

Worth shouting about: how women in the UK navigate self-promotion

February 2026

Introduction

Talking about success matters.

It affects confidence, visibility and career progression. Yet for many women, self-promotion still feels uncomfortable, risky, or constrained by social expectations.

This research, commissioned by **Galaxy® chocolate**, explores how women in the UK think, feel and act when it comes to celebrating their achievements, and how social and environmental factors shape these attitudes and behaviours.

It also examines what kinds of support, environments and experiences help women – especially young women – to celebrate and communicate their wins, and how these conditions can be strengthened so that women feel confident to celebrate their successes without embarrassment or fear.

METHODOLOGY

We commissioned **Yonder Data Solutions** to survey a UK-wide representative sample of 3384 women and non-binary people aged 18-65, and a comparison group of 1009 men. The overall sample of women included a representative sub-sample of 1505 young women and non-binary people aged 18-30 to enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the demographic we support.

Fieldwork was carried out from the 7th – 21st November 2025.

The overall sample of women contains 52 responses from trans women and 46 responses from people who identify as non-binary. For the sake of brevity, we will refer to this group as ‘women’ or ‘young women’ (where appropriate) throughout the report.



Key findings

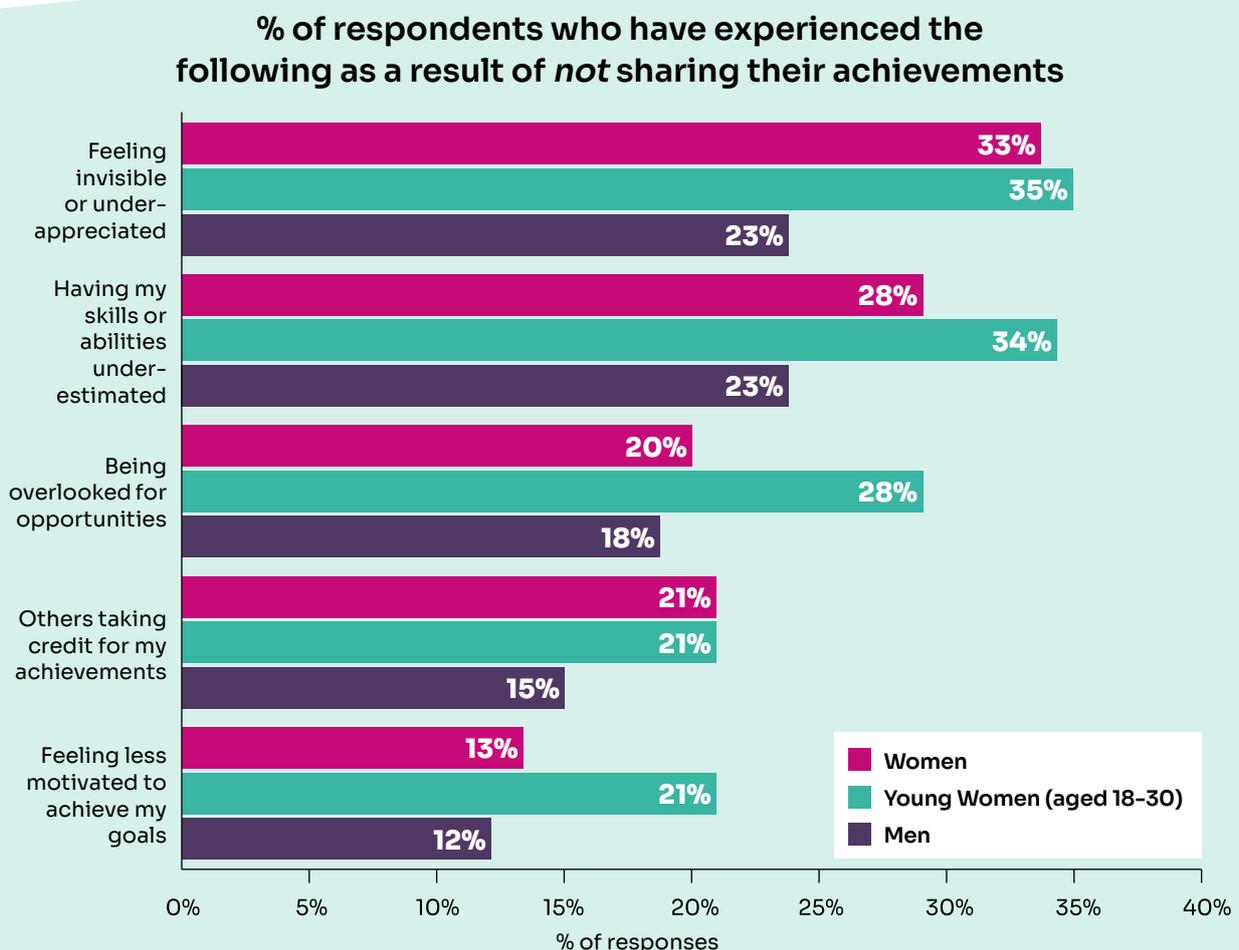
Most women recognise that self-promotion matters.

