

STUDY SHOWS DIVERSITY OF FEMALE BUSINESS OWNERSHIP AND REVEALS UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

- In its representative 'International Own Business Study' across ten countries, METRO found that 40% of all women surveyed would like to become business owners. However, only 3% of women think they are very likely to end up starting their own businesses.
- On International Women's Day, METRO wants to show the diversity of female business owners and their reasons to set up their own businesses.
- 79% of female business owners think that digital tools are essential for running their businesses day-to-day. However, only 38% of them have a website and 26% use social media to advertise their business. To address this issue METRO is already offering free digital solutions such as website creation and online reservation tools.

Düsseldorf, 7 March 2019 – METRO's International Own Business Study aims at better understanding independent businesses around the world. First launched in 2017, the second edition of the study also takes a closer look at the perception of women – those who already own a business and those who dream of founding one. To gain further insights into the every-day experiences of business owners and the public's perception of independent businesses, METRO has again surveyed 10,000 people in ten countries, among them 1,500 business owners. "METRO's purpose is to be the champion for independent business. Therefore, we stand up for business owners and their needs. On International Women's Day, we want to celebrate female business owners across the globe. Their success is vital for the diversity and dynamism of our communities. Our study shows that, while everyone has their own individual motivations, hopes and challenges, there are some things female business owners share – and this can encourage others – male and female - to become business owners themselves", says Philippe Palazzi, COO of METRO AG.

The second representative International Own Business Study commissioned by METRO was launched on Own Business Day on 9 October 2018. As part of the study, female

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business owners across 10 countries were surveyed – in the Czech Republic, France, Germany, India, Italy, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Turkey, and Romania. As International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March 2019, METRO wants to draw attention to women and those who have built up their own business. While discussions around women and business are rather focusing women in leadership positions or in MINT, METRO wants to use International Women's Day to raise awareness to those women who run their own business.

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Here are some of the study's most important findings:

Many women would like to own a business – but only few think their dreams will turn into reality

40% of all women would like to start their own business. However, only 3% of women think they are very likely to end up doing so. This clearly shows the untapped potential of female business owners. The gap varies across the 10 countries surveyed. It is widest in Romania and most narrow in Czech Republic. Overall, women in India are the most optimistic about whether they will start their own businesses (31%).

Difficulties in funding are one of the main hurdles that prevent women from turning their dream into reality. The past Own Business Study looked into the challenges of female business owners in more detail. Now, International Women's Day offers an opportunity to focus on what characterizes female business ownership in order to encourage others to take the plunge to start a business.

Business owners are diverse and disregard stereotypes

Business ownership is diverse, and so are the people who run independent businesses. For instance, there is no "right" age to start your own business. The Own Business Study found that 49% of female business owners are younger than 45, and 51% of female business owners are over 45. It is often said that family and owning a business cannot be reconciled. Although there is still a lot to do to improve the compatibility, an impressive 65% of female business owners prove that one can be both: mother and entrepreneur. The fact that 88% of female business owners say they would found their businesses again shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents thinks that, in retrospective, starting their own business was the right decision.

The vast majority of female business owners think digital tools are essential for their success

79% of female business owners think that digital tools are essential for running an independent business day-to-day. 82% even consider digital tools to be important for marketing their products and services, and 83% think digital tools can help them save time. However, only 38% of them have a website meanwhile 47% use social media for their business. This is also reflected in the perception of consumers: A majority of all people surveyed said it is hard to find out about independent businesses (63%) and that they are not very visible online (66%). To tackle this METRO offers a variety of digital solutions to own business owners.

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Results of the 'International Own Business Study' for Germany:

- Dream vs. reality: In Germany, 20% of women would like to become business owner, but only 2% of women think they are very likely to become business owners in the future.
- Average age: In Germany, 80% of female business owners are older than 45, which is the highest number among all countries.
- Motherhood: Almost half of all female German business owners (44%) have children, which is still the lowest number among all 10 countries
- Biggest hurdle: 32% of German female business owners say that raising funds was the most difficult phase of starting and running a business. This is the most frequently mentioned challenge among all countries
- Motivation: What motivates the German female business owners? In fact, 45% of female business owners want to earn a living doing something that makes them happy. Only 3% of women who would like to become business owners claim that getting rich is a reason for starting a business
- Digital tools: Only 58% of female business owners think that digital tools are essential to run an independent business day-to-day (79% globally). This is the lowest number among all countries and shows the great potential that METRO can leverage with free digital solutions that are already offered
- Conclusion: In the end, 91% of female business owners in Germany would found their business again

In 2016, METRO initiated the first Own Business Day which is celebrated every year on the second Tuesday of October. It is a day dedicated to independent business owners and their achievements. Further information about the Own Business Day can be found on www.own-business-day.de

METRO is a leading international wholesale company with food and non-food assortments that specialises on serving the needs of hotels, restaurants and caterers (HoReCa) as well as independent traders. Around the world, METRO has some 24 million customers who can choose whether to shop in one of the large-format stores, order online and collect their purchases at the store or have them delivered. METRO in addition also supports the competitiveness of entrepreneurs and own businesses with digital solutions and thereby contributes to cultural diversity in retail and hospitality. Sustainability is a key pillar of METRO's business. METRO has been the sector leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for the last four years. The company operates in 35 countries and employs more than 150,000 people worldwide. In financial year 2017/18, METRO generated sales of €36.5 billion. In September 2018 METRO AG initiated the divestment process for the food retail chain Real with its 34,000 employees. For more information, please visit www.metroag.de

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