

Over 20 years of research demonstrates a correlation between organisations with high gender diversity in leadership and several measures of organisational success.

Gender diversity is linked to employee satisfaction,<sup>1</sup> improved governance and innovation. It is also associated with financial benefits, including a positive impact on firm value.<sup>2</sup>

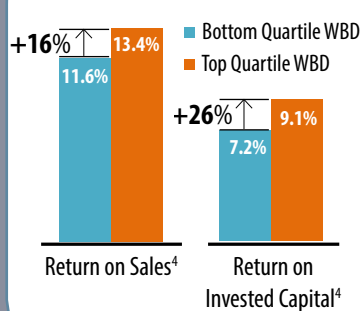
While some boards do currently have female members, discrimination still exists as women are more likely to be board members than chairs.<sup>23</sup>

To benefit from gender diversity, organisations should avoid tokenism and ensure there is a “critical mass” of women represented.<sup>17,21,22</sup> This means having at least 2-3 women, or at least 30% of the board.

While correlation does not indicate causation, there is a clear relationship between an organisation’s gender diversity and aspects of their success. Longitudinal studies found a correlation between promoting women to executive positions and high profitability over 20+ years.<sup>8</sup>

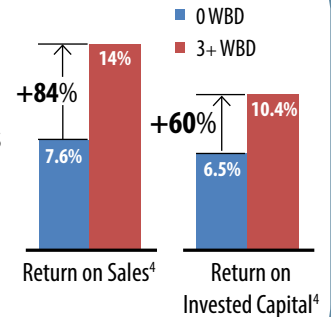
In order for change to occur, a paradigm shift is needed where organisations’ leadership values diversity, recognises the challenge of expressing diverse opinions, and aims to support the professional development of all employees.<sup>18</sup>

## Economic Benefits



Fortune 500 companies with the most women on board of directors outperformed companies with the least.<sup>4,5,6,7,8</sup>

Similar results apply to Canadian corporations.<sup>9</sup>



\*WBD: Women Board Directors; stats from 2004-2008

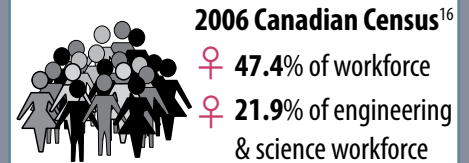
## Improved Governance

Gender diverse boards are more likely to allocate effort into corporate monitoring, and increase participation in decision-making.<sup>10</sup>

### Women directors:

- improve a firm’s ability to navigate complex strategic issues<sup>12</sup>
- positively influence board strategic direction & tasks<sup>11,14</sup>
- women are more “prepared to push the ‘tough issues’”<sup>13</sup>
- reduce conflict on boards<sup>14</sup> & negative corporate social practices<sup>15,24</sup>

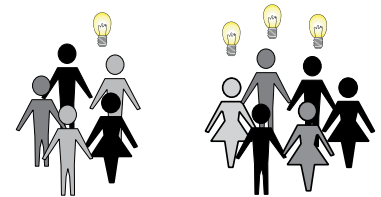
## Access to More Talent



Diverse hiring increases the recruiting pool<sup>17</sup> and is a more effective use of talent and leadership<sup>18</sup>

## More Innovation

If a group includes more women, the collective intelligence rises<sup>19</sup>



Gender diversity has a positive effect on team innovation in radical research<sup>20</sup>

Having a critical mass of 30% or at least 2 or 3 women on a board decreases **groupthink<sup>21</sup>**

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## About WWEST 2015-2020

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In a hiring process, stereotypes, unconscious bias and communication styles can **unknowingly influence** impressions of candidates and jobs.

