Supply Chain Talent Pipeline

Inclusion tool kit

GEELONG REGION LOCAL LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT NETWORK INC.

Workforce Australia
Local Jobs

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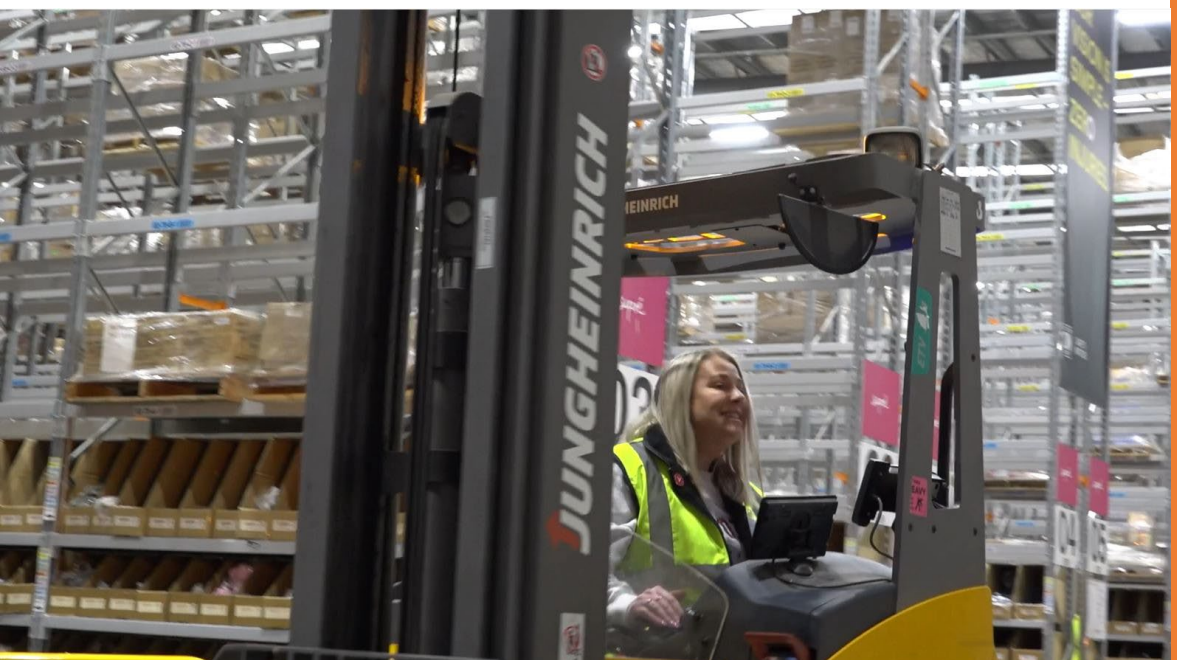

About this tool kit

This inclusion tool kit was developed as part of the Supply Chain Talent Pipeline project – a National Priority Fund initiative which aims to break down barriers to the recruitment and retention of women in the supply chain sector. It is supported by funding from the Australian Government through the Local Jobs Program.

It builds on research co-funded by *Wayfinder Supply Chain Careers for Women* and FIAL and conducted by Deakin University into the barriers to recruitment and retention of women in the supply chain sector.

What is an inclusive workplace and why does it matter?

An inclusive workplace values and celebrates diversity, and the contribution a diverse workforce can make to an organisation's culture and business outcomes.

The aim of inclusion is to ensure that everyone in an organisation feels valued whatever their age, gender, religion or cultural background. In an inclusive workplace there is a sense of belonging among co-workers that translates to greater productivity, greater innovation, improved collaboration and better decision-making.

An inclusive workplace creates a culture in which all those in an organisation come to work feeling comfortable and confident to be themselves, working in a way that suits them but that also optimally delivers what the business needs. And when employees feel valued, they are more likely to stay longer with an organisation.

Quite simply, inclusion makes good business sense.

The business case for diversity and inclusion in supply chain

The current supply chain workforce is aging and predominantly male, and at a time when they are struggling to meet workforce demands, companies simply can't afford to ignore half the potential workforce.

