

Women & Men In the IT Labour Market



ETC



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING CORPORATION

Research & Development Division

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Working towards gender equality in the labour market is one of ETC's principal commitments. Women's participation in the labour market is crucial both for Malta's economic growth in general as well as the personal development of women themselves. Yet women make up only 34% of all employed individuals.

A closer look at the figures reveals that women's representation in careers related to science, engineering and technology is much lower. Currently in Malta women make up only 10% of individuals working in careers related to information technology. Reasons behind this low percentage may be various, for example some women may think that it is hard to take up a career in IT since this is usually portrayed as a career for males. Employers on the other hand may have the perception that women are not as capable in the field. Both employers and women may presume that it is hard to balance work and family life when choosing a career in IT.

Furthermore, women are generally under-represented in courses related to information technology. At University, during academic year 2003-2004, the share of women graduating in an IT related course, mainly a Bachelor of Science with honours or a Diploma in Information Technology and a Bachelor of Science in Business and Computing amounted to 28%. Similarly the share of females who started a course related to information, communications

and technology at the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology in 2004 was 18%. It appears that few young women are aware of the possibility of taking up a career in IT possibly because girls do not have equal access to information on career prospects available in IT.

This brochure is intended to disseminate information on good practices relating to gender diversity in IT. This brochure is not a representative survey, but a series of illustrations based on information supplied by a number of companies and women who are employed in the IT sector.

Companies employing both men and women in the following occupations were eligible to participate in the study. The occupations concerned were: computer assistants; computer associate professionals; computer equipment operators; computer programmers; computer systems designers & analysts; computing professionals; computing professionals not classified; managers in computing services; technician computer and technician computer assistant. A total number of 55 companies were identified through the ETC company database. All companies were contacted by telephone and invited to participate in the study. Those companies that were reached by telephone and were interested to participate were screened in order to confirm that they employ both men and women in the above occupations and that they adopt gender-friendly work measures at the workplace. 11 companies matched these criteria. Out of these companies, there was CIMU, the Central Management Information Unit, which was lately dissolved. CIMU was included in the brochure because it was still operating when research was carried out and it proved to be an example of good practice.

The examples portrayed in the brochure cover a number of gender-friendly initiatives in areas such as recruitment, training, promotions and working conditions. In order to demonstrate what these measures mean for the women themselves, it includes interviews with a number of women IT employees at different stages in their careers as well as managers of companies operating in different sectors. These examples will offer companies new ideas for practices and policies that can help them to make the most of female potential in the workforce. Companies will then be able to improve their competitiveness and achieve further growth in the long term.

I want to thank all the companies and employees who supported this work and dedicated some of their time to provide us with useful information and also ETC's Research and Development Division who gathered the information appearing in this brochure.

Dr. Robert Tufigno
Chairman, ETC

Bank of Valletta



Bank of Valletta

“I prefer working in IT because it is not a routine job. Although it is quite stressful, it is a very rewarding job.”



The Bank of Valletta is one of the local major banks. It was established in 1974 and is shared by Maltese and foreign owners. It employs 1,477 employees of which, half are females. In BOV's IT department 20 percent are female employees. Their occupations range from senior analysts, senior systems administrators and officers working within the item processing imaging unit. Five out of 51 IT managers are women.

Bank of Valletta can be considered as a best practice because it provides many opportunities for its employees to achieve a work life balance and at the same time develop one's career prospects. Particular initiatives taken up by BOV include an equal treatment policy, the possibility to work on a flexible timetable and/or work on reduced hours. "At BOV, after maternity leave, females have the possibility to automatically shift to a reduced hours timetable," explains Ms. Vanessa Borg, Human Resources Officer.

Staff development is an important concern at BOV. Training courses are offered on a regular basis particularly to IT staff since they have to keep up-to-date with the new software applications and technologies. BOV sponsors training courses both locally and abroad to its IT staff. The latter are given the chance to participate in international conferences and to attend regular enhancement courses on particular software.

Moreover job evaluation programmes are held on a regular basis. Consequently staff may shift from one department to another depending on one's capabilities



and preferences. A typical example has been the case of few of the women IT staff. These employees were primarily engaged in clerical positions. But after the job evaluation programme and discussions with the employees themselves, the latter had the possibility to shift to the IT department.

