



WCT | **FCT**
Women in
Communications
and Technology | Les femmes en
communications
et technologie



Closing the Gender Gap:

A Blueprint for Women's
Leadership in the Digital Economy

Acknowledgements:

Collecting the ideas, insights and recommendations contained within this report would not have been possible without the generous support of Status of Women Canada (SWC). WCT is grateful for this and the ongoing encouragement that SWC provides in all our work.

Two corporate supporters of WCT – KPMG and Microsoft Canada – provided additional support. We are grateful for their support for this project and for their continuing support and leadership in our work to advance gender diversity in Canada. ITAC, the Information Technology Association of Canada was also a valued supporter of this project.

We kicked off six of our roundtables with inspiring keynote presentations from some distinguished leaders in the Canadian digital economy:

Corinne Charrette, former Associate Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Digital Officer, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada;

Margot Micallef, President, Oliver Capital Partners Inc.;

Anne Giardini, Chancellor, Simon Fraser University;

Vanda Vicars, President, Vicars Consulting and former President, Cap Gemini Canada and Executive Vice-President, Cap Gemini North America;

Louise St-Pierre, former CEO, Cogeco Cable Canada; and

Ulrike Bahr-Gedalia, CEO, Digital Nova Scotia.

We are proud to have these women in the WCT community and grateful for the contribution they made to this project.

We are also grateful to the many women and men who gave us their time and ideas in this national exploration of the best strategies to build more gender diverse companies in Canada's digital economy. They were thoughtful, well-spoken, frequently irreverent and always a joy to learn from.



Closing the Gender Gap: A Blueprint for Women's Leadership in the Digital Economy

From September 12, 2016 to April 18, 2017, Women in Communications and Technology (WCT) conducted a series of seven roundtable discussions across Canada. Their purpose was to explore the known universe of strategies, policies and programs for the engagement and advancement of women in the digital industries (broadcasting, telecommunications and technology). We set out to learn what was working and not working in present approaches and, hopefully, to encounter new ideas that haven't been put into practice yet.

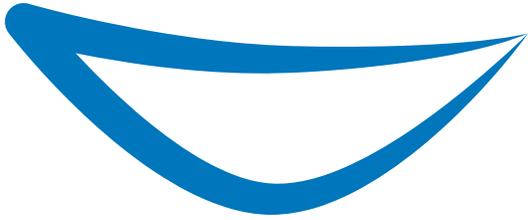
In preparation for our roundtable discussions, all participants were asked to read a short document outlining the spectrum of business processes, approaches, and behaviors essential to developing a diverse and inclusive organization. In addition, the document outlined levels of diversity maturity and what it takes to move from being a beginner to being in a true leadership position. Roundtable participants were asked to reflect on this matrix and come prepared with their views on the most effective measures, or perhaps even suggest new ones. The Blueprint for Women's Leadership Gender Diversity Model can be found in the Appendix to this report. The roundtables took place in the following cities where WCT has active chapters:

- **Ottawa, September 12, 2016**
- **Calgary, October 25, 2016**
- **Vancouver, October 27, 2016**
- **Toronto, November 22, 2016**
- **Montreal, February 9, 2017**
- **Halifax, March 28, 2017**
- **Kitchener, April 18, 2017**

Approximately 250 women and men participated in these discussions.

After a keynote address from prominent members of the WCT community (see the list on page 2) and a brief presentation on the maturity model, participants were asked to join one of three discussion groups or a "wild card" group based on where they felt they could contribute the most. The three core discussion groups were: career advancement, measurement and resources. The fourth topic area was identified in each city as being of particular interest and not necessarily captured by the three other topics. Our "wild card" discussions ranged from culture to quotas to sexual harassment.

Roundtable participants were generous, articulate and, in many cases, impassioned in the presentation of their views. Many consistent themes emerged in the regional roundtables themselves and across all seven. For the sake of clarity, we have followed the structure of the meetings to report on what we learned. In addition to serving as a record of this process, we have also included articles that reflect a bit deeper on some of the key ideas and approaches mentioned. We hope that this document serves as a primer for organizations seeking to strengthen diversity within their own organizations.



Many consistent themes emerged in the regional roundtables themselves and across all seven.

Contents

Chapter 1: Career Advancement	page 4
Flexibility in the Workplace	page 4
Mentorship and Career Sponsorship	page 6
Executive Leadership	page 9
Let's Talk About: Executive Career Sponsorship	page 11
Let's Talk About: Recognition	page 14
Let's Talk About: The Importance of Female Leaders	page 15
Chapter 2: Resources	page 17
Formal Diversity Programs	page 19
Alternative Work Arrangements	page 20
Career Planning and Education	page 21
Let's Talk About: Leaves of Absence	page 22
Let's Talk About: Women's Networks	page 24

Contents

Chapter 3: Measurement	page 26
Measuring Employer Success	page 26
Measuring Personal Success	page 28
Let's Talk About: The Pythia Index	page 30
Let's Talk About: Up the Numbers	page 31
Let's Talk About: Quotas	page 32
Chapter 4: Wild Card Roundtables	page 35
Culture and Communications	page 35
Let's Talk About: Sexual Harassment	page 37
Entrepreneurial Women	page 39
Let's Talk About: Supplier Diversity Programs	page 42
Appendix: Blueprint for Women's Leadership in the Digital in the Digital Economy Maturity Model	page 45

Chapter 1: Career Advancement

Women who decide to build careers in technology face some pretty challenging odds. Women constitute only 27% of the total technology workforce in Canada and occupy only 19% of ICT-technical jobs in the industry. The management ranks of the ICT sector are only 21% per cent female. Ninety percent of senior management positions in Canadian tech are held by men.¹ And of the 100 largest Canadian tech firms on the 2017 Branham 250 List, two were led by female CEOs. But perhaps the most daunting number of all is the drop-out rate – 56 per cent of women leave the ICT industry mid-career.² This is clearly a Snakes and Ladders game with particularly vertiginous ladders and venomous snakes. Women and the technology organizations they hope to serve need smart strategies to win it.

Three key themes emerged from the seven conversations we had regarding strategies for women’s career advancement:

- **Flexibility in the Workplace**
- **Mentorship and Career Sponsorship**
- **Executive Leadership**

Flexibility in the Workplace

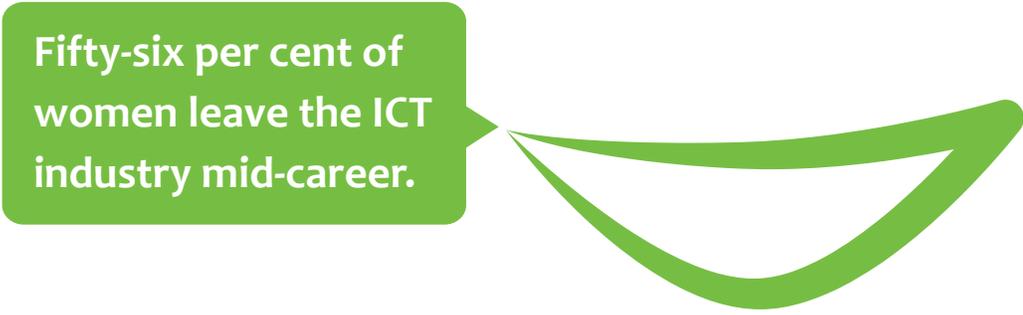
Modern employers increasingly recognize that employees – both women and men – have family responsibilities and that their abilities to fulfil these responsibilities impact their effectiveness and productivity. Policies promoting flexible hours of work, job-sharing and working from home are increasingly common, even in mid-sized and small companies.

But roundtable participants frequently noted that the evolution of policy often outstrips corporate cultural acceptance. One participant offered this example: “A couple of years ago I was having some challenging issues. It was a real tough time for me. And around the same time my daughter was having difficulty sleeping. At one point, I realized that I hadn’t slept through the night in seven months. No one noticed, thought about it, asked about it or cared.”

Companies may offer flexible work arrangements but they can be over-ridden by the exigencies of a boss or team leader’s schedule. Many participants cited intrusions on putative family time like early morning conference calls or late-in-the-day team meetings.

¹ “Where are the Women in Canada’s ICT Industry?”. WCT Up the Numbers publication, 2017.

² McKinsey: “Women in ICT: The Facts”, National Centre for Women and Information Technology, 2010. ncwit.org.



Fifty-six per cent of women leave the ICT industry mid-career.

Flexibility in the Workplace (continued)

And sometimes a company's flexibility policies run up against entrenched attitudes. We heard repeatedly that employees leaving work at 4 p.m. were subject to judgement regardless of their time of arrival or what they had accomplished in the day. This behaviour is so common that one company produced a brochure offering employees snappy comebacks to remarks like "You're leaving early." Effectively, the brochure gave employees the license to reply to judgemental remarks with a cheeky but company-sanctioned response.

Though it rose from the needs of families to better balance their work and home life, the importance of offering flexible working arrangements is growing with the emergence of the youngest cohort of workers. For this highly prized employee demographic, accustomed to transacting their professional and personal lives through laptops and smaller devices, employer flexibility is increasingly imperative. Deloitte recently reported "...when salary or other financial benefits are removed from the equation, work/life balance and opportunities to progress stand out" among millennial employee considerations when accepting employment. The study also noted that 75% of its respondents would like to start to work from home or work from home (or anywhere else where they feel more productive) more frequently.³

Time is changing our vision of work. The long commute to work in a cubicle from 9 to 5 is losing its appeal. Smart organizations competing in tight labour markets will close the gap between flexible work policy and flexible work culture faster than their rivals. Intuitively, technology firms should have an edge here. The tools and services they bring to the market are essential for modern workplace flexibility and productivity. To compete effectively for talent – female and male – tech firms need to ensure their own teams are equipped with flexibility-enabling technology and supported by corporate cultures that understand flexible workplaces as the way of the future.

Recommendations

For women: Make sure you understand the work culture of the organization you are joining. Does it offer options like flexible hours, job-sharing and working from home? And if it does, is the policy supported by corporate culture?

For employers: Implement flexible work policies to allow employees to work when and where they can be most productive. Ensure that corporate culture supports these policies.

Use technology to support employee desires for flexibility.

