



POWER FEMALE AMBITION DEVELOP CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Global Gender Diversity Report 2016

gender-diversity.haysplc.com



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Methodology

This report has been compiled using data gathered between November 2015 and January 2016. The findings of our gender diversity report are based on a survey of over 11,500 male and female respondents from across the world (57% female, 42% male and 1% preferring not to say).

We have used country specific data where there was a minimum of 100 responses per country: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

Thank you

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the respondents who provided their valuable insight. Your contribution has allowed us to produce this comprehensive report which will help influence and shape business decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Time and time again it has been proven that more diverse organisations not only outperform those which are less diverse, but are also most likely to attract and retain the most talented professionals.

In addition, the link between women in the workplace and a country's economic growth is closely connected. Despite this, globally women are not paid or rewarded equally to their male colleagues and remain underrepresented in the workplace, as well as proportionally less represented in senior roles.

In compiling this report and recommendations, we spoke to over 11,500 women and men, asking their opinion and views on women in the world of work today.

While the findings vary by country and by sector, we have discovered common themes and sometimes surprising results about what can be done by business leaders today to ensure that women continue to advance in their careers and achieve better representation at senior levels. Our findings are also accompanied with insight from a number of successful women at the top of their professions, who share their experience from both a personal and professional perspective.

Although gender diversity has improved and we have seen less of a disparity in the views and experiences between men and women, when compared to our 2015 report, our research shows that organisations can still do significantly more to narrow the gap. They hold the key to advancing women in the workplace and have an opportunity and responsibility to close the gender divide.

We want to make business leaders, and the talented women they employ, aware of the issues affecting gender equality in the workplace. In doing so, we hope to provide advice on how the divide between genders can be narrowed.

We hope you find these findings both useful and informative and we look forward to discussing them with you.

Yvonne Smyth
Global Head of Diversity, Hays

“ If we can inspire or help one female with her career progression then this is a great result. Similarly, if we draw attention to companies on how they can support their female talent and shift the dial, then this would be wonderful. ”

Victoria Jarman
Non-Executive Board Director, Hays



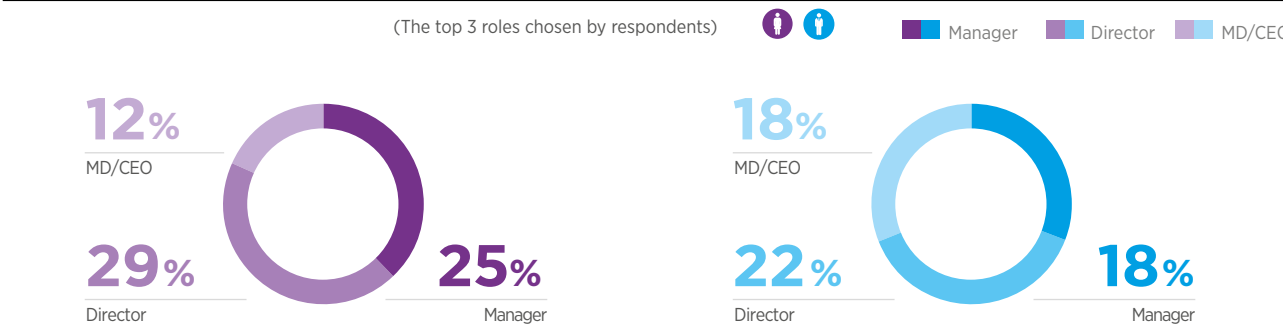
AMBITION

Senior leaders are typically male
79% of respondents stated that the most senior person within their organisation was male

In addition, 67% of respondents stated that their line manager was also male and 46% of respondents stated that their colleagues were mostly male. Given the predominance of men in leadership roles, it is perhaps not surprising that women are underrepresented in management roles and in more senior positions. However our survey shows that despite this, female and male ambition for management and director roles are nearly identical.

We must therefore conclude that a lack of female leaders is not due to a low level of female ambition but rather, the way in which companies structure and organise themselves when it comes to promoting talent. These processes are having a disproportionately negative impact on women being able to realise their ambitions and progress their careers. This section of the report will explore the differences in female and male ambition.

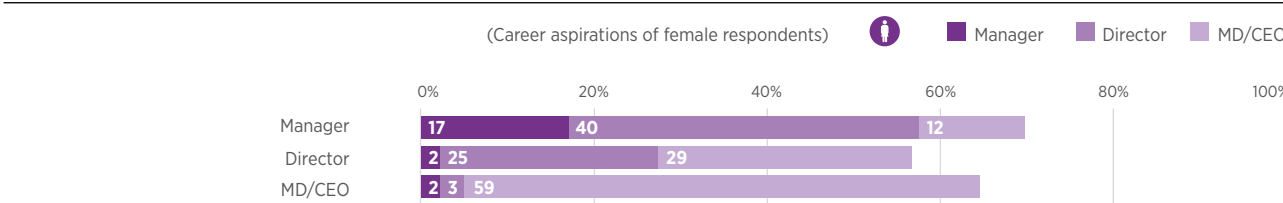
What role would you need to have to consider yourself successful?



Globally 12% of women aspire to reach an MD/CEO position compared to 18% of men. However when we include those who aspire to reach director level ambition is equal between genders. Just over 40% of women aspire to reach director or MD/CEO level similar to 40% of men. This shows that there is little difference between male and female ambition

for reaching senior positions. Women are actually more ambitious to reach manager and director level but there is a slight drop for MD/CEO compared to men. Despite this, significantly more men are in senior positions compared to women and this increasingly unequal male to female ratio in turn impacts on further opportunities for women.

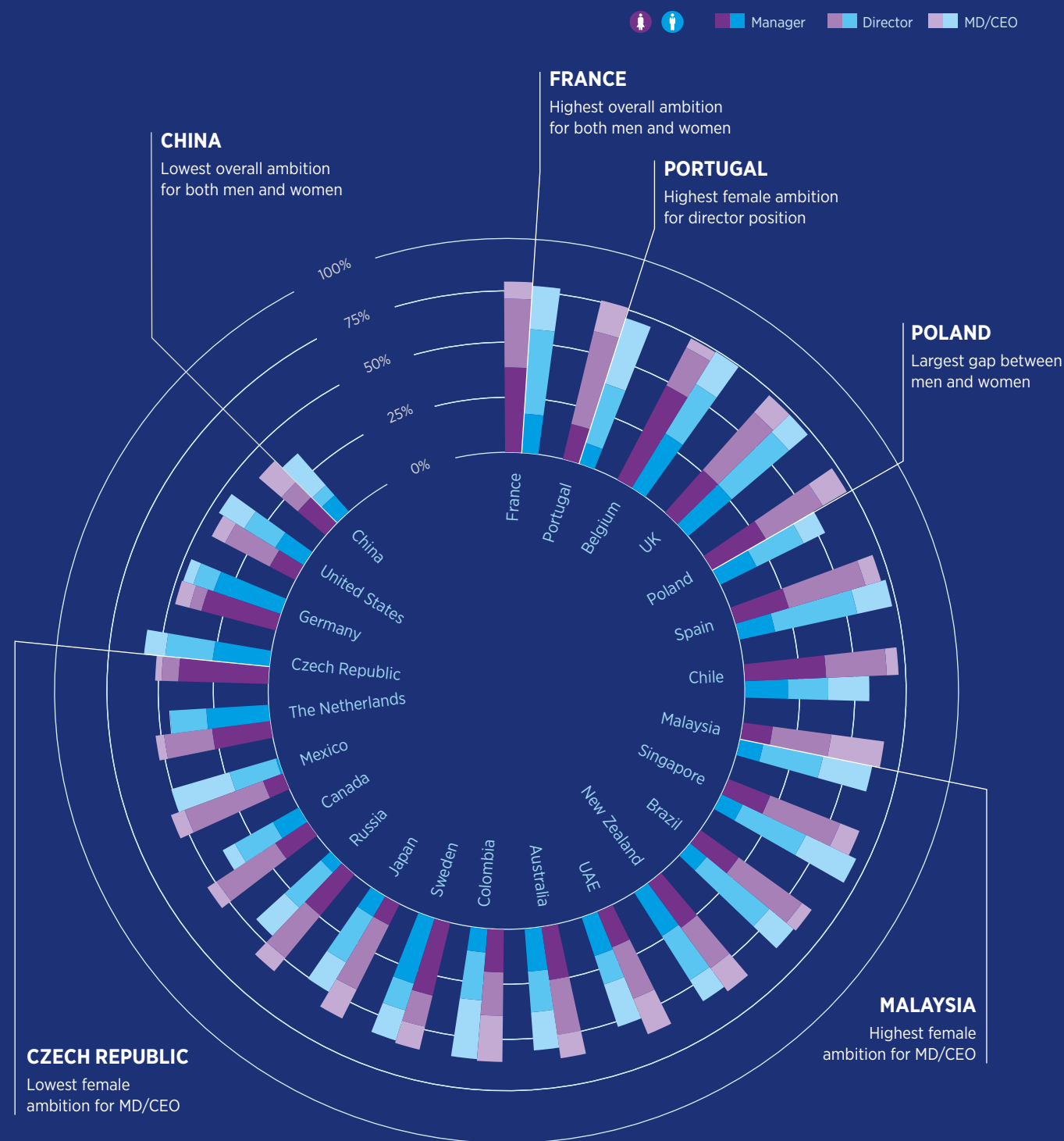
How does female ambition affect the talent pipeline?



