

McDonald's Restaurants

Building Engagement through a Women's Leadership Network (WLN), & Building Talent through the Women's Leadership Development Programme (WLDP)

As a company one of our strengths is our diverse workforce, and our Executive are supportive and committed to our Diversity Policy.

Whilst 45% of our restaurant employees, and 50% of our office population are female, as with many organisations as mid and higher management levels are reviewed the female percentage reduces.

To assist with gender diversity, and the gender mix within senior management, the WLN was set up in 2005, and in 2007 the first WLDP was held in the UK. The aims of both were not only to add value to the business, but to help strengthen and build female talent.

Issue to be resolved

As part of our Company's Diversity Policy, statistics are reviewed and analysed on a regular basis, and as mentioned previously this highlighted the proportion of female to male managers at the senior levels within the UK was not representative of the actual gender split throughout the whole organisation.

There was also strong evidence emerging in all industries which showed companies with a more balanced gender mix at senior levels had greater organisational stability and long term financial success.

We are members of several Diversity Organisations, including Opportunity Now, and through participation in annual surveys, and in 2011 the McKinsey, Women Matter, five survey strengths and opportunities have been highlighted.

Action taken

Numerous actions have been, however, two significant actions are:

1. The Setting up of the UK WLN

This was created in 2005, to add value to the business by supporting the development and retention of women through building engagement & building talent.

A National Steering Group was formed, with executive sponsorship, and regional WLN's were formed to assist with communication and success across the UK.

The WLN strategy is endorsed, defined and aligned with the Global Vision as well as the business needs and goals.

Includes:

- Personal & Career Development
- Networking
- Budget
- Recognition & Awards
- Communication
- Continuous Improvement & Measurement

1. The WLDP

The primary objective of the WLDP was to support the development and progression of women leaders in the business.

Since the pilot programme in 2007, the programme has been repeated every year. Over the five cohorts the primary objectives have remained consistent and the programme has developed in response to delegate and manager feedback, new insights and understanding and business priorities.

In addition, the programme has been expanded to incorporate other European countries, this helps to bring different strategic and tactical perspectives to discussions.

The programme focuses on:

- Building a deeper awareness of current strengths
- Gaining insights and knowledge of areas where skills can be further enhanced
- Developing greater leadership and personal impact for more effective stakeholder relationships

Result

There are many benefits from the introduction of the WLN. These include:

- Encouraging women to take ownership of their personal development and career progression
- Increasing confidence in their own ability and in the contribution they can make
- Giving the opportunity to bring the women together to learn from one another
- A chance for the UK WLN to share their experience with our European Colleagues

Each time the WLDP is run, at the end of the programme, feedback is received not only from the delegate but the delegate's reporting manager. Feedback includes:

- Increased confidence
- Improved leadership skills, and strategic thinking, allowing "big picture" thinking
- Increase in self-awareness
- Other skills have improved such as negotiation, communication, and relationship building

The success of the WLDP showed that aspects of the programme were not gender specific, and this resulted in three other mid manager development programmes being run to assist in developing talent in the business.

Next Steps

The Company remains committed to gender diversity, and next steps include:

- Continue to raise awareness across the business of the WLN
- Revisiting and refreshing the mission, aims, and strategy of the WLN
- Data gathering and benchmarking to highlight opportunities
- Development and enhancement of HR policies & processes
- External recognition through networking and attending of external conferences

Establishing membership which is inclusive and open to all

Contact

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