

New study finds solutions to improve gender equality in the STEM fields

NEW YORK, October 9, 2018— Although STEM employers spend billions of dollars to improve gender equality in their fields, women still face huge obstacles. Many highly-qualified women feel stuck in their careers, and more than half quit their jobs over time, according to Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) research. To address this, CTI’s new study, “Wonder Women in STEM and the Companies that Champion Them,” uses a data-driven approach to identify strategies linked to increased retention and career advancement for women, and shares insights from women who have achieved success in STEM careers.

The study, which surveyed 3,212 respondents between the ages of 21 and 65 with STEM credentials, ranks ten company-led initiatives by their effectiveness in retaining and advancing women in STEM roles:

1. A commitment to pay equity
2. An opportunity for employees to connect with female and minority consumers
3. Time outside of core job functions for innovative side projects
4. Sponsorship programs
5. Management training on empathy, integrity, or inclusion
6. Mentorship programs
7. Leadership development programs for women or people of color
8. Concierge services or family care
9. Employee resource groups
10. Anti-bias policies or trainings

The rank order of the top ten interventions was derived by calculating the percent increase in the number of women in STEM who advance and intend to stay at a company with a specific intervention, as compared to those who are at companies that do not have that specific intervention. The success rates for these interventions and solutions varied by race.

“Companies can now prioritize specific interventions that effectively advance and retain women,” says Pooja Jain-Link, senior vice president and head of research at CTI. “At the same time, individual women can *also* drive their own outcomes of success—regardless of whether or not STEM companies have these interventions in place.”

To that end, the study also identifies six strategies used by successful women in STEM, independent from any employer-led initiative. As compared to other women in STEM, the nearly one-fifth of women in STEM who are satisfied with their current jobs, respected for their expertise, and in senior-level positions are more likely to:

1. Be extremely confident in their abilities
2. Confront the situation when their contributions are ignored
3. Invest in peer networks by helping colleagues
4. Sponsor others
5. Be authentic
6. Build their personal brands, including by networking and attending conferences

“Ambitious women in STEM, and the companies who employ them, now have a path forward,” says Julia Taylor Kennedy, executive vice president and director of publications at CTI. “The interventions and the individual efforts featured in this report will help mitigate the challenges that women in these lines of work face to reach top jobs.”

In previous research, CTI has identified a number of common challenges that women experience in the STEM industries, which include: alienation, extreme hours, bias, exclusion and isolation, and leaders not seeing them as having leadership potential.

“The more organizations, and individuals, turn their attention to strategic solutions, the more progress we can make—both in giving women fair access to opportunities, and in drawing upon the full range of talent, ideas, and innovations they can offer our companies and our world,” says Pat-Fili Krushel, CEO at CTI.

For more information on “Wonder Women in STEM and the Companies that Champion Them,” please visit www.talentinnovation.org.

Research Sponsors:

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Methodology:

The research consists of a survey of individuals in the US with STEM credentials; in-person focus groups and Insights In-Depth® sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) involving over 200 people; and one-on-one interviews with over 60 men and women currently working in STEM.

The survey was conducted online and over the phone in November and December 2017 among 3,212 respondents (1,172 men, 2,031 women, and 9 not identifying as male or female) between the ages of 21 and 65 with STEM credentials and with at least a bachelor’s degree; 2,547 respondents are currently employed in STEM occupations. STEM credentials were defined as having an undergraduate or graduate degree in a STEM field and at least 6 months of work experience at a private or public for-profit business that utilized this STEM training; or having at least 6 months of work experience in a technology-related field at a private or public for-profit business. Data were weighted to be representative of the US population on key demographics (age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, and Census Division). The base used for statistical testing was the effective base.

The survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Center for Talent Innovation, a non-profit research organization. NORC was responsible for the data collection, while the Center for Talent Innovation conducted the analysis.

In the charts, percentages may not always add up to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses from respondents.

About the Center for Talent Innovation:

The Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) is a New York City-based think tank that focuses on global talent strategies and the retention and acceleration of well-qualified labor across the divides of demographic difference including gender, generation, geography, sexual orientation, and culture. CTI's research partners now number more than 85 multinational corporations and organizations.

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