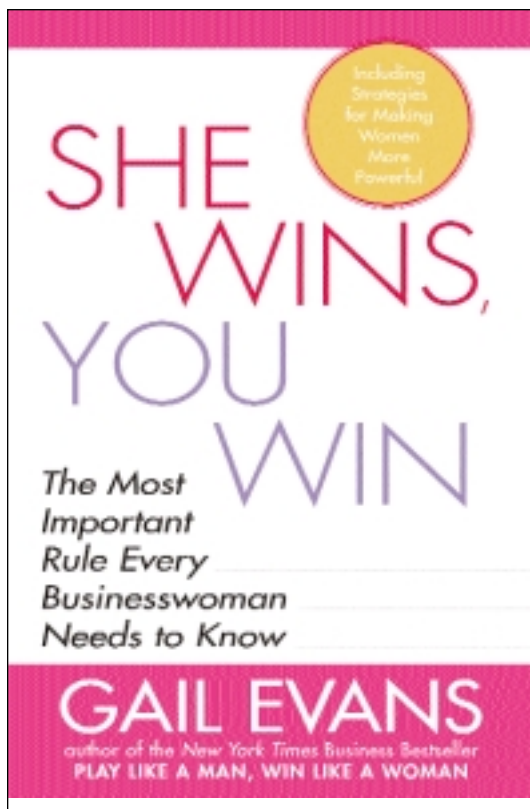


# BOOKS



## She Wins, You Win: The Most Important Rule Every Businesswoman Needs to Know

By Gail Evans

Reviewed by Sabrina E. Hicks

My management friend often paraphrases this line spoken by Hugh Grant in *Bridget Jones's Diary* to describe people, usually women, who work in human resources: "They run about aimlessly and fiddle with the insurance papers." While that statement carries the scent of chauvinism, it does reveal a truth: People are still confused about the role of HR.

That comment—and the fact that 65 percent of *T+D* readers are female—inspired me to review Gail Evans's latest book, *She Wins, You Win*.

I was hoping to find sage advice from the former executive vice president of CNN—something that HR employees

could use to teach co-workers about the relevance of their department to company goals. But mostly all I found is a book that reeks of separatism, calling for women to distance themselves from men to see themselves in a new light.

I wonder if Evans knows that most feminists realize that for the movement to be successful, it *must* include men. A separate-but-equal philosophy didn't work for public schools in the 1950s, so what makes it appropriate in the workplace now?

Evans argues that believing in gender equality at work is naïve: Women earn less money and hold fewer upper-man-

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agement positions than men, despite outnumbering them in the workforce. The good news is that the Employment Policy Foundation of Washington, D.C., forecasts that women will dominate U.S. management positions by 2030 or sooner. To rectify the current situation, Evans suggests taking a tip from the boys' club by meeting with female co-workers away from the office. Camaraderie inevitably develops from such gatherings as a long lunch or spa weekend. Evans admits that after her lectures, female attendees often ask her if they'll hurt the feelings of their male co-workers by participating in female-only events. To which Evans replies, "This is not about men, nor is this about our relationship with men. This is about our relationship with other women."

I assume the author's objective in writing books such as this one and her best-seller, *Play Like a Man, Win Like a Woman*, is to show women how to make connections in order to play on the highest levels of the corporate team. But might such activities negate women's hard work and allow men to ostracize them? Ultimately, that behavior can keep women from connecting with the men who are making the majority of upper-management hiring decisions.

Evans justifies her objective by claiming that women often feel inhibited by men at meetings and conferences; they won't say what they're thinking or, sometimes, anything at all. But could it be that women, as well as men, feel afraid to speak up because their supervisors or mentors are also in attendance? It's unreasonable to suggest that the mere presence of men restricts women. It's more likely that people are hesitant to make comments that might negatively affect their careers.

Evans also writes passionately about mentorship. She suggests that female employees approach only female superiors to be their mentors. She believes that in order to show support and admiration, women should select another woman as a

mentor. That's a good argument in theory, but perhaps the female supervisor isn't the best candidate. Maybe that awe-inspiring manager is (gasp) a male. Won't it hurt a young worker to settle for a less-qualified manager merely to prove that she's on the women's team?

Though I disagree with much of Evans's reasoning, she does provide helpful tips in a reader-friendly tone. Employees, male or female, can use them to further their company acumen. If you're searching for ways HR staff can promote their departments, Evans provides many. Throughout the chapters, she presents bulleted lists of her most important tips.

By far the most helpful tip can be summarized in this statement: Never underestimate the power of the team. If you have issues to pursue in a meeting, solicit support well in advance. Stop by an HR co-worker's office and get her or his opinion on the topic. If that person agrees with your agenda, ask if you can count on his or her support at the meeting. Next, approach a colleague in another department and do the same thing. That way, you glean verbal support for the meeting and educate others about the relevance of HR.

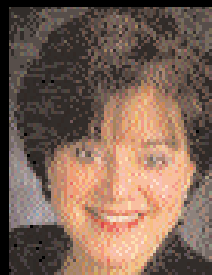
By following some of Evans's advice, my friends in HR won't be misinterpreted as just fiddling with insurance papers. Unfortunately, if they also follow her women-only strategy, they could find themselves participating in discrimination.

*She Wins, You Win: The Most Important Rule Every Businesswoman Needs to Know* by Gail Evans. Gotham Books: New York. 190 pp. US\$25  
Circle 290 on reader service card.

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By Elaine Voci



The books on my nightstand are always changing, but mostly I'm drawn to ones that glimpse the future with new ways of thinking about work and life. Here are

three worthy of your nightstand.

Futurist Melinda Davis, CEO of a New York City think tank, wrote *The New Culture of Desire: Five Radical New Strategies That Will Change Your Business and Your Life* to share discoveries made during a six-year study. Davis analyzes the most powerful desire-driven trends of our age—such as raging Amazonianism, hot-blooded spiritualism, and pleasure healing. Quizzes throughout the book help readers gauge how their habits and attitudes align with those trends.

David Weinberger's *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web* sounds dry as toast, but it's a page-turner! The book, about society and the Internet, is well written and filled with stories and humor. It will have you jotting notes in the margins.

Psychiatrist David Hawkins was knighted by Danish royalty for the work presented in *Power vs. Force: The Hidden Determinants of Human Behavior*. He teaches readers that on a primal level, the human brain is a wondrous computer linked to a universal energy field and consciousness can be calibrated on a ladder of spiritual enlightenment. The book is for readers with diverse interests in such subjects as attractor patterns for businesses, kinesiology, and personal transformation.

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