A diverse and inclusive workplace can help drive innovation in supply chain, improve decision making, increase employee engagement and retention, enhance customer satisfaction and improve a company's reputation.

- A diverse workforce reflects a company's customer base, and is better able to meet the technical, operational and cultural challenges of customer demand.
- A diverse workforce brings different views and ideas, leading to more robust decision making.
- A diverse workforce helps organisations better reflect their customer base.
- An inclusive workplace increases employee engagement, which in turn leads to increased retention and improved productivity.

'Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability'.

McKinsey 2020

'Investors targeting companies with greater gender diversity will make 4% higher returns, benefitting from more diverse thinking.'

Fin Review 2020

'If the labour force gender participation gap were halved, annual GDP would **increase by $60 billion** in 20 years'.

KPMG 2017

'Companies with above average diversity in their management teams experience a 19% boost to innovation revenue'.

BCG 2018

Of course, just increasing diversity in your company does not increase effectiveness, what really matters is how a company harnesses its diversity. Feeling valued and respected means more than feeling included, it also involves trust and confidence in the ability to influence setting the agenda.

People from diverse backgrounds also need to see opportunities for advancement and the potential for a career pathway. You can't be it if you can't see it.

Structural barriers to a more diverse supply chain workforce

There are a number of structural barriers contributing to the lack of workforce diversity.

- **Unconscious bias** – a deeply ingrained attitude or stereotype that individuals have without being consciously aware of it. It influences hiring decisions and promotion opportunities.
- **Recruitment and hiring practices** that inadvertently favour particular groups.
- **Lack of diversity at the top** can perpetuate the status quo. When individuals don't see people like themselves in leadership positions it limits their belief in their own potential – 'you can't be it if you can't see it'.
- **Workplaces that are not inclusive create an unwelcoming environment**, hindering retention and promotion opportunities for those in under-represented groups.
- **Pay disparities** based on gender, race or other factors lead to inequity in the workforce. Wage gaps are influenced by factors such as biased salary negotiations, and the undervaluing of work in female-dominated industries.
- **Access to mentors** who provide guidance, support and advocacy is important for career advancement.
- **Work life balance and family responsibilities** are increasingly important, especially for younger workers. Traditional workplace structures disproportionately disadvantage women and others with caregiving responsibilities.

Managing bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace

"Everyone has the right not to be bullied, sexually harassed or discriminated against at work"

Australian Human Rights Commission

Bullying

Bullying occurs when a person of group of people repeatedy behave unreasonably to a co-worker or group of co-workers.

Examples include:

- teasing or playing practical jokes
- Pressuring someone to behave inappropriately
- behaving aggressively to others
- excluding someone from workplace events unreasonable work demands

Sexual Harassment

Under the Fair Work Act, sexual harassment happens when a worker or group of workers:

- make an unwelcome sexual advance
- make an unwelcome request for sexual favours
- engage in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to another worker.

To be sexual harassment, it has to be reasonable to expect that there is a possibility that the worker being sexually harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Bullying and sexual harassment has a significant impact on both individuals and organisations.

- There is a physical and emotional toll which can including anxiety, depression, stress, low self-esteem, and diminished job satisfaction.
- Productivity declines – sexual harassment and bullying creates a toxic work environment where workers feel unsafe and unmotivated. It can lead to increased absenteeism and a higher turnover of staff.
- An organization that tolerates or ignores sexual harassment and bullying may struggle to attract and retain top talent.
- There can be legal liabilities and financial consequences. Lawsuits, legal settlements, and damage to the company's reputation can result in significant financial losses and damage to the brand image.
- There are also compliance and regulatory responsibilities which may lead to penalties, fines and potential legal action.
- Sexual harassment and bullying can disproportionately affect some groups, leading to a lack of diversity. In primarily male dominated workplaces like supply chain, perceptions of a 'boys club mentality' compound the issue.

Fostering an inclusive work environment

The following measures can assist companies to create a safe and inclusive work environment, free from sexual harassment and bullying.

