



# **GENDER DIVERSITY THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE**

Hays supports the advancement of women in the workplace. Although progress is being made, this remains a business critical issue. Many of the companies we speak to are suffering from skill shortages and increasing the number of senior female professionals will help to address these skills gaps. By improving access to talent, organisations will be better positioned to drive their performance, grow their businesses and secure future success.

Our global gender diversity survey was completed by almost 6,000 respondents across 31 countries. In this report we highlight key global and local results and explore the implications of these statistics. We have also included an interview with Els Van Laere, Business Director, Hays Belgium. Els shares her experience of gender diversity in the workplace and gives us insight into diversity within the Belgian market.

# EXPLORING THE GENDER DIVERSITY DIVIDE



## EQUAL PAY

Analysing male and female responses by age groups shows an interesting trend where younger people are much less likely to think there is discrimination in the workplace.

Only 33% of females and 8% of males aged 25 or under think there is gender inequality of pay. 46% of females and 17% of males aged 55+ think there is gender inequality of pay.



**64%**

of respondents think that there is equal pay between genders, however these results hide significant differences in opinion between gender and age.

**45%**

of women think that equally capable male and female colleagues are not paid or rewarded equally.

**18%**

of men think that equally capable male and female colleagues are not paid or rewarded equally.

## GENDER DIVERSITY POLICIES

50% of respondents working in the Public/Not-for-profit sector said their companies had a gender diversity policy in place, followed by Mining & Resources at 37% and Financial Services at 36%.

Advertising & Media companies were least likely to have a gender diversity policy in place (17%), followed by Construction, Property & Engineering (25%) and Manufacturing at 27%.



**49%**

of respondents said their organisation did not have a gender diversity policy in place.

**31%**

of respondents said their organisation had a gender diversity policy in place.

**36%**

of respondents who said their organisation had a formal gender diversity policy in place said that it was adhered to well.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Analysing male and female responses shows that almost one in two women (48%) said the same career opportunities were not open to equally capable colleagues of both genders.

Comparatively, 21% of men said the same career opportunities were not open to equally capable colleagues of both genders.



**61%**

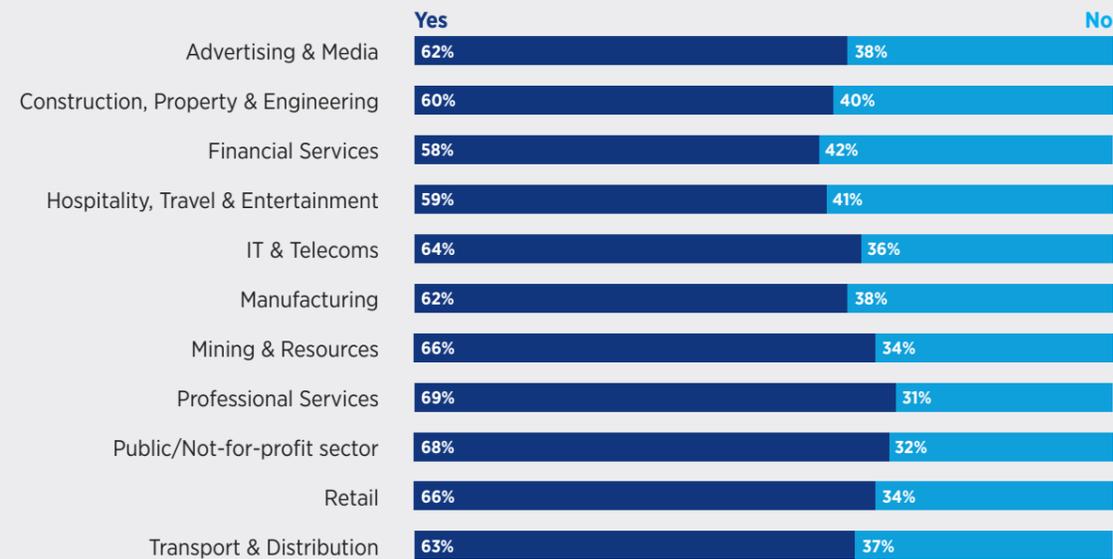
of respondents believe that the same career opportunities are available regardless of gender.

**44%**

of respondents believe flexible working practices would have the biggest impact on improving gender diversity in the workplace.