Over half (56%) of women and more than three fifths (63%) of young women agree that it is essential for career progression – less than 1 in 10 disagree.

But confidence is much harder to come by, especially in the workplace. More than two fifths (44%) of women don't feel confident speaking up about their wins or achievements at work or in professional environments. And when women don't feel comfortable talking about their successes, it follows that they do it less. Only 2% of women who feel uncomfortable sharing their achievements say they 'often' share their big career wins. Almost three quarters (74%) told us they 'rarely' or 'never' do.

When women don't share their achievements, they are more likely than men to be overlooked or underestimated.

Women who took our survey told us that the biggest impacts of not sharing their achievements were feeling invisible or under-appreciated (33%), having their skills or abilities underestimated (28%) and others taking credit for their achievements (21%). Young women felt these impacts even more strongly.



Confidence in self-celebration is not evenly distributed, which puts some women at risk of being left behind.

Women in the youngest age group (18-24) are less likely to feel comfortable speaking up about their achievements in professional settings, and women on lower incomes are particularly affected. More than half (54%) of women earning less than £20,000 a year say they lack confidence talking about their achievements at work, compared to fewer than three in ten (28%) women in the highest income bracket.

54%

of women earning less than £20k a year say they lack confidence talking about their achievements at work.

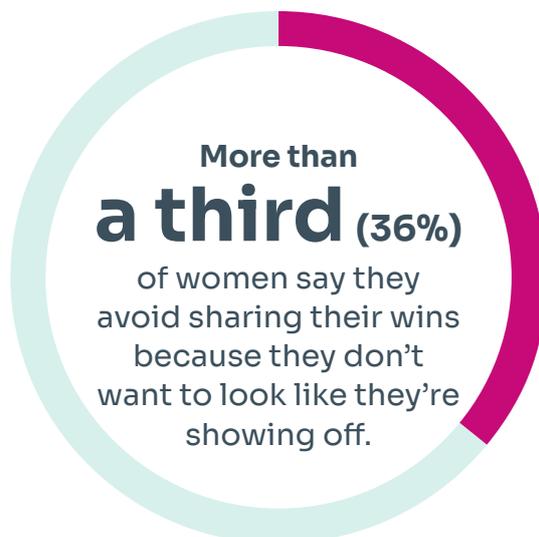
This gap shows up clearly in behaviour. Almost a fifth (19%) of women earning under £20,000 a year say they never share big work or career wins, compared to an average of just 5% of women on higher incomes. In practice, this means that the women who may benefit most from visibility and recognition are often the least able to access it.

Self-promotion is emotionally loaded for many women, and worries about how they will be perceived often stop them from sharing.

Two fifths (40%) of women and half (50%) of young women believe it is more socially acceptable for men to talk about their achievements than women – only around a quarter disagree.