- **Develop a comprehensive policy** that clearly defines what constitutes sexual harassment and bullying, including both verbal and non-verbal behaviours. The policy should outline the consequences for such behaviour and provide clear reporting procedures.
- **Conduct regular training** sessions for all employees to educate them about sexual harassment and bullying, including what behaviours are unacceptable and how to report incidents.
- **Foster a culture of respect, inclusivity, and professionalism** within the organization. Encourage open communication, empathy, and mutual support among employees. Implement initiatives that promote diversity, equality, and inclusiveness.
- **Encourage reporting** by establishing multiple channels for reporting incidents of sexual harassment and bullying, ensuring confidentiality and protection against retaliation for those who come forward.
- **Respond promptly** to any reports of sexual harassment or bullying by conducting fair and thorough investigations. Assign trained investigators who are knowledgeable about the company's policies and legal requirements.
- **Take appropriate disciplinary actions** against individuals found responsible for sexual harassment or bullying. Implement a range of consequences, including warnings, suspensions, retraining, demotions, and termination, depending on the severity of the offense.
- **Provide support to victims** by offering resources such as counselling, legal assistance, and employee assistance programs. Ensure that employees are aware of these resources and know how to access them.
- **Lead by example,** ensuring company leadership sets a positive example by adhering to policies and exhibiting respectful behaviour. Leaders should actively promote a culture of respect, address any concerns promptly, and demonstrate a commitment to preventing harassment and bullying.
- **Conduct regular audits** to evaluate the effectiveness of the company's anti-harassment policies, procedures, and training programs. Use feedback from employees to identify areas for improvement and make necessary adjustments.
- **Collaborate with external organizations or experts** specializing in preventing and addressing workplace harassment and bullying. Seek their guidance to enhance policies, training programs, and overall prevention strategies.

An inclusive approach to designing job descriptions

Implementing the following strategies will encourage diversity and create a more inclusive workplace.

Avoid unnecessary 'nice to have's' in job descriptions

- Be mindful of setting overly strict or unnecessary requirements that may discourage women from applying (research suggests women tend to apply only when they meet 100% of the criteria whereas men routinely apply when they meet 60%).
- Emphasise transferable skills and experiences that can be obtained through various pathways.
- Consider whether industry related operational experience really is a must have, or whether it can it be learned on the job. Insisting on operational experience disadvantages women.

Consider introducing targets for senior positions

- Targets are often unpopular; an alternative is to have hiring managers routinely explain why they were unable to produce diverse shortlists.

Highlight available flexible work arrangements

- Draw attention to policies that support work-life balance such as remote work options, flexible hours and parental leave.
- Add information on your company's approach to diversity on job descriptions and careers pages.

Ensure salary transparency

- Promote salary transparency by either indicating a salary range or stating that the compensation is negotiable.
- Women have historically been disadvantaged in salary negotiations, so transparent salary information can help address pay disparities.

Highlight career growth opportunities

- Highlight any mentorship programs, training initiatives, or professional development opportunities within the organization.

Redefining work as ‘outcomes to achieve’ not ‘a place to go’.

Flexible jobs help attract all workers, but it’s particularly attractive to women and to younger workers generally.

COVID19 changed the supply chain world in lots of ways, and not all were negative. The pandemic shone a spotlight on the key role supply chain plays in keeping businesses moving, and it also shifted thinking about how and where work is done. It drove a massive experiment in remote work, and hybrid models for at least some workers are likely to continue post pandemic.

Demand for greater flexibility is also driven by an increase in dual income households. Millennials are almost twice as likely to have a partner working full-time than baby boomers, and while women continue to take the major responsibility for childcare, fathers are much more involved in parenting than in previous generations.

All younger workers both male and female, value work life balance and workplace flexibility. They believe productivity isn’t defined by how many hours spent in the office but how successfully they have performed their tasks.

Examples of flexible working can include:

- remote working (including from overseas, which significantly widens the talent pool)
- flexible (and family friendly) start and finish times
- part-time and casual work
- purchasing additional paid leave
- job sharing
- flexible rostering.

