

Pinsent Masons LLP

Female Network Group

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Issue to be resolved

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Action taken

Measures taken to address this include:

- we have established a Female Network Group in the firm which provides networking opportunities for its members to develop internal and external client relationships, gives input to firm policy and provides a sounding board for women across the firm
- we ran a female-only career development survey which asked females (both lawyers and business support) for their views on the career development opportunities in the firm, barriers to progression and suggestions for change. This attracted a healthy response and a number of new initiatives are now being developed as a result. We have also undertaken a male-only control group survey to be clear about the differences between female and male viewpoints on career development within the firm.
- the career survey told us that women in the firm would welcome mentoring by senior females. We have subsequently selected and trained a number of senior women to play a mentoring role
- we established a senior female steering group to provide senior leadership for our female agenda. This consists of three senior female Partners who have been working with the head of our female network group to challenge policy and develop fresh initiatives in support of achieving better advancement of women in the business to senior positions
- we have run a series of "women in the boardroom" events with clients. This involved providing a written and verbal analysis of the recommendations from Lord Davies' *Women on Boards* report and facilitating a debate amongst clients on how they can develop and appoint a greater number of female Board members
- Our analysis of common deterrents to female career progression highlighted the fact that there are three key skills which commonly hold women back – networking skills, commercial know-how and confidence. We therefore sought a programme which would help address all three areas. The one we chose is entitled the "Pearl Club", which consists of a series of activities for women involving networking skills development, commercial awareness input from female FTSE350 Directors, and exposure to senior female role models. We initially selected 17 women for this programme and as well as having the opportunity to develop these key skills, participants are also benefiting from extra opportunities to network with women in client organisations
- We are signatories to Think Act Report, the Government's new framework for Voluntary Gender Equalities Reporting
- Providing focussed support for women taking maternity leave e.g. return to work training, mentoring and individual work plans.

Organising an event to promote skills based volunteering to female staff through our community investment programme eg school governance and becoming a trustee of a charity

Result

We recognise that this is a long term piece of work. Diversity is a live and constantly evolving business issue, and we're intent on extending the reach and effectiveness of our actions. .

- Membership of our Female Network Group has increased significantly over the last year and our group has been actively engaged in a number of projects including working with HR to provide input in to the drafting of new Maternity and Flexible Working policies.

- Feedback taken from attendees of Pearl Club events, pre and post the event, show a positive shift in outlook/attitude/confidence/approach after each event. All of our participants have requested to remain on the programme for a second year and we have renewed our commitment.

- We were proud to be recognised at The Lawyer HR Awards 2011 with the award for most effective diversity programme. A recent article in The Lawyer publication also recognised the firm's commitment to female career progression: *"If you are female and in corporate your best chances of being made up based on past statistics are at Linklaters. Outside the magic circle Pinsent Masons has made up the highest proportion of women in corporate"*.

Next Steps

There are a number of different options available and one of our senior female partners is currently leading a piece of research which will enable us to make recommendations for our next phase of work.

We believe that consultation is key to engaging our people in this issue, and maintaining momentum, and the Female Network Group will continue to play an important role in our work on gender diversity.

Contact

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