

Women in the workplace - the hidden 50% who can make you shine!

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According to Deepak Poria, General Manager APAC at Dynama, winning companies are those that look inside their organisation to attract, recruit and retain the best talent regardless of gender. Deepak explains how to gain competitive advantage using the latest Workforce Management solutions.

Like the rest of the world, organisations in Australia are struggling to fill critical roles, with personnel who have the right talent, skills or experience. However, if the latest findings from management consulting firm McKinsey are anything to go by, they are probably looking in the wrong direction. While women constitute 42% of employees, they make up just a quarter of executives and only 10% of CEOs for large, commercial companies.(i) In certain industries, female participation is exceptionally low, for example in cyber-security where only 10% of information security professionals worldwide are women!(ii) What is more, many companies don't make it easy for women in the first place, with recent government statistics revealing that only 25% of women work full-time, therefore making it difficult for them to progress and flourish in their careers (iii).

Of course, there are real-life success stories such as Julie Bishop (Australia's first female foreign minister), Maile Carnegie (former Australian Google chief), Catherine Livingstone (chair of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia) and of course, the formidable Gina Rinehart who famously turned around the mining company she inherited from her father. Sadly, for the majority of women, it appears that many organisations, both in the private and public sector, are good at talking about gender equality but poor at putting it into practice by overlooking 50% of their workforce for senior roles.

Changing the mindset along with the job spec

The world might have moved on with digital transformation and smarter working but the general mindset towards women appears fixed in a time-warp. The problem is, if you ignore 50% of your total workforce, how can you expect to compete against more enlightened organisations at home and abroad? The questions should be how do you attract and find more women? How to empower and then keep them? These are questions that can apply to all employees, regardless of gender.

Here are a few tips to get started on reassessing the corporate mindset:

- Make a conscious decision to change – by introducing an organisational model that is committed to diversity and actively sponsors rising women
- Start from within – the chances are the employees you already have know your culture, understand how your company works and are loyal. Why waste time and money on outside recruiters when you might already have the best candidates within your existing talent pool?
- Get the job spec right – the mining industry is a classic example of a sector that faces skills shortages but dig a little deeper and you'll find they sell their jobs to men rather than make them attractive career opportunities for both sexes. Pitch the job correctly and you'll find the right people. In particular focus on areas that appeal to women for example, flexible working practices, transparent pay structures and maternity leave
- Introduce new workplace planning practices – such as 'redesigning roles to enable flexible work'

and 'supporting talent through life transitions' to create a more inclusive work environment, practices that McKinsey believes are proven to achieve greater gender equality (iv). In uncomfortable or hazardous industries such as marine engineering or defence, simple measures like improving the working environment are good ways of addressing skills shortages. Most recently, the Australian Defence Force revealed that its new fleet of submarines are to "have better living conditions as well as be more female friendly", a definite move in the right direction.(v)

Using Workforce Management to close the gender gap

Another tip is to review the technology that manages your people and other resources. Today's Workforce Management (WFM) technology offers a practical and secure all-in-one solution for recruitment, onboarding and asset management while keeping personal details safe – at anytime, anywhere, using a variety of mobile devices. Automation simplifies and accelerates the recruitment process to eliminate the common feeling of disenchantment that can follow a long and lengthy interview procedure. Tap into existing talent and maximise their potential using key WFM capabilities:

- One solution, single view of all candidates - the beauty of modern integrated WFM technology is it links seamlessly with critical HR databases and ERP systems to provide a complete view of all employees. Details such as gender, age, career and pay history, past roles and future aspirations are presented in real-time making it easy to source and match candidates against current vacancies
- Make the most of self-service apps – enhance employee engagement by allowing access to WFM systems via mobile applications on people's mobile devices. Knowing in advance about shifts, travel and career options both at work or at home via a mobile device provides more control over work-life balance which is important to everyone whatever their gender
- Turn information into insight – use WFM as a powerful workforce planning tool to conduct 'what if' scenarios such as time for maternity and paternity leave and the flexibility to accommodate career breaks or role changes for working parents
- Don't just attract them, keep them - make the most of WFM data to focus on relevant and tailored e-training programmes that empower people and allow them to learn at a time and place to suit them. They'll be happier and more likely to stay put!

Get out of that time-warp and don't ignore the hidden workforce. The rewards will be lower staff attrition and recruitment costs and higher levels of productivity and operational efficiency.

Deepak Poria, General Manager APAC at Dynama (<http://www.dynama.global>)

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About Dynama

Dynama, an Allocate Software company, builds on 25 years' heritage and is a leading provider of maritime and defence workforce deployment software. Headquartered in London, Dynama has a fully fledged new office in Canberra (Australia) with sales and support in the USA.

Its flagship product, Dynama OneView, is designed to underpin complex workforce management in safety

critical and high skill level environments, delivering both safe staffing and productivity savings.
For more information, visit Dynama (<http://www.dynama.global>)

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(i)www.mckinsey.com

(<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-in-leadership-lessons-from-australian-companies-leading>)

(ii)www.homeaffairs.gov.au

(<https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/about/national-security/cyber-security/women-cyber-security>)

(iii)www.wgea.gov.au (https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Stats_at_a_Glance.pdf)

(iv)www.mckinsey.com

(<https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-in-leadership-lessons-from-australian-companies-leading>
January 2018]

(v)www.theguardian.com

(<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/oct/08/crew-shortage-could-leave-australias-new-submarines-high-and-dry>)