

From mining to mfg, cos boost gender diversity

Hire Women In Traditionally Male-Dominated Sectors

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Mumbai: India Inc has quietly progressed on the gender diversity front in spite of the pandemic. Engineering firm ABB, Hindustan Zinc (HZL), Sun Life Asia Service Center (ASC) and leading direct sel-

at HZL. These cover 39 women employees who are being groomed to take up front-end operational and leadership roles. Over a hundred senior leaders have been identified to mentor 200 women leaders.

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> Engineering co ABB has seen its diversity numbers rise to 14% in October this year from 9% in 2018

> The share of women employees at mining co Hindustan Zinc has increased to 15% from about 10% two years ago

> At Sun Life ASC, the global inhouse centre of a financial



services firm, 41% new hires this year were women. It raised its diversity ratio from 19% to 30% at director levels and 35% across the board

> Direct-selling major Amway's business model had attracted more men (60%) when it launched in 1998. Today, the percentage of women at Amway is about 70%

ling FMCG major Amway have improved upon their gender diversity numbers significantly this year through proactive hiring of women candidates.

Zurich-based ABB, which underwent a transformation from a power and manufacturing company to a technology and automation company two years ago, has seen its diversity numbers increase to 14% in October this year from 9% in 2018. A traditional set-up in manufacturing can make it extremely challenging for women to consider this segment as a career option.

ABB India CHRO Raman Kumar Singh said it's challenging to fill up positions with a woman candidate due to a smaller pool of women in manufacturing. "A big inflection point for us was to bring a shift in thinking. Once we have communicated that a certain role can be done by a woman, we seek more time to look for the right candidate," Singh said. ABB created ownership and visibility of the agenda among business leaders through diversity and inclusion councils.

At Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc, CHRO Kavita Singh had to first get the basics in place. Emphasis was laid on setting up women-friendly toilets at every mining site and forming women councils. Today, there are seven women councils

recently, from around 10% two years ago. "There are always opportunities and means to get existing leaders to create space for those who are ready to move in," said Singh. Today, the first 'second-class mine manager' for underground mining in India is from HZL. "Six more such women leaders are in the pipeline," said Singh, who worked by breaking myths around mining jobs to recruit a large number of entry-level women engineers. "The target now is 30% diversity by 2025," she added.

Across the industry, trends indicate that diversity ratios are fairly healthy at the entry level, while these tend to drop at mid-managerial and beyond. At Sun Life ASC, 41% of the total new hires this year were women. Sun Life ASC CHRO Rajeev Bhardwaj said, "We have directed efforts towards both intentional hiring at senior level and also developing leadership potential for our mid-senior female managers."

For Amway, which has 5.5 lakh direct sellers, diversity numbers favour women. When it first entered India in 1998, more men gravitated towards Amway's business model. Back then, Amway had 60% of men working in the business. The tables have now turned with the percentage of women at Amway touching 70%.