

MASON
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Gender & Diversity Aviation Survey

2019



Introduction

The aviation sector is a very competitive market in Ireland and globally. Competition is relentless and intensive in all business streams. Business leaders want to harness the diverse skills to grow and enhance development, including financial performance. Employees are expectant of a dynamic workplace with lots of opportunities and potential for career advancement. A key question for companies highlighted by a McKinsey & Co. report titled “Delivering through Diversity” (Jan. 2018)¹ is; How to use Inclusion & Diversity effectively to support growth and value creation goals?

McKinsey’s research has shown that the relationship between diversity and business performance persists. A culture of inclusion is essential to harness the power of all individuals and ultimately to benefit the organisation both internally and externally. New entrants and graduates seeking to enter the aviation industry and those seeking advancement within it have access to large amounts of publicly available hard data about target employers.

Amongst the business strategy tools used in recruitment and retention campaigns is the promotion of a strong culture embracing ‘diversity and inclusion’. Policies are very useful, however the real issue is whether organisations adhere to and track progress and measure successes. If this doesn’t happen, then organisations are in danger of being categorised as DINOsaurs – diverse in name only.²

An interesting observation from our 2019 survey is the significant percentage of organisations with all-male boards in the aviation sector. This is not unique to aviation, but it does set the tone from the top and is a very visible indicator of the commitment of shareholders, senior management and existing directors to support and promote diversity.

In August 2019, the Irish Times³ reported that 15 listed companies have zero female directors and at least a dozen companies trading on Euronext Dublin are set to fall short of a Government-backed target for zero all-male boards in listed companies by the end of 2019. Boards of large corporates consist of executive and independent non-executive directors and this provides ample scope for recruitment both internally and externally of candidates from diversity groups, which will assist to foster greater inclusion.

About the Survey

This is the fourth year of our survey looking at diversity issues in the aviation industry. As with previous years, we have had an excellent response. We are delighted that the profile of participants this year consists of 36% male participants! I would like to thank each person who participated this year. Your responses and inputs are very important to us and assist us in monitoring trends and changes in attitude within the industry.

The survey was carried out during the Summer of 2019. In the survey, we look at diversity issues such as gender, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation in the aviation industry. The general work force in Ireland is reflective of our society with close to 50% of the population at work identifying as female. A participant in our 2019 Survey commented that ‘gender is part of diversity rather than a standalone category’. Do you agree with this statement?

‘Diversity’ as a movement appears to concentrate on gender in the context of sexual identity and the freedom of self-expression in the work place. This is extremely important to ensure a safe place to work, freedom of association and freedom from forced secrecy.

1. McKinsey & Company, Delivering through Diversity. (Jan 2018) Authors V. Hunt, S. Prince, S. Dixon-Fyle and L. Yee.

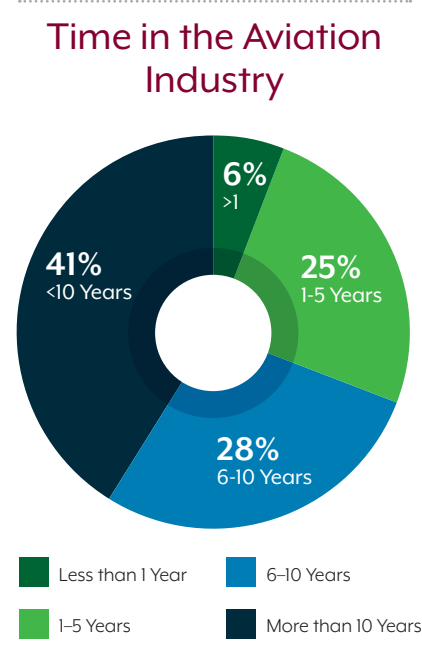
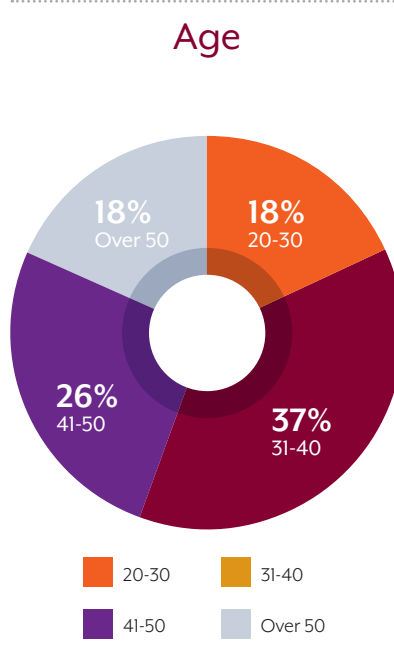
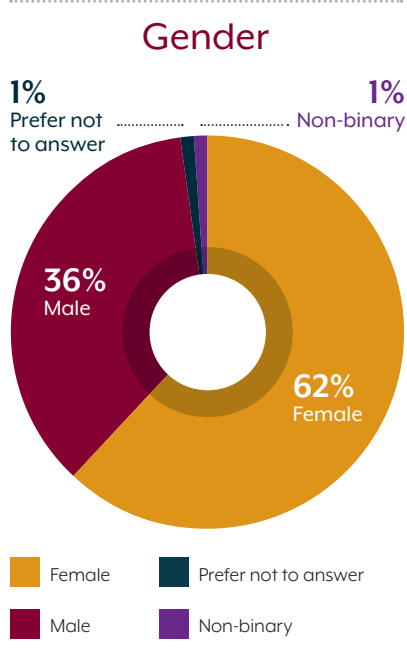
2. Mark Fenton CEO, MASF Consulting.
www.thinkbusiness.ie/articles/inclusion-diversity-work-guide.