Women's behaviour tends to be stereotyped as **communal** (kind, thoughtful, sensitive to others' feelings, deferent), whereas men are stereotyped as **agentic** (competitive, decisive, aggressive, socially dominant).<sup>1</sup> Women also are encouraged to be more self-assertive, but discouraged from advancing their interests at the cost of others.<sup>1</sup>

Language can also be characterized as **feminine** or **masculine**; being more indirect, elaborate and emotional for the former, or more succinct, direct and instrumental for the latter.<sup>2</sup>

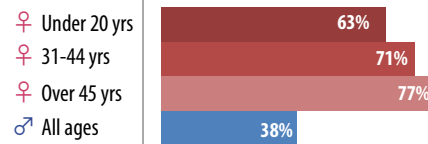
These stereotypes and assumptions can impact a hiring committee's assessment of a **candidate's abilities**, as well as the candidate's assessment of a job description and **their "fit"** within an organisation.

Job ads with masculine language are **less appealing** to women, regardless of job type, and decreased their **anticipated belonging** to the organisation.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, gendered language had **no impact** on men's anticipated belonging.<sup>3</sup>

## Gender Discrimination Exists

**Gender segregation** is the tendency for women to work in **systematically different occupations** and industries than men.<sup>4</sup> This often occurs at **critical career points**, which can dissuade women from continuing in male-dominated industries.<sup>3</sup>

Women grow more aware of the "**glass ceiling**" as they advance in their careers:



Percentage of workers who believe barriers that prevent women from reaching management level exist<sup>6</sup>



Women with children experienced **declines in earnings and hours worked**; men with children correlated with **increased earnings and virtually unchanged hours**.<sup>5</sup>



## Stereotypes & Their Effects

### Stereotype: Men

#### Agentic:

competitive  
decisive  
aggressive  
socially dominant



### Stereotype: Women

#### Communal:

kind  
thoughtful  
sensitive to others  
deferent



Traditionally, companies have valued agentic behaviour over communal behaviour



Agentic women are stereotyped as **competent**, but **interpersonally insensitive**.<sup>7</sup>

This is used to **justify** keeping them out of **male-dominated** management positions.<sup>1,3</sup>

*Some women counteract negative stereotypes by adopting a more masculine communication style.<sup>2</sup> This can be effective for some women, but not all. Agentic behaviours have social costs.<sup>2</sup>*

### Word Choice Matters

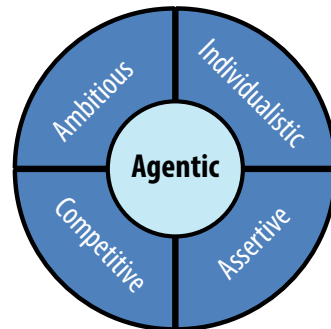
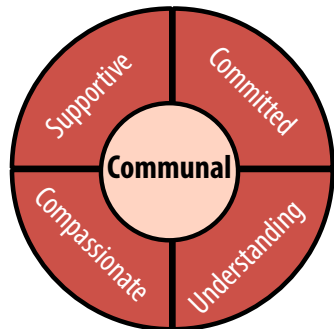
Gendered wording **subtly** signals who **belongs** and **who doesn't**.  
Below are examples of language in job advertisements and qualities of candidates.

#### Feminine

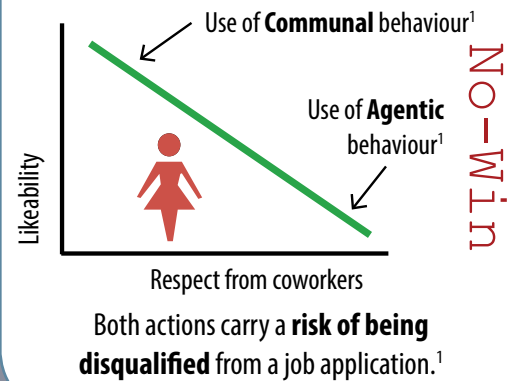
- a company's "**excellence**" in the market<sup>3</sup>
- "**understand** markets to **establish** appropriate selling prices"<sup>3</sup>
- "We are **committed** to providing top quality health care that is **sympathetic** to the needs of our patients"<sup>3</sup>

