

## How can women be inspired to grow a career within Manufacturing and Construction?



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Report prepared by Anj Handa

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## Introduction



The manufacturing and construction sector offers above average pay, opportunities for promotion and the ability to work overseas. Yet despite all of this, companies still seem to struggle to attract women into these industries.

Kloeckner Metals UK, a Founder Patron of women leaders' network, Inspiring Women Changemakers, is championing gender diversity. A member of NASS (National Association Steel Stockholders), the company has recognised that there is much to be done and engaged Inspiring Women Changemakers to help the organisation drive this agenda forward by facilitating debate within the sector.

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February, a round-table discussion, facilitated by Founder of Inspiring Women Changemakers, Anj Handa, was held with a mix of ten industry peers and advisors to consider the challenge that manufacturing and construction employers collectively face around female talent attraction and retention and make a step change in how we approach this challenge in a wider context than with individual organisations.

Although the panel recognised that raising awareness of opportunities within the sector needs to start in schools and colleges – from primary school through to Apprenticeships and degrees - the discussion was based around attraction and retention of women at mid-management level upwards and hear about where employers are challenging the status quo.

## The Panel

Aleksandra Atwell, Senior People Manager – Manufacturing, Morrisons

Alex is responsible for Morrison's meat and chilled sites across the UK. One of the scheme's that she has led is Morrisons' industry-leading Butchery Apprenticeship which has been successful in changing applicant perceptions of the sub-sector. Alex previously worked for Morrisons in the Logistics division.

Alison Guest, Senior People Manager – Talent, Morrisons

Alison joined Morrisons in 2016 following a career in talent management for the banking sector, having worked at the Co-Operative Bank, Premier Farnell and Lloyds Bank.

Anj Handa, Founder, Inspiring Women Changemakers

Anj has worked in Diversity and Inclusion since 2003, running sector and theme-based networks, including Manufacturing, for the National Employment Panel and Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

Her career has involved contributing to Government consultation, political lobbying and designing employer-led workplace initiatives. She is an experienced non-executive Director and is passionate about Diversity in Leadership.

Ciara Milne, Finance Director and Company Secretary, Kloeckner Metals UK

Ciara is responsible for Financial Control; Financial Planning & Analytics, Credit Control and IT. In addition, she is the company's National Compliance Officer. She has worked in Manufacturing since 2007, having worked at Tata Steel following an earlier career at KPMG.

Kloeckner's finance function naturally works with every department in the company, which gives a unique vantage point to view cultural changes throughout Kloeckner and drive its forward-thinking, innovating approach through its extremely diverse teams.

Helen Greenwood, Owner, Helen Greenwood HR

An Associate of Inspiring Women Changemakers, Helen has 25 years' generalist HR experience across the full range of HR activities, particularly around Diversity and Equality, employee relations, HR Policies, Talent Management, Pay and Reward including Equal Pay, and performance coaching. She provides outsourced HR to businesses of all sizes.

Helen has run several gender equality projects, such as looking at the issues around talent management for senior scientists; setting up a returning mothers forum to look at the issues on return from maternity leave; and leading a two-year project dealing with the legal defence of 16 equal pay claims.

#### Ian Gray, MD, Celerity

Ian has a background in Executive Search, recruiting Board level and C-Suite leadership talent. Since setting up Celerity, Ian has worked with companies to develop their most promising female leadership talent.

#### Jonathan Wurr, MD, Look Up Consulting

Jonathan has worked in the manufacturing sector for over 30 years. He has been a manufacturing manager with large organisations such as Coca-Cola and more recently has run plastic moulding companies in the UK and Australia.

He now works as a coach, mentor and trainer working with manufacturing companies to develop talent. He is passionate about diversity in the workplace and wants to see all groups thrive in the sector.

#### Julie Bickerdyke, MD, Austin Hayes

Julie is CIMA qualified Finance Director with 22 years' experience in defence, oil and gas industries. She was MD at Austin Hayes for two years prior to setting up Not Just an FD, which aims to add value at Board level to manufacturing and engineering companies. Her passion is health and safety and staff development through motivation and collaboration.

Julie was asked to stand for election to the Northern Region committee of Energy Industries Council after they saw her press interviews and knew she had strong opinions. At the time, the organisation had no other female members and wanted a different perspective.

#### Katja Pandza, Marketing Manager, Kloeckner

Katja joined Kloeckner Metals UK in 2016 after marketing roles in the hospitality sector. She located to the UK from Slovenia in 2005. Her role encompasses marketing and branding for the group.

