



WENA CONFERENCE 2023 SUMMARY

Round table sessions findings



‘Striving to thrive in a transitioning sector’



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Women's Energy Network Alliance

WELCOME

The Women's Energy Network Alliance comprises 8 organisations representing over 350,000 women working in energy-related industries in the UK.

WENA has evolved from the Energy Sector Women's Networking Group, established in 2015 with the support of what was then BEIS (the government department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy).

We are an umbrella of a variety of initiatives and member organisations each specialising in different career levels, sub-sectors or disciplines - from championing STEM outreach for girls to advancing women to board level, or from a focus on engineering or renewables and nuclear, to covering the energy sector as a whole.

But we have one common mission - to support women's careers and make faster progress on female representation in the UK energy industry.

Our current membership (as of July 2023) consists Ally Energy, District Heating Divas, Full Circle 21, Lean In Equity & Sustainability, POWERful Women, ReWiRE, Women in Nuclear UK and Renewable UK.

Each member is committed to sharing best practice and collaborating to support the entirety of the female energy workforce and our collective motto is "Leave no woman behind".

In March 2023, WENA held its inaugural Conference, attended by over 130 energy professionals at the VS Conference Centre in London. The day featured an array of inspiring speakers and a unique chance for the audience to brainstorm about some of diversity and inclusion's most pressing topics during the Conference's round table sessions.

The purpose of this white paper is to summarise the discussions held and conclusions made across each of our fifteen round table sessions. We hope this provides unique insight into how professionals and companies can power diversity and inclusion through discussion and shared learning.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the event and contributed their valuable insights, enabling the alliance to produce this comprehensive whitepaper, which aims to provide both organisations and women in the energy sector with unique insight and thought-provoking ideas.

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Introduction

The purpose of this white paper is to build upon the exciting findings derived from the round table sessions held at the WENA Conference on March 14th 2023.

These sessions explored thought-provoking topics such as “You can’t be what you can’t see,” “Creating an energy industry value proposition,” and “Leveraging data to power diversity, inclusion, and belonging.”

Within these carefully curated pages lie a wealth of recommendations, strategies, and best practices, acting as a guiding compass for organisations and individuals. This white paper sets the stage for transformative initiatives, fostering an environment where diversity, inclusion, and progress flourish.

The chapters ahead shows the path toward a brighter, more equitable future within the energy industry. Its impact will undoubtedly ripple across organisations, empowering stakeholders to embrace change, embrace new possibilities, and collectively shape a thriving sector.

Executive Summary

Bringing together diverse voices from various sectors of the industry, these interactive sessions facilitated open and constructive dialogue. Participants engaged in dynamic exchanges of ideas, experiences, and best practices, delving into topics such as data collection, increasing visibility and addressing cultural barriers within the sector.

‘You can’t be what you can’t see’, led by REWiRE and ALLY Energy, was the theme discussed by five of the fifteen tables at the event and was about connecting participants with female trailblazers.

- » Showcasing the accomplishments and lived experiences of women from a variety of backgrounds is imperative to enabling aspiring women to believe in their own capabilities for progression.
- » Building personal connections provides unique opportunities for career progression.
- » The energy industry would benefit from diverse individuals openly challenging societal norms by publicly sharing their stories and empowering others to do the same.
- » Getting away from the office desk was seen as critical to increasing visibility, expanding networks, developing skills, building confidence and ensuring recognition is received.

The second key theme was ‘Creating an energy industry value proposition’, conducted by Lean In Equity & Sustainability. The outcomes were as follows:

- » The importance of attracting STEM talent to the sector cannot be ignored; attendees concluded that targeted marketing campaigns, being present at career fairs and educational talks, mentoring and coaching, partnerships with educational institutions and the promotion of diversity and inclusion within STEM fields will prove invaluable.

- » The development of allyship and sponsorship programmes that have clear objectives should be at the forefront of companies’ diversity and inclusion strategies.
- » Whilst attracting STEM talent is important, there are many periods of immense change women experience throughout their careers, such as menopause.
- » Actions such as embracing lateral thinking, using more gender neutral language and elevating more role models were seen as vital to transforming company cultures.

The final theme: ‘Leveraging data to power diversity and inclusion’ was organised by POWERful Women, Women in Nuclear UK and District Heating Divas. Attendees concluded:

- » When using data to lobby governments in implementing inclusive national energy policies, it is critical to ensure data is comprehensive and readily available, relationships are built with policymakers and multiple communication channels are utilised.
- » To instil trust among employees and potential employees who are asked for their diversity data, firms should provide individuals with a clear understanding of why data is being collected and create an open and inclusive company culture.
- » The top best practice tips offered to companies around collecting data were to simplify data collection, embed data findings into company culture, consider invisible minorities such as neurodiversity and ensure the measurement of progress is a constant.

In conclusion, we believe better communication and more collaboration underpins all of these focus areas. When we actively listen to our colleagues and audiences, we demonstrate respect for their perspectives, experiences, and ideas, creating a sense of trust and psychological safety within teams.

**‘You can’t
be what you
can’t see’**

Chapter One

In the ever-evolving energy sector, the significance of visible female role models cannot be overstated, as they occupy a central and invaluable position. These inspirational women serve as beacons, empowering and motivating the upcoming generation of female professionals to pursue successful careers in a traditionally male-dominated arena.



You can't be what you can't see

In this session, participants connected with female trailblazers dedicated to driving a path toward net zero in the energy industry. Recognising the importance of positive mentors, especially for women aspiring to senior roles, this session aimed to foster meaningful connections and provide a supportive network for professional growth. By engaging with women from diverse backgrounds, attendees had the opportunity to share experiences, hear personal stories, and forge lasting connections, gaining invaluable insights along the way.

Some key points from this session include:

1. Diverse and inclusive representation:

This session involved a diverse and inclusive group of women actively contributing to the clean energy sector. By highlighting the achievements and experiences of women from various backgrounds, the aim was to create a more expansive and relatable set of role models. This inclusivity ensures women aspiring to senior positions have a more comprehensive range of relatable figures to look up to, overcoming the exhaustion and isolation that can come from being the only woman in a room.

