



RetailWeek

November 2016

BE INSPIRED



Targeting the gender gap

What retailers are doing to tackle gender diversity at the top

- **Who inspires you?** Female retail leaders name their role models
- **Turning words into actions** How to bring about real change in retail boardrooms

CONTENTS

4 Targeting the gender gap
What UK retailers are doing to plug the gender gap in the boardroom

8 Who inspires you?
Female retail leaders tell us who inspired them to reach for the top

10 Turning words into actions
We look at how women could be better represented in the upper echelons of the retail world

COVER IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK



Director of Commercial Content Charlotte Hardie
Commercial Editor Laura Heywood
Content Marketing Editor Victoria McDermott
Head of Content Management Tracey Gardner
Commercial Production Editor Emily Kearns
Contributors Gemma Goldfingle, Kate Harkus
Group Commercial Director Rachel Martin (020 3033 2868)
Account Director Julia Jones Collins (020 3033 2952)
Managing Director, Retail Chris Brook-Carter

© Retail Week
All material is strictly copyright and all rights were reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without the written permission of Retail Week is strictly forbidden. The greatest care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of information in this magazine at the time of going to press, but we accept no responsibility for omissions or errors. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of Retail Week.

Retail Week Be Inspired is printed by Headley Brothers Ltd, Ashford, Kent

Addressing boardroom diversity



Only eight months after the launch of Be Inspired, *Retail Week* has been overwhelmed by the positive response throughout the sector. More than 40 senior leaders – women and men – from the biggest names in UK retail have pledged their support as ambassadors. Thousands have watched our launch documentary and read and tweeted about our features, interviews and blogs. Hundreds of aspiring future female leaders have signed up to our series of mentoring breakfast sessions hosted by our ambassadors. And seven retailers – at the time of going to print Co-op, Debenhams, Dunelm, House of Fraser, New Look, O2 and Tesco – have pledged their support as retail partners.

Be Inspired is the widest-reaching campaign that *Retail Week* has ever launched and we hope its success even this early on is because of its focus on people. Debenhams chairman Sir Ian Cheshire, who took part in the filming of our second Be Inspired documentary, which launched this week, believes addressing the problem of a lack of boardroom diversity must lie in the creation of role models and the implementation of active mentoring. This is exactly what Be Inspired always set out to achieve. This is not a campaign that wants simply to talk about the issue of there not being enough female leaders in retail. It's a campaign that wants to celebrate the stories of those who have made it to the top in order to help inspire others – whether they are at the start of their career or on the cusp of reaching the c-suite themselves – to follow that path.

One of our ambassadors, Jaeger chief information officer Cathy McCabe, says a female Accenture consultant taught her “to question, to challenge and to be curious and to keep learning all the time”. This epitomises what we aim to instil in our mentoring sessions – which currently run every two months – and bring together our ambassadors with the next generation of female leaders. Because, as the feature on page 8 exemplifies, everyone needs inspiration to fulfil their career ambitions.

We want this campaign to build and build, and so finally a huge thank you must go to our platinum partner eCommera and our retail partners backing the campaign. With the industry's support we hope that in years to come the issue of boardroom diversity won't exist. So after a phenomenal few months, here's to the future success of Be Inspired and being able to build on the already substantial achievements within its first year.

Charlotte Hardie, Director of Commercial Content

For more information, visit retail-week.com/beinspiredTo register an interest in our mentoring sessions, email hannah.burnel@emap.com

