

# *Next Generation Diversity:* Developing tomorrow's female leaders

*Attracting, developing  
and retaining the  
female millennial*







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# Introduction

Organisations the world over are currently challenged with a lack of women in leadership positions, and fast becoming concerned with the competitive and financial toll this could mean for their organisations. Meanwhile they are also facing the challenges that come with vast numbers of millennial talent entering and reshaping the workforce.

Research and media are currently dominated with a focus on women in leadership and on corporate boards. However, to achieve sustainable change the public and private sectors must change the conversation: they must also focus on developing talented junior women now for future leadership roles. To become a change catalyst in what we believe is one of the final barriers to women permeating the top ranks of corporate leadership, organisations must drive parallel efforts which tackle enhanced leadership diversity in conjunction with systemic change efforts targeting their workforce from day one. But to get this right first organisations must better understand how to attract, develop, and retain female millennial talent.

In 2008, PwC<sup>1</sup> began digging deeper into an observed shift in thinking among younger employees in “Millennials at work: Perspectives of a new generation”. Subsequently, in 2011 we released our “Millennials at work: Reshaping the workforce” report which provided insights into the minds of 4,364 millennials from across 75 countries. Most recently, in 2013 we released our “PwC’s NextGen: A global generational study’ report”. This cross-generational study captured the views of more than 40,000 respondents in 18 territories across the PwC network. Conducted by PwC in conjunction with the University of Southern California and the London Business School it is the largest, most comprehensive global generational study ever conducted into the attitudes of millennial employees.

As our knowledge about this generation evolves and we examine our own talent pool we think it is time to put a laser focus on the female cohort of this generation. At PwC 50% of our workforce is female and by 2016 almost 80% of our workforce will be millennials. PwC firms recruit some 20,000 graduate millennials annually from across the globe, half of whom are female. Female millennials are becoming a larger and larger part of our talent pool, and we know we are not alone. This report aims to provide some insight into the minds of female millennials and how to position your organisation and talent strategies towards the attraction, retention and development of this significant talent pool.

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<sup>1</sup> PwC refers to the PwC network and/or one or more of its member firms, each of which is a separate legal entity. Please see [www.pwc.com/structure](http://www.pwc.com/structure) for further details

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# Report Highlights

## ***The female millennial - A new era***

Female millennials matter because they are more highly educated and are entering the workforce in larger numbers than any of their previous generations. The female millennial is also more confident than any female generation before her and considers opportunities for career progression the most attractive employer trait. To be successful and capitalise on the aforementioned traits employers must commit to inclusive cultures and talent strategies that lean in to the confidence and ambition of the female millennial.

## ***Diversity – front of mind***

Despite the environment the female millennial has grown up in it would be a mistake to assume this generation considers gender diversity as passé. Female millennials seek out employers with a strong record on equality and diversity but their expectations are not always met in practice. Employers need to do more than “talk the talk”, they must foster inclusive talent and advancement strategies which demonstrate visible results.

## ***Work life balance & flexibility***

This generation can be expected to drive unprecedented work life organisational culture shifts. The time is here for organisations to recognise work life balance and flexibility as a talent wide proposition.

## ***A Feedback culture***

One of the strongest millennial traits is that they welcome and expect regular feedback. Despite their affinity for the digital world their preference is for important feedback discussions to take place face-to-face. Successful employers will be those that can blend advanced technology and communication patterns with a culture of frequent and forward looking career feedback delivered face-to-face.

## ***Global careers***

Female demand for international mobility has never been higher. To attract, retain and develop female millennials international employers must adopt an inclusive modern mobility approach that provides a diversity of international assignment solutions.

## ***Reputation matters***

Millennials want their work to have a purpose, to contribute something to the world and to be proud of their employer. Image matters to the female millennial. Organisations and sectors will need to work harder to communicate the positive aspects of their employer brand. A clear understanding of their current and future talent pool will also be essential, with some sectors having to work harder and earlier than others to attract the talent they need to succeed.

# The female millennial

## A new era

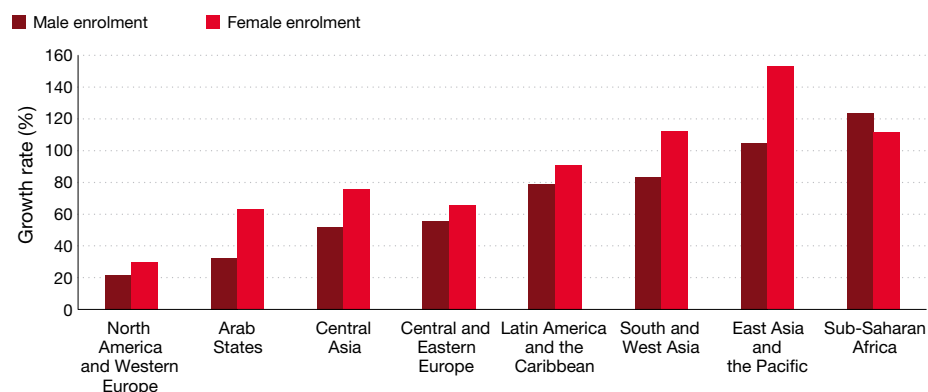
Born between 1980 and 1995, female millennials make up a significant proportion of the current and future talent pool. Attracting the best of these millennial workers is critical to the future of your business. Millennials matter because they are not only different from those that have gone before, they are also more numerous than any since the soon-to-retire Baby Boomer generation.

