

## **Sisters Can Do It For Themselves**

We applaud Virginia Larson's (May) *Power Rangers* article on the power of women over 40. It prompts us to make three points.

First, it was refreshing to see the spotlight fall on a group other than Gen Y. More focus on New Zealand's professional and corporate women (of all ages) would reveal the challenges this highly educated group face in building and sustaining their careers. It might also stimulate ideas on how the country can better leverage their talents.

Second, it's noteworthy that four of the five women profiled had started their own businesses or built new ventures — and that the corporate manager was emphatic about the value of work flexibility. Most of the women were also mothers. We believe these strands are inextricably linked.

We recently launched [www.professionelle.co.nz](http://www.professionelle.co.nz) an online community for corporate and professional women. The proportion of our members in full- and part-time work falls from almost 90 per cent among women aged 26-30 to just over 50 per cent for 41-45 year olds, before rising again in older groups. The reality of New Zealand workplaces is that full-timers with families rarely find enough flexibility, and part-timers still suffer career downgrades.

Third, the featured women possessed considerable skills they'd used to build their businesses and positions. Many of our members in their prime child-bearing years have similar skills. The numbers show that, if they have to, these sisters can do it for themselves.

With talent shortages everywhere, the surprise is that employers allow contracting and self-employment to look so appealing.

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