PLATINUM PARTNER



SUPPORTED BY



RETAIL PARTNERS



DEBENHAMS

HOUSE OF FRASER
SINCE 1849

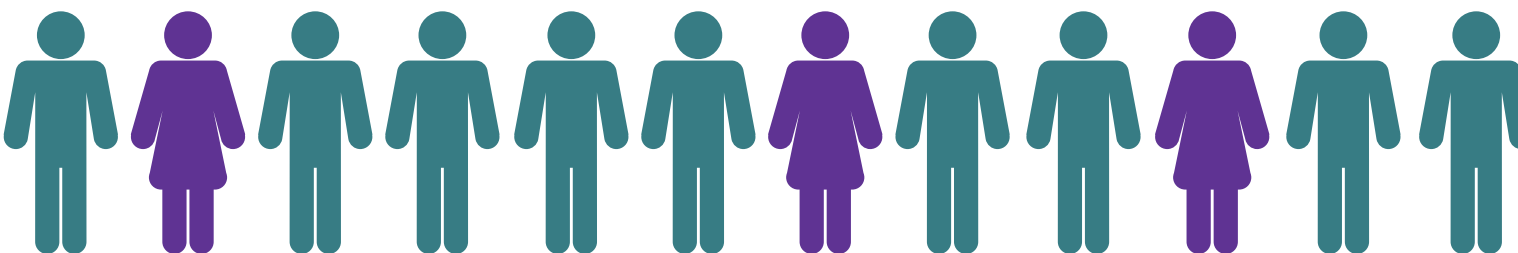
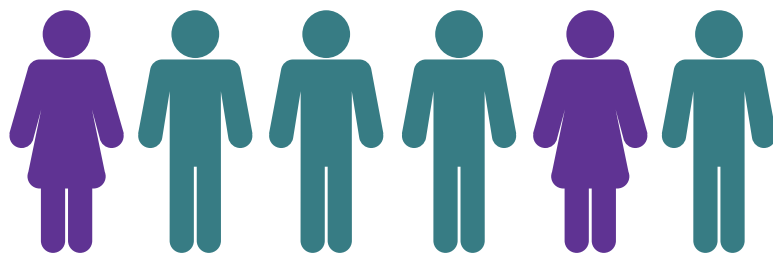
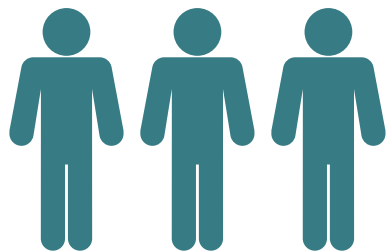
NEW LOOK



DIVERSITY

Retail Week's Be Inspired campaign carried out a Gender Diversity Monitor to find out how and where females are employed in the UK's largest retailers and what those retailers are doing to plug the gender gap at the top. **Gemma Goldfingle** reports

Closing the r



It is common knowledge that women are in the minority in the retail boardroom, however, *Retail Week* and management consultancy Elixirr decided to take a closer look at some of the UK's biggest retailers to determine the scale of the problem.

Across the top 50 UK retailers, 28% of board directors are women. Although this exceeds the voluntary 25% by 2015 target set by Lord Mervyn Davies in his 2011 report *Women on Boards*, if non-executive directors are stripped out, this number drops to 18%. Women also account for less than a quarter – 23% – of top retailers' operating boards.

Elixirr (elixirr.com) carried out a Gender Diversity Monitor as part of the Be Inspired campaign, surveying a selection of the top 20 retailers, which employ more than 750,000 people, to understand the balance of women and men throughout their businesses at all levels.

The results show that the glass ceiling is much lower at head office manager level than the boardroom. Despite women accounting

for 53% of head office staff, just 38% of senior managers are female. The situation is graver in stores, where women account for 59% of staff but 21% of regional store director roles.

Chris Shaw, consultant at Elixirr, points out that the numbers are more positive at head offices as HR initiatives seem to be implemented more effectively in that environment.

"Head offices are good at putting in place mentoring schemes. That doesn't seem to drive down into stores," he says.

Natasha Adams, UK people director at Tesco – the UK's largest retail employer – says the grocer has worked hard to build a culture where inclusion is in everything it does.

"It's really important we look at ways to disrupt traditional decision-making and ensure we look at all the options so we get more women into the leadership pipeline, especially in roles where men have traditionally dominated, like trading and commercial roles for instance," she says.

"A good example of this is our recent Store Director Academy, where we fast-tracked high-potential women."

Adams also points to the Developing Female Leaders training and development programme it carried out for store staff, which helped increase the amount of women in store director roles by 8%.

Shaw points out that the on-the-road lifestyle of a stores director can be off-putting to some women, particularly those who have children.

He says: "It's often a struggle to get women to apply for these roles. It's a lot of time on the road and many women don't want to have that kind of lifestyle."

