

Chapter 2:

Attraction

Strategies to attract more women to consider and apply for opportunities within male-dominated industries

There is a skills shortage in Australia and 45% of Australian employers are having difficulty filling key positions in their organisations. Employers have the most difficulty finding skilled trades people and engineers, both of which have remained at the top of the local skills shortage list since 2006. With little movement in these figures in the last five years, Australia ranks fourth in the world in talent shortages, well above the global average.¹

Given this 'war for talent', some organisations in the mining, utilities and construction industries are advertising off-shore to attract employees. This is despite a large pool of women in Australia who could have long and successful careers within these industries in both corporate and non-traditional roles.

Organisations that attract women will not only address the skills shortage, they will also reap the economic benefits of gender diversity and be the most competitive and sustainable in the long term.

Leading organisations are implementing attraction strategies to:

- Create positive perceptions of the industry that would make the industry or workplace attractive to potential women employees and their influencers.
- Promote the benefits and career opportunities that exist within these industries.



The following key points provide examples of attraction strategies used in male-dominated industries in Australia and internationally.

1. Job advertisements that attract women to apply:

- **Display diverse images and use inclusive language** and other visual cues in job advertisements to attract women to non-traditional roles.
- **Locate advertisements broadly and where women will notice them** including in fitness centres, in print media, on internet sites and the online forums women are regularly accessing.
- **Advertise to the key influencers on the career decisions of young women** including mothers, friends, career advisers and teachers.
- **Use women's voices for radio, television, video and internet advertising** to send a strong signal the organisation wants to attract female employees.
- **Focus on the 'brand' of the organisation and career opportunities** and create a value proposition that is attractive to women.
- **Offer a female contact for questions** to give potential female applicants the opportunity to ask questions to women employed in non-traditional roles.

2. Cases and content that inspire women to believe the opportunities:

- **Use diverse images and inclusive language** in marketing materials and on the corporate web to attract women to non-traditional roles.
- **Provide information on the full range of career opportunities available to women**, including opportunities for **flexible work practices** and other available care strategies, and encourage women to apply for both corporate and non-traditional roles.
- **Publish profiles and case studies of women in non-traditional roles** to provide role models potential applicants can relate to and be inspired by.
- **Promote achievement of individual and corporate awards focused on women** to recognise participation and success in 'leading practice' awards.
- **Sponsor awards and awards events** to enhance the organisation's profile and to promote women's accomplishments within non-traditional roles.

3. Engagement activities that broaden the pool of potential applicants:

- **Engage with primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of opportunities for girls** by creating teaching aids and sponsoring competitions, work experience and camps for girls and providing careers guidance.
- **Engage with TAFE, colleges and universities** and provide careers guidance, scholarships, internships and vacation employment for women.
- **Partner with local communities, clubs and skills based networks** to market the opportunities and non-traditional career paths that are available to women.
- **Sponsor and offer an apprenticeship program** to young women and promote the career opportunities available in non-traditional roles.

1. Job advertisements that attract women to apply

Job advertisements represent the 'face' of the organisation and send a strong signal about the culture and values the leadership team wants to display. Images also signal whether the leaders are focused on attracting women as job applicants and the types of roles they want to attract women to. This is particularly important for male-dominated industries which have historically focused on advertising to men.

The role of job advertisements is to predispose and reassure women to apply for non-traditional roles in these male-dominated industries. Imagery and language used by the organisation is an important means of achieving this. Organisations should review all advertising (brochures, flyers, advertisements and annual reports) to ensure they use inclusive language and feature photos of women working in non-traditional roles. They should also ensure women's voices feature in the voiceovers used in videos.

Leading organisations recognise that job advertisements are most effective when they:

- Catch the attention of women.
- Put forward a meaningful proposition to women.
- Make women feel 'welcome' to apply for a role.



The images and language used in advertisements in male-dominated industries send a strong signal about whether or not an organisation wants to attract women to work with them.