The female millennial has grown up in a new era. During her lifetime women have been joining the labour market in increasing numbers; global female labour force participation has been rising while the male rate is on the decline<sup>2</sup>. Between 1980 and 2008 552 million women joined the global labour force<sup>3</sup> and a further one billion women are anticipated to enter the workforce over the next decade<sup>4</sup>.

The make-up of the labour force is not the only thing that has changed, enrolment in tertiary level education has also soared. In 2009 total enrolment in tertiary level education reached 165 million – an increase of around 500 percent since 1970 and women have been the principal beneficiaries in all regions with female enrolment increasing almost twice as fast as male enrolment<sup>5</sup>. Globally women now account for a majority of students in 93 countries while men are favoured in only 46, earn more bachelor's degrees than men and have an edge over men of 56 to 44 percent in master's degrees<sup>6</sup>. In Hungary, South Africa and the US women are awarded 68, 61, and 60 percent of tertiary degree qualifications respectively while in Saudi Arabia and China they earn 44 and 48 percent<sup>7</sup> respectively.

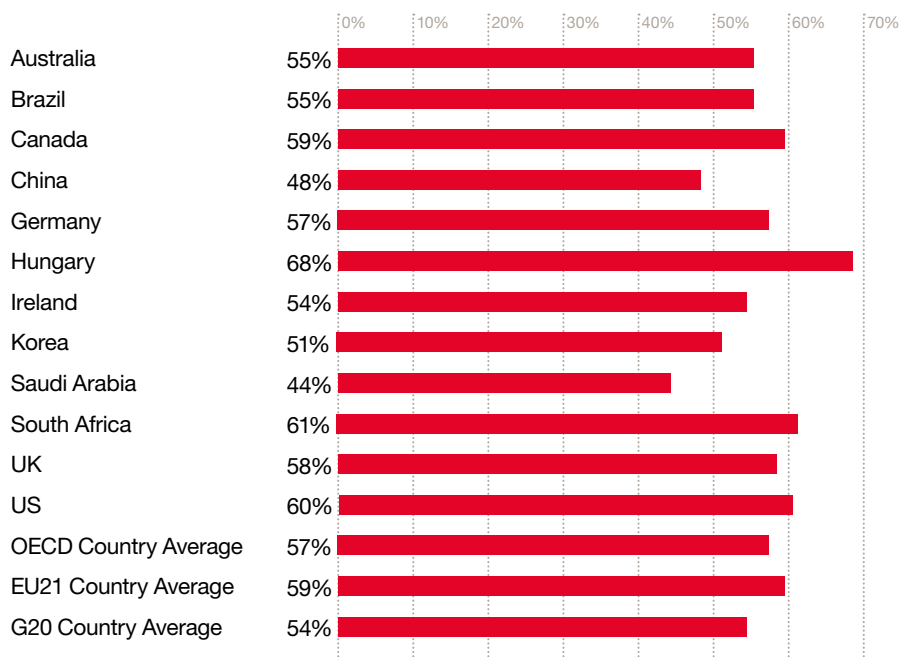
2 2012 World Development Report, Gender Equality and Development. The World Bank  
 3 ibid  
 4 Empowering the Third Billion Women and the World of Work in 2012, Booz and Co  
 5 World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education UNESCO, 2012  
 6 ibid  
 7 Education at a Glance 2012, OECD Indicators

### Percentage change in tertiary\* education enrolment 1999-2009



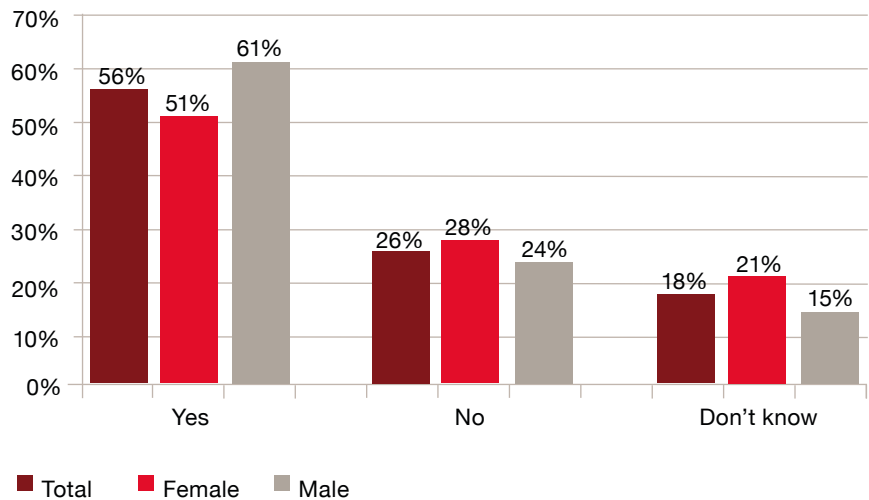
Source: UNESCO World Atlas of Gender Equality in Education, 2012  
 \*Education at college or university

### Percentage of tertiary degree qualifications awarded to women (2010)



Source: Education at a Glance 2012, OECD Indicators  
 Note: some figures rounded off

