Aon

Diversity & Inclusion in the Irish Food and Drinks Sector:
Women in business

Diversity & Inclusion – Building the business case and delivering competitive advantage

The high level of response from the Food & Drinks industry to the to the first ever survey on Diversity & Inclusion confirms that D&I is an important topic for those working in the sector. We found that agri-food companies have a strong interest in developing a D&I strategy with half at the planning stage. However, the data suggests that there is a need to assist companies to define, develop and implement their D&I strategies.

Tara McCarthy,
Bord Bia

Research shows that organisations that embrace Diversity & Inclusion and put it at the heart of their business strategy are more innovative, sustainable and successful over the long term. In this fast paced world, it is important to provide opportunities for both men and women to make the most of their skills and experience. Ireland is ideally positioned to be leaders on the world stage, with our demographic and highly educated workforce who have such a can-do attitude.

Alastair Blair,
Accenture Ireland

While career self-management can contribute to women's career development, organisations can actively support development through mentoring, coaching and development programmes. In addition, taking steps to understand and address unconscious bias is important in building an inclusive culture and supporting individuals in progressing their careers.

Bríd Horan,
The 30% Club

The survey indicates that Diversity & Inclusion is featuring strongly on CEOs agenda's. Organisations with a truly diverse and inclusive culture tend to be attractive places to work. Having a mixture of perspectives, experiences and capabilities at all levels in an organisation is proven to improve business results.

Ciara Jackson,
Aon

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Executive Summary

Attracting, retaining and developing talent is one of the largest risks facing the Irish food and drinks sector, and has been identified by businesses as a top ten risk in Aon's 2017 Global Risk Management Survey[1]. Similarly, the majority of CEOs consider the availability of key skills as their biggest business threat, according to PWC's recent Global CEO Survey[2].

If the agri-food and drinks sector is to continue to grow profitably, and deliver on the targets set out in Food Wise 2025, it needs to recruit the most talented people and to retain and develop them by making them feel they are valued and that their contribution is recognised.

Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum

Recognising the need to address the Diversity and Inclusion agenda on an industry-wide basis, the Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum (AgDIF) is a collaborative initiative with industry, led by Bord Bia and Aon. The objective of this initiative is to position the Irish food and drinks sector as the industry of choice for Ireland's best talent at all levels and across all fields of discipline.

Role of Women in Business

A long-standing challenge for Irish companies is ensuring the representation of women at senior management and board level allowing diversity of thought and perspective into the decision-making process of organisations. Recognising the vast array of competing priorities within Diversity & Inclusion (D&I), as well as the need to maintain focus to ensure progress, AgDIF will initially focus it's activities on gender equality and the role of women in it's work programme.

To ensure expertise and thought leadership is a key process, AgDIF has partnered with The 30% Club to ensure the best output for the Irish food and drinks sector. The 30% Club launched in January 2015, with a goal to achieve better gender balance at all levels in leading Irish businesses.

Diversity & Inclusion Research

A fundamental and essential first step on the path towards a more diverse and inclusive food and drinks industry is to understand the baseline of the sector and to measure progress over time. Earlier this year, Bord Bia and Aon conducted research from both an organisational and an individual perspective to measure current D&I metrics across the industry, and to understand current challenges for women.

Participating organisations in the survey ranged in size from small companies to Ireland's largest food and drink businesses, both in terms of turnover and employee numbers. A broad mix of roles and seniority levels participated in the research, from entry level and junior staff to Board of Director and CEO.

Research Findings

While the external perception of the food and drinks sector may be a traditional and rural one, the data gathered in this research tells the story of a highly educated, growth focussed sector that understands that talent is key to business success.

D&I Maturity

The data highlights that the D&I agenda is of strategic importance for CEOs. 79% of CEOs describe their progress with D&I initiatives as either beginner, intermediate or advanced. The comparable data point from an employee perspective is 90%.

Attracting, Retaining & Developing Talent

With Ireland almost at full employment, the food and drinks sector continues to compete with other industries for the best talent. The majority of CEOs (82%) believe their business is either somewhat or significantly challenged in attracting, retaining and developing staff. Key recruitment challenges were cited as salary (56%) and a lack of suitable applicants (51%). Recruiting for jobs outside of urban areas was also highlighted as being a challenge for 54% of participating organisations. The importance of recruitment and talent development appears to be reasonably well understood, with companies currently focusing on plans to develop future leaders (75%), internal promotions (75%) and internships (60%). Almost half of those surveyed (47%) are interested in learning more about Returnships.

Workplace Environment

The data suggests that food and drinks companies have worked hard to offer their employees a flexible and engaged work environment. Initiatives around flexible working (85%), corporate social responsibility (65%), health & wellness (60%) and paid maternity leave (60%) are established in many organisations. These topics are also key priorities for employees.

Mentoring, Coaching & Training

A strong cohort of CEOs have expressed an interest in learning more about mentoring, whether it's within the sector (35%), external to the sector (45%), or cross-company (40%). Leadership development programmes are in place in 47% of companies. Training on D&I topics is less prevalent, with 65% interested in establishing D&I training, and 53% interested in unconscious bias training.

Career Progression

There is consensus among Senior Leaders and employees that a combination of increased confidence, knowledge, skill & experience, and career self-management are critical to achieving gender diversity in the food and drinks sector.

According to the employees who participated in the research, both men and women identified the biggest barriers to career progression (ranked as extremely important, important or somewhat important) as the ability to relocate (61%) and lack of opportunity (61%). Also ranking highly as barriers are bias in promotion (57%) and confidence in own ability (57%).

Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit

Informed by the survey responses, the Forum has developed a Toolkit for industry. This includes guidance, templates and links to reliable sources of expert advice. Within the Toolkit, guidance is offered on how to implement D&I considerations into recruitment processes. This includes guidance on how to achieve a balanced slate of candidates, how to write a gender-neutral role profile, interview techniques, and ensuring a balanced interviewing panel is in place, among other areas.

Acknowledgements

Bord Bia and Aon would like to thank the Chairpersons of the Forum's Advisory Group, Alastair Blair (Accenture) and Taskforce, Majella Darcy (Ornua) for leading this work. We would also like to acknowledge the support dedication and hard work of all the members of the Advisory Group and the Taskforce. Special thanks is also reserved for The 30% Club for its support throughout the development of the Forum and for providing input and inspiration to its outputs. Finally, thank you to the over 700 respondents to the survey for marking the beginning of this journey and providing a direction for its future.

Ciara Jackson
Practice Leader, Food and Agribusiness
Aon

Tara McCarthy
CEO
Bord Bia

The Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum

AgDIf

Established in 2017, the Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum (AgDIf) is a collaborative initiative with industry, led by Bord Bia and Aon, in partnership with The 30% Club. The objective of this initiative is to position the Irish food and drinks sector as the industry of choice for Ireland's best talent at all levels and across all fields of discipline.

AgDIf focuses on the business case for D&I. Its basic hypothesis is that a mix of experience, background, capability and perspectives at all levels of an organisation drives better business results (and this fact is supported by a myriad of research). The current priority is to develop a framework to promote D&I in the Irish Food, Agribusiness and Drinks sector, with an initial focus on gender balance.

The objective of this initiative is to secure the future success of the Irish food and drinks sector by recognising that attracting and retaining the best talent is dependant on having an inclusive culture. This is driven by making all current and future workers feel they are valued and that their contribution is recognised, regardless of any different characteristic that they may possess. As the sector competes with others for the right people with relevant skillsets, it is clear that realising the ambitious growth projections for our sector is dependent on our success in acheiving this.

Advisory Group

This group is composed of selected CEO and Managing Director level participants of Irish food and drink companies and relevant bodies. The Advisory Group is responsible for developing the strategic direction of the initiative, including the management and coordination of the activities of the Taskforce. A core objective of this group is to guide the development of a work programme, including the development of a practical Toolkit of D&I activities for implementation by companies in the sector. The Advisory Group is chaired by Alastair Blair, Country Managing Director, Accenture Ireland, and a prominent D&I advocate.

Taskforce

This group is made up of a wider group of senior company representatives of food and drinks manufacturers representing an array of responsibilities in their respective companies including sales, business development, legal, sustainability and HR. The Taskforce is responsible for implementing the strategy designed by the Advisory Group. The Taskforce is responsible for advancing the work of the initiative, and shall develop an adequate evidence base and prepare positions, strategies and actions to be submitted to the Advisory Group for decision. The Taskforce is chaired by Majella Darcy, Group HR Director, Ornua.