Strategies used by organisations in Australia and internationally to attract women to non-traditional roles:

Display diverse images and use inclusive language in job advertisements

It is important to feature women prominently in advertising and promotional material to address negative gender stereotypes. Many organisations use images of women in non-traditional roles and in uniform as engineers, truck drivers, wearing hard hats and safety gear.

Another approach is to use imagery that focuses on the lifestyle in the work location, particularly in regional and rural locations. This promotes a quality of life that may appeal to applicants.

It is equally important to use inclusive language such as 'tradesmen and tradeswomen'. 'Tradespersons' is gender neutral and is not as likely to be as effective in attracting women.

Locate advertisements broadly and where women will notice them

Organisations are becoming more creative about placement of job advertisements and are no longer relying on traditional channels to advertise roles.

Instead, they are using magazines and other print media targeted to young women and internet sites and online forums women are regularly accessing, including MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

Other organisations overseas have broadened their advertising campaigns and circulate job advertisements to fitness-centres, day-care centres and health providers. They also post job advertisements in retail outlets and community organisations frequented by women.

These same organisations are placing advertising in newspapers under the headings for 'women-dominated' jobs, such as administrative and retail positions, as a way to ensure more women notice their advertisements.

Advertise to the key influencers on the career decisions of young women

Family members and teachers are significant influences on the career decisions of young women. Research shows the role of mothers is particularly important in influencing the career decision.²

When teachers and parents send the message that girls are equally capable of achieving in subjects like maths and science, girls are more likely to assess their abilities more accurately and to see non-traditional roles as a viable career choice.

Organisations overseas are advertising in publications and venues targeted at mothers and teachers with the aim they will encourage their daughters and students to apply.

Use women's voices for radio, television, video and internet advertising

Leading organisations overseas are using female voiceovers in recruitment advertising campaigns. Given most advertising uses male voiceovers, the female voice 'stands out' and sends a strong signal the organisation is inclusive and actively encouraging women to apply.

Focus on how you 'brand' your organisation and career opportunities

Organisations are ensuring the brand and value proposition used in their job advertisements is attractive to women. These organisations realise it is important to appeal to a broad range of women.

Some young women will be attracted by flexibility and inclusive policies while others will be attracted to a relatively large salary and the opportunity to travel. Others will be attracted by development opportunities and relative job security.

Offer a female contact for questions

- Leading organisations give female applicants the opportunity to ask questions to women employed in non-traditional roles.
- This provides tangible 'proof' that women can have a successful career in a non-traditional role in the organisation. It also provides the opportunity for young women to ask questions to someone she may 'relate' to more.

Some good industry examples include:

- **BHP Billiton** prominently features women on their graduate recruitment webpage. These women are pictured both individually and also with men. The language in the advertisement highlights the importance of diversity to BHP Billiton. 'At BHP Billiton, our success relies on recruiting and retaining talented, diverse, passionate and motivated people to help us resource the future.'
<http://www.bhpbilliton.com/home/people/graduates/Pages/default.aspx>
- **AGL's** main careers page has one image and it is of a female employee in a hard hat. The language highlights the inclusive workplace culture. 'At AGL, we see the diversity in our workforce, supported by an inclusive workplace culture, as a key to understanding and engaging our employees, the customers we serve and the communities in which we work. You can expect a workplace culture that is interested in your perspective, your experience and your ideas; where you'll be supported to achieve your potential.'
<http://www.agl.com.au/about/careers/working-at-agl/Pages/default.aspx>
- **John Holland Group** website contains a video about their graduate program featuring a female building graduate who talks about her experiences. The video also features several female employees on-site in hard hats and other protective gear. The website also contains a profile of another female construction management graduate.
<http://graduates.johnholland.com.au/meet-our-graduates.html>
- **Essential Energy** displays a photo of both a male and a female employee in their on-line advertisements for apprenticeships for power-line workers and/or electrical technicians.
'The type of person that usually excels in an apprenticeship is good with their hands, likes working outdoors, can work from heights and has shown an interest in this or similar field at school or work.'
<http://www.essentialenergy.com.au/content/apprenticeships>
- Another **energy company** needed to recruit a technical position in a regional location and wanted to attract women to apply. They used scenic rural images in their advertisements and emphasised the benefits of the location, including quality of life. The advertisement was successful, attracting and recruiting a senior woman into the technical role.
- Another **energy company** profiles female employees in non-traditional roles in *Cleo* magazine inviting women to apply for job opportunities.

