



# Equal Pay Day – A Missed Opportunity?

EDINBURGH OPINION PEOPLE

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November 10th last week was Equal Pay Day, for those of you that aren't aware it is the day that highlights the point in 2017 when a woman on an average wage stops being paid relative to her male counterparts. The November date (it moves each year) is based on the average but in some parts of the UK, the gender pay gap is apparently so wide that it is as though women work unpaid from September!

On the plus side according to one source I found, the gender pay gap on our little island has fallen to a record low this year. However, the average woman still earns 9.1% less than the average man, according to the latest data released by the ONS. In April this year, the gender

pay gap for full-time employees decreased to that 9.1% from what was 9.4% in 2016.

I also found many different studies claiming to benchmark when the pay gap will become no more. One I found was from 2016 by Deloitte – they calculated that the pay gap would not be eradicated until 2069. Even more depressingly The Fawcett Society measure the mean average gender pay gap at 14.1% and predict at current rates of improvement it will take another 100 years for it to be eradicated!!

How is this still allowed to happen? Well in our line of work specifically, IPA data suggests that the key issue is the lack of women in senior roles. While the numbers of women and men in our industry as a whole are more or less equal (50.2% female), only 30.5% of senior management roles are currently held by women and worryingly this is actually down from 33.1% in 2015.

Although the current & preceding Chairperson at Mediacom UK are women, here in Scotland the vast majority of leadership positions across all the agencies are dominated by men. Things are starting to improve and this year at MediaCom Edinburgh marked the first year that two women from our office were added to the board of directors, both of whom started out in junior positions over 10 years ago in this office.

When I was thinking about all of the stats and articles I'd found, I suddenly realised that I couldn't think of any brands who had spoken up about the issue in a visible way on 10<sup>th</sup> November last week. The only thing that came to mind was my November issue of Glamour magazine, in which their Editor-In-Chief Jo Elvin explained that women alone had completely

powered this issue of the magazine. This meant that they'd only hired women to work on all aspects of the issue from the cover photography to the writers, make-up artists, hairstylists and set designers.

Therefore, I set myself a mission to find the other brands who'd been involved in the #equalpaygap conversation last week. I went to all the usual places – Google, news sites, social media. As I trawled through the internet, I made my way to Twitter, which is obviously the social platform renowned for conversation. As I scrolled through all the posts using this hashtag, I only found one brand who had posted on 10<sup>th</sup> November about the topic. It was Amnesty International who posted an image with the Beyoncé quote, “We need to stop buying into the myth about gender equality. It isn't a reality yet.” Other than this, the only posts I could find were from politicians, celebrities and general members of the public talking about the subject.

And therefore, although I'm hopeful that we're all moving in the right direction, I'm disappointed that not many brands big or small are getting involved in the conversation yet. This is surely a missed opportunity for many brands that already stand for & claim to believe in gender equality.

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