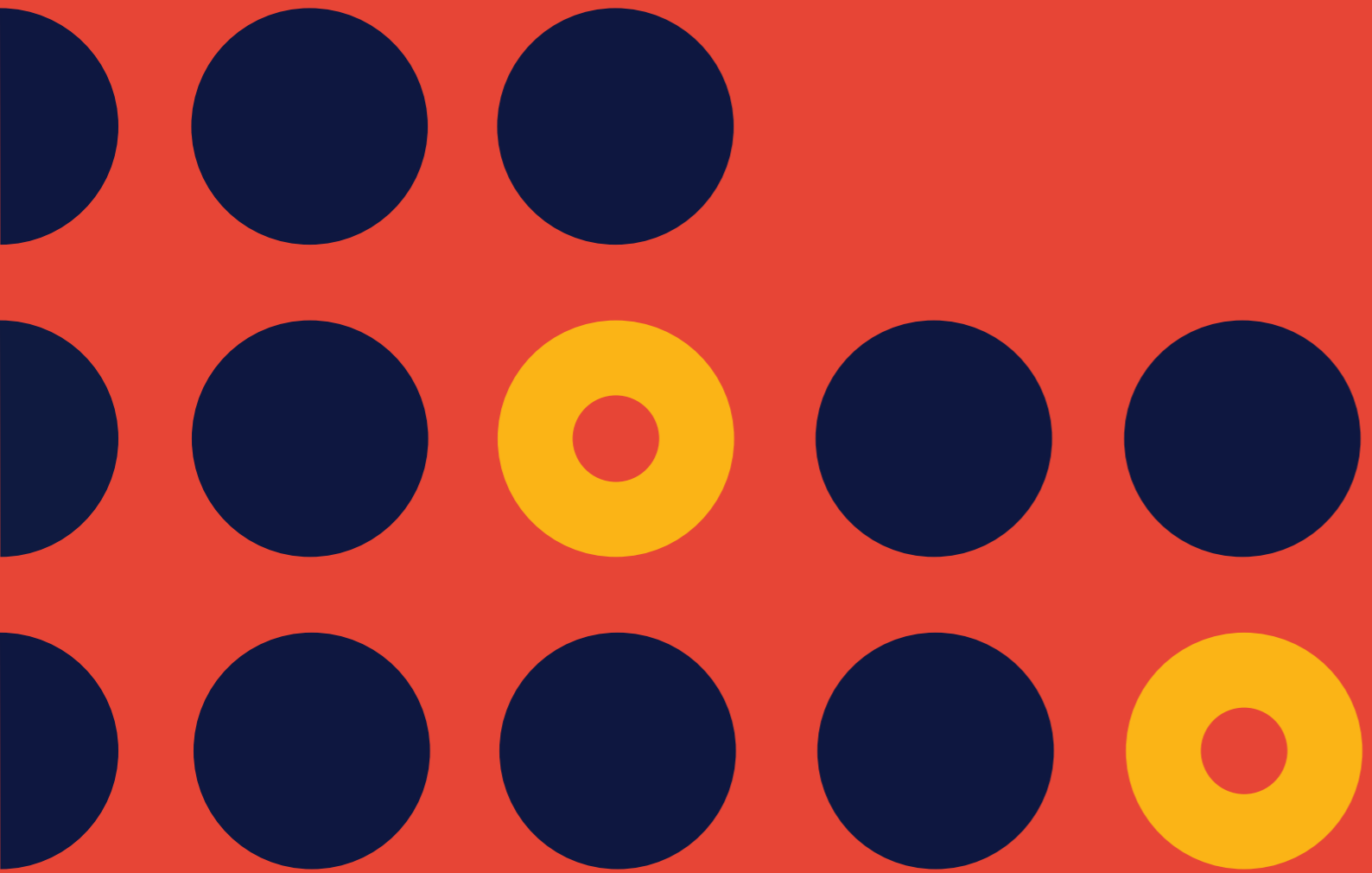


women in construction



the race to
gender equality.

women remain

under-represented.