Providing work is completed on time and to the client’s satisfaction – where and when it happens is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

Achieving work life balance in an industry that operates 24/7

Supply chain companies operate 245/7 for 365 days a year, shipping products across multiple time zones, and exchanging large amounts of data.

There's no doubt there are operational difficulties for companies looking to meet the increasing demands of younger workers for more flexible work hours and better work life balance.

A number of supply chain companies have succeeded in introducing initiatives to promote work-life balance.

- Making work life balance part of the company's values – to attract (and keep) top talent, successful companies make a healthy work life balance integral to their company culture.
- Companies are up front with current and future employees about what to expect in terms of hours and what is (and what isn't) possible.
- Managers can offset long hours with options such as allowances, wellness opportunities, additional leave and periods of remote work.
- Where possible, family friendly shift options are made available.
- Operational pre-start meetings have a remote dial in option.

Hiring for diversity

Recruiting for diversity not only makes good business sense, but it also gives access to a pool of skilled workers who are often overlooked.

Taking advantage of the benefits of a diverse workforce requires ensuring the recruitment process has been designed to firstly attract a diverse pool of candidates, and secondly that the candidate pool will be considered without bias. And retaining top talent requires a workplace culture that is inclusive and creates career opportunities for all.

Review the channels you use to attract candidates

- Look at new ways of attracting under-represented groups – social media, different recruiting agencies, industry bodies.
- Intentionally target groups outside your normal networks. Proactively reach out to women's professional networks and actively participate in events that target women in specific industries.

Update your marketing materials

- Ensure your website accurately reflects company's values and approaches to diversity.
- Include testimonials or quotes from current employees, particularly women, sharing their career journey at your company.

Use neutral language in the PD and the ads

- Try the WGEA gender decoder to ensure the language is gender neutral.
- Have you checked for inherent bias in the job title (for example salesman or security guard).

Use inclusive evaluation criteria

- Establish objective and relevant evaluation criteria to assess applicants fairly.
- Ensure criteria focus on skills, qualifications and potential rather than subjective traits that may introduce unconscious bias.
- Consider transferable skills, not just years of experience or specific industry experience.

Run unconscious bias training

- Provide staff with unconscious bias training to raise awareness of how they can be influenced by stereotypes. It will help avoid the mental shortcuts that can lead to snap judgements based on gender, race or age

The merit trap

The hiring manager says to the bird, the monkey and the rhino: 'Whoever gets to the top of the tree gets the job'. This is equality, but it clearly disadvantages the poor rhino.

The term 'merit trap' refers to a situation where the belief in meritocracy, or the idea that success is solely based on individual merit or ability, can mask or perpetuate underlying inequalities and disadvantages.

The merit trap suggests that the emphasis on merit can create a false assumption that everyone starts on an equal playing field and that success or failure is solely determined by individual effort and talent. This overlooks the systemic barriers, biases, and unequal opportunities that exist in society, and that can impact an individual's ability to succeed regardless of their merit.

"Merit is a trap – it is the ultimate card to play in preventing change. It is endemic across all organisations. The higher you go, the trickier it gets.

Jayne Hrdlicka, CEO Jetstar Group.

Recognizing the merit trap involves understanding that individual merit alone is not the sole determinant of success. It requires acknowledging the structural inequalities and systemic biases that exist.

Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change developed the paper In the Eye of the beholder: avoiding the merit trap. They believe that everyone in business should be judged on their merits and not factors such as race or gender, but they acknowledge the unintended consequences of the use of merit and the biases that can affect decision making.

Their paper asks companies to reflect on their use of merit and suggest that an appointment outcome is likely to be truly meritorious when companies critically evaluate:

- candidates based on potential as well as on past performance
- impact as a team member rather than as a sole contributor
- the process to ensure bias is minimised
- your organisation's future needs.

Their report includes case studies from some of Australia's major organisations including Qantas, ANZ, the Australian Army and KPMG – it is well worth a read.

What influences the job decisions of younger workers?

Millennials and Gen Zers expect a lot more from their workplace than previous generations.

