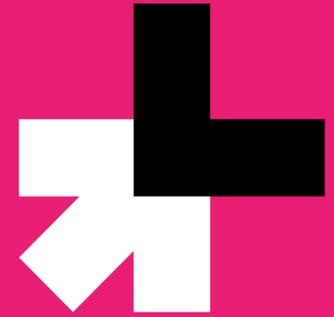


**Proven
Solution**

Economic Justice



HeForShe

BNP Paribas

Overcoming gender bias and improving diversity



Global Context

The banking industry has historically suffered an unbalanced gender mix in business lines and activities that traditionally employ mostly women or men. These male or female dominated roles carry strong stereotypes, which must be identified and removed.

Although BNP Paribas globally consists of 52% women and 48% men, our gender mix is one of our biggest challenges in our Global Markets (GM) business line and in Human Resources. Like the rest of the industry, our GM and front office roles have always been male-dominant while HR positions are mostly occupied by women. Recruitment in HR and GM has reflected the unbalanced gender mix of candidates' academic paths.

We committed to increasing diversity and gender balance, particularly in the recruitment of more men in HR (notably as HR Business Partners) and recruiting and retaining more women in the Global Markets business line – including trading room activities, electronic trading and quantitative research roles that are traditionally dominated by men.

To address these issues and ensure an improved gender balance, we identified the nudge approach as a way to reveal barriers and practical ways to overcome them.

“No woman should be deprived of her ability to contribute to a better world. We need to work collectively to ensure that women can leverage their skills, talent and creativity. By making bold moves as well as small, targeted changes to the ways we do things, we can reduce gender imbalances, accelerate economic development and build a better future for everyone.”

**Jean-Laurent Bonnafé,
Director & CEO, BNP Paribas**



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Key Stages of Implementation

1

Step 1 Recognizing the power of nudge

The nudge approach is a relatively subtle technique that encourages people to make decisions that are in their broad self-interest. Nudge is not about theory: it is about being anchored, deeply and concretely understanding how real people act in real life when making real choices. In order to sustainably tackle and overcome unconscious bias, coercing or compelling people does not work. Change must become something positive for everyone and for the company.

Improving gender balance in the target areas requires overcoming several stereotypes: those preventing someone from applying for a job and those preventing people from hiring someone “different”.

As human beings our emotions, habits, beliefs and fears constantly influence our choices and actions. We therefore have to question ourselves and examine our own unconscious bias and stereotypes.

We decided to engage a behavioral consultancy company, BVA Nudge Unit, to support us in the project as this was our first experience of this new way of working.

Nudge is a “soft” approach that can have profound impacts on the ways in which people behave in everyday life as well as helping to shift norms throughout a community. It is a useful tool for dealing with unconscious bias and stereotypes.

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Step 2 Gathering diagnostics

The project began with members of staff being interviewed by our external specialist partner, BVA. We made sure to select a group that was diverse in gender, seniority, business line and region.

Using behavioral science, BVA was able to identify conscious and unconscious, rational and irrational, individual, social and environmental levers and barriers to diversity for each stakeholder. This step required identifying all the barriers and levers at each stage of our recruitment processes, according to each actor (HR specialists, managers and candidates).

The interviews provided valuable qualitative information which we could use to get a true idea of how our people were feeling and where we needed to improve by proposing areas of focus.

2

An external partner experienced in the nudge approach can help to bring out the challenges and opportunities of your existing ways of working that are not usually apparent in the formal descriptions of those processes.

Step 3 Holding collaborative workshops

The next step was to have BVA facilitate a one-day ideation workshop for around 25 experts. We discussed the key issues and shared ideas about how these could be improved. The day finished by reviewing every idea to identify which were most appropriate and achievable.

BVA then created a “Nudge book” for GM and for HR, containing the insights and proposals from the workshop.

3

It’s important that the nudges you decide to try in your Awareness campaigns are effective in highlighting the achievements of the target audience, and in enabling everyone to see themselves through the work of others and to identify with the wider movement for gender equality on a personal basis.

It’s important that the nudges you decide to try in your Awareness campaigns work best when they highlight the achievements of the target audience, enabling everyone to see themselves in the work of others and identify with the wider movement for gender equality on a personal basis.



Step 4 Creating nudges

Two additional roundtables sessions were held to identify the “Golden Nudges” – those which are easiest to implement and with the highest likelihood of success. These were based on what the group felt would reap the biggest rewards by implementing costless changes.

Examples of Golden Nudges designed to attract and recruit more men as HR Business Partners include “the male redactor” pattern, where the job description is written by one or more men occupying this role, so that the requested skills are expressed using a variety of terms that speak to both men and women.

An example of a Golden Nudge to attract women in Global Markets is “the business line female interviewer”, we decided to always have at least one woman from the business side interviewing the candidates. This enables us to create a reference point for the female candidate, who can imagine herself in that position. This revised process also sends a message of inclusivity to male candidates.

Nudges need not be expensive – they’re all about creating an environment in which people make better choices. Bringing diverse perspectives into the design of your processes, thinking carefully about the language you use and deciding which aspects to emphasize can make all the difference.



Step 5 Communicate to drive long-term engagement

The project teams then reached out to different senior managers within Global Markets and HR to gain their support in the nudge implementation. When testing a nudge, the efficiency of the idea has to be measured: what is the before/after effect? If the impact was satisfactory, the nudge was maintained and if not, the idea had to be dropped.

The nudge methodology proved to be a valuable approach for clearly identifying barriers throughout the recruitment path and to better understand human bias and behavior. Nudge has also been inspiring for other areas in the bank such as the IT function, which has been historically male dominated.

Nudge can be a useful methodology for any company facing an unbalanced gender mix. But it is not a magic wand and it won’t solve all the problems: nudge is a booster, and complementary to wider policy. Training about stereotypes, awareness and involvement of every actor, and continuous attention at each step of the process remain key to addressing gender imbalances.

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Resources

- [Corporate website article](#)
- [“Reveal Yourself” Youtube communications campaign](#)
- [“In my shoes” podcast episode](#)

Contact

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