



# **Diversity & Inclusion**

**2020/2021**

# Contents

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- 1 Creating Value
- 2 Our Diversity & Inclusion
- 3 Statistics & Figures
- 4 Our Work in Action
- 5 Evolution

# Introduction

As a business owner, I recognise that it is of the utmost importance to celebrate diversity in our industry and beyond.

Since our creation, Fortel has promoted a working environment in which diversity is not only recognised, but valued and encouraged.

**“ Our latest diversity and inclusion strategy provides the framework for progression to ensure that we continually improve, and can monitor our impact. ”**

This continues to this day, with the business adapting to cultural and professional diversity requirements.

We know that when people with different experiences, from different backgrounds and with different points of view work together, we create the most value – for our clients, our people and our communities.

Our latest diversity and inclusion strategy provides the framework for progression to ensure that we continually improve, and can monitor our impact.

Our promise is to be pillars of our industry by creating a social legacy with foundations built on our activity and measurement.

- Sat Nijjer  
CEO, Fortel



# Creating Value



# People

**Our people** are passionate and form competent, teams for major projects. We cultivate growth and development for sustainable careers.

# Promise

**Our promise** is to be pillars of our industry by creating a social legacy with foundations built on our activity and measurement.

# Progress

**Our progress** is forged by the use of innovative technology, supporting our teams and collaborating with people, clients and communities to drive results.



finalist  
**Partnership Initiative of the Year**



Awards and Recognition





# Our Diversity & Inclusion

## 1 Inclusive Leadership

Our leadership team and senior staff actively engage with and learn from the experiences and ideas of others, while building self-awareness of any unconscious bias. Each member of our Senior Leadership Team takes part in a Diversity and Inclusion Masterclass as part of our commitment towards ensuring our overall strategy is backed by active, visible leadership.

We also host regular people forums and team meetings in order to discuss, listen and feedback on any Diversity and Inclusion issues. Personal accountability is encouraged, with individual Diversity and Inclusion focused goals and objectives sat alongside business objectives.

Personal development is also encouraged, with clear, fair and transparent routes to career progression available for all, including internal promotions. This focus means that a positive example is set across the company by a diverse and representational leadership team.

## 3 Diversity of Leadership & Workforce

Fortel consists of a vibrant and diverse team with a workforce representative of the communities we work in. We continually analyse our Diversity and Inclusion data and highlight focus areas in order to ensure we are always widening our talent pool.

Our data is kept up to date as we collect demographic information for our workforce at various touch points during their time with us. To ensure we are keeping up to date with the latest Diversity and Inclusion developments on an industry wide basis, we are participating in a number of accreditation schemes and development programmes.

## 5 Social Impact on Communities

Legacy is at the heart of our ethos and so we engage with local leadership and community groups to develop and measure our social impact. Our community partnerships focus on improving social mobility and creating opportunities for people to create a sustainable career. We partner with a number of schools and colleges in our community

## 2 Inclusive Culture

Across Fortel, we have created a working environment where diversity is recognised, respected and valued. Our people see our diversity as a key strength of the business and our actions mean we are able to act as ambassadors for the benefits of an inclusive culture in the communities we operate.

In order to enhance this reputation, we collect feedback from diverse employees on their experiences, while continuing to review and create new policies and processes to enhance the attraction of a diverse range of talent. Managers are provided with a toolkit, providing advice on creating inclusive workplaces, as well as guidance for supporting diverse talent within their teams.

Moving forward, we are creating a steering group with representatives across the business - including our Senior Leadership team - to review existing initiatives, support implementation of the diversity and inclusion strategy, and obtain feedback across the company.

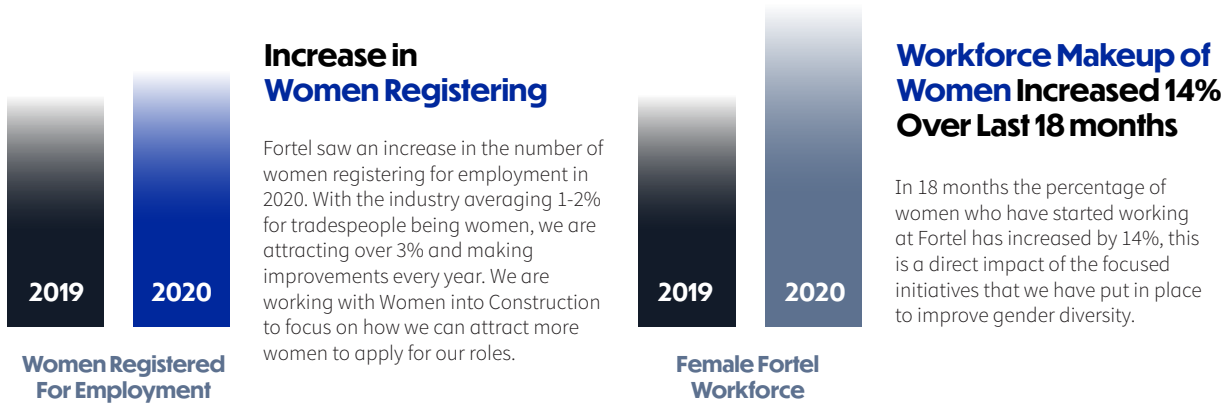
## 4 Collaboration with Clients & Supply Chain

