

# Women golfers have better shot at that boardroom seat: study

**NUS study says a handicap gives women an even bigger advantage than it does men**

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If you're a woman angling for a better shot at entering the corporate boardroom, you may have to own that backswing.

According to a study, perfecting that tee shot could actually get you a seat at the corporate table that has long been dominated by the boys.

In fact, according to a study by NUS Business School and the Department of Real Estate at the NUS School of Design and Environment, women who play golf are 90 per cent more likely to serve on a board compared to those who do not.

Better yet, that handicap gives women an even bigger advantage than men.

"The advantage of playing golf was more pronounced for female golfers than male golfers. Compared to male golfers, female golfers exhibit a 54 per cent greater chance to serve on a corporate board," said the report.

The higher the market value of a company, the higher the chance for female golfers to get a hook on a board seat.

More specifically, female golfers are 125 per cent more likely to serve on the board of big firms compared to their male counterparts.

Small firms however don't seem to



**The higher the market value of a company, the higher the chance for female golfers to get a hook on a board seat, according to the report. FILE PHOTO**

care much about a woman's swing as a prerequisite for a board seat.

"In small firms, playing golf did not affect female board membership," the report continued.

The report that studied the role of social capital through golf games discovered that predominantly male corporate boards find it easier to embrace women who participate in male-dominated social activities such as golf; after all, nine in ten golfers are male.

The study highlighted that women golfers were 117 per cent more likely to serve on the board of companies in industries with low female representation, compared to their male counterparts. It was observed that industries with low female representation also typically have prohibitive barriers to networking.

Don't care for golf? Then one may have to contend with the stark reality of the status quo as discovered by the research – that women are 89 per cent

less likely to serve on corporate boards of listed firms than men.

The NUS study analysed a data set of over 10,580 golfers and more than 1,640 directors based on information from 2000 to 2014 generated from two main sources – directors of over 430 Singapore-based firms listed on the Singapore Exchange and golfers' handicap books that matched directors with their golfing statistics.

"Social capital and networking foster career outcomes in the executive labour market. While these work for men and women, women's involvement in a male-dominated social activity such as golf appears to enhance their chances of being appointed to the board in a large listed company," said Sumit Agarwal, visiting professor at the Department of Finance at NUS Business School, in a statement.

"There is evidence of a gender glass ceiling, but there are means to overcome gender disparity."