Women under 25 are in a particularly advantageous position here, as they are the core users of social networking sites and forums. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn extend their networking opportunities and allow them to promote their businesses among their online friends and contacts.

Flexible benefits of being your own boss

: Women have developed a different attitude to work than men, influenced by the historical necessity to fit their career around family obligations. As a result they have mastered a truly flexible approach which, combined with their innate ability to multi-task, has created a working style that is focused on output, as opposed to face time. In this respect, Femterprise will truly revolutionise our understanding of work and our experience of the workplace.

Owning a business is now the ultimate goal

: Entrepreneurship has become a viable career option — if not the ultimate career goal — for women. Students and graduates increasingly recognise that self-employment is an effective way to acquire hands-on experience, and owning a business is now seen as the ultimate in career success for women of all ages.

Who are the Lipstick Entrepreneurs?

We have identified eight distinct types of Lipstick Entrepreneur:

The Meritocrat; The Rescuer; The Horizontal Juggler; The Double Hitter; The Domestecutive; The Passionista; The Fledgling and The Freewheeler.

: The Meritocrat has opted out of a successful career and decided to strike out on her own instead. She prefers being her own boss as this gives her more control over her career and lifestyle.

: The Rescuer has stepped up to protect her family's finances, often as a result of male redundancy. In practice they often become micro-entrepreneurs through direct selling.

: The Horizontal Juggler wants to excel in all areas of her life: as a mother, partner/wife, daughter and friend — not just in her career. Her focus is on personal fulfilment, so her business must fit around her lifestyle and commitments.

: The Double Hitter is so committed to fulfilling her potential that she fits a full-time job into part-time hours, as well as managing family and household responsibilities. She is an expert in time management and sets her own hours, often choosing to work late at night, early in the morning and at weekends.

: The Domestecutive works from home, as this enables her to care for her children and save on childcare costs. She usually works on a consultancy basis, allowing her to trade on her existing professional expertise.

: The Passionista has followed her passion and turned her hobby into a profitable business. This can mean anything from selling homemade cakes or craft items at local markets, to opening her own boutique, café or online business.

: The Fledgling is a self-employed school leaver, student or graduate. Young women are increasingly showing their entrepreneurial spirit by setting up their own businesses or getting involved in direct selling.

: The Freewheeler is approaching, or even beyond, retirement age. Many Freewheelers are empty nesters and may be divorced or widowed, which means they finally have time to focus on their careers.

Anna Segatti, UK & ROI president of Avon says: 'These typologies ring true to the variety of new Representatives we have seen set up their own Avon businesses this year. Some women are stepping up to the plate to provide needed income for the household budgets. Others are opting to be their own boss, to dictate their own hours and pay, with many working from home to juggle their family and business lives successfully. Feeling connected, and not isolated, is a major factor for many women who are increasingly tapping into networks and signing up to female forums to benefit from the wealth of support that is now out there for women.'

Femterprise Drivers

The rise of Femterprise is being determined by the following social, economic and cultural factors.

The New Dual Income Household

The majority of UK families can no longer manage on a single income, which means that most women, including mothers of young children, now work. According to the 2009 Fawcett Report¹, there are just under 13.5m women employed in the UK. This is a net increase of 4m women in the labour market since the 1970s, and an additional 1.5m since the last recession in the 1990s.

‘The day of one-income families and the luxury of one of the parents being able to stay home with the children is truly a thing of the past,’ says personal finance author Suze Orman. ‘I think that the new financial model in today’s economy is that two incomes are needed.’

The introduction of child tax credit, extended maternity leave and subsidised nursery places for children over three has made it easier for women to work, to the extent that this has now become the norm. However it still falls to women, rather than men, to juggle work and family commitments. This will frequently trigger women to consider business start-up options that will enable them to work full-time hours, but organised around family life.

The Mancession

The current recession has been dubbed a ‘Mancession’ as men are being made redundant at a significantly faster rate than women. Between spring and late autumn 2008, men accounted for eight out of 10 job losses². Consequently, the UK redundancy rate for men more than doubled in the last year; the number of unemployed men has increased by 45% and the number of unemployed women has increased by 25%³.