We embrace collaboration with our partners and stakeholders to ensure our approaches to Diversity and Inclusion are aligned, with each party leading in areas where our strengths add most value. Our collaboration with the Supply Chain Sustainability School includes ensuring our full Senior Leadership Team are recognised as Fairness, Inclusion and Respect Ambassadors.

When entering a project, we collaborate with our clients on Diversity and Inclusion initiatives, to ensure each party is aligned, as well as participating in existing collaborative industry groups in order to contribute to wider policy and programmes.

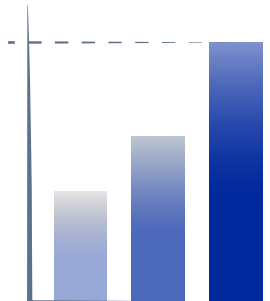
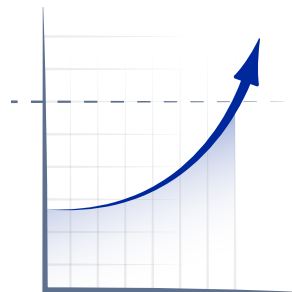
and are committed to increasing this talent pool, as well as focusing on increasing the diversity of applicants for our apprenticeship programmes. Our people are also encouraged to volunteer for charitable organisations, social enterprises and programmes which promote inclusion.

# Statistics & Figures



The success rate from interview through to employment is greater for women than men. With this positive success rate we are focusing on increasing the number of women who apply, and will monitor the proportional increase of those employed.

**over 60%**  
of our workforce  
come from BAME  
backgrounds



**50% increase  
year on year**  
Prisoner day release  
programme with the  
Ministry of Justice  
supporting ex-  
offenders



The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace.



We collaborate with Constructing Rainbows Limited to establish and implement impactful equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives.



We are sponsors and supporters of Out Of Office - Birmingham's leading LGBTQ+ professional networking organisation.

# Our Work in Action

## BAME\*

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sits at the heart of Social Impact and 2019 saw Fortel praised for its commitment to these values in a video case study produced by HS2.

The company was held up as a shining example of how to properly implement an EDI focused ethos as HS2 displayed the success of its supplier diversity requirements.

Fortel’s partnership with Balfour Beatty formed the basis of the case study.

\* Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic



CEO Sat Nijjer commented: “EDI is important to Fortel as a BAME owned business.

“With the continual development of our workforce and the engagement of local communities, we are able to reach the hard-to-reach and underrepresented talent pools and bring them into the construction industry.

“Diversity and inclusion coupled with fairness and respect ensure we retain the best workforce from the UK now and going into the future.”

## Women in Engineering

To mark Women in Engineering Day 2020 we collaborated with a number of leading construction industry partners to share the story of female professionals working in key roles across the sector.

As part of a creative communications campaign around the initiative, our social media channels were used to highlight industry trailblazers over last few hundred years, who fought the tide and paved the way for events such as INWED2020 and the huge contributions made by women to the industry.

We also conducted interviews with female professionals across a variety of roles at top employers to find out more about what it is like to work in this sector as a woman.

From starting out, to overcoming obstacles and looking to the future, we gained a fascinating insight from these conversations.



We engage with young women in our communities to encourage greater representation in the sector and are committed to using our West Midlands Training Academy to train, encourage and welcome more women into our industry.







# Supporting Ex-Forces Personnel

**Chris Edwards, Head of Operations for Major Projects at Fortel Security**

A former member of the Household Cavalry Life Guards, Chris Edwards joined Fortel after leaving the Armed Forces due to injury.

Chris began his security journey as a guard, with Fortel supporting him to build on his passion for the security industry, through career planning and upskilling.

Chris has collected a number of security industry, training and auditing qualifications, helping his career to progress to the senior management role he holds today.

**“a supportive company with a real family environment”**

The transition from life in the Armed Forces to civilian life is recognised as one of extreme difficulty and while recognition of this is improving, Chris credits Fortel for the support shown to him during this period.

He said: “Fortel have been very supportive throughout my career.

