

Championing diversity an

International Women's Day on March 8th enabled organisations to formerly celebrate the achievements of their female employees and put a spotlight on removing the remaining obstacles to equality and inclusion in the workplace. This year's campaign theme, #EmbraceEquity, also provided another opportunity for Comms Dealer to showcase the all-embracing approaches channel businesses are taking to integrate and promote diversity and inclusion as part of everyday organisational culture.



KERI GILDER
COLT TECHNOLOGY
SERVICES

"Since the founding of our Women's Network five years ago we have marked International Women's Day as an occasion to celebrate, reflect, educate, and connect. Women+@Colt focuses on generating connections through mentoring, development and educational events. A key focus is creating inclusive policies and support mechanisms such as creating a culture where the menopause experience is understood and supported. Women over 50 are the fastest growing demographic in the workplace, yet more than one in ten have left their job due to unmanageable menopause symptoms. Achieving diversity without inclusion is an empty promise. We've launched a programme to get Colt employees to build it into day-to-day habits and promote allyship."



ROSIE HALL
HABLE

"International Women's Day is an important day in our content calendar, enabling us to raise awareness of the achievements of women internally and externally. In an industry with huge gender inequalities it is important we are part of the conversation. We also ensure the day's values are celebrated all year round. For example, we introduced a new Menopause Policy to support those experiencing symptoms. We're also putting our money where our mouth is: 51 per cent of Hable employees are women compared to the industry average of 26 per cent. We measure the success of our diversity and inclusion through a bi-annual form which ensures our workforce is representative of society. A diverse workforce is a creative, productive and successful one and we are committed to ensuring we continue to champion this day in, day out."



CHRISTINA PENDLETON
INTERCITY

"International Women's Day is a way for us to celebrate our female colleagues, raise awareness of barriers and challenge bias. We began celebrating IWD in 2020 when we launched our Women in Tech Networking Group which discusses the challenges women face in the industry and promotes solutions to maintain a diverse and inclusive working environment. Imposter syndrome is a key issue raised by the group and we regularly hold events to improve confidence. By taking it in turns to present key topics we are helping our colleagues develop presentation and public speaking skills in a safe environment. Following presentations on women's health, we have introduced policies for menopause and parental leave, and we've delivered workshops on breast and cervical cancer. We also champion colleagues with mentoring schemes and have many talented women rising into management and leadership positions."



AYSHEA ROBERTSON
ZEN

"We have several D&I networks that account for 24 per cent of our workforce. Each has a vision and objective to ensure we take proactive action to make a difference and they are monitored annually. Our Women in Tech group aims to achieve gender equity, increase the number of women in tech and leadership roles and promote gender equity in the wider sector. Over the past 12 months promotions for women have increased by 13 per cent and we have seen a 20 per cent increase in the hiring of female managers. Some of our initiatives include the Step into Tech programme, a female mentoring scheme, female specific development (including confidence training, flexible/hybrid working), a menopause policy, buddies for female returners, and working with schools and colleges to change perceptions, influence curriculum and provide mentorship to young women."



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JENNY BUMFORD
CITYFIBRE

"CityFibre celebrates International Women's Day through activities that raise awareness of the event and promote the ongoing work of our own internal Gender Network. Last year we were named Times Top 50 Employer for Women for the second year running recognising our efforts to drive gender equality and empower women in the workplace. We do this by monitoring our equality metrics and setting ourselves a long-term target to increase the percentage of female employees year-on-year. We have introduced important policies and charters including Menopause at Work and family friendly working schemes. We are also developing a new early careers and apprenticeships scheme to encourage female candidates into more technical mid-management roles - an area where we see a diversity deficit. We will support this strategy with coaching and mentoring opportunities, and learning and development support."



VISH CHHATRALIA
EXERTIS

"One of the priorities for our Women at Exertis Employee Resource Group (ERG) is to provide support and create opportunities to build networks. We will be hosting several Lunch and Learn events focused on this year's International Women's Day theme of #EmbraceEquity and will be spotlighting some of our senior female leaders' personal stories, which we did last year with great impact. Our Women's ERG is one of three current ERGs and is the one with the most momentum. We have set targets and incentivised our senior team to move our diversity metrics. We are collaborating with large customers like Softcat and big suppliers like Microsoft to roll out and learn from each other, and we ensure that Women's ERG topics have a regular board agenda slot among many other exciting developments in our celebrations of women."



LUCY THOMAS
TALKTALK

"With a female CEO and a growing number of women in leadership positions, inspiring and promoting women into technology is a major priority at TalkTalk. Our Women in Tech employee network champions inclusivity in the workplace and provides a platform for role models across all levels to share career stories and encourage internal mobility. Through community engagement we seek to inspire the next generation of young girls. We created the annual TalkTalk North West Women in Technology awards to shine a light on female tech talent in the region. In 2022 almost 40 per cent of new employees were female. We launched a 'women in leadership' apprenticeship programme, 70 per cent of whom have since been promoted. Our gender pay gap has consistently reduced and almost half of our Executive Committee are women. While progress is in the right direction we acknowledge there is always more to do."



CAMILLA KARM
REDSQUID

"We have been celebrating International Women's Day for many years and 2023 is no exception. The team decides how they want to mark the day and this year we hosted a breakfast and book club morning honouring the women at RedSquid, putting a focus on women in tech and sharing some lesser known stories. Our workforce usually comprises between 35 per cent and 45 per cent women due to us investing in an inclusive workplace that can attract that diversity. To keep diversifying we let the team come up with the ideas and changes they want to see and have created different committees that facilitate this. Diversity and inclusion is about more than just gender and we are currently reviewing all our people policies to ensure they reflect that mindset, so we can keep being innovative and have an inclusive culture and community."



TORIA MCCAHILL
ANS GROUP

"We continually focus on increasing diversity and creating an environment where everyone can be themselves. One of the ways we do this is through promoting our various EDI groups. This year we will be highlighting the incredible women in the business and promoting our Women in ANS group which brings women together to share, network and learn from female colleagues they might not regularly cross paths with. We are developing a Future Leaders programme which looks at nurturing our female leaders, providing coaching and mentoring to bring out their full potential. Alongside this we're working with the Tech Academy to address the wider diversity gap in the industry. We are working to make a fully inclusive workplace where our people can be their amazing true selves every day."

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