



Lion

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

MEDIUM-LARGE ORGANISATION FINALIST

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THE STORY

After meeting ambitious goals around a gender-balanced workforce, Lion raised the bar, aiming for gender-balanced, inclusive teams right across the company.

It was a strategy that required a multi-layered approach – the business knew that as well as attracting, developing and retaining gender diversity across all its teams, it had to focus on increasing the inclusive culture within each of those teams.

Lion produces, sells and distributes many of Australasia's favourite drinks, including beer, cider, wines, spirits and non-alcoholic beverages.

Lion New Zealand Country Director Craig Baldie says Lion knows diversity and inclusion is not simply about 'doing the right thing'. "It is critical to the long-term success of our business. To deliver the best products, services and experiences for our customers and consumers we need our internal workforce to reflect the demographics of the markets we operate in."

The company has been on a journey to increase its gender diversity for some time. In 2017 it closed the gender pay gap in the organisation and by December 2021, 51.4 per cent of employees were female, meeting the gender balance goal signalled in 2018.

"However, we realised to continue our aspirations as a leading, inclusive organisation, we needed to dig deeper and be more systemic in our approach. Simply having an aspiration

to be a 50/50 male female employer would not deliver on the value of diverse thought, challenging status quo, and valuing the unique contribution that men and women bring to our workplace,” say Jacquie Shuker, Culture and Change Director.

Lion launched its Gender Balanced, Inclusive Teams initiative, with CEO Stuart Irvine choosing International Women’s Day 2021 to announce team gender targets of a minimum 40 per cent representation of both men and women in all teams of five or more, organisation wide, by 2030.

Part of the strategy to meet the target and increase the sense of inclusion females at Lion were experiencing meant building capability for both leaders and team members and reviewing and updating Lion policies, including those covering parental leave and domestic and family abuse.

The company introduced a Respect at Lion initiative, updating its policy around respectful conduct and working with an external partner to create an interactive two-hour experience building awareness around the role all employees play in creating an inclusive workplace environment.

This work was supported by building capability around being an upstander within teams and an associated Upstander Framework and initiating a Respect at Lions Champions Network which involved training key team members to assist in setting a standard of acceptable behaviour in the workplace.

The strategy has had significant results – across 12 months, Lion increased its gender-balanced teams from 37 per cent to 44 per cent of all teams in the business. In the 2021 financial year, voluntary turnover for female staff was eight per cent lower than male turnover.

Progress was also reflected in comments in the March 2022 Employee Engagement Pulse Survey.

“I came to work at Lion because I could see a strong link with team unity which had been lacking in my previous workplace. I am really enjoying feeling an integral part of a team with goals for excellence as this is always how I like to drive myself within my role,” one female team member wrote.

“Lion has an excellent, inclusive culture and a clear strategy for the future and I am proud to work here,” another team member said.

Jacquie says by focusing on creating an inclusive environment, Lion is demonstrating leadership in its sector. “We continue to bring the industry along with us on this journey so that we can all raise the bar together. We will track these initiatives annually to ensure the solutions we have put in place make the right impact where it is needed.”

“As a leading, inclusive organisation, we needed to dig deeper and be more systemic in our approach.”

THE AIM

Lion wanted to create a systemic focus on female inclusion where it matters most, at a team level rather than an organisational level.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Set a target of a minimum of 40% female and male representation in all teams by 2030
- Include team gender targets as part of the achievement goals for all leaders in the business
- Review Families at Lion parental leave policy to remove primary and secondary carer roles and be more inclusive of all types of families and parenting experiences
- Review Domestic and Family Abuse Policy and increase benefits offered
- Introduce a Respect at Lion Initiative, which included a policy review, compliance and awareness training and launching a champions' network to assist with setting acceptable standards of behaviour
- Become an industry leader in mandating minimum gender representation of both genders at external and internal events
- Launch The Impact Project, a cultural transformation programme focusing on creating trust, psychological safety and accountability. Team members are encouraged to be challengers, calling out behaviours Lion encourages, discourages or will not tolerate



RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Gender-balanced teams increased from 37% to 44% in 12 months
- Voluntary female turnover was eight per cent lower than for males in the 2021 financial year
- In the Employee Engagement Pulse Survey:
- More females agree with the statement “diverse perspectives are valued and encouraged in my team”
- Those agreeing with the statement “I am encouraged to challenge status quo” increased by 12% in the two-year period to March 22, signalling an increase in psychological safety across Lion’s teams

KEY LEARNING

In a large organisation, taking a team approach, rather than an organisation-wide approach, to gender balance can accelerate progress in creating an inclusive culture, resulting in a more innovative, better performing workforce.

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