

Mr. Price Case Study

Leadership sounds different when more voices are heard. This case study looks at how MrPRICE Branded Bargains has gone from a typical retail structure to one that actively fosters women in leadership and not just at one level, but across the board. Through focused development initiatives, real opportunities for progression and a cultural shift in how we define leadership, we've moved the needle. And we're still moving it.



62.5%
OF SUPPORT
MANAGERS
ARE FEMALE

63%
OF STORE
MANAGERS ARE
FEMALE

73%
OF DIRECTORS
ARE FEMALE



Three Different Paths, One Shared Impact. Meet Emma, Majella & Paula:

There's no one way to grow into leadership. At Mr. PRICE, we've seen that up close.



Emma Pillion, the Property Director, didn't take a traditional path. With a background in town planning and later qualifications in building surveying, she stepped into retail property with a fresh perspective. It wasn't the plan, but it became the right fit. "If you don't love the standard route," she says, "there are always other ways forward."



Majella O'Reilly, who leads our Loss Prevention and Security team, joined over a decade ago, when the department was mostly male. Her career progression took her from Keyholder to Supervisor, then Manager and now Loss Prevention Manager. Thirteen years on, she's helped shape her department into something much more balanced. What's guided her all along? Consistency, reliability and a clear sense of values.



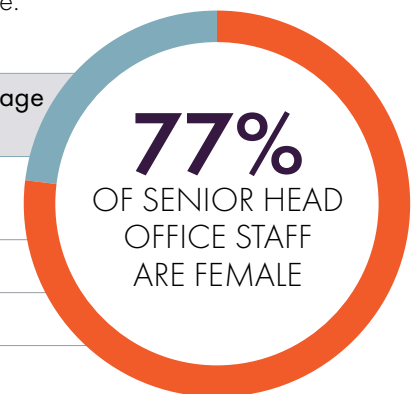
Paula Durkin started as a Sales Assistant, moved into Goods In, and grew into one of those people who quietly hold a team together. Sometimes leadership is just trust, built steadily over time.

Different stories. Different starting points. But all three show what's possible when skills are recognised early and nurtured properly. They also reflect a bigger truth we see every day: when women are supported, encouraged, and trusted with responsibility, they don't just step into leadership; they redefine it. Their presence changes the conversation, widens the perspective and strengthens the culture for everyone around them.

There's always a place for stories.

But numbers tell us what's really happening at scale.

Leadership Role	% Female Mr Price	National Average (Retail Sector)
Support Managers (Area Managers)	62.5%	36-40%
Store Managers	63%	30-35%
Directors	73%	31.2%
Senior Head Office	77%	36-40%



We're ahead of the average.... But the more useful question is: Why?

A SKILLS-FIRST PHILOSOPHY THAT WORKS

At the heart of it all is something pretty simple: we prioritise skills over credentials.

We hire and promote based on what people can do or could do, with a bit of support.

That means:

- Giving people a chance to try roles they're not "qualified" for on paper
- Backing initiative, not just box-ticking
- Rewarding capability and care, not just time served
- Educational partnership



Many of our current leaders took this route. They moved sideways. Tried something new. Or grew from within. And what we've seen, over and over, is that when you keep the barriers low and the standards high, people rise.

We've also learned that when you give people room to grow at their own pace, they often surprise you, not just in how far they go, but in how they bring others with them.

SUPPORT THAT MEETS PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

When life and work collide, we adapt

Of course, recognising potential is just one part. People also need room to breathe, try, grow and sometimes, adjust.

That's where our Reasonable Accommodation Passport comes in. It's a quiet but powerful document shared between an employee and manager, outlining any supports they may need at work.

And while it was designed to help colleagues with disabilities or long-term health conditions, it's also been a lifeline for:

- Team members going through tough mental health challenges
- Anyone who just needs a bit more flexibility, for a little while

It's our way of saying: You don't have to choose between your life and your job.

Not here. Not if we can help it.

If someone's dream is to have both, a fulfilling career and time for their family, then we'll try to build around that.

Not perfectly. But humanly.

Because that's the kind of company we want to be.



THE ROLE OF WOMEN@WORK

Another way we keep our talent pipeline open is through programmes like Women@Work, a tailored initiative supporting women who are either returning to the workforce or just starting out.

It's hands-on, based in stores, focused on real skills like merchandising and customer service.

What's made it especially powerful is how it's opened doors for women from marginalised backgrounds, particularly from the Travelling community, many of whom hadn't considered retail before or may have no work history.

It's proof that with the right welcome and a little support, confidence grows. And when confidence grows, so do careers.

We've seen women who joined the programme just hoping to get their foot in the door go on to become supervisors and team leads within a year or two. And that's something we want to see more of.

A CULTURE THAT NOTICES THE QUIET ONES

One of the shifts we've made internally is training managers to look beyond the obvious. That means:

- Noticing the team member who always follows through
- Encouraging people to try new roles, even if they're not "qualified" on paper
- Being open to promoting someone who hasn't asked, but absolutely deserves to

It's not always perfect. But it creates room for different types of leadership to emerge. And that's made our teams stronger, more balanced, and more reflective of the people we serve. We've also normalised talking about ambition in everyday ways, not as a big, scary thing, but as something everyone's entitled to explore.

STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS

There's more to do. We're still asking ourselves:

- Who's not yet represented in our leadership team?
- Where are the hidden gaps in how we hire or promote?
- What else can we do to make progression feel open, accessible?

The work continues. But the foundation is solid. And we're building on it. We're also looking ahead to new ways of expanding this work. That might mean building new internal accelerators, partnering with external learning bodies, or deepening mentorship structures. We're open to what works. As long as it helps our people grow.

FINAL THOUGHT

The women leading across MrPRICE today didn't all follow the same path. They weren't promoted because they fit a mould. They were promoted because they showed up with ideas, with care, with grit. They brought the skills. We tried to make sure there was space for those skills to thrive. And maybe that's the simplest way to put it

If it can work here in a fast-paced, value-focused retail business it can work elsewhere, too.

So, the real question isn't how we did it. It's why this still isn't the norm.