³The 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey: "Winning over the Next Generation of Leaders." Page 20, 22.



The importance of offering flexible working arrangements is growing with the emergence of the youngest cohort of workers.

Mentorship and Career Sponsorship

Consistently across all seven roundtables, the importance of mentorship as a tool for career advancement was mentioned again and again. Its importance was clearly underscored by one of the Waterloo roundtable participants: “The biggest problem is women feeling alone in the workplace and feeling that they can’t move up. Nothing works as well as learning from someone and having them have faith in you and pull you up,” she said. “I’ve been fortunate to have had a few mentors in my career. Now my mentor is founder of our company. She’s got about 20 years of experience on me now. Now I’m learning real things that I never had the opportunity to figure out – real situations where I’m being groomed and told what works best. I feel like mentorship is the most important thing we can do for career advancement.”

This oft-repeated perspective validates early research WCT conducted into the preferred career advancement strategies of women in technology. The report stated, “Women have been profoundly affected by their mentoring experiences. Of the sixty-three per cent who reported having had a mentor, 93% indicated that it had impacted the advancement of their careers in some way.” The study noted that mentors play an important role as advisors, sounding boards, role models and coaches.⁴

Shortly after it was created, the very first career advancement program that WCT (then CWRT) offered to members was a mentorship program. It has operated continuously since 1992. In its current form, the WCT Mentorship Program matches approximately 50 mentees with mentors from other companies, other sectors of the digital economy, and other professional backgrounds. Mentors can be female or male. The mentor and mentee are provided with program guidelines and encouraged to set their own objectives and terms of engagement. Results are evaluated at the end of each year. The program continues to be highly popular among our members and is over-subscribed every year. Many other professional development and business organizations also offer mentoring programs. And, increasingly, corporations are offering internal mentoring programs as a strategy for reducing the isolation that women and other workplace minorities feel, and as a means of identifying and supporting high-potential talent.

⁴“Strategies for Career Advancement: A Summary Needs Assessment”. Catherine Elliott, March 2017. Page 20.



Mentorship is the most important thing we can do for career advancement.

Mentorship and Career Sponsorship (continued)

Many of the roundtables discussions of mentorship assessed the merits of employer-provided versus third-party mentorship programs (such as those provided by business organizations and affinity groups) as well as the benefits of a formal versus informal approach. Pros and cons of all models were identified, for example corporate programs have the virtue of providing advice and guidance through the lens of a specific corporate culture, but that same familiarity can make interpersonal discussions difficult.

Corporate mentorship programs were subject to some criticism for relying too heavily on female mentors under the apparent assumption that women would voluntarily mentor women in their companies even if the same expectation was not placed on their male colleagues. Our participants generally supported having a mix of men and women in both the mentor and mentee pools. They raised concerns about “inauthentic” mentors who took on mentees for the sake of their own appearances before senior management. They recommended training programs for mentors and also suggested creating performance indicators around the mentorship role, ideally tied to compensation and promotability.

Sometimes even when the company does not provide a formal mentoring program, managers can deploy classic business structures to achieve the same outcomes. One executive with a major systems integrator told us about his experience. “I had an ambitious manager out West who wanted to move up and take on more responsibility. I saw he had a lot of things going for him but I wasn’t completely sure.

At the same time, the company had an intake program recruiting young grads just out of school. I met a very sharp, dynamic woman there and recruited her to our team even though she had no experience with the product we’re selling. I had her work directly for the manager out West. I gave him one quota – her quota – so his financial success was tied directly to how successful she was and how successful he helped her to be.” Not only did this approach help the team grow their business, it also allowed the manager and the newbie demonstrate their skills. Both people are now viewed as candidates for promotion.

While experiences with mentors and mentoring vary widely, most participants affirmed its importance to career development. The collected wisdom from these experiences includes the following:

- **Get a mentor as soon as you can, even while you are still a student.**
- **Be open to all models of mentorship relationship. Formal and informal, corporate and third-party models may each serve specific objectives better than others. Consider which one is best suited to your career stage and objectives.**
- **You can have more than one mentor at a time, ideally to address different problems or objectives.**
- **Women should mentor men as well as women and vice versa to provide a diversity of approaches to problem solving and to acquaint each other with the respective communications and management qualities associated with both genders. Working with mentors who think differently than you will broaden your perspective.**



Mentorship and Career Sponsorship (continued)

Roundtable participants also shared their experience with career sponsorship with us. This form of sponsorship is generally described as a more activist form of mentorship whereby sponsors place their resources – networks, contacts and spheres of influence – behind a specific protégé. One Halifax participant described the difference between mentorship and sponsorship this way: “Absolutely the most important person in my career was my sponsor because he turned the switch on. It started as mentoring but it evolved into sponsorship as he helped me get pay raises and opportunities for professional advancement that I wouldn’t had had on my own. He helped me get a seat at the table with the senior management team. It’s a huge boost to have an internal champion who’s got your back. That’s sponsorship.”

Relationships between sponsors and protégés have existed throughout business history. They are a classic, though tacit, strategy for succession planning. Unfortunately, gender complicates this approach, making it harder for high performance females to find sponsors. But, increasingly, companies are discovering that making career sponsorship practices explicit and programmatic is a good way to ensure a more gender-diverse pool of candidates for promotion into senior leadership. WCT recently introduced the Protégé Project, a unique national cross-company career sponsorship program for emerging female leaders in the digital economy. (See feature article Let’s Talk About Career Sponsorship.)

Recommendations

For women: Regardless of your career stage, find a mentor. Treat your mentorship relationship as seriously as you treat all professional relationships. Set specific goals (WCT recommends even having a contract), be clear about the time you will consume and the expected duration of the relationship. Report – and celebrate – accomplishments. Express gratitude for the support your mentor provides. Mentor others to learn and to keep extending your network of contacts.

For employers: Take note of who volunteers time as mentors and the relationship to their career advancement. Those who develop others should have an accelerated career path.

Create a mentorship program within your company. Train mentors. Create performance indicators linked to compensation for participating in the mentorship program.

Create a formal program for executive career sponsorship.

Sponsorship: a more activist form of mentorship whereby sponsors place their resources behind a specific protégé.

Executive Leadership

Executive leadership, expressed as the willingness of the company's senior leaders to state the business case for diversity and become a diversity champion, is a key asset for employers seeking to build a more inclusive company. WCT's maturity model identifies this practice (on the "External Representation" line) as the hallmark of a leading company.

Beyond corporate social responsibility and public relations, there is a business case for adopting this practice. With only two per cent unemployment, the Canadian technology labour pool is a sellers' market. Graduates and other new recruits can afford to be particular about where they decide to work. Among young women (and many young men), workplace equality and diversity are important considerations. They pay attention to what prospective leaders say about the companies they lead.

One example of this is Satya Nadella's commitment to make Microsoft an equal-pay-for-equal-work employer, to recruit for diversity and to expand diversity training for all employees. Microsoft employees at several of our roundtables cited this leadership with considerable pride. And in Waterloo, where start-ups compete fiercely for talent, Carol Leaman, the founder and CEO of Axonify, was commended for her leadership. According to one roundtable participant, it has made Axonify a magnet for talent. "Carol is out in the community and is a very strong proponent of equal rights," she said. "People are drawn to that story. Getting leaders to tell it feeds value back to the company. People want to work for Carol."

Leadership from the top can help create an inclusive environment for women and others. But no one should wait until they achieve the corner office to become a diversity leader. Actively promoting the ideas and contributions of female colleagues is one way to interject diversity into what may otherwise be a homogeneous corporate mindset. The women of the Obama White House practiced something they called "amplification" – self-consciously repeating or building upon the contributions of women colleagues in meetings and elsewhere to increase the chances of the female viewpoint being heard.

This approach can work equally well in the marketplace of goods and services as it does in the marketplace of ideas. "My goal is support women business owners," said one Halifax participant. "I trumpet them even if I don't know them that well. That's the way it should be... promoting my business and the business of the person next to me. Men use their networks to promote each other. We don't but we should."

The women of the Obama White House practiced "amplification" – repeating and building upon contributions of women colleagues.

Executive Leadership (continued)

Recognition programs, like WCT's Leadership Excellence Awards, are a high-impact way of promoting the accomplishments of women. They validate the contributions women are making to the economy and our society and also identify and applaud the employers that foster their success. The publicity that surrounds them reminds people that many, many women make similar contributions on a daily basis and are a force in business. The laureates of these programs add to the increasing supply of women leaders and role models. And they give recognition to women whose struggle to break through gender barriers is still tougher than it should be.

Recommendations

For women: When entering the job market or seeking a new job, research a prospective employer's public positions on diversity and inclusion.

Be aware of what your employer's public positions are and don't be afraid to point out when practice falls out of step with these positions.

Be aware of awards programs in your community that honour outstanding individuals. Take the time to nominate anyone (including yourself) who is worthy of recognition.

For employers: Ensure that your senior leadership publicly champions the merits of a diverse and inclusive enterprise. Ensure that the company walks the talk. Examples can range from speaking at conferences that are themed on diversity and inclusion to posting blogs on the topics and experiences in your company.

Invest time and sponsorship support in local and national recognition programs.

Recognition programs validate women's contributions to our society and applaud the employers that foster their success.

Let's Talk about: Executive Career Sponsorship

In 2015, with the support of Shaw Media (now Corus), WCT introduced the Protégé Project. It is a career sponsorship program that matches an influential Canadian executive champion with a C-Suite-ready female protégé. WCT forms the matches across companies and among the segments of the digital economy – broadcasting, telecommunications, digital content and technology. The program aims to increase the number of women in senior decision-making positions in Canada. And it appears to be working. In only its second year of operations with 30 protégés and champions matched, participants report a high level of satisfaction with the impact the program has had on their careers. Some have even seen their careers and their companies make significant advancements while participating in the one-year program.



WCT's Protégé Project aims to increase the number of women in senior decision-making positions in Canada.

Let's Talk about: Executive Career Sponsorship (continued)

Christin Wiedemann, Chief Scientist and Co-CEO of Professional Quality Assurance Limited in Vancouver, and Ottawa-based Namir Anani, President and CEO of the Information and Communications Technology Council, were one of the program's inaugural teams.