Ms. Josette Sciberras, an IT employee, explains, "I have been working with BOV for the last 22 years. I was employed mainly as a clerk but then I was given the opportunity to form part of the branch implementation team. This was a two-year project, which involved the shifting of BOV's manual system into a computerised one. Through this project I was then offered a job within the IT department and now am a senior systems administrator." Josette remarks, "This job is very challenging and dynamic. I prefer working in IT because it is not a routine job. Although it is quite stressful it is a very rewarding job."

BOV's equal treatment policy ensures that both males and females have the same opportunity to be recruited and/or promoted with the company. Usually males tend to apply for IT posts more than females. The main reason would be that there are more males who graduate in IT. However, interviews give a fair chance to all applicants irrespective of gender. Particular importance is given to work experience, qualifications and other skills such as the ability to work in a team. Teamwork is valued at BOV and employees, including IT staff, are encouraged to work together as a team.

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	1477
Female employees	752
Managers	447
Female managers	108
IT personnel	97
Female IT personnel	19
Managers in IT department	51
Female managers in IT department	5



“Females are more determined and express a certain degree of motivation towards their jobs. They are reliable and are very good at multi-tasking.”



The Central Information Management Unit (CIMU) falls under the Office of the Prime Minister. It is responsible for the development and management of the communications strategy for government. CIMU establishes ICT policies and standard frameworks for all government services and entities.

CIMU's small size allows it to offer a certain degree of flexibility to its employees. Employees can benefit from teleworking arrangements, reduced hours, and flexible time arrangements. Parents are also given the possibility to bring their children at work in case they have to attend meetings. Teleworking is offered to those employees who have children under 3 years of age.

Ms. Joanne Zammit, Consultant responsible of communications at CIMU, remarked, “I considered applying to work at CIMU since it gave me the possibility to work from home. At CIMU I find a degree of flexibility that allows me to be both a mother and an employee”. Zammit is a mother of two children aged five and seven. She has been working with CIMU for the past three years.

Employees are very much valued at CIMU. The latter tries to retain its employees irrespective of their gender. Employees who are experienced and have the



required qualities and capabilities are offered the best possible working conditions to be able to remain working with CIMU.

Mr. Brian Mifsud, Human Resources Manager, confirms, "A female employee who wanted to resign because she wanted to look after her children, was offered the possibility to work on reduced hours and also work from home."

Now this employee has been working with the company for the last three years and she is happy with the arrangement. CIMU did not want to lose her since she is an asset for the company."

Besides Mifsud believes, "Females are more determined and express a certain degree of motivation towards their jobs. They are reliable and are very good at multi-tasking."

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	27
Female employees	9
Managers	8
Female managers	Nil
IT personnel	4
Female IT personnel	2
Managers in IT department	1
Female managers in IT department	Nil

ST Microelectronics



“Males and females play on a level playing field in IT. Indeed one female employee, also got promoted from computer technician to a superintendent in IT”



ST Microelectronics (Malta) Ltd. is one of the largest companies operating in Malta. It employs over 2000 employees and is a leader in developing and delivering semiconductor solutions across the spectrum of microelectronics applications.

ST is committed to offer its employees opportunities to develop their skills and abilities. ST has its own university, which develops strategic and company-wide training programmes. The training programmes organised by the company emphasise the application of learning within the working environment. The scope is to enhance the job performance of employees.

Moreover IT employees can also benefit from a certain amount of flexibility at work. IT employees have the possibility to work on flexible time arrangements. They also have the possibility to work on a part-time basis.

Mr. Frans Farrugia, IT Manager, claimed that four years ago, ST found it hard to recruit technical people in IT. Thus ST made an internal drive to encourage workers to get trained and consider working in the IT department. At that time three out of the seven workers who accepted the invitation were females. Mr. Farrugia explained, “ At first I was reluctant to employ females in IT occupations. However after I viewed their capabilities and saw their determination I gave them a chance. Today I am happy with the result. Males and females play on a level playing field in IT. Indeed one female employee, also got promoted from computer technician to a superintendent in IT.”



