News from everywoman and our partners, coupled with the latest thinking from the world of leadership and diversity.
Welcome to UPDATE!

Welcome to UPDATE, where you’ll find the latest findings in employee engagement and discover what we’ve been up to at everywoman.

You’ll find news from our partners, and the freshest thinking from the world of leadership and diversity.

Since the last edition we’ve had the pleasure of hosting some exciting events, introducing hundreds of women to role models and celebrating extraordinary entrepreneurs.

At the everywoman Academy: Advancing Women in Banking and Financial Services, we heard from Charlotte Hogg, the Bank of England’s first female COO in its 321-year history, who’s smashed glass ceilings to lead teams at the most prestigious financial institutions including Experian, Morgan Stanley and Santander. While over half of the workforce in financial services is female, just 11% of senior staff are women. Charlotte told us how diversity is at the core of the Bank of England’s ethos and what they’re doing to drive an inclusive workforce. You can read more about the event at www.everywoman.com/clubblog

The year ended on a high with the 2015 NatWest everywoman Awards where we unveiled 10 winners at a tremendous ceremony at The Dorchester. All of the winners displayed courage and determination, and once again we were privileged to meet such inspirational women. Each of them had a unique story to tell and we’re sure their journeys will be of continued success. You can discover more about our winners at www.everywoman.com.

So, what will 2016 bring? We’re looking forward to reaching out to tens of thousands of women worldwide, online and offline through our Awards, Forums and the everywomanNetwork. Plus we’re looking forward to kick-starting the year with the everywoman Forum: Advancing Women in Technology and the 2016 FDM everywoman in Technology Awards on Tuesday 23 February. It’ll be a joy, once again, to witness the rare sight of 600 women in technology under one roof.

In this edition of UPDATE we’re exploring:
• Mindfulness on our members’ minds
• Leadership trends 2016: what does the future hold?
• The science of the open-plan office

Finally, we’d like to give a warm welcome to our latest corporate members Experian, Sainsbury’s and National Grid.

We hope you enjoy this edition of UPDATE,

Maxine Benson MBE
Founder everywoman

Karen Gill MBE
Founder everywoman

Maxine & Karen
In every edition of UPDATE we give you an insight into what our everywomanNetwork members are thinking. In January, we polled them on mindfulness; the conscious, non-judgemental focus of your attention on the emotions, thoughts and sensations occurring in the present moment.\(^1\)

Mindfulness has moved up the agenda: more press-time than ever before is being devoted to the ancient Buddhist practice, and it seems the everywomanNetwork has taken an interest too. In our most popular webinar to date, An Introduction to Mindfulness in the Workplace, hundreds of our members came to discover how it can improve our wellbeing and productivity during our working hours.

Of those polled, 65% have tried mindfulness, with 7% practising regularly. But why has it got everyone’s attention? Chances are, when companies like Google, Intel and Facebook are gifting mindfulness classes to colleagues, others will start to take stock and listen. But recently, a steady flow of research has given merit to anecdotal reports of its benefits, which include reduced anxiety, higher levels of concentration and better conflict management\(^2\), all of which can help interns through to CEOs lead better working lives.

The results of mindfulness are tangible, as proved by the healthcare company, Aetna, who currently deliver The Mindfulness at Work\(^{™}\) programme. “We have seen first-hand how these mind-body programs have helped our employees deal with stress more effectively and help them achieve better overall health,”\(^3\) said Elease Wright, head of Human Resources at Aetna. During its pilot programme in 2011, participants’ sleep quality improved by 20%, there were an additional 62 minutes of productivity a week and stress levels decreased by 33%\(^4\). Once these findings were discovered, it has since rolled out the programme nationwide.

As more organisations see the benefits of mindfulness on their bottom-line, and most importantly, their people, it seems it’s definitely here for the long-haul. From management consultants firms to banks and tech start-ups, the corporate world is embracing it, offering lunch-time yoga sessions, gifting online courses, and even creating mindfulness ‘zones’.

If you are a member of the everywomanNetwork, you can log in and access recorded versions of the webinar on www.everywoman.com. If you’re not yet a member and would like more information about becoming a corporate partner, please contact membership@everywoman.com.

\(^1\) http://www.wisebrain.org/papers/MindfulnessPsyTx.pdf
\(^2\) http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/07-08/ce-corner.aspx
\(^4\) https://news.aetna.com/2014/09/journey-personal-organizational-wellness/
How role models are making a difference

Hillary Clinton once said that “women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world”, and while the socioeconomic consequences of gender inequality are often-cited, the commercial forfeits are equally bleak.

