

# Understanding Workplace Diversity for Managers

In a blind resume study, male candidates were offered higher salaries, more mentorship, and were rated as more “**competent**” and “**hireable**,” than women, despite the candidates’ resumes being identical.<sup>17</sup>

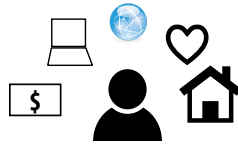
Several issues need to be addressed to **retain a diverse workforce**. The “old white boys’ club”<sup>3</sup> that excludes others from informal networking, a lack of managerial awareness about diversity issues, poor work-life balance, and discriminatory behaviours against minority employees can dissuade all workers from being loyal to an employer in the long term.<sup>3,19</sup>

Promoting diversity is not limited to gender; workplaces should be inclusive and welcoming to all.

The benefits of creating an inclusive workplace include low turnover, higher employee engagement, improved client relationships and satisfaction, stronger fiscal performance, and improved governance.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

This paper highlights eight ways to recruit, support and retain a diverse workforce in organisations.

See work-life balance as an **investment** in your employees<sup>4</sup>



Offer **family-friendly** policies<sup>10</sup>



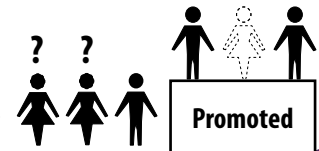
What policies does your organisation have?

Create and maintain clear policies on **promotions, retention, and work/life balance**, and **communicate** them to all employees



**Flexible scheduling** is vital for retaining **mid-career women**<sup>1</sup> and valuable to **all** employees<sup>15</sup>

**Clear, well-documented, and equitable** promotion and retention policies reduce **significant gender gaps**<sup>8</sup>



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Which ones are priorities for your organisation?



Better management performance<sup>22,23</sup>

Share priorities with staff, stakeholders & investors



Access to a **broader talent base**<sup>26</sup>

**Understand and communicate the business case for diversity** in your organisation



Increased **innovation capacity**<sup>24,25</sup>

Stronger **financial performance**<sup>20,21,22</sup>

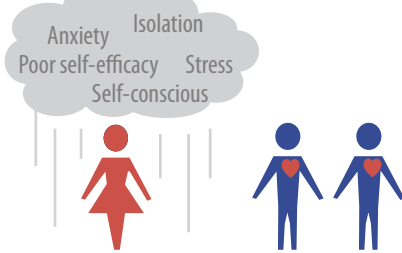


**16% higher** Return on Sales<sup>20</sup>

Fortune 500 companies with more women on average perform better<sup>20</sup>

**26% higher** Return on Invested Capital<sup>20</sup>

Negative interpersonal experiences at work predicted **lower organizational commitment** and **life satisfaction** for women<sup>9</sup>



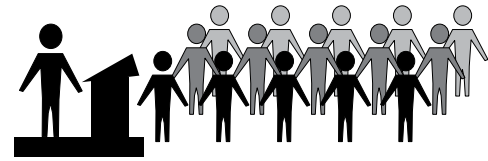
Men in exclusive and stressful workplaces, report having poor physical health, including heart conditions<sup>9</sup>

Monitor the working climate and **foster a positive, inclusive work culture**

Have a **zero tolerance** policy for derogatory comments or actions<sup>3</sup>

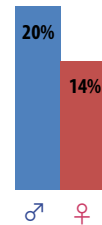


Organisations tend to be self-replicating when hiring



**Try the Implicit Bias test:**  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/>

Identify and invite or sponsor women for **leadership positions**<sup>6,16</sup>



Male mid-level employees are more likely than women peers to apply for a managerial role despite **only partially** meeting the job description<sup>13</sup>

Become aware of your **organisation's hiring tendencies** and your **subconscious biases**



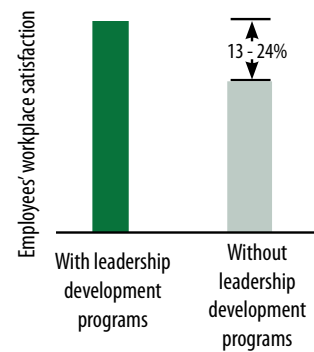
Subconscious biases<sup>4</sup> affect **everyday decision-making processes** (hiring processes, assumptions made about others)



Set an example for embracing inclusivity in the workplace<sup>3</sup>

Provide **professional development opportunities** for **all employees, on company time**

LGBT employees are happier at organisations with **leadership programs**<sup>3</sup>



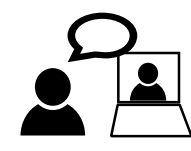
These programs also have positive effects for all employees, including more ownership, engagement, and co-operation<sup>2</sup>

Non-traditional mentoring includes:<sup>11</sup>

Speed Mentoring



Virtual Mentoring



Promote and establish **Mentoring Programs**<sup>4</sup>

Provides Access to:<sup>5, 8, 12</sup>

Knowledge Support Diverse Mentors Networking



**Establish structured diversity measures**<sup>7</sup>

- ✓ Include diversity as part of all employee's reporting;
- ✓ Track diversity (ethically);<sup>10</sup>
- ✓ Reflect your commitment in marketing and communications;
- ✓ Report on progress

