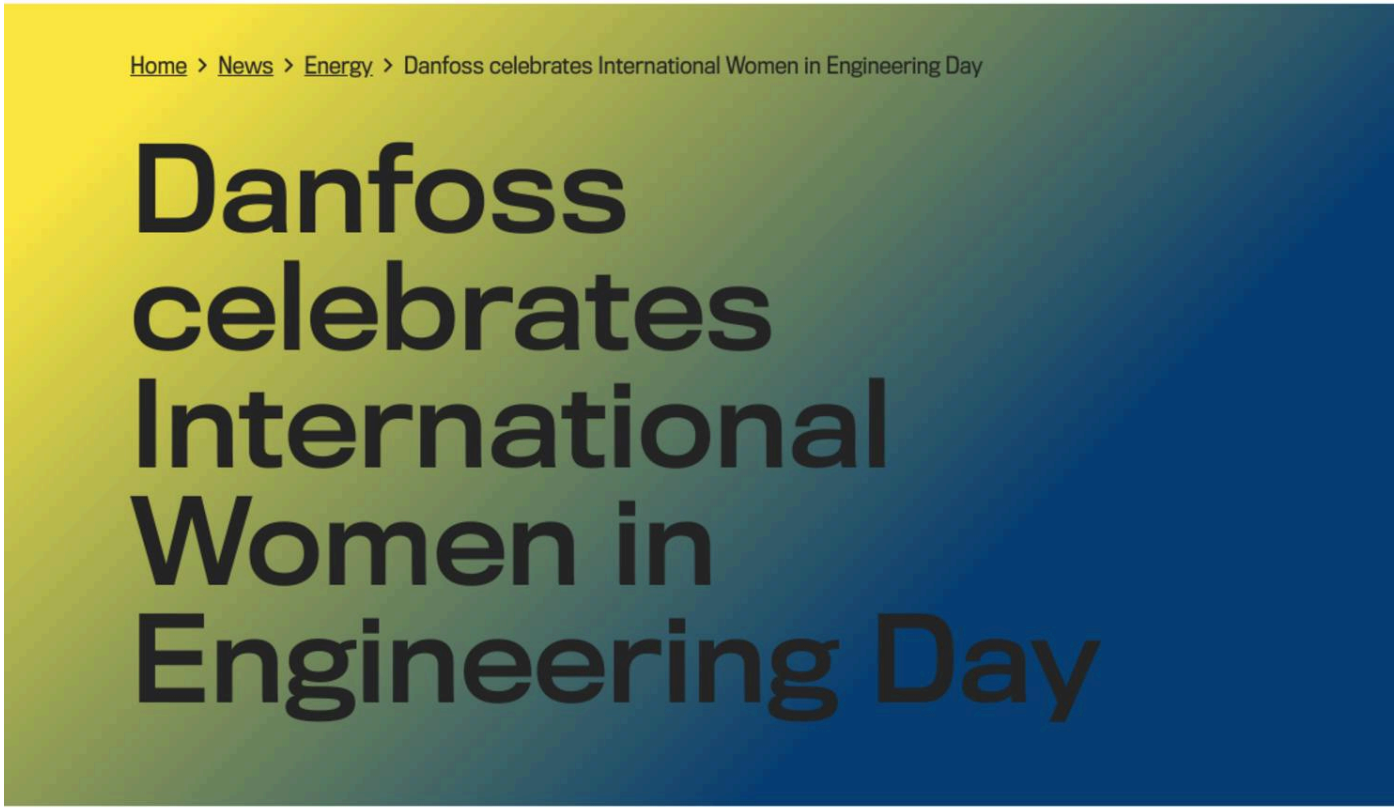
Women in Engineering June 21




Energy 23.06.21

**In an industry that is traditionally dominated by men, multinational engineering group Danfoss is striving for a position of global leadership by creating more opportunities for women to excel.**

Its 27,000 staff worldwide is 30% female and with 20% of its leadership positions already filled by women, it is well on track for its target of 30% women leaders by 2025.

It acknowledges the need to make the industry more attractive to women and to help them pursue engineering careers. But while much has already been achieved towards closing the gender gap, Danfoss recognises that extraordinary effort is needed to reach its target.

Under the heading 'diversity and inclusion', the company is actively promoting the opportunities it offers. It is focusing on recruitment, retaining talent and empowering women to become leaders.

