



Diversity update

In 2019, we commissioned a research project with the University of Technology (UTS) in Sydney to compile a set of recruitment and retention policies that have been implemented across geographies, industries, and organisations and can be tied to tangible improvements in diversity outcomes. This report, entitled *Improving Gender Diversity*, was completed a few months ago. It lays out a list of 13 tools that have been successfully used to recruit and retain women in organisations. A couple of these initiatives include:

- An Icelandic company that used apprenticeship programmes and wage gap audits after the financial crisis to increase the number of women in management positions from 30 to 50% over the course of 5 years, and all but close the pay gap between genders.
- A Japanese company that was able to meet a goal of 30% of new managers being women (from 6.5% just three years prior) through an accelerator programme started in 2005. This programme already existed to fast track top talent, but through development initiatives focused on women early on, they were able to exponentially increase the number of women included in the accelerator programme.

These policies of course might not be comprehensive solutions nor might they be of relevance to all organisations, and we are not advocating for the adoption of each and every one of them. We simply hope that they will spur further conversation within organisations to think more deeply about recruitment and retention of talent, and new measures that may be taken to make institutions more inclusive.

As such, over this past quarter, we sent this research report to the top 10 companies we hold on clients

behalf, across all of our strategies. Most of these companies responded, agreeing with the view that diversity of thought is critically important in the workplace, and addressing gender diversity will be essential in the next decade. From the responses, a few interesting examples of what these companies were able to achieve include:

- An IT services provider that was able to open an all-women Business Processing Services centre in Riyadh, employing over 1,000 women, of whom 85% are Saudi nationals. With multiple other examples of initiatives taken to retain women within the broader organisation, they have been able to keep the attrition rate for women within the company at the same level as the overall attrition rate – unique within the IT services industry.
- A company in the automotive & farming sector that was able to ensure that a minimum of 30% of new hires in ‘core’ roles of engineering, research and development (R&D), sales, and manufacturing were women. This was done by changing the incentive structure for recruitment consultants they work with, providing higher consultancy fees and referral bonuses for every female candidate shortlisted.

While the companies we have written to are no doubt making changes to address diversity, we remain concerned that they are not moving as fast as they should. We are by no means experts on this topic, and are seeking to learn from their experiences as much as we try to share what we have learned through this research process. In the coming few months, we plan to continue our dialogues with these management teams and also hope to further our own knowledge on this topic.

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Contact details

Edinburgh

23 St Andrew Square
Edinburgh EH2 1BB
United Kingdom
t. +44 (0) 131 473 2900

London

Finsbury Circus House
15 Finsbury Circus
London EC2M 7EB
United Kingdom
t. +44 (0) 207 332 6500

Singapore

58 Duxton Road
2nd & 3rd Floor
Singapore 089522
t. +65 680 59670

Sydney

Suite 10, Level 3
13 Hickson Road
Dawes Point
Sydney NSW
Australia 2000
t. +61 2 8274 8000

info@stewartinvestors.com
stewartinvestors.com