

EMPOWER WOMEN IN YOUR ORGANISATION



Setting ambitious diversity targets is a clear demonstration of an organisations commitment to gender diversity and equality; signalling to the outside world that it has senior buy-in and leadership on this issue and that it is constantly striving to improve equity, rather than accept the status quo. Given the compelling business case for organisations to create workplaces which allow everyone to succeed and thrive regardless of their gender, what could your business be doing to build the talent pipelines that will deliver the female leaders of the future?

Set out the goalposts and make diversity a business priority What are the numbers telling you? It is important to understand the current situation so consider your company recruitment and selection strategy; where people are in the organisation; promotion rates and appraisal scores; staff turnover; exit interviews; and pay and reward. Only by assessing where you already are in your diversity journey, can you make a plan to move forward and highlight any areas that need to be addressed. Find out more about the Diversity Works stocktake tool.

Encourage coaching, mentoring or sponsorship Interventions targeted at tackling problem areas can be hugely effective. These include reverse mentoring (pair senior managers with more junior employees), co-coaching (peer coaching within an organisation or with external partners) and senior sponsorship. These must have mutually agreed objectives and timescales. These activities bring value to coach, sponsor, mentor and participant alike and are fantastic for identifying talent in the business.

Embed agility: performance not 'presenteeism' Flexible working is a key enabler for women in the labour market, and is widely known to reduce overheads, sick days and attrition amongst all employees. Most jobs can be designed outside traditional working patterns to enable employees with external responsibilities or interests to still be able to fully contribute. Some common practices include placing limitations on the hours that meetings can be organised; options to work at home wherever possible; parental leave flexibility rather than full time leave and using technology to enable workers to fully participate in meetings while out of the office.

Consider how you reward and promote all employees Be honest with yourself. Do you wait for your staff to bid for pay rises or promotions? Do you unwittingly reward certain competencies more than others? Apply a gender equality lens to how you and your peers choose who to put forward for promotion. Evidence shows that men are often promoted based on potential, while women are considered based on proven performance. Proactively look for women with potential and feed your talent pipelines.

Inclusive leadership: motivate from the top Are you an inclusive leader – do you encourage the creativity of non-homogenous groups and support organisational change? Visible leaders who 'walk the talk' are inspiring role models for every level of the organisation. Never underestimate the impact one senior individual can have on the wider organisation - a visible voice for diversity and equality amongst the senior leadership team can influence real and sustainable change.