

BAE Systems

Attracting diverse candidates through flexible working

BAE SYSTEMS

INSPIRED WORK

Company information

BAE Systems designs, builds and supports advanced defence, aerospace and security solutions that provide a technological and performance edge. Our proud heritage of innovation continues apace today and we have some of the best and brightest people pioneering tomorrow's technology for today. With some 83,400 employees in 40 countries our work goes beyond our products and services, creating real economic value in the communities we work, supporting companies and partners in our supply chain and safeguarding commercial interests in the physical and virtual world.

Diversity and inclusion themes

- ✓ Using role models
- ✓ Challenging bias
- ✓ Building staff networks
- ✓ Flexible working

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Jenny Westworth,
Senior Manufacturing
Engineer, Military Air
and Information.

BAE Systems has introduced Smart Working to create a flexible working environment.

It is essential that our leaders act as role models.



Diversity encourages innovation.



Background, aims and objectives

BAE Systems recognises that a diverse workforce with employees drawn from all backgrounds encourages innovation, raises employee engagement and improves productivity. The company is working hard to create an inclusive environment in which each employee feels valued, can be themselves and has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and contribute to the success of the business.

As an organisation that relies on continuous innovation and creativity, there is clear recognition that inclusion at all levels of the organisation will deliver better business performance. The changing nature of the business requires collaboration and willingness to refresh and renew capabilities, nurturing the skills of longer-serving employees and taking on new employees for new ideas and problem-solving techniques.

Steve Fogg, managing director for munitions and shared services and executive committee sponsor for diversity and inclusion, said,

"I am proud to be the business sponsor for diversity and inclusion across BAE Systems. By recognising and embracing each other's differences, we can harness them to build and strengthen relationships. This will help us to maintain and recruit talented people, outperform our competitors and support our business needs."

BAE Systems Diversity and inclusion vision

To have an inclusive global work environment where all individuals are respected, and where our diverse workforce is effectively managed to improve business performance and enhance our competitive advantage.

Support total performance by utilising the Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Matrix to facilitate progress on D&I.

Recruit the best talent into our business, attracting and hiring at least in line with labour force demographics.

Develop and utilise all of the talent and skills we have available, growing the diversity of talent at senior levels.

Strengthen our attractiveness as an employer by motivating and engaging all of our people, and delivering positive employment experiences.

Strengthen our position in global markets by increasing our awareness and understanding of the value of differences and developing our competence in inclusive behaviours.

BAE Systems Diversity & inclusion commitment

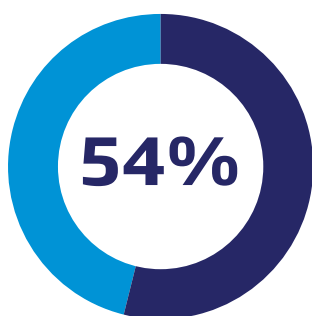
Customer focus – a more diverse workforce has a greater range of skills and capabilities, which helps us to better understand our customers and their requirements.

Financial performance – creating an inclusive workplace increases employee engagement, leading to improved productivity and better employee retention.

BAE Systems is committed to the following:

Programme execution – diversity encourages innovation by bringing in new ways of thinking while helping us attract the best talent from all backgrounds.

Responsible behaviour – creating an inclusive work environment is consistent with high standards of business conduct and helps protect our reputation.

Work-life balance

54% of women with children leave the workplace to get a better work-life balance.

Source: Project 28 - 40
<http://tinyurl.com/n9vwnqy>

Specific initiatives*Attracting more diverse candidates*

BAE Systems' workforce has in the past been heavily skewed towards more traditionally male-dominated skills such as engineering and manual skills (eg electricians and welders). Furthermore, their main sites are often in geographic locations that are less diverse than major cities, and therefore, the challenge of attracting applications from a broader pool is a real one. This is further compounded by the lack of women studying STEM subjects and pursuing careers in the STEM sector.

To attract more diverse candidates to apply for jobs in the organisation, they have taken a number of different approaches.

Firstly, they have partnered with a number of external organisations to attract more women to join the organisation including Women in Science and Engineering (WISE), the Women's Engineering Society, WorkingMums.co.uk, diversityjobs.co.uk and The Diversity Group directory, Stonewall Proud Employers, Outstanding and Business in the Community. They have also developed a partnership with the Windsor Fellowship Trust where they offered 25 summer intern places as part of their 2014 internship programme to individuals who were female and/or from a Black, Asian or minority ethnic group.

