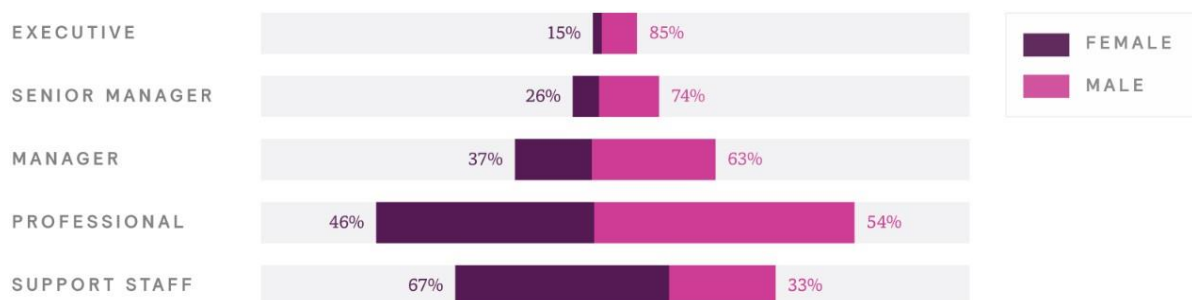


# ORGANISATIONS: NURTURING YOUR FEMALE TALENT

Representation of female and male employees at all levels in Financial Services:



Source: Mercer, *When Women Thrive, Business Thrive*

**85%** of financial services firms have a **diversity programme** of some kind, but the money spent on such programmes is not creating the results we all desire. Why? Because many of these programmes only address the periphery issues preventing women from greater levels of career success.

Periphery; factors that can help	Core issues; factors that will help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working</li> <li>• Maternity/paternity leave</li> <li>• Talking about unconscious bias</li> <li>• Diversity awareness programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing confidence and self-belief</li> <li>• Quantifying skills to tackle lack of self-recognition</li> <li>• Facilitating networking</li> </ul>

Generally, women do not qualify themselves as experts or believe that they have knowledge as quickly as their male counterparts. As a result, they do not put themselves forward nor do they identify and work with stakeholders who will help them to succeed. Tackling this issue is a must if we wish to achieve diverse workforces. Below are some actionable items that will promote confidence and self-belief amongst employees:

- **Look at objectives**; phrasing, target setting, do they promote collaboration, intuition
- Consider **defining skill levels** and be explicit about them with all members of teams, men and women. Make sure you call out when the goals have been reached
- **Create networks and mechanisms** such as mentoring schemes, including men and women, where upcoming talent can get access to senior stakeholders
- Ensuring that work success or otherwise is **correctly attributed**. Women are very good doers, but not often so vocal about their part in reaching team goals
- Encourage your female talent to frequently **go beyond their “comfort zone”**. Women can be more reluctant to take risks
- Consider **your culture** and **your website**: your window to the world. Does it promote the diversity that you want to achieve or the diversity that you have today?
- If female candidates are not putting themselves forward for roles, **ask yourself why**. Don't assume that there aren't any. Wording in job descriptions is important. Look at your internal women carefully and encourage them, where appropriate, to apply. A sea of male faces at interview stage can act as an inhibitor. Unconscious bias with CVs may have an unwitting impact here.

**“Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world”** *Hillary Clinton*

## INDIVIDUALS: NURTURING YOUR OWN TALENT

“If someone offers you an amazing opportunity and you’re not sure you can do it, say yes – then learn how to do it later” *Richard Branson*

We can be our **own worst enemy**, our own harshest critic, we can believe that we are less capable than we are, we panic about the small stuff and forget the bigger picture. **STOP.**

Get over yourself and if you want to think **BIG**, go for it.

A few tips along the way:

- If you aren't confident, **fake it**. Almost everyone else is faking their confidence to a certain extent. Confidence is infectious, the more you do, the easier it is
- You will need **sponsors**; men and women who are interested in your career and in promoting your talent within your organisation. Don't wait to be asked, **cultivate relationships** with them and let them know where you want to get to. Ask for advice and act on it
- **Network**; it doesn't have to be just about going to the pub for a beer. Networking is about creating relationships; and women are really good at creating relationships - it's just a relationship with an agenda. Think beyond your usual groups
- Give yourself 10 minutes every day to **think about your career**, what you want and how you can achieve it. Figure out what you want to be “famous” for and your own personal brand. Create a plan and do it a bit at a time
- **Don't let someone else take the credit for your effort**. Blow your trumpet where it matters to the right people
- Figure out what you want and **ask for it**. Ask your boss or ask HR. Make it known what you want from your career and ask how you should go about it. If you don't say anything, people will assume that you don't want much
- **Don't take knockbacks to heart**. Learn from them and do it differently next time. Ask for honest feedback from those around you, not just those people who will say the nice things
- **Help other people** around you, take ownership for important activities. Companies recognise leadership isn't just at C-suite but through layers of an organisation. This will get you known to decision makers in a positive way
- Put your **“game” face** on and be bold. If you are asked to do something new, always say yes. There is a reason why they have asked you
- **Don't wait to be asked** because it will hardly ever happen that way, you do the asking instead
- **Be assertive**, you are responsible for your own career. The more you are assertive, the more comfortable it will get
- If your current employer is holding you back, **move**. It's almost always easier than you think it will be and you will be glad of the change. Research the culture of the new organisation carefully
- Not everyone has to be a C-suite, but it is about you getting what you want. So, **go for it**.

“Hustle beats talent, when talent doesn't hustle” *Nike*