Analysing these results in more detail, specifically looking at female management, we can see that 40% of all female managers aspire to reach director level. Out of all female directors 29% aspire to reach MD/CEO position. Finally 59% of all females in an MD/CEO role are happy at this level. This is a very encouraging percentage as it shows that once women make it to MD/CEO level they are happy with their role and feel satisfied with their career.

Globally we can see that once women have progressed from manager to director, they are more likely to have the ambition to progress to MD/CEO level. Women have the

aspiration to move up in business, however women are still underrepresented in management roles and in more senior positions. This shows companies need to focus on internal initiatives aimed at retaining and developing female talent, such as clear and individual career development plans, to encourage and enable more women to move into senior positions. Improving and maintaining gender diversity is not just about how many women are on boards today but ensuring a substantial number of women are moving into manager roles and higher, so that there is a sustainable pipeline of women to select from when hiring for senior roles.

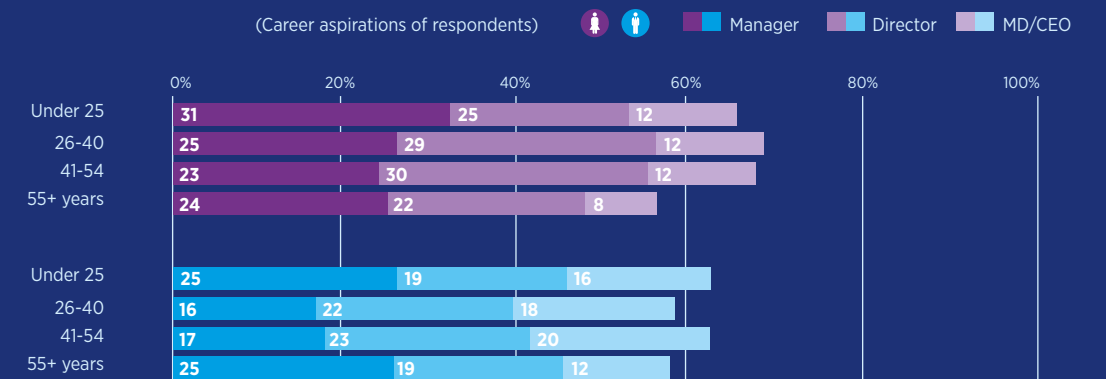


AMBITION AT A GLOBAL LEVEL

Malaysia (28%), Colombia (22%), UAE (18%) and Japan (17%) have the highest percentage of female respondents stating they would need to reach MD/CEO level in order to feel successful in their careers. Germany (7%), the United States (7%), Belgium (5%), the Netherlands (4%) and the Czech Republic (3%) have the lowest percentage of females stating they need to be a MD/CEO in order to feel successful.

Developed European markets and the United States are lagging behind other nations when it comes to female ambition in business. It is clear that there is no correlation between female ambition and developed markets. This is surprising as gender diversity has been debated for longer in developed markets and has been clearly linked to improved business performance.

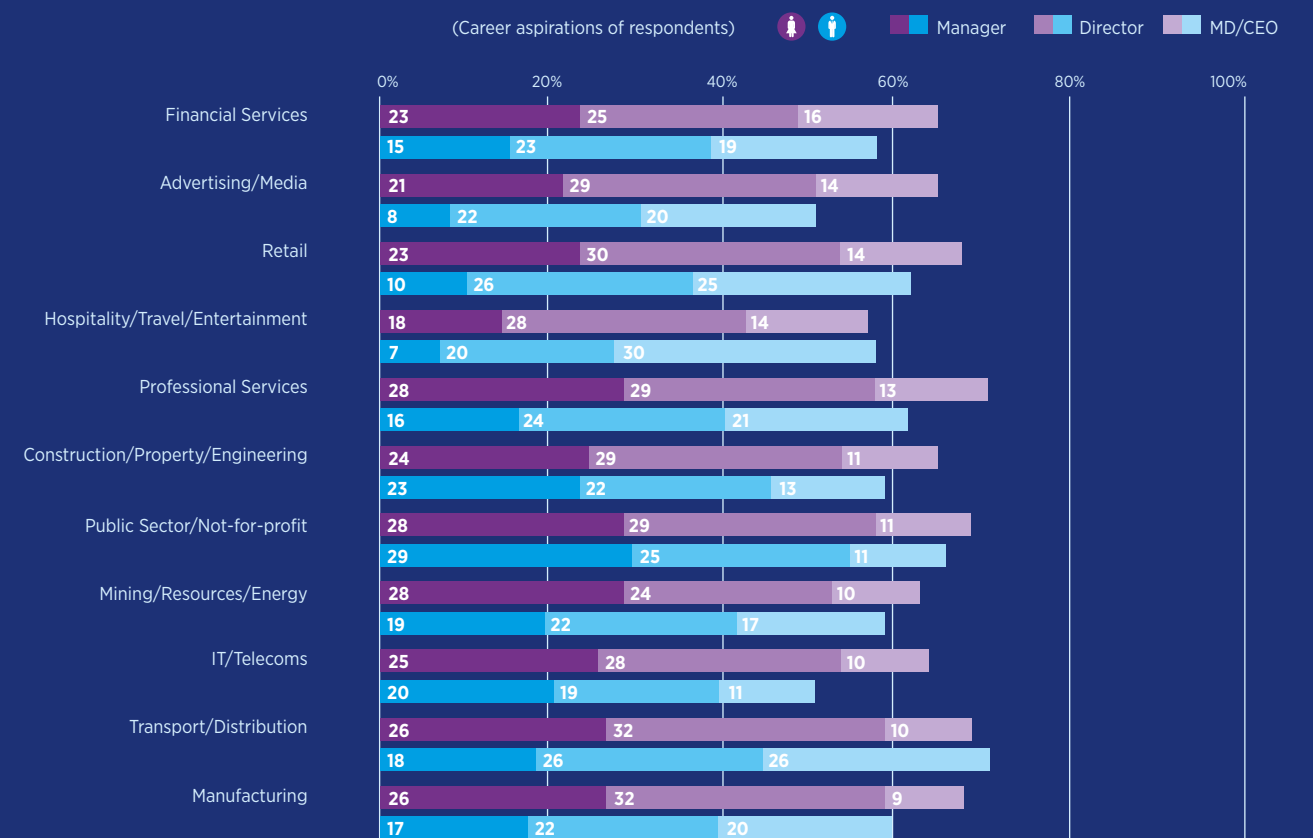
How does age impact ambition?



There is no significant difference in ambition between men and women across age groups, until the 55+ years age bracket. Consistently more women than men aspire to reach manager or director roles up to 55+ years. This shows that although women do have the ambition to achieve manager and director positions they are not getting there as globally,

67% of respondents stated their line manager was male. Women are not moving into these roles. However, we hope the continued focus on improving the female talent pipeline will help to rectify this and we will see an increase in the number of women reaching the most senior positions.

How does ambition differ by sector?



Financial services has the highest percentage of females stating they would need to reach MD/CEO level in order to feel successful in their careers, while manufacturing has the lowest percentage.

Top financial firms have historically had to fight for the best talent that schools, colleges and universities have to offer. Many firms have offered attractive financial incentives to secure this talent, which may contribute to the financial services sector attracting a large number of ambitious females.

A gender diverse workforce should reflect and be proportionate to the number of women entering a sector. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that manufacturing as a sector does not fare so well, being typically male dominated. There are traditionally fewer women in this sector and therefore fewer senior female leaders. This may explain why women working in manufacturing feel a lack ambition to reach MD/CEO level, because there are fewer role models for them to aspire to.

