



Diversity Works
for London

Women in London's Economy (WiLE) case study



BT – the 'Fresh Air' campaign



More power to you

Global Telecoms business BT employs over 100,000 staff throughout the world, with women making up 22 per cent of the workforce.

Rationale

BT wanted to boost the number of female employees in its general workforce and in the more specialist area of engineering. Its Openreach business has historically been male dominated, with women making up less than two per cent of employees. BT wanted to rectify this situation to ensure future profitability and sustain business growth as well as to show recognition of the importance and influence of its female customers.

The approach

The 'Fresh Air' campaign was developed to support BT's major recruitment drive for Openreach customer service engineers. The campaign challenged the assumption that engineering is a male domain and appealed to women to look beyond traditional 'indoor' workplaces by promoting the idea of working in different locations and in the fresh air. BT advertised on specialist websites and in publications such as climbing magazines, rather than in general interest women's magazines. Existing female engineers were used in the campaign - they talked about the job, its variety and the freedom it afforded them.

BT also reviewed its recruitment process, placing a new emphasis on aptitude, motivation and a positive approach to customer service, rather than previous engineering experience. All line managers were given refresher interview training and asked to challenge previous assumptions.

The company also made sure its recruitment agencies were aware of the new requirements. The traditional engineer's uniform was also redesigned.

Impact

Caroline Waters, BT's People and Policy Director says:

“Achieving a better gender balance is key in improving existing and longer term careers for women, promoting equality and attracting the customer service skills BT needs to help our business thrive.”

BT works with organisations like the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science Engineering and Technology in supporting technical opportunities for women.