The inflexibility of some workplaces and practices impacts workers across all parts of retail, particularly women with families. Many

etail gender gap



We believe that developing a diverse talent pipeline is the most effective way of tackling gender diversity

NATASHA ADAMS, TESCO

firms have made moves to make working life easier and all of the top 20 retailers surveyed offer flexible working.

Adams says Tesco has a number of stores run by job sharers that are very successful.

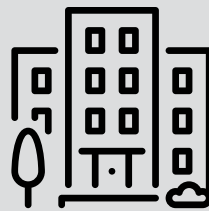
Dixons Carphone director of talent and development Caroline Angell says: “Retail by nature must be flexible, adapting to changing customer needs.

“Flexible working is therefore a hugely important and a valuable way to ensure we are best placed to serve our customers all of the time. It also ensures our employees are engaged and feel valued, which we believe ultimately improves the customer journey across all channels,” she says.

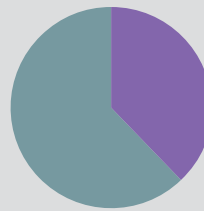
Debenhams introduced flexible working at its head office 15 years ago and group trading director Suzanne Harlow says it has helped women progress at the department store.

“We think it’s one of the fundamental reasons for our balanced gender mix at ↘

Women at senior levels by functional area

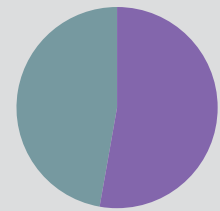


Head office



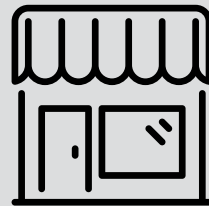
38%

Female senior managers

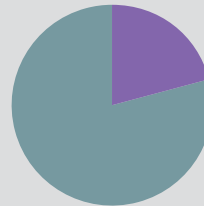


53%

Total women in HQ

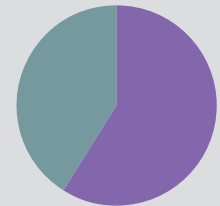


Stores



21%

Female regional directors

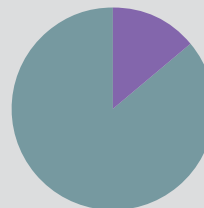


59%

Total women in store

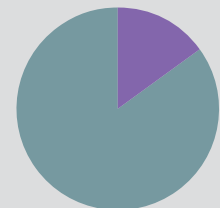


Distribution centres



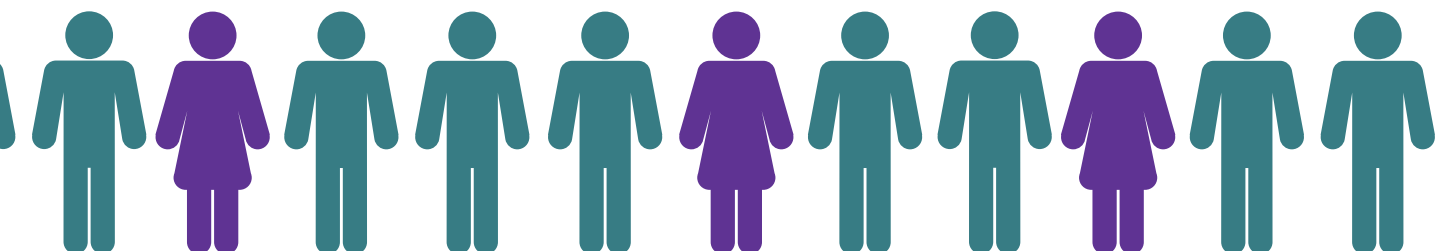
14%

Female DC managers



15%

Total women in DCs



senior management levels and why more than 50% of our top 120 [executives] are women,” she says. “We have found that if women are given support and flexibility to manage a family as they are developing their careers, they are less likely to feel that they need to choose one over another.”

Dixons Carphone has a number of senior staff who work flexibly or part time, including its UK and Ireland chief executive Katie Bickerstaffe, and head of corporate social media Mark Webb, who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2008. Webb, who was formerly Dixons Carphone’s head of media relations, moved to a four-day-a-week role, which enables him to manage his chronic illness while still working.

The Gender Diversity Monitor shows that 80% of employees who opt to take up flexible working are women but, worryingly, the more senior the level the fewer people take it up.