What is the difference between mentorship and sponsorship?

Namir: Mentorship is about being a source of advice, sharing lessons learnt and providing guidance to tackle career challenges, while sponsorship involves a planning and positioning strategy to advance a career objective by being an ambassador and an advocate on behalf of the protégé. As a sponsor, you're called upon to seize the opportunities for the protégé by leveraging your circles, networks, and other potential channels to advance the protégé's career objectives.

Christin: That's right, a sponsor is someone who actively promotes you with the outspoken goal of helping you advance your career.

How did you define the objectives of your Protégé engagement?

Namir: We started initially by having a better understanding of each other's skills, experiences, networks, and aspirations. This was done over the first two weeks of the engagement.

Christin: In our first meeting, we set up a framework for how we would work together, and we agreed on a set of goals for the engagement.

Namir: Then we started to explore current opportunities that were before us that we could leverage, such as key conferences, networking opportunities, relevant meetings, presentations and others. Once this was done we had a clear understanding of what could be achieved and set out goals for the year ahead.

Christin: In each monthly meeting, we tried to make progress towards those goals, and we took detailed meeting notes with action items to make sure we stayed on track. Distance was never an issue – we used Skype to set up video conference meeting, but we also had the opportunity to meet in person.

Namir: Yes, we had a chance to personally meet in Vancouver while I was on business travel in BC, and also when Christin joined me at the Telecom Conference in Toronto where we planned for a larger networking opportunity with key executives in the digital and media space.



A sponsor is someone who actively promotes you with the outspoken goal of helping you advance your career.

Let's Talk about: Executive Career Sponsorship (continued)

What were the outcomes of your Protégé engagement?

Christin: Namir introduced me to organizations, projects, conferences, meetings and people I didn't know of before. My network has expanded, but I have also identified initiatives that align with my company's goals and that I'm actively pursuing or participating in. I was promoted to co-CEO in April of 2015. It was my boss who told me about the Protégé program and encouraged me to apply. Having access to Namir as a career sponsor made the transition into the co-CEO role smoother and less intimidating. For me the timing was just perfect - there couldn't have been a better time for me to have an executive sponsor than as I was moving into a much bigger role than I'd ever had before!

Namir: The engagement certainly gave me a deeper sense of appreciation for the challenges faced by women leaders in their quest to achieve their career aspirations. Christin is certainly a gem that any top company would want to have leading their organization.

Christin: It was great for me and it was great for the company too. Namir helped me refine and expand our sales pitch. Through long discussions around my company's value proposition and industry needs and trends, I arrived at a succinct pitch that I continue using when presenting our company's services and the value we add.

Namir: We took care to ensure that the goals we set were beneficial for both Christin and her company. It was important if she was going to invest the time and effort in attending a conference in Toronto to meet with key leaders, that the opportunity, while meaningful for her career aspirations, was also a business growth opportunity for her company.



Let's Talk about: Recognition

“Here’s to us, we’re scarce” is a toast favoured by many women in technology. Celebrating our own achievements and recognizing the friends, mentors and bosses who have helped us get there is an essential part of the task of amplifying the contributions of women to the industry.

Stephanie MacKendrick served as the leader of Canadian Women in Communications (now WCT) for 13 years. When asked what works best for women’s career advancement, recognition programs, generally and WCT’s specifically, were at the top of her list. “A strong awards program can boost a career,” she said. “It brings attention to the recipients, to their companies and to the organization presenting the awards. Recognition and higher profile begin with the nomination process as the nominee’s accomplishments are documented right through to the presentation of the award where the recipients are saluted before a high-profile audience. The whole process is a win-win for women, WCT and the industries it serves.”

WCT (and CWC before it) has produced a national award program to recognize the achievements of women in broadcasting, telecommunications, technology and all digital industries since 1992 (it was the very first program the organization offered). The Leadership Excellence Awards annually showcase women in a variety of roles, including entrepreneurs, innovators, trailblazers and mentors. And each year it salutes a Woman of the Year and a Company of the Year.

Anyone can nominate a candidate and nominations are accepted year-round. The awards are presented at a springtime gala that attracts a large audience of distinguished guests including CEOs, government leaders and heads of state as well as many past LEA recipients.

Several of our roundtable participants recommended that women need to do a better job of engaging men in the work for gender diversity. WCT’s award program recognizes the contribution that men have made to gender equity as well. In particular, the Diversity Champion award encourages the submission of nominations of worthy men and women for LEA awards.

A strong awards program brings attention to the recipients, to their companies and to the organization presenting the awards.



Let's Talk about: The Importance of Female Leaders

While on average women represent about 25% of the Canadian technology industry, their ranks thin out considerably as they ascend the corporate ladder. Among the top 100 companies on the Branham 250 list (the definitive list of the largest tech firms in Canada) there are five female CEOs and one co-CEO. Women are also sparsely represented in the senior leadership teams of these companies – 26 of them have no women in the C-suite at all.

Female leadership is important. For one thing, it signals to the female minority in tech that success and promotion to the highest levels are possible. Nancy McTavish, who leads IBM Canada's Women's Business Resource Group, affirms the positive impact a female leader has had on her company. "As our first female CEO, Ginni Rometty has modeled how successful you can be by paving the way for women to excel." One of our Halifax participants described the importance of role models more succinctly. "If you can see her, you can be her," she said.

Corporate culture generally emanates from the corner office, with the CEO tacitly and explicitly setting standards for behaviour and how business will be conducted. Carol Stephenson served as the CEO of Stentor Resource Centre Inc. and as Dean of the Ivey School of Business, both of which had predominantly male leadership. "There was an old boys' club feeling," she said. "When I heard something unacceptable at my executive table I would just say, 'That's not appropriate.' I didn't make a big deal about it but over time I noticed it stopped. They self-regulated as a result of my being very clear about what I expected."

In both situations Carol expected something different than a classic command and control approach. "It was all about empowerment and letting people run with their ideas, about respect and the right kind of behaviour," she said. "Years later I am still running into people who tell me, 'That was the best culture I ever experienced in my whole career.'"



Among the top 100 companies on the Branham 250 list there are five female CEOs and one co-CEO.

Let's Talk about: The Importance of Female Leaders (continued)

Reforming a large, established corporate culture is a huge task. When the CEO leads a company of her own creation she can build culture from the ground up but this too requires a steady hand and constant focus. Jen Evans is a serial entrepreneur whose commitment to diversity is as persistent as her entrepreneurship. "I had an idea of the kind of company I wanted to build from the start," she said. "One of the things that's important to me is the idea of that this is a family and everybody's going to have different needs at different times." This perspective made her an early pioneer (especially in the start-up community) of paternity leave.

This family orientation embraces all ethnicities, orientations and both genders and was a key asset to Jen for recruitment in the Gen X to Millennial cohort. "It was clear to anyone who walked in the door or interviewed with us that diversity was a critical part of our culture," Jen said. Preserving this tolerance required careful stewardship and a search for a rare and under-rated quality in the tech community – humility. "There is a huge correlation between humility and a tolerance for others. There were skilled people we intentionally did not hire because we were concerned about their ability to let go of their biases," she said.

Sustaining the culture is a challenge especially as a company grows. Jen acknowledges this. "I'm not sure a culture like ours can scale," she said. "You get to a certain size and the more common organizational dynamics come in. The minute you move away from managing people to managing processes and practices, culture is in jeopardy. That's one of the reasons that companies that are started like this stay small."

Carol agrees that cultural continuity, especially after the CEO moves on, is difficult. "You can't guarantee it because the leader makes so much difference," she said. "What you can do is influence others who have worked with you so that they take some of that experience with them and it infiltrates other organizations. You can institutionalize some things and get enough women in executive positions so that the focus on diversity carries on."

But with women outnumbered by about 10 to one in the C-suite and 94 to six in the corner office, this infiltration will take a long time leaving the benefits of diversity elusive to most tech firms.



Chapter 2: Resources

Building diverse and inclusive organizations requires resources – investments of time, money, ingenuity and commitment. But the business case for making technology firms more diverse is clear. Ask the people who have done it.

“It just seems so obvious to me,” said Carol Stephenson, former Dean of the Ivey School of Business and leader of technology firms such as Stentor Resource Centre and Lucent Canada. “Everyone knows that a company’s success is based on its talent. So, if you’re not tapping into all the talent inside or outside your company you will not be as successful as if you do. Add to that the value of diversity of thinking. We’ve all been in group think sessions and we’ve also been in meetings where there are different people from different genders, countries and backgrounds. You end up in a better place if you have a group of people who don’t all think in the same way.”

Peter Drucker famously identified diversity as one of the seven sources of innovation in his 2009 management classic, *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. Since then, the idea that diversity of thought can be a key element in delivering the persistent and systematic capacity for innovation that knowledge-based companies prize has become business orthodoxy. This view is regularly supported by data like a 2013 study published in the *Harvard Business Review*. The study explored “2-D Diversity” – inherent diversity (due to gender, race and ethnicity) and acquired diversity. It found that “companies with 2-D diversity out-innovate and out-perform others. Employees at these companies are 45% more likely to report that their firm’s market share grew over the previous year and 70% more likely to report that firm captured a new market.”⁵

Diverse companies are not only more innovative, they are better run. In 2015, McKinsey and Company published a report that gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to out-perform non-gender diverse companies.⁶ And a Catalyst study confirms that diversity also improves the quality of corporate governance.

⁵ “How Diversity Can Drive Innovation”, Sylvia Ann Hewlett, Melinda Marshall, Laura Sherbin. *Harvard Business Review*. December 2013.

⁶ “Why Diversity Matters”, Vivian Hunt, Dennis Layton, Sara Prince. January 2015. McKinsey and Company.

You end up in a better place if you have a group of people who don’t all think in the same way.

Chapter 2: Resources (continued)

Simply put, here is the business case for organizational investment by technology firms in diversity and inclusion:

- **Facing full employment and as many as 180,000 vacancies by 2020, Canadian technology firms must access all sources of knowledge and talent available. The low percentage of women engaged in technology suggests a large untapped pool of talent.**
- Diversity of thought and experience in organizational work groups are recognized as a source of innovation.
- Diverse companies perform better than homogenous ones.
- Diversity in leadership (executives and directors) produces better corporate governance.