#### Nicola Sykes, Head of HR, Food to Go Division, Greencore

Nicola is responsible for the division's 23 locations throughout the UK. Her role involves creating and engaging teams in an effective People Strategy, coaching senior leaders and partnering the Directors and Executive teams to deliver the strategy and develop the business.

She has worked in various manufacturing industries for the majority of her career, with additional experience in Retail and Logistics.

Tracey McQuade, Head of HR & HSE, Kloeckner Metals UK

Tracey heads up the HR team at Kloeckner Metals. Key elements of her role include working on employee engagement, employee branding, organisational design, recruitment and selection, coaching and supporting the managers to deal with people issues, learning and development.

Three months into her role, she drafted a people strategy based on adding value to the business and the positive impact that people can have in the business if they are engaged, developed and supported effectively.

## The Statistics

According to the Employers Engineering Federation, the average manufacturing company is made up of 85% men and 15% women.

The UK has one of the lowest numbers of female engineers in Europe and the percentage of women in senior roles has fallen from 22% in 2015 to 21% in 2016. At present, there are only six female CEOs in the FTSE 100 index.

In professional services, where technical skills are paramount and HR terms and conditions are often more attractive, gender parity has almost been reached. Women now make up around 45% of the UK's GPs, scientists, solicitors, lawyers, judges and coroners.

## The Business Case

Using data from FTSE 100 firms for the period 2003-2013, Cranfield University found that companies which showed greater gender diversity were more profitable and that those with women on their board also enjoyed higher market valuations.

UK demographics have undergone a fundamental change. People are having fewer children and the average age is increasing. Due to these changing demographics, the sector must fill almost one million positions by 2020 just to replace employees who are retiring or leaving the industry.

Furthermore, workers increasingly face the choice between working and providing care for a loved one and the bulk of caring responsibilities still tends to fall to women.

Organisations simply cannot afford to have women missing from their talent pool. Most understand this and have made genuine efforts to recruit female talent. They have introduced initiatives such as targeted marketing campaigns, the use of role models and positive action schemes, with varying levels of success. So why are there still so few women in the sector?

Anecdotal experience tells us that company culture and inclusive HR policies are key success factors in the attraction and retention of talent. During this roundtable discussion, delegates discussed the impact of organisational culture and HR family-friendly policies.

Tracey McQuade and Ciara Milne from Kloeckner Metals UK shared their company's employee demographics for the organisation (as a whole, and broken down by function). The figures were comparable to sector averages. Their male/female ratios are as follows. All sites: 87/13; Head office: 63/17; Blue Collar: 100/0; White Collar: 72/28; Sales: 71/29.

The discussion that followed, covered wide-ranging topics such as blue collar roles, which tend to be occupied almost solely by men; company culture, flexible working and terminology about the role and the working environment.

## Company Culture

A 2014 study of alumnae from Murray Edwards College, Cambridge revealed that when it came to the biggest challenge to their career, 22% of women said it was combining work and family; and 38% cited an unsupportive workplace culture.

Getting women into senior roles and onto Boards requires a change in attitude and workplace culture. Often, it is not a strategic priority for CEOs, to the detriment of the company. It requires a recognition that men and women often communicate and make decisions differently and that women will not push themselves forward in the same way as men.

It has been widely perceived that 'opt-out' by women working at a senior level is down to leaving to care for a child. This is a largely a false assumption. There are many bodies of research which show that men and women have similar expectations in terms of their career.

Women opt out of organisations for reasons such as greater job fulfilment, better prospects of advancement, more favourable working terms and conditions. This is not about gender bias, but rather about addressing workplace norms.

In his TEDx talk, John Gerzma describes how he and his co-author of 'The Athena Doctrine' surveyed 64,000 citizens in 25 nations to learn how the most innovative people are deploying feminine strengths and values to recover from economic and social crisis. The important statement the book makes is about harnessing different skills and approaches to better lead, support and encourage.

So-called 'masculine' traits and behaviours are adopted by some women, as well as men. This is about getting organisations to a place where they can change mindsets and integrate culture change to create balanced and productive teams.

An aspiration would be to ensure that 'feminine' as well as 'masculine' views are woven into all touch points of the stakeholder journey (customers, employees etc).

**Direct and Indirect Bullying:** Even at Board level, women still say that they are spoken over, or that their ideas are claimed by male Board members, or that they are undermined. Others still speak of feelings of loneliness and isolation, or exclusion from certain activities.