Share your views...

Share your views on which attraction strategies have worked, and which ones haven't. We also hope you will share any other ideas you have to attract women in these industries.

Please click on the hard hat to go to the discussion area of the toolkit.



2. Cases and content that inspire women



In partnership with job advertisements, marketing materials and corporate websites convey whether an organisation values women in the workforce, is focused on attracting women to apply for job opportunities and the types of roles they want to attract women to.

If a woman is viewing a corporate website or reading marketing materials, she is probably already interested in the organisation and is considering a career in the industry. It is therefore important to provide information that assists with her decision making and encourages her to progress to apply for a role.

Corporate websites and marketing material in leading organisations contain:

- Good visual design that catches the attention of women.
- Content that is relevant to women and answers the question ‘what’s in it for me?’
- Credible messages consistent with employee experience.
- A call to action that encourages women to move from interest in an organisation to apply for a role.

Corporate websites and marketing materials can inspire a woman to apply for a non-traditional role, a role that she may not have previously considered.

Strategies used by organisations in Australia and internationally to attract women to non-traditional roles:

Display diverse images and use inclusive language

It is important to feature women prominently on corporate websites and other marketing material. Language should also be inclusive.

Leading organisations regularly review all their brochures, flyers, advertisements and annual reports to ensure they feature photos of women working in non-traditional roles, use inclusive language and provide information on the benefits and opportunities available for women within the organisation.

Provide information on the full range of career opportunities available to women

Organisations are actively promoting the diversity and complexity of the full range of opportunities available to women. This includes highlighting both corporate and non-traditional roles and the potential opportunity to transition between the two, as well as highlighting the availability of flexible work arrangements and other care strategies for employees.

Some organisations actively market the employee value proposition (EVP) offered by organisations including the rewards, both financial and non-financial, and the career and development opportunities.

To identify the most compelling EVP and the best channels to deliver this, one strategy is to hold focus groups with employees, educators and potential applicants to understand how to build a strong employment brand which appeals to women. Focus groups can also be used to strengthen the relationships between the organisations and the external participants.

Publish profiles and case studies of women in non-traditional roles

Many organisations have developed case studies that highlight the personal successes of women within the organisation.

These case studies communicate the diverse range of women's experiences in male-dominated industries. They also showcase the number of career paths available and reinforce that career success in non-traditional roles does not necessarily involve embracing a culture of long working hours.

Profiles can be brief 'snap shots' of women working in the industry. Case studies may be more detailed, providing information on the career path and development undertaken.

Promote achievement of individual and corporate awards focused on women

Some organisations promote their participation and success in awards at both the individual and organisational level. These awards can be specifically gender focused or related to the general industry. Either way, they celebrate successful progress in applauding organisational and individual achievement in supporting women in these industries.

An example of organisational award is the 'EOWA Employer of Choice for Women' (now the WGEA). Individual awards for women may be internal to the organisation or industry, such as 'Professional Engineer of the Year' or 'Apprentice of the Year'.

The awards can also be internal awards for male employees or teams who have shown leadership in supporting women in non-traditional roles or who have been 'champions' of diversity and flexibility. These awards receive active support when they are sponsored and delivered by the CEO and are the focus of an internal media and community strategy.

Sponsor awards and awards events

Sponsorship of an individual award or an entire awards program enhances the organisation's profile and perceived activity in gender equality. It also gives the organisation the opportunity to showcase their own accomplishments in their gender diversity strategy and the actions taken to increase the number of women in non-traditional roles.