WCT believes this business case is solid. It changes the discussion of workplace equity from a matter of fairness and social justice into something that is just plain good business.

Companies that decide to create more diverse organizations have access to a huge inventory of ideas, strategies and programs to do so. Through the seven roundtable conversations on resources, participants shared some of the best and most innovative ideas to advance organizational diversity. For coherence, they are grouped into three clusters:

1. **Formal Diversity programs**
2. **Alternative Work and Leave of Absence programs**
3. **Career Planning and Education Programs**

The low percentage of women engaged in technology suggests a large untapped pool of talent.

Formal Diversity Programs

Depending on their size and their position on the maturity model, companies may implement one or more of a variety of diversity initiatives prior to establishing a comprehensive diversity program. These include:

- **Screening job descriptions and recruitment canvasses for gender-exclusive language (pronouns and cultural references, for example)**
- **Implementing gender-blind hiring and promotion practices**
- **Reviewing compensation rates to prevent gender-based pay gaps**
- **Instituting internal mentorship and sponsorship programs**
- **Creating and supporting women's networks (See Feature Article, Let's Talk about Women's Networks)**
- **Running diversity events (part education, part celebration) such as Cogeco's Diversity Week.**

Larger companies or companies further along the maturity model may take the further step of appointing a diversity officer to oversee a more comprehensive diversity program and be accountable for its success. The presence of a diversity officer usually signals that the organization places a priority on diversity, but our participants on both coasts cautioned that larger companies still need to be more diligent in ensuring that diversity permeates the whole company and is not just concentrated in the head office.

One Halifax participant noted, "I work for a national company and when we go to Toronto for meetings there are a lot of female managers there and at the head of the company. But locally at offices across the country I don't see them in sales, programming – it's male across the board. Why does it shift when we get to Toronto? It's the same company. We need regional diversity champions."

In even the largest organizations diversity officers are generally mid-level managers reporting to the chief talent officer. Several of our participants recommended elevating the role. "When you have diversity and inclusion situated at an operational level then it's a tactic," one participant noted. "When the D&I officer reports into the C-suite or the CEO then it has an impact on culture."

Some companies appoint diversity champions from within the senior leadership. Their responsibility is diversity advocacy rather than an operational role. They are tasked with reviewing organizational decisions and initiatives through a diversity lens. In best practice, these champions are reviewed and compensated for this assignment and the position is rotated regularly and shared by both genders.

Recommendations

For women: Ask whether prospective employers have a diversity program, who heads it and what the program objectives are.

For employers: If you don't have a diversity program, put one in place, and consider asking a senior business leader to be the owner. Resist putting the responsibility on the HR executive and team.

When the Diversity & Inclusion officer reports into the C-suite or the CEO, it has an impact on culture.

Alternative Work Arrangements and Leaves of Absence

As discussed in the previous chapter, providing flexible work hours, alternative work arrangements like job-sharing and part-time, and allowing employees to work off-site are table stakes for attracting not only women, but men with families and younger employees to the organization. Not only do prospective employees find these programs essential, they are an important part of the calculus of benefit package value when assessing a career move. Employers can expect to be scrutinized for their top-up contributions for family leave benefits, in-situ child care and programs assisting those returning from leave in transitioning back into the workplace. Employers hoping to compete effectively in a tight labour market will need to invest creativity and capital in their efforts to provide flexibility and other expressions of respect for family obligations in their work environment.

Increasingly and in the tech industry in particular, access to technology itself is another important consideration for employees. “We all have to think about the way technology is changing our lives,” one participant told us. “No one works 9 to 5 anymore. I tend to believe we are managing outcomes rather than spending time in a seat.” Another participant illustrated this new reality from her own experience. “I worked for Telus for five years from my home in Stratford. I managed a team in Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. I saw them twice in that time but we were on the phone all the time. I knew them intimately. There I was, headset on, laptop on the counter, making dinner for my kids and on to that meeting...making things happen. Some cultures just enable it.”

Recommendations

For women: Know your employer's policies on leaves and be aware of their financial implications.

If you are working from home or in a flexible work arrangement, be clear and articulate regarding the results you are achieving.

For employers: Encourage men and women to take parental/family leave.

Make sure culture normalizes leave taking. (See Let's Talk about: Leaves of Absence)

Focus performance assessment on outcomes and results, not time spent at a desk.



To compete effectively in a tight labour market, employers need to invest creativity and capital in alternative work arrangements.

Career Planning and Education Programs

The Montreal discussion, in particular, focussed on the importance of effective career planning resources and surfaced many excellent examples of what companies are doing in this area to support women and other minorities. One example was the practice of positive discrimination – explicitly instructing managers to opt for the minority candidate when all other factors in the employee selection process are equal. While none of the companies represented had specific quotas in place (with one exception), the common hiring practice requires that at least one female candidate be presented for every opening. (The quota exception is one employer that has committed to ensure that its annual intake of summer students has a 50/50 gender ratio).

Participants also had many examples of career planning resources and strategies that integrated well with diversity programs. Coaching mentorships and sponsorships are offered to reduce isolation and also to identify high performance leaders. (See page 6, Mentorship and Career Sponsorship). They are encouraged to apply for more senior roles. And, in one case, a formal coaching program is offered to help candidates who are unsuccessful in securing a promotion be ready for the next opportunity. The overall consensus in Montreal, and supported elsewhere, is that committed career planning builds a stronger relationship between employees and employers and aids retention.

Career planning also entails investment in educational resources. Several of our participants suggested that a remedial training strategy combined with a more realistic view of the true level of technical expertise some jobs actually require could create more opportunities for women. One Halifax participant explained the idea this way: “Business analysts are obviously in great demand now.

That’s something we need to highlight. That role relies on business skill sets and acumen acquired with experience that many women have. Technical skills can be learned or upgraded. They’re not necessarily something you have to bring to the job the first day.”

Participants also highlighted the need to educate the whole organization to speed the transition to diversity. Courses on reducing unconscious bias in the workplace and on bridging communications gaps or understanding different communication styles were highlighted as important resources.

Recommendations

For women: Consider yourself the CEO of your career and determine what you want and what you are prepared to do to achieve it. Invest in upgrading your skills. Actively seek out assignments that will take you outside of your area of expertise or comfort zone. If you are in a professional department (legal, accounting, communications etc.), seek line experience.

If you are working from home or in a flexible work arrangement, be clear and articulate regarding the results you are achieving.

For employers: Make sure your process for identifying high performance employees includes women. Extend stretch opportunities to them.

Actively evaluate technical roles to identify jobs where technical competencies may be acquired through training and consider this approach for experienced and trusted personnel.

Committed career planning builds a stronger relationship between employees and employers, which aids retention.

Let's Talk about: Leaves of Absence

One way to address the calls to de-stigmatize leaves of absence is to normalize them as an accepted or even mandated part of workplace culture.

Intel, with its roots deep in Silicon Valley, has long maintained a sabbatical program for its employees. Originally the program was designed to allow every employee an eight-week leave of absence after every seven years of service to the company. Three years ago, the program was modified to give employees the option of taking four weeks after 4 years on the job.

Employees determine for themselves how they will use the leave – for education, self-improvement, to volunteer for a cause they care about or to fulfil a personal goal like scaling Everest – but the company expects them to take it and it plans accordingly. While the leave-taker makes plans to recharge and refresh, those left behind also view the departure as an opportunity for learning and development.

“We have developed a culture of coverage,” said Elaine Mah, a director and spokesperson for Intel Canada. “Sabbaticals give everybody the chance to try something new...to work in a different part of the business or in a different part of the world. I’ve had the chance to cover colleagues on leave twice – once in Oregon – and it was great experience.”

Companies can de-stigmatize leaves of absences by normalizing them as an accepted, even mandated, part of workplace culture.



Let's Talk about: Leaves of Absence (continued)

Sabbaticals are distinct from other forms of family leave. Intel uses gender-neutral language to describe these as parental leave or bonding leave for adoptive parents. These leaves are longer in duration but the culture of coverage addresses them in a similar fashion: as development opportunities. Because leaves are so commonplace, any resentment about them is counter to culture.

“Intel firmly believes that reaching a critical mass of women and underrepresented minorities in our workforce by creating an environment where everyone can thrive, brings ample benefits not only to Intel but the entire tech industry,” Danielle Brown, Intel’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and VP of Human Resources, recently wrote. Innovation is a compulsion in the hyper-competitive semi-conductor industry and it pervades all aspects of Intel’s operations including human resources. For example, the company recently introduced the WarmLine that provides a support channel linking employees with a personal advisor to talk to before they consider leaving Intel. Innovations like this appear to be working. Statistically, women are far more likely than men to exit tech jobs mid-career. But Intel’s latest diversity report indicates that it is now doing a better job of retaining diverse employees (including women) than the counterpart majority.



Let's Talk about: Women's Networks

There's a natural human instinct when we're feeling out-numbered or marginalized to get our gang together. For many women working in technology companies, this manifests itself in women's networks – formal or informal gatherings of women to regularly meet, discuss workplace and career issues and help each other solve problems and succeed. Increasingly, smart employers are supporting these initiatives by providing the resources – from meeting spaces to formal mandates and budgets – for these networks to flourish.

IBM Canada's Women's Business Resource Group is an excellent example of a formal company-supported women's network. It has operated since 2007 and currently has 365 members in 13 local chapters across Canada. Nancy McTavish, the group's current chair, says that the group's mandate is to "enhance the development and advancement of IBM women through networking, mentoring and educational opportunities that transfer skills and facilitate knowledge sharing." Additionally, according to Nancy, there are three vital ingredients for a successful women's network: active executive sponsorship (from either male or female sponsors), an engaged (and ideally, passionate) steering committee and a budget.

IBM Canada's Women's Business Resource Group (or BRG) operates with a formal budget and is accountable, through its executive sponsor, to the diversity leadership of the company. The BRG develops a national program that features events like a major celebration of International Women's Day in March and a more professional development-focussed Global Women of IBM Day in October. Throughout the rest of the year it also produces smaller events and workshops and supports other external organizations. For example, the IBM Canada Women's BRG is a founding corporate partner of Women Get on Board, which helps to prepare women to serve on corporate boards of directors. The BRG presents its annual program and budget to its executive sponsor and meets the sponsor quarterly to report on progress. At the regional level, the focus is also on community engagement with chapter members volunteering to assist local women's NGOs.