‘The recession does seem to be affecting men more than women,’ says Professor Alexandra Beauregard, from the London School of Economics. ‘The fact that women are more likely to be in part-time work or doing low-status jobs does seem to be protecting them.’

As a result of job losses in male-dominated industries such as banking, construction and manufacturing, increasing numbers of women are now entering the workforce, taking on an extra job, starting a business or becoming the sole breadwinner — often for the first time in their lives.

Challenging times

In the same way that women won suffrage in 1918 following WWI and were encouraged to enter the workforce during WWII, it seems likely that the current recession will revolutionise the way women work. Historically, women have rallied in times of economic hardship, so we can expect more women to enter the workforce, start businesses and become the main breadwinner, and they are unlikely to surrender these roles when the economy recovers.

In the 1980s, shoulder pads and power suits weren’t just a fashion statement — they represented women’s entry into the male world of business. Sharp tailoring and padded shoulders were women’s armour as they climbed the corporate ladder in a way they hadn’t done before — boosting family incomes and benefiting the economy in the process.

More recently, the foot-and-mouth epidemic had a marked effect on women’s business in rural areas.

‘When we started our awards programme seven years ago, we saw an enormous amount of nominations that had come in from women in rural businesses,’ says Maxine Benson, co-founder of everywoman. ‘This was two years after the 2001 foot-and-mouth epidemic, so these women had jumped into action when things started to go wrong. Their role had predominantly been that of the farmer’s wife, but many of them had started other businesses literally from their kitchen table. They led the diversification of rural businesses and I absolutely believe that we will see similar things in this recession. Women step up to the plate because they have to and, given the opportunity — as in war time — women do deliver.’

These historical examples show us that when women find themselves in a difficult situation, they demonstrate a very practical form of optimism: they believe that things will get better because they will actively make them better. In this respect, challenging times can be a catalyst for female progression — and the current recession could enable women to make great strides in business.

Female Influencers

Despite the glass ceiling, the numbers of women who have senior roles in business or work in high-status professions is slowly but steadily rising. There are currently 126 female Members of Parliament out of a total of 646 and, according to the 2008 FTSE Report⁴, there are now five female Chief Executives of FTSE 100 companies, and 39 companies now have two or more women on the board. As more women reach senior roles within companies, they will undoubtedly inspire women in more junior positions to strive for board status.

On a broader scale, women are becoming much more visible in the business world, largely due to media representations in newspapers, magazines and television. Strong female role models, such as Deborah Meaden from *Dragons' Den* and Margaret Mountford from *The Apprentice* can inspire women to forge a business career, while female entrepreneurs like Ultimo founder Michelle Mone, Net-a-Porter founder Natalie Massenet, White Company founder Chrissie Rucker and JoJo Maman Bébé founder Laura Tenison show women that it's possible to build a business from the ground up and have a family at the same time.

Jeremy Baker, consumer trend specialist at the ECSP Europe Business School, predicts that the next decade could see a considerable shake-up in the ratio of female CEOs of FTSE companies, with males considered by many shareholders to have taken too many risks over recent years. He has predicted the number of female MPs will double over the next ten years, with the number of female CEOs in FTSE 100 Companies increasing to over half in the next ten years.

Homeworking

Women can now start their own businesses in several different ways, on a small or grand scale — and many work from home. Statistics from the Direct Selling Association (DSA) show that 80% of direct sellers are women, with micro-enterprises, which require little investment — normally in the region of £100.

Homeworking has become increasingly popular — with both employers and employees — which is good news for women who are at home with children. New research from BT Business shows that 55% of people are working from home more frequently since the financial crisis began⁵ and the increasing availability of affordable broadband internet connections and smart phones has made this style of working possible.

Thanks to the recession, homeworking is no longer just about established home-based work like childminding — it can also include traditionally office-based roles like consultancy, marketing and telesales.

'Homeworking makes total sense,' says Suze Orman. 'I don't have an office and I don't have employees, I have independent contractors. It saves me so much money and the people who work with me get to set their own hours and save money on transportation and business clothes, too.'

