POWERful WOMEN

ATTRACTING AND DEVELOPING TALENT

BUILDING GENDER DIVERSITY IN DIGITAL FROM THE INCEPTION OF AN ORGANISATION

Shell UK's Digitalisation and Computational Science Centre of Excellence was created in 2018 to bring together expertise that supports the delivery of digital projects and incubates emerging technologies. Core competencies in this team include data science, computational science, digital product management, digital engineering and innovation.

It is especially hard to attract women into these disciplines as there is a lower proportion (26%) of female graduates with the relevant (STEM) backgrounds. Competition in the external market for this limited pool of talent is fierce as many other companies are also building these skills.

From the start, it was essential for Shell to create a culture and an employee value proposition that would be attractive to women and bring in greater cultural diversity; both in terms of recruitment and retention. This needed a pro-active approach and visible actions that could be replicated in other parts of the organisation also responding to digitalisation and building the same skills.

Actions have included:

✓ Creating an open culture where the agenda for gender balance and diversity in the team is a top priority, discussed at most leadership and team meetings and championed by all team leaders.

✓ Mentoring and coaching for women in the Digital and Computational Science Centre of Excellence. This provides a better support structure and gives leaders insights into how they need to shape the team and culture of a future organisation to better support gender equality.

✓ Shared videos of female leaders across Projects and Technology talking about their experiences of working in heavily male-dominated teams and what attracts them to work in Shell.

✓ Presence and presentations at external forums and conferences that attract women with the backgrounds the company seeks for recruitment and networking purposes.

60%

female representation in one of Shell's digital teams

DIGITAL D&I SERIES

Maggie Wenham
Manager Statisticians, Digital CoE

As a result, Shell celebrated 60% female representation in one of its digital teams this year and achieved 30% women overall in the Digital Centre of Excellence by the end of August 2019.
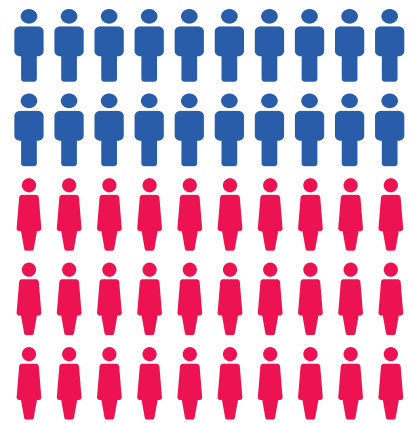
The team spans four generations and 23 nationalities in terms of overall diversity. Shell acknowledges it is not yet enough but is an encouraging start. It shows what can be achieved in the short space of a year by placing emphasis on the diversity agenda.

"Small steps around the big topic of gender balance are an effective way of getting everyone talking and taking actions themselves. A video takes just 30 minutes to shoot, training sessions – 45 minutes. Little and often is a great way to get the team involved. This is not an agenda for leaders alone. It's an agenda everyone needs to participate in to make a change."

Kari Jordan,
Digital Product Manager Lead