Others report bullying by female bosses, who pull ladders up behind them or surround themselves with a team that will not question their authority. It is likely that this form of 'protectionism' arises from a feeling of insecurity.

Creating a respectful forum for effective dialogue to take place is crucial to the performance of the Board.

Where companies have included men as well as women to challenge and change behaviour, the results have largely been positive. Unhelpful behaviours are frequently unconscious and when highlighted, can be addressed.

## HR Policies

Companies must encourage the provision of maternity and paternity arrangements to counter the demographic trend towards an ageing population.

**Statutory Maternity Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay and Shared Parental Leave:** Statutory Maternity Pay for eligible employees can be paid for up to 39 weeks, usually as follows: the first 6 weeks: 90% of their average weekly earnings (AWE) before tax. For the remaining 33 weeks, they receive £140.98 per week or 90% of their AWE, whichever is lower.

Women working at a mid to senior-level will be significantly impacted due to their usual cost of living, requiring them to save at least £10,000 to be able to take six months' maternity leave and still cover their living expenses.

Companies, especially those with a shortage of women, might offer Enhanced Maternity Pay in order to attract or retain female staff. Addleshaw Goddard, second in the [The Times Top 50 Employers for Women](#) 2016 list, is a pioneer in this area. Learn more about its family-friendly terms [here](#).

Statutory Paternity Pay is available to new fathers for either 1 or 2 weeks. If eligible they can take the remaining leave as Shared Parental Leave (52 weeks minus any weeks of maternity or adoption leave) or the remaining pay as Shared Parental Pay (39 weeks minus any weeks of maternity pay, maternity allowance or adoption pay).

Shared Parental Leave can be used to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, instead of taking it all in one go. The perceived complexity of arranging Shared Parental Leave often deters employers and employees alike from requesting Shared Parental Leave.

Furthermore, a survey by the Department of Business suggested that employers are reluctant to offer Enhanced Paternity Pay for fear that their male employees will take more than two weeks off work.

The panel reported that take-up of Shared Parental Leave has been nil to low. There are likely to be a range of factors which contribute to this, such as which parent has the higher salary (i.e. affordability) to a perception that taking parental leave is career-limiting for men.

**Flexible Working Arrangements:** For some organisations, the introduction of enhanced maternity and/or paternity pay may not be feasible, but other options such as Flexible Working arrangements may be a viable option. Job design is a key consideration in the ability to offer such arrangements.

Flexible working options could include part-time working, staggered or compressed hours, flexitime and career breaks or sabbaticals when considered in line with the nature of the role and the needs of the business. Best practice would be to offer the right to request flexible working to all staff.

Benefits to the employer include greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency, the ability to attract and retain a skilled and more diverse workforce, more job satisfaction and better staff morale and loyalty, reduced levels of sickness absence, and improved competitiveness, e.g. ability to react to changing market conditions.



Flexible working isn't just attractive to mothers. According to [Carers UK research](#), caring falls particularly on women in their 40s, 50s and 60s and women were four times more likely than men to have left work due to multiple caring responsibilities. Flexible working arrangements can help to address this.

Men are less likely to request flexible working options. Discussions about family orientation and an openness on the part of men in admitting that they would like more flexibility to spend time with their families would help to change this culture, for example, that they would like to leave early on certain days to attend school events.

Interestingly, millennials are regarded to be at the forefront of driving growth in flexible working opportunities and with an ageing, shrinking workforce, this is an important point for Manufacturing and Construction businesses to consider.

Household finances also play a part. Research by charity Working Families has shown that parents who more than £70,000 a year are more likely to work flexibly than those earning between £10,000 and £40,000 (69% against 47%). In other words, there tends to be a direct correlation between salary and the ability to work flexibly.

**Case Study:** Clinical Bio-Manufacturing Facility at University of Oxford's Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) manufacturing facility.

After juggling work and motherhood for a year, [Ioana Baleanu](#) commenced a working pattern of 30.5 hours across Monday to Friday, effectively working two shorter days on a six-month trial period.

## Approaches to target women

Certain groups of people are covered by the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Yet minority groups cannot bring about substantial culture change without the support of the dominant majority. It was agreed that that roles should be open to all, but that applications are about awareness of opportunities, offering the right support and personal choice.

**Women-only Networks:** Internal and external women's networks can provide support, career advice and networking opportunities, but should not be expected to solve diversity issues within the workplace.