#### MASCULINE

- a company's "**dominance**" in the market<sup>3</sup>
- "**analyze** markets to **determine** appropriate selling prices"<sup>3</sup>
- "We are **determined** to deliver **superior** medical treatment tailored to each individual patient"<sup>3</sup>



### Women in Leadership Positions



### Observed Effects of Women Using Forced Agentic Behaviour

- ↑ Increase ♀'s **competence scores** to equally agentic men<sup>1</sup>
- ↓ Seem more **threatening**; less **persuasive** & less **influential**<sup>2</sup>
- ↓ Decrease **compliance** of workers for ♀ managers<sup>2</sup>

If women need to manage the impressions they give off, it can lead to **stress, anxiety and reduced task performance**.<sup>2,3</sup>

### Gendered Job Descriptions<sup>3</sup>

For an Engineer

Feminine	MASCULINE
" <b>Proficient</b> oral and written communication skills" <sup>3</sup>	" <b>Strong</b> communication and influencing skills" <sup>3</sup>
"Collaborates well, in a <b>team</b> environment" <sup>3</sup>	"Ability to <b>perform individually</b> in a <b>competitive</b> environment" <sup>3</sup>
" <b>Sensitive</b> to the clients' needs, can <b>develop warm</b> client relationships" <sup>3</sup>	" <b>Superior</b> ability to <b>satisfy</b> customers and <b>manage</b> company's association with them" <sup>3</sup>
"Provide general <b>support</b> to project teams in a manner complimentary to the company" <sup>3</sup>	" <b>Direct</b> project groups to <b>manage</b> project <b>progress</b> and <b>ensure</b> accurate task <b>control</b> " <sup>3</sup>

### "Qualified"

Only partially meet the advertised job requirements?

Men are more likely to apply, regardless.<sup>6</sup>

85% of women would only apply to a job if they met the job description "**fully**" or "**pretty well**."<sup>6</sup>

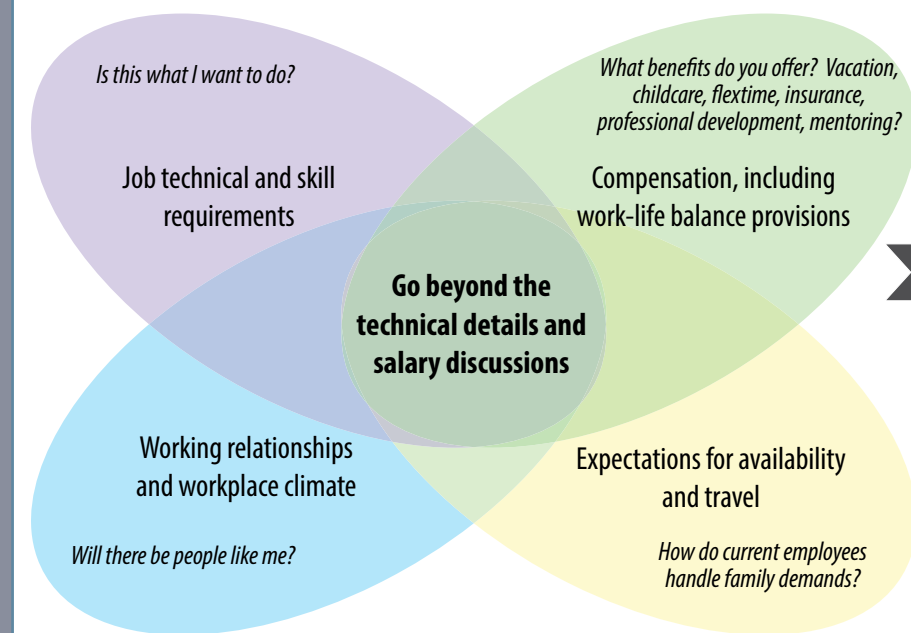
Women are also less likely to apply for masculine-stereotyped jobs.<sup>4</sup>