3. August 12, 2019 www.irishtimes.com/business/work/irish-listed-companies-set-to-miss-target-for-gender-diversity-on-boards

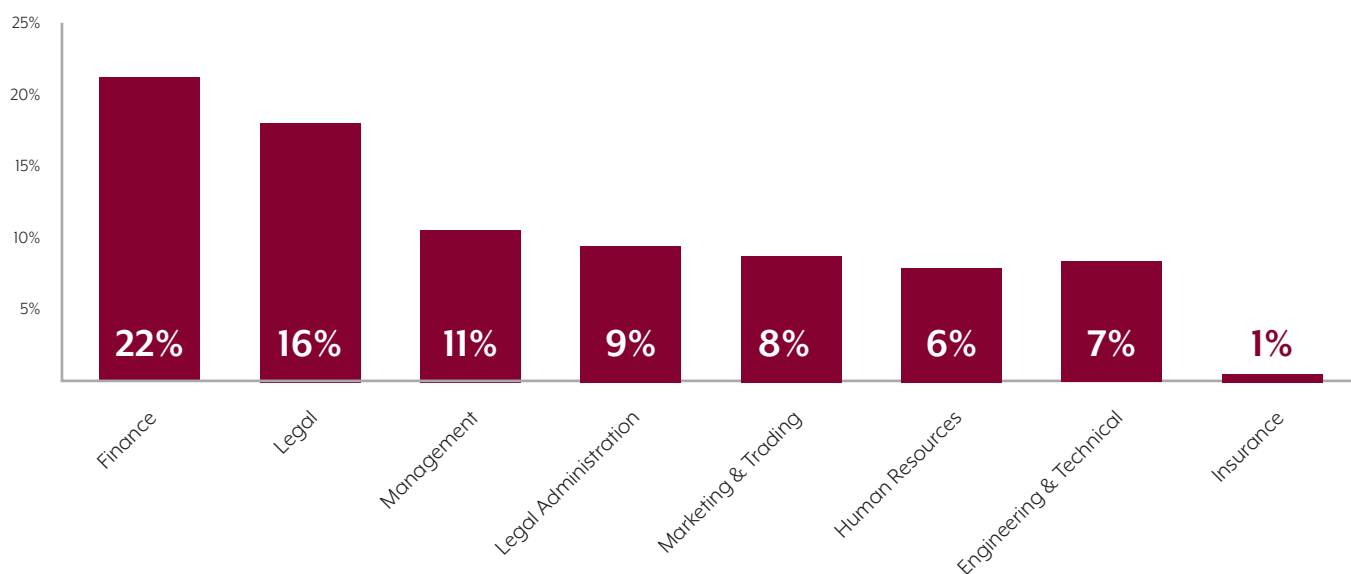
However, there is a risk that by subsuming the 'Gender' issue completely in the diversity movement that progress towards equality in the workplace – pay and promotion – will be marginalised in preference to other worthy social inclusion initiatives.

It is for this reason, amongst others, that we continue to place particular focus and emphasis on gender as a key area for progress and seek to champion for greater gender representation in aviation.

Profile of Participants



Business Area



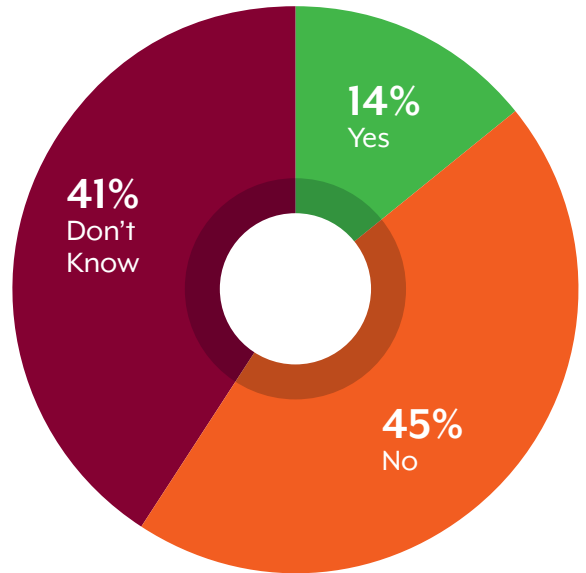
Females Flying High?

