

## SME CASE STUDY: G&B ELECTRONICS

G&B Electronics is a small family run manufacturing company offering printing circuit board assembly services, employing over 50 people.

When Laura McBrown joined her family company, the majority of the workforce was male, with an average age of 50-years-old. “It was a slightly intimidating place at the time”, she admits. After 16 years with G&B Electronics, she took over as the company’s Managing Director and, together with her sister Kate, who is the HR Director, set about to change this culture and establish a place of work where everyone feels like they belong and can voice their opinion and be themselves.

It’s a small company and they don’t have a formal EDI strategy in place. The change had to be done carefully, with listening to their employees and their perspectives at the heart of it. “People are scared of the unknown”, Laura said. “We proactively tried to make people open up and build their confidence.” For example, while recruiting for an engineering role, they knew of a female

candidate who would be suitable but who didn’t want to go for the job because she felt she could only do part of it. Kate worked with the agency to arrange a more informal interview and is delighted to say that she became an effective and popular member of the team.

After six years as an MD, they have a more balanced workforce with women making up around half of the company’s positions including senior management and key roles and the average age reducing. The leadership and development skills programme has been helpful in encouraging their team to be more vocal about their ideas, with the business thriving and winning awards for promoting new ideas and diverse thinking. The safe environment they created has also paid off during the Covid-19 crisis, when, despite big pressure on the team, the company avoided any problems with quality and levels of the production. “By changing the culture and being more attuned to team G&B we have created a real place of belonging”, Laura said.