## Do you feel that you will be able to rise to the most senior levels with your current employer?



Source: PwC Millennials at work research

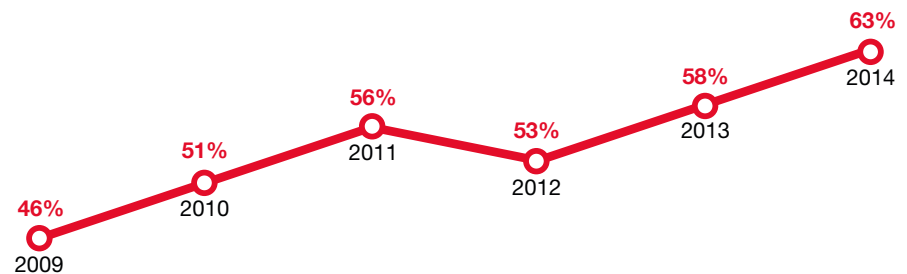
Female millennials matter because they are more highly educated and are entering the workforce in larger numbers than any of their previous generations. With 40% of the global labour force currently female<sup>8</sup> never before has a generation entered a workforce with such high levels of female participation. Despite this, women remain scarce at the top with only 4.6% of Fortune 500 CEOs currently female<sup>9</sup>. Yet, the female millennial has likely outperformed her male counterparts at school and at university and is the most confident of any female generation before her; 51% said they feel they will be able to rise to the most senior levels with their current employer. In addition, opportunities for career progression are considered the most attractive employer trait by the female millennial (53%)<sup>10</sup>.

To be successful and capitalise on the aforementioned traits of the female millennial, employers must commit to an inclusive culture, talent processes, policies and programmes that lean in to the confidence and ambition of the female millennial. A growing number of CEOs (63%) are concerned about the threat the availability of key skills present to their growth prospects<sup>11</sup>. Meanwhile, female millennials look set to form approximately 25% of the global workforce by 2020. Forming talent strategies tailored for this talent segment will be a vital step to achieving the long-term aims and ambitions of an individual organisation.

## CEOs are becoming more worried about finding key skills

Q: How concerned are you about the following potential economic and policy/business threats to your organisation's growth prospects?

(Availability of key skills was one of the threats CEOs named.)



Base: All respondents (2014=1,344; 2013=1,330; 2012=1,258; 2011=1,201; 2010=1,198; 2009=1,124)

Source: PwC 17th Annual Global CEO Survey

## Difficult questions about this new era of talent:

How well-prepared is your organisation to find, attract and keep tomorrow's workforce – even as you deal with today's talent challenges?

How are you adjusting your talent strategies to consider the female millennial?

Do you have the right talent structures in place to enable this talent segment to thrive?

How will you manage employees with different needs, aspirations and experiences from those of your own generation?

8 The World Bank

9 Mercury News ([http://www.mercurynews.com/business/ci\\_24696574/23-female-ceos-running-fortune-500-companies](http://www.mercurynews.com/business/ci_24696574/23-female-ceos-running-fortune-500-companies))

10 Millennials at work, Reshaping the workplace, PwC 2011

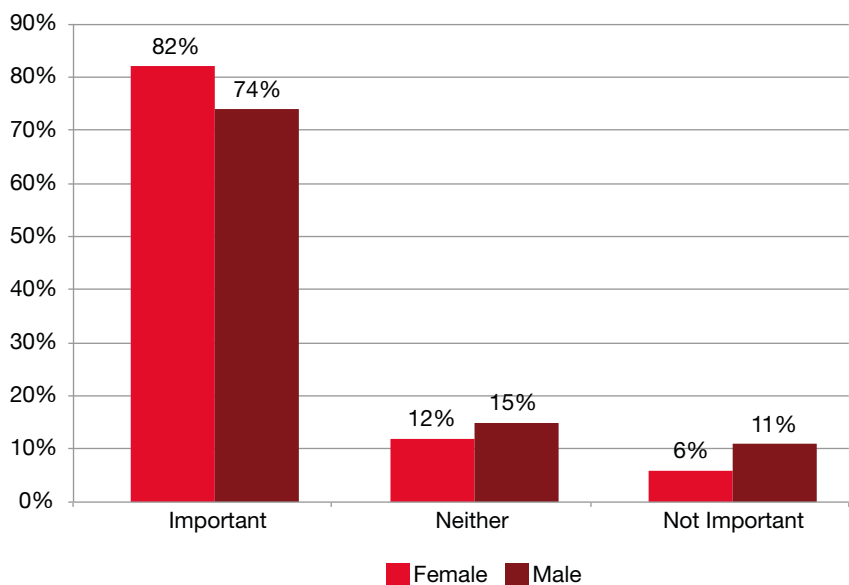
11 Fit for the future, Capitalising on global trends. 17th Annual Global CEO survey, PwC 2014

# Diversity – front of mind

The millennial has grown up with an affinity for a globalised and digital world. Their racial and ethnic profile is far more diverse than in any previous generations. In addition this generation is seen as having far more egalitarian views about the roles of women<sup>12</sup>. Globally, the female millennial is achieving a higher proportion of tertiary degrees than her male counterpart and is entering the workforce in more significant proportions than any previous generation. Despite all of this, it would be a mistake to assume this generation consider gender diversity as passé.

