

Women thriving, on and off the pitch



VISA



About Visa

Visa (NYSE: V) is a world leader in digital payments, facilitating transactions between consumers, merchants, financial institutions, and government entities across more than 200 countries and territories. Our mission is to connect the world through the most innovative, convenient, reliable, and secure payments network, enabling individuals, businesses and economies to thrive. We believe that economies that include everyone everywhere, uplift everyone everywhere and see access as foundational to the future of money movement. Learn more at [Visa.co.uk](https://www.visa.co.uk).

About the Research

Research commissioned by Visa and conducted by Dynata with 2,500 European women entrepreneurs who own a small or medium-sized business or hopeful entrepreneurs who intend to start their business within the next 24 months, including 500 respondents in the UK, Spain, France, Germany, and Italy, between 25th May 2022 and 8th June 2022.

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Message from the Manager

UEFA Women's EURO 2022™ marks an incredible milestone for the game.

Women's football is on the up. March 2022 saw the largest attendance ever for a women's football match, with a record crowd of 91,533 in Barcelona. Tickets for the UEFA Women's EURO 2022 have also been in high demand. The final at Wembley sold out three months before the tournament even kicked off. There's clearly an appetite for the game, but is this passion and interest translating into women and girls actually playing?

The link between physical activity and physical, mental, and social wellbeing has long been established. Now, our new research shines a spotlight on the link between team sports and business success for many women entrepreneurs. As someone who's played sport, I know how being part of a team has many parallels with a thriving workplace, understanding individual strengths of a group, while working towards a shared goal.

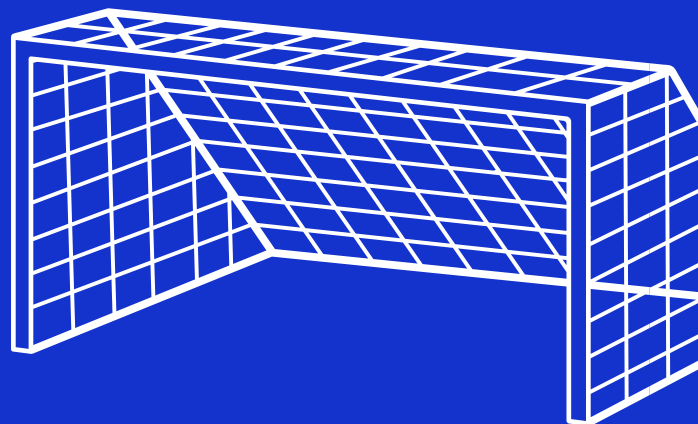
I'm delighted to share Visa's new report - *Women thriving, on and off the pitch* - which shows how playing team sports can help many women succeed in their careers in business - building confidence and teaching important lessons in teamwork and leadership.

In this report, we will get a 'Team Talk' from England footballing legend and co-creator of Visa's career development programme, The Second Half, Karen Carney MBE, and see how inspiring women are feeling the benefits of their sporting lives in the workplace.



Mandy Lamb

Managing Director, UK & Ireland, Visa



How team sport can impact business performance

Positivity

75% of women entrepreneurs surveyed who play sport say it's had a positive impact on their business life

Confidence

72% of women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports believe their business will succeed over the next five years

Growth

36% of women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports run businesses with international reach, compared to the average of 26%

Resilience

Those surveyed who play team sports say they have developed key business skills like stress management (34%) and confidence (33%)



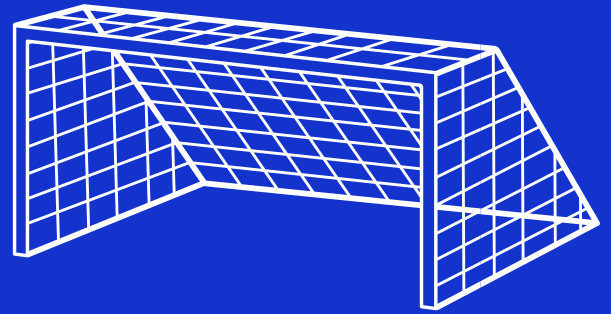
Small businesses are the backbone of the economy, and 2022 has seen a record number of women in the UK starting up on their own¹. Participating in team sports can bring real advantages to women who are running businesses.

