



How women are represented in the industry?

When we started working on story, the only information we had are the names of a few women on top—that too in frontline positions, like marketing, sales, HR (which is almost a line function in this industry) or at the C level.

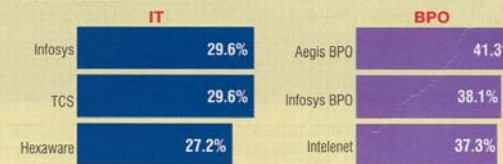
In order to get a better idea about women's representation in the overall workforce and the managerial cadres, we thought it would be best if we ask the large employers for actual data on this. We sent out a simple questionnaire to 28 companies—including all the large IT and BPO employers as well as selected medium-sized companies for the sake of comparison. We asked for three simple data points: total number of employees and total number of women employees; total number of managerial workforce and women's representation in that; and finally the number of top women managers (and percentage) and their names.

As many as 21 of them shared the data with us, including the top four employers, TCS, Infosys, Wipro, and IBM. So did HCL Technologies. Among the other large firms, while HP and Cognizant chose not to participate, we did not get a response from Satyam. On the BPO side, almost all major firms whom we approached shared their data. They include Genpact, Transworks, Firstsource, Aegis, Infosys BPO, Intelenet, 24/7 Customer and Perot BPO. In addition, we got response from companies like Xansa, MphasiS and ACS.

Together, they employ 399,159 employees out of which 112,679 are women. That is **28.2%**. This is the combined figure for IT and BPO. In IT, the number is **26.4%** and in BPO, it is **34.9%**.

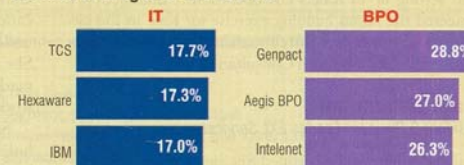
The total number of women managers that these companies employ is **15.4%**. Again the difference between IT and BPO is glaring. In the IT industry, women represent **13.4%** of total managerial workforce. The corresponding figure in the BPO industry is **27.2%**.

Total Women Workforce



While the large employers score, thank to a better sex ratio among the younger workforce, Hexaware's emergence as a strong player is a surprise. In BPO, domestic BPO firms as well as non-voice firms do well expectedly, because they do not require the women to work in the night.

Women Managerial Workforce



TCS, which emerges at top in both the lists proves that being #1 is a habit; IBM and Genpact score because of their women-specific policies.

Though we have top managers' data as well, we decided not to compare because the definition is very different in each company and often seniority is not known from designations. On a very small base, that would have created more confusion than serving any useful purpose. But it did throw a very good finding. That, behind the media glare, even the large Indian IT services firms recruit so many women managers at the top level. Being in delivery, they never get the limelight that their marketing/HR peers get. The profiles section cover many of them.



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Radhika Balasubramanian's area of expertise lies in operations, service delivery and people management. In her career spanning 22 years, Balasubramanian has worked at various organizations like DHL Worldwide Express where she was a part of the core team in the DHL de-merger process; at BPL Mobile she was instrumental in setting up the customer service delivery operations and also explore the possibility of outsourcing to run call center; she designed the reliance Web World services operations; and was successful in implementing the collection and credit process at Bharti Airtel.

Balasubramanian did her MA from Mumbai University, and has a master's degree in Marketing Management from NMIMS.