



## Is it OK to cry at work?

It's the dilemma every working woman has faced at some point.



When women cry it can be viewed as a sign of weakness but, as Anne Hathaway displayed in *The Intern*, it's more commonly a symptom of extreme passion. (Pic: Supplied)

No, not "How do I ask for a raise?" or even the perennial "What will I wear today?", but the other burning issue of our corporate times ... "Is it OK to cry in the office?"

Yet while even the most hardened of female executives has likely found herself welling up once or twice when on the clock, the ramifications can be severe. In a man the occasional teary-eyed display can be seen as — well, endearing — but in a woman it is seized upon as a sign of weakness.

"When women cry or get overly emotional at work, it can make others feel uncomfortable," author and career coach Lisa Quast advised readers of *Forbes* magazine earlier this year. "It can also cause some people, especially men, to view that female as weak/incompetent or unable to handle the stress of a normal business environment."

That it reportedly also kills off any prospect of a promotion is enough to make even the weepiest of women think twice before succumbing to a tissue-reaching moment while within a one-kilometre radius of her colleagues.

But just as the female half of the workforce prepares to appear tirelessly stoic so as not to repel employers, along comes a new study which finds women who exercise emotional restraint are perceived as being calculating and insincere.

Research conducted by Berlin's Humboldt University, in which participants watched a video of people reacting to various images, discovered women who took time to deliver a measured approach were judged unfavourably.

"The opposite was true, however, for the guys," reported *NYPMag.com's* Science of Us. "The researchers muse that this might be because women are stereotypically thought to be more emotionally reactive, and so when they don't act accordingly, their behaviour might be seen as calculated or strategic."

And let's not even start on the pitfalls of appearing angry, with a new study from Arizona State University into jury deliberation concluding that while fury can be a powerful form of persuasion when coming from a man, when coming from a woman it is a deterrent.

So, to surmise: women are damned if they do (cry or become emotional, that is) and damned if they don't. The good news is that should it be enough to move you to tears, then go right ahead — you've nothing to lose.

