

## Boys and girls come out to work

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When a company spans the world and employs more than 60,000 people, it is an honour to win the prize for best product presentation.

Victoria Yates, one of Microsoft's recent recruits, had an added reason to celebrate, as she picked up the award at the competition in Redmond, US, this month.

"There is a misconception that women aren't so good at technology, but I was on the same platform as the men and I can say women are not disadvantaged at Microsoft.

"A girl went to the 'world cup demo' and a girl won!" says Ms Yates, a graduate of Aston Business School in Birmingham, who joined as a trainee two years ago.

### Female student - employer ranking 2008

Rank	Employer	
1	BBC	12.6%
2	NHS	9.8%
3	MI5	6.6%
4	PwC	6.5%
5	Oxfam	5.9%
6	Cancer Research	5.7%
7	Teach First	5.6%
8	Environment Agency	5.3%
8	L'Oreal	5.3%
10	Apple	5.1%
10	GlaxoSmithKline	5.1%

Source: *trendence Institut*

**Microsoft** employs a higher proportion of women than most IT companies – 27 per cent of its staff are female against the IT industry average of 11 per cent – and says redressing the imbalance is crucial at a time of skill shortages across technology and engineering.

But the employers appear to be struggling against human nature. Women students in their final year of university are most likely to want to work in the public sector, while men favour leading-edge technology companies or banking and investment, according to the Trendence Institut Graduate Recruitment Review 2008.

Asked to name the most attractive employers, one in eight women put the BBC at the top of the list and one in 10 picked the NHS. Their third choice was MI5 followed by PwC, Oxfam, Cancer Research, Teach First, the Environment Agency, **L'Oreal**, **Apple** and **GlaxoSmithKline**.

### Male student - employer ranking 2008

Rank	Employer	
1	Google	8.7%
2	MI5	7.8%
3	Microsoft	7.6%
4	BBC	7.4%
5	Apple	7.2%
6	Goldman Sachs	7.2%
7	PwC	5.5%
8	IBM	5.3%
9	Deloitte	4.8%
10	Shell	4.6%

Source: *trendence Institut*

**Google** topped the list of top employers for male students, followed by MI5, Microsoft, the BBC, Apple, **Goldman Sachs**, PwC, **IBM**, Deloitte and **Shell**.

Women students put more emphasis on work-life balance and job security than men, says James Patching of Trendence. "Technology and IT-based companies that are trying to increase the number of female graduates they take on will need to address this aspect of their brand image," he says.

A company working hard to improve its appeal to women is Shell, 10th most attractive employer for male students but only 35th for females. It has 10 women's networks helping employees support each other.

Beth Bostock, a graduate in chemical engineering from Sheffield University, says: "On the first day, I was put in charge of changing the design of reactor vessels at a chemical plant in the Netherlands. I've seen research into male and female attributes in the workplace but I haven't

noticed the stereotypes.”

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