SELF-PROMOTION

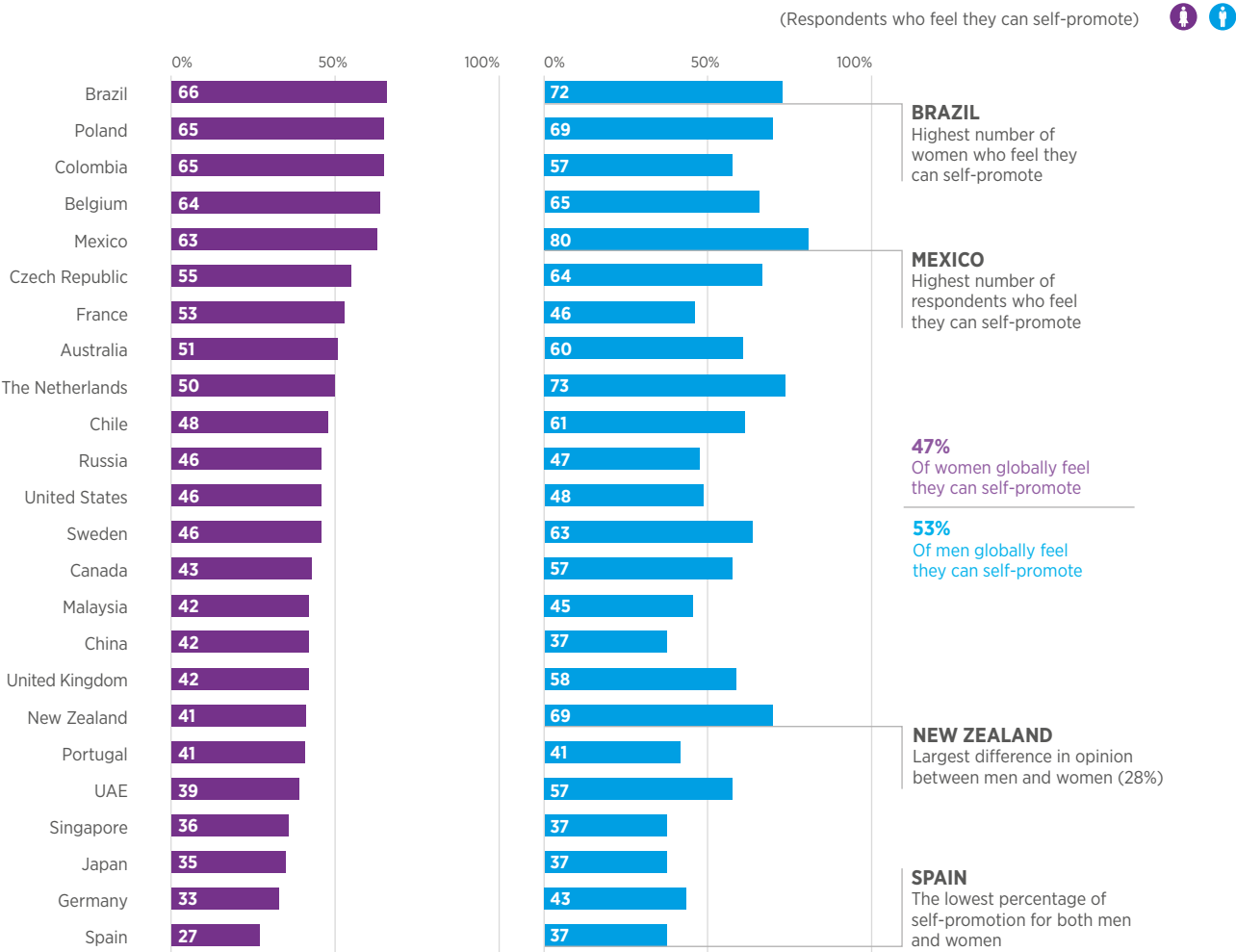
Women feel they cannot self-promote in the workplace

Only 47% of women feel they have the opportunity to self-promote and communicate their ambitions in the workplace, compared to 53% of men

Promoting achievements and accomplishments to colleagues and line managers is regarded as difficult for both men and women globally, as is communicating their ambitions. This is significant as being able to promote your achievements in the workplace and linking these to career ambitions is a key part of successful career development.

If women feel less confident in being able to assert their accomplishments, it will impact negatively on their development. Whilst women need to be advised that self-promotion is important, organisations should also do more to help women voice their achievements.

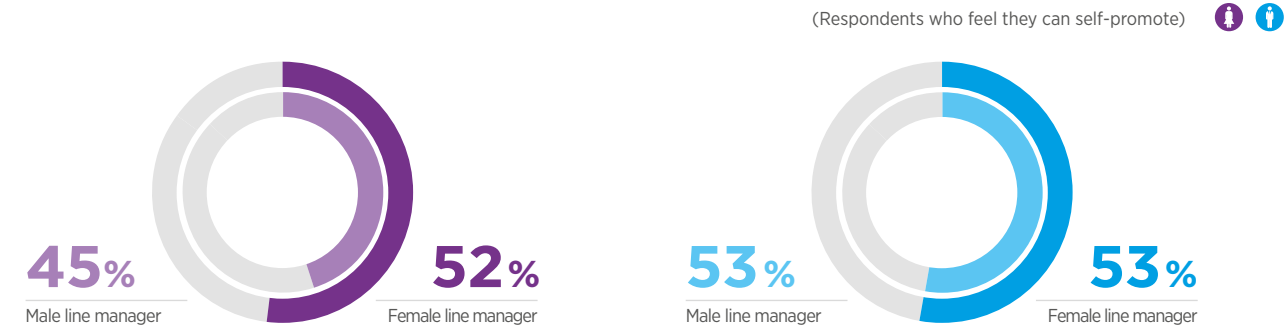
How does self-promotion differ globally?



When we look at male and female responses combined, in 13 out of 25 countries surveyed, fewer than 50% of men and women feel they have the opportunity to self-promote and communicate their ambitions: Spain (32%), Singapore (36%), Japan (37%), China (38%), Germany (40%), Portugal (41%), Italy (43%), Malaysia (43%), the UK (45%), Russia (47%), the United States (47%), and the UAE (48%). This shows that there are global differences but that feeling unable to self-promote and communicate ambition is shared across all continents, many jurisdictions and economies.

Similar to the results in the ambition section we can see that employees do not feel they have more opportunities to self-promote and communicate their ambitions in developed markets, where the gender diversity debate may be considered more established and better understood. The United States and Germany are at the bottom of the list again. As self-promotion is a crucial part of career development and is a concern for both males and females globally, companies should address this by changing or creating internal processes and by providing more training to managers and leaders around enabling these discussions.

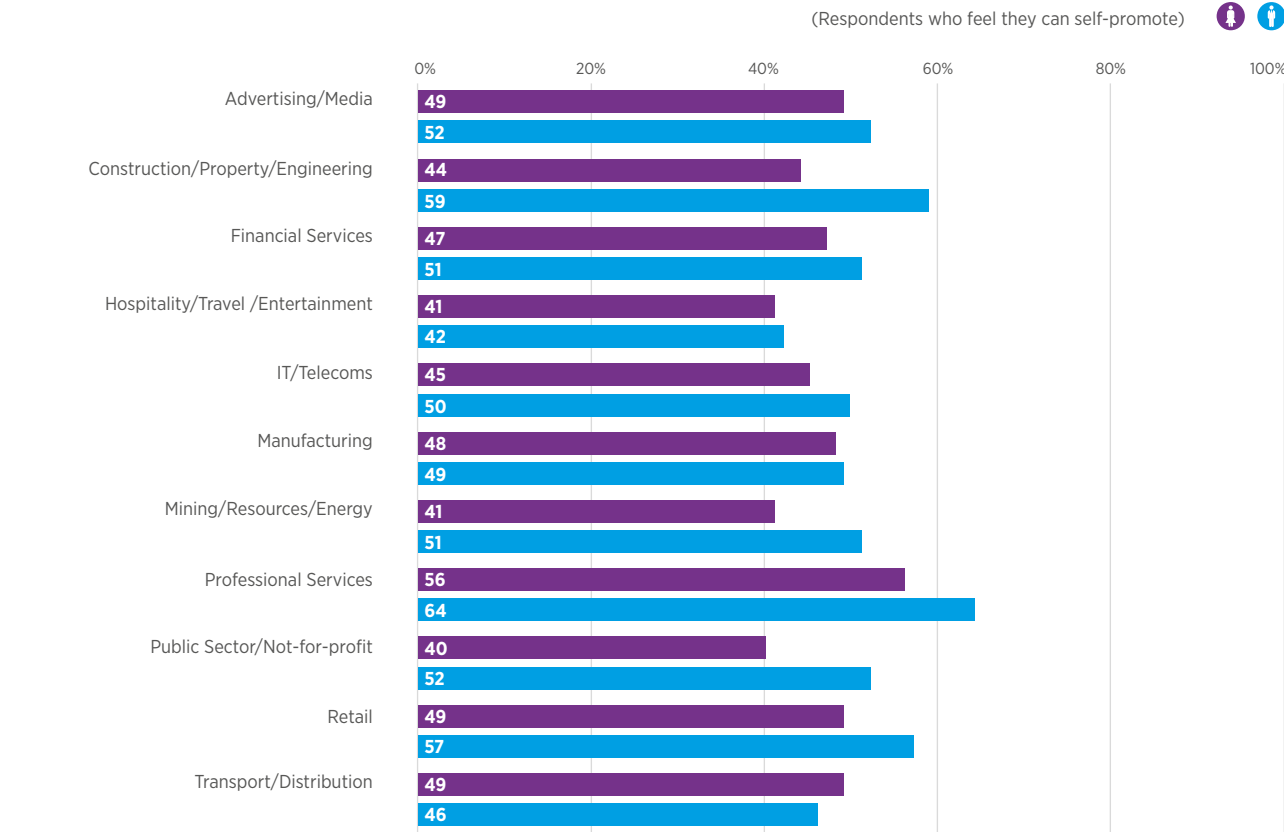
How does a line manager impact self-promotion?