Since starting this survey, the percentage of women represented at senior levels has stayed somewhat static. In 2017, 15% of respondents stated that the number of females at senior level was more than 30%. This rose slightly to 16% in 2018 and in 2019 the picture has not improved with still only 16% stating that percentage of females at senior level is 30% or more.

The barriers to women breaking through to senior levels in organisations also have a knock-on effect on the gender pay gap. Reporting on the gender pay gap will be introduced in Ireland soon, with legislation likely to be enacted in Autumn 2019.

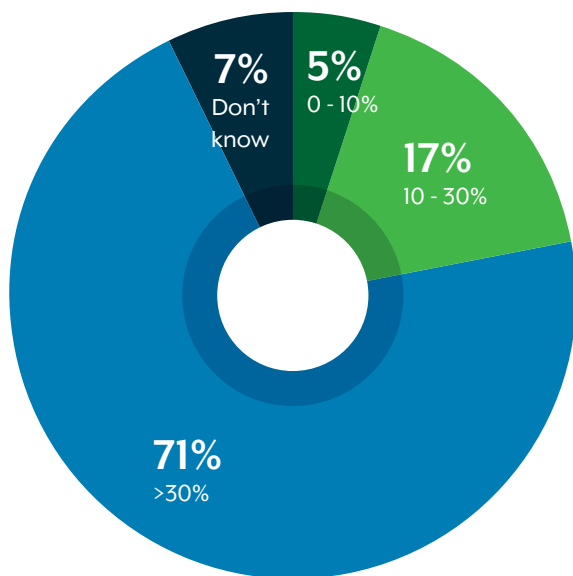
However, even with this new reporting requirement coming down the tracks, many companies in the aviation industry haven't yet carried out an analysis, with only 14% of survey respondents stating that their company has carried out an analysis.

Has your company conducted a gender pay gap analysis?



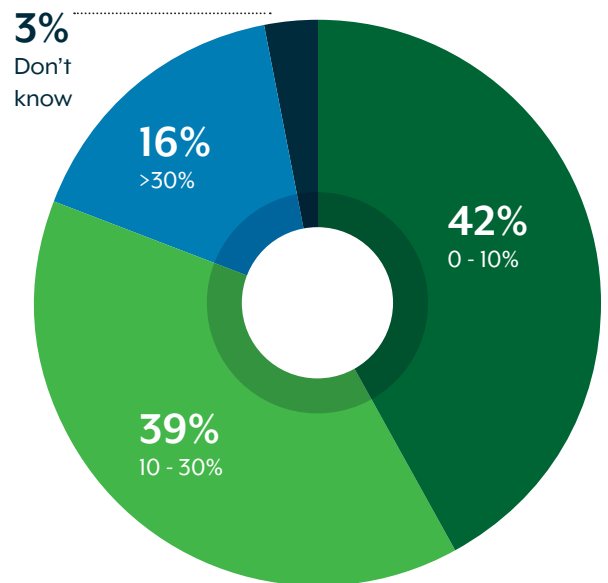
Yes No Don't know

Percentage of employees who identify as female working for your current employer



0 - 10% 10 - 30% More than 30% Don't know

Percentage of employees who identify as female at C-suite level, Director or Head of Function positions



0 - 10% 10 - 30% More than 30% Don't know

Diversity

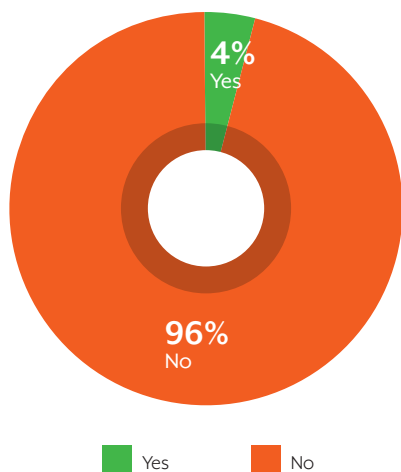
The global nature of the aviation industry makes diversity an even more critical issue. Much research has shown that diversity helps businesses become more effective and more profitable.

In 2018, 5% of those surveyed stated that their manager was a member of a minority group. In 2019, that has stayed more or less the same at 4%.

