



Gender balance in the workplace: We're in this together!

ICTC was proud to set **Advancing Technology Women (ATW)** in motion with Kickoff Events, hosted by New Flyer Industries and Kruger Products, which brought together industry leaders to discuss the attraction, retention and advancement of women in the tech field.

One of the **key themes** that emerged from the events is that **gender balance in the workplace** is NOT just a women's or HR issue – **it's a business imperative requiring a diversity of perspectives**. After meeting and speaking with champions from a variety of industries in different areas of the country, the consensus is clear – women AND men need to be part of the solution, **and it must be supported by senior leaders**. With men currently holding a majority of the decision-making positions, having a well-rounded approach is crucial to building an inclusive workforce. **Enabling supportive networks & communities** within the workplace may include men as well as women change agents that can provide practical and timely advice on-the-job and help overcome barriers in the workplace.

Here are **3 Key Themes** discussed at the events, and suggested actions you can take – for **more key learnings and actions** visit our **Women in Technology Resource Centre @ <http://wit.ictc-ctic.ca/>**:

1. Industry engagement during middle- & high-school years is critical to the pipeline.

Without a diverse talent pool, attracting and hiring women in technical roles is a challenge. Having industry work alongside education to develop more robust career guidance & pathways at an early age would make the vast array of opportunities better known and understood.



What can you do?

Have advocates from your organization – women and men - attend career fairs, speak at school events, and partner with career counsellors to provide them with the tools and resources needed to educate youth. Your company advocates (ambassadors, role models) will help make the opportunities in your organization and industry more relatable and tangible. *Building and nurturing a diverse talent community while branding your organization as an “employer of choice” with youth will help feed the pipeline!*

2. Creative HR practices are needed to foster workplaces that meet personal and professional needs.

As a 24-7 operation that requires your employees to be on-site for specific shifts, you may think that providing a flexible environment is not possible. But there are a number of options outside of hours worked that could offer a more balanced





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approach. The suggestions below have the potential to benefit your workforce as a whole (including technical staff), and help you keep those top performers!

Creative HR practices *continued*...

What can you do?

Provide avenues for job-sharing, part-time, telework opportunities for cross-province employees, job shadowing or reassignment, additional time off during the work day without penalty, leaves & sabbaticals, mandatory absence from email during non-work hours, athletic memberships, time for volunteering, dependent care, and more! *Ensure there are channels through which life events can be adequately supported, and offer employees opportunities appropriate to the situation.*

3. Active & engaged leadership is imperative.

The importance of having leaders who take an active role in the growth of the organization and employees cannot be overemphasized. With the multitude of changes and human dynamics in the workplace, management must be able to connect with others, willingly transfer knowledge, and empower their staff. Women in male-dominated environments may be less likely to express their opinions, celebrate their accomplishments, and take an active role in their advancement. Leaders who can see beyond the surface and participate in the development of their employees on an individual basis are critical to an organization's long-term success.



What can you do?

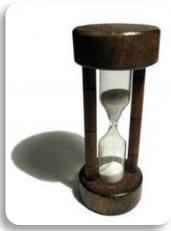
Training for both leaders and technical workers on teamwork, people development, and customer service (internal and external) could be beneficial and set the groundwork for more inclusive practices. Provide opportunities for coaching and mentoring to elevate career and personal growth (not just focusing on the job). Encourage open lines of communication on a daily basis, and allow performance reviews to be ongoing and fluid rather than one-time events. Develop clear and consistently applied guidelines for behaviour to ensure everyone is on the same page. *These practices must be inherent in the company's culture from the top-down, and the same encouragement given to employees must be given to leaders!*



If you've heard some of this before, you may be wondering...

what makes the ATW project different?

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TIMING. We are in a talent crunch NOW. ICTC's [National Digital Talent Strategy](#) points out that "The growth in digital jobs has outpaced the overall economy in the last two years by over 4 to 1, leading to a strong demand of 182,000 skilled ICT workers by 2019...with an additional 36,000 workers by 2020." Since over half of Canada's ICT labour works outside of the high-tech sector, leaders in industries like manufacturing, construction, natural resources and trades, must engage ALL sources of talent to optimize business results.



CONNECTIONS. The ATW initiative is not a "silo" effort – with collaboration and insight from representatives across industries and different regions in Canada, we are developing connections that will build momentum throughout the country. Our [Women in Technology](#) initiative is a unique and unprecedented example of the success that collaboration between industry, association, and government can achieve! **To get involved**, contact ICTC using the information provided below.



THE FOCUS. When we talk about **technical roles**, we often think of individuals sitting at a desk working on intricate programs, or answering our requests for help when the "system" breaks down. And while that is an essential part of the technical profession, there is **SO MUCH MORE to consider**. It's no secret that technology exists, and is in increasingly greater demand in all sectors and industries - as a result, **a number of roles require technical skills, training, and knowledge**. Some of these include

- **Engineers** (e.g. Process, Civil, Geotechnical, Electrical and Mechanical),
- **Technologists & Technicians** (e.g. Field Service, Industrial, Testing),
- **Millwrights**,
- **Specialists** (e.g. Energy, Control Systems, Safety, Project and Operations Management),
- **Design** (e.g. Modelling, Graphics, Architectural, Drafting), and
- **Research & Development**.

In all cases **women make up a low percentage** of individuals in those and traditional ICT roles, and the **numbers decrease significantly as we look at mid-to senior level leadership**.



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ADAPTING RESOURCES. Why reinvent the wheel? With the large number of amazing resources and tools already in existence, it seems counterintuitive to try and build something new. In the ATW project **we want your feedback** - what would help you and your organization begin “shifting the needle” toward a more gender balanced workplace? Once we know the gaps, we will work with you find the right resource – and then **adapt it to your specific needs!** Take our **Needs Assessment Survey** to help direct our efforts - <http://wit.ictc-ctic.ca/advancing-women-in-technology/>.

We would love to hear from you!

To get involved in the ATW initiative or learn more, contact:

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