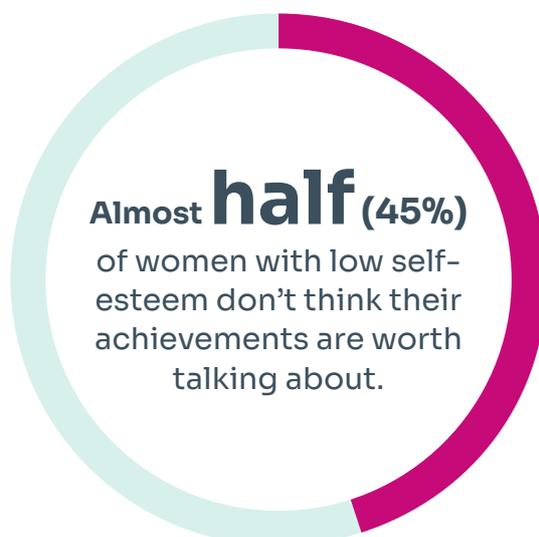
When women do talk about their achievements, they are more likely than men to feel judged, embarrassed or regretful. These feelings are even stronger among young women, with around one in five reporting feeling embarrassed, self-conscious or awkward after sharing.

This may help to explain why many women hesitate – even when they know self-promotion is important.



One of the biggest barriers stems from a reluctance to seem boastful. More than a third (36%) of women say they avoid sharing their wins because they don't want to look like they're showing off, and almost 3 in 10 (29%) say they don't share their successes because they don't want to appear arrogant or overconfident.

For women with low self-esteem, the barrier runs deeper: almost half (45%) don't believe others will be interested in what they've achieved, and the same number hold back from sharing because they don't think their achievements are "worth" talking about.



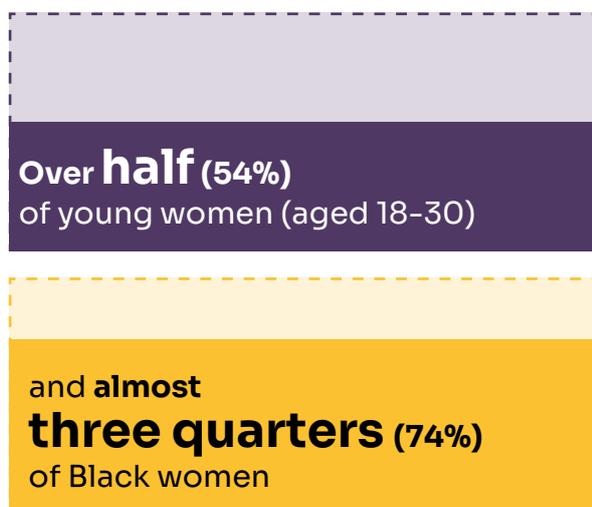
Despite self-censoring their own achievements, most women like hearing other women sharing their successes and think they should be encouraged to do it more.

When asked how they feel when they hear other women speaking about their achievements, the most common responses were:



The positive effects of hearing other women self-celebrate are felt particularly strongly amongst younger women and Black women. Over half (54%) of young women and almost three quarters (74%) of Black women who responded to our survey said that hearing other women speaking about their achievements inspired them.

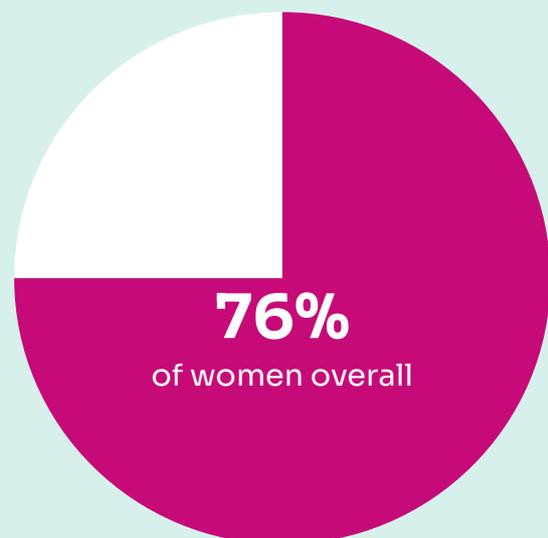
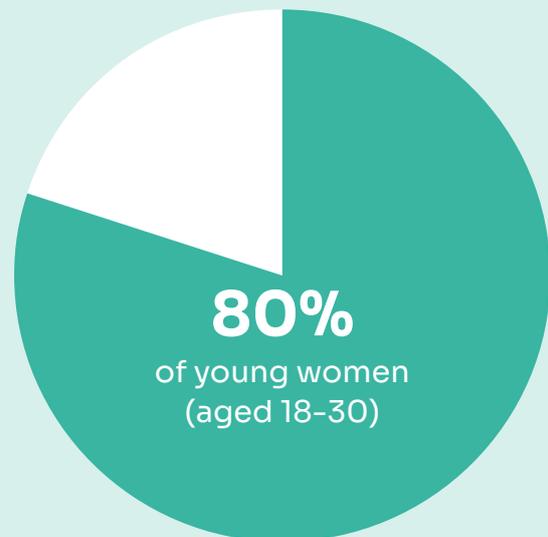
% of respondents who said that hearing other women speaking about their achievements inspired them