2. Building personal networks:

This round table session was centred around the significance of personal connections and provided a unique opportunity for participants to engage with inspiring women across the clean energy sector. By sharing personal stories and experiences, attendees could establish meaningful bonds and build supportive networks. These connections are essential for developing confidence when pursuing career opportunities in clean energy and networking with like-minded individuals who have navigated similar challenges can provide guidance, encouragement, and a sense of belonging.

3. Inspiring change and empowerment:

Participants gained valuable insights and inspiration by hearing the stories of successful women in the clean energy industry and it was agreed that these narratives can empower women to pursue their ambitions and make meaningful contributions to the sector. By witnessing the accomplishments of others and engaging in open dialogue, individuals were encouraged to challenge societal norms, break barriers, and create a more inclusive and equitable industry for future generations.



Women on boards and senior leadership

This session emphasised the need for statistics, targets, and accountability, as well as the significance of mentorship in fostering career progression. By sharing experiences and discussing strategies, attendees explored ways to break gender stereotypes, enhance representation, and create inclusive organisational cultures.



1. Statistics, targets, and accountability:

Participants recognised the need for organisations to establish clear diversity statistics and set targets to drive progress. Initiatives such as POWERful Women showcase the importance of measuring diversity and its positive impact but without targets, the responsibility for implementing change falls on marginalised groups within the organisation. Members of the round table suggested that investment grants require companies to have a minimum of 30 per cent representation on their boards and focus on closing the gender pay gap to ensure accountability. The finance sector was acknowledged as playing a significant role in driving these efforts.

2. Women in senior leadership positions:

Attendees discussed vital factors that contribute to success in senior roles while challenging gender stereotypes. It was emphasised that working longer hours does not necessarily equate to better performance and openly communicating boundaries, such as work-life balance needs, was deemed essential. Furthermore, researching the diversity of boards and senior leadership teams before pursuing opportunities helped individuals align themselves with organisations prioritising inclusivity. Alas, creating supportive and inclusive cultures should not solely rely on having a CEO well-versed in diversity and inclusion; it should be ingrained in the company's culture, reinforcing the importance of setting targets.

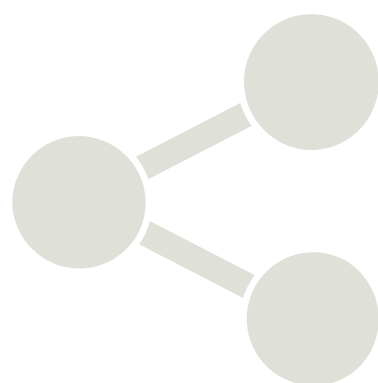
3. Mentorship:

This session highlighted finding mentors and champions to support women's career growth across the clean energy sector.

Mentorship can take various forms, from long-term relationships to informal conversations with industry professionals. However, there was an understanding amongst attendees that people tend to connect with those who are similar to them in one or many ways, making it challenging to build a network of diverse mentors. Reverse mentoring was seen by this group as a practical approach where young professionals could share their opinions and challenge the status quo. One participant also shared a positive example of a "Challenger program" at bp, where graduates were encouraged to challenge different aspects of the company.



Building your network



1. Networking strategies:

During the discussion, participants shared various strategies for effective networking. Here are the key points highlighted:

- » **Start with purpose:** Understand the value of networking and be selective about events and networking opportunities that align with your goals. Stepping out of your comfort zone can lead to positive growth.
- » **Seek “safe spaces”:** Many participants admitted they were not natural networkers and appreciated networking opportunities that provided a calm environment away from the main event. Women’s networks were mainly seen as supportive.
- » **Prioritise networking:** Carve out dedicated time in your schedule for networking activities. Most participants agreed that networking left them energised and motivated, emphasising its importance.
- » **Follow-up:** After meeting individuals, send personalised notes on LinkedIn or follow-up emails to make a lasting impression. Maintaining visibility is crucial in networking.
- » **Accountability:** Internal reporting structures can encourage individuals to engage in networking opportunities.
- » **Join professional networks:** Participating in networks like WENA and Lean In Equity and Sustainability can provide a sense of identity, belonging, and increased confidence while networking.
- » **Internal networking:** Networking within your organisation can be a strategic approach, especially when transitioning to new roles or departments.
- » **Act with openness:** Treat every conversation as an opportunity to learn and find common ground beyond work-related topics. Being approachable and interested in people builds meaningful connections.
- » **Online networking:** LinkedIn was recognised as a valuable tool for networking, but participants expressed the need for more precise strategies and guidance.
- » **Overcoming introversion:** If practiced frequently, networking was seen as an effective way to overcome introversion.

2. Benefits of building a strong personal network:

The discussion highlighted the following benefits of cultivating a robust personal network:

- » **Access to opportunities:** Participants noted that job opportunities often come through their network, and having both advocates and critical friends within the network can support career advancement.
- » **Long-term connections:** Even connecting with individuals who may not appear immediately relevant can yield unexpected benefits in the future. Long-term relationships built through networking can lead to collaborations and expertise sharing.
- » **Role models and support:** Having other women in the network as role models and sources of information provides a sense of safety, nurturing, and inspiration. Gender-diversity-focused networks, like WENA, allow for personal and professional support through shared experiences.
- » **Becoming a role model:** Participants acknowledged that their achievements positioned them as role models, especially when they were the only women at their level of seniority.
- » **Expanded perspectives:** Building a network allows access to diverse viewpoints and knowledge, aiding decision-making and finding solutions.
- » **Increased visibility:** Networking enhances visibility, both within and outside an organisation, potentially leading to sponsorship, career progression, and new opportunities.
- » **Personal brand and reputation:** Reciprocal relationships and a reputation for dependability, humility, and fairness contribute to an individual’s brand.
- » **Overcoming hierarchies:** Online networking provides direct interaction with senior figures, potentially leading to in-person opportunities and career advancement.