Over half (52%) of women who have a female line manager feel they have the opportunity to self-promote and communicate their ambitions sufficiently; this percentage drops to 45% if they have a male line manager. The fact that a line manager may be female or male has no impact on whether a man feels he has the opportunity to self-promote sufficiently and communicate his ambitions (53% for both).

If women feel more confident in promoting themselves to a female line manager and can in turn progress their careers more effectively, then we believe that having more female representation in management and leadership positions will have a positive impact on improving women's opportunities in the workplace.

How does self-promotion differ by sector?



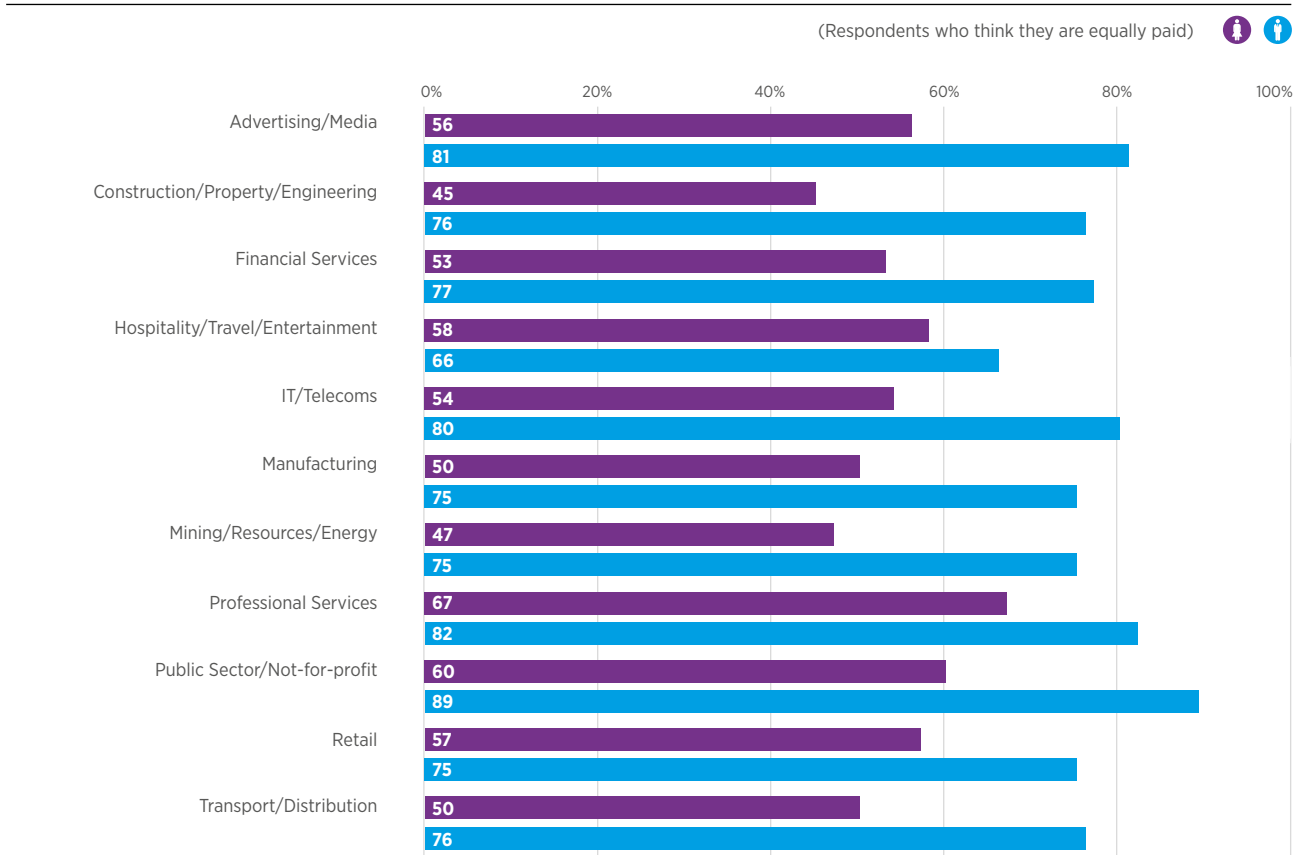
In all sectors except advertising (50%), construction (52%), retail (52%) and professional services (59%) fewer than 50% of respondents feel they have the opportunity to self-promote and communicate their career ambitions sufficiently. Self-promotion is still relatively low in these sectors demonstrating that the ability to promote accomplishments is a difficulty for all respondents.

This challenge is made even more pressing when we look at the percentages by gender. The largest disparity in male and females feeling they have the opportunity to self-promote sufficiently is found in construction at 15%. Mining has the second largest disparity at 10%. This shows women are less assertive in typically male dominated industries. It is necessary for companies in these industries to be aware that women are unlikely to feel they can self-promote and communicate their ambitions. There will also be fewer role models in these sectors.

EQUAL PAY

There is still a major disparity in opinion on equal pay between the sexes
78% of males stated that they think there is equal pay between genders compared to 56% of females

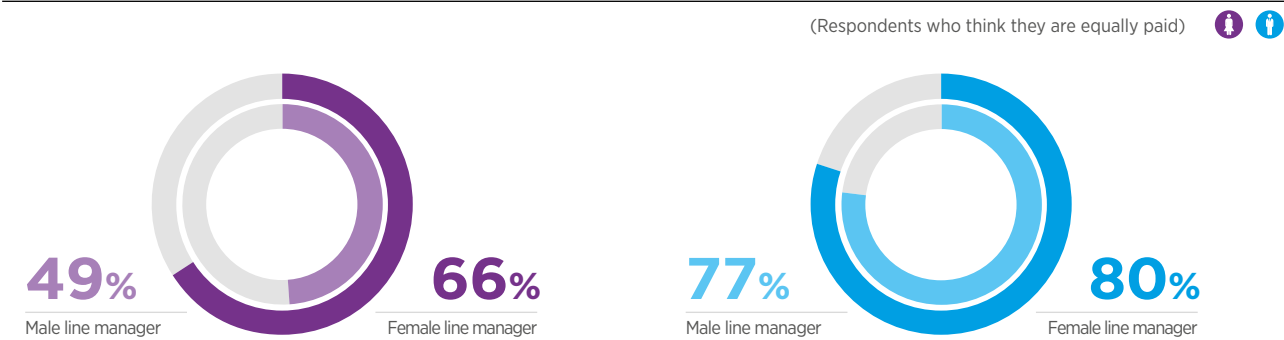
How does equal pay differ by sector?



Sectors with the highest percentage of both male and female respondents who think there is equal pay between genders are professional services (72%) and the public sector (68%).

Looking at the results by gender, professional services and the public sector are still at the top of the list and have the highest percentages of women who believe they are paid equally regardless of gender.

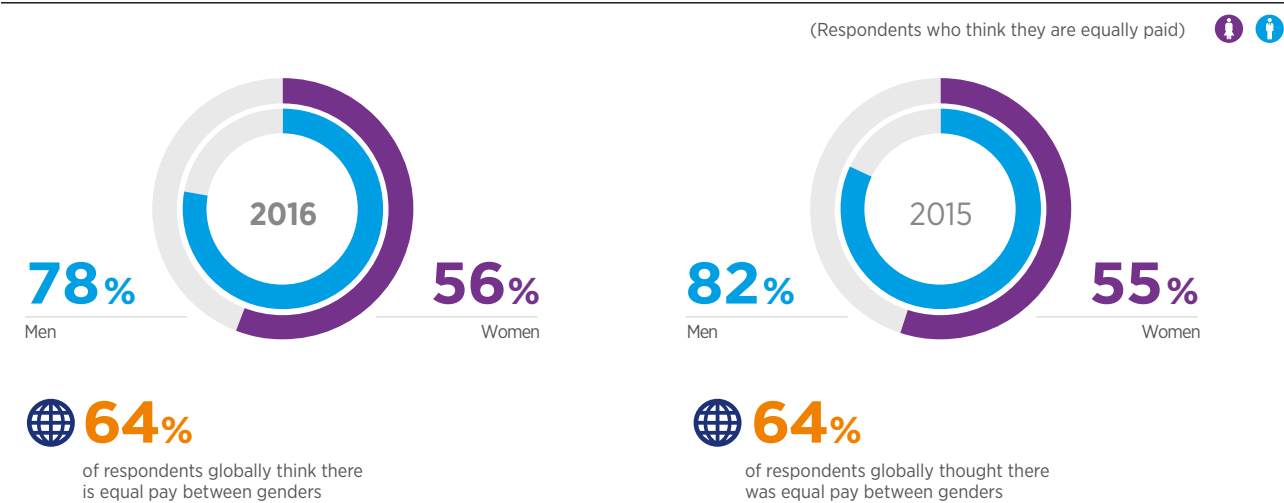
How does a line manager impact the perception of equal pay?