“When I left the army there wasn’t really any support for transitioning to civilian life, nothing like it is today.

“I think the support given to me reflects really well on the company - it is a supportive company and we have a real family environment.”





# Women in Construction

**Sharon Buck, Account Consultant at Fortel Group company SkyBlue Solutions**

The people who underpin the Fortel Group bring a wealth of experience to the table, accompanying our ambition to train and upskill younger staff.

Sharon Buck, Account Consultant at Fortel Group company SkyBlue Solutions, has worked in the recruitment sector for more than 40 years, across sectors including aviation and transport.

Today, she works with Facility Site Managers and their teams as well as more senior and project managers across the regions, bringing her expertise to help prisons in the SW, Kent and Sussex area with their facilities management needs.

Sourcing professionals from across a range of trades, managerial and administration supplying to GFSL at HMPPS prisons, Sharon sees her role as a perfect use of her skills and passion for the job.

**“I’ve got a job that I love, where I am trusted to manage my time”**



She said: “I have vast experience with 360 recruitment and internal recruitment and over the years have gained insights into various industries” Working as an Account Consultant for Skyblue lets me shine, and do what I enjoy.

“I place a huge amount of value on building relationships and face to face interaction. This is how you get to know your client and understand what they need. “It’s also important to learn how to trust your own judgement.

“I’ve got a job that I love, where I am trusted to manage my time, make my own appointments and keep clients happy in my own way.”



# LGBTQ



Our diverse supply chain includes a number of LGBTQ owned SMEs, who are helping to shape and inform our inclusive culture.

Our retained public relations agency, Reeves PR, is owned and managed by Clive Reeves, who has run LGBTQ professional networking events Out of Office for ten years.

Clive said: “I run a PR consultancy and have been open about my sexual orientation at work since 1982.

“I have spent many hours during lockdown working remotely with their senior leadership team and as the construction industry continued to operate throughout lockdown, I have visited many Fortel sites across the West Midlands, Yorkshire, London and the North East to speak to the wider team.

“I have been welcomed in a very professional and friendly manner by the senior team and everyone I have encountered on site, achieving what I think the LGBTQ community should strive for in the workplace, and that is being treated exactly the same as everyone else without question.”

Through Reeves PR, we have been introduced

to our Diversity & Inclusion consultant Sharon Slinger at Constructing Rainbows.

Constructing Rainbows helps businesses become a more inclusive working environment in order to attract new talent, retain existing employees and generate innovation.

Sharon, Company Founder, said: “Sometimes I have concerns that being open about my sexual orientation could have a negative business impact.”

“Thankfully there are organisations like Fortel who actively look for minority-owned businesses, because they understand the positive impact that diverse supply chains have, for example bringing new ideas and solutions, and accessing new markets.”

“My ongoing relationship with Fortel is proving a great success for all of us.”

**“Thankfully Fortel actively looks for minority-owned businesses”**

## Mental Health



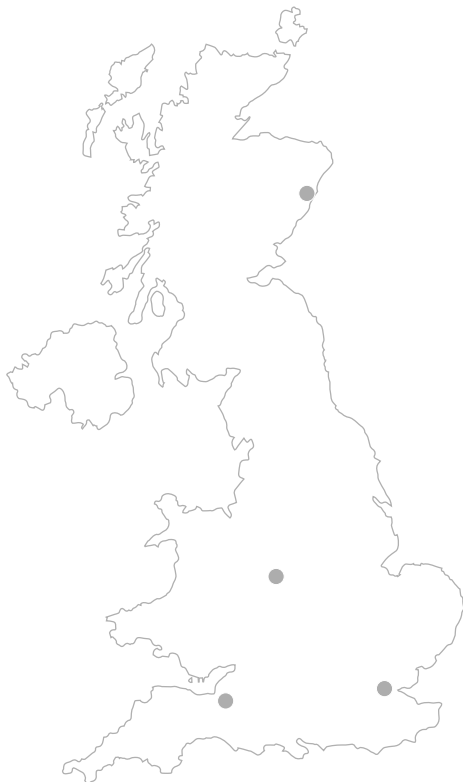
Open and honest communication regarding mental health is encouraged across Fortel, with our people given support to access crucial services relating to mental health and wellbeing.

We work with Life Works, the world’s largest Employee Assistance Programme, to offer combined modern employee assistance,

wellness, recognition and incentive programmes into a unified total well-being solution.

Our site supervisors are trained by MIND for better mental health support, while we are continuing to work with Samaritans on a project by project basis.





## Evolution

We recognise that Diversity & Inclusion is an ever evolving landscape and will continue to adapt and move-forward with new ideas, priorities and commitments.