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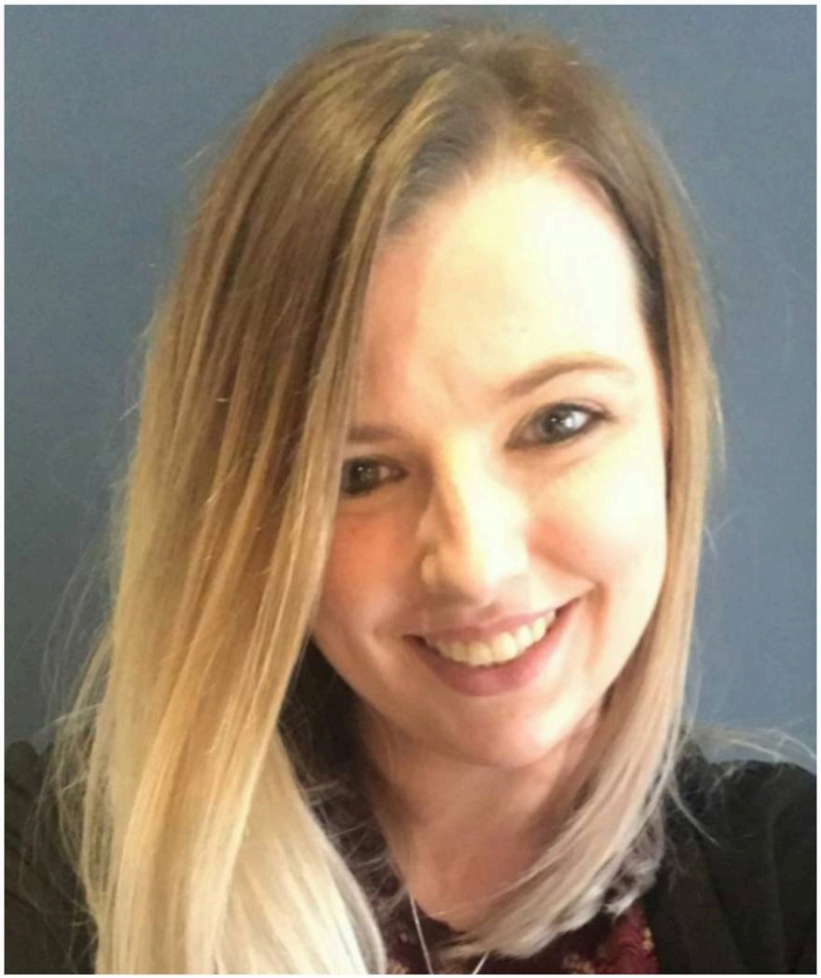
focusing on recruitment, retaining talent and empowering women to become leaders.

There are already many examples of success. In the UK, Lizzie Dunlop and Soulla Paphitis are just two typical Danfoss employees whose careers are firmly on the growth track.

Lizzie Dunlop is Commercial Sales Manager, based in Ayr, Scotland. She was inspired by her female technical teacher at school. So she studied mechanical engineering at the University of the West of Scotland, where she was one of just four women of the course with 200 men.

Once Lizzie graduated, her first job was as a trainee sales engineer with a refrigeration and air conditioning supplier, HRP. A year in, she was promoted to National Sales Engineer designate – 'designate' because she was technically still a trainee, but managers wanted her to have the role. After another year the 'designate' was dropped.



Lizzie Dunlop – Commercial Sales Manager

In October 2020 Lizzie joined Danfoss. She says: "I said I'd only ever leave if it was for Danfoss. I'd heard such good things about the company and I knew the products really well. Working with such a well-respected product range



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things about the company and I knew the products really well. Working with such a well-respected product range has been a great boost to my career.

"The industry has changed so much in the past five years. There are more and more females joining it and there is much more respect for women – not just in engineering roles but in all roles."

Lizzie is a member of the group Women in refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pumps, which she says is really helpful.

Soulla Paphitis is Software Solutions Manager – District Energy, and is based in Luton. Her career began on the sales desk at Wolseley Pipe Center, where she gradually became more involved in various aspects of the business.

After a career break to start a family, she rejoined as Branch Supervisor at a Pipes and Climate Center branch, quickly rising to Branch Manager. Next, she was promoted to a management role within Wolseley – which brought her into direct contact with engineering projects.

## Elemental

**Jun 23, 2021**

(IMAGE 3 OF 6)

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Soulla Paphitis – Software Solutions Manager

Throughout her time at Wolseley, Soulla took every training opportunity she could, both in work time and in her own. She took up many opportunities to undergo manufacturer training or visit factories to expand her technical and product knowledge.

Soulla says it's definitely more difficult for a woman to be accepted in a technical role, which is why she has invested so much of her own time to take advantage of all training.

Six years ago Soulla was approached by Danfoss, where she was offered her first real technical role. Today Soulla continues to expand her knowledge. She's currently doing a Level 5 Operational Management Apprenticeship and is on the Danfoss senior management progression track.

She says: "My career is a story of organic growth and how Danfoss has facilitated my progress. I've got where I am today by never taking my foot off the gas and always striving for better."

Soulla is a member of District Heating Divas – a women's group that fills her with confidence for the future of women in the industry. She is a member of the group's mentoring programme and is currently helping three people: a young male engineer, a marketing manager in a London-based business and a young woman in public sector business development.

Soulla says: "Women still have to work 10% harder. There is a long way to go, but the industry is definitely changing for the better."

The drive to change Danfoss is certainly not limited to employees like Lizzie and Soulla – it starts at the top of the organisation, where Ilonka Nussbaumer is Senior Vice President and Head of Human Resources.

She says: "We have come a long way, but we are aware that to achieve our ambitious target of increasing women in leadership positions by 50%, an extraordinary effort is required.

"We need to find new and unconventional ways, challenge ourselves and send an unambiguous signal internally that this effort has a high priority and externally that Danfoss is an attractive company for both genders."

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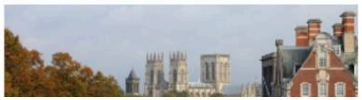

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