

Walk the Talk Award Entrant: Glen Cornelius - Harrison Grierson



In an industry which faces multiple diversity and inclusion challenges, Harrison Grierson Managing Director Glen Cornelius, is having a positive effect.

Glen, who has been MD at Harrison Grierson, an engineering and design consultancy, for over four years, has worked hard to develop a flexible and inclusive culture where employees feel valued.

He believes diversity needs to be personal values driven, not a “once and done” initiative. To support that he has built accountability into company systems and policies so employees clearly see the alignment and benefits associated with creating a diverse and inclusive work environment.

Glen’s attitude and approach to diversity has a flow-on effect both by example and by his active encouragement.

Much of the change has been implemented through the company’s Diversity@HG” group, which was established two years ago. Glen provided funding to start, develop and implement initiatives. Survey results this year will measure progress, and in the meantime last year’s IBM Best Workplace Survey provides an excellent yard stick. It attracted record participation by staff (91 per cent) and the highest overall engagement levels (72 per cent), since the survey started in 2008.

As does staff feedback:

"Glen understands the importance of diversity in the workplace and is very supportive of the efforts we are trying to make in this regard. He gets that diversity leads to better decision

making and ultimately a more profitable business and he is a great champion of this," says Karen West, GM - Marketing.

Glen has supported Karen in her desire to work flexibly. "He understands that I have a young daughter and while doing a great job at Harrison Grierson is very important to me, my family life is also extremely important. Glen is focused on performance and output rather than how many hours are spent in the office. He has confidence that I will get the job done and meet deadlines and he understands that some of the work will take place in the office and some of it at home in the evenings or on weekends. From my perspective it is a win-win situation as I get the flexibility I need and I'm prepared to go the extra mile for the company as I know they appreciate me and my situation."

Four of Glen's direct reports work on flexible arrangements.

Glen is also very supportive of parents returning to work. He established a Parental Leave Return Bonus programme to assist new parents with the transition back into work. The bonus offers up to 20% top up of their pay and enables parents to choose the amount of hours they wish to work.

Clare Tolan, Senior Surveyor at Harrison Grierson has benefited from Glen's approach. "Before I went on maternity leave, Glen came to talk to me personally and asked me what HG could do for me, acknowledging that what was available to mothers returning to work had not been ideal in the past. He said everything was possible, and for me to just say what I wanted. He made me feel trusted, valued, and essentially in one conversation made the whole situation a non-issue for me. Working from home has been ideal for me to transition back."

Glen is a strong supporter of external industry and business events, many of which have diversity and/or leadership as their themes. Key learnings are always relayed to the Management Team and through to all staff via From Glen's Desk (Glen's weekly company-wide email).

Long-standing employee Simon Murphy sums up Glen's impact at Harrison Grierson: "Not long after Glen became Managing Director, we as a company had a cultural change to person-directed values and practices. This has impacted positively. We have built trust and understanding of our colleagues both within our own teams and throughout the country. No more silos within the wider HG team. We're working better together resulting in improved outcome for our clients."