3. Admired individuals in networks:

Participants shared qualities they admired in people within their networks:

- » **Kindness in leadership:** Some participants gravitated towards leaders who displayed kindness in their approach.
- » **Strong communication skills:** Excellent communication and presenting abilities were highly regarded. Participants expressed the need for more women to be featured as speakers and panellists.
- » **Inspiring young women:** The confidence and determination of young women addressing workplace gender inequalities and advocating for what they want to serve as a source of inspiration.

4. Making networking more fun:

To make networking more enjoyable, participants suggested the following approaches:

- » **Find enjoyable networking formats:** Attend events that incorporate fun elements such as “netwalking” or events tailored to early-career professionals.
- » **Set targets and gamify networking:** Approach networking with personal goals, such as speaking to a specific number of new people or targeting specific individuals, turning it into a game.
- » **Embrace curiosity:** Treat every encounter as an opportunity for meaningful and exciting connections. Building deeper relationships can make networking more fulfilling and enjoyable.

By implementing these strategies and recognising the benefits of networking, individuals can enhance their professional growth, broaden their perspectives, and establish a strong support system within their networks.



Speaking and profile

Building a solid personal network is widely seen as crucial for career growth and support, especially for individuals with imposter syndrome, which can frequently pose challenges when networking and public speaking. However, overcoming these hurdles and thriving in the workplace is possible with experience, mentorship, and practical strategies. This section will explore critical insights professionals shared and discuss strategies for raising profiles, finding mentors, and navigating public speaking engagements.

Raising your profile to support your career:

Navigating career progression can be particularly daunting when individuals feel uncertain about the value of their contributions. However, as experience and maturity grow, so too does the understanding of which contributions add value and the confidence to seek recognition for these efforts. It was highlighted by this group that one effective way to combat imposter syndrome is to build a network of allies and cheerleaders who provide support and encouragement. LinkedIn can also serve as a platform to connect with like-minded professionals, follow other's journeys, and establish valuable support networks.

The power of networking and public speaking:

Many professionals, including those with extensive corporate backgrounds, have realised the importance of networking and public speaking for personal growth and career advancement. This group considered stepping out of the comfort zone of a corporate role and engaging in networking activities to be able to provide fresh perspectives and insights. By participating in conversations, sharing experiences, and collaborating on making a difference, professionals can broaden their knowledge and contribute to their fields.

Preparing for public speaking:

Preparing for public speaking engagements requires time and practice. Starting with round table discussions can help ease female professionals into public speaking and build confidence. Participants saw seeking the assistance of public speaking coaches or practising in front of videos as incredibly beneficial. Additionally, having conversation starters related to one's work can help break the ice and initiate meaningful interactions. By shifting the focus from oneself to the audience and asking open questions, professionals can effectively engage and connect with their listeners.

Overcoming Imposter Syndrome and finding mentors:

Imposter syndrome can be especially challenging for individuals who have not traditionally been content owners or public speakers. Overcoming this mindset involves finding mentors who can provide support and guidance. Mentorship programs, professional networks, and industry-related schemes can establish connections with experienced professionals and facilitate open conversations outside one's workplace. It's also important to remember that confidence is a skill that can be developed through practice and experience.

Finding inspiration and ensuring diversity:

Professionals can turn to various sources to gain inspiration and expand professional networks. Podcasts like Brené Brown's Exploration of Vulnerability¹ offer valuable insights and perspectives. Another action to ensure gender diversity at events can be achieved by adopting metrics like the Frencham test, which evaluates conference speaker diversity. Additionally, individuals and organisations like Simone Roche, Fiona Raymond, and Bronte can serve as role models and provide support for women working in a variety of fields.



Get away from your desk!

Why getting away from your desk and raising your profile helps your career

This group believed getting away from your desk and actively raising your profile can significantly benefit your career. Here's why:

- 1. Increased visibility:** By stepping out of your office and engaging in networking events, industry conferences, and professional gatherings, you expose yourself to a broader audience. This increased visibility allows you to connect with professionals from different backgrounds, establish new relationships, and create opportunities for collaboration and advancement.
- 2. Expanded network:** Building a strong professional network is crucial for career growth. Attending events and participating in industry activities helps you meet like-minded individuals, potential mentors, and industry leaders. These connections can provide valuable insights, career guidance, and access to new opportunities that may have yet to be available within the confines of your desk.
- 3. Enhanced knowledge and learning:** Engaging in external activities exposes you to diverse perspectives, experiences, and industry trends. You gain access to your field's latest developments and insights by participating in conferences, workshops, and seminars. This continuous learning expands your knowledge and positions you as a well-informed professional, making you more valuable to your organisation or industry.
- 4. Personal growth and confidence building:** Stepping out of your comfort zone and actively raising your profile helps you overcome challenges such as imposter syndrome. By engaging in public speaking, networking, and sharing your expertise, you build confidence in your abilities, develop more vital communication skills, and enhance your brand. This growth and increased confidence can significantly impact your career trajectory and open doors to new opportunities.
- 5. Recognition and career advancement:** When you actively raise your profile, you increase your chances of being recognised for your expertise, achievements, and contributions. This recognition can lead to career advancement, promotions, and increased professional opportunities. Employers and industry leaders are more likely to consider individuals with a visible presence and a strong reputation within their respective fields.

In summary, getting away from your desk and proactively raising your profile allows you to expand your network, gain valuable knowledge, build confidence, and increase your visibility within your industry. These benefits can directly and positively impact your career growth, opening doors to new opportunities and positioning you as an industry expert.

‘Cultivating a talented and diverse workforce’

Chapter Two

Creating an energy industry value proposition

In the rapidly evolving energy industry, the need to attract, retain, and develop female talent is increasingly recognised as a key driver of innovation and success. To meet this challenge, the sector seeks disruptive and innovative approaches to transform the industry’s talent landscape and promote gender diversity across the entire value chain, including the supply chain.

This section explores the pressing question of how the energy sector can effectively attract, retain, and develop female talent, showcasing the need for forward-thinking strategies and exploring potential solutions that can create a more inclusive and equitable industry. By embracing these approaches, the energy sector can harness the full potential of female talent, drive positive change, and secure a sustainable future for the industry.