Research Objectives

Research Objectives

The Advisory Group and Taskforce determined that one of the first actions of the initiative was to conduct research to measure current gender equality metrics across the industry, and to understand current challenges with progressing the D&I agenda.

There were a number of key strategic research objectives in conducting this survey:

1 Enable the D&I conversation – raise the profile of the gender equality agenda and encourage industry to participate in the research.

2 Provide a forum for both individuals and companies to provide input to AgDIf, and specifically share their views on gender diversity.

3 Generate robust data, both qualitative and quantitative, to measure the current stage of gender diversity in the sector.

4 Capture key sentiments, quantitative benchmarks and performance.

5 Compare the responses from CEOs to responses from employees to identify whether there is a perception gap in the sector's D&I maturity.

6 Publish a report to document the findings and insights gleaned from the research.

7 Share and debate the survey findings with the sector.

8 Leverage the research results to inform the work plan for the AgDIf group.

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board

AON
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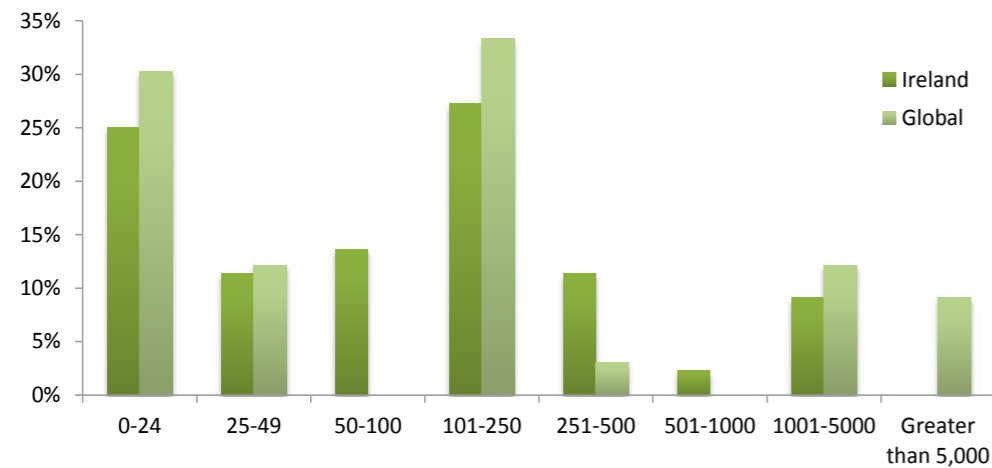
Research Findings

Profile of Respondents

Organisations who participated in the survey ranged in size from small companies to Ireland's largest food and drinks businesses, both in terms of turnover and employee numbers.

Turnover	% of respondents
Less than €1m	16%
€1m - €10m	32%
€10m - 30m	12%
€30m - 100m	20%
€100m+	20%
TOTAL	100%

**Number of employees in participant organisations**

There was excellent cross-sectoral participation from both the company and individual surveys ensuring that a representative range of views have been captured.

| Industry Sector	Company	Individual
Multi-sectoral	14%	31%
Dairy & dairy ingredients	14%	32%
Primary meats	16%	20%
Alcoholic beverages	12%	1%
Prepared consumer foods	30%	10%
Horticulture	0%	3%
Seafood	14%	3%
TOTAL	100%	100%

Employee Respondents

Over 650 employees working in the sector responded to the survey, which is perhaps indicative that D&I is a 'hot topic' for those working in the sector. The subject appears to be of equal interest to men and women, given the even split of response by gender. The data suggests that D&I resonates with people of all ages and life stages. It should be noted that the survey respondant group was self selecting, as the survey was promoted to the public via social media, the respondant profile was gender balanced (see below).

Gender of participants

49%

49%

2% Prefer not to say

Age of participants

17% under 30

55% age 31-50

28% age 51+
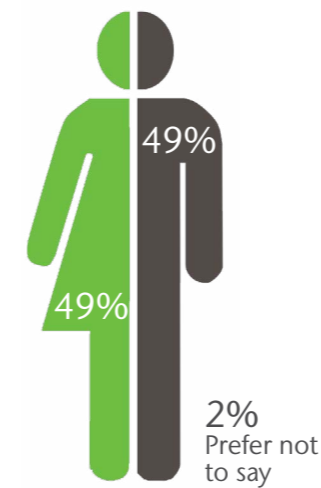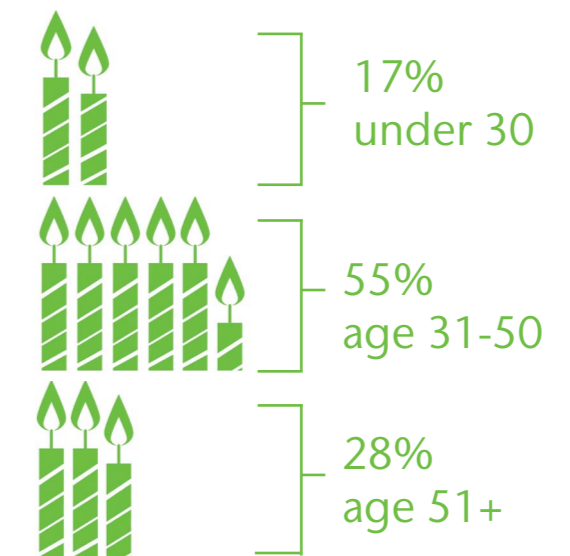
As the graphs opposite indicate, a broad mix of role levels participated in the research, from entry level and junior staff to Board of Director and CEO level. 55% of CEOs who responded to this survey are female. This is perhaps reflective of the fact that female CEOs are highly engaged when participating in D&I research. Of the 150 companies on the Irish Times Top 1,000 who are categorised as either food or agribusiness, 7% of their CEOs are female.

The gender balance shifts at Board level, where 60% of Board members are male. Of the CEOs who participated in the research 64% are aged 30-50.

Female representation is higher at early stage career:

- Entry level / junior staff – 59%
- Graduate programmes – 61%
- Junior management – 53%

According to the data collected in this survey, the dynamic begins to shift mid-career, where 43% of middle managers are female. Almost half (47%) of Senior Leaders who participated in the research are female.

Seniority of Employee Respondents

- Board of Directors
- CEO
- Senior Leadership / Executive
- Middle Management
- Junior Management / Team Leader
- Graduate programme
- Entry level / junior staff
- Other
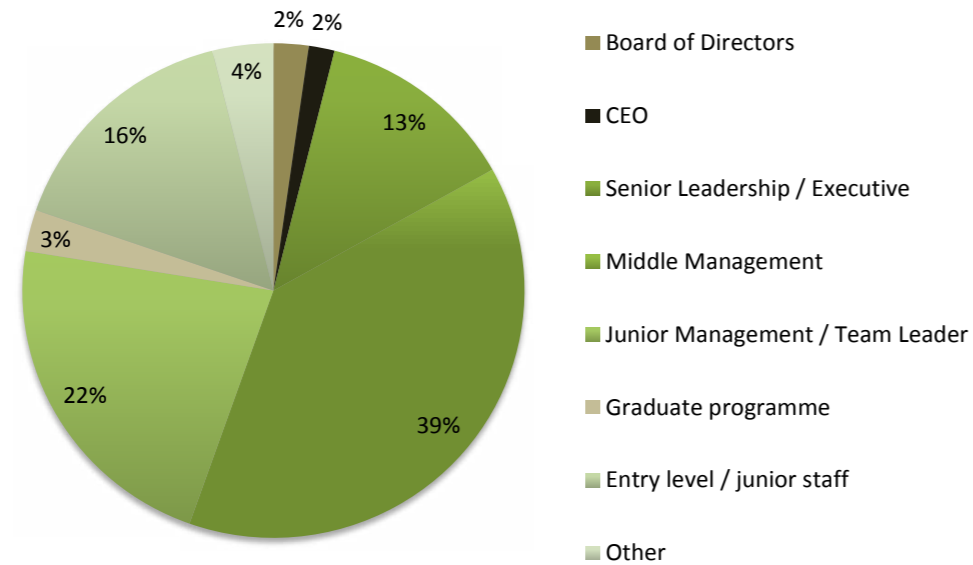
Seniority - Male versus Female Employee Respondents

