

Unlock the full potential of our people

Strengthening our winning culture

We continue to evolve and improve our culture across the business as an enabler of all aspects of our EverGreen strategy.

At our head office, where global functions converge, fostering a strong, collaborative culture is vital. To address the challenges of hybrid working, siloed thinking and people with diverse experiences coming together, we launched the Together We Thrive Handshakes programme. Through focused two-hour workshops, teams define and commit to a purpose, principles and concrete ways of working. Since its launch, nearly 1,300 people across more than 100 teams have participated, reporting improvements in collaboration, wellbeing and work-life balance as well as a stronger sense of identity across head office.

Elsewhere, we introduced the 'Climate Winning Recipe' initiative, a set of best practice guidelines designed to help management teams operate as one and inspire their people. By consolidating insights from operating companies worldwide into a clear and actionable 'recipe' format, the initiative builds trust, unity and shared purpose.

Though still in its early stages, the programme reflects our commitment to empower our leaders to build winning teams where everyone thrives.

These efforts contributed to a positive, healthy and future-ready culture, as reflected in our 2024 climate survey. With more than 74,000 employees across 85 operating companies participating, we achieved a 92% response rate. The results outperformed external benchmarks, with 90% of employees expressing pride in working at HEINEKEN and an employee engagement score of 86%. Further recognition came in October, when Forbes named us the world's best employer in the food, beverages, alcohol and tobacco industry.

Talent and leadership development

We're committed to cultivating exceptional leaders that unlock the full potential of our people to deliver on our EverGreen strategy. In 2024, we took bold steps to expand and democratise access to formal leadership development programmes, scaling these initiatives to benefit more than 16,000 participants with a truly global offering.

Flagship programmes like the Heineken International Management Course (HIMAC), ACCELERATE and Women Interactive Network (WIN) continued to equip senior and middle managers with the skills they need to drive progress.

We launched two new initiatives in 2024: LEAD, our Global People Manager programme; and HEINEKEN's Women's Summit, a development programme for our senior female leaders. Preparations were also underway for an additional offer. Having reflected on the successes of Thrive, an 18-month programme aimed at our top 160 leaders, Thrive Forward will take its learnings to management teams worldwide in 2025.

These initiatives are working. Our research suggests participants are 33% more likely to be retained in the business and twice as likely to be promoted versus peers. They've also earned external recognition, including two prestigious Brandon Hall Group Human Capital Management Excellence Awards: one for Best Learning Program Supporting a Change Transformation Business Strategy (HIMAC) and another for Best Leadership Development for Women (WIN).

Unleashing diverse talent

Nurturing an inclusive and equitable environment where all employees can thrive is good for our business as it helps make sure our brands reflect and communicate authentically with our diversifying consumer base.

We launched Queenfisher in India, an initiative developed by an all-female team to celebrate sisterhood. Alongside a new beer with fresh packaging, we created safe spaces for honest conversations about female empowerment. Elsewhere, Strongbow took further steps towards becoming the UK's most inclusive cider. Supporting the Heineken Open & Proud (HOP) network, it introduced Pride-inspired packaging and hosted activations that resonated with a new generation of diverse consumers.

Meanwhile, 66% of management team roles in our operating companies are now held by local talent, demonstrating our focus on making sure teams reflect the markets, customers and consumers we serve. Cultural diversity is a cornerstone of our strategy, and a new global graduate programme is part of a range of efforts that are helping attract and develop the next generation of talent from increasingly diverse backgrounds.

Lastly, advancing gender balance remains a key priority. Initiatives like WIN and Women in Sales are supporting our 2025 goal of 30% women in senior management one year ahead of schedule.