In today's globally competitive economy, the value of nurturing high performers has never been greater.

With the demand for talent at an all-time high, savvy business leaders in the construction, property, engineering and rail industries are enhancing their workforce to keep ahead of some of the largest projects we have seen in recent times. From completion of large infrastructure projects such as Crossrail and the Northern Line Extension to football stadiums, listed-building refurbishments and large commercial projects, having the right leadership and management capability is more important than ever.

To drive change through the ranks, the status quo needs to shift, enabling a more inclusive, diverse and gender equal workforce in the years to come. With women comprising of just under 20% of the directly employed construction workforce our report also shows they have been overlooked for the top jobs in construction.³ However, a diverse workforce allows the best talent to rise to the top, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, cultural background or beliefs.

Key projects in 2018¹

Angel Meadows - Manchester
Aykon London One - London
Battersea Power Station phase 2 - London
Palace of Westminster refurbishment - London
Capital Square - Edinburgh



It has been well documented that women remain under-represented in the construction industry despite positive advances in recent years, a prime example being more women in STEM related apprenticeships in 2017 than 2016 (6% growth).² There remains a pressing need to do more to encourage a commitment to gender diversity in the workplace and thus attract more women into the industry and enable a smoother path to senior leadership.

Our research shows there are blind spots at organisations and this is having a direct impact on the speed of change. We cannot solve problems that we do not clearly see or understand.

About the research.
In January 2018, Randstad surveyed more than 5,400 construction, property, engineering and rail professionals to find out the key barriers, limitations and challenges that women are facing on the path to senior leadership.



Women fall behind early.
The survey revealed 43% of organisations do not actively monitor pay equality.

This is a cause for concern as, according to ONS (Office for National Statistics) statistics, women in construction and building trades are paid on average 14% less than men who work in the same job. The gap rises to 22% further up the career chain for women in senior or supervisor roles.

With nearly half of businesses not monitoring the gender pay gap, organisations should bring this to the forefront of their workforce management strategies. In April 2018, government legislation will come into effect for 9,000 of the largest firms, requiring them to publish data on the gender pay gap within their organisation. By analysing and understanding this information, firms will be better equipped to ensure equality of pay in line with the government's aspirations.⁵

Normalising the female leader.

When asked how having a female manager would impact construction workers' jobs, an overwhelming 93% said that it would either stay the same or have a positive effect. Only 7% of workers felt that it would worsen. This suggests that there is an openness in the industry towards having a female manager.

Just under half of respondents (49%) said they had never worked with a female manager. The key to finishing a project on time and to budget is often down to management. Already an industry lacking skilled workers, we cannot afford to miss out on talent due to a lack of awareness. It is important for organisations to attract a wide and diverse range of talent into the industry, ensuring a balanced workforce.⁶



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Promotions and equality.

Out of 1,200 people that have experienced gender discrimination (33%), 60% were women. Three quarters (73%) of women said they felt they had been passed over for projects because of their gender and not their skills, compared to just 27% of men. This strongly suggests that across the industry, women are typically not being given the same opportunities to be involved as their male counterparts.

Social events for all.

More than eight in ten women surveyed felt left out and excluded from male orientated conversations and social events. In a more inclusive world, social events or group initiatives would be made more widely available and would be a lot less likely to be perceived as 'male activities'.

8 out of 10 women felt left out of conversations and social events.



the workplace can be challenging

especially for women.

Our research has identified a number of factors that are limiting the retention and progression of aspiring female leaders. Employers need to challenge the status quo and be supportive of a cultural shift in work behaviour to ensure the right balance.

- 1 inappropriate comments from a male colleague
- 2 passed over for promotion
- 3 overlooked for important projects

The real concern for women working in construction roles is suffering from unconscious bias. Biases are influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences. We may not even be aware at the time, and even more so not aware of the impact.