Research states that UK business could potentially benefit by £5bn a year if companies unblocked the female talent pipeline for their 500,000 female middle managers, so the question that’s equally concerning employees and their female middle managers is, how?

TAKE A LOOK AT THE EVERYWOMANNETWORK VIDEO ON THE HOME PAGE AT WWW.EVERYWOMAN.COM
“When we were developing the everywoman Network we really wanted to understand what the blocks were that were stopping so many women progressing beyond middle management,” said Maxine Benson MBE, co-founder of everywoman. “Many female managers think that progression is going to happen for them. They’ve got the ability, they’ve got the ambition and they think that’s enough.”

The Focus on the Pipeline report commissioned by everywoman, involving 400 female middle managers and 200 senior HR leaders, aimed to uncover the challenges that female middle managers face and how they can be alleviated. The results point to key findings: in order for employers to unblock the talent pipeline they need to encourage female middle managers to take more responsibility for their own careers; align HR leaders’ perceptions with the ambitions of female middle managers; extend flexible working options; and engage could-be leaders by connecting them with role models within the organisation.

When it comes to enabling connections between women in business our everywoman Club member, Heather Melville, is an expert. The Director of Strategic Partnerships & Head of Inclusion initiatives, Commercial & Private Banking for RBS said: “When I joined RBS 14 years ago I couldn’t see the senior women or role models, I knew they were there but I couldn’t see them.” She took the initiative to create her own women’s network, RBS Focused Women, which is quite the success; 12,000-strong members, presence in over 30 countries and run entirely by volunteers.

“We focus on personal development, how we can help bring change in the organisation and we’re very integrated into the business. If I were starting out again I would probably tell myself not worry as much because I had a network of friends and professionals who have helped me and that I completely trust in. I’ve been able to share my concerns with them and I’ve been very receptive in taking their advice. I’d say to my younger self ‘don’t worry, just find a trusted confidant.’”

The RBS Focus Women Group is pertaining to the needs that Heather had while climbing the career ladder and the same trepidations of millions of women worldwide. By giving women access to role models it can help them to forge better careers, simply by raising their aspirations and sharing stories.

Heather Melville stars in our video showcasing the benefits of the everywoman Network. To watch it, visit www.everywoman.com/networkvideo

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“Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world”

HILLARY CLINTON
Barclays sizes up the 2016 workplace

Throughout 2015, we shared how our partners were tackling some of the biggest workplace talking points - from digital overload to LGBT diversity, employee wellbeing to cross-generational management. As a new year gets underway, we explore what’s on Barclays’ agenda for the coming 12 months.
Welcome more male champions of gender diversity

The Women’s Business Council has called for “an army of senior male leaders to become agents of change”, something that Barclays has wholeheartedly embraced through its partnership with the United Nation’s high profile HeForShe campaign, fronted by actress Emma Watson.

“Gender equality in the workplace isn’t about men or women; it’s about leadership. At Barclays we recognise that that’s very much about a joint partnership, so this natural evolution of the gender equality movement to having a broader conversation involving both sexes, is something we see as hugely positive,” says Mark McLane, Head of Global Diversity and Inclusion at Barclays.

“We also recognise that real transformation takes time and consistency of message; you can’t just launch a campaign and hope for incremental change. We see our partnership with the UN as the vehicle for communicating with boys and men around the world, and alongside that we’ve come up with some very specific and tangible asks of internal colleagues who sign up to the campaign.”

This includes making commitments around mentoring, sponsorship and even working with community organisations focussed on empowering women. On International Women’s Day (8th March 2016), Barclays will re-launch its campaign both publically and internally, during which CEO Jes Staley will reiterate his position as a gender diversity impact champion, and senior male leaders will invite colleagues to join them in advocating for gender equality across the organisation.

“In 2014 and 2015 we’ve met our goals of a 1% annual increase in the numbers of women in senior leadership positions across the bank.

But we don’t just look at managing director levels; we look at director levels too because that’s your pipeline in. We have goals at board level, at senior leadership level and even with regards to our graduate population. If 50% of the graduating classes today are women, why would we not be challenging ourselves to get as close as possible to 50% of our incoming graduates being women?” asks McLane.
Flexibility for every employee

Experts predict a significant reduction in 2016 in the stigma attached to flexible working, particularly for returning mothers, as more and more employees look for organisations offering a range of flexible working styles and benefits suited to their personal needs.

