



Australian Government

Workforce Australia

Actions: Recruitment and engagement strategies to attract women

Attracting and retaining previously underutilised sources of talent, including women, is key to addressing a skills shortage facing Australian businesses. Innovative attraction strategies can support organisations to create positive perceptions of the industry or workplace, making it more attractive to female employees and those whom they are influenced by. Attraction strategies also promote the benefits and career opportunities that exist within these businesses.

Building a robust pipeline of diverse talent begins when individuals join an organisation. Recruitment is a critical component of an organisation's gender diversity strategy. A candidate's experience during the recruitment process is a key determinant of whether they will accept a role with an organisation. For women, the evidence indicates that there are structural and cultural barriers to recruiting women into the workforce following a caring related career break, however mechanisms can be put in place to address these barriers.

What immediate actions you can implement:

- Consider more inclusive approaches to recruitment using the [Inclusive recruitment resource](#).
- Identify and disrupt bias across the talent lifecycle by using the [Fixing the system not the women resource](#).
- Ensure gender diversity on recruitment panels.
- Consider job design, statements of duty and teamwork allocations to identify positions that may be viable for returners.

What longer term actions you can implement:

- Establish recruitment targets for women, both shortlisting and interview targets and explain the process and rationale to all employees.
- Train recruiters to recognise stereotypes and unconscious bias about the work women can do and the myths about women in non-traditional roles.
- Assess the effectiveness of attraction and recruitment strategies, by tracking the progress of female candidates through the recruitment process.

Scenario:

The Career Revive initiative prompted [Encompass Community Services](#) to reassess its approaches to talent attraction and engagement, representing a significant shift in mindset for the organisation.

Encompass revised its attraction and recruitment approaches, experimenting with new recruitment channels (including social media) and applying a 'case-by-case' strategy for different positions.

The recruitment team also experimented with the language of their advertisements, emphasising flexible roles and opportunities for an immediate start.



Scenario:

[Keech Australia](#) participated in Career Revive, as part of the 2019 intake, to address perceptions about 'dark, dirty and dangerous' work. A reliance on walk-ins to fill internal vacancies had also resulted in a narrow pool of applicants.

As part of the Career Revive initiative, Keech began to proactively monitor the Bendigo Jobs Board for potential candidates. This represented a significant shift from traditional reliance of expressions of interest from job seekers.

Keech shared its goals to increase the recruitment of women into its workforce with local labour firms and requested that they actively seek diverse candidates for new positions.

To build ownership for diversity initiatives across the business, the HR manager established a committee dedicated to sharing ideas and actions on how to increase female workforce participation.

Internal communication channels were also used to engage staff in Career Revive activities, enlisting staff as supporters and sponsors for implementation activities.

In the past, the company had struggled with women being unable to pass physical assessments for production roles. To support physiotherapists to make informed assessments, they were invited to tour the site and re-evaluate the workplace.

Scenario:

[Capecare](#) faces a significant challenge in attracting and retaining staff as Australia continues to see workforce shortages across the aged care sector.

As part of the Career Revive initiative, Capecare was supported to consider more varied recruitment strategies to reach a broader audience. This includes one-on-one mentorship from the Career Revive customer intelligence team to support better targeting of advertisements.

As part of the growth agenda, Capecare has delivered a number of community engagement events to create interest in the care sector. The organisation is seeking to expand on this and deliver outreach programs at universities and high schools in the region, while also targeting the parents of high school aged students who may wish to return to work.

To improve the experience of working parents, Capecare is exploring opportunities to provide pre-and after school care for their employees who work shifts.

Scenario:

The Career Revive initiative has enabled [Shield Traffic](#) to pursue and explore more sustainable growth strategies, including all female franchising and the development of new training pathways for female traffic controllers. Additionally, participation in the initiative has enabled Shield Traffic to develop and communicate a narrative around the organisation's unique employee value proposition to directly address stigma surrounding the industry.

The Career Revive initiative has enabled Shield Traffic to directly influence the development of a Traffic Controlling training package to be developed by TAFE Queensland. The course will support individuals living outside metro areas to access quality training in a rapidly growing sector.

Shield CEO, Rebecca Rowe has also connected with the Industry Skills Advisor in Queensland government to provide evidence based, industry advice and intelligence about the current and emerging direction of traffic controlling. This advice will directly inform and align the Queensland Government's training and skills priorities and decision-making, including program design and investment setting.

Shield Traffic has also been working successfully with local recruitment agencies to proactively address misconceptions about working in traffic management. Shield Traffic has worked to promote attractive aspects of the role (including opportunities to work outdoors, access to casual work and company culture) to shift existing narratives about working in the industry.

Scenario:

The Career Revive initiative has supported [Nexus Primary Health](#) to more clearly define their strategic focus regarding talent attraction and engagement. This sharper focus has led to increased executive support and engagement in strategic workforce initiatives, including the referral program, returner program, and the design and delivery of a maternity return program.

A comprehensive diagnostic supported the Nexus HR team to identify factors preventing positive change and develop targeted strategies to enable continuous improvements.

To support the attraction and recruitment of women returning to work following a career break, Nexus developed a comprehensive Returner Program Prototype which it is looking to trial in its corporate areas with a view to trialling in other areas if successful.

Following consultation with a Career Revive Mentor, Nexus developed and implemented a referral incentive program, to help staff to spread the word about open roles amongst their networks.

Finally, Nexus has leveraged Career Revive initiative elements, including capability workshops, mentorship and resources to align leaders, managers and staff around the need for strategic workforce activities, positioning the HR team as the primary driver for this work.

The development of a strategic recruitment framework has enabled Nexus to better plan for future growth and has supported their ongoing recruitment and retention activities.

