



Amazon announces programme to further boost gender diversity and inclusion across UK business

March 7, 2019

New 'Amazon Amplify' programme includes a series of initiatives, adding to existing broader company programmes

Last year, Amazon partnered with WISE (the campaign for gender balance in science, technology & engineering) to conduct research and help build a roadmap for companies across the UK to improve gender diversity, with the findings helping inform the new programme

WISE's research, which polled over 1,000 women working in STEM, reveals a 10 per cent increase of women in STEM careers would lead to £3bn boost for UK business, with women in innovation earning up to £11,000 a year more than in other careers

Thursday 7 March 2019 – London – Amazon has today launched *Amazon Amplify* – a series of initiatives designed to further increase the number of women in technology and innovation roles across its UK business. This new programme builds on existing diversity-focused initiatives at the company, including programmes to ensure diverse interview panels and increase volumes of women applicants, affinity groups for women, LGBT+, BAME and disabled employees, and transgender guidelines for managers and employees to support transgender staff and their allies.

The *Amazon Amplify* programme aims to further ramp up the recruitment and retention of women employees; encourage more women to consider careers in technology and innovation; and help prevent some of the biggest barriers to career progression cited by women in STEM roles across different sectors. *Amazon Amplify* initiatives include:

Boosting the pipeline of future women innovations

- The **Amazon Women in Innovation Bursary**, providing funding of over £130,000 a year for up to 24 women students to fulfil their ambitions of a career in innovation and technology
- Amazon **degree apprenticeship programme**, enabling people of all ages and backgrounds to train as engineers and business leaders
- Opening Amazon's doors and inspiring future leaders with [public tours](#) and **STEM workshops** for children

Recruiting and retaining more women innovators

- New **global candidate inclusive interview questions**, which help find potential Amazonians who share our commitment to diversity
- New **UK-wide interactive training programme** to support employees with: building confidence and self-awareness, as well as displaying confidence to others; adapting to different environments; being an effective contributor; and managing internal and external stakeholders
- A new [AWS \(Amazon Web Services\) Return to Work](#) programme, providing individuals on a career break with the opportunity to return to full-time employment following robust on boarding and coaching sessions and support from a subject matter per coach

A commitment to diversity goals

- Becoming a signatory to the [WISE Ten Steps Commitments](#).

"Diversity fosters greater innovation and helps raise the bar for customers, and having a diverse workforce is also just the right thing to do," said Fiona McDonnell, Director, Consumer Retail, Amazon and chair of the cross-industry Women in Innovation Advisory Committee. "Our new *Amazon Amplify* plan aims to attract and retain the best and brightest talent in Britain, ensuring a positive environment in which they can thrive."

Partnership with WISE

Last year, Amazon joined with WISE and launched a consultation to help increase the number of women in innovation roles across the UK. The consultation was designed to help understand the barriers to increasing diversity across industries, and help create a roadmap for companies to follow in improving gender diversity at all levels. As part of that effort, Amazon commissioned research from WISE and The Lord Ashcroft International Business School at Anglia Ruskin University. Over 1,000 women across the UK working in innovation from a variety of companies and sectors were polled by YouGov, along with over 200 women feeding directly into the consultation and 50 telling their stories in one-to-one interviews. The research is now available to help companies of all sizes develop their own plans to address gender diversity in their ranks.

Among other things, the research identified barriers and enablers to increasing the number of women working in the innovation economy across all industry sectors in the UK, and revealed that improving the ratio of women to men in STEM innovation by just 10 per cent has the potential to increase company revenues in that sector by over £3bn per annum.

Other key findings include:

- Nine in 10 women innovators experienced some barriers to their innovation careers, with over a quarter (26 per cent) experiencing more barriers than enablers
- Six in 10 (66 per cent) women working in the UK's innovation economy have had to overcome challenges on their own to succeed in their careers, with just two in 10 (22 per cent) saying they had received support from their employers
- The top three barriers women working in STEM careers across the UK identified were a lack of confidence (84 per cent), having to adapt to a male dominated environment (75 per cent), and a lack of recognition from senior management (72 per cent)
- However, more than half of all women working in STEM-careers said pursuing a career in innovation gave them a feeling of self-achievement (59 per cent), the opportunity to do exciting work (56 per cent) and set the foundations for positive career development (56 per cent)
- The top three enablers to increasing the number of women working in STEM and innovation were personal determination and resilience (59 per cent), self-efficacy (44 per cent) and greater work-life balance (44 per cent).

"It's concerning that lack of confidence came out as the biggest barrier faced by women working in innovation, but of course confidence develops as a result of support and encouragement," said Helen Wollaston, Chief Executive, WISE. "The report recommends specific actions for employers and universities to boost the contribution of women to innovation. If they follow Amazon's lead by taking a proactive approach to build an inclusive culture where women and men from all backgrounds are confident being themselves, it will pay dividends."

From childhood to career, the report outlines a roadmap of recommendations that drive change by addressing barriers and improving the representation of women in innovation, including:

- **Childhood:** Building the pipeline of the next generation of women innovators via outreach to parents as well as children, using language that resonates with young women from an early age, and creating more partnerships between business and existing outreach programmes that stimulate interest in innovation
- **College:** Stimulating careers in innovation with tours of STEM-focused businesses, more business role models for students, internships and bursary programmes targeting women
- **Career:** Flexible career pathways in technology and innovation through degree apprenticeships, return to work programmes, and reskilling programmes, as well as career development support through mentoring programmes, peer support and career development coaching.

The research was supported by a Women in Innovation Advisory Committee, made up of senior leaders from across industry.

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,004 females working in innovation, science and technology. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31st July – 27th August 2018. The survey was carried out online. The research recommendations are supported and overseen by a *Women in Innovation Advisory Committee*, made up of senior leaders from across industry, comprising:

For further information about the Women in Innovation Research, please contact:

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About Amazon

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About WISE

Founded in 1984, [WISE](http://www.wise.org.uk) is a Leeds based non-profit community interest company. WISE enables and energises people in business, industry and education to increase the participation, contribution and success of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). All its revenue comes from membership fees and sponsorship. It has over 200 member organisations. Its activities include:

- - - Fiona McDonnell, Director, Consumer Retail, Amazon (Chair)
 - Bhavagaya Bakshi, Co-Founder, C the Signs
 - Beatrice Bigois, MD of EDF Energy, Customers Business
 - Ishreen Bradley, Chief Inspiration Officer, Equality Pioneers
 - Dr Helen Finch, Former Head of Research & Development, Jaguar Land Rover
 - Simon Johnson, Country Manager, UK Books, Amazon
 - Lauren Kissner, Director S3, AWS
 - Tim Kohn, VP Prime Video, Technology, Amazon
 - Amanda Mackenzie OBE, Chief Executive, Business in the Community

- Rikke Rosenlund, Founder and CEO, BorrowMyDoggy and non-executive director on WISE Board
- Mark Stewart, General Manager, Airbus UK
- Sharing insight and knowledge about the causes of and solutions to gender imbalance in STEM in the UK, from classroom to boardroom.
- Collaborating and connect WISE members (individuals and organisations) to be THE leaders, role models and champions of gender balance in science, technology and engineering
- Amplifying impact through inspirational events and campaigns
- www.wisecampaign.org.uk

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