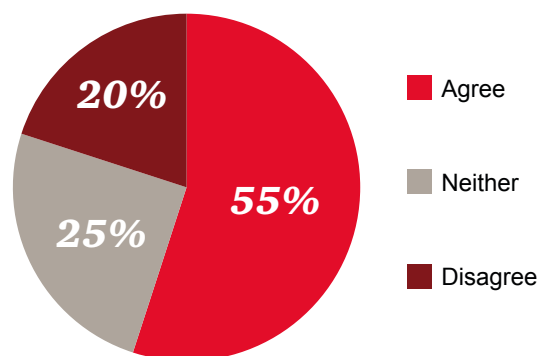
The millennial generation tends to seek out employers with a strong record on equality and diversity. In particular this is important to the female millennial, with 82% identifying an employer's policy on diversity, equality and workforce inclusion as important when deciding whether or not to work for an organisation. However, their expectations are not always met in practice; 55% of millennials agree that organisations talk about diversity, but they don't feel opportunities are really equal for all.

## How important is an employer's policy on diversity, equality and workforce inclusion when you decide whether or not you should work for them?



Source: PwC Millennials at work research

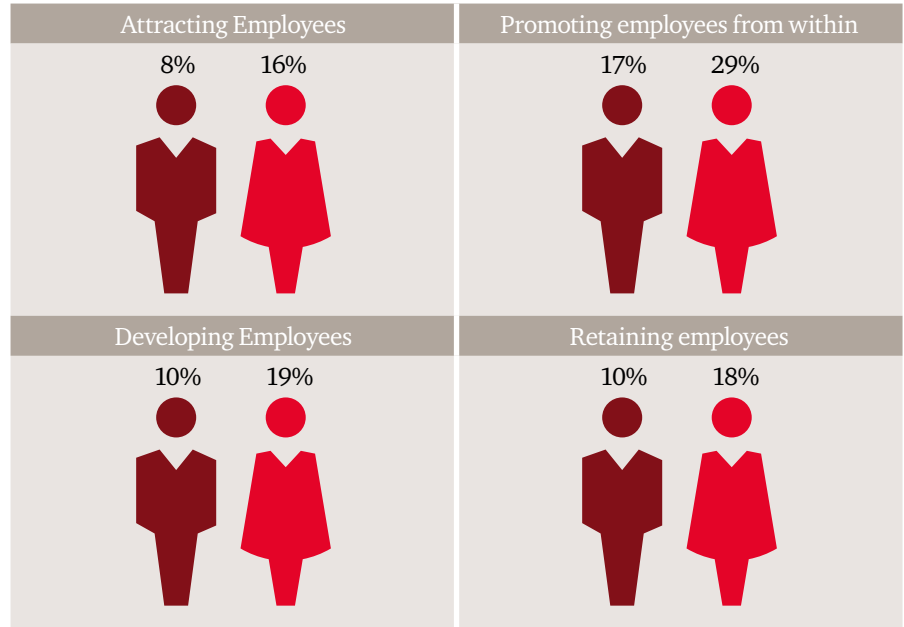
## Organisations talk about diversity, but I do not feel opportunities are really equal for all?



Source: PwC Millennials at work research

12 Creating Tomorrow's Leaders: the expanding Roles of Millennials in the Workplace, Boston College Center for Work & Family

**Employers are too male biased in terms of:**

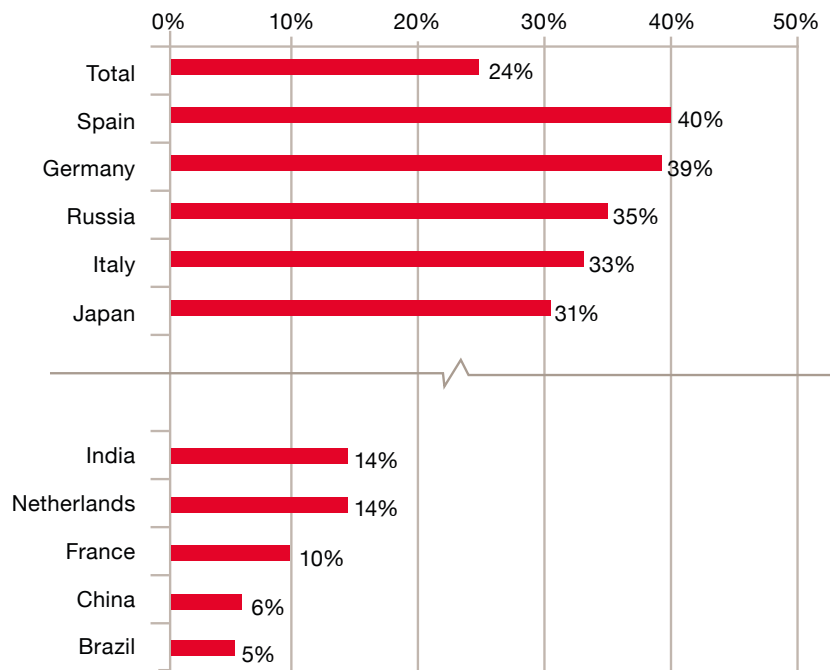


In particular, the perception of gender bias in the workplace remains a concern for female millennials. The female millennial is more likely than her male counterpart to believe that organisations are too male biased when it comes to attraction, developing, and retention. When it comes to promoting internally a significant 29% of female millennials felt employers were too biased towards male employees. Spanish and German employers were seen as the most male biased, while China and Brazil were seen as the least male biased.