Board of Directors
CEO
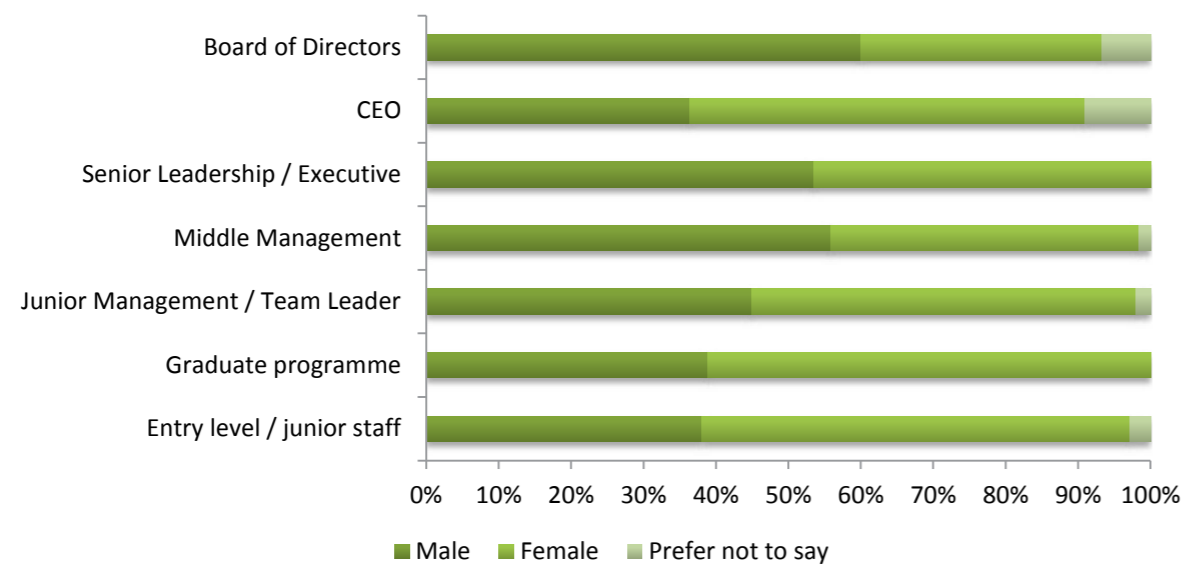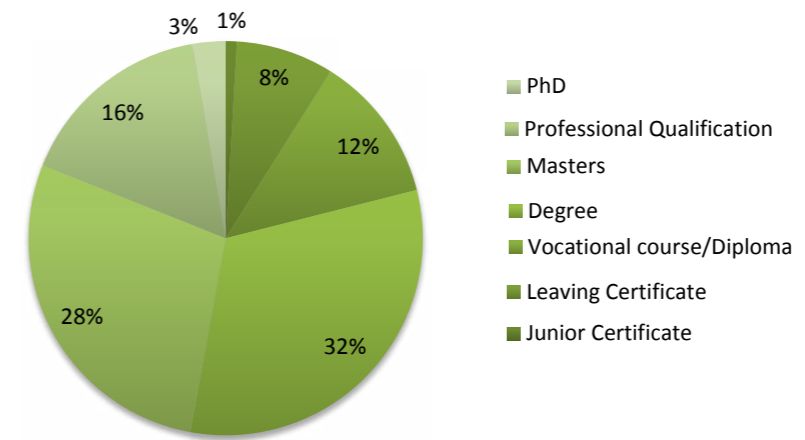Senior Leadership / Executive
Middle Management
Junior Management / Team Leader
Graduate programme
Entry level / junior staff

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Male ■ Female ■ Prefer not to say

Education Level of Employee Respondents

- PhD
- Professional Qualification
- Masters
- Degree
- Vocational course/Diploma
- Leaving Certificate
- Junior Certificate

The Irish Food & Drinks sector is highly educated. Of those who completed the survey, almost one third (32%) are educated to degree level (56% F, 44% M), a further 28% have a Masters qualification (52% F,48% M), and 3% hold a PhD (61% F, 39% M).

Ethnicity of Employee Respondents
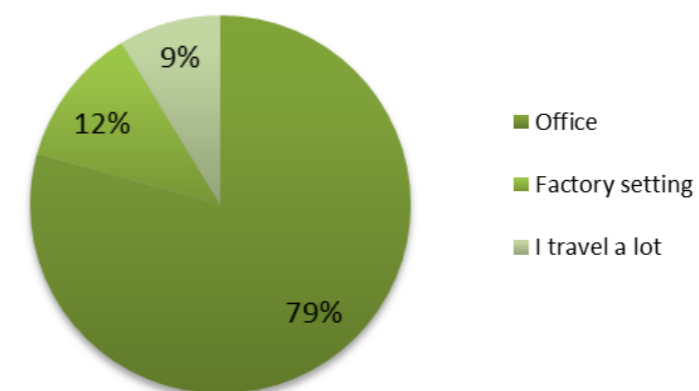
Ireland 85%   EU 10%   International 5%

Predominately Irish nationals participated in the research, working in office based roles. This may not be reflective of overall employee populations.

Primary Work Location of Employee Respondents

The majority of respondents (79%) are office based.

- Office
- Factory setting
- I travel a lot

Full Time v Part Time Working Hours


Full time
94%

Part time
6%

Somewhat surprisingly, 94% of those who completed the survey work in full time roles. Of this 94%, 48% are female, and 52% are male. This relatively even split changes significantly for part time roles, where 74% are female and 26% are male. 72% of those females who work part time have caring responsibilities.

Employee Respondent's Caring Responsibilities

44%

47%

3% 6%

■ Yes, children

■ Yes, elderly relative

■ Yes, dependant adult

■ No
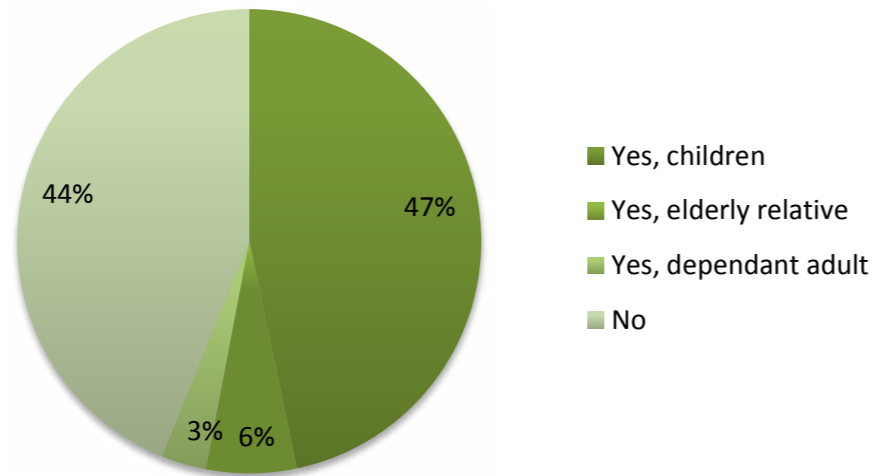
Over half of the people surveyed (56%) have caring responsibilities, for a mix of children (46%), elderly relative (6%) or dependant adult (3%). Caring responsibilities are split relatively evenly between men and women (48% F, 52% M). This is perhaps reflective of modern society, where both parents work full time, and caring responsibilities are being shared. There is often a financial implication for those who have caring responsibilities, ranging from childcare to elderly care. Alternatively, some may choose to take on these responsibilities full time.

