



Revolving Door:
Women in Tech
DEI Toolkit

Foreword

Technology is at the heart of innovation and creation in the modern world. As such a significant influence on our everyday lives, it's vital that the tech industry is representative of those who utilise and rely on it. And yet, as countless reports and surveys demonstrate, women are hugely underrepresented in this sector.

50% of women in tech leave the industry by the age of 35¹. The Tech Talent Charter's latest report found that only 22% of senior tech roles are held by gender minorities². And whilst gender diversity has historically been a challenge for this specific sector, improvement rates are discouraging; the number of women in tech increased by less than 1% in 2022³.

As a business dealing primarily with tech talent and demand, we're acutely aware of not only the hugely positive impact that gender-diverse workforces have, but also the challenges faced by women in these roles and businesses trying to implement a more inclusive environment.

Partnering with Preqin and the Tech Talent Charter at our Revolving Door: Women in Tech event, we explored a range of topics, discussing obstacles specific to this issue and approaches that individuals and businesses can take to tackle them. In a sector where 51% of CEOs and founders think DEI initiatives are not effective⁴, it's vital that we continue to push this agenda.

As a result of conversations throughout the event, and those we continue to promote and facilitate, we've created this DEI toolkit. Whilst inequality and exclusivity remain, we all have a part to play to create an industry in which everyone is given an equal opportunity to succeed.



“Here at La Fosse, we want to create industry-leading, high-performing teams, and having a diverse workforce is a vital part of that success. Being at the forefront of this market means building truly diverse teams, engaging and supporting each individual, and approaching each hire with a ‘skills-first’ attitude. It’s a marathon, not a sprint, but one that we’re committed to leading so that women in tech can really thrive.”



Ollie Whiting
CEO at La Fosse

“Although we can see some slow progress, significant structural barriers remain for women in tech.

We know that to really plug the gaps in the pipeline and make a more equitable and diverse tech workforce, we need to work as a collective. The Tech Talent Charter brings together over 750 organisations like La Fosse to surface what works and provide data to support organisational change.

Building diverse teams is not just the right thing; it is a business imperative to ensure that companies can keep pace competitively. We recently found that only 22% of senior tech workers are women and, alongside this, many women leave tech for good before the age of 35; we must challenge existing practices to create cultures that retain this vital talent.”



Debbie Forster MBE
CEO at Tech Talent Charter



“Preqin places great importance on encouraging women to have thriving careers in tech, and La Fosse is a fantastic partner to advance more women in this field.

Women have for too long been underrepresented in the industry, facing numerous barriers and biases, and the importance of supporting and encouraging women to pursue professions in technology cannot be overstated.

By fostering diversity and inclusion in the tech sector, we not only empower women in their choice of career, but also enhance innovation and creativity, leading to diversity of thought that helps address the complex challenges of our increasingly interconnected world. Gender diversity in technology fosters a stronger, more resilient, and sustainable industry, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of user needs, market demands, and the requirements of our customers.

We are committed to improving the gender gap in our industry, and striving to create an environment where all can excel.”



Christoph Knaack
CEO at Preqin



How to use the DEI Toolkit

This DEI Toolkit includes practical recommendations for women to help them navigate their careers in tech, as well as actionable steps for businesses and individual allies to foster an inclusive work culture and promote gender diversity.

We hope readers will use this toolkit to:

- **Understand** the specific gender equality issues facing women in tech
- **Demonstrate** the need for all business levels and groups to work towards equality
- **Consider** different perspectives and approaches across the workforce
- **Share and implement** actionable advice to improve gender diversity
- **Recognise** the effect of workplace equality on the retention of female talent



Why gender diversity matters: **The facts**

There are numerous positive outcomes that businesses can achieve by promoting gender diversity in the workplace, demonstrating that not only is it the right thing to do, it's also a strategic business approach that leads to tangible, measurable benefits.



Greater financial performance

According to a report by McKinsey & Company, businesses with gender-diverse executive teams are 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability compared to companies with less diversity at the executive level⁵.

Larger talent pool

Embracing gender diversity expands the talent pool and allows companies to benefit from a broader range of skills, perspectives, and experiences. This can lead to increased business performance and access to a broader talent pipeline.

