Start-Ups Worse Than FTSE 100 for Gender Diversity, Research Reveals

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New businesses are worse for female representation at board level than the FTSE 100 firms.

Research commissioned by approvedindex.co.uk, the UK's leading business-to-business services market place, revealed the number of women on the boards of UK start-up firms is depressingly low and has been on a continuous decrease since 2010.

The report highlights that whilst the FTSE 100 and FTSE 250 companies have witnessed incredible growth in female directors (22.8% and 15.6% respectively) start-ups across the UK have a meagre national average of 8.37%. Thus since 2010 the gap between the FTSE 100 companies and start-ups has quadrupled.

To add a further blow, it appears that start-ups are making some attempt to change the profile of the stereotypical director through appointing younger faces; 48 is the average board member age. Start-ups are rewarding the young, but continue to exclude the female.

Though the FTSE corporations are often thought to represent the 'Old Boys Club', these new findings suggest that start-up culture appears to be repeating the diversity mistakes of their predecessors. The findings re-fit the figurative glass ceiling. Have we missed the rise of the Silent Suppressors?

In all the focus on the '25 by 2025' objectives set for the FTSE 100 firms, how have the bad practices of new businesses gone completely under the radar?

Trilby Rajna, of Approved Index said: "It seems that despite start-up firms being heralded as the pioneers for innovation and technological advances, the inherent culture is far from progressive. Emerging entrepreneurs do not have the excuse of a history of bad cultural practices to latch on to. They should know better." Amy Catlow, Director of Publishing at Approved Index and MVF Global said: "As a woman on the board of a leading tech company I feel the importance of my position as a role model for all women who are seeking to work in the industry. It's a shame many of these new start-ups have not made a mixed board essential to their plans, as it's crucial that the next generation of business leaders are advocates for diversity."

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Notes for Editors:

- Start-up firms are those from the Fast Track 100
- Findings cover the period 2010 – 2014
- Start-ups have lower female representation that those on FTSE 100; 8.37% versus 22.8%
- Female representation on start-ups has been decreasing since 2010
- Average age on start-ups is ten years younger than FTSE 100: 48
- Approved Index match reputable office suppliers with specific business needs

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