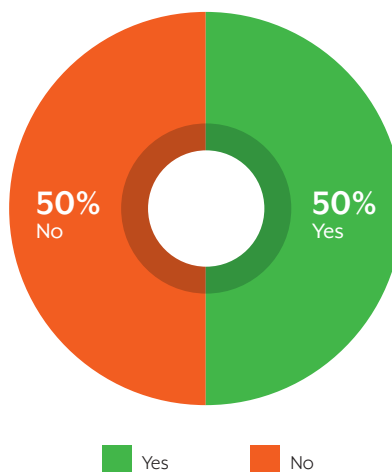
There is a slight uptick in those surveyed in 2019 who state they are from a minority group compared to 2018, with the percentage of respondents stating they are LGBTQI increasing from 1% to 5%, economically disadvantaged from 1% to 3% and a religious minority group from 3% to 4%.

In terms of company-wide diversity committees, there is an equal split – 50% of respondents state that they have a committee, and 50% state that they don't. The benefits of organisations having diversity committees can include increased staff engagement and increased awareness of the importance of diversity at a team and management level. The majority of those surveyed, both male and female, who don't have a committee feel their organisation would benefit from one.

Is your manager a member of a minority group?

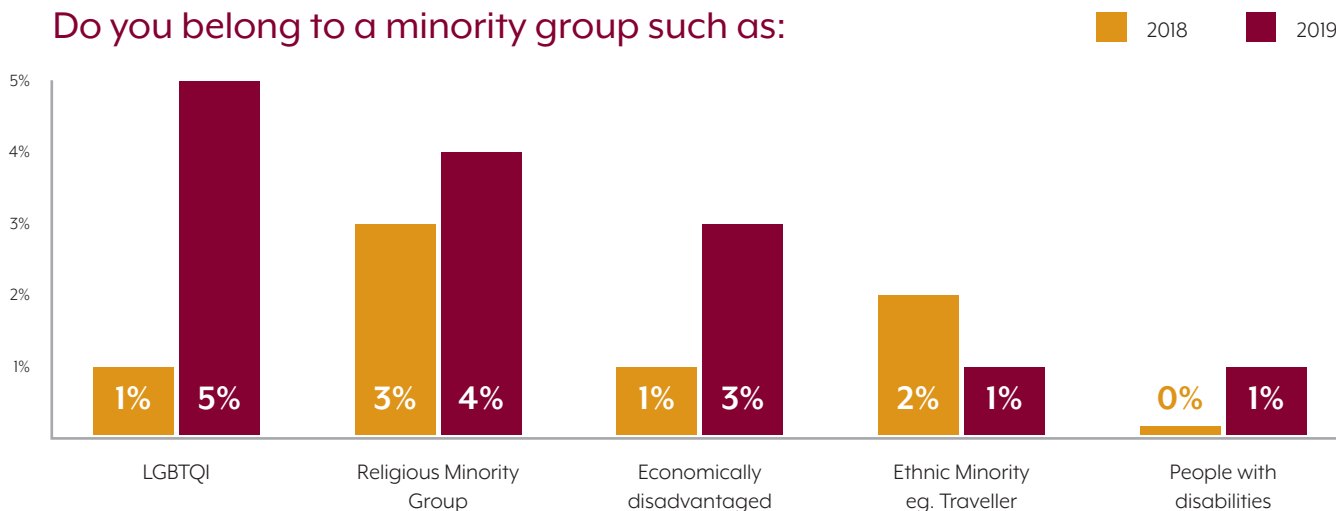


Does your company have a Gender & Diversity Committee?