Source: PwC Millennials at work research

Successful employers will do more than talk the talk, they will commit to inclusive talent and advancement strategies which demonstrate visible results.

**Employers are too male biased when promoting from within (those that agree)**



Source: PwC Millennials at work research





***Does your organisation plan to increase its focus on the following priorities over the next 12 months?***

***Do you have the following in place to develop your leadership pipeline?***

**Board level diversity**

**33%**

**Workforce diversity and inclusion**  
**50%**

**Programme to encourage diversity amongst business leaders**  
**58%**

Source: PwC 16th Annual Global CEO Survey

***Difficult questions about diversity:***

***What are you doing to make your workforce more diverse? And how will you utilise the benefits of diversity?***

***Do you have the right role models in place to attract and retain the female millennial?***

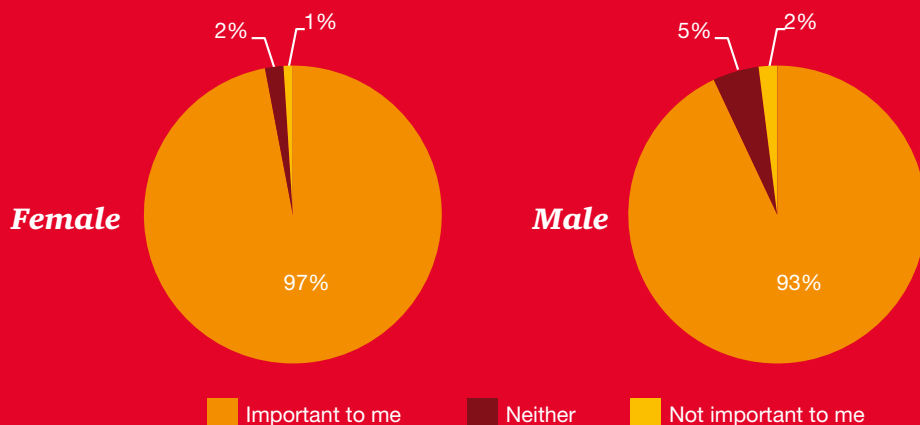
***What are you doing to enable objective talent, performance management and career progression systems and processes?***

# Work life balance and flexibility

Work life balance is important to nearly all millennials, and appears slightly more important to the female millennial with 97% identifying it as important to them and 74% saying it is very important. In addition flexible working hours were preferred over financial benefits when millennials were asked which benefits they would most value from an employer. These findings reinforce the common sentiment that work life balance and flexibility are of high importance to the millennial generation.

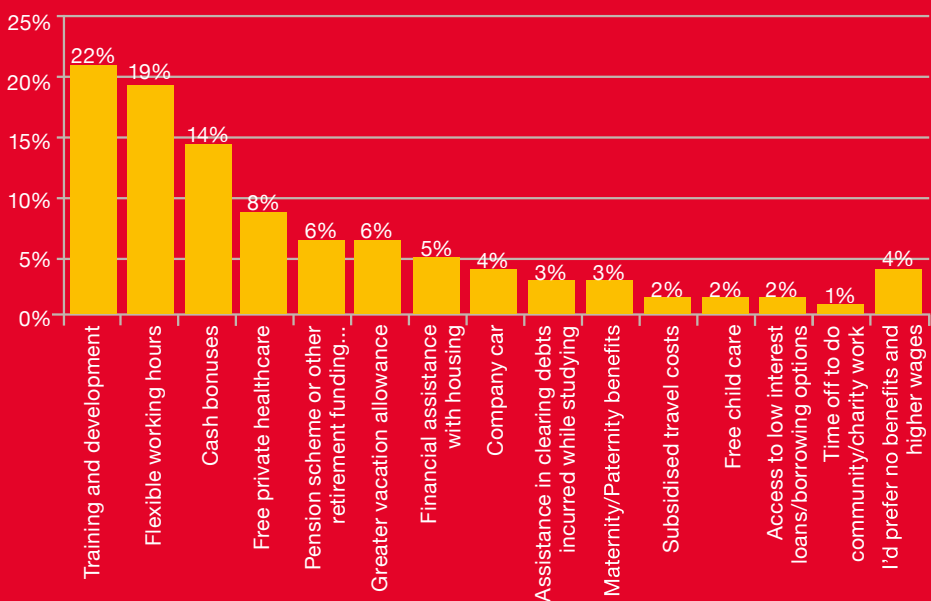
This generation can be expected to drive unprecedented work life organisational cultural shifts, given the millennial is typically unmarried (75%) and without kids (92%)<sup>13</sup> and the desire for work life balance and flexibility is in high demand from both female and male millennials. Outdated organisational work life strategies that view such topics as solely a female or parent demand will fail to attract or retain millennial talent, male or female.

## How important is it to you that you have good work life balance?



Source: PwC Millennials at work research

## Which three benefits would you most value from an employer? % ranking each 1st place



Source: PwC Millennials at work research

<sup>13</sup> PwC's NextGen: A global generational study, 2013



Likewise, a work life and flexibility strategy over-orientated toward the millennial generation could leave organisations faced with challenges as millennials are not alone in wanting more flexibility. A significant number of employees from all generations feel so strongly about wanting a flexible work schedule that they would be willing to give up pay and delay promotions in order to get it.

Employers who get it right will understand the importance of creating a flexible work culture for all genders and generations. The time is here for organisations to recognise work life balance and flexibility as a talent wide proposition.