Femterprise Trends

Lipstick Entrepreneurs are adopting a range of different business styles to fit their lifestyles and career goals.

These trailblazing women prove that it's possible to start and grow FMEs regardless of age, experience, family commitments or funding arrangements. From micro-enterprises to big online and high-street brands, Lipstick Entrepreneurs are already transforming the way women work.

The eight Lipstick Entrepreneur typologies are:

- : The Meritocrat
- : The Rescuer
- : The Horizontal Juggler
- : The Double Hitter
- : The Domestecutive
- : The Passionista
- : The Fledgling
- : The Freewheeler

Here we explore each of these types of Lipstick Entrepreneurs and reflect on the way their attitudes, lifestyles and business practices are informed by the drivers outlined in the previous section.

The Meritocrat

The Meritocrat has enjoyed significant career success, but is fed up with banging her head against the glass ceiling or struggling to combine family life with the inflexible corporate world. As a result, she has chosen to 'opt out' and strike out on her own instead.

Research shows us that women are increasingly driven to become their own boss, and this goes some way to explaining the slow growth in the numbers of women at the top — they would rather take control and set up their own businesses, rather than work for someone else. According to the Female FTSE Report 2008, women make up only 11.7% of board directors, which is a small improvement from 6.9% in 1998⁶. However, during the same period, we have seen a steady rise in the number of FMEs. Research from female business network Prowess shows that women are increasingly moving from permanent to self-employment; since 1990, the proportion of women moving from employment to self-employment has increased from 22.2% to 32.6%⁷.

One of the ways that women think they can have it all — and it is alluring to think you can — is to be in control of their own schedule,' says Julie Meyer, founder of Ariadne Capital. 'It's about more than flexibility: it's about being in control of your own destiny.'

As many Meritocrats come from a business background, they tend to be more confident about setting up their own enterprise than other types of Lipstick Entrepreneurs. What's more, their former job title and expertise may result in them being taken more seriously, effectively giving them a head start.

'There is definitely something to be said for the gravitas that comes from having a big title to start with,' says Julie Meyer, 'particularly if you are trying to secure funding.'

The Rescuer

As the Mancession takes its toll, increasing numbers of women are stepping up to protect their family's finances. In practice, this means they are re-entering the workforce and, increasingly, starting up their own micro-enterprises.

The Rescuer may have minimal business experience, but she does not let this hold her back. Cleaning and ironing businesses are particularly appealing to this type of Lipstick Entrepreneur, as is direct selling, which is the perfect way to gain a rudimentary understanding of business with minimal investment or risk.

The Direct Selling Association forecasts a 15% rise in recruitment of women in 2009, which is a clear indication that all women, even those who have never prioritised their career, now see self-employment as the way forward.

The Rescuer certainly supports the theory that women will be the ones to lead their families — and their country — out of recession. From female bankers in Iceland (Audur Capital, a bank with an all-female board, was saved from collapse unlike almost every other financial institution in the country) to the legions of part-time workers whose incomes are now paying the mortgage, it is clear that women really do possess the skills, tenacity and motivation to keep the economy afloat.

'When times are tough and unemployment is high, many women are turning to Avon for additional income for their families. Every time a Representative joins us, we allow her trade payment terms so she does not have to pay for her initial products up front. With credit drying up, we have more money outstanding to Avon by women than probably any other business, which provides them with the opportunity to get started.' Says Anna Segatti, president of Avon UK & ROI.

The Horizontal Juggler

Women strive to be successful in all areas of their lives; they want to excel in their careers, as a wife/partner, a mother, a friend, a daughter — and they want to dedicate time and energy to each of these roles. Unlike men, their ambitions extend horizontally, or outwards: they do not have a single-minded, vertical focus which prioritises career advancement, promotion and financial reward, but invest more in interpersonal relationships and achieving a healthy life/work balance.

In order to achieve this complex balancing act, women are increasingly likely to become their own boss, as this allows them to set their own hours. It's significant that the most entrepreneurial age for women is 35-44⁸, the point at which women are most likely to have young children. In fact, 21% of women state family commitments as the reason for becoming self-employed, compared to just 2% of men⁹.