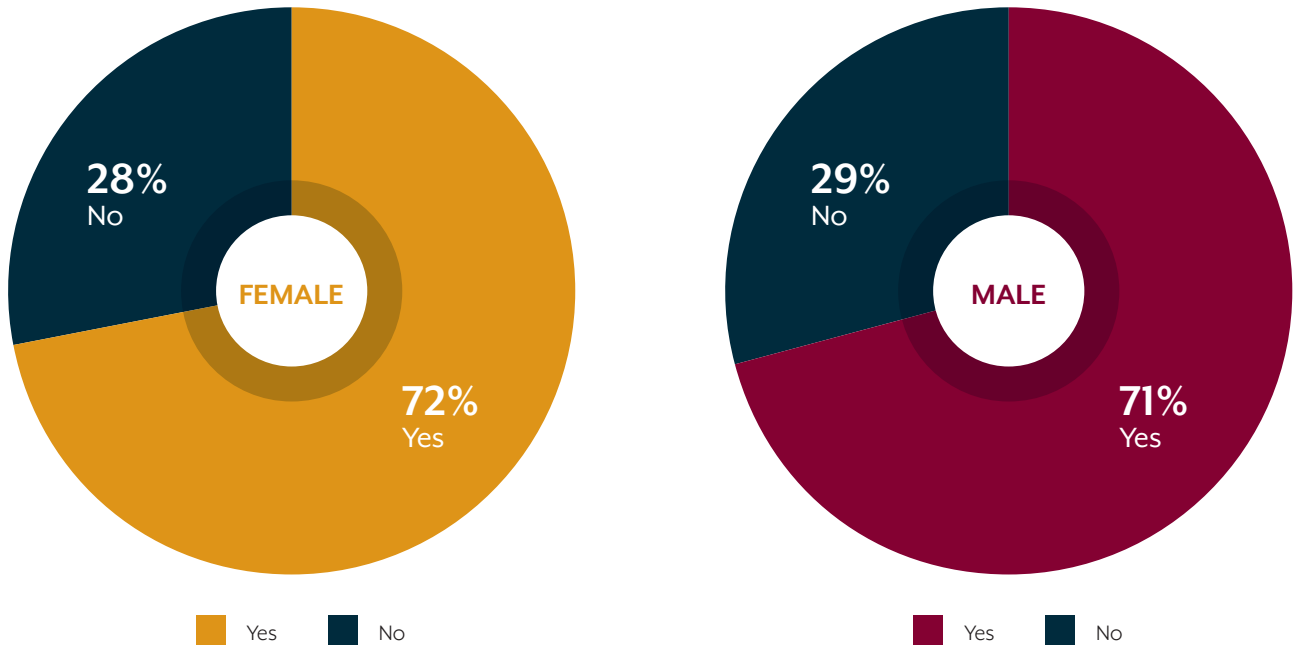
“Given the global nature of aviation, diversity is even more relevant”

Do you belong to a minority group such as:

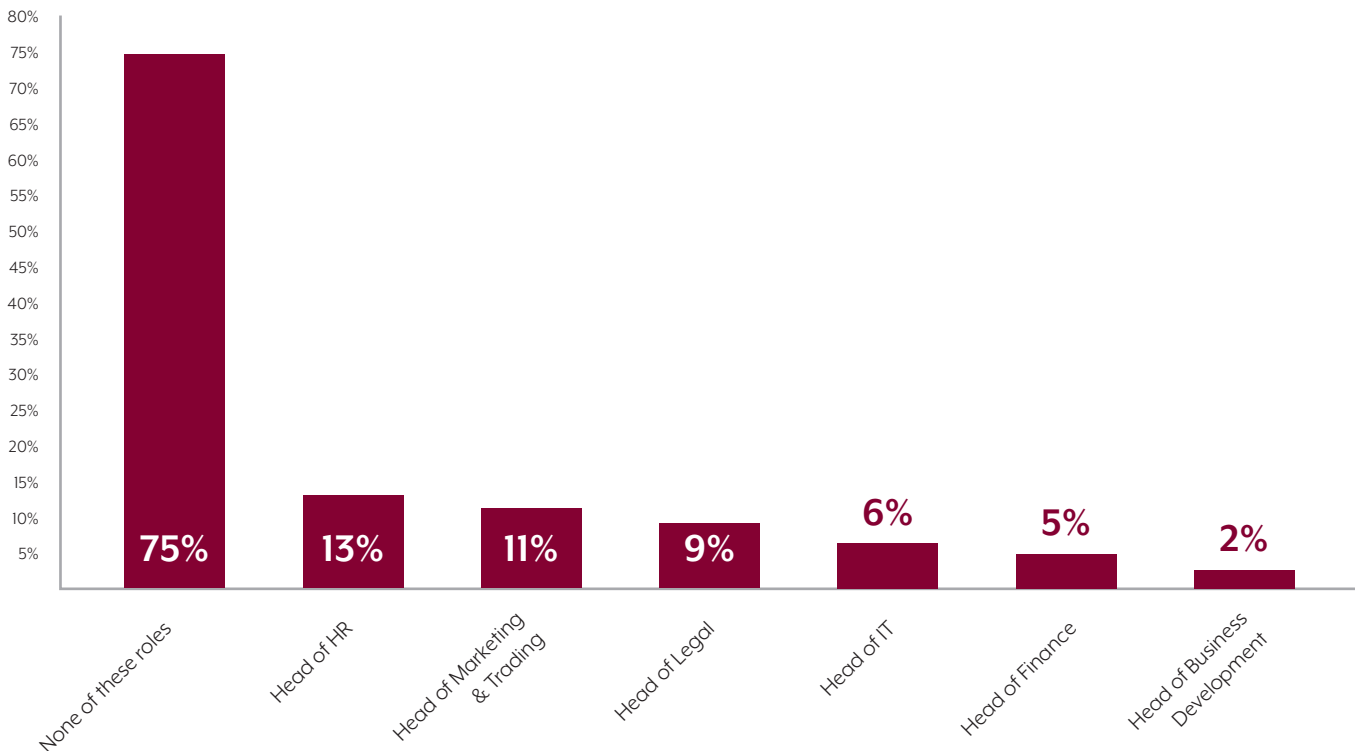


We reviewed the responses received from men and women. There was marginal difference in responses and a general consensus amongst all participants that businesses would benefit from a gender & diversity committee.