Barclays contribution to this trend is its ‘Dynamic Working: How Do You Live Your Life?’ campaign. It isn’t an HR policy or a flexible working charter; the campaign invites employees to take part in a wider conversation about how life stages impact workplace needs across the board. It asks the question of each employee: do you feel empowered to be able to take advantage of that as an asset for your career and personal life at Barclays?

“Life stages impact workplace needs: whether I’m a man who wants to leave at 3pm on Thursdays because I coach my daughter’s football team, or I find myself in my 50s and caring part-time for a parent, or I’m a first time parent, a single parent, I’m adopting children, or I want to take a career break to travel the world or volunteer in the community. This campaign empowers the individual to look for ways to work dynamically around those needs,” says McLane.

“I can go on the Dynamic Working website and chances are I’ll find a story there from someone with a similar experience who I can call up and ask how they navigated that situation. This peer-to-peer rather than organisation-to-employee approach also helps managers hold these conversations; in our virtual line manager clinics, you can get advice from other managers who’ve been asked the same questions. Obviously we can’t say yes to every request, but what this approach does is ensure there’s a framework in place for exploring every option.”

Keen to ensure this campaign is as evolving as HeForShe, Barclays visualises the number of Dynamic Working hours taken by employees - from time off for volunteering to career breaks - with giant clocks displayed in its London, New York, Johannesburg and Singapore buildings. “This sends a clear message to employees that the campaign is on-going; that the conversations are continually being had,” says McLane.
Lower turnover rates, better performing employees who advance quicker, and higher engagement scores are the rewards for employers who invest in developing their staff. In the digital era, technology is drastically changing the way we learn, with e-training, virtual classrooms and smartphone-enabled gamification systems becoming the norm.

For Barclays, new technologies are also an enabling factor for including its wider colleague networks in events like the bi-annual Global Women Leadership Forum taking place in London, New York, Hong Kong and Johannesburg in May this year.

As with the 2014 event, over 400 Barclays colleagues will be in attendance across the four centres, but a soon-to-launch app will ensure this year’s forum can be attended virtually by anyone within the organisation, along with an everywoman-hosted virtual learning platform, live blogs and a Twitter wall to encourage conversation for all those present, whether in person or virtually.

“There’s still great value in face-to-face learning and networking, but to be able to scale it takes a technology component. This is about taking the forum to new populations. Our employees will be able to see a keynote speaker from their desks and participate in the discussion.”
Is it the end for the open-plan office?
It was supposed to inspire teamwork and greater efficiency, but study after study shows that the open-plan office - popularised by German workspaces of the 1950s - can in fact spell disaster for employees’ concentration spans, productivity, creativity, engagement and even general wellbeing. The near constant distraction of others’ conversations even has a name in scientific circles – ‘the irrelevant speech effect’. And the workplace which takes steps to eliminate this disruptive background noise - using so-called ‘sound masking’ through ‘pink noise’, broadcast through speakers to make human speech less discernible - will be rewarded with employees who are 27% less stressed, 38% more productive and 174% happier all round.

The anti open-plan movement has been given new life by the Quiet Revolution, led by self-proclaimed introvert Susan Cain. Her seminal work Quiet: The Power Of Introverts In A World That Won't Stop Talking sold two million copies worldwide in its first two years. Her TED talk on the subject has been viewed over 13 million times. And now she’s focusing her attention on the workplace, her Quiet Leadership Institute’s website recently asking: “What kind of sadist concocted the open-plan office layout?” She’s also partnered with office designers Steelcase to produce Susan Cain Quiet Spaces by Steelcase, a range of office pods. They aim, through special acoustics, gaze-averse windows and customisable mood lighting, to enable an environment in which the introvert - thought to make up 50% of the workforce, but only 4% of leadership teams - can flourish.

“Open plans might work well for extroverts who thrive on social interaction to get things done, but for introverts, who can be easily overwhelmed by stimuli and who need alone time to recharge and stay focused, this kind of setup can have the opposite effect,” says one of Cain’s Quiet Revolutionaries, Elan Morgan.
"Designing for engagement is designing to make those positive moods more likely"

“It was difficult to concentrate and stay on task in the office with all the surrounding noise and movement, and I was often pulled away to consult on other projects outside my main work. Rather than engaging more with my co-workers, I had to withdraw as an act of self-preservation.

“Spending eight to ten hours a day in an environment that left me exhausted and scattered began to take its toll. When I finally had to seek out prescription medication to deal with the stress, I knew that something had to give,” says Morgan.

Satisfying both the need for teams to work collaboratively and the introvert to perform optimally, poses a challenge for environmental psychologists.

