

WOMEN IN THE WORLD

Study: Sports Help Women Develop Leadership Qualities

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/witw/articles/2013/06/18/ernst-young-study-female-execs-can-thank-sports-for-leadership.html>

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A new Ernst & Young study says playing sports helps women develop leadership qualities. The Daily Beast talks to E&Y's Beth Brooke about the playing field and the C-suite.

From those beginner-level soccer games—filled with perfectly cut orange slices and Gatorade at halftime—women develop skills they may have to tap into once they enter the professional workplace.

According to research conducted by Ernst & Young, titled "women leaders' perspective on sport and high-performance teams," participation in sports plays a crucial role in developing leadership and team building skills for women. A majority of women surveyed, who had executive and management roles, participated in sports at some point in their lives.

Beth Brooke, Global Vice Chair for Public Policy for Ernst & Young, said "Not only do the majority of senior women executives have sports in their background, they recognize that the behaviors and techniques learned through sports are critical to motivating teams and improving performance in a corporate environment."

The survey attests to Brooke's statement as 90 percent of women agree teams are the best way to address problems in business and 82 percent think improving the team structure in their organization will help them remain competitive in the field.

Of the men and women surveyed, the research found that women in the highest positions in their firms participated in sports with far more frequency than other female managers, according to a press release on the study. More than half of the C-level women played sports at a university level.

In an interview with The Daily Beast, Brooke said she herself played sports—even into the collegiate level. Her sports of choice were softball and basketball and though she never became a professional athlete, she sees the skills she learned from sports as incredibly valuable.

"I was what I call a mediocre athlete at the collegiate level," she said.

Ernst & Young has commissioned studies based on the connection between women's participation in sports and business success, this study is the first in a series. According to the release, the Women's Athletes Global Leadership Network, formed in March 2013, is a program focusing on creating a network for business leaders and athletes to meet, research the how women in sports affects society and highlighting inspirational stories.

These inspirational stories can be seen on Ernst & Young's newly launched web presence, which has interviews with athletes/entrepreneurs such as Donna de Varona, Fabiola Pulga Molina, and Michelle Marciniak. Brooke said not only are these women talented, but they have managed to create brands around themselves—by themselves.

"They have some of the most incredibly inspiring stories," she said. "Of both success and failure." Brooke, who was named one of Forbes' "World's 100 Most Powerful Women," will speak at Women's Forum Brazil 2013, and is currently in the country promoting the study, which she calls an "incredibly valuable piece of research."

On Monday, she launched the CEO Champions Brazil, a group of male and female executives aimed at furthering the advancement of women.

"There's no doubt about it that my participation in sports allowed me to compete in the business world in a very gender neutral way," she said.