With a strong background in global security, risk and resilience spanning over three decades, Claire has stepped into the corporate world after a long and rewarding career in the police, successfully founding her own consultancy and training business NuParadigm. She prides herself on being authentic and respectfully disruptive in order to make a real difference to the security landscape.

Claire **Humble**

Founder and Chief Executive Officer
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The security sector faces a critical challenge: balancing the growing demand for skilled front-line staff with the need to maintain high standards in talent acquisition. Recent shifts in the global workforce emphasise the importance of diversity and inclusion, which not only enrich organisational culture but also bolster the sector's ability to navigate complex security challenges and environments.

This article will act as a means to challenge current sector thinking and provide my thoughts based on a vision of the security sector characterised by enhanced gender representation, critical shifts in organisational culture and the implementation of progressive talent attraction and acquisition methods. Historically male-dominated, the security sector has yet to overcome the barriers of traditional job perceptions and associated stigmas. Research indicates that negative associations with job titles can deter skilled candidates from applying, particularly women who often seek roles that offer growth potential and align with their values. The negative stigma surrounding "security guarding/officer" roles stems from misconceptions about the nature of the work, often perceived as low-skilled or dangerous. This perception is particularly discouraging for women seeking fulfilling, impactful careers.

Research has consistently shown that diverse teams outperform their homogeneous counterparts. Gender-diverse security teams leverage a variety of communication styles and decision-making processes. And as a result, model solutions can be crafted that address complex challenges in nuanced ways. Diverse teams bring a wider array of ideas and strategies that can address security challenges more effectively—whether preventing crime, managing crises, or navigating complex social dynamics. A culture that encourages diversity is naturally more innovative. By embracing different viewpoints, organisations can develop creative solutions that may have otherwise gone unconsidered. In my experience, security providers often rely on outdated recruitment practices focused solely on technical skills, overlooking the soft skills and broader perspectives that diverse candidates bring.

Retention of talent issues arise from a lack of career progression opportunities, inadequate support systems and an unsupportive work environment that fails to accommodate a variety of cultural and individual needs. Addressing the negative perceptions associated with security roles is paramount for attracting a more gender-diverse workforce. Through targeted strategic initiatives and a commitment to inclusivity, organisations can not only reshape the stigma but also harness the strengths that gender diversity brings to their operational effectiveness and community trust. Better use of technology such as AI-driven assessments and talent analytics can be a first step in removing bias and streamlining the recruitment process to ensure a more inclusive candidate evaluation. ▪