Research shows that unconscious bias can heavily influence recruitment and selection decisions. In order to bring this to the front of hiring managers' minds, organisations should upskill and train their layers of management in how to identify what the risks and warning signs of unconscious bias are. 17



The industry has changed for the better in my 20 years in construction. Bigger companies don't want to be seen as they used to. But attitudes on site still remain and it'll take a few years to bridge the gap. The industry doesn't tend to push the women workers it has and it isn't advertised enough from a school age so there are still big differences in mentality."
Julie Harris, site manager, Pennyfarthing Homes.

Women in high places.

According to our research, one in every five board members in construction is a woman while FTSE (Financial Times Stock Exchange) 100 boards comprise of 28% (1 in 4) female members. This has significantly increased in the last eight years with 2010's figure sitting at 12.5% but the construction industry is still playing catch up with other sectors. Construction News revealed in 2017 that since 2014, the number of female board members has dropped and a number of female CEOs have left their post, being replaced with male counterparts.

Company size to rally a change.

Even though it is well documented that fewer women work in construction than men, 62% of smaller business (1-49 employees) do not have a female board member. A change of mindset at these organisations would help to evolve and ensure their business is seen as a fair and equal employer. By making a visible commitment to diversity with sustained actions throughout the organisation, a cultural change could be just on the horizon.

Organisations of all levels should look beyond their current and previous CEOs/C-suite members and consider candidates with the right expertise and skills regardless of gender.

A call for female role models.

Just under half (45%) of women indicated that a lack of senior female role models was a barrier to progression. Having women that have been through similar experiences, who have overcome obstacles and successfully achieved may inspire those trying to do the same thing as well as those who never before considered a career in construction. They could serve as mentors and coaches as opposed to offering more formalised and structured training and workshops.

Lack of strategy compromising the path to the top.

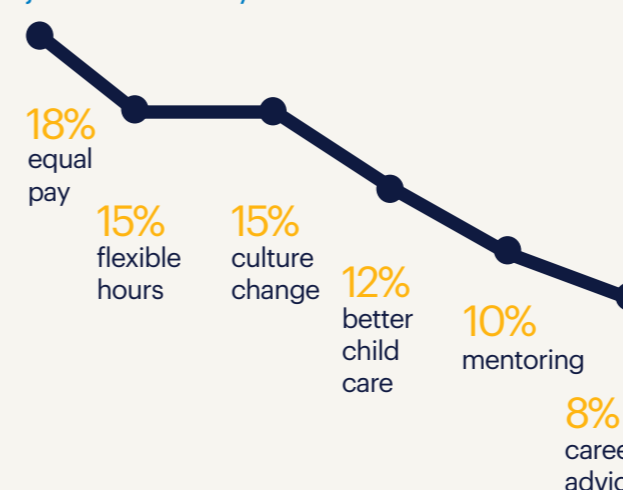
Creating a clearly defined strategy for developing staff is potentially a greater issue than gender bias. One in five organisations have never promoted a woman to a senior position and without the right support, encouragement and development opportunities, women are likely to miss out on opportunities.

Talented professionals need to be in communication with their employer about their personal career path, and companies need to be sure that they understand their workforce, in order to offer the right leadership and development opportunities.

Nearly three quarters (74%) of women in our survey were not aware of any initiatives that help women progress into senior positions suggesting employers need to improve at offering programmes and encouraging involvement.

