



# Diverse Women in Manufacturing – Unique Differences Creating Belonging

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## INTRODUCTION

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We've spoken a lot about how to increase gender diversity in operations-based industries, and we've also touched on the why. In this article, we'll dive into the why in more depth as we share highlights from our recent conversation with the team from Mondelēz.

There are obvious moral reasons for increasing gender diversity: equality of opportunity is simply the right thing to do. There are also compelling business reasons to increase gender diversity. It's been shown that attracting and retaining diverse talent brings businesses engaged and reliable teams with more creative thinking and problem-solving abilities. However, when we examine the benefits of diversity from a cultural and interpersonal perspective, it really gets interesting.



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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEI AND BELONGING

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Belonging is more frequently now included in the DEI agenda – known for some as in DEIB. This is because, although diversity, equality, and inclusion bring significant benefits, belonging brings something unique again: encouraging and supporting people to bring their whole selves to the workplace. And when people feel safe to do this, workplaces benefit. Imagine if you had an employee who had an exceptional yet unconventional, idea of how to solve a problem that had been plaguing the business. Whether or not they speak up and bring their vision to the table depends on how safe they feel from a cultural perspective.

So, how can workplaces foster a sense of belonging?

Gallup states that the key to belonging lies in fostering an authentic appreciation for the diverse contributions of everyone. In fact, Gallup highlights that by boosting the number of employees who feel their opinions are valued, organisations can lower turnover rates by 27%, lower safety incidents by 40%, and elevate productivity by 12%. A pursuit that is clearly well worth the investment! The team from Mondelēz has been working on creating this kind of workplace environment and we recently spoke to four members of their team.



## THE MONDELĒZ DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION JOURNEY

Mondelēz has been on a proactive DEI journey for over 5 years. One of their key initiatives was to find a way to formalise their DEI efforts. As Selena Main, People Lead, put it: “A culture of diversity and inclusion has always been important at Mondelēz, but we wanted to introduce a more structured framework, with the extension of our ANZ DEI Council, DEI Champion Groups and Lead Team sponsors. Formalising diversity, equality and inclusion priorities is one way of ensuring continued focus and momentum. The Mondelēz DEI representatives consists of leaders and team members from all functions across the business, and once established, with inputs from relevant employee engagement and DEI surveys, and feedback from leaders and colleagues, five priority pillars were identified in 2022-23 to focus:

1. Gender Representation
2. Multiculturalism & Indigenous Communities
3. Inclusive Leadership
4. LGBTQIA+
5. Disability

The Champion Team from each Pillar helps suggest ideas, execute programs and strategies across the total business, and cascade in different functions and sites. The Mondelēz employees who opt to join the DEI volunteer team, join as allies to affect change, engage and educate our business. As champions they lead and partner, in addition to their roles, which speaks volumes to their passion and commitment. The Council has introduced several initiatives over the past two years with a targeted approach for each Pillar that is business-led, including:

For the Gender representation pillar, examples of initiatives the team has deployed include:

- Female mentoring programs
- Extending the partnership with NAWO
- Amplifying the celebration of International Women’s Day
- Leading and showcasing careers with career panels
- Actively leveraging the strategic talent planning process to support and enable career development, and diverse career experiences
- Conducting the WGEA pay equality and gender equality review
- Leveraging the power of our brands for consumer and community reach on gender representation

These activities have led to further purposeful action (eg. Policy review), focused employer branding efforts, and launch of Lean-In Circles.

With the partnership of Mondelēz’s People Leads, Leaders and Managers, and the Talent Acquisition team the company has increased our representation of females in external hires and the facilitation of internal talent moves (promotions, lateral moves, project assignments). This is an impressive outcome, strengthening the company’s inclusive culture and sense of belonging for its people.



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## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION, AND SENSE OF BELONGING IS DEEPER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK

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In the words of Selena Main, Mondelēz People Lead: “Facilitating an environment where people can bring their authentic selves to the workplace also creates a strong sense of community.” It’s this strong community that brings so many accompanying benefits for employees and businesses, such as:

- Increased employee engagement
- Higher job satisfaction
- Enhanced employee retention
- Better collaboration and teamwork
- Reduced stress and burnout
- Fostering innovation and creativity
- Greater brand loyalty and advocacy

For Mondelēz, leveraging diversity is about facilitating diversity of thought, so increasing representation of females across the business helps enable diverse thinking and drive growth.

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### HEAR FROM FEMALE LEADERS AT MONDELĒZ ON WHAT DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION MEANS TO THEM

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#### **Yashi Paruman – Production, Planning, and Inventory Control Manager**

Yashi is an accomplished supply chain professional with 15+ years of experience in FMCG. Her leadership ethos is best described by Helen Keller’s words: “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.” Yashi feels that she can bring her authentic voice to work with the Mondelēz team, allowing her to bring her creativity to implement new ideas and improve how things are done. This is one of the strongest reasons that belonging translates into such powerful outcomes for organisations.



#### **Cara Johnstone – People Lead, Supply Chain**

Cara thrives at Mondelēz, finding the work deeply fulfilling. She’s especially impressed by the DEI team’s proactive approach—organizing events, launching initiatives, and seeing many members from the business eagerly volunteer. To her, it’s a clear sign that inclusion efforts are impactful, fostering positive change within the team. Cara notes the invaluable support from senior execs, fueling these projects forward.

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## BELONGING IN ACTION WITH THE MONDELĒZ TEAM

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### Shivani Saini – Senior Manager for Supply Chain Finance

Shivani's origins and ethnicity are from India and she joined the Mondelēz ANZ team from Africa. She believes that when people with different backgrounds join the team and work together, they can start to address some of the unintentional biases that people may have. Further, Shivani feels that diverse and inclusive teams significantly improve leadership capability, and cultural intelligence, and together resolve unintentional biases and facilitate stronger collaboration.



### Selena Main – People Lead, Enabling Functions

Selena is a People Lead who strives to create an environment where Mondelēz team members feel they can bring their authentic selves to work and there are no barriers to their career. She's especially passionate about this beyond her role with Mondelēz, as she volunteers her time as a NAWO VIC Committee Member to ensure gender balance and DEI is embedded into an organisation's success.

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The team at Mondelēz recognises that by developing their team and including a diverse group of talent, they will be able to grow as a company and meet their business targets. They continue to strengthen their talent planning process to identify and develop female talent; review succession plans to help accelerate capability in readiness for future roles. They are more intentional in sourcing and shortlisting talent to present more female candidates and share career stories with the community to inspire talent and let them know what's possible.

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## WHAT'S NEXT FOR MONDELĒZ?

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Diverse voices lead to more creativity within teams and better problem-solving. The team members we spoke to reflect this diversity, and each brought their own perspective on what DEI and belonging mean to them. Moving forward, Mondelēz will continue its journey to strengthen DEI and review existing priorities and Pillars based on recent feedback into 2024. Examples of actions Mondelēz will continue include addressing female talent gaps and the gender pay gap and strengthening inclusion and belonging across the business with a focus on capability, policy review, and leadership sponsorship. With these undertakings, Mondelēz will review plans to strengthen their employer brand, extend their mentoring and development programs and continue to share career stories that resonate with the community and inspire more women and gender diverse people to join their team.

For enquiries please contact:  
**Louise Weine**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**0423 120 786**  
**[lweine@nawo.org.au](mailto:lweine@nawo.org.au)**

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