



WISE

A WISE Ten Steps Case Study



Top Tips from Sky

- Consider realistically what your organisation is capable of, ensure you have the resources necessary and be prepared to stay committed – programmes such as Get into Tech require a lot of effort to design and deliver.
- Be very clear about the problem you are trying to solve and tailor initiatives specifically to the needs of women.
- Demonstrate that activities have the backing of your organisation's leaders.
- Measures outcomes to ensure your approach is working.

Demonstrate to women that you want to retain and develop them

Technology underpins the whole of Sky's entertainment and communications business. But like the rest of the industry, the company has a problem attracting women into technology jobs. It also faces the challenge of getting the very best people into leadership roles. It has therefore sought new ways to show women that their talents are valued and needed, whether that is through helping to build their confidence, resilience and status or giving them new technical skills to succeed in what up to now has been a male-dominated environment. Sky believes that this benefits the business, that having more mixed teams and including more women at senior levels leads to greater innovation and better results.

Why is this important?

However much an engineering or technology company may seek to ensure that opportunities are open equally to men and women, sometimes that is simply not enough. A level playing field does not by itself guarantee that women will succeed as they should.

Companies need to do more. They need to take positive action, tailored to the specific requirements of women who may feel uncertain about their place in the industry – perhaps on returning to work - or may lack the essential skills to go forward in their career. Letting women know they are valued and can progress takes not just words, but practical actions that offer them the tools for success.

What is being done?

Sky has introduced a Women into Leadership programme, aimed at creating the strongest possible pipeline for promotion to senior roles.

- This is led from the top, driven by board executives and their senior teams.
- It includes a 12-month sponsorship and development programme, providing women with a personal sponsor and sessions to develop their self-belief and grow their knowledge in areas such as strategy and finance.

It also has a Get into Tech initiative which enables women with little or no previous technical experience to learn the skills necessary to start a career in software development.

- This offers a 15-week part-time course (full-time and immersive for the first week) open both to external and internal candidates.
- It is designed exclusively for women, including those returning from career breaks and those wanting a complete change in direction.

In addition, Sky provides:

- a resource hub for self-directed learning,
- Women in Technology roadshows at their main UK sites, with role models and leading internal and external speakers,
- better flexible working patterns, including shared parental leave,
- balanced shortlists for senior appointments,
- unconscious bias training for leaders and managers who hire staff.

What are the results?

- Over a third of Sky's top 500 leaders are now women.
- A third of those who have taken part in the Women in Leadership programme have seen their career progress upwards or sideways over 12 months and 65% say they are more confident about applying outside their comfort zone.
- 27 of the first 100 women to undergo the Get into Tech training succeeded in getting jobs in software development at Sky.



"Bringing women into software development can introduce an extra dynamic. Women often bring a more detailed approach and that can make for better teams."

Conrad Langworthy, Head of Sky's Software Engineering Academy.

"The Get into Tech course was brilliant. It made me realise I really wanted to get into software development, and without it, I would never have had the skills. Of the 16 women on my course, nine applied for jobs at Sky and seven of us were appointed."

Victoria Marshall,
Associate Software Developer.