



The Puffin's Voice

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In This Edition

This month's edition of The Puffin's Voice focuses on the challenges women face within the tech industry. We'll examine recent hiring trends, the issues women encounter within the workplace, and ideas for promoting gender diversity in the technology sector.

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Women in Tech - Facts & Figures

- Women represent almost half of the labor force, but only 25% of the technology sector - a **3:1 ratio of men to women**.
- In the US, women in tech earn **94.6 cents for every dollar** earned by a man with the same role/experience, compared to a cross-industry average of 98 cents ([The Atlantic](#)).
- Women are under-represented in the Top 100 tech firms in Canada, with only 5 female CEOs and 1 female co-CEO ([CBC](#)).
- In the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) sector, the rate of women who leave their STEM jobs is **53%**. In comparison, that number for men is **31%** ([Ncwit](#)).



Common Issues & Challenges

In a 2018 Ivanti survey of 500 women in technology, the biggest challenges women reported in their careers and workplaces were:

- not being taken seriously due to gender perceptions - 63%
- the gender pay gap - 39%
- having no female role models - 42%



The Accenture study “Getting to Equal 2018: Creating a culture where everyone thrives” found there are almost three times more women on the fast track to management in organizations with at least one female senior leader than in organizations in which all senior leaders are male. Increasing the percentage of women leaders from 0 to 35 percent leads to the most significant gain in women’s advancement.

Sexual harassment and discrimination affect both men and women. 35 percent of women and 26 percent of men have experienced harassment or know a colleague who has. 46 percent of women reported their organization has made no change in reducing tolerance of discrimination and gender-biased language or has presided over a deterioration in this behavior or language. In organizations where leadership does create an inclusive culture, employees see the difference. For example, only 3 percent of women in workplaces where factors supporting equality are common experience sexual harassment or discrimination, compared with 28 percent of women in workplaces where those factors are less common.

Adapted from [Global News/Accenture](#).

Promoting Gender Diversity in the Workplace

Here are some strategies which can be effective in promoting gender diversity in the workplace.

Establishing Clear Policy

Develop an anti-discrimination policy at your workplace which outlines the processes for dealing with complaints of discrimination, bias, or harassment. Ensure all accusations are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Look for ways to help your employees feel safe and confident enough to report cases of gender bias they may experience.



Addressing Unconscious Biases

Unconscious biases are things we've picked up over the years from our families, peers, and general society. They are mental shortcuts that cause us to make quick judgements and decisions. Unfortunately, gender bias within society reflects in our judgements as well. We may support gender equality consciously, while holding a set of unconscious assumptions that lead us to act in ways undermining that same goal. Therefore we need to be ever-aware of the possibility of a conflict between our conscious and subconscious thinking.

Training and Mentoring

All employees - including all levels of management - need to be aware of and trained in a company's anti-discrimination policy. As well, training all employees on things such as being aware of unconscious biases and communicating respectfully can be very effective (See next section titled **Communication Patterns: Men vs. Women**). Mentoring is another tool for promoting gender diversity. Creating a program where women with high growth potential meet regularly with women in leadership positions can generate a more balanced ratio of male-to-female managers.

Adapted from [envatotuts](#).

Communication Patterns: Men vs. Women

It's a reality that many women and men experience barriers when they try to communicate with each other. These barriers arise not because one gender is better at communicating than the other, but simply because they communicate differently. While men communicate in a focused and goal-oriented fashion, women communicate in a more expressive style.

Women tend to express interest in conversations with affirmative remarks and by asking a lot of questions, even those to which they already know the answer. Because men typically focus quietly on what is being said, and only ask questions when they need further clarification, they can find women's input to be interruptive and confusing.

Studies show that during negotiations between men and women, men tend to be more direct and self-emphasizing. In general, this means the men were more forcefully stating a course of action.

Women, on the other hand, use more justifications and indirect suggestions, which is less commanding/authoritative than men's style. Even though this can be interpreted as submissive or hesitant, studies show that the women's communication style positively affects how well a conversation goes. This method of communication allows women to effectively interpret non-verbal cues and be more collaborative.

The difference in communication patterns can lead to misinterpretations, which can disrupt the flow in work environments. Therefore, it is important that all genders know about these patterns, as well as how to alternate between the various methods of communication.

Adapted from the [IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science - Volume 2, Issue 1](#).



Benefits of Gender Diversity

Widening Your Talent Pool

Emphasizing gender diversity maximizes the size of the talent pool from which you are hiring. By selecting from a diversified pool that disregards gender, you ensure you select the most optimal talent for your team. Having a diversified employee base can also bring varying perspectives to the table, which helps create creativity and innovation.

Enhanced Collaboration

Research has concluded that groups containing more women communicate more effectively, thereby promoting greater collaboration and producing higher quality work.

Improved Understanding of Customer Needs

Unless you have a product or service aimed at a specific gender, your customer base is very diversified. An equally diversified group of employees helps your organization relate more closely with its customer base and enables more effective communication with that base. By having team members from different backgrounds, you are encouraging different perspectives that can prove to be an advantage for your product or service.

Adapted from [Line Zero](#).



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