Who is accountable?

Gender diversity is recognised as critical in modern business, which is why leaders from the UK’s largest retailers including Tesco, Asda, Kingfisher and John Lewis, are backing *Retail Week’s* Be Inspired campaign.

Most agree that gender diversity needs to be driven from the very top of each and every organisation. However, only one retailer surveyed had someone on its operating board accountable for this.

Should more senior executives take accountability for gender diversity? “It has to be led from the very top, but it is everyone’s job to build a culture of inclusion, one where individuals can be themselves, live their lives and reach their full potential,” says Adams.

“Diversity and inclusion is everyone’s accountability at Tesco, driven by the Tesco executive [team] as a whole.”

Dixons Carphone takes a similar approach. “We believe that the full executive board should take accountability for the promotion and maintenance of gender diversity within our business, as they do with all other talent initiatives that we operate,” says Angell.

Monitoring diversity performance

What gets measured, gets done, so the old adage goes. If true, that puts retail in good stead to tackle the female talent gap at the top

Snapshots into gender diversity



Women represent **56%** of the population across retail but only **47%** of promotions across the industry were women over the past 12 months.



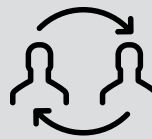
All respondents offer flexible or part-time working. However, the more senior the level, the fewer people take it up. Of those who do take up flexible or part-time working, **about 80% are women.**



Only one of the respondents has an operating board executive who is accountable for gender diversity in their company.



All respondents report on gender diversity metrics to management executives on either a quarterly or annual basis.



The majority of retailers who responded offer sponsorship and mentoring programmes, and diversity and women’s networks. However, there are mixed perspectives of whether these are as effective as they could be.

of the industry. All retailers surveyed for the Gender Diversity Monitor said they reported back on gender diversity metrics to their senior management teams.

“As an industry, retailers measure lots of things – sales, footfall, conversion,” says Karina van den Oever, principal at Elixirr. “Surely this is one people metric that ought to be included as a priority. The companies that do measure diversity, are the same companies that are building momentum in addressing diversity and inclusivity, which are the same companies that want to get closer in touch with their customers who are predominantly female.”

Given that such information is collated and analysed inside boardrooms, would the sector benefit from an industry-wide benchmark to share best practice in this area?

Tesco’s Adams believes so. “We believe that the focus must remain firmly on understanding what it takes to attract, develop and retain women in senior positions and sharing best practice across the industry will be important for success.

“We believe that developing a diverse talent pipeline is the most effective way of tackling gender diversity and we are keen to work as an industry to achieve this.”

All in retail want to close the gender gap at the top of their organisations. To do so we have to come together, track our progress and share our success stories. Be Inspired is the vehicle to do this. To get involved email victoria.mcdermott@emap.com.



Who inspires you?

The Be Inspired campaign centres on putting aspiring female talent in touch with role models to encourage them to achieve their dreams of leadership in the retail sector. **Victoria McDermott** finds out who inspired those who have already made it to the top



Catriona Marshall, chief executive, Hobbycraft

"I find Helen Dickinson, chief executive of the British Retail Consortium, to be a true inspiration to a generation of retailers, both male and female. She was courageous to take a big career change into a demanding and high-profile role at the BRC.

"She has all the demands of building and running the BRC as an organisation, as well as recruiting, satisfying and representing the

membership. She balances both extremely well. On a daily basis she deals with a wide variety of stakeholders including business leaders, politicians and journalists.

"Her style is open, honest and fair. She's a good listener and always has time to invest in people and relationships. She's a great example of someone with talent and energy, who's investing in the greater good of our industry."



Wendy Hallett, chief executive, Hallett Retail

"There are a number of women in the industry who continue to inspire me. I love the fact that women like Angela Spindler, Liz Evans, Meg Lustman and Beth Butterwick have the confidence to step into chief executive roles. And there are fantastic women like Chrissie Rucker, Amanda Wakeley and Cath Kidston, who have built amazing businesses.

"But when I reflect on my life, there is one very special woman who has been an inspiration for the whole of my life and well beyond hers. My grandma was one of the strongest women I have ever met.

