

# Construction employers must become more female friendly to tackle shortages

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Construction firms must look to become more attractive places for women to work if they want to beat the skills shortages, says One Way.

An analysis by the specialist construction and rail recruiter found that employers must look to address the environments they foster if they want to attract more women into the industry. There are currently over 265,000 women working in construction and statistics reveal that female professionals will make up 26% of the workforce by 2020. However, One Way has warned that in order to retain this pool of talent and encourage more females to join the sector, employers must develop more open and welcoming working environments.

Paul Payne, Managing Director of One Way, comments:

“We’ve been very vocal about the skills shortages that are plaguing the construction and wider engineering industries and, until very recently, the female half of the workforce has been almost entirely overlooked by employers. Thankfully, times have changed and we’re now seeing a healthier pipeline of female talent moving into the sector. However, all of this hard work could go to waste if employers don’t think about the impact of the working culture that they’re fostering. Let’s be honest, construction isn’t the most female friendly industry and while a lot of the stereotypes are now outdated, it still has some obstacles to overcome in order to become a truly inclusive industry.”

“Recruiting women doesn’t just make sense in terms of boosting the numbers of workers in the sector, but also in terms of improving diversity which, as we all know, holds clear business benefits. There are a number of highly effective schemes in place like the SPEC programme and the likes of the #NotJustForBoys initiative which have made a real difference, but now it’s down to employers to create a more welcoming and friendly environment. Bringing in fresh blood can help to improve processes in areas like health and safety and compliance, to name just a few and having fresh, different perspectives on board can only help construction firms grow at a time when the market is particularly challenging and uncertainty is rife.”