Higher employee engagement and retention rates

Gender-diverse workplaces tend to have higher levels of employee engagement and retention. A study by Gallup found that employees who feel included and valued in the workplace are more likely to be engaged and committed to their jobs, resulting in higher productivity and reduced attrition rates⁶.

Better decision-making

Research by the Harvard Business Review indicates that diverse teams are more effective at problem-solving and decision-making due to the variety of perspectives and insights they bring to the table⁷.

Enhanced reputation and brand image

Companies that prioritise gender diversity are often seen as progressive, inclusive, and socially responsible, which enhances their reputation and brand image. This positively impacts customer perception, talent acquisition, and general business approval.

Our key talking points



Recognising and reducing the gender pay gap

Gender-equal promotion and progression

Family-friendly cultures

Overcoming hostile work environments

Education and allyship through support networks

Our key talking points: The main issues

With a range of topics to cover, we've broken this toolkit down into five specific issues:

Recognising and reducing the gender pay gap

Gender-equal promotion and progression

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Education and allyship through support networks



“It seems that, although we’re talking a lot more about gender equality in the workplace, the conversation isn’t evolving. We’re asking the same questions we were years ago and that’s a reflection of the fact that the problem isn’t improving quickly enough.”

Maryfran Johnson
CIO Leadership Live

Recognising and reducing the gender pay gap

What you can do as an employer:

Men earn **more than women** in every British industry sector, demonstrating that the **gender pay gap** is still very much **a reality**⁸.

Using accurate data, identify the different areas within your business where there is a gender pay gap.

Making impactful change starts with understanding the scope of the issue and focusing on the specific areas that need attention. This includes exploring different horizontals across groups and teams and scrutinising the data.

Be transparent with both your findings and the pay process in general.

Highlight any inequalities that your data has revealed, and communicate how different salary, bonus, and benefit packages have been calculated across the business.

Research market rates and benchmark your employee salaries.

Benchmarking salaries ensures you are informed on both fairness and competitiveness. By creating a standardised process, you remove the opportunity for gender bias to play a part in initial rate decisions.

Include salaries within your job adverts, encourage conversations from the outset, openly discussing remuneration at the interview stage and regularly thereafter.

By creating an environment of honest exchange, you'll build confidence in female candidates and employees when it comes to salary negotiation.

Female representation at a senior level often contributes to the gender pay gap.

More men in leadership positions results in more men being paid a higher salary. Fundamentally, companies should be **facilitating women to progress to the C-suite**, and as gender parity adjusts, pay equality will follow.

However, the scale of the problem with progression means that this is not a passive exercise; attention and effort need to be directly applied to ensure opportunities such as allocation of promotable work tasks are fairly assigned, 'glue work' isn't being apportioned only to female staff, and training development schemes are accessible to all.

Advocate on behalf of your female employees.

If managers recognise an imbalance, they should call it out. Hold those within your supply chain accountable, too – Goldman Sachs famously launched their own initiative to help combat this issue by setting a quota for board diversity before they would take a company public⁹.

Keep reviewing your pay data and benchmarking processes.

Understand how the changes you make impact the actual numbers and produce reports that can be accessed by the whole company to ensure transparency.

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Recognising and reducing the gender pay gap

What you can do as a female employee:



Know your value.

Research market rates and come to the table with confidence when negotiating at the offer stage. Ask for a breakdown of how your salary is calculated, and how it aligns with similar positions across the business.

Keep talking about it.

Talk with your manager, with your female colleagues, with male allies across the business. This will ensure the topic stays front of mind for many and allows you to gain a diverse range of perspectives.

Call attention to instances of perceived inequality.

Discuss these with your manager. If you discover a male colleague in a similar role is being paid a higher rate, ask about the differences in your positions that result in that discrepancy.

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Gender-equal promotion and progression

What you can do as an employer:

20% of women over the age of 35 who work in the tech industry are still in junior positions¹⁰.

Remove identifying factors from the job application process.

These might be elements such as first names and titles. Assess on skills, attitude, and aptitude from the outset. Ensure there is female representation on your interview panel and evaluate against a defined matrix. Have a defined approach for how you discuss gaps on CVs.

Encourage flexible working, parental leave, and return to work initiatives to all employees.

This removes stigma on female employees, but also ask individually what more can be done to better align with and support your female employees in achieving their professional goals.

Have regular, transparent conversations with detailed feedback and reflection.