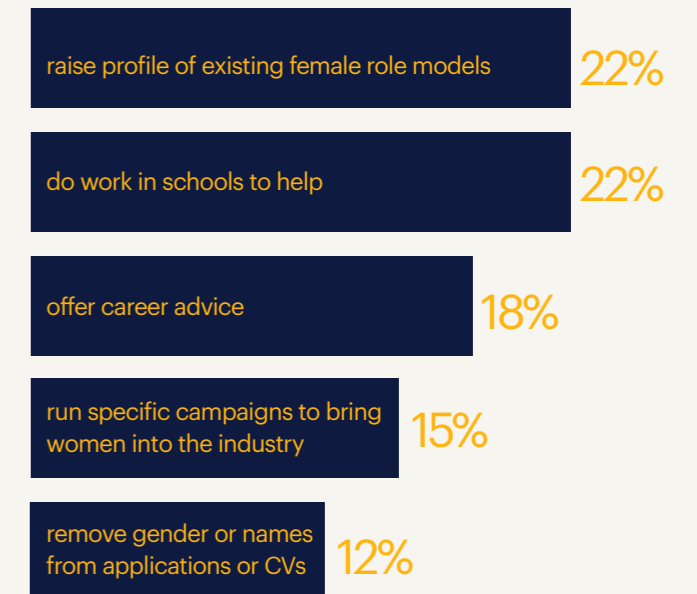
Nearly one third (30%) of organisations promoted a woman into a senior position last year, which suggests the majority do not provide opportunities for women to progress. If companies showed that after development training there are roles to fill then that would go some way to offer encouragement to women at all levels of the organisation.

What would encourage more women to join the industry?



Encouraging change.

Our survey asked what organisations are currently doing to remove gender bias; here were the most adopted initiatives.



Perception could be a large part of the problem.

Nearly a quarter (22%) of businesses raise the profile of some of their most senior women. This helps to encourage and motivate aspiring female professionals to achieve their goals.

Starting at the grassroots level, it is important to encourage more women into the sector at a school and college age. Again, just under a quarter (22%) of companies do work in local schools, and offer careers advice to young people. Encouraging young people and especially women into STEM subjects will go some way in helping bridge the gap in the future.

According to "Girls into STEM", the UK needs 100,000 new graduates in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics every year until 2020 just to maintain current employment numbers. Employers could work closely with local schools and communities to promote the career opportunities that working in construction, property, engineering and rail sectors could bring them in the future.

When looking at the recruitment process, to combat unconscious bias, 12% of organisations remove names and/or gender from CVs; thus anonymising applicants. This is a positive step forward. Language in job descriptions could also be crafted to speak to a wider ranging audience, ensuring a more inclusive recruitment and selection process.



advice from the top

“ There are enough events and initiatives going on in the industry, in many different sectors, so the door is definitely open for women. In the six years of working with construction firms, I have seen an improvement around women in construction. The key is in building rapport and trusting relationships.”
Pam Sherwood, Health and Safety manager

“ At a time when equality and diversity is making leaps forward, construction is still playing catch up in some areas. Companies need to band together to build an environment that nurtures and rewards successful, hard-working women to move up the career ladder. Though the number of women entering construction is slowly rising, retention is a key area that needs development. Organisations that cannot retain, develop and enhance their female workforce will be missing out on key skills, new ideas and ways of working to help keep the industry driving forward.”
Owen Goodhead, Managing Director, Randstad CPE

“ Construction has always had a ‘macho’, male-dominated connotation. In over 10 years of construction recruitment I have seen more and more women entering the industry and have seen women promoted into senior positions, which is refreshing as it shows the industry is beginning to remove barriers. Businesses need to analyse why women would leave the industry. Most importantly, we all need to make sure that construction is a career path that both women and men enjoy being a part of.”
Sarah Sidey, Head of Strategic Accounts, Randstad CPE



road to
equality.



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links to stats within this report

- *1 <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/analysis/news-analysis/10-projects-to-watch-in-2018/10025751.article>
- *2 <https://www.wisecampaign.org.uk/resources/2017/11/women-on-stem-apprenticeships-201516>
- *3 <https://www.constructionnews.co.uk/data/industry-barometer/women-in-construction-what-do-the-numbers-say/10017870.article>
- *4 <https://visual.ons.gov.uk/explore-the-gender-pay-gap-and-test-your-knowledge/>
- *5 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-42918951>
- *6 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2017/11/16/skills-shortage-tightens-around-uk-construction-sector/>
- *7 <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/guidance-resources/employment-and-careers/staff-recruitment/unconscious-bias/>





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