

# Case Study @ BHP- Interrupting Bias by Hiring for Capability

## Background

BHP has set to disrupt the gendered nature of the mining industry with a 50% women in the workforce target by 2025. Traditionally, there has been a reliance in mining on front line operations experience for senior roles. Abandoning the usual approach of requiring applicants to have 10 or 15 years' experience in mining, BHP instead is focusing on "the skills that we want the individual to have". The rise of technology has significantly changed mining operations, opening opportunities for transferable technology skills from other industries. BHP's new high-tech remote-control centre located in Brisbane, operates BHP's coal system in Western Australia, with new technical skills required outside the mining industry.

## I&D Audit

Internal data revealed parts of BHP's operations with a more diverse workforce, including some maintenance, drilling & blasting and pre-shipment units, had lower injury rates, adhered more closely to work plans and were more likely to meet production targets. The workforce at Queensland coal mines Caval Ridge and Daunia, at 25% women have also outperformed. Technology is changing the nature of mining, and it gives BHP opportunities to rethink how the work is done and how this impacts hiring practices.

## Bias Interrupter

BHP designed a bias interrupter focused on hiring for capability; defining requirements on intrinsic attributes, such as logical reasoning, instead of external attributes, such as qualifications & previous mining experience. A hiring for capability approach enabled recruiters to widen their search to a range of different industries with similar skills including traffic controllers, medical technicians, IT programmers, etc... BHP used YouTube videos and alternative forums to reach target talent pools & promote their collaborative team structure & culture. To assess capability, BHP leveraged standardised assessment centres with diverse panels who focused on a mix of attributes in teams; how teams complement each other, rather than selecting individuals who "tick all the boxes".

## Bias Interrupter Outcomes

The bias interrupter has seen far less candidates self select out of the process due to lack of specific experience, and has seen women making up 53 percent of BHP's remote-control centre workforce.

## Evidence-based approach

Organisations have long struggled to attract women to consider and apply for jobs in male-dominated industries. Australian industries can ill-afford to sideline a large percentage of qualified candidates. Structural barriers reinforce and perpetuate gender inequality in the workplace.

### Hiring 'for fit' challenges:

- Narrowing the hiring funnel by requiring applicants to have 10 or 15 years experience does not equal the most qualified candidate.
- Many organisations are looking for the 'X factor'- looking beyond job requirements for candidates that fit their company culture which is loaded with bias.
- Organisations looking to build more diverse teams need to focus on capability fit & 'culture add'- what can a candidate bring to the table that will add to team culture and help move the team in an inclusive direction.