### Deciding to Apply

3 main factors when individuals decide to apply:<sup>4</sup>



### Interview Best Practices<sup>4</sup>



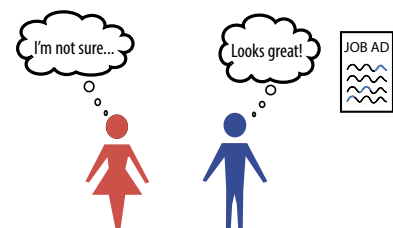
Interview best practices help you find the best employee, and are **universally helpful, regardless of gender**.<sup>10,12</sup> Lifestyle and workplace climate discussions are particularly important to women<sup>9</sup> and young workers<sup>8,11</sup> (Millennials / Gen Y).

### What Can We Do?

Gendered language is not a deliberate process - most job ads only contain 1% gendered language<sup>3</sup> - but impact women's application decisions. Increasing **feminine language** in job descriptions can **increase women's interest** in the job.<sup>7</sup>

Organisations need to rethink their hiring process, and should ensure career advancement **reflects skills and capabilities** instead of emphasizing time served.<sup>6</sup> When attracting women to a job, **flexible working hours** and **work-life balance** are important,<sup>4</sup> as well as ensuring they have a **sense of anticipated belonging** in the organisation.<sup>3</sup> In the study of MBA graduates, women were no less likely to receive offers in masculine jobs; the segregation occurred in the application process where **women self-selected the jobs** they believed they fit.<sup>4</sup>

Women's leadership potential should be maximized through **professional development, mentoring, and proactively identifying** talented individuals and encouraging them to apply for upper level jobs.<sup>6</sup> The negative effects of communal communication stereotypes can also be eliminated through **self-affirmation exercises**.<sup>2</sup>



Gendered language has **no impact** on men's decision to apply, but may dissuade women.<sup>3</sup>

It also goes **unnoticed** in job advertisements; even when explicitly pointed out.<sup>3</sup>

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**Social identity threat** is an anxiety or concern people experience in situations where their social group is underrepresented, devalued, or stereotyped to be inferior.<sup>1,2</sup>

This can be subtly triggered through conversations, or other interactions with peers and colleagues.

Social identity threat can be experienced when taking a challenging academic test, and results in poor performance on the test (known as stereotype threat<sup>3,4</sup>).

## Why Does This Matter for STEM Professions?

STEM fields have low representation, and a high attrition rate of women.<sup>6</sup> For example, 11.7% of licensed engineers in Canada are women,<sup>7</sup> and women are leaving the profession at a higher rate than men.<sup>8</sup>

STEM fields, particularly engineering, often involve a lot of collaboration between coworkers. Research has shown that for female engineers, work conversations with male colleagues can be a source of social identity threat and can lead to psychological burnout.<sup>1</sup>

Actively addressing subtle behaviours that trigger social identity threat are critical steps in creating inclusive and safe workplaces, and retaining more women in STEM fields. This can be done through raising awareness about social identity threat, and creating spaces that welcome all identities.

Gender inclusive policies can result in all employees feeling more accepted and competent in daily conversations, and more engaged in their work.

## Can Conversations Cue Social Identity Threat?



When we share ideas with others, we are **vulnerable** to a variety of responses.



Negative responses (critiques, dismissals) can trigger feelings of **incompetence** and **lack of belonging**.

When you belong to an unrepresented group, either of these feelings can cause social identity threat.

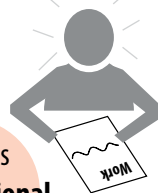
## Psychological Burnout

affects individuals & organizations.

Often involves personal:<sup>5</sup>

- **Exhaustion**
- **Disengagement**
- **Inefficacy**

Negatively impacts **mental health**<sup>5</sup>



Reduces **organizational productivity**<sup>5</sup>

Predicts **employee turnover**<sup>5</sup>

## The Workplace Study<sup>1</sup>



Pairs of engineers who work together documented **daily conversations** at work.