Mandy Lamb

Managing Director, UK & Ireland, Visa

¹www.diversityuk.org/women-starting-record-number-of-new-companies-in-the-uk

Did you know...?



Women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports say it helps them in business:

50% feel it helps them to manage stress

33% feel they can better adapt to change

28% say it has helped them learn to deal with different personalities



Women entrepreneurs who play team sports tend to run larger businesses. They are:



Much more likely to run a business with more than 10 employees (48%) than those who infrequently play team sports (10%)



More likely to turnover >€2m than average (34% vs. 14%)

Women entrepreneurs who play team sports are:



More likely to run a business with more than 50 employees than average (24% vs. 10%)



More likely to say they like working as part of a team (29%)





Team talk with Karen Carney



The biggest eye-opener for me working with Visa on The Second Half programme was how transferrable skills from sport can be. The ability to work in teams, to be adaptable, resilient, and hard-working – the list could go on – but these are all things you learn in sports that don't just get left behind when you stop playing. We want to help female players realise that these skills matter in the business world too, and they are highly desirable.

Karen Carney MBE

Former England footballer and co-creator of Visa's The Second Half programme dedicated to supporting women in their careers when they retire from professional sports



Captaining with confidence

Women are a driving force for small business and power economies around the world. For many women who play team sports like football, their working lives benefit too. When more of us play, all of us benefit. In business, as in sport, those small percentages can make all the difference. Here are six areas where European women entrepreneurs say playing team sports has helped them in business:

Developing core business skills

Women who play team sports are likely to say that what they do on the field helps them in their work life too: four in ten of those surveyed (38%) say it's had a "very positive impact" on their business. 43% of team sports players say that business mentoring is "very important" to them, slightly above the average (38%), which could reflect respect for the role that coaches, and others, play in upping a player's game.

Teamwork

We found that nearly seven in ten (68%) women entrepreneurs who run businesses with between 101-249 employees play team sports themselves, nearly twice the number for sole traders (35%). Women who build medium-sized businesses thrive in team environments.

Women entrepreneurs who play team sports are also more likely to ask for help during busy periods (50%) than women entrepreneurs more generally (42%).

Mental and physical health benefits

For many women entrepreneurs, sport helps them be at the top of their game, on and off the pitch. Half (50%) of the women entrepreneurs surveyed that play team sports say it helps them deal with stress, tiredness or being overworked. One in three (33%) also say that they gain confidence from team sports, which they bring to their businesses.

Our research shows that one of the key barriers to women starting their own businesses is a lack of confidence, so taking part in team sports could be a potential game-changer for many would-be entrepreneurs.

Leadership

Team sports require clear communication and organisational skills, often under pressure – just like the workplace. For many, this means learning how to lead a team.

Three quarters (75%) of women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports say that they believe they are a 'good leader or businesswoman', above the average (73%) and nearly one in five (19%) of team sports playing entrepreneurs cite leadership as a skill they bring from the playing field into the workplace.

Our findings show that women who play team sports are more likely to report that their business has grown in the last two years (44% vs 32%). They are also twice as likely to report having grown significantly during that period. Nearly three quarters (72%) of women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports are confident their business will succeed over the next five years, above the average (69%).

Community spirit

Sports are just one way that entrepreneurial women can immerse themselves in a supportive community or group activity, such as music and creative or outdoors pursuits. Women entrepreneurs who play team sports seem to bring that 'team player' mentality to the workplace.

This can be seen through the insight that while nearly three quarters (73%) of women entrepreneurs say they set up their business because they wanted to work for themselves, this figure is much lower (57%) for women who play team sports. Women who play team sports are also nearly twice as likely to be motivated to give something back to their community (16% vs 9%).

Support networks for success

Feeling supported in business is key to success. 90% of women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports are highly likely to say that their personal network is important to them. They are also more likely to rely on support groups, such as:

- **Colleagues**
(37% vs. 33% of all respondents)
- **Local community groups**
(26% vs. 21% of all respondents)
- **Hobby-focused groups**
(16% vs. 10% of all respondents)
- **Wider industry groups**
(34% vs. 25% of all respondents)

A strong support network is important for many women entrepreneurs, but they are especially so for those who play team sports.