**Set targets**<sup>5</sup>



Do a **Diversity Audit** at your organisation<sup>10</sup>

Ensure every employee has an opportunity for advancement<sup>3</sup>

Assign **accountability for diversity** and track your progress<sup>10</sup>

Create a **culture of diversity**<sup>10</sup>

Build **Diversity Culture** with diversity shares at meetings

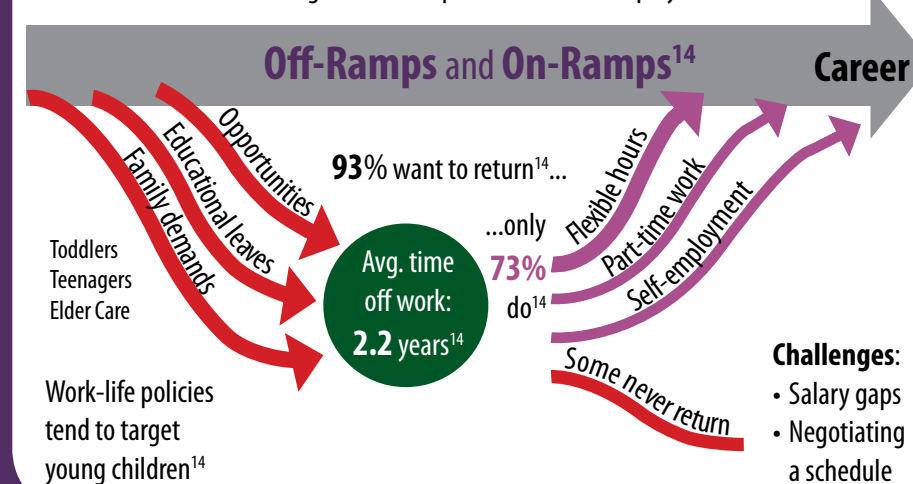


Safety comes from a **safety culture**; Diversity comes from a **diversity culture**



**Why do women leave work?**

**60%** of highly qualified women have **nonlinear** careers<sup>14</sup>  
Historically, **24%** of highly qualified men also have nonlinear careers<sup>14</sup>  
**75%** of the Millennial generation expect to have 2-5 employers in their life<sup>18</sup>



**The Benefits of Change**

Employees are more satisfied and committed when they have **positive work relationships** with managers and colleagues.<sup>3</sup> By supporting diversity, managers and organisations can foster positive work cultures for all.

Committing to change can make a difference; UBC's Faculty of Science went from having **no women** in senior leadership positions from 2003-2007 to having **5/13** senior faculty positions held by women from 2007-2010.<sup>12</sup>

Managers should **celebrate their successes** and be open to a wide range of communication styles.<sup>1</sup> While the inequality gap tends to increase over time,<sup>8</sup> taking direct action such as assigning accountability for diversity can lead to short and long term changes.

**Training and feedback** can be an effective method for eliminating managerial bias and inequality.<sup>7</sup> Opportunities for technical and leadership development need to be available to **employees of all ranks**.<sup>1</sup>

Allowing workers to off-ramp partially or completely and welcoming them back later **without penalty**, combating stigma and stereotypes by training staff to be self-reflective and deconstruct their own processes, and making organizational decision-making as transparent as possible helps build a **culture of diversity** within organisations.<sup>10,14</sup> WVEST is currently researching which specific policies best support gender diversity in the workplace.<sup>4</sup>



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- ‡ WWEST. (2013). *Mentoring Works*. Retrieved from: <http://wwest.mech.ubc.ca/diversity/>
- ‡ For more information, please see Engendering Engineering Success: <http://wwest.mech.ubc.ca/ees/>

## About WWEST

Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science & Technology (WWEST) is the operating name for the NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Engineering (CWSE), BC and Yukon Region. Our mission is to advance engineering and science as welcoming careers that serve our world through holistic understanding and creative, appropriate and sustainable solutions. WWEST works locally and, in conjunction with the other CWSE Chairs, nationally on policy, research, advocacy, facilitation, and pilot programs that support women in science and engineering.

## About the Chairholder

The Chair is held by Dr. Elizabeth Croft, P.Eng., FEC, FASME. Dr. Croft is the Associate Dean, Education and Professional Development in the Faculty of Applied Science, and a Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the University of British Columbia. She is also the Director of the Collaborative Advanced Robotics and Intelligent Systems (CARIS) Laboratory. Her research investigates how robotic systems can behave, and be perceived to behave, in a safe, predictable, and helpful manner. She is the lead investigator of "Engendering Engineering Success," a 3-year interdisciplinary research project that aims to take an evidence-based approach to increasing the retention of women in engineering by understanding and changing aspects of workplace culture that place women at a disadvantage.

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