'There is not so much ego involved in female entrepreneurship,' says Stephen Alambritis. 'The business is an addition to their lifestyle. They will carry on with childcare duties and will add the business to that, whereas the male tends to push everything else aside and just focus on the business.'

This 'lifestyle business culture' affords Lipstick Entrepreneurs maximum independence, and there is a culture of staying small, so that the business never takes over or infringes on their other roles and responsibilities. In this respect, the Horizontal Juggler actually manages to 'have it all' even though she may never reach the dizzy heights of big business.

The Double Hitter

The Double Hitter expertly completes a full week's work in part-time hours, as well as managing family and household responsibilities. Although recent figures from the Office of National Statistics show that women are more likely than men to work part-time, particularly if they have children, this does not reveal the whole picture.

In 2008, 42% of women in employment worked part-time, compared to just under 12% of men. In addition, 33% of mothers compared to 18% of fathers used some kind of flexible working arrangement¹⁰. However, the Double Hitter has become so adept at time management that the definition 'part-time work' is something of a misnomer.

'These women often put in more hours than they would if they were working for someone else,' says Julie Meyer. 'It's not that they want to work less, it's just that they might have to work at the weekend or between 8pm and midnight.'

When she sets up her own business, the Double Hitter is totally focused on output. She is not interested in working set office hours — and is often unable to — but can achieve more by setting her own hours, and fitting her business around her family commitments.

Internet businesses are particularly appealing to the Double Hitter, as this type of work does not require her to be physically present in the office — it's perfectly possible for her to keep on top of things wherever she is, by using a laptop and smartphone.

The Domestecutive

The Domestecutive is already benefiting from the fact that homeworking is one of the most effective ways for companies to cut costs and survive the downturn. This, combined with affordable and reliable broadband connections, means that there are an increasing number of opportunities for women to work from home, in a range of fields including sales, marketing and PR, journalism, accounting and IT.

In 2008, there were more than 2.5m businesses operating from home in the UK — a 16% increase in one year¹¹. Homeworking is particularly appealing to women who have young children. The opportunity to conduct their business from home cuts childcare costs, not to mention travel expenses.

Typically, the Domestecutive employs no staff and has minimal overheads, which means that she is in a strong position to generate profit from the start.

'As long as you aren't running a franchise and have to incur high costs, then you should be able to run your own business profitably right from the outset,' says Anna Segatti. 'Avon has a low start-up cost of £15 which allows many new Avon Representatives to get going free from any debt.'

As she works on a consultancy basis, the Domestecutive is able to push forward in her career at a stage in her working life when many women are forced to undergo a period of stasis, as they devote their time and energy to motherhood. The Domestecutive does not have to make this compromise.

The Passionista

The Passionista has decided to follow her passion and turn her hobby into a business. Often this is a long-held ambition, or an idea born from personal experience, that comes to fruition only when she is pushed out of her comfort zone and effectively forced to evaluate her career options. For this reason, the Passionista's decision to go into business usually follows a major life change, such as having children, her partner's redundancy or divorce.

The Passionista tends to favour retail-based micro-enterprises, as she rarely has previous business experience. Fashion, beauty, food, baby and child products, crafts and collectables are all popular choices, and many Passionistas' first experience of retail is selling their products at local markets or craft fairs.

An Avon business is also a popular choice for the Passionista, as it can be built to a size and scale to suit each woman's needs. Top performers can look to turnover businesses in the region of £4m annually or a woman can work on her own bringing home a few thousand pounds a year.

The Passionista is well aware that the Internet has created a much broader customer base, and her introduction to Femterprise often owes a great debt to eBay.

'eBay has spawned 170,000 small businesses and, when we come into recovery, we estimate that it will spawn many, many more,' says Stephen Alambritis.

Typically, the Passionista works from home on a part-time basis.

The Fledgling

Young women are less likely than their mothers to follow a traditional career path, and would rather work for themselves and set their own hours

Revealingly, over half (51%) of female students (aged 14-19) say they want to be entrepreneurs, compared to 47% of males, and 84% of 18-24 year-olds view entrepreneurship as a good career choice¹².