**Would give up some of their pay/slow the pace of promotion in exchange for working fewer hours**

| Female Millennial | Male Millennial | Female Non-Millennial | Male Non-Millennial |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 19.9%             | 14.3%           | 17%                   | 13.1%               |

Source: PwC’s NextGen: A global generational study

**Difficult questions about work life strategies and flexibility:**

- What are you doing to create a culture where performance trumps presence?
- How will you shift from a culture of work life policies to a culture of work life in practice?
- How will you transform your work life and flexibility strategies so they are attractive to your complete talent pool?

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# *A Feedback culture*

One of the strongest millennial traits is that they welcome and expect regular feedback on their job performance. 51% of female millennials said feedback should be given very frequently or continually on the job while only 1% said feedback was not important to them. Setting clear targets and providing regular and structured feedback will be very important to the female millennial. Equally important will be a more progressive approach to feedback, ultimately a focus on feedback that is future orientated<sup>14</sup> and gears this talent pool towards future career progression; rather than feedback that is reactive and past orientated.

This generation is the most digital and tech-savvy of any generation. An employer's provision of state-of-the-art technology is important to 59% of millennials when considering a job, although, less important to the female (54%) than the male millennial (64%)<sup>15</sup>. 40% of female millennials have a preference for the use of electronic communication instead of the telephone or face-to-face conversations when it comes to conversations in the workplace. However, it is important that employers don't over-emphasise the importance of technology as a communication channel when it comes to performance evaluations, career planning, and compensation. The millennial generation much like their previous generations, value face-to-face time when it comes to these types of important career conversations.

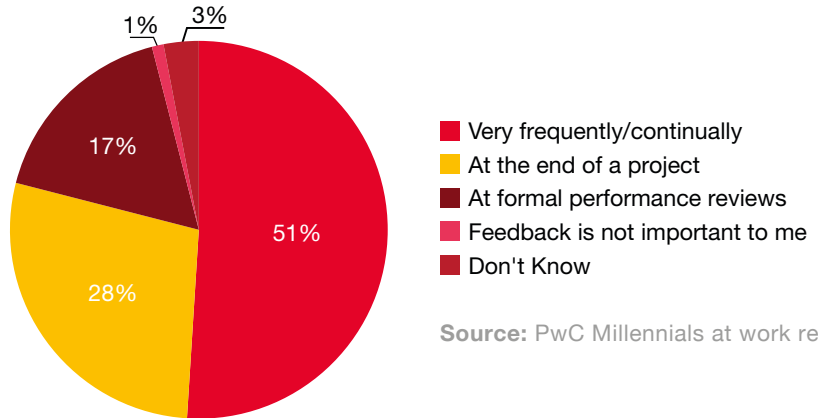


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<sup>14</sup> Rising Stars, Developing Millennial Women as Leaders, Dr. Elizabeth Kelan

<sup>15</sup> Millennials at work: reshaping the workforce. PwC 2011

**How frequently do you believe you should receive feedback from your employer on your performance?**



Source: PwC Millennials at work research

**Preference for face-to-face discussions on:**



Source: PwC's NextGen: A global generational study

Successful employers will be those that can blend advanced technology and communication patterns with a culture of frequent and forward looking career feedback delivered face-to-face.

**Difficult questions about a feedback culture:**

- What are you doing to create a progressive feedback culture?

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- How will you blend a growing use of modern communication channels with a culture of face-to-face feedback?

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*To attract, retain and develop female millennials international employers must adopt a modern mobility approach that provides a diversity of mobility solutions and fosters a mobility culture that does not over-identify international assignments with male international assignees.*

## Global careers

In an increasingly globalised world, international experience is seen by millennials as a vital element to a successful career. Millennials have a strong appetite for working abroad, with 71% keen to do so at some stage in their career. It is critical that international employers realise that this is not a male phenomenon. Female demand for mobility has never been higher with 69% of female millennials identifying they want to work outside their home country during their career.

Given international organisations are placing growing importance on the establishment of leadership teams and an employee base that are globally competent it is no surprise that 63% of women feel international experience is critical to further their career. Despite the number of female assignees doubling in the past decade, women currently make up a meagre 20% of international assignees<sup>16</sup>. Research identifies that gaining international experience advances women's and men's career further and faster, yet the best and brightest female talent are overlooked for these opportunities compared to their male peers<sup>17</sup>.

To attract, retain and develop female millennials international employers must adopt a modern mobility approach that provides a diversity of mobility solutions and fosters a mobility culture that does not over-identify international assignments with male international assignees. Successful international employers will also have a clear understanding of their 'mobile ready' population.



### **Difficult questions about global careers:**

- | What is your organisation doing to create a cadre of leaders with a global mindset?
- | How will you evolve your mobility strategy to meet the dual demands of an increasingly diverse talent pool and a rapidly changing work landscape?
- | What are you doing to make your international assignment programme inclusive to women? And how will this manifest itself in your international assignment programme structure and the selection of international assignees?
- | How will you make sure you always have a current picture of your mobile ready talent pipeline?