Team talks: SMB profile

Alanna first had the idea to set up her ice cream business, A Few Scoops, in 2019, when she was out for a walk with her husband and baby daughter. They wanted an ice cream and a glass of wine together and had the idea of creating alcoholic ice cream. Her husband encouraged the business idea and the following day she bought equipment and ingredients and experimented with different flavours. She practised, learnt about the science behind ice cream and did lots of market research. Unfortunately, when the pandemic arrived in the UK, she had to pause progress, but was able to officially launch her business in May 2021.

One of Alanna's favourite parts of running her own business is when she hears people talking about the quality of her ice cream or getting excited about the concept of her brand. Alanna feels passionate about championing women, especially working mums, and believes that society should give them more credit for the constant juggling act and what they are able to achieve.

Before starting her own business, Alanna worked as an Executive Assistant, most recently for the CEO of a charity for people who are blind or visually impaired. She remains involved within the charity sector as Chairwoman of a men's mental health charity based in Manchester.

Role of team sports and activities in Alanna's life:

Alanna played netball when she was younger and was captain of the first team from age 12 - 15. Her netball team were county champions at her school, and she played briefly at county level. She gave netball up in year 11 to focus on acting as the two clashed at weekends.



I played netball and we were county champions and I think that's where my love and desire to be a boss and an entrepreneur started – trying to get the best out of everyone and never settling for anything less than 100%; having that confidence has definitely helped.



Alanna Atkinson
Owner of A Few Scoops,
Manchester

The European perspective

How SMBs are performing in each market, according to the research.



United Kingdom

Women-run UK SMBs are the most likely in Europe to be operating online. More women entrepreneurs in the UK work part-time than in other countries. Nearly three in four UK women (73%) who play team sports say it has a positive impact on their business performance.



Germany

Germany's women entrepreneurs are among the most active when it comes to sport. They have enjoyed solid growth performance over the last two years compared to the rest of the continent and a third (36%) of team players say it teaches them leadership.



France

French women entrepreneurs really value the confidence they gain from playing sports. They are the most likely in Europe to say that sport has a "very positive impact" and the future looks bright for up-and-coming hopeful women entrepreneurs who practice sport.



Spain

Women entrepreneurs in Spain value team sports for the focus and discipline it gives them and are positive about the future. They value the leadership skills they can bring to their business from the playing field and have a strong community spirit.



Italy

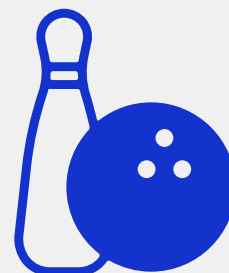
Italy's women entrepreneurs are most likely to have a physical, bricks-and-mortar business. They value the leadership and people management benefits that they gain from participation in team sports.



Spotlight on... UK



In the UK, nearly three in four (73%) women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports say it has a positive impact on their business. When compared to other women who run small and medium-sized businesses, those who play team sports are more than three times more likely to have a turnover exceeding £2 million per year (34% vs. 10%), and are also three times more likely to employ more than ten people (54% vs. 19%).



For British women entrepreneurs who play team sports, the three leading skill benefits include:

42%

Perseverance and hard work

38%

Routine and discipline

38%

Stress management

It appears that playing team sports can bolster self-confidence too. Women entrepreneurs in the UK who play team sports are much less likely to say that self-confidence is a business challenge (32% vs. 21%). And what about transferring leadership qualities from the pitch into the workplace? More than eight in ten (81%) team sports players feel they are a "good leader" compared to the average of 68%.



Did you know?

Nearly three in ten (29%) UK women entrepreneurs surveyed or hopeful entrepreneurs are self-employed

UK women entrepreneurs surveyed tend to run their business online and are less likely to own physical stores than their continental counterparts

Spotlight on... Germany



Germany's women-run businesses are proving the most resilient to recent challenges. They are more likely to have grown significantly over the past two years (16%) than the European average (10%). Six in ten (61%) German women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports report growing their business in the last two years, compared to the national average (40%).

German women entrepreneurs are the sportiest of the countries surveyed and the most likely to say that sport was very important to them (45% vs. the European average of 38%).

Entrepreneurial women in Germany who play team sports say it helps them benefit from these top skills:



35%

**Perseverance
and hard work**

33%

Confidence

32%

**Passion and
determination**

Did you know?