Women with a female line manager are more likely to feel that their equally capable colleagues are paid/rewarded in an equal manner regardless of gender (66%) compared to those who have a male line manager (49%). Men are much more likely than women to feel that their equally capable colleagues are paid/rewarded in an equal manner regardless of gender. In fact, 80% of men think there is equal pay between genders if they have a female line manager and 77% think this if they have a male line manager.

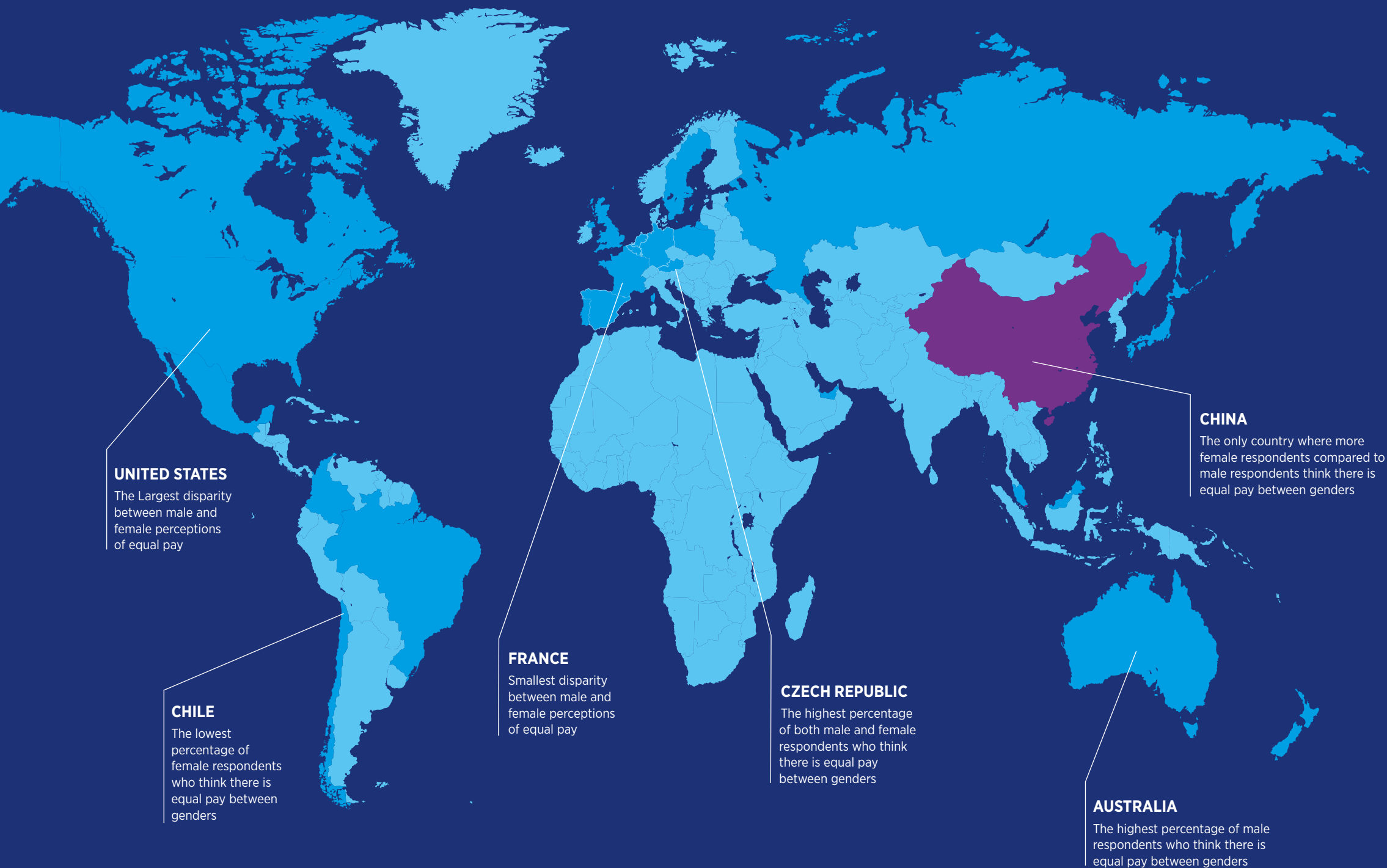
Similar to the findings around self-promotion, having more females in senior positions will create optimism amongst female staff about the opportunity and reality of equal pay in the workplace. Employers therefore need to be aware of the difference having a male or female line manager can have on how employees, especially women, feel about equal pay.

How have perceptions of equal pay changed year on year?



When we compare the year-on-year results we can see that there is still a major disparity in opinion on this issue between the sexes. This year, 78% of males stated that they think there is equal pay between genders compared to 56% of females. In 2015, 82% of males stated that they thought there was equal pay between genders compared to 55% of females.

This shows that more men are becoming aware of some of the concerns that have been expressed about the existence of a gender pay gap. This 4% difference year on year when taken globally is significant; however more awareness and support from current male leaders will once again be needed if positive changes are to be made around narrowing the gender pay gap.



EQUAL PAY A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

When looking at perceptions of equal pay and the percentages of male and female respondents who believe there is equal pay between genders, we see countries such as Chile (49%), the United States (52%) and Spain (58%) falling behind Malaysia (71%), Colombia (71%) and Singapore (72%). Traditionally the United States and European businesses lead the way with promoting equal pay. However these results show that once again,

despite having a well-established debate around gender pay differences in these countries, employees still feel that they are not paid equally.

There are still large disparities between male and female responses in most countries especially Australia, Chile and the United States. Male workers in these markets are the least aware that there is a gender pay gap when compared to their female counterparts.

Do you think you and your equally capable colleagues are paid /rewarded in an equal manner regardless of gender?			
	-/+	Male	Female
China	+ 3%	63%	60%
France	- 6%	69%	75%
Malaysia	- 13%	66%	79%
Japan	- 16%	50%	66%
Colombia	- 19%	62%	81%
Singapore	- 20%	63%	83%
Czech Republic	- 21%	63%	84%
Russia	- 21%	60%	81%
Sweden	- 21%	52%	73%
Mexico	- 23%	57%	80%
Portugal	- 23%	53%	80%
United Arab Emirates	- 23%	53%	76%
Poland	- 24%	64%	88%
Belgium	- 28%	52%	80%
Canada	- 28%	49%	77%
The Netherlands	- 28%	48%	76%
Spain	- 28%	44%	72%
Brazil	- 29%	51%	80%
United Kingdom	- 30%	56%	86%
Germany	- 33%	44%	77%
New Zealand	- 34%	54%	88%
Australia	- 41%	50%	91%
Chile	- 41%	29%	70%
United States	- 43%	32%	75%



(Respondents who answered yes)

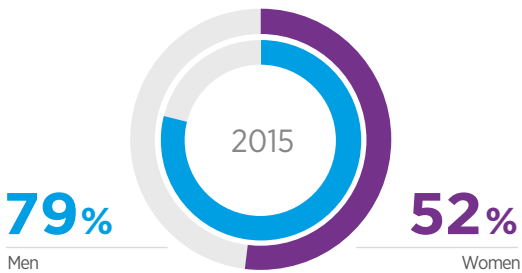
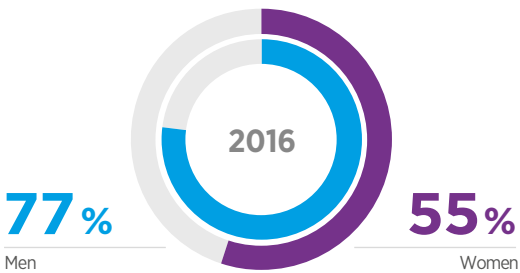



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES


There is a large disparity in opinion on career opportunities between the sexes
77% of males believe that the same career opportunities are available regardless of gender compared to 55% of females

How have perceptions of career opportunities changed year on year?

(Respondents who think there are equal career opportunities regardless of gender)  





 **64%**
of respondents globally believe that the same career opportunities are available regardless of gender

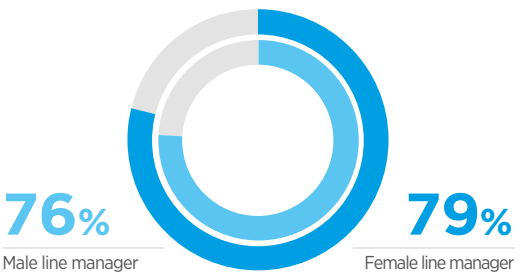
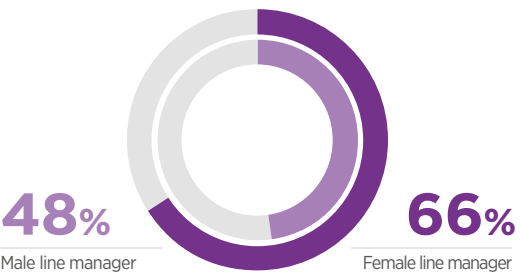
 **61%**
of respondents globally believed that the same career opportunities were available regardless of gender

As with perceptions of equal pay, there is a significant difference between male and female opinion about opportunities in the workplace. However globally there was a 3% narrowing of the gap between the views of men and women year on year, with more men likely to feel there is a difference between the opportunities available for men and women.