TABLE 1: ATTRACT
Empowering the next generation in STEM and the significance of coaching

The discussion in Table 1 shed light on the importance of attracting the next generation to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields and the valuable role of coaching in their development. Here are the key insights shared:

- 1. Attracting the next generation:** To address gender inequality in STEM fields, the industry should actively engage and attract young individuals to pursue careers in these industries. The participants highlighted the need for targeted outreach programs, career fairs, and educational initiatives that showcase STEM professions’ exciting opportunities and potential impact. By fostering curiosity, inspiring passion, and breaking down gender stereotypes, the energy industry can tap into a diverse talent pool and ensure a sustainable and consumer representative future workforce.
- 2. The power of coaching:** Coaching was recognised as a valuable tool for empowering the next generation in their STEM journey. Participants emphasised the need for coaching programs that are accessible, inclusive, and tailored to the specific needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- 3. Mentoring and role models:** Mentoring relationships and exposure to role models were seen as vital factors in attracting and retaining STEM talent, as mentoring enables women to navigate and combat the barriers they will ultimately face in a male dominated sector and aid in their progression, whilst having visible role models increases young professionals’ belief in their own capabilities.

- 4. Collaborating with educational institutions:** The collaboration between the energy industry and educational institutions, such as schools and universities, was emphasised as a key strategy for attracting young talent to STEM fields. Establishing partnerships, offering internships, sponsoring scholarships, and providing resources and support to educational institutions help create a seamless pathway for students to pursue STEM careers. By actively engaging with educational institutions, the industry can shape curriculum, promote industry-specific knowledge, and bridge the gap between academia and practical industry applications.
- 5. Diversity and inclusion in STEM:** The participants stressed the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion within STEM fields. The industry can attract and retain diverse talent by creating inclusive and welcoming environments where individuals from all backgrounds feel valued and supported. Addressing gender biases, fostering inclusive practices, and celebrating the achievements of under represented groups were identified as key strategies for building an inclusive STEM community.

In summary, attracting the next generation to STEM fields requires proactive outreach efforts and inspiring educational initiatives. Coaching is vital in empowering young individuals while mentoring relationships and exposure to role models provide guidance and support. Collaboration with educational institutions and a focus on diversity and inclusion are essential for creating a thriving and inclusive STEM ecosystem. By implementing these strategies, the energy industry can cultivate a talented and diverse workforce that drives innovation and sustains growth.





TABLE 2: RETAIN

Enhancing allyship and sponsorship for retaining female talent in equity and sustainability

In this round table, table leaders led the participants into another insightful session. In their discussion, they revealed that fostering a more inclusive and supportive work environment for female talent, companies, corporate entities, and leadership within the energy industry includes adopting disruptive and innovative approaches to amplify the role of allies and sponsors. The discussion highlighted several essential solutions and actions that can be implemented to create a company culture that actively supports and promotes allies and sponsors.

Firstly, developing allyship programs with clear definitions, objectives, and accountabilities is essential. These programs should outline the roles and responsibilities of allies and sponsors, ensuring that everyone understands the expectations and purpose of their involvement.

Creating awareness among employees about the importance of allies and sponsors is also crucial. By educating individuals about the value they can bring as allies and sponsors, companies can encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of their role in supporting female talent.

To make allyship more effective, the participants suggested that allies can be self-nominated, nominated by the company, or even incorporated into job descriptions. This ensures that allyship becomes a visible and integral part of the organisational structure and responsibilities.

Measuring and monitoring allyship efforts should be integrated into the company's overall strategy and individual performance evaluations. Including allyship objectives and outcomes in employees' performance evaluations reinforces the significance of this role and encourages active participation.

The conversation asserted the importance of integrating allyship discussions into regular manager-leadership-employee conversations. It ensures that allyship is not viewed as a separate initiative but woven into the organisation's culture and day-to-day operations. Mandatory DEI training for all employees can also promote a shared understanding and commitment to allyship principles.

Recognising the influence of leaders, the participants highlighted the need for top-level executives, including CEOs and C-suite leaders, to serve as role models of allyship. When leaders actively demonstrate their support for female talent, it sends a powerful message and encourages others to follow suit.

In addition to allies, women supporting women was emphasised as a vital component in fostering a supportive work environment. Encouraging women to uplift and empower each other strengthens the support network and creates opportunities for growth and advancement.

Drawing inspiration from successful DEI initiatives and retention examples from other companies is important. Benchmarking against industry leaders and learning from their experiences can provide valuable insights for implementing effective allyship and sponsorship programs.

Lastly, to address the gender imbalance in the industry, there was a call to encourage more girls to pursue STEM studies. The energy industry can tap into diverse skills and perspectives by expanding the talent pool and nurturing young women's interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

By implementing these recommendations, companies can create a workplace culture that values and supports allies and sponsors, empowering them to actively retain and develop female talent across the energy industry's value chain and supply chain.





TABLE 3: RETAIN

Plugging the second talent pipeline leak: empowering women during menopause

The third round table discussion led by Lean In Equity and Sustainability focused on plugging the talent leak caused by menopause in organisations. The conversation highlighted the need to normalise and elevate the conversation around menopause in the workplace, support women in mitigating disruptions, and reframe menopause as a phase that can contribute to talent management and organisational success. Here are the key recommendations discussed:

1. Normalising the menopause conversation:

- » Encourage open discussions about menopause and raise awareness among women and men.
- » Provide education sessions for women of all ages to understand menopause, its symptoms, and self-care.
- » Establish a menopause policy that acknowledges menopause as a natural life phase rather than a sickness.
- » Create informational materials, such as leaflets, with up-to-date clinical information and details about the company's "Menopause Friendly" initiatives.

2. Supporting women to mitigate disruptions:

- » Implement infrastructure solutions such as water fountains and table fans for women who may need them.
- » Designate dedicated spaces for women to refresh themselves and provide wardrobes for clean clothes and toiletries.
- » Offer benefits like cotton uniforms for women in uniformed roles and flexible working hours, hybrid work, or remote work options for women facing menopause-related challenges.