Diversity & Inclusion Maturity
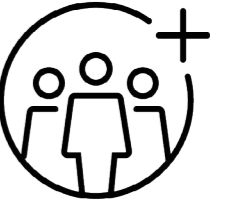
In order to measure the current state of progress with D&I in the sector, we asked both CEOs, Senior Leaders and employees working in the sector to provide an assessment of their opinion as to the level of progress their organisation is making with the D&I agenda, defined as follows:

- **Not yet started** - my organisation hasn't given any time yet to Diversity & Inclusion

- **Beginner** – we are in the process of establishing our Diversity & Inclusion function and are figuring out the basics

- **Intermediate** – we have figured out the basics and are currently advancing our efforts

- **Advanced** – we have a mature Diversity & Inclusion function within our organisation

Diversity & Inclusion Maturity Spectrum

■ Company perspective ■ Individual perspective
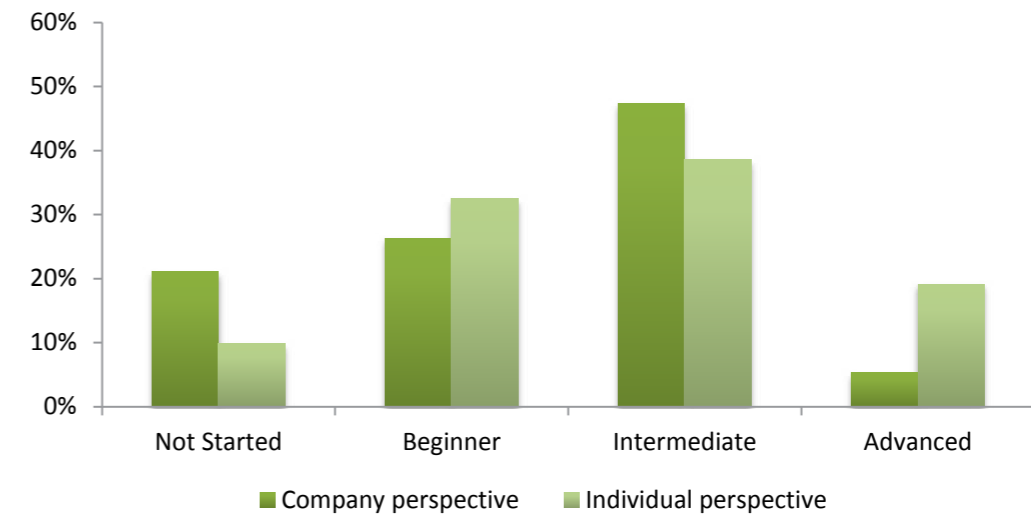
At a high level, the data suggests a relatively consistent perspective across companies and individuals on D&I maturity - this distribution pattern remains when the data is analysed by sub-sector and by organisation type. 52% of Senior Leaders have assessed their D&I maturity as either advanced (5%) or intermediate (47%).

Interestingly, employees believe their organisations are more progressed on their D&I journey than the organisations themselves. 58% of individuals believe their organisation is either advanced (19%) or intermediate (39%) in relation to D&I maturity.

There appears to be a perception gap in advanced maturity levels. Only 5% of CEOs & Senior Leaders believe their organisations demonstrated advanced levels of D&I maturity, yet 19% of employees believe their companies are advanced.

At the other end of the scale, 21% of leaders believe their companies have not started their D&I journey, versus 10% of the general workforce.

Key Takeaways

One possible interpretation of the D&I maturity data is that leaders have a better informed understanding of where D&I culture fits within their business strategy and planning. It's also likely that there are nuances around the definition of D&I, where employers focus on structure and process, whereas employees view it through the lens of their own individual experience.

Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

CEO / Senior Leader Perspective

The old adage of 'what gets measured gets managed' certainly rings true in the context of D&I. Ensuring D&I is clearly defined is an important first step in this process, and encouragingly 42% of senior leaders have defined D&I in their organisation, with a further 47% planning to do so. Those who have not yet defined what D&I means for them are interested in learning more about how to do this.

Leader Interest in Developing a Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

Legend: ■ Not interested in ■ Interested in learning more about ■ Planning to do ■ Currently doing
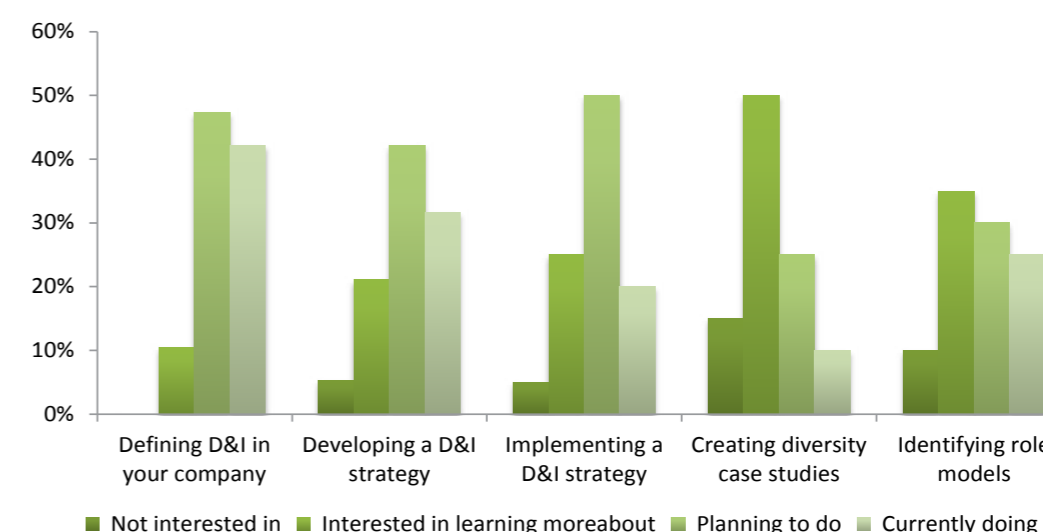
There is evidence of strong interest in developing a D&I strategy, with 42% planning to develop a D&I strategy, and 21% interested in learning more about the subject.

Implementation of strategy is key. Encouragingly, 50% are planning to implement a D&I strategy, with 25% interested in learning more about this.

While there is evidence of significant activity in defining, develop and implementing a D&I strategy, many organisations see an opportunity to further enhance their work to date, with 50% interested in learning more about creating diversity case studies (only 10% are currently doing this), and 35% want to learn more about identifying role models.

Key Takeaways

While a cohort of companies have made strong progress with their D&I strategy, the data strongly supports the need for the Toolkit to help companies in defining, developing and implementing a D&I strategy.

In order further bring this to life there is a clear requirement for case studies and role models.

Recruitment & Talent Development
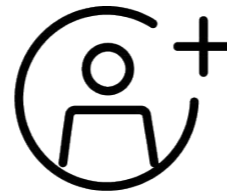
CEO / Senior Leader Perspective

With Ireland almost at full employment, the food and drinks sector continues to compete with other industries for the best talent. The talent agenda is a real challenge for the sector - 82% of respondents say their business is either somewhat or significantly challenged in attracting, retaining & developing their people.

Extent of hindrance to business growth due to recruitment challenges

75% of organisations have a dedicated Human Resources (HR) function. Of the 25% who don't, CEO (27%) and Operations (45%) have responsibility for managing people.

Dedicated HR Function in place

- Yes
- No
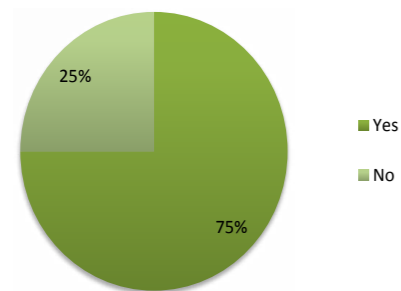
No Dedicated HR Function in place - Employees managed by

- CEO / Managing Director
- Finance
- Operations
- Other
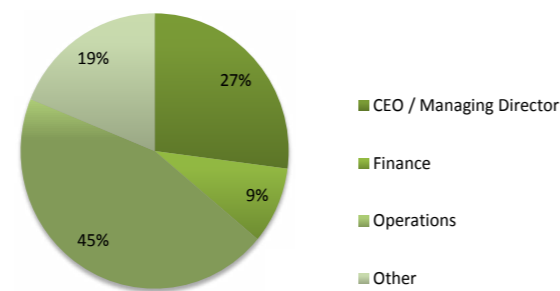
Top Recruitment Challenges

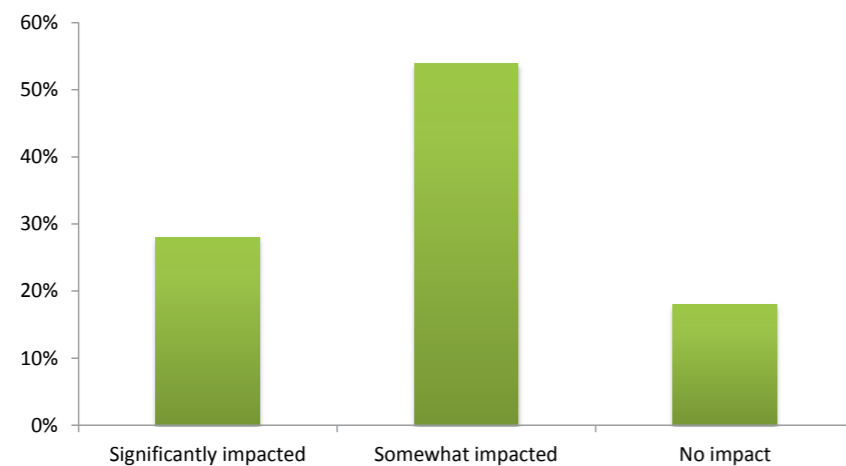Key recruitment challenges (either rated as very challenging or extremely challenging) are called out as salary (56%), location (54%), competition for talent with other sectors (51%), and lack of suitable applicants (51%).