‘We’ve seen from our work with Enterprise UK and Make Your Mark that students are running businesses from their classrooms and their bedrooms,’ says Stephen Alambritis. ‘Programmes like The Apprentice and Dragons’ Den capture the imagination and many young people are keen to pay off their student debt by setting up in business as soon as possible.’

Some schools and colleges now have special enterprise status, which enables students to garner some business experience before they graduate. Unlike older generations, the Fledgling has plenty of confidence in her abilities and has enough technical know-how to set up and run an Internet business. Women under 25 are digital natives: they have grown up with the internet and communicate with smartphones. They are comfortable with the idea of using the internet to further their careers; many of them have blogs and they use social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter to connect with friends who share their aspirations. As a result, they are part of a strong online community.

Securing financial backing is seldom an issue, as the vast majority of young women will use a credit card to set up their businesses, as many of the limits are very generous. At this stage in her life, the Fledgling has few, if any, financial responsibilities or debts, so she is perfectly placed to survive on a small, unreliable or irregular salary as she gets her business off the ground.

Many forward-thinking Fledglings start up their own micro enterprise as a way to generate some hands-on work experience, which will give them a head start when they enter the competitive job market. Avon has seen a rise in the numbers of graduates applying to become Representatives, as they are well aware that this demonstrates initiative, self-management and many other skills that are required to perform well in business.

The Freewheeler

Women approaching retirement age are increasingly deciding to start a business, as they finally have the time to focus on themselves and their careers — often for the first time in decades.

Many women aged 50+ are empty nesters, or may be divorced or widowed. The British Association of Women Entrepreneurs (BAWE) has found rising numbers of women setting up a small business at this stage of life, largely because they have fewer financial burdens, such as mortgage repayments, and may have savings they can use to get them started¹³.

What’s more, these Baby Boomers reached maturity in the freewheeling 60s, so the idea of being their own boss is particularly appealing to their anti-establishment sensibilities.

The recession has also had a considerable impact on this age group; falling interest rates have depleted the value of the savings that they were relying on to see them through their retirement, which has encouraged them to stay in work — or re-enter the workforce.

However, many women of this generation struggle to find suitable employment, especially if they have been out of the workforce raising children for the bulk of their adult life. Unless they have managed to combine work with motherhood, they may find that they are considered out of touch in the ageist working environment — and menial part-time work may seem like their only option.

In light of this, it’s no surprise that self-employment has become an attractive option; recent figures show that around one fifth of the UK over-50 working population is self-employed, with many women continuing to work beyond the current state pension age¹⁴.

‘The over-50s are seeing their children and grandchildren succeed in business and this motivates them to go into business themselves,’ says Stephen Alambritis. ‘There is no age obstruction to being your own boss, and their years of experience can come in very handy.’

Freewheelers tend to work from home, and run their businesses online. They no longer feel the pressure of juggling family commitments, so are free to devote as much or as little time as they wish to their business. In reality, they tend to keep things small and local, and often choose to go into business with family or friends.

Femterprise Futures

As Lipstick Entrepreneurs become a force to be reckoned with in the business world, we can expect their influence to revolutionise the ways in which we live and work. In the following section we will explore what the future of Femterprise will look like, and particularly what the Lipstick Entrepreneur will look like as we come out of recession.

Femme Power

As increasing numbers of Lipstick Entrepreneurs enjoy business success, their influence will be far-reaching. By the time the economy stabilises, many will have become their family's main breadwinner and, as a result, the key decision makers in the home. They will be understandably reluctant to relinquish this newfound power and independence and are unlikely to return to their former roles, either at work or at home.

'There's nothing that makes a woman feel more powerful than when she's powerful over her own life, when she has money coming in and she doesn't have to ask anybody for it,' says Suze Orman. 'Once women understand how great they are at working for themselves, they will never want to lose that power or go back into a subservient role.'

As a direct result of women developing and growing their own businesses, we will see more female board members and millionaires. Their success will not only serve to inspire and motivate other women, it will also transform our working culture. The glass ceiling and the pay gap will become obsolete, as it will be unthinkable for businesswomen to endorse and sustain these sexist and discriminatory practices.