- » Establish a supportive helpline and provide Line Manager education and training. Consider creating a "Menopause Support Group" or appointing a Menopause Champion to foster safe communities for women to share experiences and support each other.

3. Reframing menopause:

- » Implement talent management best practices for women over 50, including targeted initiatives to attract and retain this demographic.
- » Provide high-impact leadership development opportunities.
- » Create flexible career paths and career advancement sponsorships to accommodate the needs and aspirations of women in this phase.
- » Develop intentional leadership programs specifically designed for women over 50, enabling them to transition to other roles within the company and occupy future leadership positions.

By implementing these recommendations, organisations can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for women experiencing menopause. Normalising conversations, providing necessary support, and reframing menopause as a valuable phase contributes to retaining experienced talent, enhancing well-being, and fostering diversity and inclusion.

Embracing the potential of women during menopause not only addresses the second talent leak but also maximises the contributions of this valuable segment of the workforce.



TABLE 4: ATTRACT & RETAIN

Attracting & retaining female talent through cultural shift & change

This team explored organisational strategies for driving cultural change in a collaborative effort led by a number of Lean In Equity & Sustainability trustees. The discussion centred around three key areas: embracing the non linear, adopting the feminine language, and fostering role models. By implementing these approaches, organisations can create an environment that is adaptable, inclusive, and conducive to growth. Here are the key recommendations:

1. Embrace the non linear:

- » Acknowledge that the future is characterised by constant change and uncertainty. Organisations should be prepared to adapt quickly and embrace new developments.
- » Foster a culture that encourages experimentation and risk-taking, allowing employees to be agile and adaptable.
- » Provide support and resources for learning and development to help employees navigate the non linear landscape effectively.

2. Use feminine language:

- » Shifting the organisation's language and culture to be more gender inclusive.
- » Encourage language emphasising collaboration, empathy, and flexibility rather than competitiveness, aggression, and domination.
- » Move away from the hierarchical "command and control" management style and adopt a more cooperative and collaborative approach.

3. Foster role models:

- » Recognise the importance of role models in shaping an organisation's culture.
- » Highlight the achievements and behaviours of diverse role models, including women, people of colour, and under represented groups.
- » Showcasing a wide range of role models helps break down barriers, inspires employees, and promotes inclusivity throughout the organisation.

By embracing these recommendations, organisations can farm a culture that supports change, values diverse perspectives, and fosters inclusivity. This cultural transformation will enable organisations to navigate the non linear future effectively, harness the power of feminine language, and provide inspiring role models for all employees. Organisations will thrive in today's dynamic and evolving landscape by creating an environment that celebrates diversity and embraces change.





TABLE 5: ATTRACT & RETAIN

Driving change through the supply chain to increase representation across the sector and value chain

In a dynamic round table discussion, industry leaders explored strategies for driving change across the sector and value chain, specifically focusing on increasing representation. The discussion yielded three key actions organisations can take to foster diversity and inclusion throughout their supply chains. Organisations can create a more equitable and representative business environment by implementing these actions.

1. Define diversity:

Defining diversity within the context of your organisation is an important first step in increasing diversity and inclusion. It involves aligning your company’s values with a comprehensive understanding of diversity. This definition should encompass not only gender and ethnicity but also factors such as age, disability, sexual orientation, and cultural background - some of which - are often less visible. By clearly articulating what diversity means to your organisation, you can set a solid foundation for shaping your supply chain to reflect these values.

2. Accreditation schemes:

Accreditation schemes were seen as vital in promoting diversity and inclusion within the supply chain. However, it is essential to move beyond mere box-ticking exercises—design accreditation schemes tailored to companies of all sizes’ unique needs, ensuring accessibility and feasibility. Companies can benefit from collaborating with government entities, industry peers, and suppliers to develop standardised processes that simplify accreditation and reduce administrative burdens. By incorporating transparency and progress tracking mechanisms, similar to the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework², organisations can demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.

3. Bottom-up approach:

To drive change effectively, it was thought to be essential to adopt a bottom-up approach that focuses on widening the pool of potential suppliers and breaking down barriers. Expanding supplier networks by looking beyond established suppliers and actively seeking new and diverse voices was seen as monumental in powering diversity inclusion in and beyond individual organisations. Leverage existing schemes like the Minority Supplier Development UK (MSDUK) to connect with under represented suppliers. Engage suppliers early, involving them in building an inclusive supply chain. Invest in their development to enhance and align their capabilities with your desired standards. Long-term contractual agreements can provide stability and foster mutually beneficial relationships. Creating a collaborative environment where suppliers feel empowered to express their views and provide input is crucial, ensuring that decisions are made collectively.

4. Driving impact:

Organisations can drive tangible impact throughout their supply chains by implementing these key actions.

Research shows that diverse supply chains lead to increased innovation, improved financial performance, and enhanced reputational value. A diverse supplier network brings fresh perspectives, fosters competition, and opens doors to new markets and opportunities. Additionally, organisations prioritising diversity in their supply chains contribute to broader societal goals, promoting social equity and economic empowerment.

In conclusion, driving change through the supply chain to increase representation requires intentional actions and a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Organisations can cultivate a more equitable and representative supply chain by defining diversity, designing purposeful accreditation schemes, and adopting a bottom-up approach. Embracing diversity not only benefits the organisation but also contributes to societal progress. A diverse and inclusive supply chain becomes a strategic imperative as businesses strive for sustainable growth and competitiveness.



‘Data-driven advocacy can influence policy decisions and promote gender-inclusive energy policies.’

Chapter Three

Leveraging Data to Power Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Many employers recognise the value of diversity and inclusion today, acknowledging that unique ideas and diverse perspectives are essential for the industry’s future success. However, by leveraging data effectively and consistently, companies can avoid the pitfalls of minimal return on investment and sluggish progress. Hence, exploring how data can be successfully employed to empower diverse talent and foster a thriving workplace environment is necessary.