The three vital ingredients for a successful women's network are: active executive sponsorship, an engaged steering committee and a budget.

Let's Talk about: Women's Networks (continued)

Julie Cork had previous experience with a Woman's Council when she took on an executive position at SUN Microsystems. She discovered that SUN did not have a women's network so she started one. She had the first ingredient in Nancy's recipe for success – the trust and support of the leader of SUN who knew her from earlier in her career. She did a little research, asked a few of colleagues if they'd be interested in a women's network and when they endorsed the idea, she began to build the network. Her responsibilities in business development put her in touch with most of SUN's female workforce across Canada so she was able to build a team that offered popular events that drew the network together. Social events with a professional development flavour – like having a professional photographer provide pointers on the elements of a good LinkedIn profile picture and take professional quality photos – proved very popular. The group functioned autonomously with corporate approval, without accountability to or a budget from the company leadership. Julie notes that for small, more informal networks, “you don't really need a budget if you have dedicated women who are really passionate about this.”

Both examples show the benefits and sense of belonging that women acquire when they join a network like this. IBM Canada's Women's BRG is robust and growing, adding two new chapters in the past year. “Women are eager to engage,” Nancy observed. “They see it as a valuable investment of their time.” Julie concurs, noting that the networks give women a chance to develop new skills that they may not use in their present job. And while they may not address all the issues women face, they are empowering. “Women like to belong to women's councils because they feel like they have a voice in the corporation and the concerns they have are being talked about and addressed,” Julie said.



Chapter 3: Measurement

The technology industry loves data. It eats, breathes and sleeps data in the unceasing pursuit of new ways to mine value from huge volumes of tiny bits of information. The former CEO of HP summed up the industry's raison d'être succinctly as "...to turn data into information and information into insight."

For such a data-adept industry, the problem of diversifying its workforce should not be difficult. In the IT paradigm, solutions begin with collecting and analysing current data, then setting targets for improvement supported by an operational plan to achieve them by a specific date. Measuring (more data and analysis) and reporting progress at regular intervals is also key.

Here's what the current data tells us about where women are in Canada's tech industry:

- **Women constitute 27% of the ICT workforce. Women's engagement in tech has hovered between 25 and 29% since 2011.**
- **Women hold 21 per cent of the management positions in ICT. (The Canadian average is 31%.)**
- **Women are found in only 19% of the ICT-technical positions (developers, analysts etc.) in the industry.⁷**

The relatively low and static nature of these numbers prompts several questions – are we measuring the right things, do we know what success looks like – that formed the basis for discussions about measurement strategies and approaches at all the roundtables. These discussions focussed on two dimensions of measurement: how employers measure success in making meaningful advances toward equitable workplaces and how women personally measure career success.

Measuring Employer Success

The importance of measurement, analytics and reporting in addressing gender diversity issues can't be overstated. One participant, an executive and long-time advocate for gender diversity, put it this way: "I'm coming to the view that measurement is more important than everything else. We've been doing this stuff – supporting, advocating, mentoring, sponsoring – for 30 years and it hasn't made a whit of difference. We know how to make every other change we want make in a company – incentive and reward. You put it in the bonus scheme and the annual review process. We know how to motivate people to do the right thing, we do it every day. We've just never set gender diversity as a meaningful objective and put it into this process."

This process begins with collecting and analysing the numbers. The most basic data should reveal how many women the company employs and where they are in various levels in the organizational hierarchy including the C-suite. These numbers will provide an employer with a snapshot of current state of the organization. That's a good first step, but the numbers alone won't effect change.

⁷"Where are the Women in the Canadian ICT Industry?" WCT publication. May 2017.

We know how to make every other change in a company. We've just never set gender diversity as a meaningful objective.

Measuring Employer Success (continued)

The next step is to set a target for improvement. An organization may choose to increase female participation across the board. It may set a target based on its own feasibility assessment. Or it may choose to benchmark its performance against the whole industry or a select peer group. Others may aim to achieve a leadership position by setting targets and creating initiatives to outperform its peers. One participant described how this process is at work at her company: “We currently have 35% women. By 2020 we want to achieve 40%. It’s an ambitious goal because we’re not necessarily growing our workforce so that means making changes internally. Then we want to have the same per cent target in technical roles, not just sales and marketing and HR. I don’t know how we can expect to change things without the organization setting goals.”

Modest goals impel progress too. An organization may determine that its overall gender ratio is acceptable and that it has achieved parity in its C-suite but the numbers in the management ranks are not where they need to be, so it sets a target there. And a company coming to grips with diversity for the first time can make a large step with small changes, understanding that not setting a target throughout the organization will mean that sustaining progress is at risk. As one participant put it, “A company with no women at all makes an improvement by hiring one.”

To achieve a measurable goal, employers need to have a solid action plan and clear accountability for fulfilling and achieving results. Several participants in our roundtables (including the one cited above) recommended tying accountability and results to key performance indicators and to compensation, bonuses and other rewards. The resources and strategies discussed in the previous two chapters will suggest some approaches for such a plan. Because the changes will have an impact on the whole organization, it is generally the practice to communicate the goal and the plan to the whole organization.

To achieve a measurable goal, tie accountability and results to key performance indicators and to compensation, bonuses and other rewards.

Consistent reporting at meaningful intervals is also essential as the action plan unfolds. It helps to underscore organizational commitment to goals, especially over the long timeframes that workforce changes of this nature require. Regular reporting communicates organizational will and intent while charting (and celebrating) progress toward the objective. If progress isn’t apparent, the reporting requirement provides extra impetus for modifications of the action plan.

Improving gender balance is just one aspect of diversity that data analysis can help to address. For example, Marc Benioff, the CEO of Salesforce, has publicly committed his company to drive the “Age of Equality.” One of the first steps toward that goal was to address pay equity. The company began with a comprehensive analysis of the salaries of its 17,000 employees. The analysis showed that “approximately six per cent of employees required salary adjustment. Salesforce has spent nearly 3 million to eliminate statistically significant differences in pay.”⁸

Many of our participants offered a wide variety of suggestions for other areas of data collection and analysis to address specific issues. Besides salaries, these include:

- **Gender disparities in bonus compensation**
- **Impact of flexible work arrangements on productivity, retention and advancement**
- **Comparative advancement rates of those taking family leave versus those who don’t**
- **Gender analysis of the rate of retention and reasons for departure**
- **Gender differences in response to employee feedback research**

⁸ <https://www.salesforce.com/blog/2016/03/equality-at-salesforce-equal-pay.html>

Measuring Personal Success

While corporate goals for measuring success are generally widely shared, personal goals are – well – personal. Not everyone aspires to be a CEO and not everyone who does shares that aspiration out loud. Many begin their careers without a clear goal in mind. And even for those who do, life happens and career goals need to be re-vectored. Many of our participants stressed the importance of early goals in the formation of a successful career. One participant, who has achieved the position of CEO, put it this way, “How do you define personal success in your own personal career? If you don’t have a definition of that yourself you will not get to that point. If you don’t have those elements defined and you keep reframing yourself, you will not self-actualize. Having that ability to define success and track it is a big thing you have to measure.”

Women have to be comfortable defining their personal goals in organizational cultures designed and validated primarily by men. But they don’t have to accept standard goals as their career motivation. “It’s in our control to shape our goals,” one participant said. “Goals tied to meaning will inspire us to do our best work. There’s meaning in our relationships, there’s meaning in caring for our families. We have to find meaning in our work too or it just becomes a cycle of despair.”

In these terms, aspiring for economic stability and the freedom to address family needs may be as worthy a goal as the corner office. Understanding your own personal motivation and setting an appropriate goal are key. If the goal is as simple as a title or a salary figure, progress toward is relatively clear and obviously measurable. But reading the satisfaction metrics can be just as clear, with regular reflection and self-assessment combined with the courage to re-vector a career plan that isn’t delivering them.

Finding yourself in a job that wasn’t what you thought it would be can be a paralyzing and heartbreaking experience. It can also be a major impediment for career planning. Participants at many of our roundtables highlighted the need for tools to help women make better career and employer choices. One participant in Waterloo suggested creating an index of the 50 best companies in Canada for women. In Ottawa, maturity models such as the one WCT distributed before the roundtables had great potential. One participant pointed out that, with the added dimension of a scoring system, the maturity model would be an immensely valuable resource to job seekers concerned about finding an equitable workplace. “If I had known as a younger woman the actual diversity maturity score of a prospective employer, that would have been really powerful,” she said.

Aspiring for economic stability and the freedom to address family needs may be as worthy a goal as the corner office.

Measuring Personal Success (continued)

Recommendations

For women: Set a career goal early and regularly measure your progress toward it. Articulate your goal with those who can give you feedback and support your progress.

Use your network to acquire intelligence on perspective employers and call out or recognize your employer if they are doing a good job by recommending them to others.

To avoid a job misfit, research prospective employers using resources like “Canada’s 50 Best Employers” as well as your network. Ask about gender diversity targets and workplace culture in job interviews.

For employers: If you haven’t already, start counting. Develop a baseline report – how many women are in the organization, pay ranges and seniority, what roles are they in, what is the trend, what information can be gleaned from exit interviews, etc. – to learn where women are and are not in your organization. Look at roles (technical versus non-technical) as well as levels of seniority.

Conduct gender-based research on other dimensions of workforce engagement like wage rates and rates of satisfaction and progression.

Measure the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion programs and investments.

Set measurable goals for improving diversity and inclusion. Announce your goals to your workforce and hold the organization accountable for achieving them.

Be aware of gender gaps in wage rates and have a plan to end them.

For WCT and other professional organizations:

Create a set of standards based on best practices discerned through regular discussions with women and their employers. Develop an online library of resources for employers interested in improving their diversity outcomes. Establish a consultative capability for employers interested in benchmarking and improving their diversity outcomes.