This is moving in the right direction as it is important that men are more aware of the differences in perceptions of equal career opportunities perceived by men and women. This increased understanding will hopefully influence decision makers so that more can be done to narrow this gap further. Companies, as a minimum, need to ensure that career opportunities are communicated effectively to all employees to avoid a difference in the perception between genders.

Does a line manager change perceptions of career opportunities?

(Respondents who think there are equal career opportunities regardless of gender)  



As seen previously, a male or female line manager impacts female perception of career opportunities, similar to the perception around equal pay. There is significant difference in opinion as 66% of women with a female line manager think the same career opportunities are open to equally capable colleagues regardless of gender, compared to 48% with a male line manager. Once again men are less likely to perceive a difference as 79% feel that the same career opportunities are open to equally capable colleagues regardless of gender if they have a female line manager, compared to 76% if they have a male line manager.

These results emphasise the importance of female role models in the workplace. Not only does a female line manager increase a woman's perception of career opportunities but it also increases her perception of equal pay. A lack of female representation in management roles or higher will have a detrimental effect on this. Companies must focus on increasing the number of female staff in senior positions and should also work to communicate career opportunities effectively to all staff.

GENDER DIVERSITY POLICIES

Gender diversity policies increase positivity in the workplace

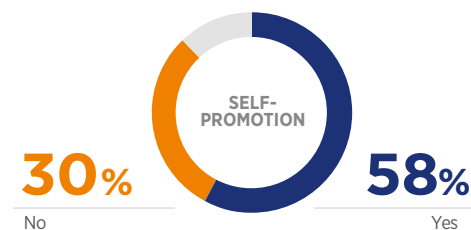
Respondents working for a company with a gender diversity policy in place are more likely to think there is equal pay between genders

Globally our respondents reported a lack of gender diversity policies in organisations and awareness of these policies has decreased year on year. This is significant as respondents who stated their organisation has formal gender diversity policies and practices in place feel more positive about their ambition, pay and career opportunities.

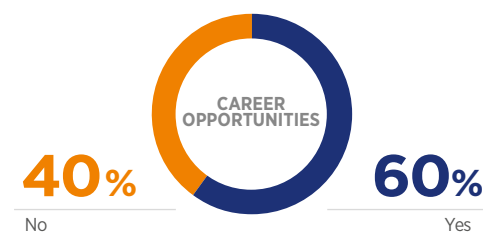
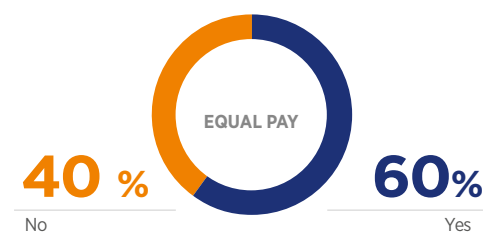
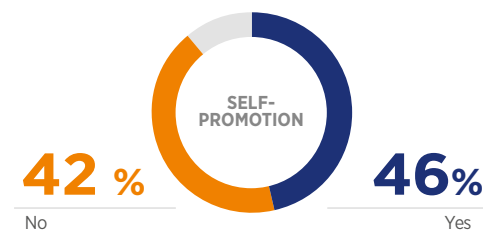
The existence of gender diversity policies have a positive impact on both men and women. Therefore employers must ensure they have gender diversity policies in place and that these are communicated clearly to employees.

Gender diversity policies increase positivity

Respondents stating their organisation has formal gender diversity policies and practices in place



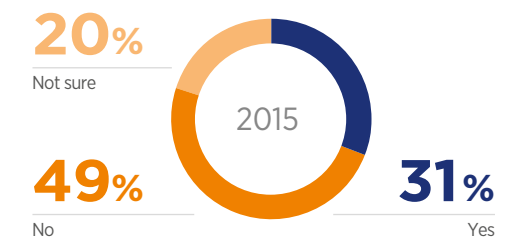
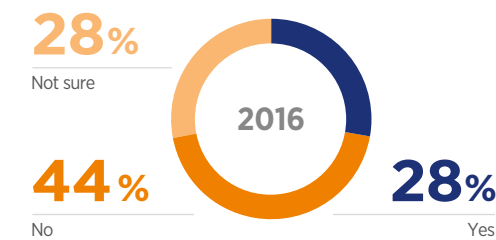
Respondents stating their organisation does **not** have formal gender diversity policies and practices in place



The results show that a gender diversity policy increases positivity in three key areas: employee self-promotion, perception of equal pay and career opportunities. If there is a gender diversity policy in place employees are more likely to feel they can self-promote and communicate their ambitions, more likely to think they are paid equally and feel that the same career opportunities are available regardless of gender.

Despite this, there is a 4% decrease in employees stating their company has a gender diversity policy compared to last year. Employers must refocus their efforts in implementing gender diversity policies and ensure that these are clearly communicated.

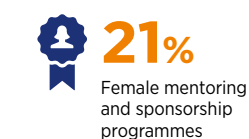
Globally most employees do not think that their company has a gender diversity policy in place



When we compare the year-on-year results we can see that there continues to be a lack of policies in place or a lack of employee awareness of these policies. This year the majority of respondents said that their organisation either did not have a gender diversity policy in place (44%) or weren't sure (28%). Out of the respondents who said their organisation

had a formal gender diversity policy in place, 32% said it was adhered to well. In 2015, 49% of respondents said their organisation did not have a gender diversity policy in place and 20% weren't sure. 31% of respondents who said their organisation had a formal gender diversity policy in place said that it was adhered to well.

Which gender diversity initiatives are most effective?



Respondents said that companies should be focusing on flexible working practices (33%) and education across the organisation to change workplace culture (23%). Gaining backing from the board around gender diversity issues (21%) and positive action for women applying to management roles or above (21%) were also regarded as effective.

Flexible working was listed as the most effective initiative. This will help men and women with family commitments, enable working from home, part-time or condensed hours and support an employee's work-life balance. Companies should offer flexible working to both men and women, in doing so any commitments outside of work can be shared equally between genders and help to create a more gender balanced workforce.

CONCLUSION

While we have seen slight improvements in perceptions of equal pay and career opportunities year on year, in many cases employers are still not doing enough to narrow the gender divide in the workplace.

While the gender of a line manager should have no impact on male or female employees, employers need to be aware of the effect that a male and female line manager can have on how employees feel about their perceived ability to self-promote, their career opportunities and pay. Furthermore as management and senior roles are still typically male dominated, there is a lack of role models which is detrimental to female ambition. As this report has shown, a female line manager increases a woman's perception of equal pay and equal career opportunities. Companies should be aware of the importance of role models to female employees.

There remains a significant difference in the opinions of men and women around gender diversity issues in the workplace, as 22% of men compared to 44% of women think that equally capable male and female colleagues are not paid or rewarded in an equal manner. Additionally 23% of men compared to 45% of women do not believe that the same career opportunities are available to all, regardless of gender. This shows that on the whole men do not recognise that there is a gender diversity problem in the workplace. There is a slight improvement however when we compare the year-on-year results, so it appears that more men are becoming aware of the issues around equal pay and career opportunities.

Developed European markets and the United States are lagging behind other nations when it comes to female ambition in business. In Spain (32%), the United States (47%) and the UK (45%) fewer women think they have the opportunity to promote themselves or communicate their ambitions. Women in emerging markets feel much more confident in furthering their careers, such as Brazil (68%) and Mexico (71%).

Employers need to recognise the commercial and societal benefits of a more gender diverse workforce and prioritise actions that will improve gender diversity. Additionally men need to recognise that there is a significant difference between men and women's perception of gender diversity and want to tackle these issues. Without backing from male colleagues it will be much harder to work towards gender equality in the workplace.

We see the actions of countries, cultures and companies contributing to building of a more gender diverse workforce. The introduction of new legislation by governments also maintains pressure on companies to make changes. The implementation of gender diversity initiatives, as well as government legislation, will continue to position gender diversity as a necessity for businesses and thus play a part in helping to narrow the gender divide.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

ENCOURAGE FEMALE AMBITION

As shown in our report, women have the ambition to move up in the workplace (page 3) but the number of women in senior positions is still low. Employers need to develop a clear career development plan for management levels and above and communicate these plans, so that women are encouraged and supported in developing their careers. This will help ensure companies have a sustainable pipeline of talented and ambitious women moving into senior management/leadership roles.