## Findings



On days when a conversation with a male colleague cued feelings of incompetence and a lack of acceptance...

**For men:**

no change in social identity threat levels



**For women:**

higher levels of social identity threat



Women reported experiencing **more daily social identity threat** than their male colleagues, predicting:

**mental exhaustion**

&

**psychological burnout.**

**All employees** feel more accepted and competent in daily conversations in workplaces with **gender inclusive policies**.



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**Microaggressions** are subtle, mundane exchanges that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to individuals based on group membership.<sup>1,2</sup> They can be verbal, behavioural, or environmental,<sup>1</sup> and include staring, glaring, comments, actions, and gestures.

These actions are not always conscious, yet are constant - often daily - experiences for people of colour, women, LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, and members of other under-represented groups.<sup>24</sup>

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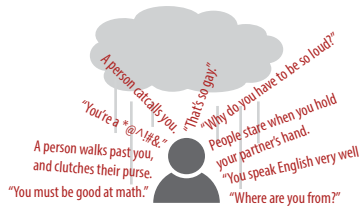
Microaggressions are prevalent across social environments; they exist in media coverage<sup>25</sup>, clinical therapy<sup>26</sup>, classrooms<sup>21</sup>, academia<sup>3</sup>, workplaces<sup>27</sup>, and communities<sup>19</sup>. They are powerful because of the subtle, negative messages they often send<sup>1</sup>, including that the person does not belong, and they deviate from the accepted norms. These messages are often unconscious and unintentional.

In order to address the lack of diversity in STEM fields, individuals and organizations must acknowledge their unconscious biases and behaviours. Microaggressions are interpersonal and institutional<sup>28</sup>; they can be as simple as unintentionally excluding a person from an important conversation<sup>27</sup>.

Education and reflection - individually, communally, and institutionally - are critical steps to making workplace and community environments inclusive to all people, regardless of the groups they identify with. Once identified, action is needed to correct policies and behaviours that have the potential to harm and discriminate against members of our communities.

## Prevalence & Effects

College students of colour experienced an average of **291 microaggressions** over 90 days.<sup>3</sup>



Microaggressions:

Negatively impact <b>mental health.</b> <sup>4-9</sup>	Decrease <b>productivity &amp; problem-solving abilities.</b> <sup>10,12,13</sup>
Perpetuate <b>stereotype threat.</b> <sup>10,11</sup>	Create <b>hostile work &amp; institutional environments.</b> <sup>14,15</sup>

## What Can We Do?

To address microaggressions, learn to:<sup>2,22</sup>

**Define them**  
especially "invisible" ones

**Recognize them**  
In ourselves, and others

**Deconstruct their hidden meanings**

**Acknowledge their effects**  
& learn about coping strategies

**Take action**<sup>23,25</sup>  
Implement education programs

## Types of Microaggressions<sup>2</sup>

### Microassaults<sup>2</sup> (often conscious)

Aims to **attack the a person's group identity**, or harm them through **name-calling, avoidance, and discriminatory actions.**<sup>16,17</sup>

@#&?!  
\*\$%@\$&!</p></div>
<div>
<p>Occurs when the perpetrator:<sup>18</sup></p></div>
<div>
<p>has a level of anonymity</p></div>
<div>
<p>is among like-minded people</p></div>
<div>
<p>loses control</p></div>
<div>
<h3>Microinsults<sup>2</sup>  
(often unconscious)</h3></div>
<div>
<p>Conveys a **stereotype, rudeness, or insensitivity** towards a person's group identity.</p></div>
<div>
<p>You are so well spoken for an immigrant!</p></div>
<div>
<p>Includes assumptions about the individual's:<sup>2</sup></p></div>
<div>
<p>sexuality<sup>19,20</sup> citizenship<sup>1</sup> language abilities<sup>21</sup>  
belonging<sup>1</sup> intelligence<sup>1</sup> gender<sup>22</sup> criminality<sup>1</sup></p></div>
<div>
<h3>Microinvalidations<sup>2</sup>  
(often unconscious)</h3></div>
<div>
<p>**Denies, excludes, & negates** the **experiences and feelings** of an individual in a group.</p></div>
<div>
<p>May lead individuals to **question their experience.** Their response to the negative interaction may be **perceived as a irrational overreaction.**<sup>2</sup></p></div>
<div>
<p>Copyright © WVEST 2015  
More information and resources at: www.wvest.ca</p></div>
<div>
<p><img alt="WVEST Logo"/> 2010-2015</p></div>