Occupations held by females within ST's IT department are: superintendent in infrastructure support, computer audit manufacturing engineer, IT operator and analyst programmer. The first occupation specialises in hardware while the latter are software oriented.

As to the low number of women working in IT, Farrugia said, "Young females who are in their secondary level of education are not aware of the working opportunities that exist in the IT field. IT occupations suit women because they offer flexibility and even the possibility to work from home.

However, many females reading for a degree at university are opting for general subjects and do not see IT as an option. In our schools there isn't enough knowledge about the contributions females might give to this area. Other countries, such as India, give a lot of IT exposure to females. India has expanded very rapidly in the IT field because all IT employees, including females, are competent and proficient in their work".

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	2417
Female employees	1254
Managers	86
Female managers	2
IT personnel	23
Female IT personnel	4
Managers in IT department	2
Female managers in IT department	Nil

Media Centre



“In IT there is no difference between males and females. Both have the necessary qualities and skills to work in the field”



Media Centre is a Maltese owned company, which operates in the communications sector. Media Centre houses a radio station, a printing press and a publishing house. It employs 69 employees of whom three work in the IT department. One of these employees is a woman and works as a desktop operator.

Mr. Geoffrey Calafato, Media Centre's Managing Director, claimed that Media Centre adopts an equal treatment policy. An evaluation of occupations is carried out on a regular basis and whoever deserves a promotion gets automatically promoted irrespective of one's gender.

The female currently working in the IT department benefited from this procedure. She was initially engaged as a trainee and after evaluating her work and her capabilities she was promoted to her current position. The skills required for her job included the knowledge of programming languages and of software applications.

At Media Centre employees working in IT have the possibility to work on flexible time arrangements. Employees, for example, can start working an hour before and finish work earlier.

The management at Media Centre permits this flexibility as long as the workflow



is not disrupted. Besides employees in IT are offered good salaries and good working conditions.

Having only one female IT employee does not put her at a disadvantage. "In IT there is no difference between males and females. Both have the necessary qualities and skills to work in the field," said Mr. Calafato. He also stated that there are less females engaged in IT occupations because less females apply for these posts.

On a more general level Mr. Calafato claimed that educational institutions should work closer with employers and encourage more students to take up subjects that are required by the labour market, more specifically in IT. Students should also be given more work exposure so that they learn more about the skills and competencies required by the market.

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	69
Female employees	17
Managers	8
Female managers	2
IT personnel	3
Female IT personnel	1
Managers in IT department	1
Female managers in IT department	Nil

Philip Toledo Limited



PHILIP TOLEDO LIMITED
Computer & Communication Solutions

“Few are the females that apply for IT occupations. He claimed that the percentage of females and males that apply for such vacancies is roughly 20 to 80 percent respectively”



Philip Toledo Limited was established in 1946. It is one of Malta's leading IT companies and offers total solutions in IT including hardware, software and support services. Philip Toledo Limited has a very low employee turnover and most of the employees have been working with the company for quite a long time. This is partly attributed to the good working conditions offered by the company including good salaries, training opportunities and flexibility.

At Philip Toledo there are four females working in the IT department. Two work on sales, whereas the other two are software programmers. One of the programmers is married, has one child and works on a full-time basis.

“We try to cater for the employees needs on an individual basis. We always found a way of how to help our staff keep their job and be able to raise a family. Women are more loyal and as long as we provide them with the right amount of flexibility they remain working with our company,” says Mr. Albert Rossi, Joint Managing Director. In its strive to help employees achieve work-life balance the company offers measures such as teleworking, flexible time arrangements and the possibility to work part-time.

Mr. Rossi claimed that during recruitment procedures, “few are the females that apply for IT occupations. He claimed that the percentage of females and males that apply for such vacancies is roughly 20 to 80 percent respectively”.



When recruiting new personnel the company seeks to employ persons with the relevant qualifications and experience in the field. No difference is made by gender.

More awareness among students particularly women, is needed in the field of IT. Mr. Rossi stated that many female students do not know what it means to have a career in IT. It is not a matter of women lacking the necessary abilities. Schools need to encourage more females to take up a career in IT. They also need to equip themselves with more qualified teachers who can teach IT in all schools especially those for girls.