Some good industry examples include:

- **AGL's** website has a case study on Janet and her role as a Drilling and Completions Manager. In her profile, Janet focuses on the career opportunities she has had with AGL along with the lifestyle benefits and the ongoing development. 'AGL has supported and developed Janet through skills and leadership training so she can achieve more from her career and is now a highly respected leader in the business.'
<http://www.agl.com.au/about/careers/meet-our-people/Pages/Janet-Michalopoulos.aspx>
- **John Holland Group's** website recognises five women from the organisation who were recognised at the 2012 National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Awards of Excellence. Each woman is photographed and there is a brief description of her role and why she was successful in winning the award.
<http://www.johnholland.com.au/Documents.asp?ID=14760&Title=John+Holland+shines+at+NAWIC+Awards>
- **AGL** publicises on their website and other promotional material that they were awarded the 2012 EOWA (now WGEA) Employer of Choice for Women citation. 'Like other Australian corporates, AGL faces the challenge of attracting and retaining the best female employees and I believe this citation will help us to recruit the best talent in the market.'
<http://www.agl.com.au/about/ASXandMedia/Pages/AGLwinsmajorawardforwomen-friendlyworkplace.aspx>
- **Essential Energy** has information on their Women@Work Network on their website. The network provides career and personal development, support and guidance by leveraging existing programs to support our women. 'Essential Energy recognises the contribution of female employees in our organisation. We are committed to achieving workforce diversity by providing an equal employment environment where people from all backgrounds can work together to reach their fullest potential.'
<http://www.essentialenergy.com.au/content/womenwork>

Examples from industry networks include:

- The **National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC)** has a Building a Better Future Website. 'The site contains stories and images of women actively involved in the construction industry including information about how these women got to the position they are in, what they studied, what challenges they overcame and what the highlights of their career in construction have been'.
<http://www.nawic.com.au/index.cfm?MenuID=58>

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3. Engagement activities that broaden the pool of potential applicants



Given there is a skills shortage, leading organisations have recognised the need to establish and maintain relationships with schools, TAFEs, universities and community organisations. These relationships are beneficial as the external partners help to raise awareness about the industries and career opportunities available to women. As a result, they broaden the pool of potential applicants.

For leading organisations in male-dominated industries, external relationships assist to:

- Increase the awareness amongst young women about the mining, utilities and construction industries.
- Cultivate the appeal of the non-traditional roles to young women.
- Achieve research outcomes which aim to increase the representation of women in male-dominated industries.

Engagement with the educational institutions and community groups broadens the pool of potential applicants for non-traditional roles in male-dominated industries.

Strategies used by organisations in Australia and internationally to attract women to non-traditional roles:

Engage with primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of opportunities for girls

Leading organisations recognise that communication about non-traditional career opportunities within the mining, construction and utilities industries should commence at school.

One strategy is to create teaching aids that discuss the industries and the diverse career paths available for girls. These aids address any potential stereotypes and biases teachers and careers counsellors may have about these industries.

Another strategy is to enable local school students to meet female employees within the organisation. These women inspire the girls by describing their careers in non-traditional roles and the benefits of working in their particular industry. Other strategies include sponsoring competitions, work experience and camps for school girls.

Organisations overseas have also invited high school teachers to participate in an intern program during the summer break. The program promotes educator awareness of the various career opportunities within these male-dominated industries as well as the skills necessary to pursue them. The aim is for teachers to return to school and to inspire young girls to consider non-traditional career paths.

Engage with TAFE, colleges and universities and provide scholarships, internships

Some organisations provide internships, work experience, final year projects and scholarships so young women can directly experience what it is like to work within these industries, particularly in non-traditional roles.

Organisations have found that a meaningful work experience assignment and a supportive team can encourage young women to consider longer term career opportunities.

Engagement with TAFE, colleges and universities also allows educators to become better informed about the developments within these industries and to provide a more factual and compelling image of the career opportunities for women.

Another strategy is to have an employee speak to female students to help influence career decisions. Some organisations encourage the students to stay in touch with this female employee as informal mentors or sponsors through to graduation.

Providing networking sessions for female students is also a good strategy for professionals in the industry to discuss their careers and to encourage potential candidates.