Do you think your organisation would benefit from a Gender & Diversity committee?



Are any of the following senior positions held by individuals from minority groups?



Board Level Diversity

According to Mason Hayes & Curran's 2018 AGM Season Report, 19% of board seats on Irish listed PLCs are held by female directors, which is some way short of the recommended 30%. The issue of board diversity has been high on the news agenda in recent years, and there are undoubted benefits for organisations in having diverse voices at board level. In the Institute of Directors in Ireland's 2019 Diversity in the Boardroom report,⁴ 83% of respondents agree that board diversity leads to enhanced board effectiveness and 77% agree that it leads to enhanced company performance.

In our survey, 28% of participants reported that their companies have an all-male board of directors and 72% of participants reported a gender mix at board level. Single gender boards is fast becoming taboo for boards of companies involved in international business, and such boards will need to put a plan in place to appoint female directors from either within their business or external independent appointees.



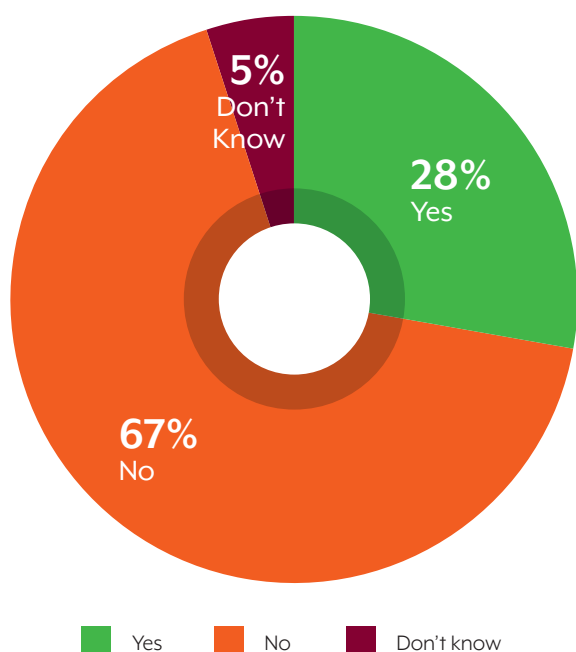
"It's often difficult for women's opinions to be heard, perhaps due to aviation technical knowledge historically being the expertise of male colleagues."

"Diversity is a hard sell to a C suite filled with older white males."

"Promotion if it ever happens seems to be a hard slog unless you are 'one of the boys'."

"Senior men are afraid of senior women in the board room unless they are parachuted in from another industry."

Do you have an all-male board of directors?



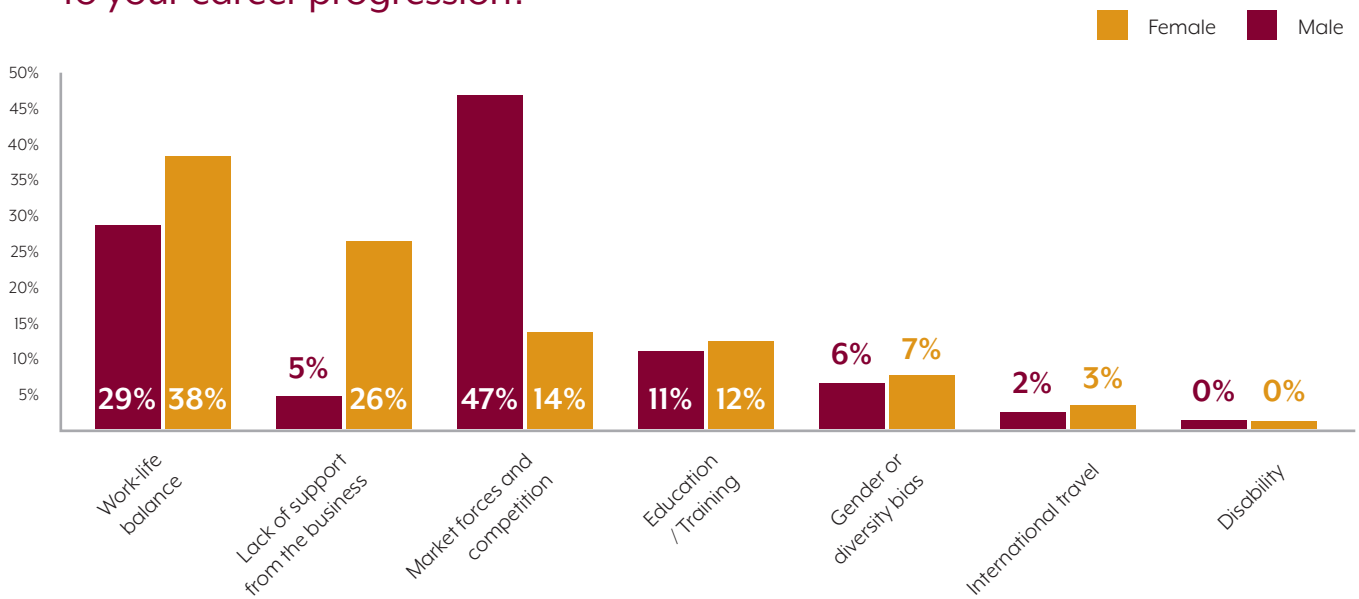
4. www.iodireland.ie/news-events/news/new-iod-diversity-boardroom-report-2019