As women take charge, we will also see more jobs in the private sector which fit more easily around home life, so that women will not be forced to set up their own companies in order to balance their commitments. Lipstick Entrepreneurs promise to make business more female-friendly than ever before.

'The outlook is very positive, and there is great potential for women to enjoy success in business,' says Dr Patricia Lewis, Senior Lecturer, Kent Business School.

The Flexi-Revolution

As we move out of recession, we will notice some radical changes within the job market. First and foremost, we will see an increased focus on flexible ways of working, which more companies have been forced to adopt in order to survive the downturn.

Up to now, part-time work and homeworking has predominantly been the preserve of women, but this will change. Men will increasingly adopt these strategies too, often as a result of redundancy, and more companies will favour part-time, home-based and consultancy roles. As a result, this style of work will enjoy a newfound credibility.

However, our concept of flexible working will undergo a radical shift. It will no longer mean starting work an hour later or leaving an hour early; it simply won't matter where or how we work, provided the job gets done.

'At the moment, flexible working still means working full-time, and being constantly reachable. It's still holding to the model of work for white, heterosexual men in the 1950s with a wife and two children; it's not really that different,' says Professor Alexandra Beauregard.

Thanks to Lipstick Entrepreneurs and their unique business style, we can expect to see a new focus on output rather than 'face time' and, consequently, will no longer be tied to the office or the 9-to-5.

'As we come out of recession we have the opportunity to shape the workplace of the future,' says the Rt Hon. Theresa May, MP. 'To do that we need to change people's perceptions about flexible working. And we must remember that flexible working is not necessarily about working less hours — it might also be about working part-time or job sharing, but it might also just be the tailoring of your working time.'

Recent redundancies have undoubtedly forced us to question established views on job security, leading many of us to come to the conclusion that self-employment no longer offers significantly less job security than full-time employment — and it could offer more.

‘I always felt that the riskiest thing I could do would be to work for somebody else, because my future would be in their hands,’ says Julie Meyer. ‘I feel that I have a high level of job security and my efforts are going to be compensated because I know what I am worth.’

This shift in perception will mean that self-employment and consultancy becomes more appealing, and will become an active choice rather than a temporary stopgap or last resort.

‘If people have lost their jobs in the recession, whether they are men or women, it does mean that they are more likely to become entrepreneurs from home and they might come to like that lifestyle,’ says Carole Stone. ‘This may mean that when we come out of recession they will continue working for themselves, and that would be wonderful.’

The New Equality

The collapse of the world economy has shown us that women will not realise their full potential by acting like men. Instead, they will serve themselves and the economy far better if they utilise the collaborative, creative, empathetic, right-brain qualities that come naturally to women.

‘Women have great communication skills, they have a high emotional intelligence quota and they are very inclusive in the way that they make decisions because they do a lot of things by consensus,’ says Maxine Benson.

Given that many experts believe that this has been a ‘man-made recession’, employers are already recognising the advantages of the female way of working: risk awareness rather than risk taking, teamwork rather than power struggles, and a focus on the common good rather than bonus-based greed.

Lipstick Entrepreneurs will demand this skill set from their staff, and will actively disprove the notion that women are not tough enough for business. Given that 60% of graduates are now female¹⁵, there is a sizeable pool of female talent to choose from, so we can expect to see a much more equal split between men and women working at higher levels in business.

With the rise of FMEs, we can also expect to see increasing numbers of men who choose to stay at home and take care of children, or perhaps work part-time to share childcare duties more equally. The 2009 global survey ‘Women’s Recession’ found that 40% of respondents believe women’s role would change to become the main earner post-recession, while one in three respondents said that women’s role as primary carer would also change¹⁶.

Stay-at-home dads will no longer feel that they are defined by an emasculating ‘house-husband’ role, but will see it as a practical solution to managing the family budget and keeping the highest earner, who will increasingly be female, at work.

