

# Nurturing diverse talent to retain and attract candidates for a changing world



European Materials Handling Federation



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### Introduction



In the ever-evolving landscape of material handling, resilience, adaptability, and skilled talents are the cornerstones of sustainable success. The challenges faced by HR communities across different countries in attracting talent continue to grow. It's no secret that in this competitive job market, finding the right candidates for any position is becoming increasingly difficult. However, amidst this challenge, there lies a tremendous opportunity – the power of diversity and inclusion.

As the President of FEM and Executive Vice President Sales & Service KION Industrial Trucks and Services, I passionately believe that sustainability as a whole, with diversity, inclusion and equity as integral components, is now considered a "must-have" by potential candidates. It's not just about the right thing to do; it's a strategic imperative.

### Talents: the backbone of resilience



In our fiercely competitive industry, the ability to attract, develop, and retain highly skilled individuals from across the globe is a driving force behind business success and sustainable growth.

Talents are the lifeblood of our organisations, the architects of innovation, and the key to overcoming the challenges presented by a constantly changing environment.

At Linde Material Handling, Fenwick-Linde, STILL, Baoli EMEA and Dematic, we firmly believe that a motivated and diverse workforce is essential for fostering innovation, creative problem-solving, and ensuring our sustainability. To achieve this, we employ several strategies, all with the aim of not only retaining our current staff but also attracting new and diverse candidates to join our sector:

#### ① Employee engagement and retention

Our journey begins with active listening. Every year, we conduct a global employee survey, providing invaluable insights into engagement and satisfaction levels. Through intense team workshops and follow-up actions, we work diligently to improve year after year compared to internal and external benchmark, making us an attractive destination for potential candidates.

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## ② Diversity and inclusion

Diversity is the mosaic of our identities, a tapestry of experiences, abilities, and backgrounds. At Linde Material Handling, Fenwick-Linde, STILL, Baoli EMEA and Dematic, we cultivate a culture of inclusion, respect, trust, and equal opportunities for career growth. This inclusive environment not only retains existing talent but aims to also act as a magnet for candidates who are seeking organisations that value diversity.

Our Global Diversity & Inclusion Council, which I co-chair, plays a pivotal role. Comprising leaders from all business units and employees from underrepresented groups, the council defines and implements sustainable measures while continuously monitoring our progress.

### The power of Example & Inclusion Council

In June 2023, we embarked on a groundbreaking initiative, the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Awareness Month. This worldwide celebration embraced our differences, uniting our strengths, and deepening our understanding of diverse perspectives. From workshops on unconscious biases to engaging discussions on inclusive leadership and allyship, our commitment was evident. Visual cues such as pride banners, D&I-themed food, posters, postcards, and virtual backgrounds reinforced dedication of everyone.

But our pursuit of diversity and inclusion is not confined to a single month. Our efforts extend across various facets of our business, exemplified by three more initiatives, all designed to attract and retain diverse talents:

- **Fostering Female Technicians:** In a traditionally male-dominated field, we are breaking barriers by actively recruiting and developing female service engineers at Linde Material Handling, STILL, Fenwick-Linde and Baoli EMEA. We have conducted workshops to understand their unique challenges and launched a diverse communication campaign to inspire prospective candidates.
- **Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Champions:** At STILL, Linde Material Handling and Fenwick-Linde we're piloting D&I Champions. These champions act as points of contact, drive local D&I initiatives and are instrumental in bringing our D&I strategy to live, making us an appealing choice for current and prospective talent who value inclusion.
- **Employee Resource and Allyship Groups:** These offer a supportive community for individuals who share similar experiences/characteristics and can provide opportunities for career growth, building relationships, fostering understanding, and promoting cross-functional collaboration.

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## 3 Talent development

Attracting and retaining top talent is only part of the equation. To truly excel, we must invest in the ongoing development of our employees at all levels. At Linde Material Handling, Fenwick-Linde, STILL, Baoli EMEA and Dematic our integrated talent, performance, and succession management process, applicable to all employees across our organisation and serves a dual purpose: to evaluate the "what" and the "how" of employee performance. The "what" focusses on the business performance, evaluated on the basis of targets and main tasks. With the "how", behaviour performance is described, which is evaluated based on our shared values and leadership principles (for people managers only) and the six core competencies of our competency model.

To ensure fairness and diversity in talent identification and succession planning, we conduct structured calibration conferences. These sessions involve managers of the same hierarchical level, next-level managers, and HR representatives. Together, they review and discuss talent and succession candidates to mitigate any unconscious biases and ensure that the most deserving individuals are identified, creating an environment where candidates from all backgrounds see a clear path to grow.

Our extensive development offerings cover both off-the-job and on-the-job measures, fostering continuous growth and learning:

- **Off-the-Job Measures:** These include corporate talent programs, country-specific programs, and individual off-the-job training opportunities. These programs provide employees with a chance to enhance their skills and knowledge beyond their daily tasks, making us an attractive choice for female candidates aspiring career growth.
- **On-the-Job Measures:** We believe in learning by doing. Our employees benefit from on-the-job measures such as individual assignments, international rotations, work shadowing, and job rotations. These experiences broaden their skill sets and perspectives.
- **Feedback-Centric Development:** Feedback is a cornerstone of growth. We encourage and facilitate feedback through mentoring, coaching, ongoing feedback mechanisms, and our 360-degree feedback process. Employees receive insights and guidance to continuously improve their performance.

Of course, diversity and inclusion also play a key role in our talent development programs, e.g., the

- **Global Women's Mentoring Program:** Our program focuses on developing female potential across the globe. It pairs talented women with mentors who provide guidance, support, and opportunities for growth.
- **Management Trainee Program:** Our successful management trainee program targets talented graduates with master's degrees who aspire to an international career. Over 18 months, trainees gain exposure to various facets of our business, including at least one international assignment. This program helps us groom future leaders with diverse backgrounds and experiences, a compelling proposition for young talents considering their career options.

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## Vision



My vision is that our industry is to be recognised as a leading employer that attracts, develops, and retains the best talent from diverse backgrounds around the world. This vision is grounded in sustainability, and we strive to be leaders in environmental responsibility and social impact. In today's fiercely competitive talent landscape, we understand that diversity and inclusion are not just buzzwords; they are business drivers and magnets that draw in and retain the brightest and most diverse minds, creating a dynamic tapestry of skills and perspectives.

Our commitment to diversity, engagement, and inclusion are integral to our culture, driven by the belief that skilled talents, that feel psychological safe and see opportunities for career growth, are the pillars of our success and that of the thriving material handling industry.

We are committed to embracing diversity and investing in the development and growth of our employees as strategic necessities. We believe that by outing people first, we can create a workplace culture that fosters innovation, creativity, and collaboration, making us the top choice for both current and potential candidates.

In a world where skilled talents are the currency of success, we see diversity, engagement, equity, and inclusion as cornerstones of our industries and company's culture. Our promise is simple: an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and included. This promise extends beyond our current talent pool; it reaches out to those considering their career options.

Our goal is not only to retain and develop our existing talent but also to be the industry beacon that beckons top candidates from diverse backgrounds, offering them a place where their unique talents are embraced.

Together, we are dedicated to ensuring that the material handling industry remains a leader in innovation, sustainability and as the destination of choice for the world's most talented individuals, ready to shape the future.