



# The Leadership Edge

## Strengthening the Female Leadership Pipeline in Food & Retail

### → Executive Summary

In food and retail businesses, the female leadership pipeline often narrows at mid-management level. Not due to lack of capability. But because this stage brings increased pressure, broader accountability and more complex stakeholder environments – often without targeted support around influence, progression and sustainable leadership.

**Fearless Women: The Leadership Edge** is a bespoke development programme designed to strengthen and retain rising female leaders before they step into senior roles. It is a proactive investment in your future leadership bench.

### → The Mid-Level Risk

Research and industry experience consistently show that:

- Women are underrepresented in senior operational roles
- The largest drop-off occurs at mid-management level
- Development acceleration often comes too late
- High-potential women leave before progression

For food businesses operating under sustained commercial pressure, this represents both a talent and succession risk.

### → Programme Focus Areas

Each programme is tailored to your organisation's context, but typically strengthens:

- 1. Leadership Presence:** Developing credible, confident contribution in senior forums.
- 2. Organisational Influence:** Understanding power dynamics, managing dominant personalities and building sponsorship relationships.
- 3. High-Stakes Communication:** Challenging constructively, holding boundaries and influencing under pressure.
- 4. Sustainable High Performance:** Reducing over-responsibility patterns and preventing burnout in high-potential leaders.
- 5. Promotion Readiness:** Supporting visibility, progression planning and succession alignment.

### → Who It Is Designed For

- First-time and mid-level female managers
- High-potential women within succession plans
- Future leaders transitioning into broader influence roles

This programme focuses specifically on strengthening the female succession pipeline at mid-level.

### → Business Outcomes

Organisations typically experience:

- Increased readiness for promotion
- Stronger cross-functional influence
- Greater confidence in senior contribution
- Improved sponsorship visibility
- Reduced attrition of high-potential female talent
- A deeper, more prepared female leadership bench

### → Why Fearless Women

Fearless Women is grounded in lived leadership experience within UK food businesses.

We understand:

- Operational and factory environments
- Retail scrutiny and commercial pressure
- Cross-functional tension
- The realities of managing up in complex organisations

Our programmes are practical, applied and commercially credible.

### → Delivery Approach

The programme is bespoke and may combine:

- Interactive workshops
- Action learning
- Coaching
- Manager alignment conversations

Designed around your succession priorities and business context.



Would you like a conversation about how Fearless Foodies can support your team?

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