2

FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE SELF-PROMOTION

Globally men and women across all sectors do not feel they have the opportunity to self-promote and communicate their ambitions. Employers need to make changes to internal processes to ensure opportunities are communicated successfully and that those who wish to put themselves forward have sufficient opportunity to do so. Managers need to have more training so they are able to recognise and draw out the skills and ambitions of colleagues around them. If the majority of the workforce feel they cannot self-promote and communicate their ambitions this will have a negative effect on motivation and career satisfaction.

3

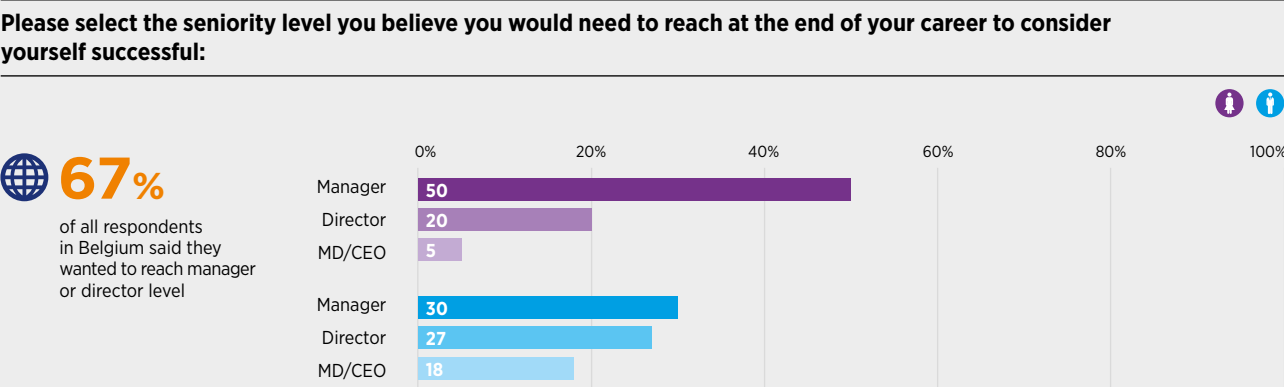
IMPLEMENT AND COMMUNICATE GENDER DIVERSITY POLICIES

Men and women who work for organisations with gender diversity policies and practices in place feel more positive about their ambition, pay and career opportunities. However 72% of respondents said that their organisations do not have policies in place, or as employees they are not aware of these policies. Employers must ensure they have gender diversity policies in place and that the existence of these policies and the opportunities that they provide, are communicated effectively to employees in the organisation.

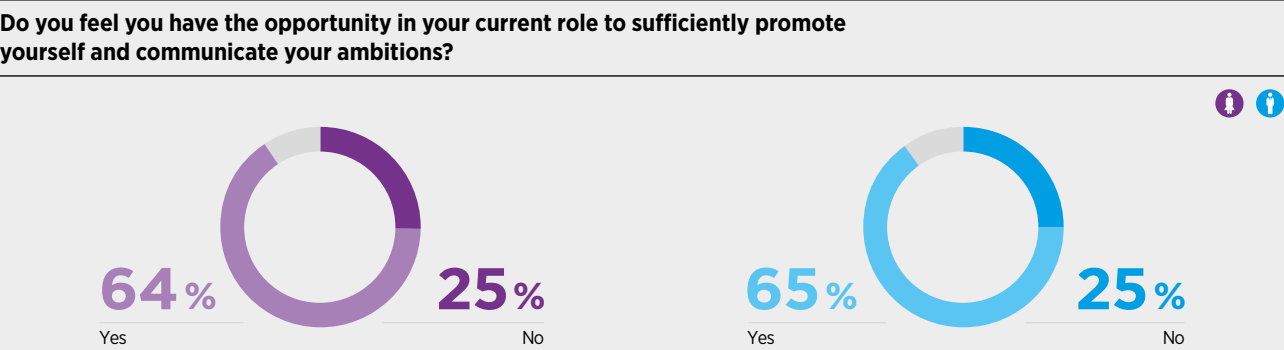
COUNTRY REPORT

BELGIUM

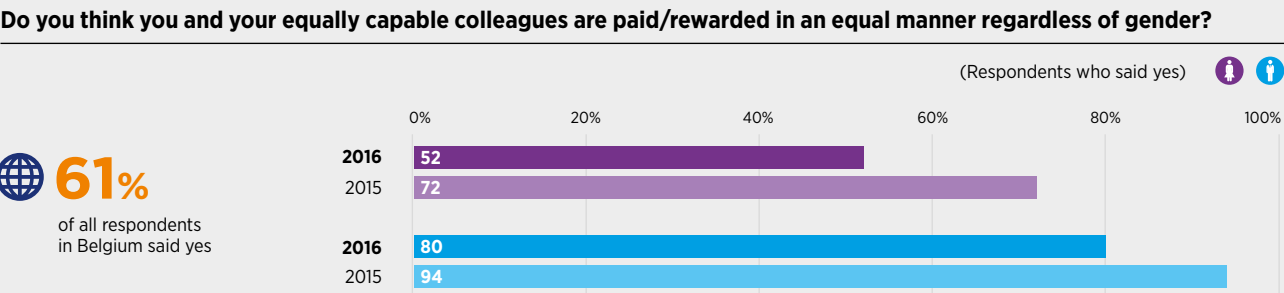
Ambition



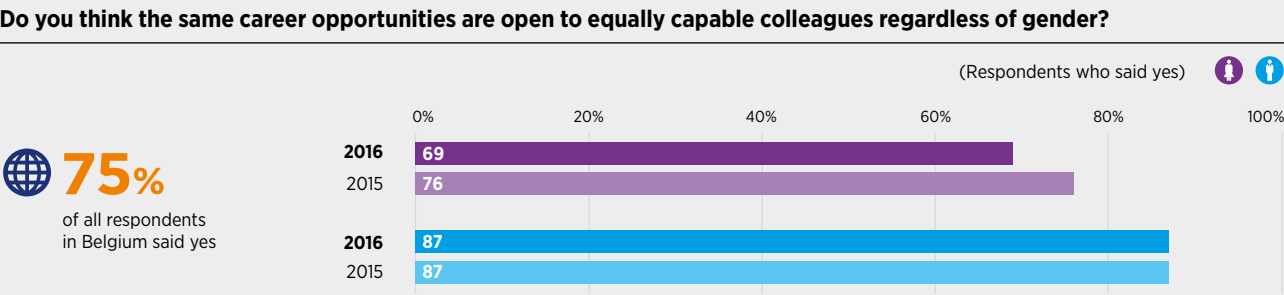
Self-promotion



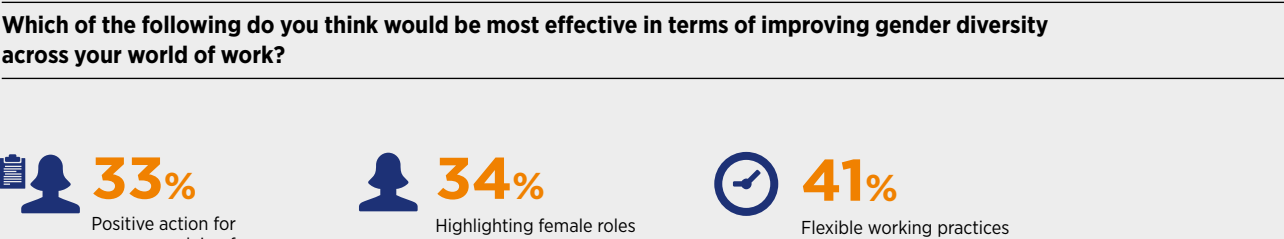
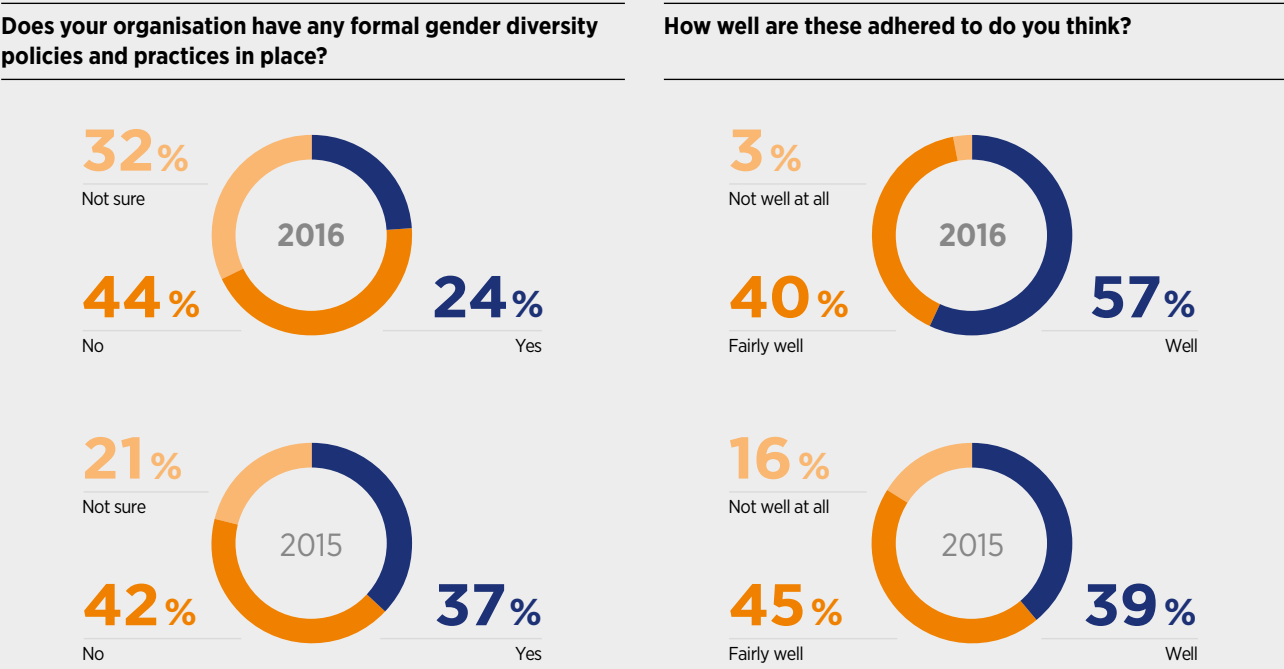
Equal pay