# GLOBAL RESULTS SHOW EQUAL PAY ACROSS ALL INDUSTRIES

Do you think you and your equally capable colleagues are paid/rewarded in an equal manner regardless of gender?



When looking at equal pay across all industries surveyed there is a similar trend: respondents believe there is equal pay between genders across all industries.

Which of these changes do you think would have the biggest impact on diversity in your world of work?



Overall, respondents tended to think that allowing more flexible working practices (44%) and changes in workplace culture (44%) would have the biggest impact on gender diversity. In contrast, only 9% believed that introducing quotas would have the biggest impact.



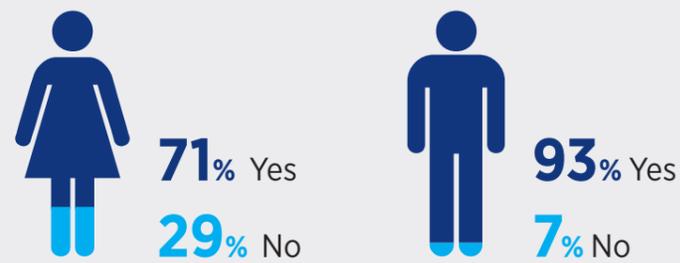
# GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE BELGIAN MARKET

## EQUAL PAY

Do you think you and your equally capable colleagues are paid/rewarded in an equal manner regardless of gender?



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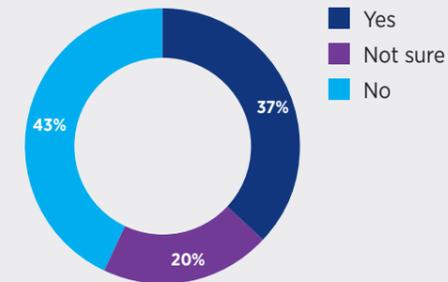


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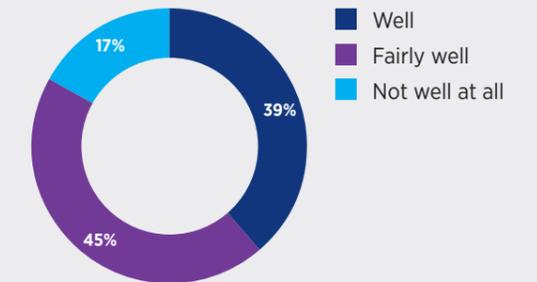


## GENDER DIVERSITY POLICIES

Does your organisation have formal gender diversity policies and practices in place?



How well are these adhered to do you think?

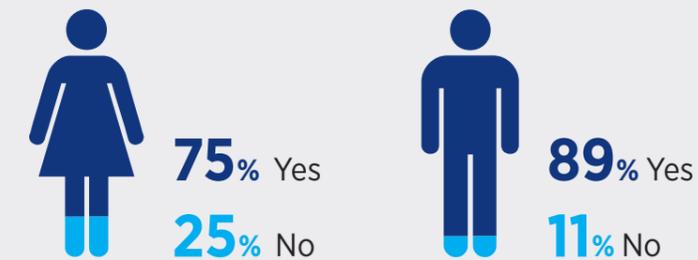


## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Do you think the same career opportunities are open to equally capable colleagues regardless of gender?



Do you think the same career opportunities are open to equally capable colleagues regardless of gender?



# INTERVIEW WITH A LEADING WOMAN

In this interview, Els Van Laere, Business Director, Hays Belgium, shares her experience of gender diversity in the workplace, speaks about her progression into a leadership role and assesses the survey results in Belgium.



## What was your route to Hays?

Despite my clinical psychological background and experience I always had a strong interest in recruitment. I decided to make a change and started my recruitment career as a consultant in an agency specialising in temp roles. After a few months I was promoted to Office Manager and two years later to Regional Manager. I wanted to work on higher level jobs so I started at Hays in 2006 as Team Leader of two offices and around 20 consultants. During my time at Hays I have had the opportunity to face different challenges and progress across several areas: people management, sales, division management, assessment and development and corporate accounts. For the last year and a half, I have been Regional Director for Hays offices in east and west Flanders, managing around 50 consultants.