Let's Talk about: The Pythia Index

Some technology companies have not only embraced the importance of tracking, analysing and reporting gender data, they have found new ways to produce more meaningful insight from their numbers. “We have a very sophisticated system for measuring our female leadership,” said one Ottawa participant on what her company is doing. “We measure how many women report to other women.”

She's describing the Pythia Index, a tool developed by Pythian, a 400-person global IT services company. The Pythia Index measures the proportion of people in a business, or in a team, who are women leaders or report to a woman leader. Pythian's conventional gender numbers are solid – 24 per cent of employees and 35 per cent of the executive team is female. But the Pythia Index gives a clearer measure of female influence. Fifty-six per cent of employees either report to women leaders or are female leaders.

Pythia CEO Paul Vallée sees an initiative like this as tool for combating tech's pervasive “Bro Culture.” “We know that well-blended teams outperform homogenous teams,” he said. “By taking sides in this battle and strengthening our deliberate talent blending practices, we intend to attract the right employees and encourage others to set similar diversity goals. This is not a social responsibility initiative. It is good business.”

Learn more about the Pythia Index. <https://www.pythian.com/pythia-index/>



We know that well-blended teams outperform homogenous teams... This is not a social responsibility initiative. It is good business.

Let's Talk about: Up the Numbers

WCT subscribes to the maxim, "What gets measured gets managed." In 2016, it launched a program to regularly analyse and report data on where women are in the industries it serves and across the whole digital economy.

The Up the Numbers Program is WCT's source for original research on gender issues in technology and other digital industries. Women's engagement in technology, for example, has been stuck at around 25% for many years. By adopting the same techniques that digital companies themselves use to address problems – collecting and analyzing data, setting targets for where we want to be and executing a plan to get there – WCT believes it can influence improvement in the engagement of women in the digital economy.

WCT uses the information Up the Numbers produces as a foundation for its advocacy for gender equality before governments and employers. As WCT Executive Director Joanne Stanley explained when the program was launched, "We simply must do a better job of attracting and retaining women if we want to build a strong digital economy. Up the Numbers will provide everyone with a clearer picture of where we are as an industry."



We simply must do a better job of attracting and retaining women if we want to build a strong digital economy.

Let's Talk about: Quotas

The issue of quotas came up repeatedly throughout our roundtable discussions across the country and in Vancouver was the subject of a wild card discussion of its own. The word “quota” makes business people, including many women, uncomfortable. It seems to perennially collide with “merit,” an unassailable principle in recruiting and promotion. Yet our discussions, and recent research, suggest that this collision is far from inevitable.

As one of our Halifax participants explained, “When I think about quotas, I think about taking the time to communicate effectively so that everyone in the organization sees why quotas are valuable and everybody buys in...when they realize ‘Oh, this could help the business.’ Employers aren’t interested in the touchy-feely aspect of diversity. But when they understand the importance of diverse skill sets, when you have the conversation from that perspective, is it really risky to have a quota?”

Given the strong business case for diversity (see page 18), it would seem that the riskier path is to continue to merely pay lip service to it and leave the fuller inclusion of women and minorities into the economy to take a natural – and glacially slow – course. It is time that business leaders accept the reality that the homogenous status quo is hindering corporate capacity for innovation and excellence in corporate governance and results, the Q-word loses its power to induce fear and loathing.

A number of countries, most notably Norway, have woken up to this reality. Gro Bruntland’s election in 1986 as the country’s first female Prime Minister heralded a sea change in Norway’s social and economic policy. Policy initiatives in childcare, early childhood education and parental leave signaled a clear commitment to more fully engage the contribution of Norwegian women. Similarly, Prime Minister Bruntland’s unprecedented formation of a virtually gender-equal cabinet has become standard practice in the country’s governments ever since.

When employers understand the importance of diverse skill sets... is it really risky to have a quota?



Let's Talk about: Quotas (continued)

In the past 30 years, Norway has demonstrated a clear understanding that quotas are the fastest route to ending centuries-old exclusions and inequalities. In 2003, Norway legislatively established a 40 per cent quota for female membership in corporate boards of directors (by 2006 for state-owned organizations and by 2008 for publicly traded companies). This was an unapologetic quota backed up by severe consequences for non-compliance, including corporate dissolution.

Remarkably, the chaos that business leaders (many of whom took their companies private to evade the legislation) predicted would ensue never happened. Norway continues today (under its second female Prime Minister) to enjoy OECD-leading economic outcomes, an enviable standard of living, a consistent first place in the Legatum Prosperity Index and the respect of the World Economic Forum. "Norway tops our 2017 index of inclusive economies, a study of which countries are best at providing growth that is sustained over decades, is broad-based across different sectors, creates jobs for a great majority of the population and reduces poverty," it notes.⁹

A number of other jurisdictions have followed Norway's lead in enacting quota legislation to make the boards of state-owned and publicly traded enterprises more gender diverse. In Canada, the province of Quebec set a quota for full gender parity for boards of provincial corporations and agencies by the end of December 2011.

Elsewhere, resistance to the idea of quotas maintains its grip with many governments and private organizations, who have opted instead for "targets." Targets generally do not have the power of enforcement vehicles behind them, and in many cases don't even require regular reporting. They run the risk of being more aspirational than purposeful but are certainly a more progressive step than having no targets at all.

⁹"Lessons from Norway, the World's Most Inclusive Economy". World Economic Forum.



Let's Talk about: Quotas (continued)

In 2016, Ontario's Premier, Kathleen Wynne, set a target to have all Ontario Crown corporations and agencies achieve 40 per cent female membership on their boards by 2019. And in 2015, the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) introduced new regulations aiming to have all listed companies report their boards' gender ratios and to provide regular reports on internal targets and plans for increasing the number of female directors. This "comply or explain" approach prompted one commentator to lament, "If the first six months offer any clue, it will take 68 more years before boards will reach gender parity, longer than anyone reading this will be alive."¹⁰ The OSC's 2017 report indicated some improvement – 21 percent of companies had disclosed their gender data and 55 percent reported that they had at least one woman on their board (or, less optimistically, 45 percent had none.)

Not only are enforceable quotas the swiftest and most direct path to inclusion, new research suggests that the presence of quotas may have beneficial impacts on organizational performance itself. A study conducted by economists at the London School of Economics examined the gender quotas adopted by Sweden's Social Democratic Party for candidates in the 1993 election. Predictably the quota boosted the number of women candidates by 10 percentage points. The study also found that the use of the quota elevated the competence of the male candidates as well. On average the 10 percentage point boost in female representation increased the proportion of competent male candidates by three percentage points. The study demonstrated that the quota led to the displacement of mediocre male candidates. "When debating the merits of gender quotas, it is commonly claimed that supply constraints make quotas counterproductive by replacing competent men with mediocre women," the study reported. "We have claimed, to the contrary, that quotas can increase the competence of the political class by reducing the share of mediocre men."¹¹

At minimum, we must conclude that our knee-jerk reaction to quotas deserves deeper questioning. Ideally, we need to see more carefully communicated and thoughtfully deployed quotas in public and private use. We need to listen to the counsel of one of the most respected business leaders in the global economy, Sir Richard Branson: "It's incredible that most boardrooms have one or two women in their boardroom. I am not sure you can leave it to us men to get the change to get that 50 percent representation...I think it needs to be forced on us by law."¹²

¹⁰"The Misplaced Optimism of Gender Diversity Targets" by Bob Ramsay, Globe and Mail. June 2, 2016.

¹¹"Gender Quotas and the Crisis of the Mediocre Man: Theory and Evidence from Sweden" by Timothy Besby, Olle Folke, Thorsten Persson and Johanna Rickne. American Economic Review 2017.

¹²Richard Branson, Virgin Founder and CEO cited in "Legislating a Woman's Seat on the Board: Institutional Factors Driving Quotas for Boards of Directors" by Siri Terjensen, Ruth V. Aguilera and Ruth Lorenz.

Ideally, we need to see more carefully communicated and thoughtfully deployed quotas in public and private use.

Chapter 4: Wild Card Roundtables

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, in addition to the three central areas of focus captured in chapter 1-3, participants also had the option to introduce an additional “wild card” topic of particular interest to the group. This final chapter reports on those discussions.

Culture and Communications

Fortunately, many companies have implemented diversity policies and invested in the resources necessary to create a more inclusive workplace. Generally, these companies can situate themselves between the last two columns in our maturity model. What makes the difference between “Emerging” and “Leadership” is frequently culture and a willingness to share the lessons learned. Unfortunately, the last steps forward into leadership may be the most difficult of all. As we heard on more than one occasion, “Culture eats policy for breakfast” and, alas, “Culture is hard.” The importance of corporate culture in the creation of inclusive workplaces was acknowledged in our roundtables, but in Calgary, Montreal and Toronto cultural issues were singled out for deeper discussion.

Many participants shared their experiences of corporate cultures that foster inclusion and of others that merely pay lip service to diversity. One participant noted, “Success in culture-building is based in values and behaviour. The three bedrock values for me are trust, honesty and mutual respect.” Company leadership has a huge impact on establishing and protecting corporate culture. It must walk the talk and be prepared to take the measures, even painful ones, to ensure that corporate behaviour authenticates and support corporate values and culture. As one Calgary participant put it, “There’s the kumbaya – the words you create and plaster on the wall. But living the values is much more important.”

Story-telling is as important to cultural reinforcement in corporate life as it is in tribal life. Many participants expressed the need for more stories about women’s advancement, company leadership in diversity and profiles of the heroes (women and men) who actively support diversity. “It’s not enough to have just the propaganda,” one participant said. “We really need to be telling stories about what the company is doing to make the gender numbers move.”

The Calgary discussion in particular was rich with examples of how companies are creating the formal structures to tell these stories. Stealing a page from the time-honoured practice of producing health and safety videos, one company creates short “Diversity Moment” videos to capture stories of its diversity policies in action. A major oil company commits funds and the dedicated time of a network of employees who are trained in respectful workplace policies and who serve as ambassadors for inclusion in jobs and work units. And perhaps the most innovative approach of all comes from the City of Calgary itself, which has created a “living library” of storytellers to share stories about inclusion. The city encourages its employees to take out a “living book” for coffee or conversation.