A 2023 report from Deloitte's found that Gen Zs and millennials 'care about the state of the world, and actively trying to balance the challenges of their everyday lives with their desire to drive social change'. Younger workers are looking for more purposeful work; they want to make a difference in their world.

Integral to this is the value younger workers place on diversity and inclusion. Younger workers see workplace diversity and inclusion as more than just age, gender, race, or sexual orientation. They see it as about the combining of different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives and how different points of view are accepted and valued … and that by taking advantage of these differences we can increase innovation.

Younger workers believe that the willingness of a business to embrace diversity and inclusion will result in a workforce that is more engaged, more productive and more innovative.

Millennials and Gen Zer's interest in a sustainable environment is a key driver for the growth in ESG and corporate social responsibility, and the supply chain industry's role in supporting sustainable practices has the potential to be a major recruitment drawcard.

Modern supply chains have a key role to play in switching to renewables and the green economy. Introducing recyclable packaging and improving biosecurity. Around 90% of the environmental impact the consumer sector has on the environment comes from supply chain activity. Companies are increasingly including environmentally friendly choices into their supply chain. Sustainable supply chains help the environment by reducing miles, reducing production costs, and reducing product waste.

Retaining top talent

Attracting a more diverse workforce is only one half of the equation, it's also important to retain good staff.

Employee turnover is expensive not only because you lose valued staff but because of the exit costs when an employee leaves and then the additional costs to recruit and train new hires.

A 2023 Survey on LinkedIn found that while 60% of employees are happy in their current roles, they would consider leaving their current employers for more money (40%) and better work-life balance (31%).

Why do people leave jobs?

Work life balance is a key

Younger generations tend to place a higher value on work-life balance and personal fulfillment in their careers. They are less willing to sacrifice their personal lives for the sake of their jobs and are more likely to leave a job that doesn't align with their values or priorities. Flexible scheduling, remote work options and part-time opportunities are key to work life balance and valued by younger workers.

Most employees are looking for a career not a job

Lack of opportunities for career progression is a motivator to look elsewhere for most employees but particularly younger workers. They expect opportunities for professional development and training, including the secondment and shadowing opportunities that will encourage talented workers to see they have a career with the company not just a job.

A culture that employees want to be part of

A company's culture matters not only to employees who are considering a new job but also to employees staying in their current role. A good company culture is one of the main reasons employees will opt not to leave and a toxic workplace is a major factor in people's decision to leave a company.

Chasing a higher salary

Workers who feel appropriately recognized and rewarded by their employer are much easier to retain long term, but while a competitive salary is important, so are other financial incentives like bonuses or gift cards. Access to other perks like time off, a mobile phone, wellness opportunities and product discounts can be a useful alternative if salary increases are not possible.

Does company culture matter?

Company culture has a major influence on whether people decide to stay or move on from their company, and with social media, views on company reputations travel fast.

For millennials, and for women in particular, strong company values towards diversity, ethical responsibility and sustainability are a major decider in their thinking about joining or staying with a company.

For almost half the people in a study* conducted by Deakin University in 2020, company culture was cited as barrier to further developing their career. Poor workplace culture can lead directly to poor morale, stress, reputational damage and increased staff turnover. Negativity in the workplace is contagious and can affect the whole team.

Policies may be in place, and there may be annual reviews of internal barriers to issues such as bullying, gender equality or sexual harassment – but if company culture is poor, inappropriate behaviours will persist.

Workplace cultures are formed from the actions and beliefs of those who work there but ultimately, company culture comes down to leadership. Leaders must send the right messages about the company's stance on issues like bullying and sexual harassment and represent company values in their own behaviours.

* Executive Summary: *The under-representation of women in the supply chain workforce*. Study co-funded by Wayfinder and FIAL and conducted by Deakin University in 2020 .

Are your company's values visible to potential recruits?

The millennial generation cares about issues such as diversity and inclusion, climate change and ethical supply chains, and they want to see company values in action and not just talked about.

Younger workers, particularly those in professional roles, prioritise personal values in deciding where to work, whether it's a commitment to sustainability, diversity or social impact. Ensuring that a company's core values are clearly visible on their website and in job descriptions can be an important recruitment tool.