Look at areas of success and improvement. Consistency is key; this process should be followed regardless of structural transformation, management changes, or periods of leave.

Talk to your female employees about factors that restrict their progression.

Consider parental leave, care responsibilities, menopause – and make reasonable adjustments to ensure that these don't negatively impact continuous development.

Ensure opportunities are visible to all.

Whether it's an internal job vacancy, a new project, or a networking event, communicate across the business to give every employee an equal opportunity for professional development.

Shout about the women in your business.

Spotlight those in senior roles, those being promoted, those producing great work. Representation is vital at all levels of your business to ensure that minority groups feel seen and valued.

Build career frameworks with clear development steps.

These should result in distinct levels of promotion, and then reward completed goals. Be unambiguous as to how progression is achieved.

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Gender-equal promotion and progression

What you can do as a female employee:



If you feel your progression isn't being appropriately tracked or considered, talk to your manager.

Demonstrate the goals or KPIs that you have achieved and suggest how you would like them to be recognised.

Call out exclusionary behaviour.

Networking on the golf course, senior roles not being advertised, project leaders repeatedly choosing the same individuals for their teams. Explain why these situations are promoting gender inequality within the business.

Ask for help when you need it.

Whilst it's true that businesses should make reasonable adjustments to support your personal circumstances, you need to be clear in communicating what that means to you specifically.

Keep track of the work you are allocated.

Make sure you have fair access to promotable work tasks and that you are doing an equal amount of 'glue work' as your male counterparts – writing meeting notes, updating project and team plans, onboarding, logistics, etc.

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What you can do as an employer:

Women account for

85% of sole carers for children

and

65% of sole carers for older adults¹¹.

Broaden what the term ‘family-friendly’ means within your business.

It’s not just in relation to parents, but also for people going through a fertility process, suffering a bereavement, caring for elderly and/or disabled relatives and people within their communities.

Regular interaction is vital.

Consider ‘stay-in-touch’ days or more informal check-ins. Especially for extended periods such as parental leave, include all employees in company communications and invitations to both professional and social events.

Make sure you’re aligning with each individual to find out how you can support their specific circumstances.

Every situation is different. Similarly, not everyone wants to share details about their personal experiences or will have had the same journey as others.

Ask for regular feedback on how your initiatives are and aren’t working.

Make sure that there are diverse representatives from your senior team who are part of that review process.

Managers should undertake training in how to approach these conversations appropriately and sensitively.

Also make sure they are aware of legal requirements and employer responsibilities.

Make your family-friendly culture equitable for all.

Family means different things to different people, and the policies you put in place shouldn’t exclude anyone or only benefit a small pool of employees.

Reframe what flexibility looks like.

For example, for someone doing a regular hospital or school run, give them the option to work later in the day. Remove stigma from asking for flexibility by having a wider offering that accommodates other commitments that people value, such as looking after a pet. Consider a more flexible approach to benefits too, where employees can choose those that are most appropriate and valuable for them.

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What you can do **as a female employee:**



Don't think of your personal circumstances as a problem to be solved.

If your business claims to have a family-friendly culture, add your unique perspective and experiences to help build on that culture and provide better support.

Be realistic about your workload and mental capacity.

Make sure to communicate openly with your manager about how much you are able to take on, especially during times of elevated stress.

If you're a woman in a leadership role, make your own story visible to other women within your business.

Role models and mentors in senior positions demonstrate that success is attainable for everyone across the business, regardless of personal factors.

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What you can do as an employer:

Women (23%) are more likely to **leave a job** due to **culture** than men (18%).

Job resignation due to toxic company culture was **more common** in the **tech sector (36%)** than any other¹².

Ongoing learning and development is a key approach to overcoming hostility in the workplace.

Microaggressions and unconscious bias are typical behaviours that can be improved with understanding and awareness gained through training.

Consider engaging with a DEI consultant to assess knowledge gaps and areas for improvement within your business.

Gaining an unbiased, external perspective will encourage a more authentic reflection of your working environment.

Request regular, honest feedback at all levels.

Ensure that those responses are properly considered and addressed. For example, for businesses with all male boards, accept that the lack of diversity may have led to outdated language being used. Show and be willing to change.

Call out bad behaviour when you see it.