To address concerns about making a successful transition from education to work, some organisations promote an induction process which includes training, mentoring and other transition to work support.

Partner with local communities, clubs and skills based networks

Organisations are supporting women's networks and industry associations to build awareness of career opportunities within male-dominated industries.

These partnerships are with a broad range of groups and may be targeted to young women's organisations like the Girl Guides. Other organisations are sponsoring industry specific forums for women such as Robogirls, an online forum focused on increasing the number of young women pursuing engineering in their tertiary studies and careers.

Leading organisations are also developing innovative partnership strategies to attract mature aged women and Indigenous Australian women to apply for roles.

Sponsor and offer an apprenticeship program

Some organisations actively target women for their apprenticeship program and provide scholarships for women.

Some of these organisations also promote the opportunities available after the apprenticeship program to reassure women that a long term career with the organisation is available and encouraged.

Some good industry examples include:

- **Ausgrid's** 'Women in Trades Work Experience Program' is a four day program that offers female students the opportunity to experience electrical trades. 'If you're female, 15 years of age or older, are currently enrolled in school or TAFE and want to try your hand at an electrical trade, then the Ausgrid Women in Trades Work Experience Week is for you!'

<http://www.ausgrid.com.au/Common/Careers/Work-experience/Women-in-trades-work-experience-week.aspx>

- **Essential Energy** established the Kath Knowles Scholarship at the University of Newcastle for female students in science, engineering or other technical studies. The student is also given an internship and a mentor within the organisation. 'We know firsthand the power industry is experiencing shortages of technically skilled employees, both nationally and internationally. We also know women represent around 51 per cent of the total population in NSW – that's an under-utilised pool of talent we want to tap into.'

www.essentialenergy.com.au/asset/cms/pdf/media/mr_090312.pdf

- **Origin Energy** is improving employment prospects for women by partnering with the YWCA in Queensland on a research initiative. The 'Count Me In' project aims to help maximise the opportunities for women by identifying barriers to gaining work and determining where support is needed to help overcome them. 'There are so many career path choices available for women in the gas industry, not only locally but globally also.'

<http://reports.originenergy.com.au/sustainability/case-studies/count-me-in/>

- A **mining organisation** in North America is partnering with the Girl Guides to encourage girls to study maths and science. This recognises research which showed Girl Guides are more self-confident and have broader career aspirations, less limited by gender stereotype, than girls who are not involved in similar organisations.
- **Sinclair Knight Merz** has a 'Women in Consulting' network, which is an employee led initiative established in all major offices in multiple countries. 'The network is a powerful voice in the organisation, assisting in it garnering Employer of Choice for Women status in Australia, and providing extensive client and internal networking and professional development opportunities'.

http://www.globalskm.com/Site-Documents/AboutUs/Diversity/SKM5582_WIC-Meeting-the-Challenge-Brochure-Update-Oct_2012_AW2.pdf

Examples from other male-dominated industries include:

- **IBM's** EXITE (Exploring Interests in Technology & Engineering) Camps are an initiative to get girls interested in taking science and math classes throughout high school and to help them understand the benefits of technology and engineering careers. The target audience for the camps is high school girls aged 13 to 16. The Camps are held annually in collaboration with state-based Departments of Education to encourage young women to pursue studies in engineering, IT and science.

<http://www-07.ibm.com/employment/au/diversity/women.html>

- The **Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force** recommended (recommendation 8) developing innovative strategies that appeal to women at different stages of their careers. This includes a 'try before you buy' option, which provides an opportunity for women to experience military training and lifestyle within a 12 month program before committing to a permanent role.

<http://defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/>

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- 1 Manpower Group, "Manufacturing" Talent for the HUMAN AGE 2011 Talent Shortage Survey Results (2011). At <https://www.manpower.com.au/research/white-papers.aspx> (viewed 6 February 2013).
- 2 Manpower Group, "Manufacturing" Talent for the HUMAN AGE 2011 Talent Shortage Survey Results (2011). At <https://www.manpower.com.au/research/white-papers.aspx> (viewed 6 February 2013).