

Paving the way for women in male-dominated industries



Redefining business success in the context of diversity, equity and inclusion

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, organizations face a multitude of challenges, including heightened competition, the need to comply with new legal requirements and the impact of shifting demographics. The persistent shortage of talent adds an additional layer of complexity to these obstacles, with 75 % of employers reporting difficulties in filling open positions (Manpower Group, 2024).

To address the talent shortage, organizations must act quickly to expand their talent pool. This can be achieved through **retraining programs, facilitating career transitions, promoting inclusivity and enhancing industry appeal to underrepresented groups**. For male-dominated industries, such as manufacturing, the latter means to make the workplace more appealing and inclusive for women by considering their expectations as employees.

Mercer's [Global Talent Trends](#) (GTT) 2024 indicates that women expect fairness and equity in the workplace, with a fair salary being a top priority for 34 % of female employees.

However, how can female employees feel fairly treated if they still face an average global pay gap of 31.6 % (World Economic Forum, 2023) compared to their male counterparts?

The GTT further shows that women expect flexibility. A lack of/or reduced flexible working options would lead 23 % of women to leave a company.

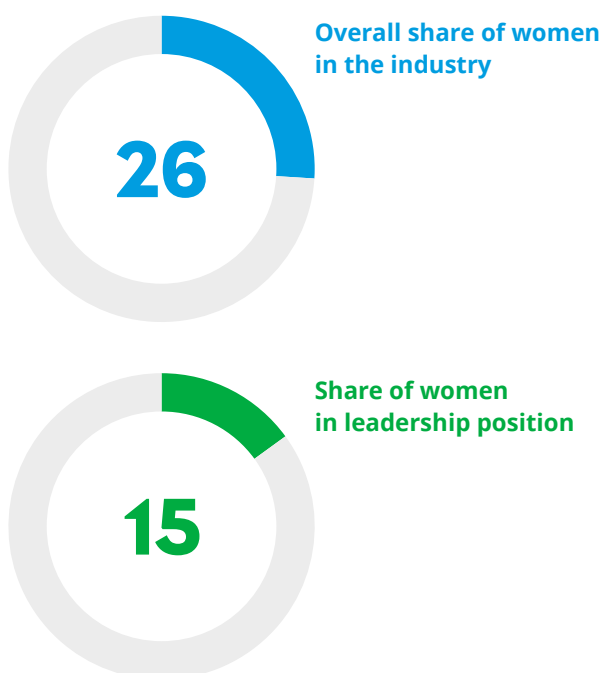
However, how many companies do really offer flexible working arrangements that accommodate different life phases and situations in male-dominated industries?

Mercer's GTT also shows that women want to trust their employer, with 16 % of them indicating that trustworthy and inspiring leadership would encourage them to stay with the company.

However, when basic facilities like changing rooms at production sites are lacking, how can women place trust in their employer?

The examples provided serve as a compelling illustration of the significant gap between the expectations of female employees and the current reality they face in the workplace. This discrepancy poses a challenge for organizations, particularly those in male-dominated industries, as it hinders their ability to attract and retain female talent. The consequence is evident: unfilled positions that hinder productivity and come at a substantial financial cost to organizations. Therefore, it is crucial to not only acknowledge but actively address this disparity between expectations and reality. One way to begin is by fostering a work environment where every employee feels valued, represented and treated with fairness.

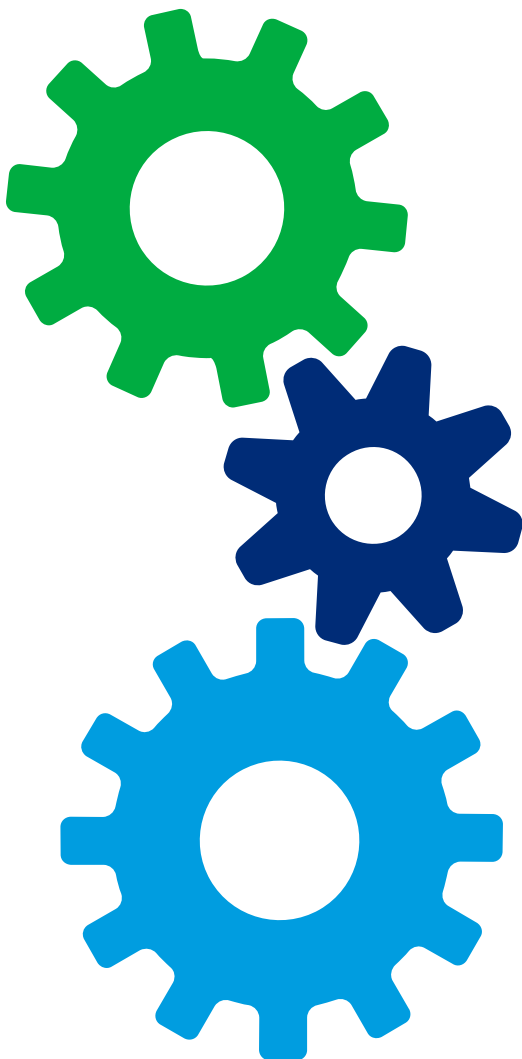
Share of woman in a male-dominated industry such as manufacturing (in %)



Sources: Jenns, 2023; WeAreTechWomen, 2021

Driving success through diversity, equity and inclusion: Mercer's holistic approach

At Mercer, we strongly believe in the power of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on organizational success. Our project experience has shown that when individuals from diverse backgrounds collaborate, they bring a wealth of unique ideas and perspectives that drive innovation and creativity. Research indicates that prioritizing DEI can lead to 2.5 times higher revenue per employee and a 35% increase in productivity (Research & Markets, 2022). Therefore, DEI presents a valuable opportunity for organizations to tackle challenges like environmental, social and governance (ESG), talent acquisition and employee retention.