During this session, participants examined five vital strategies for utilising data to promote inclusivity and enhance workplaces.

1 How can inclusive gender data be used for successful national energy policy-making?

Inclusive gender data can inform and shape successful national energy policy-making. Some ways in which data can be effectively utilised to lobby the government and improve national energy policies include:

- » **Identifying gender disparities:** Inclusive gender data helps identify disparities and gaps in energy access, consumption patterns, employment opportunities, and decision-making within the energy sector. By analysing this data, policymakers can gain insights into the specific challenges faced by different gender groups and design targeted policies to address them.
- » **Building the business case:** Inclusive gender data can provide evidence of gender-inclusive energy policies' economic and social benefits. By quantifying the positive impacts of gender equality in the energy sector, such as increased productivity, job creation, and improved well-being, data can help convince policymakers of the value and importance of prioritising gender considerations in energy policy.
- » **Engaging stakeholders:** Data-backed research and analysis can engage and educate key stakeholders, including policymakers, government officials, and industry leaders. Presenting compelling data highlighting the link between gender equality and positive energy outcomes can help garner support and create awareness, fostering a conducive environment for policy changes.
- » **Highlighting best practices:** Inclusive gender data can be used to showcase successful case studies and best practices from other regions or countries. By demonstrating how specific policies or interventions have positively impacted gender equality in energy, policymakers can draw inspiration and leverage those examples to inform their own policy decisions.
- » **Collaboration and partnerships:** Engaging in partnerships with civil society organisations, research institutions, and gender equality advocates can strengthen the impact of data-driven advocacy efforts. Collaborating with experts with access to gender-disaggregated data and research can enhance the credibility and effectiveness of lobbying activities, increasing the chances of influencing policy decisions.

However, it is essential to consider the challenges and factors that can impact the success of using data to lobby the government and improve national energy policies:

- » **Data availability and quality:** Availability and quality of gender-disaggregated energy data can vary across countries and regions. Limited data can hinder effective advocacy efforts, making it essential to address gaps and invest in comprehensive data collection systems.
- » **Political will:** Successful lobbying requires political will and commitment from policymakers to prioritise gender considerations in energy policies. Building relationships, creating awareness, and demonstrating the value of inclusive policies through data can help foster political support.
- » **Tailoring the message:** Effectively communicating data is crucial. Advocacy messages should be tailored to resonate with policymakers' priorities and address specific energy policy challenges. Highlighting the relevance of gender equality to broader national development goals can increase the chances of policymakers embracing gender-inclusive energy policies.
- » **Engaging multiple channels:** Utilising diverse communication channels, such as policy briefs, reports, presentations, and digital platforms, can help reach policymakers effectively. Employing a combination of evidence-based data, compelling narratives, and personal stories can strengthen the messaging and increase its impact.

Overall, the successful use of data for lobbying the government and improving national energy policies requires a strategic approach that leverages inclusive gender data to build a robust business case, engage stakeholders, highlight best practices, and foster collaboration. By addressing challenges and effectively communicating the message, data-driven advocacy can influence policy decisions and promote gender-inclusive energy policies.



2 Leveraging data for trust and safety

Initial thoughts

When it comes to leveraging data, trust, and safety are important considerations. In this context, exploring the initial thoughts surrounding data collection and its impact on individuals is essential. The evolving world has witnessed increased data sharing. Yet, people may still exhibit defensiveness if they need a clearer understanding of the purpose behind data collection. Additionally, there is often a perception that employee feedback needs to be adequately valued, leading to a disconnect between leadership and employee experiences.

Simply relying on quantitative data on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) may fall short, necessitating gathering opinions and qualitative insights. Furthermore, creating surveys with clear and compelling language is essential to encourage honest responses, even if they include negative feedback towards the company. Engaging with the public on sensitive topics like gender, income, and home-ownership can pose challenges. Therefore, addressing trust and authenticity in data collection is vital to ensure meaningful and reliable outcomes.

Challenges and effective approaches to gathering data

Gathering data presents companies with various challenges that must be addressed for more effective outcomes.

One of the initial challenges is the emotional response data collection can evoke from individuals. Even though data sharing has become more prevalent, people may still feel defensive if they need a clearer understanding of the purpose behind data collection. This table explored this topic in detail, below.

It was understood among attendees that it will prove crucial to go beyond quantitative data on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and gather employee feedback that captures opinions and experiences to overcome the challenges. These approaches help address issues beyond representation numbers and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the workplace environment.

When collecting data, it is sensible to create clear and well-crafted survey questions that encourage honest responses, as this ensures that the data collected is accurate and reflects employees' true sentiments. Additionally, sensitivity is required when engaging with the public when asking about personal information such as gender, income, and home-ownership.

Psychological safety also plays a critical role in data collection. Individuals must feel psychologically safe when providing data to ensure trust and encourage participation. Anonymity can be a powerful tool, allowing individuals to contribute without fear of repercussions.

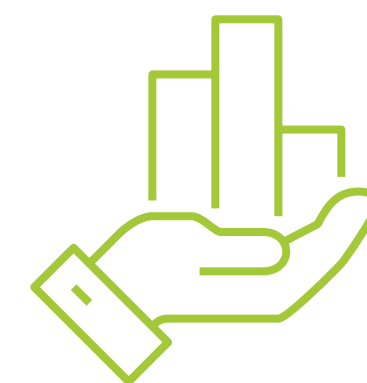
The role of data in recruitment and internal processes

Data collection extends to recruitment processes, where companies face specific challenges. Some recruiters may avoid asking for gender to prevent bias. Still, this group agreed that more information is needed to ensure visibility and understanding of diversity within their talent pool. Balancing diversity across industries and preventing talent rotation requires bringing in individuals with transferable skills.

Sharing data on women in leadership positions was seen as a powerful tool for showcasing career progression possibilities, inspiring others, and creating transparency regarding internal progression within the organisation.

