

UNLOCKING EXCELLENCE: HARNESSING WOMEN'S UNIQUE TRAITS FOR SUCCESS



BENEFITS

- Gi Group Holding has kick-started a wider leadership programme to bring about culture changes across the global organisation. From women in leadership, to wider non-gender leadership and parents at work, its programmes will 'dare to try'.
- Leadership perspectives are based on the richness of each individual, regardless of gender.
- Gi Group Holding will attract the best people for the right leadership roles.
- Ultimately the Group will work towards reducing the mis proportion of women versus men leaders on its strategic committee.



ABOUT GI GROUP HOLDING

Founded in 1998 in Milan, Italy, Gi Group Holding is one of the world's leading providers of services for the evolution of the Labour Market. Through a global staffing and recruitment business

ecosystem that includes eight individual, yet complementary brands – Gi Group Holding, Gi Group, Grafton, Wyser, Gi BPO, Tack TMI, INTOO and Jobtome – the Group offers a 360° suite of staffing and recruitment offerings that generates relevant and impactful solutions. It works to promote a sustainable and enjoyable global market for people, companies, and society, reflecting the ever-changing Labour Market needs.

The company employs over 8,000 staff and operates in 34 countries across the globe providing services to more than 20,000 organisations. Gi Group Holding is the 8th largest European staffing firm, and 15th worldwide (according to Staffing Industry Analysts).

THE CHALLENGE

Despite progressive steps towards equal representation in recent years, only one woman in four is a C-suite leader according to recent research by **McKinsey**. In the recruitment sector where there are typically more women than men in the workplace, Gi Group Holdings' workforce is 70% female, while less than 20% of the strategic committee is female.

Aware of the imbalance of females in leadership positions and how it had reflected in the organisations' culture over the years, Gi Group Holding was looking to address how it could change and evolve to shape the next generation women leaders. This meant looking at how to nurture and develop women leaders from the very beginning, enabling individuals to explore and unlock their own unique capabilities and characteristics.

A key aspect of Gi Group Holdings' work was to gain insight into all people's needs such as the demand for flexibility in career paths and work schedules, regardless of their gender and background.

With Gi Group Holding in the business of providing advice to others as a leading global HR consultancy operating directly in 34 countries, it was more important than ever to the Group to be able to enable this culture of change.

Lilia Borrelli, Global Learning and Development Senior Manager, Gi Group Holding says,

“ I wanted to undertake a programme of work which focused on the power of the individual being able to take steps towards leadership. The initial focus on women is because the environment and the current culture of work has been built through the centuries around a different heritage of values and ways of working, in an environment that has been created by males.”

SOLUTION

Gi Group Holding is committed to investing in its Diversity, Equality and Inclusion policies and practices and partnered with Tack TMI, a leading Learning and Development practice, who supports organisations to improve the representation of women in leadership through its innovative solutions. Tack TMI was keen to use its extensive industry experience to support its parent company's objectives across all brands and developed a pilot programme focussed on building confidence for women in leadership. This would form part of a wider leadership programme that aims to improve leadership capabilities of

“ To constantly innovate and improve, we need to think outside the box. And if that box still sees women in top management as exceptions, then it's time to get out now! I always prefer to think in terms of the uniqueness of the person, and I think that's the way of thinking we have at Gi Group Holding.”

Sara Osti, Global CSR & Compliance Project Manager



managers at Gi Group Holding to impact positively on the business.

As part of the pilot development for Gi Group Holding, Tack TMI provided insight into research it had conducted about women leaders, which provided awareness to what extent women are more likely to demand flexibility in their career choices to fit around specific work/life values. A lack of confidence in achieving the right balance and less senior-level opportunities can also start

to impact women's careers at their second or third stage of career moves.

A pilot programme was set up to provide the tools for women to become aware of their own leadership styles within the working environment. These could then be leveraged to improve communication with different stakeholders in the business, positioning women in a stronger way to move forward in the organisation based on their own potential.

The pilot provided four sessions focusing on different aspects with a combination of theory and practice, group activities and real case scenarios. Critical to the process was providing opportunities for peer-to-peer coaching where participants were asked to share their experiences. Access to peer support, networking and mentoring are the most valued development practices for all leaders with restricted access to such opportunities reported as an underpinning factor in limiting women's access to leadership positions.

Engagement on the pilot was high and demonstrated a strong desire to be part of the programme. 34 participants came from around the business at both global HQ and local level, all of differing seniority levels from manager upwards. Feedback from all participants was positive and will be used to finetune the programme and rollout to a wider audience over the coming year. Lilia adds,

“ This pilot was designed to help women to better position themselves in a stronger way to effectively break the glass ceiling, without the need to adapt legacy-based male-oriented leadership styles. The feedback will help us improve as we extend the range of programmes to support our people, such as parents at work.”

BUSINESS OUTCOMES

The objective of the pilot was to begin taking the steps to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce for all, aiming to bring about culture change and support women to harness their unique strengths and characteristics to achieve their true potential.

The programme uncovered that many of the women had not previously been aware of their own individual leadership styles and as such were keen to improve areas of their business life, such as how they communicated with other stakeholders to become more effective.

The mix of participants from global HQ and from local offices also brought different perspectives to the table, such as how to manage a local hierarchical structure versus how to influence others horizontally at global HQ level. Different country

cultures and organisation maturity levels also had an impact on leadership approaches.

Another important perspective from the women in leadership initiative is about encouraging women to grow their own networks from around the global business to build a peer-to-peer community and offer coaching and support based on their own experiences. Lilia concludes,

“ I see this more as a movement to impact change at a personal and global level, rather than simply a one-off programme. The plan is to include it as a permanent building block as part of our leadership programme in the future, and we'll be able to also measure its impact over the years.”

