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HIRING

Why Women Don't Apply for Jobs Unless They're 100% Qualified

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You've probably heard the following statistic: Men apply for a job when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them.

The finding comes from a Hewlett Packard internal report, and has been quoted in *Lean In*, *The Confidence Code* and dozens of articles. It's usually invoked as evidence that women need more confidence. As one Forbes article put it, "Men are confident about their ability at 60%, but women don't feel confident until they've checked off each item on the list." The advice: women need to have more faith in themselves.

I was skeptical, because the times *I* had decided not to apply for a job because I didn't meet all the qualifications, faith myself wasn't exactly the issue. I suspected I wasn't alone.

So I surveyed over a thousand men and women, predominantly American professionals, and asked them, "If you decided not to apply for a job because you didn't meet all the qualifications, why didn't you apply?"

According to the self-report of the respondents, the barrier to applying was not lack of confidence. In fact, for both men and women, "I didn't think I could do the job well" was the *least* common of all the responses. Only about 10% of women and 12% of men indicated that this was their top reason for not applying.

WHY DIDN'T YOU APPLY FOR THAT JOB?
Men and women give their reasons.