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Women's Conference say confidence is among the biggest factors impacting leadership, success and fulfillment in a career.

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Nearly 80 percent of female financial advisors attending the first-ever Edward Jones Women's Conference say confidence is among the biggest factors impacting

leadership, success and fulfillment in a career. Half of those surveyed also say

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Edward Jones. "One of the main topics Claire Shipman discussed during the conference was that while the shortage of female confidence relative to male confidence remains prevalent in today's workforce, evidence shows that confidence can be acquired. It was fascinating to learn more about the importance of confidence and what the industry can do to ensure female advisors feel confidence in their career role at the 2016 Women's Conference."

Twenty-five percent of the attendees say having a mentor/sponsor is most important tool to advance one's career, 15 percent credit hard work/accomplishment, having a professional network (9 percent) and having an advanced degree (1 percent).

Age plays a factor in these womens' views on the importance of confidence. Sixty-six percent of those over age 64+ say confidence is the most empowering tool for career advancement, compared to roughly half of those ages 45-63 and 29-44. All women in the youngest group, ages 18-28, instead choose mentorship/sponsorship.

In recent years, many studies have pointed to the disparity in confidence among men and women. For example, in 2011, the [Institute of Leadership and Management](#) surveyed British managers about how confident they feel in their professions. Half of the female respondents reported self-doubt about their job performance, compared with fewer than one-third of male respondents. This relative lack in confidence has caused some women to decline career advancement opportunities and delay their promotions, as noted within Edward Jones' survey. Of those who admitted to declining a career advancement opportunity due to a lack of confidence, 44 percent say that it took longer for them to get promoted.

The Edward Jones survey also reveals inconsistencies in views on female representation and advancement opportunities in financial services. While 85 percent of individuals agree or strongly agree that strides have been made to advance women in their careers, 77 percent also agree or strongly agree that barriers to career

advancement continue exist for women in the field, suggesting a continued industry

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Women currently represent 19 percent percent of the firm's 14,500 financial advisors, relative to just 14 percent of female financial advisors in the industry, according to the latest data from Cerulli Associates.

The survey of 100 top-earning financial advisors was conducted on the grounds of Edward Jones' 2016 annual Women's Conference, which took place from February 17-19, 2016.

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