"She was a nurse in the war, which she had to give up when she married, and had three children to look after – a role she willingly took on again when my mum, her daughter, died, leaving three young children.

"She showed a steely resilience against adversity that helped me cope with the challenges life throws at you. She taught me that it is not about the cards that are dealt, but how you deal with those cards."



Susan Aubrey-Cound, founder, Olive Aubrey shoes

"My inspiration was a lady called Barbara Beckett, the marketing director at BAA in the 1990s.

"She led by example to be brave strategically, to have the courage in your convictions and to 'tell a story' to engage colleagues – and she was as supportive of the women in

her team as she was the men. Engendering huge loyalty, she was intellectually brilliant, invariably hilarious and as on-point with the detail as she was with transformational strategy – a rare thing.

"If the going gets tough, I still think of Barbara." ↘

ROLE MODELS



Paula Nickolds, incoming managing director, John Lewis

"I am privileged to have come into contact with a large variety of inspirational people, both in my professional and my personal life.

"My mother, Sheila, died very recently and I have had even more cause than ever to reflect on her particular contribution. She was, of course, very influential in my life as my mum.

"She strongly believed in bringing up her three daughters to be bold and ambitious in achieving whatever it was that they aspired to in life; giving us confidence, allowing us to believe that anything was possible and celebrating our different strengths. She truly was an extraordinary woman and her legacy lives on in her daughters and indeed many hundreds of others."

Cathy McCabe, chief information officer, Jaeger

"The following people have inspired me throughout my career:

- My very first boss when I was a management trainee – Carol Hubbard at WHSmith, who demonstrated a purist love of the customer and high standards of service at all times.
- Geraldine Cox, an amazing consultant at Andersen Consulting [now Accenture] consultant, who taught me to question, to challenge, to be curious and to keep learning all the time.
- Angela Ahrendts, former Burberry chief executive officer, now senior vice-president of retail at Apple – an amazingly sharp, astute, tough woman, yet at the same time her leadership style remained very warm, approachable and personable."



Cat Hambleton-Gray, head of people – retail, Halfords

"Martyn Phillips, now chief executive of Welsh Rugby, was human resources director at B&Q for several years (and my boss for some of those years) and then eventually became chief executive. He possessed some great leadership qualities – one of which was being very down to earth and having genuine concern for colleagues.

"He once said, 'your customers will tell you

what to do, your colleagues will tell you how'. This is so true. They have all the answers.

"Yet many businesses' boards spend hours locked in offices and meetings trying to define strategies and plans without really finding out or seeking to understand what's really important to customers and colleagues. Listening to them is critical if your business is to be successful."

Annabel Thorburn, director of retail services, eCommera

"I don't have any one person as I have drawn from a number of sources over my career. But what's consistent is that it is the people I've known personally, rather than public figures, who inspire me.

"On a day-to-day basis I don't think of it as inspiration, more that I'm always trying to learn from others who excel in particular things, or manage to deal with tricky situations in a way that I wish I could.

"One of these is a manager I had for many years, now more of a mentor, who was brilliant at stretching people but in a way that empowered me and gave me confidence. He would always ask me

how I would do things and what I thought, rather than telling me the answer, despite having far more experience.

"This behaviour in large meetings with other senior executives is especially powerful. It says to everyone, 'stop and listen to this person who I trust', despite that person being by far the most junior in the room.

"Too many execs 'tell' the answer without listening. People who bring the best out in others, and have earned rather than assumed the trust and respect of their teams, are those who I aspire to be like."

Fiona Lambert, former vice-president for own-brand design and development, Asda

George at Asda founder George Davies was my inspiration for his entrepreneurial vision, his focus on delivering new, great quality products and experiences that put the customer at their heart. And his giving young people, like I was, a chance to succeed."

Angela Spindler, chief executive, N Brown

"I am constantly inspired by new people I meet, but typically it's those who triumph through adversity or start with nothing and create something amazing, such as Lord Alliance of Manchester, the founder and main investor in N Brown.

"His story of starting as a penniless immigrant and becoming a force in British business and

generous philanthropist is amazing. He stands out from the crowd because of his resilience, hard work and determination and embodies the principle of never, ever giving up.