Women overwhelmingly agree that things would be better if more women celebrated their successes.

More than three quarters (76%) of women and four fifths (80%) of young women agree that women should be encouraged to celebrate themselves more openly.

% of respondents who agree that women should be encouraged to celebrate themselves more openly



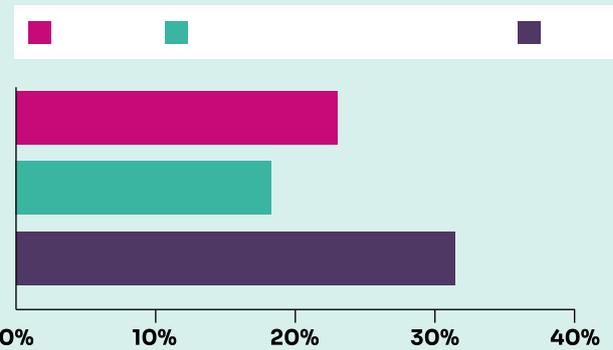
Family and friends play a major role in shaping how women feel about celebrating success.

They are the most common source of both encouragement and discouragement, and 'encouragement from friends and family' was the most common answer women gave when asked what would make the biggest difference to their confidence to talk about future achievements.

Workplaces matter too — but often fall short.

Women are less likely than men to have been encouraged by a manager or supervisor to self-promote, and young women are least likely of all to receive this kind of support.

% of respondents who have been encouraged by their manager or supervisor to self-promote or celebrate their achievements



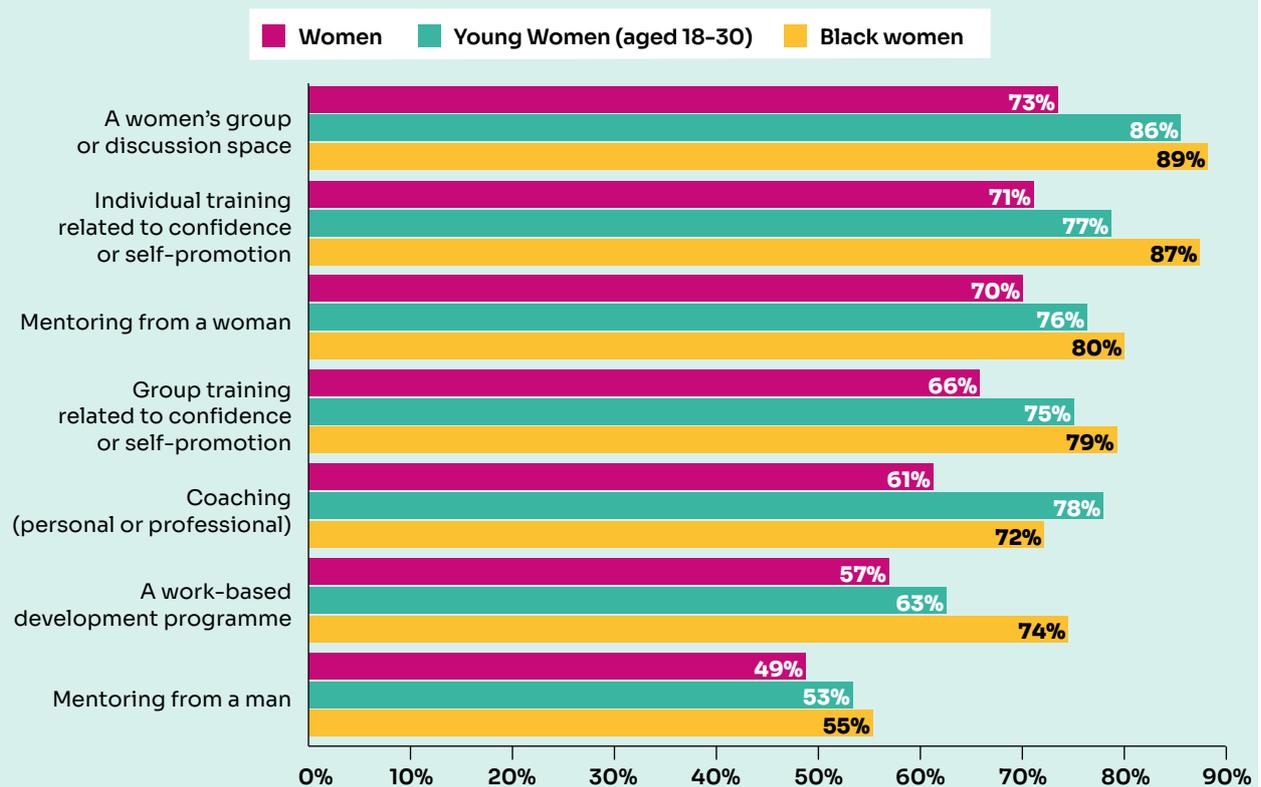
Visibility and support are the keys to getting more women to self-celebrate.

