

How to attract new and diverse talent

Cath Sibbald, VP of HR, highlights CDK's views on recruitment and how it builds a varied workforce

Do people outside our industry perceive the automotive sector to have quite a 'blokey' image? Why is that?

There can be a tendency to perceive the automotive industry as 'blokey', as it has been traditionally male-dominated in the past. The good news is that this is certainly changing, but I can understand how people outside of the industry may not be able to see the change as clearly as those within.

Put simply, I think a lot of people have traditionally thought of cars and driving as a male interest, even though that's really not the case. The automotive industry is about much more than just 'liking cars', and the variety of roles within it range from engineering and software development to customer experience and project management (and much more besides). It is perhaps more obvious to those of us within the industry, but a shift in the culture of the automotive industry is already under way.

There is still a way to go, but the number of women entering the industry is slowly increasing, and as the industry has had to

rapidly innovate and transform, so has its traditional image. In a 2016 European study, Deloitte reported that 62% of women in the automotive industry would remain in the industry if they started their career today.

What barriers need to be taken down to entice a broader spread of candidates to apply for roles in automotive retail?

One of the main barriers in recruiting a diverse workforce is a lack of visible representation. If applicants perceive there to be a certain culture within the industry that they may not fit into, they are unlikely to see it as somewhere they can be successful.

It is important that businesses in the automotive industry actively recruit and advertise to a more diverse group of applicants, ensuring that job roles are written for both men and women, and that they are being posted and advertised through a range of channels. Blind applications are a valuable tool in combatting unconscious bias, as well as ensuring the hiring board itself is diverse, including interview formats being focused on problem-solving and skills rather than industry knowledge.

In addition, businesses need to make sure their external facing appearance is in line with their internal values. If diversity is something the business values, then this needs to be clear to potential candidates. Whether it is featuring team members on the website or actively engaging on social media channels, businesses need to be seen to be supporting the values they uphold in order to attract a wider range of candidates.

CDK Global is taking a broader view to promoting recruitment opportunities by ensuring that language is gender-neutral in job specifications and interviews are based on skills rather than automotive experience. As a result, a more balanced and diverse workforce is being shaped.

What tangible benefits could businesses gain from taking action to increase workplace diversity?

Diversity is more than just a buzzword or a metric to strive for – it has a direct effect on the bottom line. Organisations with more diverse management teams see up to a 20% increase in revenue over those without. Diverse teams offer different perspectives and ideas, which is critical for driving innovation – a vital component of the modern automotive industry. In fact, a 2018 Deloitte study, in partnership with Automotive News, found that diversity of thinking in leadership enhances innovation by 20%, and diverse groups are more adept at spotting risks, reducing their occurrence by 30%.

We are in a time of increased technological disruption and rapid digitalisation, and with the automotive industry going through a period of transformative change, innovation is essential for its survival. New car

purchasing models and subscription services, electric and automated vehicles, plus an increased focus on public and shared transport, have all put pressure on retailers to stay one step ahead of automotive trends.

With a diverse workforce, businesses are more likely to remain competitive and capitalise on opportunities for growth. Not only that, a diversified workforce attracts a wider audience. This is up to 70% more likely, according to a 2013 study by the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI).

What can businesses do internally to foster diversity and empower the talent they may already have?

Recruiting for a more diverse workforce is only one half of the equation, it is crucial we also support talent within our organisations. Diversity must be fully implemented and integral to an organisation's business model, not just an addition to meet targets.

One of the best steps businesses can take to foster a more diverse working culture is developing an inclusion council to keep diversity at the top of leadership agendas, as well as a detailed communications plan, showing how diversity is being promoted throughout the business. To nurture existing talent, it's important that clear and personalised development paths are set out, so that individuals, in particular future female leaders, can see how their career can progress without having to look elsewhere for opportunities.

What other markets or industries could the automotive sector take lessons from relating to developing and maintaining a more diverse workforce?

There is already a great deal of overlap between the STEM industries and the automotive industry, but we can still take inspiration from the broader STEM landscape, including how they have joined

CDK uses gender-neutral language and ensures interviews are based on skills rather than automotive experience as a way of shaping a more diverse workforce, says Cath Sibbald, CDK's vice-president of human resources



COMPANY PROFILE

Key products: Providing automotive solutions to dealers in more than 100 countries.

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