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## About WWEST 2015-2020

Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science and Technology (WWEST) is the operating name for the 2015-2020 NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Technology (CWSE), BC and Yukon Region. Our mission is to promote science and to engage students, industry, and the community to increase the awareness and participation of women and other under-represented groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). 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.

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Dr. Lesley Shannon P.Eng is an Associate Professor and Chair for the Computer Engineering Option in the School of Engineering Science at Simon Fraser University. Dr. Shannon studies computer systems design. She works in a rapidly growing field that combines custom computing hardware and software to design and implement application-specific computer systems for applications in a wide range of areas including robotics, machine learning, aerospace and biomedical systems, multimedia applications, and cloud computing. She teaches both undergraduate and graduate students in the area of Computer Engineering; she received the 2014 APEGBC Teaching Award of Excellence in recognition of her classroom and out-of-class mentoring activities and her contributions in leading a redesign of the School's undergraduate curriculum at SFU. Dr. Shannon has long been an advocate of increasing the diversity of students and workers in science- and engineering-related fields and was instrumental in developing programs to support a successful transition from high school into university.

## Stereotype Threat

refers to the concern with being viewed through the lens of a stereotype.<sup>1</sup>

Stereotype threat is caused by cues in the situation that remind people of negative stereotypes.<sup>13,18</sup>

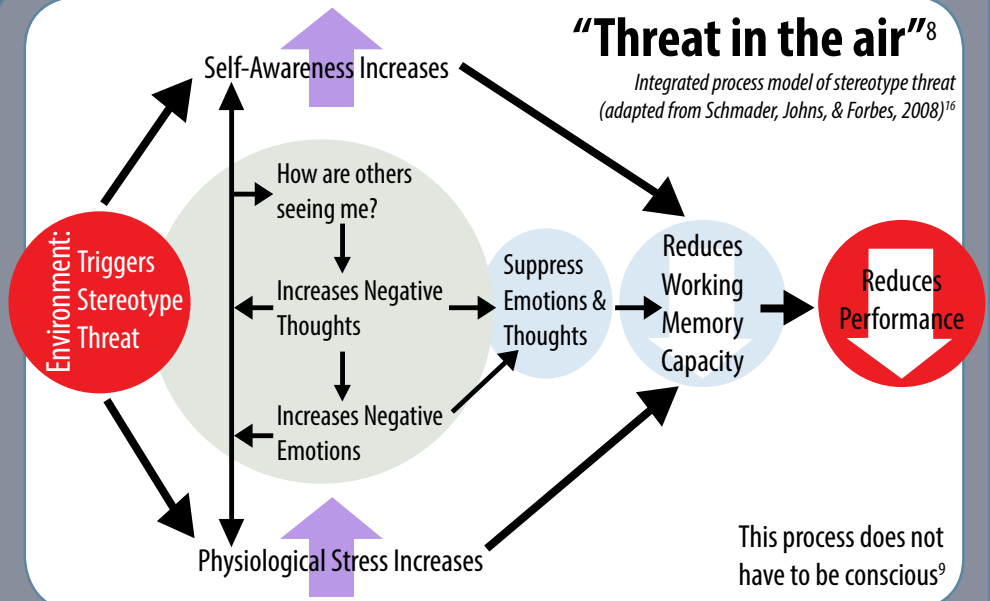
Anxiety over confirming these stereotypes can **impair** an individual's ability to perform up to their full potential.<sup>2</sup>

