

Ernst & Young

Leadership Pipeline Review

EMEIA (Europe, Middle East, India and Africa) is one of the four Areas that make up Ernst & Young globally. It is made up of 93 countries with about 70,000 people.

The EMEIA Executive wanted to increase the diversity of the leadership teams across the Area, in particular their Partner population and felt that more could be done to leverage the eligible talent pool.

A leadership pipeline review was implemented. The only consistent data available across the Area was gender so they looked at the gender split by promotions, performance rankings and the scheduling of assignments

It was clear from the results that a more focussed effort was needed in the management of their talent. A number of actions were taken.

All Senior Managers were assessed for their leadership potential and categorised either A, B or C. From this, aspirational targets for Partner promotions by 2013 were set.

Unconscious bias training was rolled out with the request that anyone attending a performance ranking session should complete it.

A sponsorship programme was developed, called Career Watch for all women categorised A.

This exercise is refreshed annually and this approach has led to the number of women being promoted to Partner increasing from 15% in 2011 to 20% in 2012.

Issue to be resolved

Ernst & Young were aware that the number of women being promoted to Partner did not reflect the eligible talent pool.

A leadership pipeline review was rolled out with the aim to:

- Help managers develop skills to accurately identify and assess both high performance and high potential women
- Better understand how and why the leadership pipelines currently appear to be skewed towards male candidates
- Have realistic and achievable targets for gender representation at Partner level by 2013.

Action taken

The pipeline review consisted initially of four stages:

1. To review all senior managers who had 2+ years experience and categorise them in terms of their partner potential, with a particular focus on women who have the potential to make Partner by 2013.
2. A review of the Global Client Serving Partners leading priority accounts by gender.
3. Analysis of the performance rankings by gender for all ranks
4. Analysis of the people survey by gender.

The above steps were completed and the outcomes of the initial review were;

- Each Sub-Area in EMEIA now has targets for Partner promotion by 2013
- There was a clear trend that more men than women were working on priority accounts
- In most Sub-Areas there were more men ranked higher than women in performance ratings
- In many Sub-Areas, women completing the people survey were less satisfied overall than their male counterparts

A number of actions have been taken to address the issues above;

- Awareness of unconscious bias has been raised with the use of a web based learning programme and face to face training.
- Women with the potential to take on leadership roles attend an EMEIA wide Women's Leadership Programme.
- The Career Watch sponsorship programme is being deployed to most high potential women.

Result

Reviewing the leadership pipeline is now an ongoing activity across EMEIA with centralised check points to monitor progress.

This focus and the associated activity has contributed to the number of women being promoted to Partner increasing from 15% in 2011 to 20% in 2012.

Next Steps

The leadership pipeline review is closely linked with other gender initiatives across EMEIA, such as the Women's Leadership Programme, Career Watch programme and unconscious bias awareness training.

In the Sub Areas that can monitor their people by their ethnicity, they have been included in the review.

Reaching further down the leadership pipeline, we are also now piloting a women's leadership programme for our female Managers.

The next key step is to include a focus on recruitment by gender.