"JK Rowling is also an inspiration. Her story is very different, but inspiring for similar reasons, and her talent and creativity is truly inspiring."



Demand is growing for better representation of women in retail's upper echelons, but bringing about real change is easier said than done. **Gemma Goldfingle** looks at some different approaches



Turning words into

ACTIONS

Even in an industry that largely targets female customers retailers are all too aware that there is a lack of women in the boardroom.

Women make up 60% of retail's workforce, yet just 20% of executive teams and 10% of executive boards are female.

The fact that so many of the UK's largest retailers, from Tesco and Dixons Carphone to Marks & Spencer, have thrown their weight behind *Retail Week's* Be Inspired campaign, demonstrates there is a real desire to change these worrying statistics. However, affecting real change is easier said than done.

Where does the pipeline stop?

People and service director at Dunelm Amanda Cox says it is important to identify where in a business the female talent pipeline



If it seems to stop at store manager level, it's important to identify that and try to work out why

AMANDA COX, DUNELM

dries up in order to tackle the problem. "If it seems to stop at store manager level, it's important to identify that and try to work out why. It could be down to a lack of role models at department manager level or a lack of flexibility," she says.

In many cases, that pipeline comes to a halt not at a specific job role, but at a stage of life – when women opt to start a family.

The 30% Club, an organisation that aims to get a minimum of 30% women on FTSE 100 company boards, has identified the 'danger zone' where a woman's career trajectory slows as being between the ages of 28 and 38. This is a period when many women take time out of work to have children and when many men's careers propel.

Cox says it's important to make sure your company is supportive during this ↘

period by trying to understand what each individual wants.

Women's needs can differ wildly, says Cox, but mentors can play a vital role in determining them. "It's dangerous to make assumptions. Each person should be treated as an individual," she adds.

"Some women may choose to take a step back when they've just had children. That's fine, but we shouldn't forget where they are. In a couple of years, they might decide they want to step it up again. We need to make sure we support them and remember the trajectory they were on," she says.

Employers should provide options such as flexible working and sabbaticals to work around the needs of new mothers.

Fashion retailer White Stuff is investing in flexible working to retain its best talent. Employees are encouraged to challenge the number of meetings they have to attend, and the business has invested in IT to provide remote access to data to help make working from home a reality.

Dianah Worman, associate adviser for diversity and inclusion at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and co-director at consultancy Inclusive Talent, argues that taking time out to look after children can help build new skills that can benefit the business.

"They can go off and learn new skills and strengths. Give them that room to do that and let them know you value them," she says.

Training, development and mentoring

With training and development important for all talent, Cox believes companies should



It is imperative that every colleague works to their full potential

RICHARD PENNYCOOK,
CO-OPERATIVE GROUP

"layer on" specific training and informal programmes for women.

Dentsu Aegis Network, which owns eCommera – Be Inspired's platinum sponsor – introduced its Women in Leadership programme last year to help foster a culture where women can become leaders on their own terms.

Tracy De Groose, chief executive of Dentsu Aegis UK & Ireland, says the programme is already having a positive impact on female career progression.

"No single strategy will fix the challenge, but one of the ways we have addressed this is by

setting up a development programme specifically designed to help our women accelerate their careers and achieve their potential. The results speak for themselves and several are now taking on bigger roles including moves into managing director positions," she says.

Cox says Dunelm has introduced mentoring, networking events and informal guidance sessions to help female employees build confidence, which she says can be a real barrier for some to progress to the next level.

Beth Butterwick, chief executive of Karen Millen, says mentoring helped her to achieve her own success.

Getting buy-in from those at the top

To bring about real change in an organisation, gender diversity needs to be implemented from the very top. "The start point for all is top down, because in retail it is at the top that women are under-represented. In the 'middle' it tends to be a good balance," says Annabel Thorburn, director of retail services at eCommera.

This is why *Retail Week's* Be Inspired campaign has attracted supporters at the helm of the biggest UK retailers, both female and male.

Retailers including the Co-operative Group chief executive Richard Pennycook, Tesco UK chief executive Matt Davies and Marks & Spencer chief executive Steve Rowe, have thrown their weight behind the campaign.

However, this support isn't a cursory nod or a PR opportunity, as these retailers have already committed to putting gender diversity at the core of their business.

