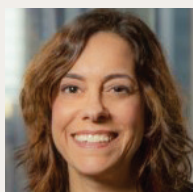


Diversity and inclusion create wider talent pools

Fitch Group is providing platforms for women to succeed



Jamie Krulewitz,
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INCREASING diversity and improving inclusiveness is critical to Fitch Group's success.

In 2017, we created a diversity, equity and inclusion steering group, chaired by Paul Taylor, our chief executive officer, to drive accountability and establish a consistent approach to increasing diversity and improving inclusiveness. The group focuses on initiatives that offer the greatest impact.

After analysing the number of women in senior roles, we found fewer women at senior director and managing director levels than at the director level. The result is a less diverse talent pool to draw from for senior management positions.

It was essential to actively support development for women if we were to improve this.

Getting back into work after a career break can be daunting, so in 2017 we launched Fitch CreditPath. This is a full-time internship programme that welcomes women who are ready to re-enter the workforce in credit analysis and research. We provide the path. Making the most of the opportunity is up to each participant.

During the 10-week programme, we offer a combination of training, on-the-job learning, mentoring and special projects to enhance participants' knowledge and skills. Upon completion of the programme, participants are up-to-date on analytical, technical and market developments, and positioned to apply for an analytical role within Fitch.

Since the programme's launch, we have had 25 participants, of whom 19 received offers and 14 are currently employed. Allison Clark, associate director at Fitch Ratings, took part in the programme and said:

'CreditPath was something I really wanted to do because I hadn't worked in 18 years and thought it would be the perfect way to transition into working again. I was hungry to learn and the training was excellent. I learned how to present at a committee, how to command my space and feel confident. There were also more technical aspects, such as Excel training, general skills and training about financial

statements that I needed to relearn and brush up on.

'I became really close with the rest of my cohort. Everyone is so supportive of each other. We were all excited to be back in the workforce. All of us, while we were at home, have been highly effective doing other things. Everyone is highly motivated and we can bring that energy and passion now to Fitch.'

Building on the success of CreditPath, we launched ForwardPath, which provides a platform for high-performing women at director level. The programme is for promising future leaders and actively supports their professional development. It offers various developmental opportunities including classroom instruction, individual development planning and coaching. A key part of ForwardPath is a special project assignment that is focused on strengthening and broadening leadership capabilities, expanding knowledge and developing business acumen. Its aim is to create a broader and more diverse leadership pool.

Denitza Ouzounova, senior director at Fitch Solutions, said: 'I think we do really have that inclusive culture here. When my ForwardPath cohort came

together, it became a true celebration of diversity. We had a mix of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds all growing and learning together. You get this community and sense of camaraderie, which ensures that you have connected talent within the organisation who are there for each other. They become your staunchest supporters. You can teach

'Having more diverse teams makes us stronger, more collaborative and effective. It also increases employees' sense of fulfilment'

skills and you can put people in a room to learn but you can't beat making that connection.'

Having more diverse teams makes us stronger, more collaborative and effective. It also increases employees' sense of fulfilment. By leveraging the backgrounds and experiences of our global workforce, we can succeed in our objective to become the first-choice provider of credit ratings, analysis, solutions and training to the global financial markets. •