

5.6 Women Entrepreneurship and Exportation



1 MIN READ

Statistics show that only 11.1% of women-owned businesses are active in the export market.¹ At first glance, that figure seems quite low. However, for men-owned businesses, the percentage is 12.2%.² Not such a big difference!

What export barriers do women entrepreneurs face?

Although exportation has increased for women-owned businesses in recent years (growing from 5.0% in 2011 to 11.1% in 2017)³, they still face many export barriers, which include:⁴

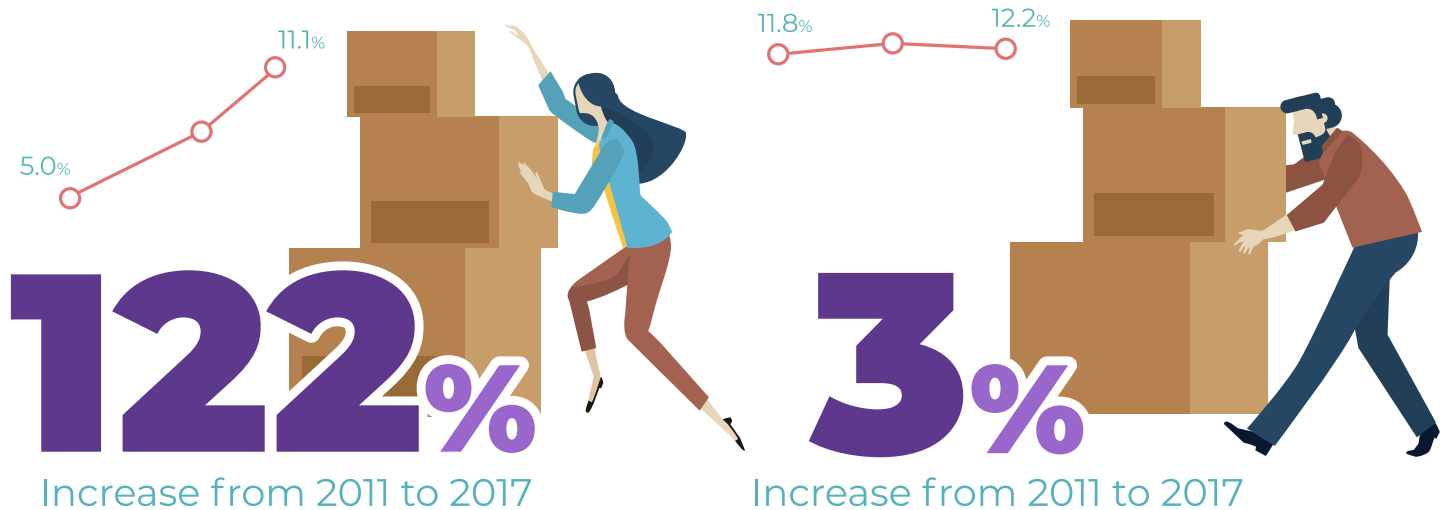
- Operating in sectors that are not “export-friendly,” such as services, tourism, education and healthcare.
- Lacking access to distribution networks.
- Fewer contacts/mentors.
- Smaller businesses and less employees.

Encouraging trends

In terms of exports, women-owned businesses have made some improvements in recent years, significantly closing the gap with their male counterparts.

Exportation have stalled for men-owned businesses in recent years, with percentages remaining relatively flat (11.8% in 2011 vs 12.2% in 2017).⁵

Closing the gender gap on exportation



Source: Office of the Chief Economist, Global Affairs Canada using data obtained from Statistics Canada, Survey on Financing and Growth of Small and Medium Enterprise, 2011, 2014, 2017.

A number of factors have helped to boost women-owned businesses' exports:⁶

- More women are operating in export-friendly sectors (manufacturing, wholesale).
- Fewer women are operating in less export-friendly sectors (restaurants, hotels).
- The rise of online companies and e-commerce.
- In recent years, businesses with less than 20 employees are exporting more.

References

- 1 Audrey Ann Bélanger Baur (October 2019). Women-owned Exporting Small and Medium Enterprises, Descriptive and comparative analysis, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/economist-economiste/analysis-analyse/women_owned-export-entreprises_femmes-eng.pdf, p. 9; Huju Liu (April 2019). Research Blog: Women-owned businesses in Canada, Statistics Canada, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog/cs/wob> (page consulted November 2nd 2020).
- 2 Audrey Ann Bélanger Baur (October 2019). Women-owned Exporting Small and Medium Enterprises, Descriptive and comparative analysis, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/economist-economiste/analysis-analyse/women_owned-export-entreprises_femmes-eng.pdf, p. 9; Huju Liu (April 2019). Research Blog: Women-owned businesses in Canada, Statistics Canada, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/blog/cs/wob> (page consulted November 2nd 2020).

- 3 Audrey Ann Bélanger Baur (October 2019). Women-owned Exporting Small and Medium Enterprises, Descriptive and comparative analysis, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/economist-economiste/analysis-analyse/women_owned-export-entreprises_femmes-eng.pdf, p. 9.
- 4 Audrey Ann Bélanger Baur (October 2019). Women-owned Exporting Small and Medium Enterprises, Descriptive and comparative analysis, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/economist-economiste/analysis-analyse/women_owned-export-entreprises_femmes-eng.pdf, p. 6, 12.; Bonnie Chiu (October 2018). “Women-run Businesses Aren’t Exporting Enough - But Things Are Changing”, Forbes, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bonniechiu/2018/10/05/female-entrepreneurs-are-going-global-new-policy-attention-may-close-the-gap/?sh=6f5999712df7> (page consulted December 3rd 2020).; Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (2020). The State of Women’s Entrepreneurship in Canada 2020, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, p. 31.
- 5 Audrey Ann Bélanger Baur (October 2019). Women-owned Exporting Small and Medium Enterprises, Descriptive and comparative analysis, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/economist-economiste/analysis-analyse/women_owned-export-entreprises_femmes-eng.pdf, p. 9.
- 6 Audrey Ann Bélanger Baur (October 2019). Women-owned Exporting Small and Medium Enterprises, Descriptive and comparative analysis, Global Affairs Canada, Government of Canada, https://www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/assets/pdfs/economist-economiste/analysis-analyse/women_owned-export-entreprises_femmes-eng.pdf, p. 7, 13, 16, 17.; Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub (2020). The State of Women’s Entrepreneurship in Canada 2020, Toronto, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, p. v, 31.

Disclaimer

All documents prepared for the LEADING LENDERS project were developed in line with the most appropriate and recent terminology. However, we recognize that terminology is subject to change over time. To the best of our ability, we have attempted to use terminology that respects the dignity and rights of all individuals.