Germany's women entrepreneurs are strongly motivated by community and giving back to others.

Almost one in five (18%) German women started their own business so that they could give back to the community, nearly twice the average (9%). One in three (32%) who aim to start a business want to do so to give back to their community.



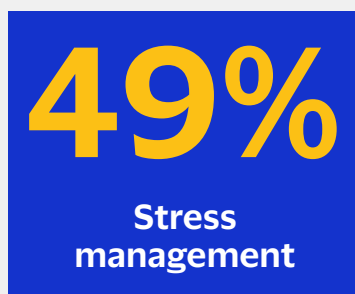
Spotlight on... France



In France, self-confidence is a major factor for women setting up their own business. The majority of women entrepreneurs surveyed (58%) who play team sports say that they started their business once they finally had the confidence to do so, compared to the average of 37%.

Nearly half (49%) of French women entrepreneurs who play team sports say that their activity has a "very positive impact" on their working life.

French respondents who play team sports say they learn these top three business skills from their activity:



Did you know?

Participation in sport is going to feature heavily in the lives of France's future businesswomen. Nearly all (99%) of France's hopeful entrepreneurs are sportswomen, compared to 85% of current entrepreneurs. For more than half (54%) of France's hopeful women entrepreneurs, sport is "important", compared to 29% of current entrepreneurs.



Spotlight on... Spain



While many of Spain's women entrepreneurs surveyed are financially motivated, those who play team sports seem to also be community minded. Those who play team sports in Spain are more likely to report that they like that they can make a difference (19% vs. 14% on average) and that they can help their community (12% vs. 9%) when running their business.

In Spain, women entrepreneurs surveyed really feel the benefit of playing sports as a way of boosting their self-confidence. Those who play team sports are much more likely to believe that their business will succeed over the next five years (63%) compared to women entrepreneurs more generally (56%). Nearly three quarters (73%) of Spanish women entrepreneurs surveyed who play team sports describe themselves as a good leader or businesswoman, compared to 59%.

Spanish women entrepreneurs say they learn these top skills from playing team sports:



45%

Routine/Discipline

40%

Stress management

39%

Perseverance and hard work

Given that four in ten (43%) Spanish women entrepreneurs surveyed did not start their business sooner because they lacked the confidence to do so, playing sport could really help galvanise and inspire others.



Did you know?

Those who play team sports in Spain are more likely to say they develop skills including:

- **Working as a team** (27% vs the average of 21%)
- **Leadership** (25% vs 17% on average)



Spotlight on... Italy



For four in ten (41%) of Italian respondents surveyed, fear of failure is a key challenge, which is higher than the European average for women entrepreneurs of 34%. When it comes to the nature of their business, six in ten (59%) Italian women entrepreneurs surveyed own a shop or physical premise compared to the average of 52% of women entrepreneurs in Europe. They are less likely to operate online (38% vs 47%), underlining the importance of support from their local communities.



The two things women entrepreneurs and hopeful entrepreneurs in Italy like most about playing sport is its physical (60%) and mental (50%) benefits.

Italian women entrepreneurs are most likely to say that playing team sports has helped them in these ways in the workplace:

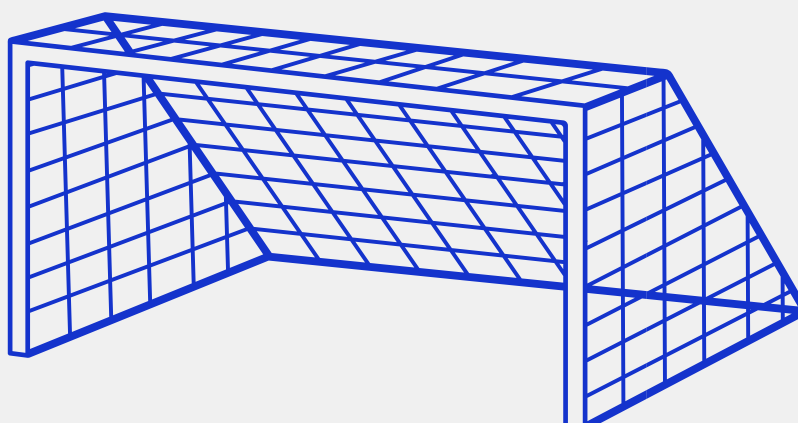


And Italian women entrepreneurs who play team sports certainly feel the benefits when it comes to leadership, as nearly four in ten (38%) strongly feel they are good leaders compared to the average of 29%. Italian women entrepreneurs who play team sports are much more likely to say that playing sport has helped them deal with conflict between people (35% vs the average 19%), manage different personalities (31% vs 22%) and handle underperforming people (17% vs 10%).