Research has shown that stereotype threat negatively impacts: women's math performance<sup>3</sup> (compared to men's), White men's math performance<sup>4</sup> (compared to Asian men), men's social sensitivity<sup>5</sup> and spatial abilities<sup>6</sup> (compared to women's), White athletic performance<sup>7</sup> (compared to Black), and Black students' verbal problem-solving abilities<sup>1</sup> (compared to White students').

Stereotype threat may be a significant factor in undermining women's success and persistence in engineering.<sup>13</sup> This has important implications for STEM fields. A simple reminder of one's race or gender is enough to elicit stereotype threat.<sup>18</sup>

STEM fields should consider ways to create identity safe environments to help people overcome stereotype threat.

By actively **raising awareness** about stereotype threat, providing **role models**, and **encouraging self-affirmation** exercises, individuals' performances are more likely to match their potential.



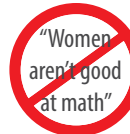
## Environment Triggers

Don't...

... define people by their gender,



... or their group,



... or stereotype on performance expectations

## Impact on STEM

Reduced:

Performance<sup>18</sup>

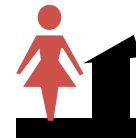
of women & minority students on the SAT, by 50 points<sup>18</sup>



Job Engagement & Organizational Commitment

in academia<sup>11</sup> & in the engineering industry<sup>12</sup>

## Coping Strategies & Alleviating the Threat

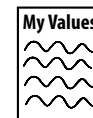


Role Models

Show that others have struggled and succeeded<sup>9,17,20</sup>

Self-Affirmation

Write about your core values<sup>21</sup>



Reframing the Situation

Create identity safe contexts e.g. gender-fair tests<sup>3</sup>

Learning about Stereotype Threat

Performance improves when stereotype threat is explained before a test<sup>14,15,19</sup>

Attribute the anxiety to the stereotype, not the self<sup>14</sup>



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## Recommended Readings

1. <http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/>
2. Dr. Toni Schmader's website: <http://schmader.psych.ubc.ca/research.html>

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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>

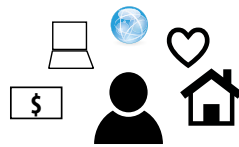
Several issues need to be addressed to **retain a diverse workforce**. The “old white boys’ club”<sup>3</sup> that excludes others from informal networking, a lack of managerial awareness about diversity issues, poor work-life balance, and discriminatory behaviours against minority employees can dissuade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



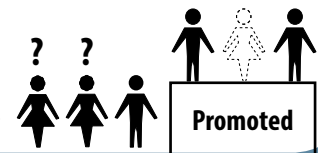
What policies does your organisation have?

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>



Which ones are priorities for your organisation?



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

Share priorities with staff, stakeholders & investors

Priorities



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>



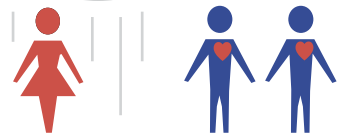
**16% higher** Return on Sales<sup>20</sup>

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>

Anxiety Isolation  
Poor self-efficacy Stress  
Self-conscious



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**

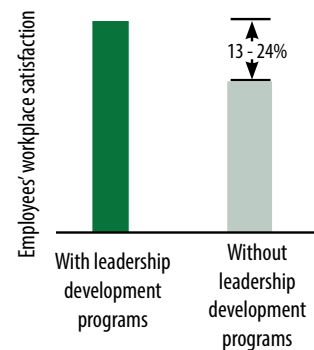
Have a **zero tolerance** policy for derogatory comments or actions<sup>3</sup>