In this regard the company has taken an active approach since it offers apprenticeship training to young students as well as promotes IT through its membership in the Computer Society and the Malta Chamber of Commerce.

Philip Toledo Limited considers ongoing training as a great asset. The company provides regular product training to its employees, which leads to certification from the respective product developers. Furthermore it either brings foreign experts to train staff or sends staff abroad.

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	64
Female employees	8
Managers	10
Female managers	1
IT personnel	46
Female IT personnel	4
Managers in IT department	10
Female managers in IT department	1



"I believe there should be no difference by gender. Anyone who is capable in the technical field should have the opportunity to develop and advance in one's career"



Creating an inclusive working environment for its employees is a priority at Crimsonwing. Crimsonwing, one of Malta's most renowned IT companies, strives to develop a working environment that gives its employees the opportunity to develop as well as creating an environment that is gender friendly. This foreign-owned IT company offers five types of services namely: creates programmes on IT development; delivers projects for other companies; offers systems support and maintenance; develops products and offers consultancy both on business solutions and IT problems.

At Crimsonwing 13% of the staff complement is female. Out of the 80 IT staff six are women. Despite this relatively low number of women IT employees working with the company, two of them hold a managerial position. The occupations held by women at Crimsonwing include the posts of quality manager, project manager, senior analyst programmer and analyst programmer.

"At Crimsonwing everyone is treated equally there is no such thing as this is for females and this is for males," says Ms. Jackie Sciberras, Project Manager. She also remarked, "Here at Crimsonwing they wish to have more females." She recalled her interview experience and explained that one of the interviewers asked her specifically if she knew of any other females who were interested to work in IT.



Mr. Pierre Zammit, Head of Business Operations confirmed, “ I believe there should be no difference by gender. Anyone who is capable in the technical field should have the opportunity to develop and advance in one’s career.”


As Project Manager, Ms. Sciberras’ work involves: the monitoring of project deliveries; making sure that projects are according to clients’ requirements; bring in sales; creating new ideas for clients (known as presales); team leading, and performance reviews of staff. She opted to choose a carrier in IT through her friends who also worked in IT. She was interested in taking up this career, even though her parents did not approve of her choice. “For them (Sciberras’ parents) I was taking on a man’s job but I didn’t feel it that way, I was not going to be a mechanic. Today they are proud of me but I remember the shock and I still don’t understand it to a certain extent”, says Ms. Sciberras.

What attracted her at Crimsonwing was that the company is foreign and that it offers the opportunity to go abroad and get training. The company gave her this possibility and also the opportunity to achieve more work-life balance.

In fact, now that she is pregnant, Ms. Sciberras’ views of work have changed. Her main concern now is to balance work and family life. “I need to get used of my

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	92
Female employees	12
Managers	12
Female managers	4
IT personnel	80
Female IT personnel	6
Managers in IT department	5
Female managers in IT department	2



new lifestyle and look after the baby," she explains. However, her wish will be accomplished since Crimsonwing will offer her the possibility to work on reduced hours, work from home and even change her responsibilities at work. Her new responsibilities will not require her constant presence at the office. "I was lucky enough that management gave me the option to choose out of four new occupations. I will still hold the position of a manager but I will no longer be a project manager, I will shift to another department, which doesn't require my constant presence at the office and permits me to work on a part-time basis. For me this is ideal."

In its drive to meet employees' needs, management at Crimsonwing issues an employee satisfaction questionnaire on a yearly basis, whereby upon the results obtained from this survey action is taken so as to improve the working environment for its employees. A friendly working environment reigns within the company. Employees can approach their managers freely. On a related note, the company also has a system of performance appraisal whereby, depending on the merits of the individual, monetary remuneration is provided to those who excel.

When it comes to IT staff development and the development of IT in Malta in general, Crimsonwing is very much involved. The company is involved in apprenticeship training and it provides IT awareness sessions to students who are reading for a degree at University. These sessions are also delivered to MCAST students.

