

Women in rail Adeline Ginn



# Exploring the benefits of a tailored recruitment campaign

Founder and Chair of Women in Rail, **Adeline Ginn**, discusses the importance of any recruitment drive

**R**ecruitment is key for every organisation and how we look to attract new talent is critical to the diversity and growth of our business. As an industry, we have witnessed a tremendous effort to redress the gender balance over the last couple of years and it is always important to consider whether we are taking the best approach to recruitment in order to attract the most diverse pool of candidates.

Across the network there are some brilliant examples of organisations who have addressed this issue head-on including Virgin Trains, the Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Rail, to name just a few. One such example is at MTR Crossrail where they have put in place tailored recruitment campaigns to ensure they are reaching a wide audience base in order to attract the best candidates.

Research has shown that the role of a trainee train driver is often perceived as a career choice only for men. Tackling this misconception, the team at MTR Crossrail redesigned their advert, hosted an open day where interested parties could gain first-hand experience of the role, and in collaboration with TfL, ran a two-week



placement scheme specifically aimed at giving unemployed women the opportunity to gain a further understanding of the role.

Across the UK rail industry, currently just 6.5 per cent of train drivers are female, with over eight per cent of train drivers nationally

Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME), and 15.8 per cent aged under the age of 35. Through adopting this new recruitment approach, MTR Crossrail saw a significant shift, with 12.5 per cent female train drivers, 28.4 per cent BAME and a staggering 47

per cent of drivers aged 35 and under now employed.

The importance of organisations adapting to ensure they are reaching and speaking to a potentially new and interested audience is critical for our industry. We have made great strides as a sector to improve gender diversity across our networks but more can still be done.

Understanding how our audiences consume information is hugely important to enable the industry to combat perceived career stereotypes.

After a successful campaign to increase female representation on their trainee train driver programme, MTR Crossrail partnered with organisations who support under-represented groups across London, to ensure adverts for new opportunities were being shared widely within local communities, who may not otherwise have accessed them.

Diversity and Inclusion Partner at MTR Crossrail, Kelly Forrest recently discussed the importance of their tailored recruitment campaigns, highlighting how creating a unique supportive application process had led to over 13 per cent of their Customer Service roles being offered to members of targeted partnerships: 'We trialled the initiative in 2018, through organisations we were working with to ensure we reached the widest range of people with our



opportunities.

'The new application process allowed applicants to ask questions, gain confidence and removed many of the barriers that have deterred under-represented individuals from applying in the past. We looked to incorporate paper applications, group assessment days and ran interview and assessment skills workshops, showcasing what people could expect from a career with our organisation.'

For the UK rail industry, it is important that we continue to position ourselves as an attractive career option for both men and women, to attract the best talent and

develop a strong and diverse workforce.

At the end of February, we announced the launch of a Women in Rail careers page. The introduction of this hub is an exciting venture for our charitable organisation, enabling our members to have direct access to vacancies from across UK rail, supporting our aim of increasing the numbers of women in the rail industry and to further help bridge the skills gap.

If you are interested in finding out how your company can access this resource, or to find out about current vacancies across the UK rail industry, please visit <http://womeninrail.org/careers-in-rail/>