Importance of making data collection safe and inclusive

Collecting data is more effective when individuals feel safe and valued. Organisations should prioritise creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable being honest and providing feedback. This includes ensuring confidentiality, respecting anonymity when desired, and assuring participants that their contributions will have an impact.



Recommendations for effective data collection

To enhance data collection and utilisation, members of the round table outlined some recommendations below:

- » Use open option boxes instead of closed menus to allow individuals to describe their situations more meaningfully, considering the complexity and intersectionality of their experiences.
- » Communicate the purpose and destination of collected data, emphasising how it will be constructively used and benefit everyone involved. Demonstrating the role data plays in driving organisational change is essential.
- » Provide follow-up and report back to individuals who contribute data, showcasing the value and impact of their input. This helps participants see the tangible outcomes of their efforts and encourages future engagement.
- » Recruiters can gather information about job roles and influence clients' access to those roles, supporting initiatives such as flexible working arrangements.
- » Increase public disclosure of DEI policies to influence potential employees' choices and hold organisations accountable.
- » This empowers stakeholders to pressure companies that lag in fostering diversity and inclusion.
- » Research job changes and industry departures among women and under represented groups to identify reasons and patterns. This information can inform targeted strategies to address retention challenges.
- » Assess managers' confidence in leading diverse teams and invest in building their competence. Building more confident and inclusive managers contributes to the development of better-performing teams.
- » Share examples of how procurement practices can drive ED&I efforts in the public and construction sectors. These examples can inspire other companies to prioritise diversity in their supply chain.

By implementing these recommendations and ensuring psychological safety, companies can overcome challenges in data collection and leverage data effectively for improved decision-making, policy development, and fostering inclusive work environments.

3 Using data to recruit diverse professionals into the energy sector

This section focuses on recruitment strategies and explores how data can be effectively utilised to attract a diverse applicant pool. It emphasises the importance of requesting diversity and inclusion (D&I) data on job applications clearly and transparently, aiming to instil confidence in applicants that their data will be used to promote diversity within the organisation.

There was a unanimous agreement amongst the group members that collecting D&I data would not discourage applicants but rather provide valuable insights into why certain groups may be under represented in specific roles. They recognised the need for job descriptions to be more detailed and informative, emphasising the role's value to the organisation and highlighting its broader impact on society. The group acknowledged that different D&I groups respond differently to various values, thus suggesting incorporating organisational values that resonate with diverse candidates.

Furthermore, it is significant to present the data in a compelling manner that tells a story because applicants are more likely to be attracted to roles where they can see themselves represented or face individuals who resemble them. For example, let us consider the visual representation of the organisation's board. If women perceive a lack of representation among board members, they may hesitate to join the organisation. Therefore, the group proposed creating visual representations that showcase the positive changes and progress made within the organisation regarding diversity and inclusion. This visual storytelling approach aims to help applicants envision themselves as part of an inclusive environment.

By implementing these strategies, organisations can effectively leverage data to promote diversity in their recruitment processes and cultivate a more inclusive applicant pool.

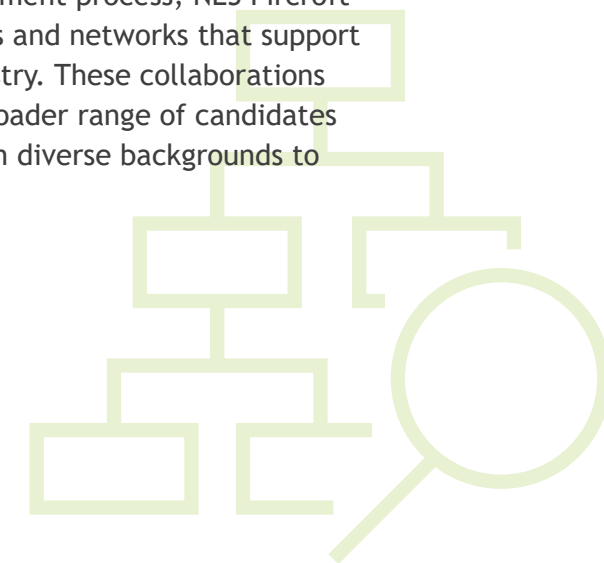


NES Fircroft, an established, global recruitment agency, recognises the importance of recruiting diverse talent and understands the value it brings to clients in the energy sector. The company has actively implemented several processes to promote diversity in its recruitment practices. To begin with, NES Fircroft acknowledged that a diverse workforce contributes to innovation, creativity, and problem-solving within the energy industry. They have developed strategies to attract candidates from various backgrounds, experiences, and demographics, aiming to build a talent pool that reflects their clients' diversity and communities.

NES Fircroft emphasised the need to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all candidates. They have implemented inclusive language and non-discriminatory practices in their job advertisements and recruitment materials. This approach ensures that diverse talent feels valued and encouraged to apply for roles within the energy sector.

In addition to addressing biases in the recruitment process, NES Fircroft actively seeks partnerships with organisations and networks that support under represented groups in the energy industry. These collaborations enable hiring managers to connect with a broader range of candidates and provide opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to access roles and progress in their careers.

www.nesfircroft.com



4 Using data to retain diverse professionals within the energy sector

It bears importance to focus on recruitment efforts and create an inclusive and supportive environment where women can thrive in their careers to foster long-term engagement and retention of women in the energy sector. POWERful Women's research sheds light on cultivating female talent in the energy industry. It provides valuable insights into improving the delivery of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) strategies.

POWERful Women's (PFW's) research emphasises the need for organisations to go beyond recruitment numbers and focus on creating an inclusive culture where women feel valued and included. It highlights the importance of monitoring departures and regularly assessing feedback to identify systemic issues that may hinder women's career progression or cause them to leave the sector.

Organisations can identify patterns and understand why women may leave by actively monitoring departures. This data can then inform targeted initiatives and interventions to address women's challenges in the energy sector.