In Montreal, the focus was on communication: differences in styles of communication between women and men and how this makes them feel like outsiders from corporate culture. Citing a Nelson Mandela quote (“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart”), one participant said, “I think in business we are talking to women’s brains. It doesn’t have the same effect. We are smart, we adapt but after 25 years we are still at 25%.”

Company leadership has a huge impact on establishing and protecting corporate culture.

Culture and Communications (continued)

The gender difference in communications is sharpened even further in the technology industry. As one Toronto participant noted, “Men talk about the specs and the cool things technology can do while women prefer to talk about its impact on the market and society.” This communication challenge may be the highest hurdle of all for it permeates all organizational behaviour. One participant noted, “There is a big difference between women and men in their achievement motivation. The simple motivation of winning, producing or selling is not enough to inspire women to do their best work. Goals have to be framed with positive side effects like personal growth, sustainability, inclusion or quality.” Unfortunately, solutions for bridging this gap were elusive. The discussion concluded with the observation that in order to get the best from women and all their employees, companies need to think about what motivates them. In particular they need to incorporate the meaning and belonging that women (and many younger workers) need to ensure their lasting contributions.

Recommendations

For women: The culture of the workplace is an important consideration for your job and career satisfaction. Research a new employer’s culture carefully before enlisting.

Don’t be afraid to challenge gaps you perceive between your company’s diversity policy and behaviour. Do it professionally and cognizant you may be taking a career risk. But weigh these factors against the reality that leaving them unchallenged makes you complicit in an inauthentic culture. Educate when you see a gap.

For employers: Lead a culture of inclusion within your company. Expressed values and policies are necessary for this but not sufficient. A robust culture of inclusion celebrates diversity and ensures there are no gaps between stated values and policies and accepted behaviour.

Stop sexual harassment in the workplace.

For WCT: Lead a communications campaign to end sexual harassment in the workplace.



Let's Talk about: Sexual Harassment

Our roundtable discussions took place in the period of time between the conclusion of the Jian Ghomeshi trial and the resignation of Uber founder Travis Kalanick. As mentioned in the introduction, our roundtables were based on three pre-set topics and a “wild card” topic selected by the group. It was not until our fourth roundtable in Toronto that someone suggested we discuss sexual harassment. As the discussion convened, the participant who introduced the topic noted, “Five different people have come up to me since I raised it and whispered, ‘so glad you brought that up.’”

Far too many women in tech have harassment stories to tell but this participant had one that was particularly chilling. After receiving a significant promotion, she became the subject of an e-mail-driven smear campaign from another employee who asserted that promotion was the result of sexual favours performed. Even though she was worried about being branded as whistle-blower or whiner, she responded professionally. “I called it out,” she said. “I had a conversation with the individual. In the end, my boss was more concerned about protecting the tribal knowledge in that individual’s head. He received a reprimand and a note in his file. Communications was locked down. Eventually I left.”

Participants in this conversation expressed dismay that corporate attitudes toward abuse like this still persist. But they also expressed chagrin that there was still a reluctance to talk about sexual harassment above a whisper.

“I think there is an underlying sense of shame,” one participant observed. “People are worried about hurting their careers. In most places, it is just not fully safe to talk about.”

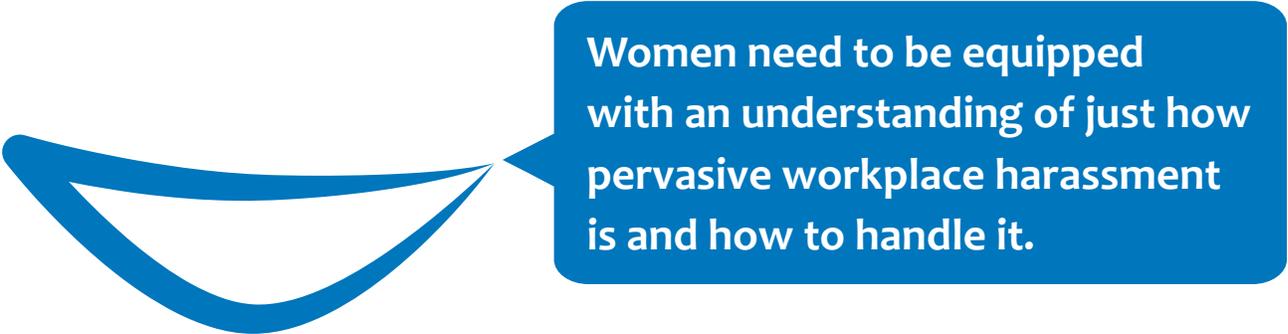


We need to have more of these uncomfortable conversations in an empathetic, non-judgemental way.

Let's Talk about: Sexual Harassment (continued)

While there were some encouraging examples offered of companies that have taken measures to publicly address abusive behaviour, there was agreement that most employers still need to address the subject out loud. There are so many ambiguities around what constitutes acceptable workplace behaviour (complicated by inter-generational differences in what's acceptable and what isn't) that companies only add to the confusion when they fail to provide guidance to their employees. One participant summed up corporate responsibility this way: "We need to have more of these uncomfortable conversations in an empathetic, non-judgemental way."

Women need to be equipped with an understanding of just how pervasive workplace harassment is and how to handle it. And while they may make use of corporate policies for dealing with it, their own self-advocacy can be a powerful tool. Our keynote speaker in Calgary, Margot Micallef, illustrated this with an example of how she handled a sexual advance from a senior member of her firm when she was a young lawyer. "This gentleman made an advance at a staff party. He'd been drinking and I pushed him away and walked away. But then I wanted to make sure that when I saw him the next time in the office I wasn't going to be made uncomfortable by something he did. The next day, I went into the office early and watched for him to arrive. As soon as he walked in, I walked into his office, looked him in the eye, shook his hand and said good morning. I wanted him to know that I was not intimidated by him. And that situation never arose again."



Women need to be equipped with an understanding of just how pervasive workplace harassment is and how to handle it.

Entrepreneurial Women

Many entrepreneurial women participated in roundtables from Vancouver to Halifax, but it was in Halifax where entrepreneurship was singled out for fuller discussion in a “wild card” group. As we’ve seen, women leave the technology industry at mid-career at a much higher rate than their male colleagues. Fortunately for our digital economy, they do not disappear. Many of them take the knowledge and skills they acquire working for an employer and start their own businesses.

Women leave tech for a variety of reasons. Several women mentioned leaving the often-frustrating restraints of a corporate career to form a company of one’s own as a way of gaining more control over their careers and lives. “What I look for is control,” one entrepreneur said. “Control over the work that I do, the space that I work in, whether or not I’m going to go big or stay small – any of those decisions. The entrepreneurial side gives you all of that.” Another participant noted, “My exit from my previous employer was directly related to being blocked from advancing to become the person and the professional that I wanted to be.”

Running your own business is generally viewed as offering more freedom than salaried employment, but it requires vision, confidence and an appetite for risk. “It starts with vision and imagination,” one participant said. “Anyone can write lines of code. But it takes real imagination to see what the code can do and what problems it can solve and develop a product and take it to market.”

Appetite for risk and self-confidence seem to go hand in hand. One entrepreneur who left a corporate job to start her own business told us, “It’s like gambling. When you play, you gamble against the house and the house controls the game. But as an entrepreneur, my bet is on me and I control the game.”

Managing risk is hard enough, but in Atlantic Canada it seems to come with additional cultural challenges as friends and relations express their fears and misgivings. The best advice seems to be to mute the chorus of negativity. “We get a lot of – This is a terrible time...we’re in economic downturn – I ignore all that. It may be economically true, but in terms of my own stuff, I’ve never been busier,” one participant told us.



As an entrepreneur, my bet is on me and I control the game.

Entrepreneurial Women (continued)

Several participants noted that while the entrepreneurial path has its advantages, it can be isolating, especially in the early stages. They identified a need for peer-to-peer mentoring and sponsorship programs for women business owners. “I have two mentors,” one business owner told us. “They are both senior and I get a lot of value out of the relationship. They help me advance my goals. They also don’t listen to my baloney. They don’t let me feel sorry for myself.” Besides mentorship, participants also suggested other forms of mutual support such as endorsing women-led businesses – even those of competitors. Larger corporations can also contribute here by initiating social procurement policies and procurement set-asides for companies led by women and representatives of other minority groups for their supply chains. The entrepreneurs we met in Halifax and elsewhere told us of some of the difficulties they face as small business owners providing flexible work arrangements – job sharing, family leave etc. – for themselves and their employees. One suggested remedy is to create a more formal network of entrepreneurs to “mutualize” opportunities and share trusted resources.

Not surprisingly, the topic of ways to further support women-led businesses and other diversity goals came up in Waterloo. The region is a hot-bed of start-up activity and the home of some of Canada’s fastest growing tech firms. Participants were well acquainted with the role that government financial support has played in this growth. Several suggested that a stronger linkage tying diversity performance to government grants and tax credits would assist women-led businesses and provide extra incentives for inclusivity for companies led by men.



Recommendations

For women: Support other women in business. Have and use a network of women-led businesses.

Support businesses that advance diversity. Use your buying power to communicate your satisfaction.

For employers: Look at your supply chain and remove barriers that prevent women-owned businesses from working with your company. Implement a supplier diversity program.

Consider an alumni program for women who have left to start up a company as a means of retaining knowledge and connection.

For WCT: Ask the government for programming set aside for women entrepreneurs. Make diversity metrics part of the qualification process for super-cluster funding.



Let's Talk about: Supplier Diversity Programs

Among women entrepreneurs, the importance of supplier diversity programs is well-understood. While this instinct may be driven by solidarity, it turns out there is a very solid business case for supplier diversity.

Supplier diversity programs offer enterprises owned by women and other minorities, such as companies owned by members of the First Nations community, the opportunity to grow through access to new or expanding supply chains. These programs entail the systematic identification, qualification and cultivation of a network of minority-owned suppliers. In addition, they may also include procurement set-asides or quotas.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, the business case for introducing supplier diversity programs rests on four pillars. They help corporations to:

- **Better represent a corporation's diverse customer base, increasing customer satisfaction and revenues**
- **Better reflect the diverse background of employees, increasing their job satisfaction and retention**
- **Strengthen supply chains by identifying a wide range of qualified suppliers and reducing the risk associated with streamlined supply chains**
- **Open new markets.**¹³

While supplier diversity programs are widely deployed in private enterprise in the United States, they have not been as readily adopted in Canada. The Conference Board estimates that only 39% of Canadian organizations have them. It also notes that private sector organizations, especially U.S.-based companies, are more likely to have them than others.

