

The management pipeline

The economic case for increasing the number of women in senior management, executive committees and boards is undeniable with positive impacts on financial indicators like profits and earnings per share, creativity and innovation as well as governance.

Tackling gender imbalance will help businesses attract and retain the best talent, building the teams they need for a highly competitive and challenging world. The Ibec data shows real progress and also highlights the challenges which need to be tackled as a matter of priority for continued progress.

Ibec's research unit routinely collects data on women in management. This document provides a comparative view of data collected in 2001 (297 companies) and 2018 (347 companies). Respondent companies were primarily from manufacturing, financial services, electronic services and distribution sectors. Ibec data shows that:

- A significant pipeline of female talent exists in certain activities, for example, HR/Personnel, Finance/Accounting and Customer services.
- In 2018, proportions of females at upper management levels within HR, Finance/Accounting and Customer services are significantly higher than those of 2001.
- Female participation, while improved in 2018, remains relatively low in engineering roles. This may be as a result of prevailing cultures, norms and mores within engineering. The lack of an available pipeline of female management talent in this area may also be a factor, as female engagement in engineering activities is low from junior management level, all the way to senior management.

Horizontal and vertical segregation

The funnelling of men and women into gendered roles can contribute to the gender pay gap, reinforce gender stereotypes and impact men and women's access to particular jobs. The concentration of one gender in certain occupations (horizontal segregation) or in certain grades, levels of responsibility or positions (vertical segregation) is evident within our data.

Female participation is more likely in HR, finance and customer services and less likely in manufacturing, engineering, distribution, materials and IT (horizontal segregation). Vertical segregation is evident in the lower proportions of females working at each successive layer of senior management.

It is essential that the dominance of a particular gender in roles, for example, males in construction, engineering, ICT, or females in HR, finance, etc. is challenged to ensure that both men and women have access to career opportunities and choices.

Female CEOs

Female participation rates have risen between 2001 and 2018 from 8% to 16%, however the pattern of improvement varies across years.



CSO data on gender produced in 2019 for companies with over 250 employees shows broadly similar findings: that around 11.5% of CEOs are female. The Ibec figure of one in seven female CEOs includes smaller companies.



Ibec data includes all company sizes

CSO data pertains to companies with over 250 employees only

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**Smarter World,
Smarter Work**
An Ibec campaign

Women in management in Ireland

An Ibec update



Head of function

Job title	2001	2018
Finance/Accounting	25%	39% ↑
HR/Personnel	53%	72% ↑
Manufacturing	15%	3% ↓
Materials	22%	20% ↓
Sales/Marketing	18%	28% ↑
IT	10%	17% ↑
Financial services	–	36%
Customer services	31%	53% ↑
Environment	12%	20% ↑
Distribution	15%	7% ↓
Engineering	5%	6% ↑
Other	32%	48% ↑

In 2001 there were 297 responses and in 2018, 347 organisations provided data.

There were more women at head of function level in 2018 compared with 2001 in most activities, showing an active pipeline of female talent coming through from lower management levels.

There were very high levels of female participation in HR/Personnel (72%), Customer services (53%) and Finance/Accounting (39%) in 2018.

Levels of female engagement in Manufacturing and Distribution had dropped between 2001 and 2018.

Levels of female engagement at head of function level in IT, while improved between 2001 and 2018, remained relatively low (17%).

Middle management

Job title	2001	2018
Finance/Accounting	42%	53% ↑
HR/Personnel	61%	80% ↑
Manufacturing	17%	17%
Materials	23%	32% ↑
Sales/Marketing	30%	43% ↑
IT	28%	22% ↓
Financial services	–	45%
Customer services	60%	46% ↓
Environment	19%	23% ↑
Distribution	27%	22% ↓
Engineering	5%	18% ↑
Other	34%	37% ↑

In 2001 there were 297 responses and in 2018, 347 organisations provided data.

At middle management level, female engagement in HR and Finance/Accounting has increased even further between 2001 and 2018, continuing a pattern of female dominance in these particular activities.

Female participation at this level in Engineering, Environmental and Materials roles have all increased between 2001 and 2018, although overall female participation in these roles remains low.

Junior management

Job title	2001	2018
Finance/Accounting	65%	59% ↓
HR/Personnel	80%	79% ↓
Manufacturing	30%	25% ↓
Materials	43%	45% ↑
Sales/Marketing	48%	43% ↓
IT	33%	24% ↓
Financial services	–	51%
Customer services	67%	67%
Environment	20%	17% ↓
Distribution	43%	23% ↓
Engineering	9%	11% ↑
Other	45%	48% ↑

In 2001 there were 297 responses and in 2018, 347 organisations provided data.

Manufacturing roles, Distribution and Engineering are less likely to attract females at lower management level, with implications for the talent pipeline for these activities at more senior management levels.

Female engagement in IT roles has decreased between 2001 and 2018 highlighting the importance of STEM initiatives to support female engagement in IT and scientific careers.

Improving the recruitment and opportunities for women at junior management level will see improved outcomes for females at more senior levels of management, over time.

How you can help

Examine flexibility available to employees

Gender proof job advertisements

Provide unconscious bias training to managers

Collect metrics on female participation and use them – make managers accountable

Promote a culture that supports future female success

Assess possible gender impacts of organisational policies and practices

Create and meet targets for female participation across all role types

Build awareness of gender issues within your organisation