## Tell us about your progression into a leadership role, what challenges did you face along the way?

A daily (and important) challenge is to keep our consultants motivated and satisfied; to inject my own energy into the business and detect potential so that each consultant is working in the right role. This will drive them to perform better every day. Our consultants are the capital of Hays and our most important asset. Strong results are a logical consequence of highly motivated employees.

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

I think there is a difference between how men and women progress in their careers and this varies across companies; however I have not seen this in Hays Belgium. As the recruitment industry in Belgium is dominated by women it is difficult to compare it to other industries, but within Hays Belgium a large number of our managers are women. A recent study has shown that companies that have a large number of women in leadership roles perform up to 34% better! The same study indicates that women are better people managers, are more flexible and stronger in teamwork. In my view, women naturally have a more psychological insight into people and their emotional intelligence is better developed, which is crucial in leadership roles, not only in the recruitment business but in all businesses. I think that if men in senior positions would agree on this and recognise these strengths, progression of women compared to men would improve.

## Have you encountered any gender specific obstacles in your career?

No I have not encountered any gender specific obstacles in any of the companies I have worked for. Also within Hays, people with ambition and

the right competencies are able to build a career, whether male or female.

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

The 'normal' family dynamic is that men focus on their career and women adjust their lives to fit in with this and in most cases prefer to take care of the children. I think this 'norm' is still embedded in our culture. For a woman to choose a career, rather than the man, this is less common and perhaps less accepted within our culture. My advice would be that women in leadership roles, or looking to move up to a leadership role, if she has a family she will need a partner who fully supports her in her career and he will need to participate in family commitments.

## In Belgium, 43% of respondents said that their organisation did not have formal gender policies in place and 20% weren't sure. What do you think are the implications of these statistics?

For me it is strange that there should be gender policies in place; I see promotion as being based on competencies and not by gender policies. It's a fact that work becomes more demanding when you are in a leadership role and I think that more men are able to make these sacrifices. When a choice needs to be made between a man and a woman with the same competencies and the same years of experience, an employer will also look for flexibility, which person will be able to make sacrifices for the company's requirements.

However, out of the respondents who said their organisation had formal gender policies in place, 83% feel they are adhered to well/fairly well. This implies that gender policies are valued in companies that have them. Is this something you agree with?

I think it is psychological. The idea of a formal gender policy in place is enough to satisfy some people. However, I think it is vital that women are chosen for roles and for promotions based on their competencies rather than because of a gender policy.

## Globally, 48% of women do not think they have the same career opportunities as men. In Belgium 25% of females do not think they have the same career opportunities as men. What do you think about this?

This statistic doesn't surprise me. 75% of our consultants are female and in Hays Belgium a high proportion of managers are women. This is proof that if you want a career you can do it! As I have said, recruitment in Belgium is a female dominated industry which I think helps women progress. I can't speak for other industries. We also have to ask the question, how many of these 48% really want to push their careers and take advantage of opportunities? Men are usually more vocal about their ambition compared to women; whereas women will rely on their managers to recognise their competencies and promote them accordingly.

## 71% of female Belgian respondents believe there is equal pay between genders, compared to 93% of male Belgian respondents. Is this an expected trend?

It is more of an exception than the norm that women are paid better than men at the same level. It is more likely to be the other way round. However the statistics show that a high proportion of men and women in Belgium believe they are equally rewarded in the workplace.

Belgian respondents under the age of 25 are less likely to think there is unequal pay between genders. Is this a trend you agree with?

I don't know if this is a trend but I think that people at the age of 25 are more likely to be paid equally. The differences in pay are more expected between men and women in senior roles.

## Globally respondents (both male and female) believe that allowing more flexible working practices and changes in workplace culture through education across the business, will have the biggest impact on diversity in the workplace. What do you think about this?

I don't think that flexible working and changing workplace culture through education will be the solution. If you really want to progress in your career, both men and women will have to compromise and make sacrifices. As a leader it is necessary to be close to the people in your team; you also need to set an example in all aspects of the job, which includes flexibility.

I think that it's not only the time you are able to put into your career which will decide whether you're capable of a leadership position; you need to take on responsibilities, take initiative, you need to think in line with the company and be fully engaged and driven. This will prove your ambition.

Hays is focused on finding the right person for the right job, it's what we do every day. This should be the aim of every company and finding the right person should not be influenced by whether the candidates are male or female.

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