

Women in Logistics

Workplace flexibility provides benefits for businesses and their employees

Flexibility in the workplace and ongoing development of human capital has a correlation with benefits and opportunities delivered to business and employees, writes CAROLINE ZALAI*

FREIGHT & Trade Alliance (FTA) is in a privileged position within the trade and logistics sector in being able to interact directly with our valued members, stakeholders and government agencies to examine “best practice” workplace activities. Through these interactions it has become clear that a thirst for opportunity and development within the workplace are sought by the ladies in our industry.

There are many strategies required to support professional development and too many to address in one commentary. Here are some thoughts to get you thinking which revolve around workplace flexibility and mentoring.

Flexibility in the workplace

Barriers for gender equality often come into play, such as females having the traditional role of primary carers. How do women overcome the daily juggle of

family life and still develop a fulfilling, meaningful career and valued role in a male dominated industry?

Do businesses need to consider greater workplace flexibility to provide these sought after opportunities?

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) states that “Flexibility is becoming an imperative for organisations across Australia as they begin to recognise it as a key enabler of gender equality”.

An indicative statistic from WGEA shows that only 27.3% of Freight Forwarding Services in 2017 provide flexible workplaces, with 54.2% being the national average for all industries. Unfortunately the data also indicates that flexible workplace opportunities are declining in our sector. Is the lack of flexibility one of the catalysts for the gender gap, not only in our industry but in all workplaces?

Flexible workplaces offer benefits to business which include lower staff

turnover, improved talent attraction, improved productivity and higher morale. One example is working from home where it can provide a quiet space to work on a project or increase quality and speed of work without interruption. Workers who have flexibility in the workplace are usually highly organised and are often happy to work out of traditional work hours, which provides greater coverage and support for their customers. Retention of staff who require a flexible working environment can also reduce the cost and time to businesses in recruitment and re-training, hence corporate knowledge and skills are also retained.

Mentoring

As co-founder and Director of FTA, I am delighted to have officially joined the Women’s International Shipping & Trading Association’ (WISTA) committee for New South Wales and undertaken

the role of WISTA Mentor Program Support. WISTA Australia is chartered to work towards the promotion and visibility of women in the industry through educational, professional and personal development. WISTA is a national association which holds various networking events throughout the year.

The WISTA Australia Mentoring Program was launched late last year which matches experienced professionals (mentors) with upcoming industry professionals wanting to grow their careers (mentees). The program aims to link the WISTA members with peers who are willing to share their wisdom and experience. Mentors encourage mentees to explore a range of ideas and solutions and provide support and guidance while the mentee takes the appropriate action. Mentors act in a way that builds the mentee’s self-esteem and creates a sense of experimentation

with ideas, challenges and aspirations. One of our current Mentees recently saying “I wasn’t sure what the program would provide... my mentor has already given me fantastic support and we have put some professional goals in place for the next twelve months”. The development of this relationship builds on each individual’s human capital.

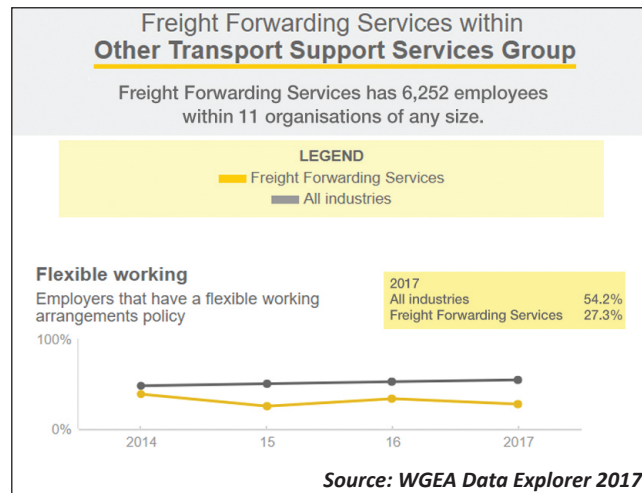
WGEA describes “Human Capital” as a person’s accrued knowledge, skill, experience and ability, gathered over time in a variety of settings such as in education and the workforce. “The rewards a person receives for their human capital – a higher salary, better standard of living etc. – provide a measure of its value. The growth of human capital is affected by opportunity and continuity of employment, and when human capital stops growing it also loses value”. FTA is proud to be a part of the mentoring program provided by WISTA in

the endeavour to develop this human capital of your female colleagues.

An opportunity to engage and learn from industry peers

I encourage you to join FTA and WISTA on 8 August, when FTA will hold its annual Women in Logistics (WIL) Forum at the Mercure Hotel, Wolli Creek, Sydney Airport. This year we will have a key note address from Despina Theodosiou, WISTA International President. The WIL Forum provides further opportunity for ladies to network and hear personal journeys and valuable insights from inspirational leaders in the logistics supply chain.

Caroline Zalai is a director at Freight & Trade Alliance. For further enquiries about the WISTA Mentor Program or the 2018 WIL Forum please contact Caroline Zalai at czalai@ftalliance.com.au



L to R: Lisa Styrod (WISTA Australia president), Naraya Lamart (senior associate at HFW Australia), Sneha Chatterjee (chief superintendent, Australian Trusted Trader, Australian Border Force, Department of Home Affairs) and Caroline Zalai (director at Freight & Trade Alliance).

WISTA going from strength to strength

Lisa Styrod*

WOMEN’S International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA) is the international network for women in shipping, trade and supporting industries.

WISTA Australia was established in 2011 and has been growing rapidly ever since.

We are active in four states, QLD, NSW, VIC and WA where we hold regular educational, networking, professional and personal development events.

We have recently launched our mentoring program in NSW, and is soon to be adopted in the other states.

We anticipate these will be a major value add to our membership base across Australia.

Our membership has great diversity across the broader maritime industry,

trades and professions, and includes seafaring women as well as portside,

logistics and trading professionals and women in support function roles.

We bring together women new to the industry and women with decades of

experience for a great mix of knowledge, mentoring and networking; all of which

makes WISTA a platform for sharing interests and ideas.

WISTA would also like to congratulate committee member, Alison Cusack – ANL, awarded “Highly Commended” at the 2017 DCN Australian Shipping & Maritime Industry Awards and committee member, Naraya Lamart, for being listed as a Rising Star for Transport in Doyle’s Guide.

2018 is looking to be a very exciting year for WISTA Australia, with many events for our members and in particular our AGM in Brisbane later in the year where we will be joined by our WISTA International President Despina Theodosiou who has recently been listed as the 96th most influential person in the Global Shipping Industry by Lloyds List UK.

* Lisa Styrod is WISTA Australia president

2018 WISTA Events			
New South Wales		Victoria	
June	Personal Finance speaker / learning event, Sydney CBD	May	Industry Trivia Night
8 August Mercure Hotel Sydney Airport	2018 Women In Logistics Forum	August	Fun with Flags – Semaphore Training
3 October Port Botany	DP World Port Operations	October	Shipping Australia Limited (SAL) Ball
December	Christmas Function	November	Breakfast Seminar
Mentoring Group catch ups throughout the year		December	Christmas Function
Western Australia		Queensland	
May	Border Force Breakfast	May	Movie Night
August	Breakfast/Sundowner Networking Event	July	Trucking Tour
November/ December	Christmas Function	August	AGM
Note: Further WA networking events still to be announced		October	SAL Ball
		December	Christmas Function