



Pinsent Masons

PINSENT MASONS

# THE BUSINESS PLEDGE

A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

---

Written by: Antara Das, Amity University

## 1. WHAT IS THE INITIATIVE THAT THE ORGANISATION HAS ESTABLISHED?

Pinsent Masons has established the FREE (Faith, Race, Ethnicity and Equality) Network within their organisation as part of their commitment to an inclusive workplace.

The key aim of this initiative is to widen access to the legal profession and to raise career aspirations by encouraging candidates to collaborate with people from uniquely different personal backgrounds.

Project Sky, which is being led by Linda Jones (an employment partner of Pinsent Masons), has established a number of initiatives with the ultimate aims of:

- ensuring greater transparency in career development;
- a greater accessibility to flexible or agile working;
- more structured support around parental leave and training to help identify and address subconscious bias, and
- consultation on these issues in conjunction with leading consultancies specialising in gender issues.

## 2. WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE FOR ESTABLISHING THIS INITIATIVE?

Issues of equality and diversity have always been a major concern for businesses due to the constant competition to retain the best employees.

In order to strive and create a more inclusive workplace where employees are provided the opportunity to accomplish their goals regardless of their gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, or pregnancy. A direct result of people being themselves at work would be that they are undeniably happier and more motivated to push themselves further at Pinsent Masons.



### 3. WHAT WERE THE WAYS IN WHICH THE ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENTED THE INITIATIVE?

In Pinsent Masons, the initiative of Diversity Week - which coincides with National Anti-Bullying Week - was one of the first steps to raise awareness and celebrate the work of Pinsent Mason's diversity network groups.

The event kicked off in the Pinsent Masons's Dubai branch with the 'Bring your child to work day' initiative, followed by a seminar for the entire organisation on the theme of 'Working Families'.

The following days included a variety of events that helped increase awareness on various global issues pertaining to diversity in the workplace. For instance, a series of women's networking events hosted by the Women's Network Group helped employees discuss the growth of women leaders and their importance in companies.

In the spirit of celebrating other religions and faiths, Pinsent Masons held a Diwali celebration event where the staff wore traditional Indian clothes. This was also in conjunction with the multicultural themed menus in Pinsent Masons's staff restaurants, where employees of diverse ethnicities were able to bring and share food from their countries of origin and were able to provide their peers and co-workers with an opportunity to learn more about the culture.



### 4. WHAT WAS THE IMPACT THE INITIATIVE HAD ON THE ORGANISATION?

After receiving clear feedback from their clients, having open-ended discussions with peers, conducting several surveys around the workplace, enabling employees to call out discrimination upon encounters with discriminatory behaviours, and conducting several mentoring programmes, there has been a drastic change in the attitudes and mindsets towards increased numbers of women at the board level, and a spike of willingness to look at non-uniform solutions to promote growth, productivity, and morale. It also provides a better balance in any decision-making process.

Pinsent Masons are ahead of the curve with initiatives like Project Sky to create a gender balance within their organisation with particular reference to the partnership and senior leadership team. While it is bound to be a long process, the firm has achieved their first target of 25% female partners ahead of their schedule, and have now set their next goal of 30% more female partners by 2020.