Crimsonwing also offers training courses for its employees. Training courses are carried out both locally and abroad. Employees are sponsored their Masters degree and other courses. The company follows a training needs analysis programme for all staff. The system of performance appraisal is attached to the training programme. Employees are also given courses in soft skills such as team building.

Thistle IT Services

Thistle IT Services Limited is a very small company. It employs four employees including a manager. Thistle's mother company is Dutch and its core business rests on the development of software.



Due to its small size the company recruits people that are highly specialised in the field of IT and it adopts a number of measures when recruiting new staff. Staff would need to sit for tests and solve case studies to prove their abilities in software design and development.

There is only one female employee engaged with Thistle IT Services. She works as a software programmer, is married and has a son. Thistle gave the employee the possibility to work from home. In this respect the company provided her with a company laptop and an Internet connection.

Mr. Jurgen Rakkers, Software Consultant, claimed, "As long as employees respect the deadlines of projects, the company can afford to be flexible. We would consider employing another woman to achieve more gender balance. The company also offers employees the possibility to work on reduced hours and/or flexible time arrangements."

The company offers training for its staff especially on new computer languages. Mr. Rakkers explained that training courses are offered to those employees who are willing to pursue with their studies, "To a certain extent that is what we want from our people - that they take the initiative and wish to progress. There is no difference by gender. Opportunities are open for all."

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	4
Female employees	1
Managers	1
Female managers	Nil
IT personnel	4
Female IT personnel	1
Managers in IT department	1
Female managers in IT department	Nil

Enemalta Corporation



“To retain IT employees with the Corporation, employees have the possibility to grow career wise, have good working conditions and are offered job security.”



Enemalta is a state owned company dealing with the generation and distribution of electricity, importation and distribution of fuel products and bottled gas known as LPG. The services are offered across Malta and Gozo and range from domestic use to industrial and commercial activities.

Enemalta has a workforce of almost 2,000 workers out of whom only 6.8 % are females. Females occupy mainly clerical positions. However it is worth noting that within the IT department females make up almost 50 % of total IT staff.

Enemalta's IT department was primarily composed of clerks who were promoted to data entry operators and who upon their own initiative of taking courses related to IT they were then promoted to technical support officers. Enemalta sponsored training courses to these employees including those leading to University degrees. In fact, a female IT employee who now is employed as web communications officer has graduated recently from University.

Occupations held by female IT staff at Enemalta include: technician support officers, executive officers and web contents officers. The former two are responsible for the maintenance of computers and offer technical support services, whereas the latter are responsible of Enemalta's website.

Enemalta has a gender equality committee composed of three males and three



females. The committee, which is chaired by a female employee, works directly with the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality between Men and Women. The main role of the committee is to inform management and employees about guidelines issued by the Commission and make sure that the Corporation follows them.

The company offers a certain degree of flexibility and in some cases the work schedule of employees can be set according to the employee's needs as long as the workflow is not disrupted. Female employees are entitled for maternity leave and can benefit from parental leave and/or career break that range from one to four years. Moreover a female employee may opt to shift on reduced hours. Although reduced hours are offered to males and females alike, females avail themselves most of this measure.

Mr. Ray Azzopardi, Assistant Human Resources Manager, said, "To retain IT employees with the Corporation, employees have the possibility to grow career wise, have good working conditions and are offered job security."

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	1849
Female employees	126
Managers	22
Female managers	1
IT personnel	14
Female IT personnel	6
Managers in IT department	3
Female managers in IT department	Nil

Megabyte

MEGABYTE
TOTAL COMPUTER SOLUTIONS

“Megabyte is for diversity at the workplace. Men and women have different qualities that, if combined, lead to very good results.”



Megabyte Limited is a Maltese owned company, which currently employs a total of 59 full-timers and 2 part-timers. Megabyte is an IT system integrator and offers a wide range of services in IT including: management consultancy, software services, engineering services, and training in IT.

Mr. John Ambrogio, General Manager, states, “Megabyte is a talent incubator. Working at Megabyte improves an individual's work experience and track record. Employees are exposed to a wide variety of customers and also have the possibility to enhance their knowledge in IT. These add more value to a person's credentials.”

