

Labels

1 VOCABULARY With a partner, match the words (1-10) with the definitions (A-J)

1 boss 2 bossy 3 dedicated 4 neat 5 persuasive
6 pushy 7 selfish 8 show off 9 smooth 10 vain

- A Working hard at something because it is important to you.
- B Too proud of your own appearance (or abilities)
- C Good at encouraging people to do something.
- D A person who is in charge of other people at work and tells them what to do.
- E Charming and confident.
- F Trying hard to get what you want, in a rude way.
- G Telling people what to do in an annoying way.
- H Tidy and carefully looked after.
- I Caring only about yourself, not other people.
- J A person who tries too hard to impress others.

2 Now try to divide the words into positive and negative. Check with your partner. Do they agree?

3 VIDEO Watch a short video and discuss the following questions in pairs.

1. What do you think the message of the video is?
2. What is the video actually advertising? Do you think the message is appropriate for the product?



4a READING Read the article and compare with your ideas about the video.

Labels against women



First launched in the Philippines, the Pantene shampoo ad, ‘Labels against women’ has been making a splash all over the world since the (female) Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg re-posted it online, saying that it was ‘one of the most powerful videos I have seen.’

The video shows male and female professionals, doing the same thing, but being labelled differently. The man stands up and gives instructions- he’s a boss. The woman does it- she’s bossy. The father who works late at the office is dedicated. The mother who does it is selfish.

Some people have argued that the very fact that this is an advert for shampoo undermines its message. It seems they say, like Pantene are telling us that women won’t be treated equally until their hair is nice and shiny. How can a company that sells beauty products be taken seriously in putting across a feminist message? They have a point, but this is a serious issue, and at least this advert is getting people to think and talk about it.

There is plenty of serious academic research which proves that successful women are often described as ‘too aggressive’ or ‘difficult’. Research also shows that male and female bosses are liked equally when they are working in a team with others, but when they start giving orders, women are disliked far more than men.

On a positive note, the fact that this video has gone viral probably shows that a significant number of people around the world are interested in the topic of whether women are treated equally in the workplace. And that can only be a step in the right direction.

4b Read the article again and answer the following questions.

- 1 Whose action probably caused the video to go viral?
- 2 In what way might the fact that it is an advert undermine what the video has to say?
- 3 Does the author agree with the message of the video? How do you know?

5 SPEAKING

- 1 In your experience are women treated equally in the workplace? Give examples to support your opinion.
- 2 Do videos like this one help to change people’s attitudes? Give examples of any other videos you have seen that you think may be effective in changing people’s minds, or raising awareness about an issue.



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Key and Notes.

1

- A Working hard at something because it is important to you- 3. dedicated
- B Too proud of your own appearance (or abilities)- 10.. vain
- C Good at encouraging people to do something.- 5. persuasive
- D A person who is in charge of other people at work and tells them what to do.- 1. boss
- E Charming and confident.- 9. smooth
- F Trying hard to get what you want, in a rude way.- 6. pushy
- G Telling people what to do in an annoying way.- 2. bossy
- H Tidy and carefully looked after.- 4. neat
- I Caring only about yourself, not other people.- 7. selfish
- J A person who tries too hard to impress others.8. show off

2

Positive: dedicated, persuasive, smooth (actually this can also be negative if someone is trying too hard to be charming), neat
 Negative: vain, pushy, bossy, selfish, show-off
 ('boss' is probably neutral)

3

1. That women doing the same things as men at work may be judged more negatively.
2. Shampoo. Whether it is appropriate is a matter of opinion.

4a

Depending on the level of the class, you might want to pre-teach the following words and phrases before reading.

launch – to make something available to the public for the first time

labelled – described in a way which is not completely fair or true.

making a splash- attracting a lot of attention

undermine- make something weaker or less effective

go viral- spread quickly among internet users

a step in the right direction – an action that makes success more likely.

4b

1 Sheryl Sandberg (because as the COO of Facebook she is incredibly influential)

2 Because it is an advert for a beauty product, which could be seen as still telling women that they have to look beautiful to be successful or to be liked.

3 He/she agrees that women are unfairly labelled in the work place. We know this because the author quotes academic research to back up the point, and also says in the last paragraph that it's a 'step in the right direction' if people are interested in equality for women in the workplace.



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