Although many women have not taken part in formal confidence- or self-development activities, those who have report clear benefits. Mentoring, coaching, confidence or self-promotion training and women's

groups all increase women's confidence in and likelihood of sharing or celebrating their achievements.

Sharing experiences or receiving support from other women appears to be a particularly powerful driver of positive change, especially amongst Black women and younger women.

% of respondents reporting that the following activities have made them 'much' or 'a little' more likely to share or celebrate their achievements



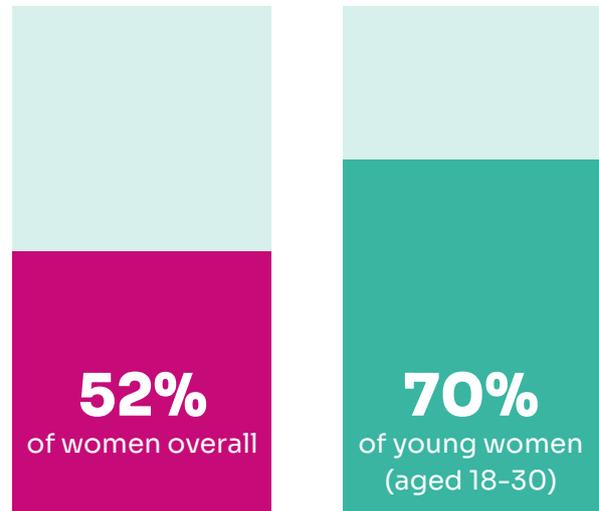
More than half (52%) of women and more than two-thirds (70%) of young women agree that self-promotion is a skill they can learn - suggesting there is an appetite for more tailored guidance and support.

In our research four things stood out that women told us would make the biggest positive difference to their confidence and comfort in self-celebrating:

- Encouragement from friends and family
- Support from their workplace
- Reducing stigma around self-promotion
- Seeing other women celebrate their achievements publicly

Together, these findings point to a clear conclusion: helping women celebrate and share their successes is not just about telling them to “be more confident”, but about creating environments where self-promotion is role-modelled and women are visible, celebrated and supported.

% of respondents who agree that self-promotion is a skill they can learn



Galaxy[®]

Our partnership with Galaxy[®]

Galaxy[®] chocolate is a long-term partner of Young Women's Trust, supporting our mission to help young women thrive at work. This research, commissioned and funded by Galaxy[®], highlights the need for all women to come together, celebrate their achievements and encourage their peers to do the same - in all areas of their lives. It shows that in doing so we can build a community where self-promotion, however big or small, is nothing to be feared, and could in fact unlock potential and help women get to where they want to be.

As part of the new Galaxy[®] campaign, *The Unhumble Project*, free confidence training is being provided to women, helping them self promote and start their confidence journey.

Young Women's Trust offers free coaching, support and information to young women aged 18-30 in England and Wales.

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