Career Progression

As with the 2018 survey, in 2019 the majority of respondents identified work-life balance as the single biggest challenge to their career progression. However, when we look at the male/female responses to this question, a difference emerges. For female respondents, work-life balance is the biggest challenge, while for men it is market forces and competition.

“Aviation is very male dominated, there are opportunities for females but you have to push yourself forward and not stand on the sidelines.”

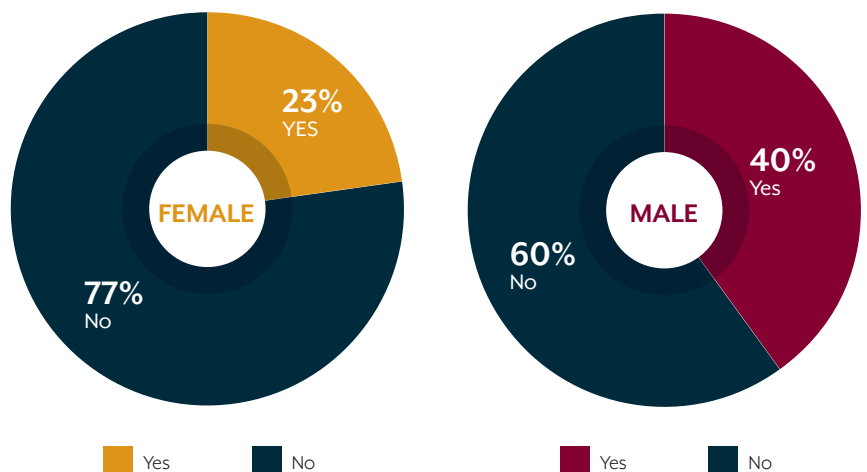
What is the single biggest challenge to your career progression?



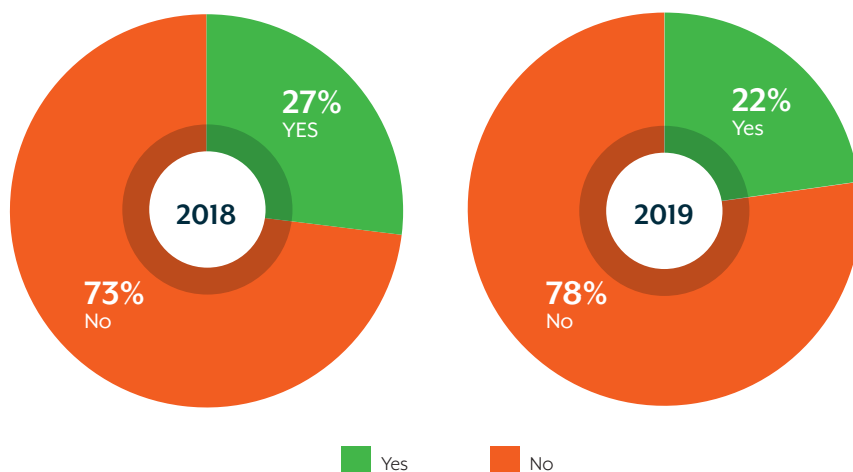
In 2018, 36% of respondents stated that the promotion track in their organisation was clear and transparent. In 2019, when we look at the responses based on gender, we see another marked difference.

40% of male respondents believe the promotion track within their company is clear compared to 23% of women. This perhaps points to a need for improved internal communications around advancement and promotion to all staff, particularly to women.

Is the promotion track clear and transparent in your current employer?



