

Ornua

Diversity & Inclusion Case Study

Spotlight on Ornua

Improving gender diversity in succession pool

January 2022



Our Challenge

Ornuia is the largest exporter of Irish dairy products and the proud owner of Kerrygold, Ireland's only €1 billion food brand. With a global team of over 2,400 employees from 59 countries, Ornuia knows first-hand how people with diverse backgrounds can bring their own perspectives, ideas, and experiences, leading to better strategic decisions.

We place a huge emphasis on succession planning; identifying a large pool of talent and implementing a development plan to ensure they are ready to become the next generation of leaders. In 2017, only 17% of the succession pool for senior leaders were females, highlighting a need to place an increased focus on developing, and supporting, female talent across the organisation.

Our Approach

We set up a Diversity & Belonging working group, comprising of 12 passionate volunteers, sponsored by the Chief Executive and Chief People Officer. From the outset, this group focused on gender diversity and implemented a wide range of initiatives to develop and support female talent.

We established a bespoke Women in Leadership programme equipping female leaders with the skills needed to negotiate their careers with Ornuia. We also introduced a Fertility Treatment Policy and Miscarriage Policy to support all employees, both male and female, as they navigate the more complicated aspects of having a family. We implemented a range of training programmes on unconscious bias and belonging to raise awareness. We increased our efforts in our recruitment process to ensure all candidate shortlists and interview panels were gender diverse.

Our Outcomes

The Women in Leadership course has been a resounding success with over 120 female leaders completing it from 2019 to 2021. Since 2017, we have achieved 35% female diversity among senior leaders in its succession pool and this year, we appointed two female Independent Non-Executive Directors to the Board of Ornuia.

Additional supports have been welcomed by all employees with a 4-point increase in overall engagement scores in 2020. 78% of our people believe Ornuia is a place where people from diverse backgrounds can and do succeed. While we have more work to do, we have made a commitment and a solid start to achieving it and it is good to see that recognised.

Our Learnings & Next Steps

While we have seen an improvement in gender diversity of our succession pool over the last four years, we know we have a lot more work to do. The success of the Women in Leadership programme has identified a need to encourage and support female networking groups across the organisation which we're placing an increased emphasis on.

Family supports such as Fertility Treatment & Miscarriage Policies have been welcomed by our employees and we've introduced further programmes, such as New Parents Programmes, to help support new parents as they look to strike a balance between home and work life.

Possible Next Steps For Your Company

Gather talent data on female progression in your business.

Assess the level of gender diversity in your succession pool of senior leaders.

Survey female colleagues to identify what, if any, barriers are present.

Find the diversity champions in your organisation and set up a group, sponsored by the MD/CEO, to identify and implement initiatives to support and develop female talent in your organisation. Depending on the size of your organisation this could range from bespoke programmes to external courses.

Review your recruitment process and ensure candidate shortlists and interview panels are diverse where possible.

Measure and review progress continuously.

Find out more about how to build and execute your D&I strategy by using the AgDif toolkit, to create an environment where your employees can thrive and where you can attract the best talent to your business.

a collaborative initiative to advance and support diversity and inclusion within the Irish Food, Drink and Horticulture industry led by