It could be inappropriate language, comments that conform to gender stereotypes, interrupting or talking over others – but be mindful of your approach. This is an opportunity for learning, not an opportunity to embarrass or shame someone.

Engage the gender majority in your organisation.

Make sure they know they are part of making an equitable workplace and that, by doing so, the whole business benefits and thrives. Allyship programmes and education on intersection can help majority groups develop the tools to be included in progress.

Give women a seat at the table.

As numerous studies have shown, companies with at least one woman on the board are more successful than those without. Make opportunities at every level of your business accessible for everyone.

Measure your progress.

Think about different data sets that would help to monitor any improvement (an employee NPS, number of reported instances, stress-related absence). Pulse surveys can be effective here – ask your employees about the sense of belonging and what culture feels like in your organisation. Create regular reports that are available to all employees.

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What you can do as a female employee:



Be vocal about the things that you want to change.

If it's assumed you will take the meeting notes or organise the catering because you're the only female on the team, let your manager know that this is not acceptable.

Bring attention to microaggressions in the right way.

If you feel your male colleague spoke over you in a meeting, take him to one side and have a conversation. It's not about apportioning blame, but making others aware of behaviours that negatively affect you. Remember that it is also not your responsibility to remove hostility from your workplace environment; you should be supported by your line manager to navigate negative behaviours.

Support your female colleagues.

Whether it's including them in an important meeting, recognising someone's hard work, or asking them directly for a response, make a point of championing the women around you.

Education and allyship through support networks

What you can do as an employer:

77% of men believe that most men within their organisation were either **‘active allies’** or **‘public advocates’** for gender equity, compared to **45%** of women¹³.

Listen.

Nobody has all the answers, but actively listening and approaching each conversation with an open mind and a genuine receptiveness to learn sends a clear message that your business wants to improve.

Be proactive about celebrations, discussions, and topical issues that are important to your female employees.

Encourage internal communications and learning sessions to spread a wider message.

Make the gender equality conversation a priority.

Facilitate networks and events that promote and encourage more discussion. Help your employees to manage their time and workload in order to involve themselves in these events.

Add cultural contribution to the appraisal process.

Make it a success measure for every employee. This not only demonstrates the importance and impact that it has on your business, but also keeps it front of mind for everyone.

Bring in industry experts.

Start discussions about gender equality initiatives and approaches in other businesses, and seek out specialist advice to share across the business.

Remember that support networks are not the responsibility of the minority party.

Nominating a female employee to manage a network and expecting gender equality to suddenly improve is unrealistic and unsupportive. Improvements are made when everyone works towards a shared goal.

Encourage senior leaders to play an integral part in these networks.

Put them at the heart of the issue to drive change, whilst also establishing the need for all levels of the business to engage.

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What you can do
as a female employee:



Be patient with those who want to learn.

It's not your duty to champion gender equality, but try to be receptive to those who are seeking answers or a better understanding of how they can support women in your workplace.

If you are part of a support network, be open about the challenges you face and try to support others around you.

Networks are there to help validate, inspire, and drive action.

Hold your allies accountable.

As the now infamous saying goes, "Women's rights are human rights". It's a collective responsibility to address gender equality, and those who express their support should also be taking action.

Education and allyship through support networks

What you can do **as a male employee:**

Male colleagues can play a **crucial role** in **becoming allies** and **supporting** gender diversity **and** inclusion **in the workplace:**

Educate yourself.

Take the initiative to educate yourself about the challenges and biases that women face in the workplace. Read articles, books, and research on gender diversity and inclusion, and engage in discussions to gain a better understanding of the issues at hand.

Advocate for equal opportunities.

Advocate for equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. Ensure that female colleagues have access to the same resources, opportunities, and career advancement as their male counterparts. Challenge any biased practices or policies that may hinder their progress.

Listen and empathise.

Listen to the experiences and perspectives of your female colleagues without interrupting or dismissing their concerns. Show empathy and validate their experiences to create a supportive environment where they feel heard and valued.

Support work-life balance.

Recognise and support the importance of work-life balance for all employees, including women. Advocate for family-friendly policies, flexible work arrangements, and other measures that can help women balance their personal and professional responsibilities.

Amplify voices.

Use your privilege and platform to amplify the voices of your female colleagues. Acknowledge and credit their contributions, and actively promote their ideas and achievements in meetings, discussions, and other forums.