Key recruitment challenges in the Irish marketplace

Salary	Location outside urban area	Lack of suitable applicants
56%	54%	51%
Extremely 12% / Very 44%	Extremely 25% / Very 29%	Extremely 22% / Very 29%

Competition - other sectors	Benefits	Skills availability
51%	48%	44%
Extremely 17% / Very 34%	Extremely 7% / Very 41%	Extremely 12% / Very 32%

Competition within sector	Brand/ Reputation	Overseas competition
41%	37%	37%
Extremely 7% / Very 34%	Extremely 15% / Very 22%	Extremely 5% / Very 32%

Work life balance
32%
Extremely 5% / Very 27%

Salary was rated as challenging by 56% of respondents. In order to attract talent, offering flexibility and potential for promotion and career development, as well as purposeful and interesting work, all offer compelling additions to salary. The Irish food and drinks industry has an enviable programme and ambitions in the form of Origin Green, and this should be leveraged to tap into the increasing percentage of employees that are seeking roles with purpose. Candidates value the brand and reputation of an employer.

As the majority of the food and drinks industry operations are located outside major urban areas, location is likely to remain a challenge. The advent of technology and flexible working practices may help alleviate this challenge, however, anecdotal evidence suggests that poor broadband infrastructure is a significant inhibitor to this. The 2017 Action Plan for Rural Development identifies five pillars to realise Ireland's rural potential, one of which is improving infrastructure and connectivity. The industry should give some consideration to branding this apparent obstacle as a virtue, and illustrate the work life benefits, such as reduced commuting times, reduced cost of accommodation, increased access to schools and other facilities, and reduced cost of living.

A lack of suitable applicants is a real challenge for employers. Recruitment and hiring is becoming more candidate-centric. It matters to applicants where they work and what the culture is like. Food companies have numerous innate purposeful drivers such as nutrition, health, hunger, rural development, social inclusion and as such the industry can make a virtue from its leadership position in relations to sustainability and purpose.

Recruitment Channels

Organisations use a mix of recruitment channels, such as direct recruitment (58%), recruitment agencies (54%) and referral programmes (50%). Given the challenge identified in attracting talent, it is not surprising to find organisations using multiple recruitment strategies. It may also be reflective of the nature of recruitment, and the variety of roles being recruited for.

What recruitment channels do you use?*
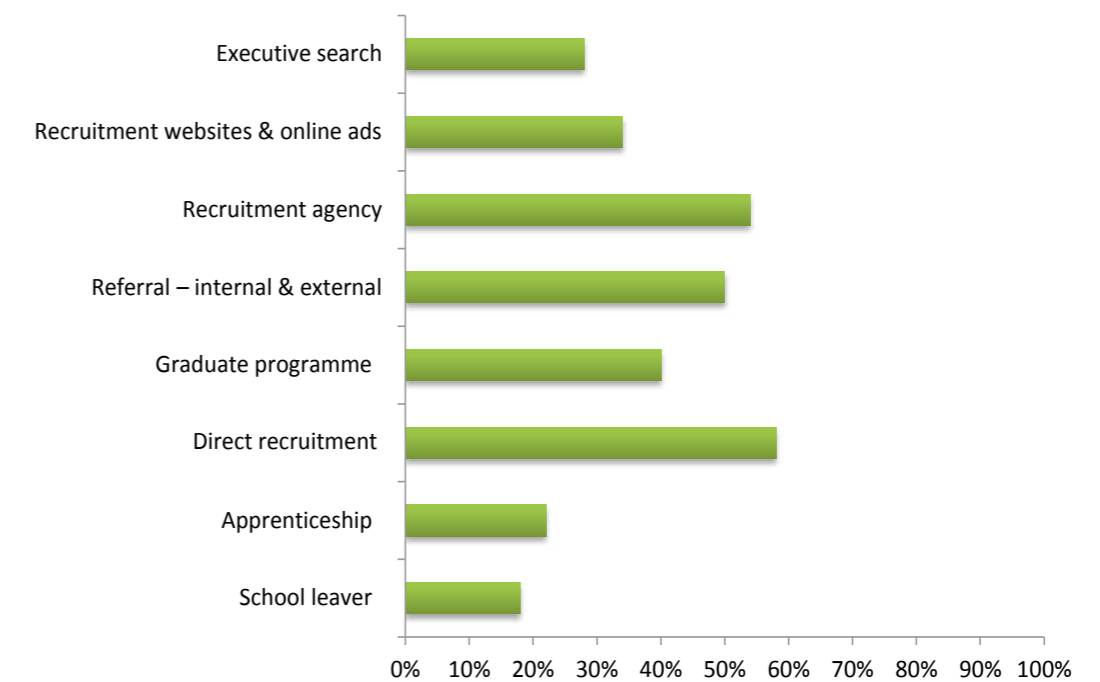
* Respondents could select multiple answers

To increase gender equality at senior level, one solution is to develop new models of recruitment that target high performing, but passive employees, in other companies and sectors. Employers could consider complimenting the well-established advertising approach with a job seekers' model of finding talent, and to identify and target those passive employees who are ready to move, but not actively searching for a job.

Talent Development

The importance of recruitment and talent development appears to be reasonably well understood, with companies currently focusing on plans to develop future leaders (75%), internal promotions (75%) and internships (60%).

Almost half of those surveyed (47%) are interested in learning more about Returnships. A Returnship programme is defined as an internship-like programme for experienced workers seeking to re-enter the workforce after a period of absence, typically as a bridge back to senior roles for experienced professionals.

45% of CEOs reported a gender proof recruitment process. This suggests that further guidance and tools to ensure progression of the female workforce would add value to the sector.

Recruitment and talent development

Legend: Not interested in ■ Interested in learning moreabout ■ Planning to do ■ Currently doing
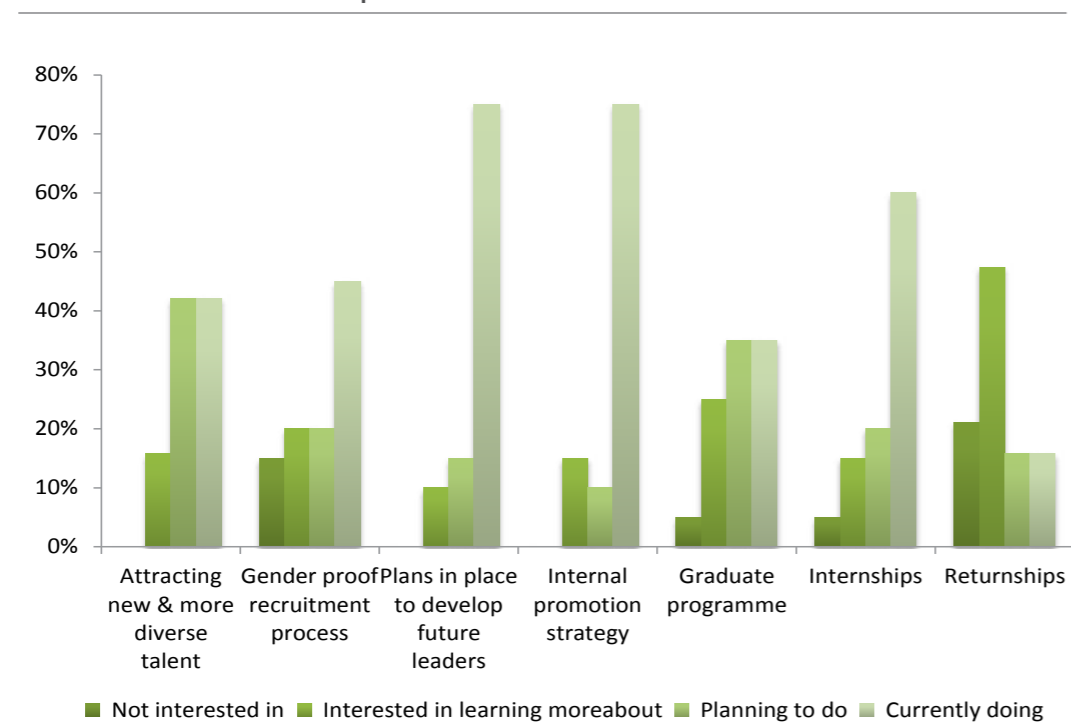
Key Takeaways