Some suggestions for ensuring your company's values are visible

- Include employee profiles on your website (people after all, are the backbone of all businesses).
- Create and regularly update content that showcases your company's commitment to creating sustainable and ethical supply chains and inclusion and diversity.
- Showcase your commitment to company values and include links to real time events and activities.
- Ensure all employees are aware of company values and that they are evident in position descriptions and during interviews.

Marketing a supply chain career to women

The women in a 2020 research study* were uniformly positive about the advantages of a supply chain career – they saw it as a 'high tech, high speed, high stakes game, managing multiple interactions and requiring a rich mix of skills'.

They like the people aspect

It may be increasingly digitised, but supply chain is still a people business and building relationships and working with people is the main game, working with colleagues in other departments, external organisations and stakeholders to ensure reliable supply.

They like the diversity

In supply chain no day is the same – the diversity in day-to-day activities is a real plus for many women – there is huge variety both within and between supply chain roles.

They like that it's a job with a future

As COVID 19 showed, supply chain is crucial to business, it's a job with a future and it's well paid.

They like to problem solve

For people who are curious and like looking for patterns and trends the problem-solving aspect of supply chain is a real joy.

They like that it makes a difference in the world

That an efficient supply chain benefits people, profit and planet

* Executive Summary: *The under-representation of women in the supply chain workforce*. Study co-funded by Wayfinder and FIAL and conducted by Deakin University in 2020 .

Useful resources (1)

Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI)

AHRI is a professional association for HR practitioners in Australia. They offer resources, training, and events related to diversity and inclusion, including webinars, research papers, and best practice guides.

Australian Human Rights Commission

The Australian Human Rights Commission provides resources, guidelines, and training materials on preventing and addressing workplace discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying. Their website offers practical tools and information for both employers and employees.

Australian Institute of Company Directors

AICD provides guidance and resources to boards and directors on diversity and inclusion. Their website features publications, articles, and insights on governance practices that promote diversity and inclusion in boardrooms and leadership positions.

Business Victoria

Small businesses are a vital part of Victoria's economy. Business Victoria provides information, support and resources to help business owners develop essential skills and understand their legal obligations. Small businesses are a vital part of Victoria's economy. Business Victoria provides information, support and resources to help business owners develop essential skills and understand their legal obligations.

Champions of Change Coalition

The Champions of Change Coalition is a globally recognised strategy for achieving gender equality, advancing more and diverse women in leadership, and building respectful and inclusive workplaces. Men of power and influence step up beside women leaders to lead and be accountable for change on gender equality issues in their organisations.

Deloitte Diversity and Inclusion

The global firm Deloitte has developed a range of resources and publications on diversity and inclusion. Their website includes research reports, articles, and insights that can help organizations create inclusive workplaces.

Diversity Council Australia

The Diversity Council Australia provides research, tools, and resources to support organizations in building diverse and inclusive workplaces. They offer guidance on issues related to cultural diversity, gender equality, and flexibility. Their publications, webinars, and events provide insights and practical strategies for creating inclusive workplaces.

Useful resources (2)

Fair Work Ombudsman

To learn more about the fair Work Ombudsman's role in dealing with complaints of bullying at work, go to FWC – Bullying . Small businesses may be eligible for free legal advice from the FWC's Workplace Advice Service.

Respect@Work

The Australian Human Rights Commission and Respect@Work Council have a tailored website to help workplaces prevent and respond to sexual harassment and create a work culture that is safe, respectful and equal for everyone.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

The website contains the tools to help organisations meet their obligations including equal opportunity practice guidelines

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) works towards promoting gender equality in Australian workplaces. Their website offers research, guidelines, and resources to help organizations improve gender equality, including information on gender pay equity and flexible work arrangements.

WorkSafe Victoria

Each state and territory has a local workplace health and safety body, which regulates and investigates breaches of laws about workplace health and safety, including bullying and harassment.

This is a live document, and we would be delighted to include examples of good practice in diversity and inclusion from local businesses large and small.

Contact p.mclean@deakin.edu.au

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