

EXCEEDING POTENTIAL

Korn Ferry, the world's preeminent people and organisational consulting firm, understands that gender equality is crucial to success

WWW.KORNFERRY.COM

"Korn Ferry aligns an organisation's talent with its strategy to enable it to achieve exceptional performance through its people," says Karin Barnick, Senior Client Partner at Korn Ferry, the world's preeminent people and organisational consulting firm. Korn Ferry places a candidate every three minutes. It has a database of over 4.4 million professionals, and more than 100,000 people benefit from its leadership-development programmes each month.

The company was founded in Los Angeles in 1969 and was focused on placing executives in roles. However, since acquiring Hay Group in 2015, it now works with clients across all aspects of their talent strategies. While Korn Ferry remains the largest executive search firm globally, nowadays more than half its work is in advising companies on every element of their people and organisational strategy from pay and reward to organisational design.

"We help our clients design their organisation – the structure, roles and responsibilities," says Barnick. "We help them understand the talent they need to execute that strategy, the gaps they have and how to close that gap, be that through recruiting external talent or developing internal talent." Korn Ferry has tremendous reach through its 50 offices and 7,000 employees around the globe and an annual turnover of \$2 billion. One of the company's flagship offices is in London, which is home to approximately 700 employees.

Nearly half a century of work in executive search and talent consulting has provided Korn Ferry with a deep understanding of the issues surrounding gender balance in the workplace. "Having a gender balance at the top of an organisation is critical to success," says Barnick. "A diversity of experience and opinions leads to better and more rounded business decisions."

Despite this, she feels, there are still too few women in senior positions within business, for many reasons. A male majority at senior levels can lead to unconscious bias which can impact many aspects of talent strategy from recruitment to career paths and compensation. Korn Ferry uses its unique combination of executive search and strategic consultancy to help clients create inclusive workplaces. They advocate a 'shared responsibility approach' where employees, managers, leaders and other stakeholders all have a role in tackling any systemic barriers impeding efforts to achieve diversity and inclusion.

This business model has earned Korn Ferry significant recognition. It won gold in the People and Performance category in the *FT* Management Consultants 2018 awards. Last year, it was recognised by Hunt Scanlon as the world's largest search firm. The firm supports its consulting capabilities through the Korn Ferry Institute, its research and analytics arm set up to share expert viewpoints on talent and leadership and to demonstrate how strategic talent decisions contribute to firms' competitive advantage, success and growth.

The company's September 2017 report, *Women CEOs Speak*, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, sought to identify the common success factors among 59 US chief executives. It found that 60 per cent had a background in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) skills or had financial, business or economics experience.

"It shows that there needs to be a schoolroom-to-boardroom approach," says Barnick. "If you are going to change the world, you can't do so by intervening at a single point. You have to have a holistic approach."