The number of organisations citing competition for talent suggests that the sector needs to work on raising its profile to ensure access to desired managers and senior leaders. This furthers the business case for D&I as a concerted effort to recruit from a wider talent pool can alleviate these pressures. Within the Toolkit, guidance is offered on how to implement D&I considerations into recruitment processes. This includes guidance on the following topics:

• Achieving a balanced slate of candidates

• Writing a gender-neutral role profile

• Interview techniques

• Ensuring a balanced interviewing panel

"Talent is increasingly choosing the employer and not the other way around"

"There is an increasing expectation from candidates that as the economy is 'better', they are expecting more"

"Developments in technology, demographic changes and urbanisation continue to create challenges for our business. At the same time, talent shortages prevail."

Participant Insights

Workplace Environment

The views of employees and of CEOs were canvassed with a view to understanding which policies are valued most in the workplace.

Employee Perspective

Flexible working is clearly a priority for employees, with 80% of employee respondents ranking flexible working as either extremely important (56%) or important (24%). While 96% of respondents work full-time, it is possible to work full time and have flexible working arrangements – for example early start / early finish, or working remotely. Employers tend to have structured processes and procedures in place to facilitate flexible working.

Policies & programmes - importance to individuals

Legend: Extremely important, Important, Somewhat Important, Indifferent, Not important
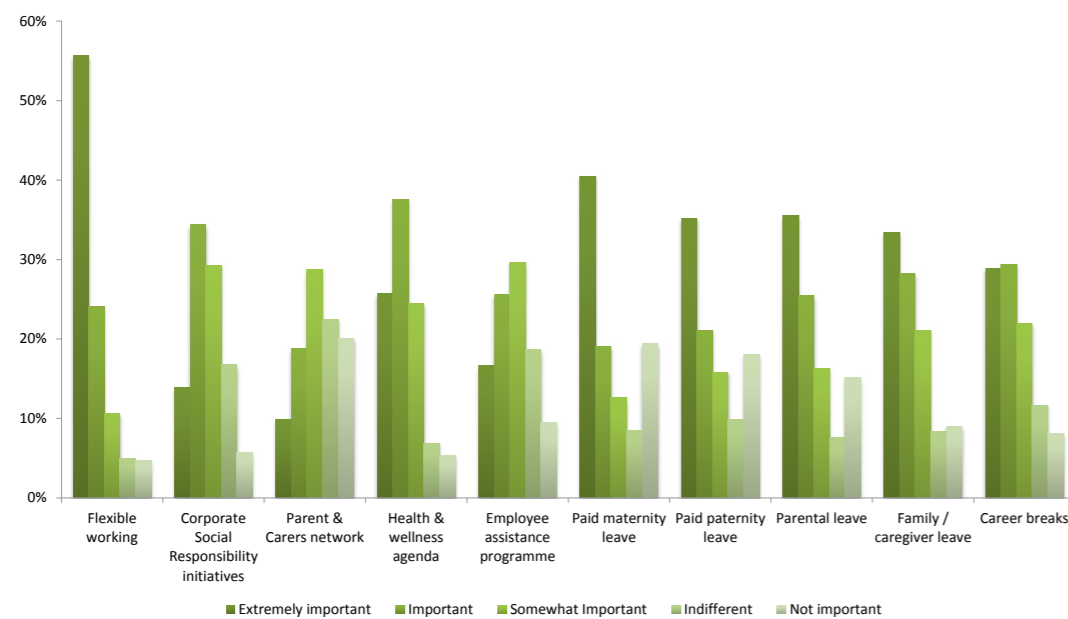
Health & Wellness is ranked as very important to respondents, with 63% ranking it as either extremely important or important. Aon's definition of wellness is a holistic one – encompassing physical, financial, emotional and social wellness.

Flexibility to support family at various life stages is also ranked as either extremely important or important, with family/caregiver leave scoring 62%, parental leave 61% and career breaks 58%.

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) have been rated low, and given links with the above point on health & wellness, are worth further consideration - there may be a lack of understanding and awareness of the services offered. An EAP is a company-funded employee benefit programme that assists employees with personal problems and/or work-related problems that may impact their job performance, health, mental and emotional well-being.

CEO/ Senior Leader Priorities

The data demonstrates flexibility in many different guises really matters to people working in the Irish food and drinks sector. Many organisations are working hard to meet this need. 85% of companies offer flexible working, with 60% providing paid maternity leave and 45% providing paid paternity leave, and 60% offering a health & wellness agenda. Given that more than 9 out of 10 people who responded to this survey work full time, it may be the case that flexible working is offered by employers, but not availed of by employees. It also suggests that there may be a disconnect or lack of understanding around what flexible working actually means. It can also mean that flexible working is available to some, but not all staff, due to the nature and structure of roles, e.g. production roles and shift roles.

CEO / Senior Leader Perspectives

Legend: Not interested in, Interested in learning moreabout, Planning to do, Currently doing
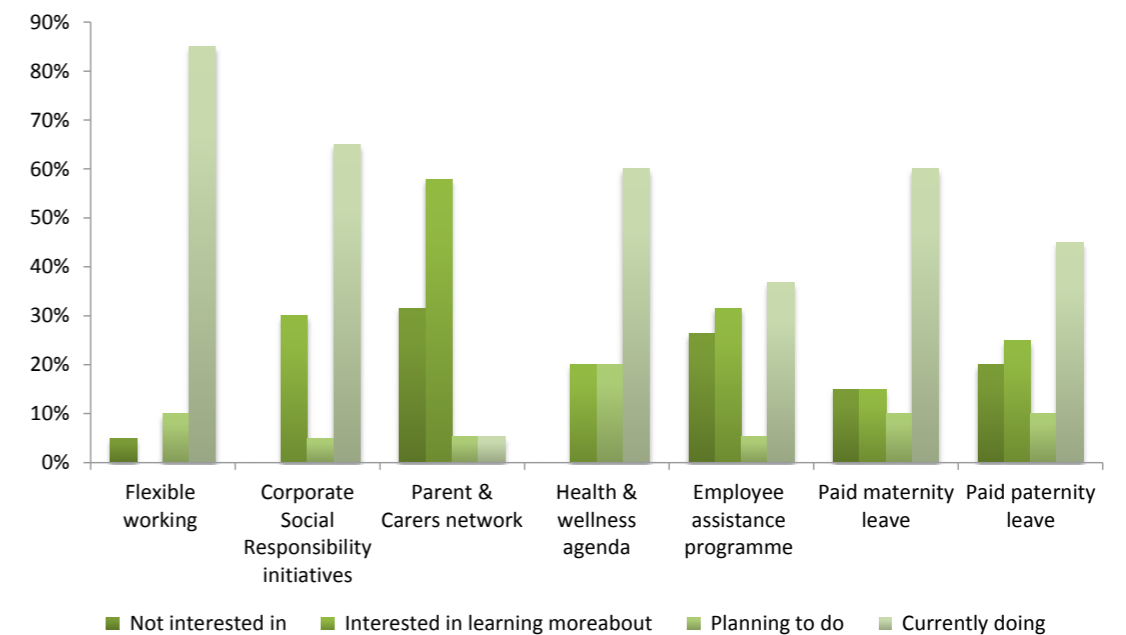
Key Takeaways

Agri-food companies are working hard to offer their employees a flexible and engaged work environment. The data suggests that initiatives around flexible working, corporate social responsibility, including those under Origin Green, and paid maternity leave are established in many organisations. However, when cross-referenced with employees' perspective, it appears that there is perhaps some confusion around what flexibility actually means, and how established it truly is in practice.

> "The lack of empowerment to work flexibly has impacted my ability to really develop my career to the level I am capable of. Organisations need to move from a transactional model of fixed working hours and presenteeism and embrace deliverables in terms of output and impact."