“Megabyte is for diversity at the workplace. Men and women have different qualities that, if combined, lead to very good results. Although females are usually associated with marriage, our company has sought to eliminate this stereotype. Women fare better and the few that take up a career in IT are very good. They are dedicated a lot and are very good at multi-tasking. They usually enter into the industry to excel in their career” Mr. Ambrogio remarked.

Ms. Mary Grace Busuttill, Enterprise Business Consultant, said, “During the interview, I felt that the job was appealing and that it suited me. I am lucky because I found what I was looking for. I have flexible hours and have the facility to work from home. The company sponsors training for us. Besides we are given the privilege to go on training abroad. I have availed myself of such measures.”

Her tasks deal mainly with the implementation of software systems that directly match clients' needs. She was primarily engaged as a junior business analyst.



Then was promoted to senior systems analyst and ultimately to consultant. Mr. Ambrogio confirmed, "Both males and females have an equal chance of being selected. We would like to have both males and females at management posts."

Ms. Busuttill has been working with Megabyte since 1998, she is 27, married and has one child. She is currently working on reduced hours and was given the possibility to work from home on teleworking arrangements. Apart from these measures the company also offers flexible time arrangements. Ambrogio stated that, "Although both males and females can avail themselves of such measures, yet females make most use of them. However, these measures are helping us to retain our employees. They are too valuable to lose."

Ms. Busuttill feels, "having a career in IT is very rewarding and dynamic, since there are various areas of specialisation." Although women are in the minority in her department, this does not affect her. In fact she now got used to the idea of being surrounded by males since even when at University women were in the minority. In this regard she said that people especially students need to become aware of the possible careers that are available in IT. Similarly Mr. Ambrogio confirmed, "Few women apply when we issue a call for applications. I would say the ratio is 10:1. However, the few women that apply are very good."

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	61
Female employees	13
Managers	7
Female managers	3
IT personnel	39
Female IT personnel	7
Managers in IT department	3
Female managers in IT department	Nil



“At Methode Electronics gender equality is valued. As a company, Methode strictly abides with gender equality laws and makes sure that it does not discriminate amongst its employees on the basis of gender.”



Methode Electronics Malta Limited is a full service switch supplier involved in the design and manufacture of electromechanical and electronic controls, sensors and switch devices for Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) worldwide. Major customers include General Motors, Ford, Jaguar, Mazda, Volvo and BMW among others. The company has been operating in Malta for the last 10 years.

Methode Electronics is committed to provide the best possible working environment for its employees. The company offers a certain amount of flexibility and tries to meet individual requirements. Full-time workers can shift to reduced hours, they can benefit from special leave and the company also holds a system of succession planning in management occupations whereby an employee who is on leave can be replaced by another colleague. The company has also implemented a number of policies such as a health and safety policy, a reporting system known as 'Myself Workplace', a training policy and an equal opportunities policy among others.

Mr. David Parnis, Human Resources Manager, explains, “Methode is one of the leading companies in Malta. In fact it is used as a benchmark for most other Maltese companies in order to help them raise their standards.”

Mr. Parnis claimed that “at Methode Electronics gender equality is valued. As a company, Methode strictly abides with gender equality laws and makes sure that it does not discriminate amongst its employees on the basis of gender.” People working within the company are all very proficient and are respected for their capabilities. He insisted that employees are given the same treatment irrespective of their grade and gender.

As to IT within Methode, Mr. Parnis referred specifically to a female IT manager who used to work with the company. He stated that Methode did not find any



problems to promote her to the job. She had a very good track record and was excellent in her job. As a result she was directly promoted to the post of IT manager.

Unfortunately, Mr. Parnis said, this employee decided to leave the company because of childbirth. She wished to dedicate more time to her child. "Methode offered her all possible arrangements to stay working with the company but this was her personal decision and Methode could do nothing about it. She was a very good employee and the company is going to lose her capabilities and excellent performance."

Meanwhile Methode offers training to all staff. Employees have the opportunity of getting training both locally and overseas. When training is carried out locally, an expert in the field is brought to Malta to deliver lectures. Sponsorship of degrees or other courses is also available. Training is directly linked to career development plans for all staff. This ensures that all staff are provided with the best possible work packages and that they have the possibility to progress within the company's structure. Training is also directly linked to a performance management system whereby employees who train and perform in their occupations are rewarded with wage increments and promotions.