To embark on this transformative journey, the first crucial step for organizations is **to actively listen and deeply understand**. It is imperative to delve deep into the root causes of inequalities and gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges at hand. By asking ourselves important questions such as why is there a lack of women in leadership positions and why a gender pay gap exists, we can uncover the underlying issues that need to be addressed.

Armed with this knowledge, a **steadfast commitment** is required to initiate **meaningful organizational development**. Our recommendation is to adapt and revise all organizational processes, programs and day-to-day practices. Special attention should be given to important personal moments that matter, such as birth, relocation and conflicts. By addressing these areas, we can create a more inclusive environment and provide support and opportunities for women to, for example, attain leadership positions.

As positive changes begin to emerge, organizations need to take the next step by **engaging in open and honest communication**. It is essential to transparently convey what the organization can offer and how it can fulfill the aspirations of its employees. Setting clear goals and timelines becomes paramount, ensuring that everyone is aligned and aware of the organization's commitment to DEI. By proactively managing expectations and addressing concerns, we can mitigate potential disappointments and foster a culture of long-term employee retention.

Breaking barriers: Women4Metals empowers women in the metal industry

A prime illustration of our dedication to DEI is the Women4Metals (W4M) case, which exemplifies our commitment to empowering women in male-dominated industries.

For more
information
click on
the logo



What is Woman4Metals about?

Like many manufacturing companies, Aurubis – a global leader in copper recycling and a trusted supplier of non-ferrous metals – faces the challenge of attracting women as an employer and ensuring their long-term retention by fostering an inclusive culture where female employees feel welcome. To tackle these challenges, a dedicated group of Aurubis employees took proactive measures by founding the women's initiative Women4Metals (W4M) in 2019.



As a grassroots initiative, W4M started with the aim of giving visibility to women to pull others into the industry. As the initiative grew, new objectives emerged, such as supporting career growth, fostering diversity and equal opportunities and cultivating inclusivity.



To achieve these objectives, W4M extended its internal work within Aurubis by launching an industry-wide external initiative. The internal work of the initiative involved increasing collaboration between male and female employees from all locations, along with ESG and HR experts, to conduct a thorough needs analysis, shedding light on the conditions for women at production sites worldwide. The analysis resulted in specific actions such as the construction of female sanitary facilities, provision of hygiene products and the use of inclusive language in job adverts and postings to attract individuals of all genders. Additionally, W4M recognized the importance of creating safe spaces where women can openly discuss their experiences and concerns.



Simultaneously, the external work of the initiative focused on building partnerships with companies, associations and individuals globally. This increased the visibility of women in the metals industry and facilitated the creation of platforms for exchange and networking, such as cross-mentoring, empowerment days, training sessions and plant tours. With their dedication, W4M have become pioneers who aspire to transform not only Aurubis but the entire metals industry.



The growth of the initiative can be attributed to several key success factors. These include strong board support and adequate funding, a passionate and engaged team, a focus on tangible impact, a broad network and strong presence, as well as an inclusive approach with 30% male allies.

Mercer was fortunate enough to guide W4M on its journey through sharing best practices and developing the focus topics that now serve as the structural foundation of the initiative. However, W4M is far from reaching its destination. Next steps include offering specialized recruiting training, a buddy program, cultural workshops, factory tours and launching a newsletter and podcast.

Our recommendations for your success

When it comes to achieving extraordinary results, the W4M case serves as a compelling example of how even an idea with an initial small budget and limited resources can turn into something truly remarkable.

To support you in attaining comparable success, here are three key considerations:

Define your purpose

Start by clearly articulating your organization's purpose. This sets the foundation for creating a compelling vision, a mission that resonates and a roadmap that leads to tangible outcomes.

Engage your stakeholders

Involve relevant stakeholders from the very beginning. Empower them as ambassadors for your initiative. Their passion and commitment will make a difference in establishing necessary structures and developing actionable measures.

Be authentic

Ensure that your initiative reflects the authentic values and identity of your organization. Stay true to your core principles and beliefs throughout the journey to gain trust and credibility but also attract like-minded individuals and organizations to join your cause.

Develop a strategic plan

Create a comprehensive plan that outlines the steps, resources and timelines needed to bring your purpose-driven initiative to life. This plan should be flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances.

Contact us

At Mercer, we understand the complexity of turning ideas into reality. We have the expertise and experience to guide you through this transformative journey. Our team is dedicated to provide you with the strategic advice and support you need to bring your initiative to life. Let us help you make a meaningful impact and achieve extraordinary results.

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