Did you know?

Italy's women entrepreneurs are most likely to cite people-related challenges when starting a business, with nearly six in ten (58%) saying finding the right people is their biggest hurdle.



Tactics Board and Player Stats

How Visa is supporting women in sport and business

Team Visa: aimed at providing athletes with the tools, resources and support they need to achieve their dreams

Player of the Match: an award sponsored by Visa that recognises individual excellence, female empowerment, diversity, and inclusion on the pitch – values which are at the heart of our support for women’s football

The Second Half: a programme supporting female footballers in Europe, as they consider their careers beyond the football pitch

FIFA Women’s World Cup 2023™ Partner: Visa is also a payment service for the tournament

Sponsorships of women’s football



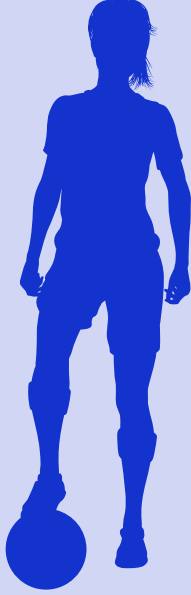
She’s Next: Visa launched this initiative in 2019, to shine a spotlight on women entrepreneurs in their efforts to run, fund or grow their small business. Visa has invested more than \$1.6 million in over 150 funding and coaching grants for small and medium-sized business owned by women globally through the She’s Next programme

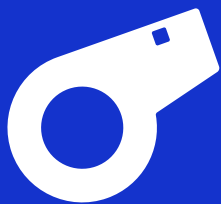
The Visa Foundation: has made a five-year, \$20m commitment to Women’s World Banking to develop sustainable solutions for women entrepreneurs in an increasingly digital world

Social Impact

Where You Shop Matters: As part of our commitment to help eight million European small businesses thrive, Visa is working with more than 100 partners across the continent to help small business owners build their digital capabilities

Talent at every stage

16-34-year-olds	34-54-year-olds	Over 55+
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More likely to have seen their business grow (47%) in recent years• View leadership, discipline, and hard work as key to success• Most likely to say sport has had a positive impact on their working life	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider financing and funding as the biggest challenge to setting up a business• See hard work, preparation, and discipline as core strengths• Almost half (48%) who play sport say it's benefitted their work life	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most likely (82%) to be motivated to work for themselves• View hard work, discipline, and preparation as the most valuable traits• Least likely to view sports as providing transferrable skills



Closing thoughts



With the right idea, support, and investment, women from any background can succeed in business. While playing team sports like football is not key to business success, it's clear that many women entrepreneurs who partake in team sports feel the benefits beyond the pitch.

From managing stress, to building mental resilience and making tough decisions, there are many ways in which playing sport helps women across Europe in their business lives. The power of sport to level the playing field for women is undeniable. With a record number of UK women starting small businesses in the UK in 2022^[2], and Visa's long-standing commitment to women's football, we believe the UEFA Women's EURO 2022™ can uplift a new generation of women leaders, on and off the pitch. Through our research, we also know that there are many ways in which playing sport helps women, so we are encouraging girls and women across the UK to lace up their boots and join in the beautiful game this summer.

As the first ever UEFA sponsor dedicated to women's football, we're using the full power of Visa's network to economically empower women from all walks of life, from retired professional footballers through The Second Half programme to small business owners looking to grow their business.

Women who own and run businesses face a unique set of challenges, including access to capital and networks. We believe the digital economy should offer equal opportunities, and that small and medium-sized business owners from all backgrounds should have more opportunities than ever before to thrive in a digital age. Visa is empowering women across the world to succeed, and championing diversity and inclusion, both on and off the pitch.

Adrian Farina

Chief Marketing Officer, Europe, Visa

²www.diversityuk.org/women-starting-record-number-of-new-companies-in-the-uk/



VISA