

## Rolls for women as well as men



# Rolls-Royce

Getting a more diverse range of female role models to encourage more girls into engineering is a key factor behind the decision of Rolls-Royce to introduce Skills 4's Career Development Programme into the workplace.

Patrick Kniveton Head of Engineering Skills and Knowledge Management at Rolls-Royce (Submarines), says that sometimes the same few women keep winning competitions or are featured in the media which can give the impression there are limited opportunities.

"The more women who have the confidence to speak passionately about engineering, the better chance we have of attracting more women into the sector," says Patrick.

Having spent a lifetime in engineering, Patrick is passionate about skills. Rolls-Royce (Submarines) at Derby has seen the workforce grow from 800 in 2006 to 1500 in 2015 – huge growth and with it the need to keep on top of the skills agenda.

He came across Skills 4 at a conference for women in the nuclear industry, which he described as revelatory. He was determined to see the Career Development Programme delivered within his division but, at first, it was not an easy sell.

"There was a bit of kickback with some women saying they didn't want to be seen as special and men saying it was showing preference to women," said Patrick. "I talked to a lot of people and once they understood it was about confidence, the different language men and



women use the need to give women the confidence to behave like women in engineering and not adapt to be like men, employees bought into it."

Of the 150 women in the submarine division, 50 successfully undertook the Career Development Programme – from an 18-year-old apprentice to those who had been in the business for many years.

"At the beginning there were a few cynics but by the end they were turned around," said Patrick. "Lynn Tomkins (Skills 4's chairman) did a superb job with everyone who attended saying it was the best possible training they had received."

The feedback from attendees has been extremely positive. Here is just a snapshot of what they were saying.

"The course was invaluable, releasing a sense of confidence and purpose in my life, stretching beyond the boundaries of work. I have already used a few of the tips and techniques in negotiation and look at my goal almost every day. As a result of the course, my managers now know who I am and where I want to be." Lara



Small, Team Leader (ME) NGNPP Core Barrel, Pressuriser & Miscellaneous Vessels)

**Patrick says Rolls-Royce has a flexible working environment, with a lot of good practice. "Nobody wants to have quotas but there is nothing wrong with setting targets and empowering women to have the same opportunities as men when promotions are on offer.**

"I was always been able to see my children in their school plays and attend their parents' evenings, other employees have elderly parents to deal with – it is important that both men and women know it is OK to take advantage of the flexible working policies."

Patrick regularly takes part in the graduate assessment programme for Rolls-Royce, is a Visiting Professor at the University of Derby where he gets the public and businesses engaged in engineering and a past President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

"Engineers are great people, they are creative, professional and generally they are very modest," he said. "The last characteristic something I wanted to amend so I did a campaign – Proud to be an Engineer – to get engineers to speak out with pride about the mark they have made on the world and what legacy they will leave."

He regularly mentors young engineers, as well as promoting the sector through speeches and seminars both nationally and internationally.

Following the Skills 4 Career Development Programme, Patrick is advocating more courses across the company; facilitating a women's network for those who have undertaken the programme; helping to improve marketing material so it features women prominently and "not just men in hard hats"; parallel development for male engineers who have the same confidence issues when it comes to going for middle management and senior positions; promoting the work-life balance policies within Rolls-Royce and sell it as a great place to work.

He also wants targets but not quotas to monitor the progress of gender diversity and to get more female engineers into schools as STEM ambassadors.

Patrick said: "What I would really like to achieve is to get parents, teachers and young people, especially including girls, to realise what a fantastic profession it is – how creative, how professional, how enjoyable, how varied, how you get travel in it and how well paid it is."

**The training featured in this case study was part of a project managed by Semta and funded by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills Women in Work initiative**

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