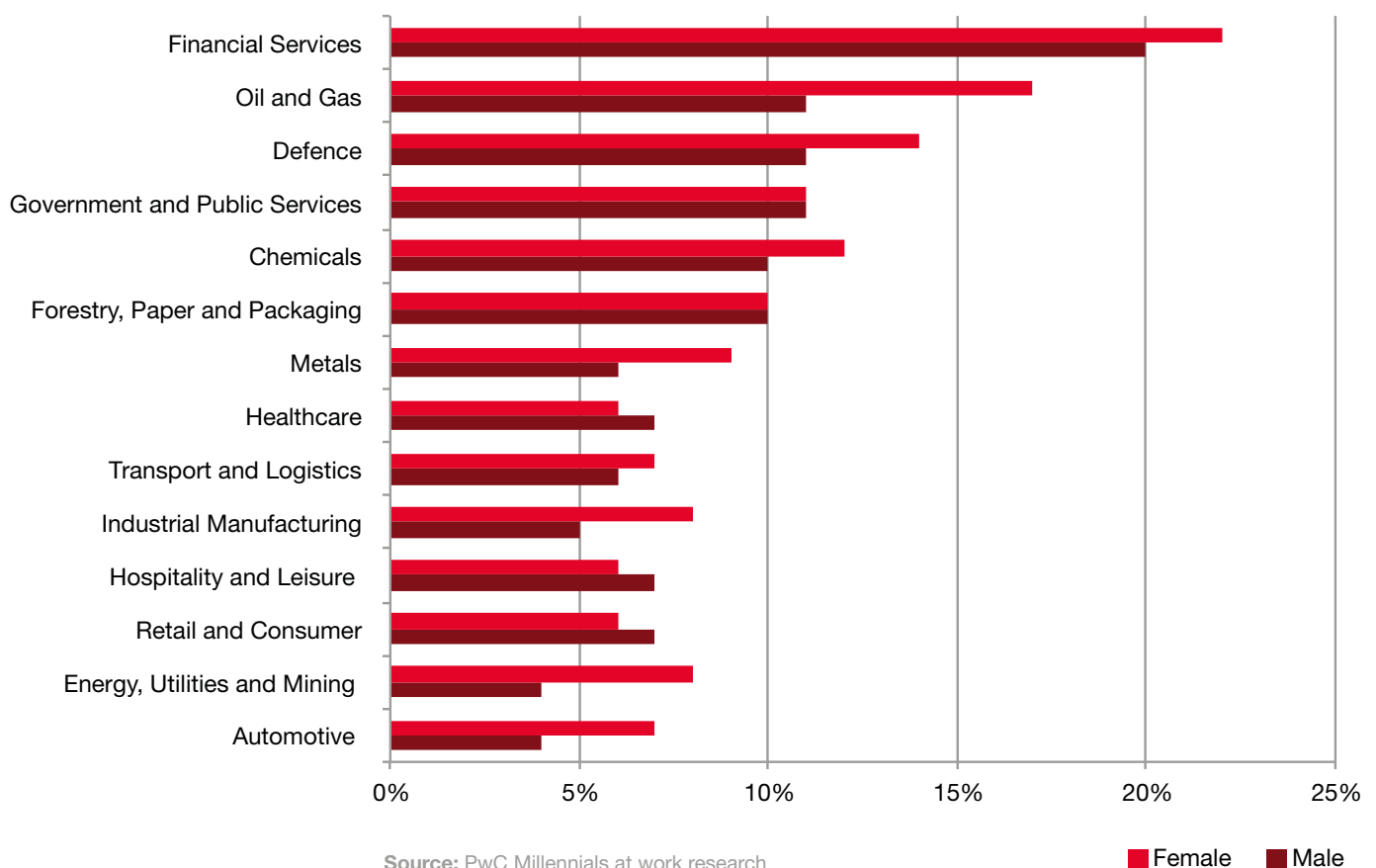
<sup>16</sup> Talent Mobility, 2020 and beyond, PwC 2012

<sup>17</sup> Good intentions, imperfect execution? Women get fewer of the "hot jobs" needed to advance, Catalyst

# Reputation matters

Our research into this Millennial generation has told us one thing is clear - millennials want their work to have a purpose, to contribute something to the world and to be proud of their employer. This holds true for both the male and the female millennial. Our research suggests that some companies and sectors will have to work harder in the future to communicate the positive aspects of the employer brand. 58% of millennials said they would avoid working in a particular sector solely because they believe it had a negative image<sup>18</sup>. Image appears to be a stronger influencer of the female millennial with the image of 9 of 14 sectors less appealing to more women than men.

## Are there any sectors in which you would not wish to work solely because of their image? (top sectors only shown)



18 Millennials at work, Reshaping the workplace, PwC 2011

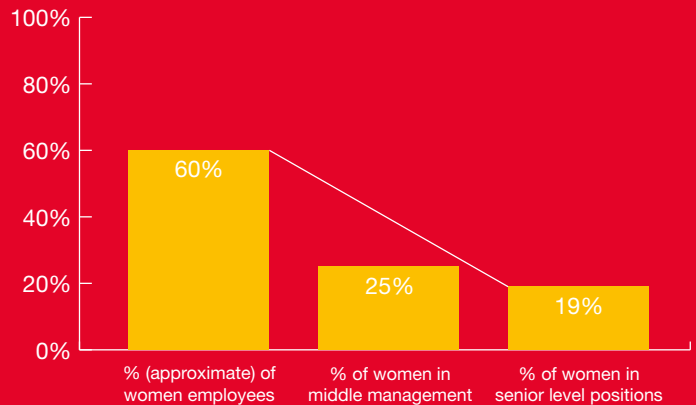
# Spotlight on Financial Services

The most significant number of women (22%) said they would not like to work in the Financial Services Sector solely because of its image. This presents some unique challenges for the Financial Services Industry.

