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SEO salary survey points to glaring gender pay gap

Posted by Daniel Hunter on Aug 01, 2013

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Above average earnings in the SEO industry are skewed in favour of men, whilst women's earnings are considerably lower than the average wage, a study has revealed.

The research, conducted by BrightonSEO — one of Europe's largest SEO conferences — discovered that the overall average salary for men was in excess of £39,000 whilst women earned more than £10,000 less, with an average of £28,000.

The research comes just two months ahead of the next conference, which is planned and organised by digital marketing agency SiteVisibility, and found some major differences in salaries between men and women when it came to various roles within the industry. With Juniors/Executives receiving a similar salary of £24,000 for women and £23,000 for men, the big divide came amongst the more senior roles.

Male managers in the SEO industry receive an average wage of £37,000 compared to an average of £28,000 for females in the same position. Head of Departments who are female receive £37,000; a modest figure when you compare it to men in the same position who earn on average £10,000 more at £47,000.
Therefore it perhaps comes as a no surprise that over half of the female respondents felt that their salaries were 'too low' whilst almost the majority of men admitted that their wage was 'about right'. Interestingly, a small, yet larger portion of female respondents compared to men, also conceded that they felt their salaries were 'too high'.

This follows the call to businesses from female MPs to collect and publish stats on the number of women they employ at each level and the number of employees promoted by gender and the average pay gap at each rank.

With these stats in mind, SiteVisibility recently launched a dedicated recruitment agency for the digital marketing industry, ClockworkTalent, spear-headed by Kelvin Newman, Managing Director of BrightonSEO and Director of Strategy at SiteVisibility and recruitment expert Natasha Woodford.

“This survey gains a fascinating insight into salaries paid in the SEO industry and given the glaring gender differences I’m sure will lead to some intriguing debate," Kelvin Newman commented.

"Our industry continues to be one of much growth and expectation and this is only going to continue in the future. However, we have to be careful not to be left behind when it comes to gender pay and these stats show that we’ve got some work to do in order to close the gap between men and women.”

Speaking as a female in a senior position, Natasha Woodford concludes: “Given that the gender pay gap materialises as you head towards the more senior roles, certain questions must be asked. For instance are these findings a result of men being more confident in their negotiation of pay raises or remuneration upon accepting a new job?

"Have women taken a career break to raise their children? Another survey in more detail should determine whether there is really a glass ceiling or even a difference at senior level in what is really a relatively modern industry. One thing is for sure, there are some exceptional female digital agency leaders.”

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