Participant Insights

> "Company has a flexible working policy, but it is constrained within your own department & is manager dependant"

> "Flexible working conditions are essential to retaining skilled and experienced women in the workplace"

Mentoring, Coaching & Training
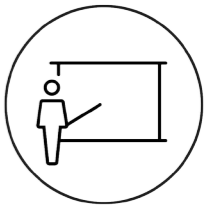
CEO/ Senior Leader Perspective

There is a cohort of organisations that recognise the value of mentoring for their employees, whether it's within the sector (50%), external to the sector (40%), or cross-company mentoring (45%). A second group are interested in learning more about mentoring, whether within the sector (35%), external to the sector (45%) or cross-company mentoring (40%).

Mentoring & Coaching - Company Perspective

- Not interested in
- Interested in learning more about
- Planning to do
- Currently doing
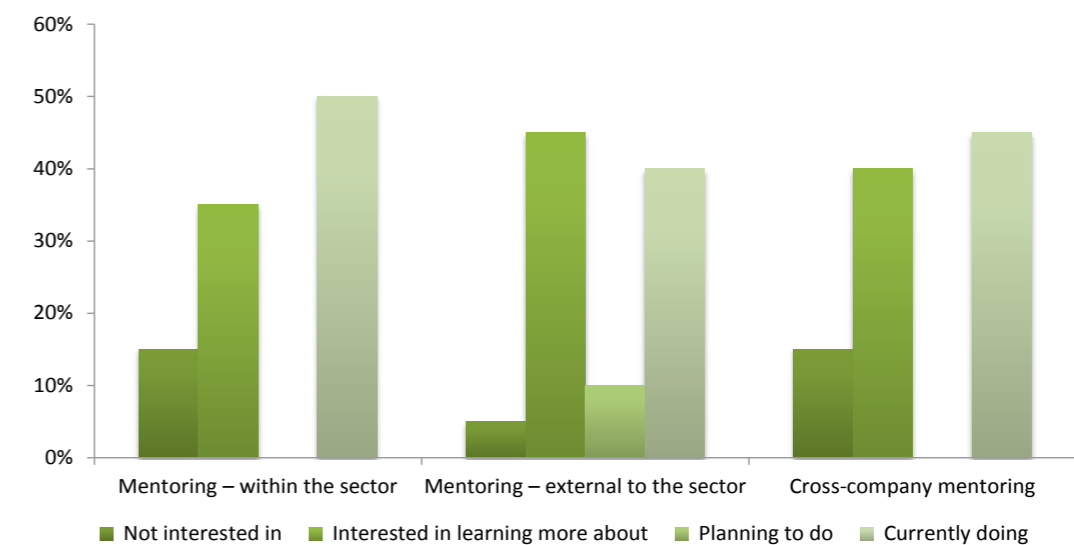
Almost half of the organisations surveyed (47%) offer leadership development programmes. Increasingly businesses are becoming aware of the tangible benefits of a successful D&I strategy, and therefore it is not surprising to find that 65% are interested in learning more about D&I training, and 53% are interested in unconscious bias training.

Training - Company Perspective

- Not interested in
- Interested in learning moreabout
- Planning to do
- Currently doing
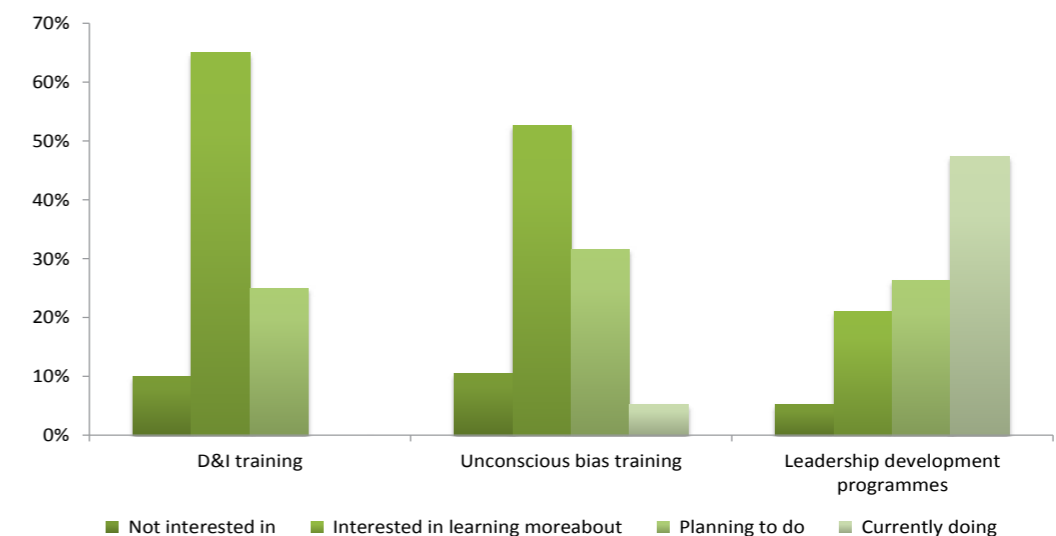
Key Takeaways

The data identifies a need for both unconscious bias training and indeed broader D&I training.

"Organisations need to be more proactive in ensuring constructive feedback to staff via appraisal process, and to have a more active and dynamic approach to staff development."

Participant Insight

Career Progression
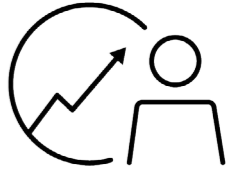
Career Advancement for Women

In terms of career advancement, organisations and individuals were asked their views on the top three factors influencing career advancement for women, and it is interesting to note the consistency of response, albeit in a slightly different order of priority.

CEO / Senior Leadership view	Employee view
Confidence (64%)	Knowledge, skills and experience ((66%)
Knowledge, skills and experience (60%)	Confidence (62%)
Self-management of career (57%)	Self-management of career (44%), stretch opportunities / new role (44%)

Career Progression & Development

When participants in the survey were asked if they have ever had a conversation regarding their own career development with line manager, 68% said Yes and 32% said No. The responses from men and women were relatively evenly split. 85% of those working in prepared consumer foods businesses have had a conversation regarding career development, with 77% of those working in dairy & dairy ingredients also reporting above average levels of career progression discussions.

Conversation regarding own career development

- ■ Yes
- ■ No

32%
68%
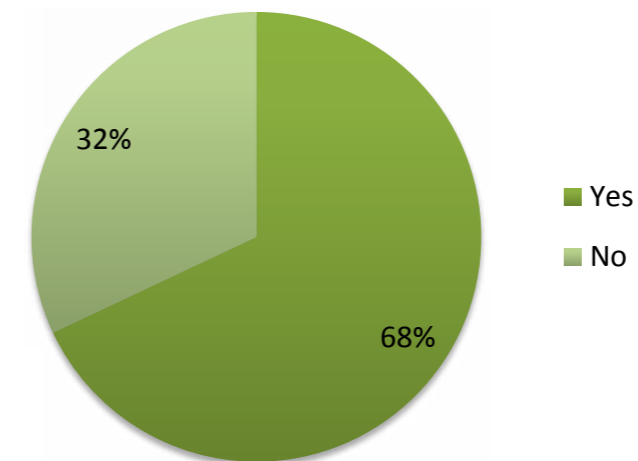
Barriers to Career Progression– Employee Perspective

Stated Barriers to Career Progression for Employee Respondents - Stated importance

Lack of Opportunity	Mobility	Lack of Development
61% Extremely 14% Very 21% Somewhat 26%	**60%** Extremely 20% Very 18% Somewhat 22%	**59%** Extremely 13% Very 18% Somewhat 28%
Personal Choice	Bias in my Organisation	Confidence in own ability
58% Extremely 9% Very 20% Somewhat 29%	**57%** Extremely 15% Very 16% Somewhat 26%	**57%** Extremely 11% Very 20% Somewhat 26%
Responsibilities outside work	Appraisal Process	Lack of Mentor
54% Extremely 11% Very 18% Somewhat 25%	**52%** Extremely 9% Very 13% Somewhat 30%	**51%** Extremely 9% Very 18% Somewhat 24%
Lack of manager support	Lack of Sponsor	Lack of knowledge/skills
49% Extremely 9% Very 14% Somewhat 26%	**47%** Extremely 10% Very 15% Somewhat 22%	**41%** Extremely 3% Very 11% Somewhat 27%

According to the individuals who participated in the research the biggest barriers to career progression (ranked as extremely important, important or somewhat important) are as follows:

- Mobility (the ability to relocate) is cited by 61% of respondents as being a barrier to career progression, and when analysed by gender the split is very close to 50/50

- 61% of respondents called out that lack of advancement opportunity is also a barrier to progress, and this response is also relatively balanced by gender. Further factors that inhibit career advancement include lack of development opportunity (60%), confidence in own ability (57%), and bias in promotion in my organisation (57%). Bias in promotion is a form of unconscious bias. Unconscious bias describes situations where our background, personal experiences, societal stereotypes and cultural context can impact our decisions and actions without us realising.

