

## Is business doing enough to redress the gender balance?

Just 22% of employees in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector are female, 9% are engineers and 5% are managers. These statistics are not necessarily surprising but they do highlight a significant gender imbalance across the sector which is worsening the skills shortage in the industry and hindering the UK's ability to compete on the manufacturing world stage.

A diverse workforce is vital for a business to be at its most productive and innovative. Those of varying age, ethnicity, culture and gender bring a wider range of skills experience, ideas and viewpoints.

Attracting and retaining women in manufacturing careers is just one piece of the diversity puzzle but with the UK's leaky STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) pipeline no closer to being fixed, we need to act now to attract and retain skilled women within manufacturing and engineering.

That's why Women in Manufacturing, a not-for-profit organisation, has been set up by British Glass, the trade association for the UK glass manufacturing industry, to support, attract and retain women in the UK manufacturing sector.

A recent survey\* of over 5,000 women found that the top five areas for assistance they feel they would need from employers in order to stay and progress within STEM employment are:

1. Personal Development Courses (28%)
2. Flexible Working (10%)
3. Careers Advice (9%)
4. Refresher Courses (9%)
5. Mentoring (8%)

There also needs to be a cultural shift so that diversity is encouraged and the training of management should reflect this by supporting changes to working practices.

Encouraging young women into the sector is vital, which is why Women in Manufacturing has partnered with Works Management magazine to co-ordinate the delivery of the 'Females in Factories' campaign. With around 50 Ambassadors signed up so far, the campaign will see industry representatives from a wide range of manufacturing companies and roles across the UK, such as Weetabix, Siemens and Mondelez

## The Great Business Debate

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Confectionery, visiting their local schools to inspire the next generation and showcase some of the fantastic career opportunities in the sector.

The Ambassadors give first-hand insight on why there is a lack of women in the sector and what can be done to address this.

*“I am keen to promote careers for women in the manufacturing industry to raise awareness and give women more choice. I love where I work and I think if more women knew more about the industry then we would have a better balance of males and females.”*

Sophie Torjussen, Shift Team Manager at Outokumpu in Sheffield

*“Women are missing out on fantastic opportunities because they are not aware of the jobs available and career potential as the term ‘manufacturing’ can be misleading.”*

Emma Goddard, a Technical (Metallurgical) Apprentice at TATA Steel

\*An independent 'Women in STEM' survey, May-September 2014, supported by TRS, Prospect, WES and Women in Manufacturing.