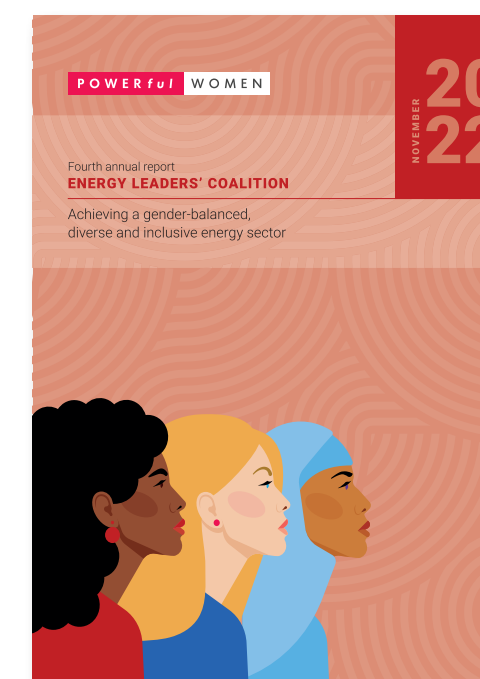
Regularly assessing feedback from female employees is another mandatory aspect of an effective DEI strategy. This feedback can provide valuable insights into women's experiences, concerns, and career barriers. It enables organisations to address issues promptly, make necessary improvements, and create an environment where women feel supported, empowered, and included.

In summary, while recruitment efforts are invaluable for achieving gender diversity in the energy sector, organisations must also prioritise creating an inclusive culture that fosters women's professional growth and development. PFW's research and recommendations guide identifying and rectifying any shortcomings in DEI strategies, emphasising ongoing monitoring, feedback assessment, and targeted interventions to cultivate female talent and promote gender equality in the energy industry.

CLICK ON THE LINKS TO VIEW THE FULL DOCUMENT



[Annual State of the Nation Summary](#)



[Energy Leaders' Coalition Report](#)



[Cultivating Female Talent in Energy](#)



[Working for a Gender-Balanced Diverse and Inclusive UK Energy Sector](#)

5 Practical tips for leveraging data and good practice sharing

In this industry discussion moderated by POWERful Women, representatives from various companies came together to explore the power of data in fostering diversity and inclusion in recruitment practices. The conversation shed light on the challenges faced, the importance of accurate data collection, and the need to drive change within the sector. Here are the key takeaways:

1. Balancing diversity and merit:

The participants acknowledged the delicate balance between diversifying the workforce and avoiding the perception of “diversity hires.” They stressed the importance of accountability in recruitment and the need for data-driven decision-making.

2. Inclusive language:

Round table members recommended using inclusive terminology and de-gendering language in job descriptions to attract a diverse applicant pool. Companies can broaden their appeal and encourage applications from diverse candidates by focusing on the role’s value to the organisation and the wider collective.

3. Leveraging data for active recruitment:

The data on the current diversity landscape was seen as an asset in pursuing active recruitment. During the discussion, members also noted that positions need to exist to accommodate a diverse workforce, making data an essential tool for identifying gaps and taking proactive steps toward inclusivity.

4. Emphasising transferable skills:

The participants highlighted the importance of showcasing transferable skills within the energy sector, particularly in leadership roles. This approach can attract talented women and other under represented groups. Engaging with school-aged children through career fairs and other initiatives was also suggested to help them envision themselves in these roles.

5. Simplifying data collection:

Gathering comprehensive data while respecting privacy regulations, such as GDPR compliance, was deemed crucial. It was emphasised that people should feel comfortable providing truthful information about themselves, ensuring the data collected is accurate and representative.

6. Embedding data into company culture:

Effective analysis and utilisation of collected data require internal resources within organisations. The findings should be integrated into the company’s culture, driving meaningful changes and fostering a more inclusive work environment.

7. Beyond gender:

While gender data is robustly collected, the discussion emphasised expanding data collection to include other protected characteristics, such as neurodiversity. Encouraging employees to be their authentic selves in the workplace was considered vital for fostering a sense of belonging.

8. Continuous monitoring and improvement:

Regularly updating and monitoring data is essential, including capturing changes in employees’ diversity, such as caring responsibilities or disability status, which can influence workplace experiences. Exit interviews should also incorporate diversity and inclusion-related questions to understand if employees leave due to such factors.

9. Overcoming prejudices:

Openly communicating the purpose of data collection is crucial for overcoming traditional prejudices; for example, gathering neurodiversity data to facilitate workplace accommodations can dispel negative assumptions and encourage participation.

10. Setting targets and measuring progress:

Measuring the right metrics, including tracking individuals’ backgrounds and their entry into the sector (e.g., through apprenticeships or transfers), was discussed. Organisations assess talent attraction and retention efforts more accurately. Benchmarking against industry standards and considering sector-specific targets were also highlighted.

As expressed continuously in this white paper, the energy sector can effectively create a more inclusive and diverse workforce by leveraging data. The insights shared during the discussion underscored the importance of accurate, inclusive, and regularly updated data and the need for transparency and accountability in recruitment processes. Through these efforts, the sector can cultivate a thriving environment where individuals from all backgrounds can flourish and contribute to a sustainable energy future.



Conclusion

The inaugural WENA Conference provided a valuable platform for knowledge exchange and idea sharing, enabling participants to deepen their understanding and commitment to the shared mission. WENA will continue connecting different sectors and disciplines and joining best practices to create a truly inclusive and collaborative energy sector.

Remember, please stay connected with WENA, as the individual member organisations within the alliance offer unwavering support to women's careers, from specific topical events to resources, tools, reports, mentoring programmes, and coaching opportunities. Please use the resources that are readily available to you and your employer.

Recognising that the responsibility for change lies with company practices rather than women themselves is essential. Companies should back their good intentions with accurate data, a sincere commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and proactive measures to enhance policies, strategies, initiatives, and culture. By doing so, they can create a significant impact, enabling diverse talent to thrive without struggling for recognition and advancement.

Together, through our continued collaboration, we can cultivate an energy industry where women no longer have to strive to thrive.

“ Together, through our continued collaboration, we can cultivate an energy industry where women no longer have to strive to thrive. ”

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Further information at:

in Women's Energy Network Alliance: Overview | LinkedIn
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