"Here at Methode we are interested at having the right person for the right job irrespective of gender. If the person is excellent in his or her job and proves to be so s/he is offered the best work packages in the market," Mr. Parnis concluded.

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	650
Female employees	320
Managers	10
Female managers	3
IT personnel	9
Female IT personnel	2
Managers in IT department	1
Female managers in IT department	1

Keyworld Internet Services



“IT jobs are many times associated to something tedious and boring. But it’s not true. IT is fun and challenging.”



Keyworld Limited is a small firm operating in the communications sector. It is an Internet Service Provider and employs 16 employees of which almost half are females.

An informal environment prevails within the company. Keyworld Ltd. offers flexible working conditions for its employees such as the opportunity to work from home and set their own flexible timetables. For example employees can opt to start early in the morning and finish off earlier in the day or vice versa. Management is also considering the possibility of setting up a nursery at the workplace if the need arises. Working on reduced hours or part-time basis is also possible.

“At Keyworld it does not make a difference whether to recruit male or female IT professionals. The company is after employees who have the right capabilities and knowledge of the subject,” says Mr. Christian Ransley, General Manager. He adds, “however women tend to perform better than men.” Ransley referred to the female who works as senior developer and web services administrator with his company and claimed that he is very satisfied with her performance because she shows initiative and possesses the right capabilities for the job.

Ms. Analise Said is 22 years old, single and a University graduate in Business and Computing. She has been working with the company for almost two years and her main tasks include the development of new software and web development.



About her work Said states, “it is dynamic not a routine job. It is one of the positive aspects of my job always dealing with new projects. I also deal with clients, meeting different people. I also consider this as very positive. IT jobs are many times associated to something tedious and boring. But it’s not true. IT is fun and challenging.”

Being the only female IT employee with the company does not discourage her; rather she describes it as an advantage. As she explained women and men have different perspectives of how to tackle day-to-day job requirements. Out of a diverse pool of talents companies tend to benefit most.

She claimed that at Keyworld gender difference is not felt. However, she maintained that at University she felt more gender bias than at the place of work. Males used to consider themselves more proficient in the field. Women were considered as less able in the area of IT. “IT is ideal for women since it gives you a certain amount of flexibility like working from home. However, few women know about IT occupations. When I was in secondary school I didn’t know anything about IT occupations. There is lack of information about career prospects in IT particularly for women. When I started reading for a degree in IT I hardly knew about the types of jobs I could apply for,” Said remarked.

TOTAL NUMBER OF:

Employees	16
Female employees	7
Managers	4
Female managers	1
IT personnel	10
Female IT personnel	1
Managers in IT department	2
Female managers in IT department	Nil

Conclusion

This brochure has sought to provide a series of good practices among companies that promote gender diversity in IT. The case studies show that it is possible to have both males and females working in IT occupations. To achieve more gender balance, companies can:

- Show commitment towards gender equality;
- Introduce transparency in recruitment and promotion procedures, hold regular staff reviews, and select individuals on the basis of merit;
- Introduce flexible work arrangements such as reduced hours, teleworking arrangements, career breaks, part-time work, childcare and special leave;
- Adopt a number of specific HR policies such as gender equality policy, sexual harassment policy, and policies for reporting grievances;
- Develop an attractive work environment that promotes training and career progression initiatives such as sponsorship of training courses and/or degrees, and the organisation of training sessions both locally and abroad;
- Enhance workers' participation at the workplace through open communication, regular meetings, teamwork, and employees' satisfaction surveys;
- Participate in partnerships with schools, colleges, and the university to encourage more students, particularly females, into IT-related careers.

Finally, as shown by the examples presented in this brochure, gender balance in IT is possible. Both men and women are capable to take up a career in IT. Their different qualities could in turn benefit employers in achieving higher levels of innovation and competitiveness in the area. Moreover technology can provide employees with the kind of flexibility they require. IT is the tool that gives the best positive solution to both employers and employees.

Women & Men In the IT Labour Market

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