

## BLOG FROM VICTORIA HUGHES, HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY, VINCI FACILITIES A MALE DOMINATED PROFESSION LIKE FM MAY TAKE TIME TO CHANGE

**N**ews headlines about the lack of women on the boards of the FTSE 250 women combined with details about gender pay gap data (GPG) published recently has all served to highlight the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. That attention is a good thing. But what is it telling us – really?

Ask any women in business and they have similar stories. There is still unfair discrimination, but there is a lot of change occurring too that goes unnoticed. But first we must face some facts.

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) research has found that men on average earned £11,000 more than women in the profession in 2016, up from £7,000 in 2015. In fact, whilst women start their careers on a par with men, by the time they reached the 46-55 age bracket women earned £13,000 less than their male peers. Problems too at the top, UK wide GPG data shows women are underrepresented in top-paid jobs when compared to the business as a whole in 82 per cent of companies who reported.

It's no big surprise that the ONS lists construction and building trade supervisors as having the highest men-favoured gender pay gap at 45 per cent. The arguments state that the historic pipeline of experienced and or talented females is just not as prevalent as our male counterparts. Fair enough, but right now, today, females still struggle to push past middle management in large enough numbers, and research supports this.

Behaviours are embedded and need to shift. Unconscious bias and micro-practices performed subconsciously affect this transition. Tiny throw away comments, the tendency to recruit people like ourselves and board room banter can negatively impact mindset for all parties.

Every company I know recognises that diversity is a key component to an effective sustainable business. A mix of backgrounds, values, perception and attitudes stimulate debate and challenge executive decisions and if companies do not address diversity in their senior management positions the company will be worse off for it. I'm not in favour of quotas or female specific programmes as these can be counterproductive. Rather companies should embrace modern life, call out bias and perceived stigma to promote inclusivity for all. This accompanied by a change in culture of middle and senior management to accept feedback and act on these often-unconscious behaviours (for all genders) will start a ripple that will grow into a sizable wave of change and improvement.

Within VINCI our results put us low on the league table, and perceptions could be that we do not promote diversity within our organisation. However, my experience is one of feeling supported and valued in my role before and after becoming a mother. Have I encountered discrimination, inappropriate comments, and frustration across my various employers and job interviews – yes and the explosion of the #metoo campaign and the requirement for the



Victoria Hughes, Head of Sustainability, Vinci Facilities

GPG demonstrates there are real issues that need closer scrutiny. However, the GPG data from the ONS shows that the largest difference in pay is 62 per cent in favour of women for the midwifery profession, a traditionally female dominated occupation. Therefore, in a traditionally male dominated profession it will take time to challenge behaviours and implement change to successfully pull the pipeline of female talent into our more senior roles. Let's stop finger pointing at industries that are doing great things despite what the data says and recognise the giant leaps we have made in the last 20 years for greater diversity.

## VACHERIN SETS OFF ON 600-MILE BIKE RIDE FOR CHARITY

**M**embers of London's premier catering provider, Vacherin, are set to embark on a 665-mile cycle ride to return to 'the home of Vacherin' in September 2018.

The journey, which will start at Vacherin's headquarters in Hatton Garden, London, on Saturday 8th September, will finish on the Swiss French border, at the Museum of Vacherin in the Jura region on Friday 14th September.

As part of the 'Le Tour De Vacherin', Vacherin is hoping to raise £15,000 for its chosen charity, Luminary Bakery. A social enterprise based in East London, Luminary Bakery offers opportunities for women who have experienced social or economic disadvantage to build their skills and improve their futures.

The charity adventure takes place just months after the release of the annual 'Vacherin Cares' report, listing the company's continuous efforts to maintain their impressive CSR and sustainability results. Vacherin has already raised over a third of its £15,000 donation target. If you'd like to donate to the cause and pledge your support to the team, please visit the fundraising page here:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/vacherinletourdevacherin](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/vacherinletourdevacherin)

## PARETO FM TO COMPLETE GROUP SKYDIVE FOR CANCER RESEARCH UK

Pareto FM is raising funds for Cancer Research UK in the form of a group sky dive, due to take place on 1st September 2018.

The sky dive is one of the highest within the UK, and will see the team jump from 15,000 ft which includes a sixty second free fall.

Andrew Hulbert, Managing Director, commented: "We have all been directly affected by cancer, whether it's family, friends or colleagues. It's a life altering illness and incredibly disruptive to the lives of those it affects. Within Pareto FM, three of our colleagues, have been diagnosed with cancer in the last four weeks. Pareto's ethos has always been to be hugely supportive of and engaged with our team members, so we wanted to do something to show that support and simultaneously recognise the incredible work of Cancer Research UK."

In terms of the high number of jumpers Hulbert said: "We went to our team of 30 managers, expecting a couple of them to say they were interested and eight of them came back to say they wanted in! Furthermore, three of them are petrified of heights, but wanted to show their support. We thought this was a great opportunity to show the Pareto FM community spirit and raise a good amount of money for the chosen charity."

Pareto FM have fully funded all eight jumpers, so any money raised will go directly to Cancer Research UK. Those who wish to support the group sky dive can donate here: <https://tinyurl.com/ParetoGroupSkyDive>

