

# Rosensweig for OP Global Events: Navigating the Glass Ceiling, Female Entrepreneurs' Challenges

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Haynes Boone Partner [Shelley Rosensweig](#) authored a newsletter for *OP Global Events* describing hurdles that female entrepreneurs may face.

Read an excerpt below.

The entrepreneurial journey is fraught with obstacles, but these challenges often come with an added layer of complexity for women. Despite these hurdles, female entrepreneurs continue to break barriers, showcasing resilience and innovation. As co-head of the New York investment management and private equity practices at a leading law firm, I have had the privilege of knowing, working with and collaborating with many dynamic female entrepreneurs. Their stories of navigating the glass ceiling are inspiring and a testament to the transformative power of perseverance and strategic thinking.

## **The Challenges: Funding, Mentorship, Networking, and Work-Life Balance**

One of the most significant hurdles female entrepreneurs face is securing funding. According to a 2023 report by PitchBook, female-founded start-ups garnered just 2.1% of the total capital invested in venture-backed startups in the U.S. This disparity highlights a systemic issue: Women often find themselves pitching to predominantly male investors, who may not fully understand or relate to their business models. Additionally, studies from the Harvard Business Review have shown that women are often subjected to more scrutiny and harsher judgment during pitch presentations.

Mentorship and networking also pose unique challenges. While mentorship is critical for entrepreneurial success, women often struggle to find mentors who can provide the guidance and support they need. The 2021 Women in the Workplace report by McKinsey & Company reveals that women are less likely than men to have a sponsor — someone who can advocate for their advancement. This lack of support can hinder their ability to navigate complex business landscapes effectively. Notably, however, this same report indicated that women leaders are more likely to support female colleagues and shoulder more mentorship and support responsibilities than their male counterparts.

Networking, a crucial element of business growth, often operates within male-dominated circles. Women may find it challenging to break into these networks, limiting their opportunities for collaboration and partnership. Furthermore, societal expectations and traditional gender roles can make balancing work and personal life particularly demanding for female entrepreneurs. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, with many women bearing the brunt of increased caregiving responsibilities, as highlighted in a 2020 report by the United Nations.

Despite significant obstacles, female entrepreneurs continue to achieve remarkable success. Resilience and innovation are pivotal to their inspiring stories of triumph. Take Sara Blakely, the founder of Spanx, who began with just \$5,000 in savings and transformed it into a billion-dollar empire by revolutionizing women's undergarments. Her journey highlights the importance of perseverance and recognizing and seizing market opportunities.

These triumphs extend beyond tech and fashion. In investment funds, leaders like Mellody Hobson, Co-CEO of Ariel Investments, have broken through barriers, proving that women can excel in finance and investment management. Hobson's leadership and commitment to diversity and inclusion set a new industry benchmark.

To read the full newsletter, click [here](#).