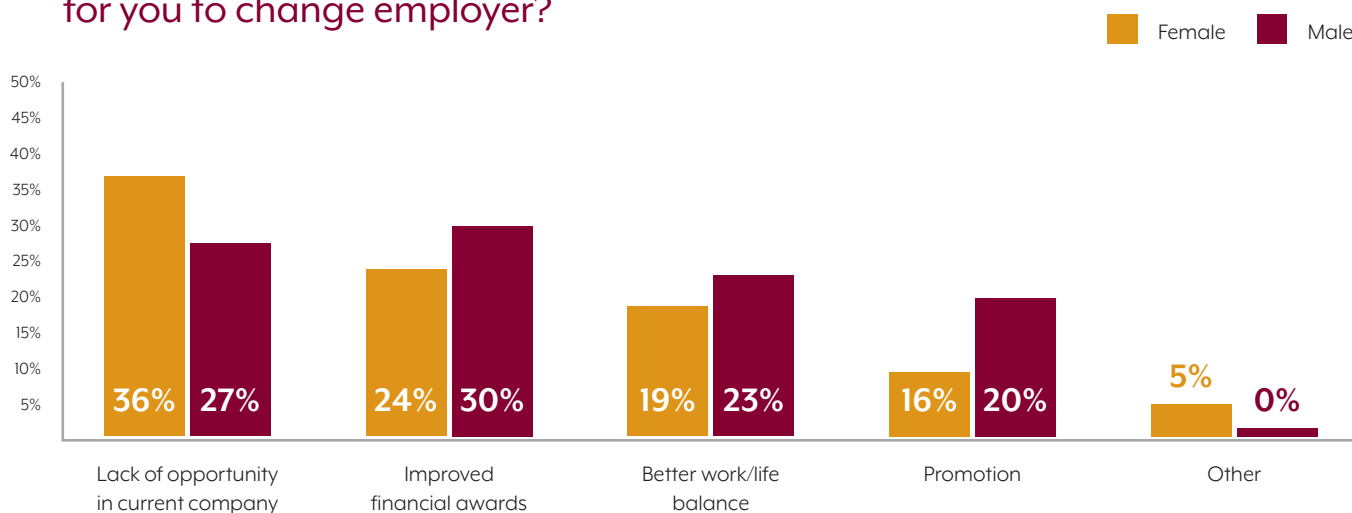
Do you believe your promotion prospects have been impeded due to your cultural background, disability, family situation, gender, religion or sexual orientation?



This year, a small but significant minority of 22% stated that they believe their promotion prospects have been impeded due to their cultural background, disability, family situation, gender, religion or sexual orientation, which is roughly in line with the results of the 2018 survey.

In terms of the reasons employees might leave their current employer, we can also observe a difference between the male and female respondents. The majority of females surveyed state that their main reason for leaving their employer would be a lack of opportunity for advancement in their current company. For male respondents, the main reason would be the prospect of improved financial rewards.

What would be the main reason for you to change employer?



“Some jurisdictions do not recognise same sex marriages/relationships and it is preventing same sex couples from relocating to Asia as they cannot get a dependent visa for the accompanying spouse for example.”

“Personal experience of not offering flexible working options mitigates against more females progressing in the aviation industry.”

Conclusion

McKinsey's 2018 "Delivering through Diversity" report highlights that progress has been slow. Between 2015 and 2018 research concluded that the average gender representation on executive teams improved by only 2% (up to 14%) and ethnic and cultural diversity up by 1% to 13%. Similar trends appear in our 2019 survey results. Businesses function through human engagement and productivity, and humans are responsible for the pace and speed of change.

The challenge remains to embed a culture of equality and inclusion within organisations so that changes in the economic cycle, leadership change and staff turnaround do not cause it to fade away. Education and training has a role to play in achieving diversity in the form of technical legal training on the extensive body of laws, regulations, employee rights and redress procedures as well as the complex and intangible area of skills training and the issue of bias or unconscious bias as a factor impeding progress in area of inclusion & diversity.

Unconscious and unintentional bias due to the influence of social networks, education or business training may be part of the issue and by assisting organisations to identify bias it should be part of the solution. Unconscious bias training and testing is now often included in courses conducted in companies as a means to highlight issues and address lack of progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all participants to advocate for diversity and inclusion in their employment; to seek out information on new roles and promotion prospects; and to lobby and advocate internally through committees and other groups for greater levels of engagement and diversity starting at the top in the board room. Achieving and then maintaining equality remains a work in progress.

Author

[Christine O'Donovan](#)



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Chambers & Partners, 2019

Christine O'Donovan



Christine is celebrated for her "precise knowledge of the aircraft industry."

Legal 500, 2018

Christine O'Donovan



Christine has been listed as an expert in the area of Aviation in Who's Who Legal: Aviation 2018.

Who's Who Legal: 2018

Christine O'Donovan



"Authoritative and knowledgeable" Commentators say "she is renowned for a very pragmatic and commercial view of transactions."

Chambers Europe, 2018

Our Aviation Team



"They are flexible, always readily available and come back quickly."

Chambers & Partners, 2017

Our Asset Finance Team



"The level of service you get is excellent."

Chambers & Partners, 2017

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