“Via a chain of psychological chain reactions, mood influences worker engagement; more positive moods link to higher levels of engagement. Designing for engagement is designing to make those positive moods more likely,” writes Sally Augustin, Founder of Design With Science.

A number of psychology studies are feeding this thinking. One, involving 47 office workers in London, found that when given the opportunity to arrange and decorate their own workspace, employees were 32% more productive than the control group allowed no input into their surroundings. Another found that curvy interiors and rounded meeting spaces triggered more satisfaction than rectilinear layouts. Too little noise is thought to have just as detrimental an effect on colleagues as too much: “In many open-plan offices, the argument is exactly the opposite - it's deathly quiet,” says Alexi Marmot, an architect and professor at UCL University College London. “A lot of open-plan offices are just rows of people only working at their computers. And people don't want to be there.”

In other studies, exposure to blues and greens has been shown to aid idea generation, red to attention
to detail, dimmer light to creativity, bright lighting analytical and evaluative thinking, higher ceilings more conducive to abstract thinking, and the presence of plants to stress reduction. Furthermore, workplaces with exposure to daylight significantly impact employees’ quality of life: a 2013 study found that those who receive natural light sleep for an additional 46 minutes per night.

Clearly then there’s a huge upside to getting the office workspace right, and one that everywoman partner Vodafone is heavily invested in. As the mobile giant moved its Netherlands outfit to a new Amsterdam location, it took the opportunity to beta test a revolutionary new office setup.

Step one was to canvass opinion and incorporate the thinking, not just of leadership but all levels of the organisation, into a temporary site ahead of the move into a permanent space in another part of town. Starting with a blank piece of paper was seen as a necessary move “to break out from traditional offices to something fresh, new, even heretical,” says CEO of Vodafone Netherlands, Jens Schulte Bockum.

“Involving staff throughout the organisation gave us a kind of sanity check on what we were proposing,” says Paul Smits, Director of Human Resources, Property and Security for Vodafone NL. “Even more important, once we determined our design strategy and transition plans, it helped build buy-in throughout the company for major changes.”

The upshot is a workspace in which there are no assigned workspaces - everyone from graduates to the CEO works in the same collaborative layout. There’s even a space - called Club 11 - in which employees can eat and socialise against a backdrop of upbeat music and outdoor terraces. But there are also plenty of breakout zones for informal conversations, as well as ‘library’ spaces where talking and phone usage are forbidden.
Starting with a blank piece of paper was seen as a necessary move

“What really surprised me was that working here was easy from the start. It felt good, almost natural, much more quickly than I would have thought,” says Bockum. “People are closer to one another, so it’s easier to have a quick chat about issues. People are communicating informally more than in previous environments and I think that adds to productivity. Mission-critical information is passed between people more easily and people have the feeling that they’re on the inside rather than struggling to keep up with what’s going on.”

Such learnings fed into Vodafone’s new UK-based call centre, the office space for 900 employees.

“We held a number of workshops with our customer advisors at Stoke asking them to talk about, draw, and even build physical models of their ideal workplace.

The finished work environment is very much a product of their feedback and ideas: whether it’s the style and layout of the desks, the chill room as a sanctuary from work, or the coloured portals that employees now walk through every day as they enter the building,” says Zoe Humphries, from the Applied Research & Consulting team at Steelcase, who managed the project.

Taking inspiration from Vodafone Netherlands, the open-plan main workspace allows for quick reconfiguration. There are also solo offices and training rooms with ergonomic seating that can be adjusted to every user, privacy screens for workspaces, controlled acoustics, and an average density of just over eight square metres per employee.

Its founder has turned its back on open-plan - the average German employee today has 30 square metres of personal space at work; their right to elbow room built into legislation. But with this much office space in London’s West End costing upwards of £60,000 per year, it remains to be seen whether cross-organisational hot-desking complete with pink noise becomes the norm.
LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Leading-edge companies know that gender-balanced groups perform at a higher level. Studies reveal that organisations with inclusive leaders are ‘70% more likely to report capturing new markets and increasing market share.’

Despite this, many organisations struggle to engage key stakeholders and influencers in their drive for greater diversity and to make headway in their quest for change.

everywoman’s ‘3 focus’ strategy drives this change at all levels. It supports companies to communicate the benefits of diversity across the business and drive higher performance though inclusivity.

To find out more contact Kate Farrow at kate@everywoman.com, or 020 7981 2574.

*Maximising women’s contribution to future economic growth: Two years on (Women’s Business Council: 2015)
Join our growing list of everywomanNetwork corporate partners, including:

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