

WOMEN IN RAIL CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS

A GENDER DIVERSE WORKPLACE

Adeline Ginn, founder and chair of Women in Rail, explains the benefits and need for a more gender diverse workforce on the railway, and how her organisation is setting out to achieve this.

The railway is an amazing industry, and it is more important than ever that women are made aware of the fantastic opportunities a career in our sector can offer.

Over the last two decades the rail sector has been in a period of exponential growth, but a definite lack of diversity of skills threatens future growth. Only 17% of the workforce in our industry are women, and an even smaller percentage are in senior, decision-making posts.



With a more gender diverse workforce comes different experiences, skillsets, ideas and ways of working, all of which ultimately brings about positive changes and economic competitiveness. It is crucial to support and develop our female talent and promote our industry as an attractive career choice to young girls. A diverse workforce will ensure that our sector is truly representative of modern Britain and its customer base, and that the decisions made by its senior leaders are fully informed.

I created Women in Rail in 2012 with a handful of passionate enthusiasts like me, determined to ensure we retained and supported female talent in UK rail. In the last seven years, we have grown to full registered charity status and our members consist of 4,000 men and women from all grades and roles, representing a wide range of companies from our sector and eight regional groups operating in England, Wales and Scotland.

SHIFTING THE GENDER BALANCE

We are all volunteers, running the charity alongside our day job. Our journey is illustrative of the industry itself: a close-knit community, operated by passionate people who deeply care about the railway and are determined to tackle outdated perceptions and help shift the dial on gender balance, diversity and inclusion so as to ensure our sector has access to the best talent.

We support women by hosting regular networking events and workshops across the UK, running a successful cross-industry mentoring programme and working alongside major stakeholders, including NSAR, RSSB, RDG, BEIS and the DfT, to promote diversity and inclusion in UK rail.

This year, we launched SWIFT, a peer-to-peer network of senior men and women in rail whose purpose is to develop high-potential women and foster the next generation of female leaders in UK rail. We raise awareness of the need for action through surveys and reports and we encourage key stakeholders to identify and develop their female talent.

We showcase female talent in reports and celebrate our inspirational colleagues and peers during our yearly Women in Rail Award, working on changing perceptions and positioning rail as an attractive career choice for young women.

We want to see women thriving in careers on the railway; young girls passionate about our industry and a diverse rail workforce, supported by inclusive cultures. It is only by working together that we will redress the gender imbalance and fill our ever-growing pipeline with the best talent. Let's unite and make it happen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Tw: @WomeninRail

W: www.womeninrail.org