Key Takeaways

In order to progress, it's vital that individuals take ownership of their own development. Career self-management is ranked reasonably high by both individuals and companies.

There is consensus among CEOs, Senior Leaders and individuals participating in this research that a combination of increased confidence, knowledge, skill, experience, and career self-management are critical to achieving gender diversity in the agri-food sector.

"Promotions should be given to the best person for the job, regardless of gender. Predetermining the number of roles that should be filled by either gender will be damaging to any organisation in the long run."

Participant Insights

"I decided to focus on my family during their formative years giving them more of my time and the opportunity to do extra-curricular activities as required. My employer allowed me this extra time, allowing for flexible working hours, etc."

"I think it is important for both genders that the discussion is framed around equality. And, if we want to make it equal for both genders to succeed in their careers, that senior management begin to take the difficult and costly decisions that make a difference, including maternity cover, flexible working hours etc."

Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit

The results of our survey clearly highlighted the varying degrees of D&I knowledge and implementation across the Irish Food and Drinks sector. A common toolkit is needed to ensure we enhance these capabilities across the board and embed a best practice culture that ensures our sector is competitive and attractive as a talent destination.

While the initial focus of the Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum is on gender equality, guidance is not limited to this area. Hence in the first Toolkit there is guidance on building the business case for your Diversity & Inclusion strategy and help in defining your measures of success.

Exploring metrics such as the profile of your workforce as it relates to not only gender, but ethnicity, nationality, age and other factors can be a useful starting point for exercises surrounding Diversity & Inclusion in your organisation. The Toolkit offers ideas on how to begin this process.

Additionally the Toolkit will serve as a handbook to guide your thinking on talent development in all its guises. It looks at mentoring, coaching, training and creating the right conditions in your work environment to foster and nurture Diversity & Inclusion. The Toolkit also address driving improvements in leadership and developing talent pipeline strategies which are built on a foundation of unbiased and fair recruiting processes.

This toolkit is ever evolving and reflects the pace and thinking that is occurring in this space. It is a starting point to elevate new ways of working and we welcome feedback and collaboration to expand on this current iteration.

The toolkit can be found on the Bord Bia website where more information is provided on how best to navigate and utilise its content.

www.bordbia.ie/AgDIf

Methodology

This report is based on data collected in two online surveys issued by the Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum, conducted in the first quarter of 2018. The surveys targeted CEOs, Senior Leaders and employees working in the sector. Both groups were surveyed to capture their respective views and insights on Diversity & Inclusion. In order to complete the survey, access to a computer / laptop was required. Responses from 50 CEOs and Senior Leaders were received, and 664 employees working in the sector completed the survey. These web-based surveys addressed both qualitative and quantitative D&I issues

Aon conducted this survey on behalf of the Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum. The Advisory Group and Taskforce had the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on the draft survey question set developed by Aon, with input from Bord Bia.

All responses are held confidentially, with only the consolidated data being incorporated into this report. Percentages for some of the responses may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding or respondents being able to select more than one answer. All financial amounts are shown in euro.

Disclaimer

Appendix 1:
Members of Advisory Group & Taskforce

ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS			
Name	Organisation	Role	Member since
Alastair Blair (Chairperson)	Accenture	Country Managing Director	Oct 2017
Tony Murphy	Aryzta	Chief People Officer	Dec 2017
Aidan O'Driscoll	Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine	Secretary General	Oct 2017
Michael Carey	East Coast Bakehouse	CEO	Oct 2017
Margaret Daly	Errigal Bay	Deputy CEO	Oct 2017
Jim Bergin	Glanbia Ingredients Ireland	CEO	Oct 2017
Conor O'Leary	Greencore	Group Company Secretary	Oct 2017
Conor McQuaid	Irish Distillers	CEO	Sept 2018
Caroline Keeling	Keelings	CEO	Oct 2017
John Horgan	Kepak	CEO	Oct 2017
Malcolm Sheil	Kerry Group	President & CEO Kerry Taste & Nutrition Europe	Nov 2017
John Jordan	Ornua	CEO	Jun 2018
Majella Darcy	Ornua	Taskforce Chairperson	Oct 2017
Brid Horan	The 30% Club	Steering Committee	Oct 2017
Ciara Jackson	Aon	Practice Leader, Food & Agribusiness	Oct 2017
Oisin O'Gogain	Aon	HR Director	Oct 2017
Tara McCarthy	Bord Bia	CEO	Oct 2017
Shane Hamill	Bord Bia	Overseas Trade Manager	Oct 2017

TASKFORCE MEMBERS			
Name	Organisation	Role	Member since
Majella Darcy (Chairperson)	Ornua	Group HR Director	Oct 2017
Alistair Tosh	Aryzta	Chief Talent Officer	Oct 2017
David O'Flynn	Dawn Meats	Group Head of CSR & Sustainability	Oct 2017
Eilish O'Brien	Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine	Senior Veterinary Inspector	Oct 2017
Felipe Chambino	Errigal Bay	European Sales Manager	Oct 2017
Jill Davidson	Glanbia Ingredients Ireland	Recruitment Manager	May 2018
Jolene Gacquin	Greencore	Head of Legal & Compliance	Oct 2017
Caroline Littleton	Kerry Group	Global Director Talent & Organisational Development	May 2018
Patrick Cooney	Kerry Group	CFO EMEA	Oct 2017
Lisa Melody	Ornua	Head of Talent Acquisition & Development	Oct 2017
Michelle Walshe	Ribworld	Managing Director	Aug 2018
Karina Pierce	UCD / Ceres Network	Lecturer	Oct 2017
Laura Phelan	Aon	Managing Director Cut-e Ireland	Aug 2018
Siobhan Kelly	Aon	Professional Services Director	Aug 2018
Tom Tully	Bord Bia	Industry Talent Manager	
Shane Hamill	Bord Bia	Overseas Trade Manager	Oct 2017

Bord Bia
Irish Food Board

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About Aon

Aon plc (NYSE:AON) is a leading global provider of risk management, insurance brokerage and reinsurance brokerage, and human resources solutions and outsourcing services. Through its more than 50,000 colleagues worldwide, Aon unites to empower results for clients in over 120 countries via innovative risk and people solutions. For further information on our capabilities and to learn how we empower results for clients, please visit: http://aon.mediaroom.com.

About Bord Bia

Bord Bia (The Irish Food Board) is the Irish government agency charged with the promotion, trade development and marketing of the Irish food, drink and horticulture industry. Bord Bia work to enhance the reputation, based on the principles of sustainable development, of Irish food, drink and horticulture to develop markets for Irish suppliers and bring the taste of Irish food to more tables world-wide. With its headquarters in Dublin, Bord Bia has a network of overseas offices in Amsterdam, Dusseldorf, London, Madrid, Milan, Warsaw, Moscow, New York, Paris, Stockholm, Shanghai, Singapore and Dubai. This extensive overseas presence, coupled with authoritative strategic insight, enables Bord Bia to pursue emerging opportunities and actively respond to significant market issues that affect industry.

About The 30% Club

The 30% Club Ireland officially launched in January 2015, with a goal to achieve better gender balance at all levels in leading Irish businesses. The 30% Club believes that gender balance on boards and executive leadership not only encourages better leadership and governance, but further contributes to better all-round board performance, and ultimately increased corporate performance for both companies and their shareholders. The initiative is complementary to individual company efforts and existing networking groups, adding to these through collaboration and the visible commitment of senior business leaders. Over 200 Irish Chairs and CEOs of leading businesses are supporters of the 30% Club Ireland. These leaders are committed to accelerating gender balance in their organisations through voluntary actions.

The 30% Club is a collaborative business-led effort to make real change in Ireland, aiming towards 30% female representation in senior management by 2020.