



Gender Equality is Everyone's Issue

By Kerry Hallard, CEO of the GSA UK

IN June 2016, the GSA put out its first hold the date, signalling its intent to host a Women in Sourcing event. Within a week, 100 members had registered interest to attend.

Three weeks later in London, Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith, the then CEO of industry giant Mitie, addressed a packed room of (predominantly but not exclusively) female representatives from the sourcing industry. The Baroness shared her powerful and personal account of the trials and tribulations she'd faced on her rise to the top – many of which were faced only because she was a woman, a pregnant woman and then a mother. The event featured a variety of speakers and a panel session, followed by an open floor facilitated discussion. This resulted in a more concrete plan of how the GSA would develop its Women in Sourcing Programme.

So, what's the issue?

Currently in this industry there is a woeful lack of women in senior positions. This resonates in most boardrooms around the country,

but it is clear from our research and conversations, that it is just as bad, if not worse in sourcing, with figures suggesting around 19% of board level positions being held by women cited as average by the major advisories.

Further to that, for those that do hold senior positions, their pay is not often commensurate to that paid to their male counterparts and there were many examples cited of how women did not feel they were treated equally in the workplace with regards to progression, camaraderie and opportunities, etc.

And why does that matter?

Well let's not waste airtime on the fact that it's not fair and just in the 21st Century that there is still no gender equality – it would take a brave (read arrogant / misogynistic / dangerous) person to argue a case for inequality. Instead let's look at the base facts. Men and women are different. They approach things differently – physically and mentally. They problem solve differently. They relate to others differently.

GSA research shows that when outsourcing fails, in 85% of cases it fails due to poor relationship management. Well I would



bet my bottom dollar, that if there were more women involved in senior relationship management positions, we would experience far fewer failures in this area. We listen and aim to pacify rather than rip open our shirts and beat our chests. OK, any man reading this is now likely to be getting prickled! If yes – case in point!

But don't just listen to the GSA. The International Monetary Fund shows a loss of GDP growth of 15% due to gender pay gaps and cites that supporting women to fulfil their potential could grow the economy by 35%.

So, what are we going to do about this?

Well, what we are not going to do is push feminism for feminism sake.

I'm hearing cases of positive discrimination in favour of women. One CEO in the digital delivery arena said he was advised by the recruitment agencies that their clients were only seeking females to join their c-suites to help rebalance their books. Totally preposterous! We are not forcing false equality targets to the detriment of business – may the best person win. But to allow that to happen we need to ensure equal opportunities from the get-go!

Our programme is comprised of 5 key elements (at present):

• **Sharing experiences**

We are taking a Women in Sourcing programme on a National Roadshow, inviting inspirational figures in the industry to share their stories in open discussion forums, alongside newly recruited grads, to share experiences, celebrate successes and share ideas.

• **Sharing programmes**

GSA members across the spectrum have shared their approaches to gender equality. Linklaters shared its approach to bringing more women on board at Partner level. KPMG highlighted how one new video approach to recruitment resulted in a massive decline in female applicants. These programmes and learnings are shared across and within the GSA community.

• **Setting and measuring targets**

Measuring and reporting on targets is central to achieving change. The GSA is promoting its members adopt the targets set by the 30 percent club, where a minimum of 30% of FTSE-100 Boards will be comprised of females by 2020. We will publish annual results to this from across our corporate membership base. We aim to have at least a third of women holding the senior positions in the UK's sourcing industry by 2020.

• **Publishing gender pay gaps**

In April 2017, new gender pay gap reporting regulations require businesses with more than 250 employees to calculate and publish the pay gap between male and female employees. The GSA will be collating this information in an annual programme from across its membership base to help drive equal pay.

• **Mentoring programme**

The GSA's Women in Sourcing Mentoring Programme is a free and open global programme set up with the express aim of using experienced sourcing professionals as Mentors to encourage more women to enter the sourcing industry, and to help develop the careers of those women working in sourcing, so as to achieve more senior positions.

The GSA's Women in Sourcing Mentoring Programme incorporates:

- The development of a Directory of Mentors
- A matchmaking programme – matching Mentors and Mentees around the world
- Free masterclasses on how to mentor, delivered by GSA's Professional Development division

We have over 90 people registered onto our mentoring programme – across both the buy and supply side. We are seeking more mentors for our mentees – male and female professionals need apply. To register your interest, visit the GSA website: www.gsa-uk.com/mentoring



"I firmly believe that the industry would greatly benefit from having more women working in these essential, collaborative and motivational people-centric roles.

"As a global association, we are committed to improving equality in the global sourcing industry and are calling on the wider global profession to assist us. Gender equality is everyone's issue".

"Already interest has been sparked globally, with the support of major brands such as Capita, KPMG, Mitie, Capgemini, npower, Bank of Ireland, Mayer Brown, Linklaters and the Ministry of Justice."

Kerry Hallard, GSA

"Social inclusion needs to remain on our industry's agenda and must relate to more than just gender equality it needs to cover ethics and corporate responsibility with responsibility landing on both supply side and buy side."

Joanne Webber, npower and the GSA Council

