



eowa BAA winner 2003
case study



Autoliv Australia

EOWA Outstanding EEO Practice for the Advancement of Women

Autoliv Australia is a subsidiary of Autoliv Inc which has over 80 fully owned subsidiaries and joint ventures in 32 countries and employs 30,000 people worldwide. 71.5% of the Australian workforce of 600+ is female. The largest area of employment is the shop floor, with the majority of staff (91.7%) female. Thirty-two nationalities are represented and forty-seven languages spoken.

Having a deliberate business strategy of diversity which Autoliv believes creates a more cohesive, creative, profitable workforce, a concern arose when it identified that the number of women in management positions did not reflect the overall proportion of women in the organisation. Only 47% of positions at team leader and above were held by women and only 11% of the executive management team were women.

A program was instituted to attract, retain and develop women in engineering and manufacturing disciplines. The key strategies were:

- equal opportunity
- becoming an employer of choice
- attracting the most talented women engineering graduates
- developing career path plans for the key positions in the organisation
- instituting a mentoring program

Two main objectives were identified, then aligned with the overall business plan, and incorporated into the Key Performance Indicators. These were:

- In the medium term, increase the number of women in management positions at Team Leader level and above, and
- In the long term, increase the number of women in executive management positions.

Organisation Information

INDUSTRY SECTOR	=	Manufacturing
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	=	606
% OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES	=	71.4%
% OF FEMALE SENIOR MANAGEMENT	=	20%

How Issues Were Addressed

In order to measure success the following organisation-wide KPIs were established:

- % women in management, team leader and above
- % women in executive management
- %women in engineering
- % women in the industrial based learning programs
- % women returning from maternity leave



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Management accountability was ensured through the agreement of further relevant performance indicators for each business area.

Financial considerations were incorporated into the organisational budget, and HR forms part of the executive team and is active on the HR global council.

The strategy of being an Employer of Choice for Women relies primarily on work/life balance programs which enhance the quality of employees' working life while providing opportunities to more effectively manage their personal and family commitments. The EBA is a tool for leading by example and some highlights include:

- Flexible working hours to allow time to be made up and employees to attend appointments
- Modified hours to accommodate specific start/finish needs
- Leave Without Pay for up to 6 weeks for emergencies
- Employees finish an hour early on Fridays
- One RDO per month
- Access to all sick leave as carer's leave
- Up to 14 weeks paid Maternity Leave
- Part-time is available when returning from maternity leave, approaching retirement, etc
- 100% two year income protection insurance for all employees in case of illness or accident
- The opportunity and facilities are provided so that women can continue to breastfeed
- Access to Long Service Leave entitlements after seven years
- Ability to take long service leave at half pay over an extended period
- Option to purchase two weeks extra annual leave
- Option to purchase a year's leave by spreading four year's pay over a five year period

The organisation conducts annual benchmarking which highlights areas of concern and these concerns are addressed and dealt with, enabling it to remain an employer of choice.

A comprehensive program of university and college presentations, attendance at industry nights, job expos and visits to local schools is in place. A tripartite initiative with Swinburne University and the State Government offers a scholarship program for women completing university study to assist in the transition from student to workforce. Traineeships are also offered, as well as an Industry Based Learning program for twelve months before students return to university to complete their final year.

The CEO and his management team members are passionate, visible advocates for the women in the workplace seeing this as an essential leadership role both internally and in the broader community.

A comprehensive training program has been developed which allows workers on the shop floor to gain their Engineering Production Certificate, advance to the position of trainers, gain promotion to the level of assessor, then with a Diploma of Frontline Management progress again to Frontline Manager.

Succession Plans exist for all key positions within the organisation, key competencies have been defined and at least three successors for each position have been identified. Development plans have been programmed for each successor.

The mentoring program ensures talented employees were matched with an experienced employee both for the purpose of career development and to ensure the organisation had an understanding of the issues and challenges facing future leaders.

Results

- Women in management has increased from 47% in 2000 to 60.7% in 2003
- Women in the executive management team has increased from 12.5% in 2000 to 20% in 2003



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- Women engineers have doubled in same period
- No loss of production time as a result of industrial disputation for 12 years;
- A staff turnover level of 0.5%; and
- Absenteeism below 4%
- Six women of eight staff have graduated with a Certificate in Engineering Production
- Fifteen of the seventeen staff graduating with a Certificate II in Engineering Production have been women;
- In 2003 six of the nine staff who completed the Frontline Management Program were women.
- Three of the four graduates mentored by the CEO in 2003 were women.
- 100% return rate from maternity leave
- Ten out of eighteen mentorees are female and represent both staff and shop floor
- Sales and returns have increased by more than 20% since 2000
- Women in engineering has increased by 20% since 2000.

Lessons Learned

The support and passionate advocacy of the CEO has been a critical driver of Autoliv's success.

Integration of diversity and inclusivity principles into the whole of business strategy, has meant budgeting and performance measurement naturally include performance with regard to women in the workplace.

The development of a culture which understands the business value and necessity of diversity has allowed Autoliv to be a leader in the field of equal opportunity for women in the workplace.