

EIP

Women in STEM: tackling gender statistics in leadership

As we approach 'International Day of Women & Girls in Science' on the 11th of February, I would like to take the opportunity to encourage female STEM graduates to consider a career in Intellectual Property. Having studied English Literature and Philosophy I am not speaking from personal experience (quite possibly the furthest from it) but for the past three years I have worked within the recruitment team at IP firm 'EIP'. I can therefore offer a glimpse into how we support, promote, and encourage equal opportunity and gender equality.

Woman leaders in the legal profession

One would assume (or hope) that professionals in positions of influence recognise that there is no correlation between leadership and gender. Strong leadership is defined by gender-less attributes such as hard work, commitment, and knowledge. Nevertheless, statistics illustrate the underrepresentation of women in legal leadership.

A report from [PwC Annual Law Firms' Survey 2020](#) found that 'there's been a steady rise in female representation at partner level amongst the Top 50 firms (c. 19% to c. 21%)'. The Law Society article ['Influencing for impact: The need for gender equality in the legal profession'](#) reads 'Women have made up over half of practising solicitors since 2018, but the profession continues to be led predominantly by men. 'Similarly, the '[Intellectual Property Regulation Board](#)', found that in 2018 only 28.5% of attorneys were female. I would need more than a side of A4 to introduce each notion that exists to provide an

explanation behind these statistics. The reasons for this imbalance are well-documented so the focus of all companies, in IP/Law and beyond, is how to instigate positive change.

It is my belief that narrowing the gender gap in leadership starts with an organisation being receptive to change, and this, I believe, falls within the crux of EIP's values. We are not just receptive but actively promote 'better, different' in all aspects of our work, including fairness when it comes to our people's career development.

Assessing leadership qualities

Quantitative performance evaluations can be valuable insofar as they provide data driven, clear-cut means of measuring results (i.e. billing performance). Our process of determining who is eligible for promotion does not rely entirely to statistics but is combined with non-tangible leadership qualities or attributes that we believe creates a well-rounded EIP leader. So, how does this tackle performance evaluation biases, including gender bias?

Our promotion criteria are not, of course, entirely subjective. We have adopted a standardised set of criteria to outline common goals, to include, but not limited to a person's work ethic and positive attitude, client care, internal and external business development, involvement in wider business initiatives and project groups. This helps our decision makers avoid double standards between male and female employees as we hold all to the same criteria, whilst not being so open ended there is room for unjustified preferences.

Further to this, our Board create a 'check and balance' as there must be a unanimous decision before promotions are granted. Whilst we have female executive board representation of 25% (which is in line with industry averages), 100% of our board members are invested in inclusivity initiatives, so a desire for positive change is at the forefront of the decision-making process.

We encourage equal opportunity as part of all EIP employees' careers right from day one. I am not assuming that we are unique, nor that we are the finished product. I can say with confidence that EIP continues to seek commercially sound talent and leaders without the preconceived notion that gender has any bearing on a person's suitability for a role or promotion.

In an area of law that protects creativity, innovation and technical advancement, there is absolutely no place for outdated leadership stereotypes or glass ceilings.

Celebrating EIP's female leadership team

We are proud of our diverse leadership team and appreciate the individual women leaders who make up a quarter of that team. Today, I would like to celebrate:

- [Heather McCann \(Partner, Executive Board Member\)](#)
- [Claire Lehr \(Head of EIP Brands\)](#)
- [Paula Flutter, \(Partner, Co-Head of EIP Dynamics\)](#)
- [Kathleen Fox Murphy \(Partner, Litigation\)](#)
- [Monika Rai \(Head of EIP Life\)](#)
- [Charlotte Noon \(Head of Marketing and BD\)](#)
- [Gemma Wooden \(Partner, joined EIP as a trainee\)](#)

The future of woman leaders

With a rise in female representation at partner level, the industry has come a long way. Although woman leaders are still facing barriers throughout their careers, I know the future will be bright. There are now more career pathways available for women who study STEM subjects, so it is important young adults are aware of their options.

Gemma Wooden, Partner at EIP, joined us in 2012 as a trainee attorney after studying Particle Physics at University. Gemma now works for some of EIP largest clients, primarily in the fields of software relating to image processing and artificial intelligence. [Gemma's journey can be viewed here.](#)

At EIP, we are committed to building a stronger workforce and improving gender equality. If you are studying STEM and are considering your career options, please reach out to me or my colleague Chris Ball for a non-committal conversation about your future in IP at: careers@eip.com

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Grace Baker

Recruitment Coordinator