Pennycook says: "For a business to be truly successful, I believe it is imperative that every colleague works to their full potential."

The Co-op has a network called Aspire, which organises monthly networking events to help women connect around the business. The network, which has witnessed a 20% increase in membership this year, organises monthly networking events and relaxed round tables where senior female staff members speak about their career and life experiences.

The Aspire network also holds 'lunch and learn' events, where topics such as confidence, negotiating and leveraging personal strengths are discussed.

M&S has also made gender diversity a priority for its business. Rowe says: "We know that diversity

helps us perform better as a business and we promote inclusion throughout the organisation, taking action wherever it is right to do so."

The retailer is a member of the 30% Club, which provides young talent within M&S with cross-industry mentoring, and it works with consultancy Talking Talent to help it grow its pipeline of female talent through a tailored coaching programme.

Similar to the Co-op, M&S has its Inspiring Women Network, which Rowe says "plays an important role in fostering talent at every level".

"The network's monthly speakers and mentoring programme helps women to progress and reach their potential," he says.



Steve Rowe



“
“
When you
only see
men in senior
positions, you
think ‘I can’t
get there’

AMANDA COX, DUNELM

“I believe one of the key factors that has supported me in being the experienced leader I am today, is the support, mentoring and sponsorship I have had from other great leaders along the way... They encouraged me to be curious, believe in myself and shoot for the stars,” she said in the *Gender Balance in the Retail Boardroom* report earlier this year.



**People shouldn’t
have to change to
fit in. The culture
needs to change**

DIANA WORMAN, CIPD

Many of the UK’s largest businesses, including Kingfisher, John Lewis and Dixons Carphone, have mentoring schemes. Cox says it is important to have a mix of mentors of both sexes, across a wide number of business areas, and HR leaders should make sure mentors are trained to bring the most out of their mentees.

It is also important to tailor the format of mentoring. Dixons Carphone director of talent and development Caroline Angell says its well-established mentoring programme, which is offered to all staff, can be operated as formally or informally as the employee likes.

She says: “We have found that it is particularly helpful for women as they progress into senior roles and are trying to maintain the right work-life balance. However, we are beginning to see a trend that this mentoring assistance has also become hugely valuable for our male workforce.

“Ultimately, while we are extremely committed to supporting women as they

progress within our business, we believe mentoring should be an entrenched company ethos rather than simply a gender diversity initiative.”

Annabel Thorburn, director of retail services at eCommera, also believes development programmes should be offered to men, but for a different reason.

“While increasingly these programmes are being rolled out, what is interesting is that the participants are typically all women, which is a great investment in them, but arguably the education needs to be across the board – men included,” she says.

Positive role models

Retailers need to get to the root cause of what stops career progression for women in their businesses, says Cox.

“You need to understand what the barriers are,” she says. An all too common factor is the lack of female role models in their organisation.

“When you only see men in senior positions, you think ‘I can’t get there,’” adds Cox.

Cox says the fact that three women sit on Dunelm’s executive team, and there is a good spread of female directors and area managers across the business, makes people think “it is possible”.

“It shows it’s not just a box-ticking exercise. Women are successful here,” she says.

Cox says it’s important for the senior leadership team, both female and male, to be visible and accessible. Dunelm holds career talks by its executive and non-executive team where small groups can hear about their career progression.

Inclusive Talent’s Worman points out that it is important that those women at the top are identified as women, rather than just leaders.

“Often women at the top do not bring their experience of being a woman into the job. They try to behave more like men,” she says.

The Co-op retail chief financial officer Jo Whitfield said in the *Gender Balance in the Retail Boardroom* report that she has experienced such behaviour.

“It is particularly hard in some of the functional areas which are more male-dominated and you often see women feeling compelled to display more male behaviours such that they are not being true to themselves,” says Whitfield.

Worman says that is a missed opportunity for retail. “We shouldn’t block the way women see things. People shouldn’t have to change to fit in. The culture needs to change,” she says.

And that is where the real challenge lies. To truly change the make-up of retail’s male-dominated boardrooms, the culture of their businesses must be one in which gender does not inhibit or enhance progress. After all, diversity isn’t HR policy or a mentoring scheme, it’s a culture.