Be a mentor and a sponsor.

Offer mentorship and sponsorship opportunities to female colleagues, and actively support their professional development. Provide guidance, feedback, and advice to help them advance their careers.

Interrupt bias.

Speak up and intervene when you witness biased behaviour or discriminatory comments against women. Use your influence to address and challenge such behaviours and promote a culture of inclusivity and respect.

Engage in inclusive language and behaviour.

Use inclusive language and behaviour that respects and values all employees, regardless of gender. Avoid making assumptions, jokes, or comments that may be offensive or exclusionary.

Promote diversity and inclusion initiatives:

Actively support and participate in diversity and inclusion initiatives in the workplace such as training and development and networking events.

Toolkit checklist



Key takeaways

Gender equality and DEI is an ongoing effort that requires continuous commitment and action. By implementing these recommendations, both women and businesses can contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

Checklist for businesses:

- Get your data in order
- Remove gender bias from your application process
- Build equitable remuneration and promotion frameworks
- Address female representation at senior levels
- Ask, listen, and give feedback at all levels
- Shout about female success
- Make adjustments based on individual circumstances
- Promote ongoing learning and development
- Address inappropriate behaviour
- Put DEI on everyone's agenda
- Track your progress

Checklist for female employees:

- Know your value
- Call it out
- Ask for help
- Add your perspective
- Share your experiences
- Lead with awareness
- Support other women
- Be part of the learning process
- Hold your allies accountable

Thank you to our **Revolving Door: Women in Tech** event panellists



Sophie Hebdidge
Academy Director at La Fosse Academy

Sophie is the Academy Director at La Fosse Academy, a tech training programme that develops and places diverse, highly skilled talent. She is also the founder of Techniclarity, which gives female founders the tech know-how they need to lead their start-ups. She began her career at Barclays as a business analyst and has developed some of the world's leading coding communities in London and New York. She has also been a serial founder and CTO, developing voice bots equipping teenage girls with the skills they need to manage their own mental health.

Debbie Forster MBE
CEO at Tech Talent Charter

Debbie Forster is an award-winning leader and a recognised figure in the areas of diversity, tech, innovation, and education, and was named by Computer Weekly as the Most Influential Woman in UK IT for 2019. She is a portfolio consultant and is Co-founder and CEO of the Tech Talent Charter, an industry collective that aims to deliver greater inclusion and diversity in the UK tech workforce. As part of her wider portfolio, Debbie serves on a range of advisory boards and works as an executive coach consultant specialising in supporting start-ups, scale ups, SMEs, and social enterprises.

Christoph Knaack
CEO at Preqin

As well as serving as the company's CEO, Christoph is also an executive member of the board at Preqin. His in-depth understanding of the alternatives industry is invaluable when overseeing Preqin's day-to-day operations and leading on the company's overall direction. Before joining Preqin, Christoph worked as a hedge fund investor at Davidson Kempner, and in the private equity team at Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. He started his career in investment banking at Morgan Stanley.

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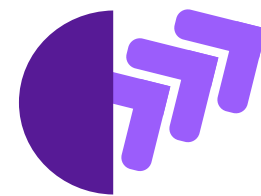
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La Fosse:

Talent solutions from the classroom to the boardroom

We work by your side to create a total talent solution for every level, from the C-suite leaders of today to the junior rising stars of tomorrow. We don't just fill your immediate tech skills gaps, but more importantly solve your future needs with outstanding and diverse talent.



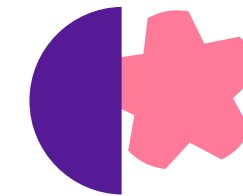
Recruitment

Delivering next-level technology talent



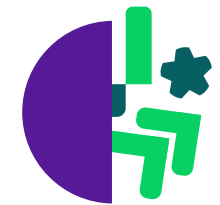
Executive

Finding transformative leadership



Academy

Training tomorrow's tech superstars



Solutions

Building and deploying bespoke teams



To find out more about our talent solutions, **contact our expert team:**

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"We can't move fast enough to ensure we have better female representation across organisations. We must create environments and a social fabric that allows females to flourish. Any society that fails to harness the energy, creativity, and brilliance of its women will always be at a huge disadvantage."



Jackie Dane
Chief People Officer at La Fosse