¹³"The Business Case for Supplier Diversity in Canada", <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/initiatives/sdr-rdff/index-en.html>



Let's Talk about: Supplier Diversity Programs (continued)

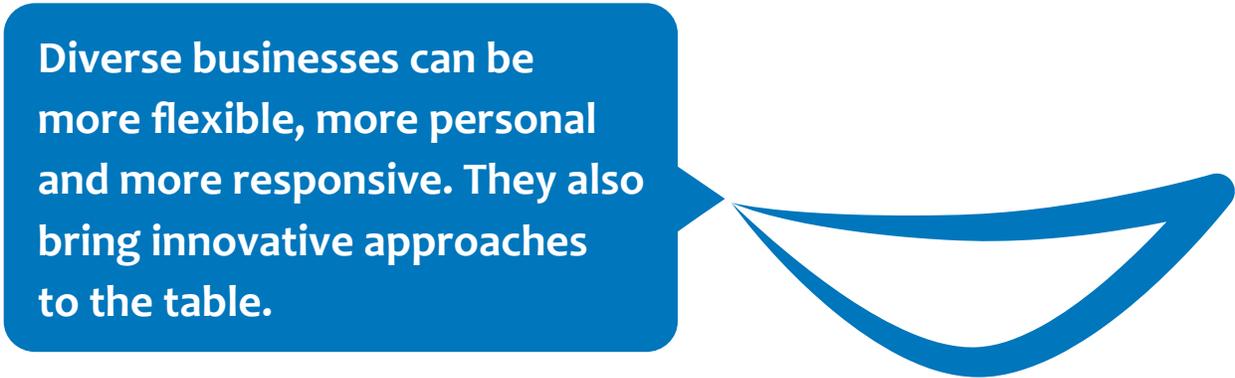
TELUS has had a supplier diversity program since 2012, managed by the Procurement Strategy and Innovation team. While it supports TELUS' overall diversity and inclusion strategy, this is an excellent example of a diversity initiative integrated into an important business unit.

"Supplier diversity is important to TELUS," said Madeleine Baker, Manager, Network Supply. "We believe that we can deliver better services and a better customer experience if we can ensure that we have a supplier base that is reflective of our community." The program actively seeks the engagement of women-owned businesses as well as firms owned by visible minorities and members of the aboriginal and LGBTQ communities. The task of identifying and engaging diverse vendors is made easier through close relationships with organizations like the Women's Business Council, Canadian Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council. These organizations maintain databases of diverse suppliers, accredit them and produce programs to introduce them to large corporate customers.

Women-owned businesses provide a broad range of goods and services to TELUS including branding, training, construction, promotions and IT. Madeleine's team promotes the use of diverse vendors among all their procurement colleagues. "We find that diverse businesses can be more flexible, more personal and more responsive and they also bring innovative approaches to the table," she said.

TELUS tracks the performance metrics of the supplier diversity program on a quarterly basis. The value of its spend with diverse suppliers grows year on year.

Diverse businesses can be more flexible, more personal and more responsive. They also bring innovative approaches to the table.



Let's Talk about: Supplier Diversity Programs (continued)

Madeleine offers the following tips to companies starting out in the creation of a supplier diversity program:

- **Look for strategic opportunities to diversify and don't fall into the trap of stereotyping. Women-led businesses operate across the whole spectrum of commerce.**
- **Ensure that procurement processes encourage diversity. Elaborate questionnaires and unnecessarily high revenue thresholds may dissuade the companies you are hoping to attract.**
- **Think of smaller diverse companies as part of the organization's risk mitigation strategy. Having a smaller secondary supplier of critical parts of the supply chain can be a significant benefit.**
- **Don't presume that all diverse companies are small. Madeleine noted that TELUS alone spends millions annually with one of its woman-owned vendors.**

Don't presume that all diverse companies are small.



Appendix: Blueprint for Women’s Leadership in the Digital Economy Maturity Model

		Level of Gender Diversity			
		ESSENTIAL	RESPONSIVE	EMERGING	LEADER
		Not consciously active in promoting gender diversity.	Will address issues and opportunities related to gender when they arise but do not actively promote investments.	Invests in programs, training, policies and approaches that aim to improve the number of women across all levels of the organization.	Strategically invests in talent in such a way that gender diversity is achieved. Monitors diversity and is quick to adjust and plans to avoid imbalance. Shares best practices and approaches, and reports numbers externally.
Functions Critical to Gender Diversity	HIRING/ STAFFING	No policies or recommended guidelines to address diversity in hiring.	Generic policy statement exists that all qualified candidates should be considered for hiring. No active enforcement or review process.	≥ 1 qualified female candidate per role. ≥ 1 female interviewer in hiring process. Recruiting focus on pool of diverse talent. Gender neutral Job descriptions that appeal to women. Managers trained in hiring for diversity and interviewing best practices.	Even number of male and female candidates for roles, particularly those prone to imbalance. Interview panel is a balance of women and men.

Appendix: Blueprint for Women’s Leadership in the Digital Economy Maturity Model (continued)

		Level of Gender Diversity			
		ESSENTIAL	RESPONSIVE	EMERGING	LEADER
Functions Critical to Gender Diversity	COMPENSATION	No intentional policy regarding pay and promotion of diversity.	Compensation policy includes pay equity but not actively managed.	Reports generated and analysis conducted by gender to identify inequalities or trends. Equity plan in place and reviewed.	Compensation equity is promoted, achieved, and actively monitored.
	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	Ad hoc. No specific policies or guidelines regarding performance assessment.	Performance reviews exist but are biased toward male behaviors.	Performance evaluations conducted on a regular basis and reviewed for any diversity issues. Managers reviewed for any gaps in diversity measures. Reviews based on outcomes and results (not time spent on site in office).	Active review at all levels with diversity measures in mind. Analysis conducted and action and remediation plans created to address gaps. Managers compensated for diversity efforts and results.

Appendix: Blueprint for Women’s Leadership in the Digital Economy Maturity Model (continued)

		Level of Gender Diversity			
		ESSENTIAL	RESPONSIVE	EMERGING	LEADER
Functions Critical to Gender Diversity	CAREER DEVELOPMENT & ADVANCEMENT	No programs or support structures exist to actively promote and grow diverse talent.	Generic policy statement advocating that any qualified candidate be considered for advancement. Management may or may not consider the policy when making decisions. Career development programs with little or no specific focus on developing female talent.	Mentoring and career sponsorship programs in place that track the balance of female high-potential talent. Women’s networks encouraged and supported by the organization. Several male executives sponsor female candidates/ protégés.	High-potential female talent actively mentored and sponsored (equal matching: men and women working together). Senior Leaders reviewed for sponsorship and mentorship skills and activities; development programs provided to support that.
	SUPPORT PROGRAMS	No intentional compliance programs in place to ensure unbiased execution of support programs.	Personal time off and vacation policy in place that can be freely leveraged without fear of persecution.	Flexible hours policy including ability to work at home. Employee Assistance program.	Sabbatical policy in place. Support for returning from leave. Family support program for elderly and child care.

Appendix: Blueprint for Women’s Leadership in the Digital Economy Maturity Model (continued)

		Level of Gender Diversity			
		ESSENTIAL	RESPONSIVE	EMERGING	LEADER
Functions Critical to Gender Diversity	TRAINING	No management training on diversity practices.	Managers are trained on diversity in hiring practices and interview techniques.	All managers are trained on diversity and inclusion and provided with appropriate materials and support.	Management and senior leadership are actively involved in discussions about how diversity drives their results, how to deal with unconscious bias, etc.
	ANALYTICS & REPORTING	No analysis and reporting in place regarding diversity of talent.	Ad hoc. Reports and analytics may be generated on request, often for senior leaders only.	Manager and senior leadership are provided with reports for their teams' results. Action plans requested where gaps exist.	Diversity analytics available for all senior leaders and regularly discussed at leadership meetings. Regular review of progress on action plans. Support and appropriate materials are provided.

Appendix: Blueprint for Women’s Leadership in the Digital Economy Maturity Model (continued)

		Level of Gender Diversity			
		ESSENTIAL	RESPONSIVE	EMERGING	LEADER
Functions Critical to Gender Diversity	CULTURE	No specific focus on initiatives that would help build a culture of gender diversity.	Occasional initiatives on gender diversity. No ongoing or sustained programs.	Vision and values reflect diversity. Employee engagement surveys cover diversity. Different styles/behaviors are respected. Language in communication is gender neutral. Open and inclusive events. Non-HR executive tasked with diversity.	Organization diversity witnessed in everyday actions. Employees comment on diversity as a reason to stay, potentially highlighting this through social media.
	EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION	No specific focus as to how the organization is portrayed externally with respect to diversity.	Ad hoc. The organization addresses external diversity-related complaints and queries if/when they occur.	Marketing & Communications team intentionally represents diversity in externally viewable photos, promotions, social media, etc.	Speakers at external events reflect diversity. HR’s diversity push acknowledged in community. Senior leaders cite importance of diversity.

Appendix: Blueprint for Women’s Leadership in the Digital Economy Maturity Model (continued)

		Level of Gender Diversity			
		ESSENTIAL	RESPONSIVE	EMERGING	LEADER
Functions Critical to Gender Diversity	BOARD OF DIRECTORS	No consideration given to gender mix of board members – usually recruited based on previous associations.	All qualified candidates are equally considered for open board positions.	Gender-ratio target set and improvement towards a makeup representative of organization's customers measured. Considers new sources for recruits.	Board diversity status and improvements shared publicly. Openly and actively recruiting from as many diverse sources as possible.

**For more information about assessing
and improving your organization's
gender diversity, please contact WCT.
info@wct-fct.com
1-613-706-0607 or 1-800-361-2978**