Secondly, the organisation's diversity networks have supported local/national recruitment campaigns and participated in one of the UK's largest early educational STEM programmes. More than 300 active school ambassadors, 35% of whom are women, help make female role models visible. Female graduates and apprentices visit schools, colleges and universities to explain and demonstrate the benefits of a career in engineering, and online resources have also been designed, showcasing engineering as an accessible, exciting and rewarding career option for both young women and men.

Finally, there is a focus on ensuring there are appropriate and diverse role models on the graduate and apprentice websites and at campus fairs, and the company also regularly publicises the success of female graduates and apprentices in national, regional and trade press and journals in addition to extensive promotion through social media.

Unconscious bias training

To ensure their recruitment process is as fair and transparent as possible, in 2013, BAE Systems launched unconscious bias training for all of its leadership population. A total of 6,200 leaders completed an e-learning module and facilitated conversations. A proportion of this training specifically focused on recruitment and talent development to prevent unconscious bias in resourcing.

Smart working

BAE Systems has introduced a bold and innovative approach to flexible working (smart working), which has produced significant business benefits. This has been implemented within the naval ships business—a unionised shipbuilding environment historically reliant on fixed working hours and a traditional management style.

The specific objectives for implementing smart working were to:

- Create a modern working environment.
- Enhance and improve employees' work-life balance.
- Improve employee engagement and promote increased diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

There was also the expectation that flexible working would have additional business benefits, such as

- Improving the company's employment proposition and our ability to attract the best candidates.
- Reducing turnover/increasing retention.
- Reducing the cost of overtime.

Previous employee surveys and focus groups highlighted that the prevailing culture dissuaded employees from working flexibly even if they had the option to do so. Furthermore, part-time employees were concerned that they might be perceived as less committed than their full-time peers. Smart working was introduced against this backdrop and is now available to all office-based staff in naval ships via two distinct propositions:

For professional staff:

- A significant reduction in core hours required each day.
- The ability to shorten and lengthen working days to suit business and personal needs.
- The ability to bank additional hours worked.
- A flexible lunch break of up to two hours.

For managers:

- No core hours and no formal leave approvals required.
- Expectation that these employees will manage their time effectively to deliver successfully against objectives and meet personal commitments as needed.

The smart working communications campaign included a dedicated Intranet site with case studies, supporting documentation for managers and facilitated conversations with teams, ensuring they felt genuinely encouraged, empowered and trusted to work in a different way.

Leadership commitment was also vital, and members of the management committee acted as role models and personal sponsors, making it clear that smart working had the full support of senior leaders.

Impact

Smart working is subject to regular review and evaluation to measure its impact since its introduction. The review includes employee focus groups and analysis of all available data. Findings include:

- To date, flexible leave has been utilised by 76% of in scope employees, often to accommodate absences that would otherwise have been 'paid leave.'
- The need for better work-life balance was the highest rated priority for employees in terms of employment proposition. Employee feedback now consistently suggests that the ability to flex the working day supports this balance in the following ways:
 - Easing childcare commitments.
 - More convenient time to assist elderly relatives.
 - Using the gym at better times.
 - Avoiding rush hour traffic.
 - Attending personal appointments.
 - Allowing parents to return to work with greater ease after the birth of a child.
- There was also consensus across the focus groups that flexible working had affected workplace culture in the following ways:
 - 'Face time' felt to be less important and more acceptance of flexibility generally.
 - Reduced 'long hours' culture.
 - More relaxed office atmosphere.
- Consistent focus group feedback indicates that new candidates have a different perception of working at naval ships and that retention has also improved.

Challenges

One challenge is to ensure that the organisation continues to improve the overall employment proposition and stay abreast of 21st century thinking in relation to flexibility for all employees, particularly in view of changing demographics. Investing in new technology will also play an important part in allowing employees to exercise a greater range of options for delivering against objectives and achieving new levels of work-life balance.

Hints and tips

- Leadership commitment is vital, and it is essential that leaders act as role models to visibly sponsor any new initiative. The managing director of BAE Systems states: "I've been really encouraged to see that many of you are considering your own approach to working in a more flexible way...I've personally embraced the principles of smart working and now finish early most Fridays to collect my kids from school".
- Recognising that it isn't possible to quantify fully the benefits that a new initiative might prior to launch, a 'leap of faith' may be required to bring about cultural change.

Next steps

- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the recently-introduced working from home option where any desk-based employee can work at home for a maximum of two days per week. More generally, reviewing and continuing to develop the employment proposition, particularly in relation to generational differences in motivations and expectations.

→ See Appendix 3 for more guidance on specific initiatives linked to this case study:

- Job advertising.
- Recruitment and selection training.
- Role of leadership.
- Flexible working.

→ For useful resources and organisations to support your work, see Appendix 4.



To find out more about the case study, contact diversity@raeng.org.uk