Data from 20 global markets shows women comprise nearly 60% of employees in this industry<sup>19</sup>. With women making up the majority of this industry, Financial Services organisations will need to focus on retention strategies specifically tailored to this generation of women (and men), or risk a more severe leaking pipeline than they are accustomed to. In tandem, they will need to drive attraction strategies that highlight the benefits of working in this industry combined with an articulation of a strong organisation purpose.

A laser focus on leadership diversity and development strategies targeting an enhanced career trajectory for their female talent will also be vital if they are to attract, retain and capitalise on the talents of the female millennial. Otherwise the female millennial will struggle with why they are still faced with the question: if women represent 60% of all financial services employees, why aren't they rising through the leadership ranks on par with their male counterparts<sup>20</sup>?

## Average representation of women in financial services in 20 global markets Source:



Source: World Economic Forum, The Corporate Gender Gap Report 2010

19 World Economic Forum, The Corporate Gender Gap Report 2010; Financial services data includes financial institutions and insurance companies

20 Mending the gender gap: Advancing tomorrow's women leaders in financial services. PwC, 2013

# Spotlight on Oil and Gas

Next in line is the Oil and Gas sector; 17% of women said they would not like to work in this sector solely because of its image. The challenge for this sector is different than the challenges facing the Financial Services Sector. With women currently making up only a fraction of the global oil and gas workforce<sup>21</sup> attraction needs to be front of mind. Globally, engineering positions are currently ranked as the second hardest to fill<sup>22</sup>, only 27% of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) graduates in G20 countries are female<sup>23</sup> and nearly four times as many 15 year old boys are planning a career in engineering or computing than girls<sup>24</sup>. This sector needs to start their attraction strategies earlier than most. They also need to consider how they attract talent.

PwC research has found there are several negative perceptions of the industry commonly held by women, namely that it is male dominated, involves excessive compulsory travel to remote or challenging locations, requires physical labour better suited to men and a background in STEM<sup>25</sup>. Meanwhile, women know much less about the more positive aspects of the industry. Organisations in this sector should look to re-evaluate their Employee Value Propositions (EVP) to incorporate a clearer articulation of the positive aspects of the industry such as the opportunity to make a difference with ground-breaking work and the higher than average salaries. The branding of their EVP also requires consideration - for example whether the imagery and language used is overly male orientated.

21 Building talent for the top: A study of women on boards in the oil and gas industry. PwC, 2013

22 Talent Shortage Survey, Manpower Group, 2013

23 Choosing Stem, Wouter Van den Berghe and Dirk De Martelaere, October 2012

24 Education at a Glance 2012, OECD Indicators

25 Building talent for the top: A study of women on boards in the oil and gas industry. PwC, 2013



Successful employers will have a clear understanding of their sectors' and organisations' image and reputation. They will also have a clear picture of their current and future talent pool. To attract the required talent some organisations will need to work harder than others, and others will need to work harder earlier. Irrespective of sector all employers will need to clearly articulate what they are offering a potential employee and know that the messages they send out need to stand-up in reality.



### ***Percentage of qualifications awarded to women in tertiary-type A and advanced research programmes, OECD Average***

| <b>Field of Education</b>                    | <b>2000</b> | <b>2010</b> |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Education                                    | 74          | 77          |
| Humanities and arts                          | 65          | 67          |
| Health and welfare                           | 68          | 74          |
| Social sciences, business and law            | 52          | 58          |
| Services                                     | 43          | 51          |
| Engineering, manufacturing, and construction | 23          | 27          |
| Sciences                                     | 40          | 42          |
| Agriculture                                  | 43          | 54          |
| All fields                                   | 54          | 58          |

Source: Education at a Glance 2012, OECD Indicators

### ***Difficult questions about reputation***

How are you communicating the positive aspects of your employer brand – and making sure they stand up in reality?

What are you doing to adopt your employer brand to this cohort of talent?

What will it cost your organisation, if you get your talent pipeline wrong?

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# Summary

The female millennial represents a new era of talent. This talent population is not only entering a workforce that looks different to the workforce her mother and grandmother may, or may not, of entered - she is entering it with a different career mind-set. She is more highly educated, more confident, and more career ambitious than any of her previous generations.

Meanwhile, female millennials are estimated to form approximately 25% of the global workforce by 2020. Forming talent strategies tailored for this talent segment will be a vital step to the sustainability of any organisation. If employers are to be successful in capitalising on the strengths of this significant proportion of their current and future talent pool, the status quo will no longer suffice. To truly address the gender leadership gap, organisations must drive parallel efforts which tackle enhanced leadership diversity in conjunction with efforts that develop junior talented women now for future leadership roles.

Organisations must be positioned to respond to the core learnings and difficult questions highlighted throughout this report. A commitment to an inclusive culture and inclusive talent processes, policies and programmes will support a business model where all talent can prosper – including the female millennial. When talent rises to the top, everyone wins.

To learn more on the female millennial or access any of the PwC publications referenced throughout this report visit: [www.pwc.com/IWD](http://www.pwc.com/IWD)



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