As Nicola Sykes from Greencore highlighted, a focus on single issues such as maternity or women fast-track schemes that are not well designed could be counter-productive

**Role models and Mentors:** One of the challenges for women in leadership includes a lack of mentors and role models. Ideally, this would not just be a single individual, but rather a developmental network of people to provide emotional as well as professional support and role modelling to help them learn, develop and progress at work.

What happens when there are too few women (or none at all) at the right level to act as mentors and role models within your organisation? Who should women approach then? On occasion, women leave their innate skills at the door and instead imitate men. Yet what works for a man can be unhelpful to women if it leads to incongruent behaviour.

An interesting point made by the panel is that some women selected by their organisation are either 'ice queens' or 'super mums' which many would be unwilling to aspire to.

Instead, women can look to the traits displayed by the leaders that they admire and emulate these in a way that works for them External role models and mentors can also provide valuable insights and guidance. The Inspiring Women Changemakers network offers a pool of values-driven female peers and mentors to its members.

**Recruitment and Progression:** Board level positions are often recruited through word-of-mouth and recommendation, yet Board members often do not know a wide range of senior women. This approach tends to result in higher numbers of men on Boards. However, even outsourcing the recruitment process is not without its pitfalls.

As a former headhunter, Anj Handa identified a barrier when placing senior-level or Board roles with Search and Selection companies. Such vacancies tend to be 'loss leaders.' They are used to promote a relationship with the client in the hope that this will lead to future job placement opportunities for 'easier-to-place' executive roles which attract higher margins.

As Ian Gray from Celerity pointed out, unless companies ask for a 50/50 shortlist, not much will change. This isn't about tokenism. Instead, a focus on the organisation's culture and systemic biases are needed to reach a sufficient number of female candidates who meet both the skills needs and culture of the Board.

Informal open days for candidates to go along to discuss opportunities and walk round the organisation can work well with the right role models present. Transparency and a 'warts and all' approach can reveal whether candidates will be a 'culture fit' or not.

Real progress can be made when companies acknowledge that even though under-representation isn't necessarily their fault, inequality exist, when diversity is something that male leaders are actively involved in, and when workplace policies and practices that may be holding under-represented groups back are challenged.

**Terminology:** Beth Stewart, CEO of Trewstar, a firm which specialises in placing women on boards, has highlighted the importance of terminology. She has observed that organisations can inadvertently restrict female applicants due to the wording of advertisements and job specifications.

For example, if a Board-level advertisement requires that a candidate must have worked at CEO, this may rule out capable women who have not held that title.

Even in management roles, companies should take care with job specifications. A frequently quoted statistic (which originated from a Hewlett-Packard internal report) suggests that men apply for a job when they meet 60% of the qualifications, but women apply only if they meet 100% of them.

This isn't necessarily down to confidence, but rather a 'have a go' attitude on the part of men. There is a range of reasons behind this difference in attitude, some of which are outlined in this [Harvard Business Review article](#). In summary, women often believe that qualifications are the real requirements and regard the recruitment process as more black and white than it is.

The panel also discussed job advertisements. For example, would the use of the word factory dissuade women from applying for a role; and would the alternative of engineering attract them?

**Career life-cycle – different needs at different stages:** How can companies best help their employees be successful in their career? Further investigation is required, but in summary, the cycles can be described as follows.

At the early stage in their career (first 5 years in the workforce), the needs of employees are likely to be quite different to mid-stage (5-15 years in the workforce).

During the mid-stage and in the mature stage (more than 15 years in the workforce), they are likely to experience one or more of the following: having a career break; looking for employment; re-educating, returning to work after a career break; working part-time, full-time or as a contractor. They will need to be supported in their jobs accordingly.

A survey by London Business School showed that 70% of women worried about the impact that a break for maternity leave or travel would have on their career. A fixed-term trial period for women re-entering the workforce can bring benefits for employee and employer alike if structured correctly.

Women Returners, a coaching, consulting and network organisation, supports companies in enabling the return to work of professional women after an extended (longer than maternity) career break. Firms such as O2 have introduced their own women returners schemes to re-introduce experienced professionals to their businesses.

## Next Steps

The panel is interested in hearing from other Manufacturing and Construction sector organisations. There are three areas where they would like to focus attention:

1. Job Flexibility
2. Culture and Mindsets
3. Recruitment Practices
4. Maternity and Paternity Benefits

If you would like to hear more about this work or contribute to the debate, please email [anj@inspiringwomenchangemakers.co.uk](mailto:anj@inspiringwomenchangemakers.co.uk).