Safe Space

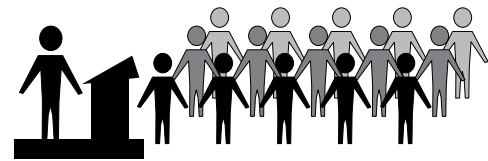
Provide **professional development opportunities** for all employees, on company time

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



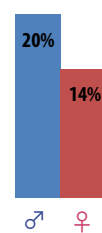
These programs also have positive effects for all employees, including more ownership, engagement, and co-operation<sup>2</sup>

Organisations tend to be self-replicating when hiring



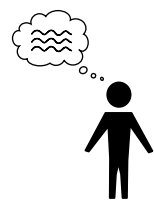
**Try the Implicit Bias test:**  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/>

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)



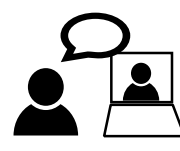
Set an example for embracing inclusivity in the workplace<sup>3</sup>

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



Think **safe**.

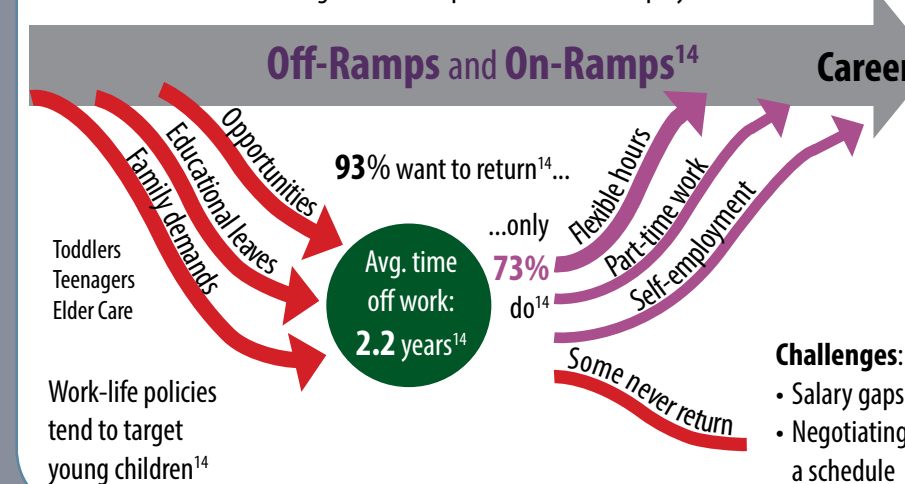
Safety comes from a **safety culture**;  
Diversity comes from a **diversity culture**



Think **diverse**.

**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>



Work-life policies tend to target young children<sup>14</sup>

**Challenges:**  
• Salary gaps  
• Negotiating a schedule

**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> WEST is currently researching which specific policies best support gender diversity in the workplace.<sup>4</sup>

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## About WWest 2015-2020

Westcoast Women in Engineering, Science and Technology (WWest) is the operating name for the 2015-2020 NSERC Chair for Women in Science and Technology (CWSE), BC and Yukon Region. Our mission is to promote science and to engage students, industry, and the community to increase the awareness and participation of women and other under-represented groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). 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 2015-2020 WWest Chairholder

Dr. Lesley Shannon P.Eng is an Associate Professor and Chair for the Computer Engineering Option in the School of Engineering Science at Simon Fraser University. Dr. Shannon studies computer systems design. She works in a rapidly growing field that combines custom computing hardware and software to design and implement application-specific computer systems for applications in a wide range of areas including robotics, machine learning, aerospace and biomedical systems, multimedia applications, and cloud computing. She teaches both undergraduate and graduate students in the area of Computer Engineering; she received the 2014 APEGBC Teaching Award of Excellence in recognition of her classroom and out-of-class mentoring activities and her contributions in leading a redesign of the School's undergraduate curriculum at SFU. Dr. Shannon has long been an advocate of increasing the diversity of students and workers in science- and engineering-related fields and was instrumental in developing programs to support a successful transition from high school into university.