Career opportunities



Gender diversity policies



INTERVIEW WITH A LEADING WOMAN



Tina Ling
CEO, Hays France
& Benelux

In this interview, Tina Ling, CEO Hays France & Benelux, shares her experience of gender diversity in the workplace, her progression into a leadership role and provides insight into our survey results.

Tina Ling, CEO, France & Benelux, was interviewed in last year's gender diversity report and since then a lot has changed. Tina has been promoted from MD of Hays France to CEO, Hays France & Benelux. Hays France's flagship office in Paris has moved locations to allow for exciting business development and an expanding team. Here we speak to Tina about her new role and the results of our 2016 gender diversity survey.

Congratulations on your new role. Can you explain what your role was before and how it's changed? Have you come across any challenges?

I was MD of the French and Luxembourg business and now I am also MD of Belgium and the Netherlands, as well as the Hays International team based in London. It is very much the same role but across different territories. The main challenge has been getting to know the new teams and understanding their business processes. This role is about how I can bring my experience and what I've learned from developing the French business and sharing my best practices. My focus is on providing support to the teams and further developing their businesses in the future.

You expect idiosyncrasies culture by culture and this is something I thought I would see in my new businesses. The big advantage is that Hays Belgium and the Netherlands have 'Hays DNA', so the building blocks were there, which makes it similar to leading the French business. There are obviously culture differences but that is an aspect of this role that I enjoy.

Our survey revealed that globally 12% of women feel that to be successful they would need to reach an MD/CEO position, compared to 18% of men. Does this surprise you?

These numbers don't surprise me. I'd have expected there to be a difference between genders but I think it's positive that the difference is only six per cent.

The countries in your remit rank much lower with only 8% of women in France stating they would need to reach MD/CEO level to feel successful, 5% in Belgium and 4% in the Netherlands. What do you think about this?

These figures are rather low, especially compared to the global percentages above. I think this shows that females do not base their feeling of career success purely on their job title. This isn't necessarily a negative thing. There are so many other aspects of a role that can provide job satisfaction and a feeling of success i.e. having a role that challenges you, feeling passionate about the work you do and believing that the work you and your company does is important and makes a difference.

Have you noticed any differences between France, Belgium and the Netherlands that could explain these results?

I haven't noticed any differences between France, Belgium and the Netherlands. It is the same in all of these countries - there aren't enough women in senior positions. However I believe this is a global trend and not specific to Europe even when taking into account these percentages.

However, it is also hard for me to comment on gender diversity in other companies because I have been at Hays from the beginning of my career. We promote based on performance and not on gender so this is all I've ever known in business. We have a very gender balanced workforce. Here in France around 64% of my staff are female and there is a 50/50 split in middle management. When I look at Belgium around 80% of the business are women and in the Netherlands it is a 50/50 split again.

In France 53% of women feel they have the opportunity in their current role to sufficiently promote themselves and communicate their ambitions, compared to 46% of men. This is higher than the global average of 47% for women and 53% for men. Does this instil confidence in France and its gender diversity progress?

There is more talk about gender diversity in the press compared to last year, so perhaps this is giving women more confidence in that their voice is heard, that things are changing.

It is important for women and men to be able to talk openly about their ambitions. At Hays we have regular career review meetings where consultants and managers at every level are able to discuss their achievements, go through their objectives and talk about where they want their career to go. It is designed to be an open conversation with their line managers. It is important that all employees regardless of gender are able to do this.

In your opinion is there a difference between how men and women plan to progress in their careers?

In reality of course there's a difference. I can't speak too generally because not every woman wants to have children but if she does she will have to take some time out of work. This will have to be taken into account in her career plan and may slow down her progression in the short term. Similarly, if a man wants to start a family he may want to change his career plan and be able to spend more time at home but this is not a mandatory change. A woman will have to take time out of her career to start a family whereas a man can choose to. Apart from this I don't think there should be a difference in male or female career planning in regards to ambition and objectives.

You have been working at Hays since you graduated from University, which is quite rare these days. Do you think staying with the same company is beneficial, or do you wish you had moved around?

I think there are benefits to both. If you stay with one company you have to be sure that there are opportunities for you to develop and take on new challenges. Hays is the market leader in specialist recruitment and has continued to provide me with progression, so I have never felt like leaving would have enhanced my career.

January 2001 I left Hays UK to set up Hays France. It was a huge challenge as I went from working in an established business in the UK to starting a new business from scratch - we literally had nothing in our database! I was also working in an unfamiliar culture too. I felt daunted but also excited to have the opportunity to grow something out of nothing. I look back now, 15 years later and see what I've achieved here in France and it makes me proud.

My advice would be that if the company you are working for continues to support and encourage your progression, and you can gain additional experience in-house, then staying will be beneficial for your career.

Globally, only 28% of respondents said that their organisation has formal gender policies in place, this has decreased from 32% last year. Are you surprised by this? Have you seen any changes in gender policies in France in this past year?

Not much has changed since the quota law was introduced in 2013 to increase the number of women on the boards of the top 17 French companies. There has been no continued push for further improvements and gender diversity doesn't seem to be at the top of companies' agendas. I believe that gender policies are important and that every company should have one but at the moment there is no huge demand for it here in France.

Globally, 45% of women do not think they have the same career opportunities as men. What do you think about this?

I don't think my response has changed much compared to last year. At Hays an individual progresses based on performance and gender has no impact on progression and career opportunities. This makes it hard for me to imagine working in an organisation or sector where career opportunities are not based on the work you put in and the results you generate. I would say that if you feel like there are no career opportunities available to you then you should assess your career plan and potentially look to move to a company where you will be able to progress and realise your ambitions.

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INTERVIEW WITH A LEADING WOMAN

(Continued)

Globally, respondents (both male and female) believe that the following initiatives will have the biggest impact on gender diversity in the workplace: flexible working practices and education across the organisation to change workplace culture. What do you think about this?

Flexible practices are important for working parents, both male and female. They allow parents to come in early and leave earlier so they can pick their children up for school for example. I am not too sure about the importance of education across the organisation to change workplace culture. If the mind-set of a company needs to change because women are not given equal opportunities or are regarded as equally competent compared to their male counterparts then this will be important. However, this initiative is not something we have a demand for at Hays.

At Hays France we have a Christmas family day which is a really fun initiative. For the last six to seven years we have organised a 'Santa's Grotto' in our Paris office where the children of our employees are invited to come to the office. One of our directors dresses up as Santa and gives the children presents. He also has a photo with each child (this year 97 children attended the event!). Our employees really enjoy this family day and appreciate their children being able to see where they work. The children love it too!

Globally, 64% of respondents, both male and female, think there is equal pay between genders. This is the same percentage compared to last year. Is it a surprise that this hasn't changed?

I think there should be equal pay between genders, which goes without saying. It is good to see the percentage is consistent year-on-year and it's the highest percentage we've seen so far throughout the interview, which is good! This shows that the perception is stable and hopefully means that women are being paid equally.

The gender pay gap is a hot topic at the moment. In the UK there are plans to bring forward rules to make firms with more than 250 workers reveal whether they pay men more than women. What impact do you think this will have on gender diversity in the workplace?

It can only be good. It is important to reveal if organisations don't pay the same salaries for the same job as employers will be forced to address this issue.

Do you have any advice for female professionals who are in, or are looking to work in, a management or leadership role?

From my experience I would advise women to be confident in their abilities and take on new challenges. You should always accept opportunities if they are right for you and keep your career moving in the right direction. If an opportunity seems daunting then that means it will challenge you and you will learn new skills and develop as a professional.



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