

# Transforming careers and accelerating equality:

## A telecommunications success story

With a commitment to building an inclusive and diverse workforce, this global telecommunications giant was keen to address the underrepresentation of women in specific functional areas of the business.

Shape Talent's targeted women's acceleration programme was implemented to empower and advance female talent within the organisation.

The programme has led to remarkable results, with up to 81% of participants achieving job moves and/or greater responsibilities following the programme.

### KEY FACTS

Around **950** participants + **1,700** Line leaders and sponsors

**actively involved in the programme to date**

“

The coaching circles have been one of the most amazing experiences I have ever had in any leadership programme I have been a part of. Being able to share experiences with other women in similar situations holds huge power. ”

### THE CHALLENGE

## Boosting women's representation in key functional areas

With women continuing to be underrepresented in STEM and leadership roles this organisation has a strategic priority to attract and retain more women. While the company had achieved 30% representation of women at the Executive Team level, it recognised women remained under-represented in key functional areas of the workforce. It approached Shape Talent to design and deliver a solution that would enable an increase women's representation in the three functions where women were least represented around the world.



“

I'll keep many valuable lessons from the programme: shared experiences with colleagues, inspirational coaching sessions and dialogues with my sponsor. The “I'm not the only one facing these challenges” and sanity check moments were the best! ”

## THE SOLUTION

### A comprehensive, global women's leadership development programme

To ensure the programme design best met the needs of the organisation, a series of focus groups and senior leader interviews were conducted to help identify the underlying barriers to women's progression in the target business areas. Data was collected from individuals across ten countries, nine functions and four leadership levels to better understand the barriers to women's career progression using the proprietary Shape Talent Three Barriers model.



Subsequently, the Breaking Barriers Women's Programme was designed to develop both experienced leaders as well as emerging leaders. It was designed to engage, retain and accelerate high potential women from around the world, ensuring they maximised their potential. Following a successful pilot programme of two cohorts, involving a combination of in-person and virtual delivery, the programme was deployed to all business areas globally and is now in its fifth year.

The solution was an immersive, high-touch programme comprising:

- Psychometric assessment
- Coaching circles
- Workshops
- 1-on-1 coaching to create a bespoke individual development plan
- Sponsorship from a senior business leader
- Key targeted experiences gained on-the-job
- Fireside chats with executive women leaders
- Peer learning

“

Not only did I gain a better understanding of myself as a professional woman and a leader, but I was also given tools to continue growing in my career, and a large network of other amazing women with whom to continue on my development journey. ”

The programme was designed to address specific barriers to women's progression, with the topics covering:

- Career Vision
- Authentic Leadership
- Presence & Impact
- Strategic Networking
- Creating an Individual Development Plan
- Confident Me
- Influence
- Maintaining Momentum

Participants spent an average of 40 contact hours in the programme over a 12-month period.

Recognising the critical importance of support from leaders, the programme was designed to also support those most involved in the participant's development: the line leader, the sponsor and HR Business Partners.

Working across cultures, countries, and continents, the programme brings women together and offers an incredibly strong network where women can flourish in their careers.

## THE RESULTS

### The metrics that matter – measurable results and transformative experiences

The business impact of the programme is clear:

- 8.3 is what participants rate the programme out of 10
- 81% of participants have increased their impact at work
- 90% of sponsors benefited from the programme and would sponsor further participants
- 2x participants between 2 - 4.6 times as likely to be promoted and twice as likely to stay\*

“

The programme has helped me increase my self-awareness, reflect on what really matters to me and given me tools to make more conscious use of my strengths. ”

Overwhelmingly, participants report a positive experience of the programme and its popularity means the programme typically has a waiting list for each intake. Every cohort reports an increase in their impact and confidence, greater career clarity and ambition, and a stronger, more powerful network. Line managers actively report a positive impact on their programme participants, reporting more impactful leadership and confidence. They also report a greater awareness of the barriers faced by women in their careers. Sponsors report the power of two-way learning and there is a high rate of sponsors signing up to take on new sponsorees at the end of the programme.

“

This has been the best leadership training I have had so far. It prompted me to think hard about my career path and also how to make a positive impact on the team and wider organisation. ”



## ADDED VALUE

### Coaching Circles provide embedded coaching capability within the company

One of the additional benefits for this company was the extent of learning and value gained through Shape Talent's Coaching Circles. These small group coaching sessions, facilitated by a Shape Talent coach, provide the means for women to gain coaching skills in a safe and supportive environment, learning through being coached as well as the vicarious learning that occurs through the observation of their peers. Participants regularly point to the Coaching Circles as the places where the moments of inspiration and self-awareness most commonly land for women. As well as gaining valuable insights and inspiration, the process helps to build coaching skills which enable participants to continue their coaching circles in a self-managed form beyond the programme.

\* Data is statistically significant at a 99.9% confidence level