Avon's Real-Life Lipstick Entrepreneurs

Debbie Davis, (27) – The Meritocrat

Debbie Davis from Sunderland had a full-time position at a network marketing firm when she realised that, for the hours she was putting in, the rewards were not enough. She set up her Avon business five years ago and experienced success immediately, excelling to Sales Leadership* and achieving the title of being Avon's top-earning Representative. She loves being her own boss and her passion for Avon led to her recruiting her own partner Dave. They are now the ultimate Avon couple, with a joint turnover of £7m, 2,786 Sales Leaders and Representatives in their team and annual earnings of over £300k.

Ria Wilkes, (28) – The Rescuer

Housewife and mother of two, Ria Wilkes from Nottingham stepped in to rescue her family from the recession by starting up her own Avon business in January 2009. As the recession began to affect families up and down the country, Ria was about to be the next as her husband, a pipe fitter by trade, was suddenly made redundant. Ria, who previously worked as a PA, knew that finding a job that would fit around her young family would be difficult, but knew it would be up to her to provide much-needed income. Since starting her Avon business 10 months ago, Ria has seen her business go from strength to strength and has secured a customer base of over 40.

Gail Reynolds, (38) – The Horizontal Juggler

Gail Reynolds from Dorset is one half of a highly-entrepreneurial and successful husband-and-wife team, who started their Avon business just five years ago. With three children, she is always on the go and has found Avon to be a brilliant way to boost her social life and get to know other mums and families in the area. Gail is one of the top Avon Sales Leaders in the country for her business' success, managing a team of 1,500 Representatives and successfully juggling work and a family of three, she had earnings of £85k in 2008.

Erica Ayre, (28) – The Double Hitter

Erica Ayre from Basingstoke, has always been used to working unusual and extended hours, as she successfully runs her own party planning business. She enjoys the flexibility of being her own boss and juggles her hours, allowing her to have the best of both worlds. When Erica found out about the earnings opportunity with Avon she was keen to give it a go. After starting her Avon business only seven months ago, she has been able to combine both her enthusiasms for party planning and Avon, by organising Avon Pink Pamper Parties for charity. Already a Sales Leader, she manages a team of over 100 Representatives and is focused on building her team by ten new Representatives a week.

Rebecca Brookman, (29) – The Domestecutive

Rebecca Brookman from Weston Super Mare is a married mum of four. She had always been the devoted homemaker until the recession began to impact her family back in January 2009. She was already running a busy home, and with a young child under two, so she knew that finding a part-time job that would fit around her family commitments was going to be a challenge. Rebecca decided to start her own Avon business in February 2009 and jumped into the Sales Leadership role straight away. She comfortably signed up nine Representatives within her first week and now has a team of over 40. Her successful Avon business has taken over £18k in her first six months.

Yogeeta Mistry, (32) – The Passionista

Yogeeta Mistry from Birmingham became an Avon Representative three years ago and knew straight away that it was the right career choice, because in her first few weeks she had put through over £500 of orders. Since the age of 18 she's had a passion for sales and has always been a confident sales woman, running a sales team of 20 when she was just 20 years old. Being able to combine her passion for sales and make-up, starting her own Avon business was the perfect professional fit. Yogeeta, now an Executive Sales Leader, manages a team of 450 Representatives in the East Midlands and believes that the sky is the limit. She loves that Avon provides the opportunity for Representatives to turn their passions into lucrative businesses.

Katie Price, (22) – The Fledgling

Katie Price a recent graduate from Gloucestershire remembers helping her mother with her Avon business when she was growing up, and from a young age has always wanted to run her own business. Working full-time in a local supermarket, she loves that she can fit her Avon business around the lifestyle. She began her Avon business just a few months ago, as she wanted to earn extra money, but relished the challenge of running her own business. She is focused on building up her customer base and driven to grow her business further.

Yvonne Noon, (56) – The Freewheeler

Yvonne Noon from the West Midlands has been married for 33 years and always devoted her life to being a wife and running her family home. Now her daughter has grown up and is about to get married, Yvonne has more time to herself and for enriching her own life ambitions. When Yvonne heard about Avon she thought that it would be a great opportunity for her to challenge herself and make her Avon business a success. Now Yvonne has a customer base of over 100 and loves the sense of community that Avon brings. She has built up relationships with her customers and knows that they rely on her, not only for their make-up fix but also a weekly catch-up.

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