

Changing the culture for engineering employers

Become part of the 30 by 30 initiative. Work with us to improve and strengthen the engineering profession in Canada by making it more gender inclusive.

Influencing gender equity and diversity requires a culture change in the engineering profession and we all have a part to play. Although women successfully secure jobs in engineering and are very satisfied in their work, they face many challenges such as starting lower on the corporate ladder than men, a lack of mentoring and career development opportunities, sexual harassment, and pervasive gender stereotypes that lead women to being disrespected and undervalued by managers, co-workers, and/or clients ([Catalyst Research: Women in male-dominated industries and occupations- quick take](#)). The following are insights from the 30 by 30 network on tactics for increasing diversity and women's participation at various levels in an organization.

“Given barriers to entry and retention, implicit bias, workplace cultures that are not inclusive and other challenges, there is significant work to be done. Collaboration is key. Engineers Canada can't make change alone. Women can't make change alone. None of us can journey alone to 30 by 30.”

Jeanette Southwood, Vice-President, Corporate Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, Engineers Canada



CEO AND MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT

Success in gender diversity needs commitment from all management levels, starting with CEOs. This does not mean simply signing a commitment or pledge; it needs to go deeper and involve evaluating and improving processes, setting targets, and much more. Managers need to be committed and involved in the culture change as they control the implementation and processes that need to change. From McKinsey's [Reinventing the workplace for greater gender diversity](#)

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The focus on increasing women in engineering fits into your broader diversity and inclusion efforts. 30 by 30 is a metric that indicates a level of success in recruiting and retaining women and should be part of a broader strategy to increase diversity within the workplace. This is part of effective efforts to address the underrepresentation of racialized, LGBTQ2+, and individuals with visible and non-visible disabilities that will establish you as a welcoming workplace.

MAKE A PLAN

What are you trying to achieve and what are your desired outcomes? Starting off with short-term and long-term goals and metrics that are linked to well-resourced action plans will ensure your return on investment can be measured. Your 30 by 30 initiatives will need to be embedded in your vision and mission, to ensure the changes you are making are sustained. It will take time to see improvements, but a long-term plan will help you and your colleagues understand that this is not a one- or two-year project. This is an aspirational effort that will take time and concerted effort.

UNDERSTAND YOUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As part of the plan, define your company's strengths and weaknesses in recruiting and retaining diverse talent. Are there disciplines or departments that you need to specifically address? Are there strong champions and/or opponents to change within your organization?

DON'T RELY ON VOLUNTEERS ALONE

The passion for change often lies with volunteers within an organization. However, there can be an overreliance on volunteers, who are often from underrepresented populations and at the early stages of their careers. To make a real, sustained change in your workplace, you will need to resource the efforts and ensure volunteer committees and task forces have a staff person to rely on and funds to draw from for their activities (i.e. release time for unconscious bias training, hiring a diversity consultant to create your plan).

PLAY THE LONG GAME

Whether you start today or have women in engineering programs or diversity policies already, it is important to make these activities part of your organization's long-term strategic priorities in order to sustain the efforts in reaching 30 by 30. A persistent and multi-year gender equality plan is needed. According to [McKinsey research](#), "best-in-class companies initiated diversity programs earlier, indicating that it takes time to effect tangible, sustainable results."

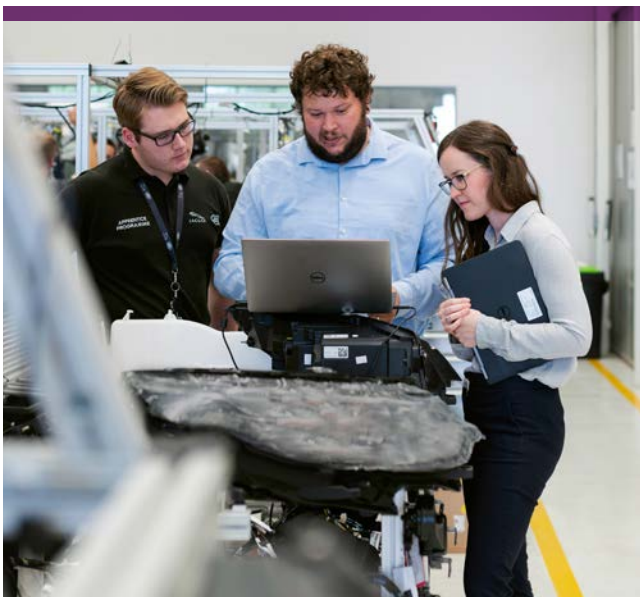


DO THE NUMBERS

- a) Set targets for gender equality and diversity in your workplace (i.e. 30 per cent women by the year 2030).
- b) Create a measurement program to track progress towards targets and share results. With these metrics, the goal is to strive for 30 per cent or more:
 - Percentage of new engineering recruits, including internationally educated, who are women.
 - Percentage of engineering recruits who are women who obtain their licences.
 - Percentage of engineers who are women who are in leadership positions (C-suite; management; Board).
- c) Obtain a [Great Place to Work](#) Certification.
- d) Sign up with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) to do a workplace survey or diversity assessment to get you started on your benchmarking.

DO THE TRAINING

The work of building a diverse and inclusive engineering profession includes providing effective and research-based support mechanisms for women and other underrepresented groups once they enter the profession. While the objective is to diversify by ensuring that at least 30 per cent of newly licensed engineers will be women by 2030, various inclusion efforts are required to ensure all individuals are treated equitably and without unconscious bias, in order to retain and develop an engaged workforce. We are calling on engineering employers to invest in diversity and inclusion programs, including training and development opportunities for engineers who are women that improve career satisfaction, strengthen skills, encourage growth, and provide profitable gains for employers and organizations.



- a) Provide training aimed at de-biasing recruitment and evaluation, for leadership and mid-level managers on diversity and unconscious bias with groups such as: WinSETT Centre, Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, Catalyst Canada, etc.
- b) Create programs tailored to developing women engineering leaders, accompanied with mentorship and sponsorship programs, and networking opportunities for engineers who are women.
- c) Ensure reskilling and professional development programs are designed with women's needs in mind, including their ability to afford, access, and undertake the program.
- d) Employees are encouraged to use the [DiversifySTEM](#) app, which has microlessons on promoting gender diversity in STEM workplaces and is full of practical tips.

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

- a) Adopt Managing Transitions recommendations for during and after parental leave.
- b) Improve hiring practices and [remove gender bias from job descriptions](#).
- c) Promote flexible work hours and work options, which contribute to a satisfying workplace and enable women to participate more fully in the engineering profession.
- d) Strong anti-harassment policies to ensure a respectful and secure work environment.
- e) Adequate sick leave and leave to attend to family who are sick.
- f) Pay equity because equitable compensation contributes to career satisfaction.
- g) Support employees to give back to their community in the form of 'Engineer in Residence' (see [Dalhousie's Engineers in Residence](#)) or mentorship programs with local engineering regulators.



USEFUL LINKS

- [Anima Leadership](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion](#) (this link takes you to their Diversity Meter but click through to their 'Consulting' tab and you will find more services that they offer)
- [Canadian Equality Consulting](#)
- [Catalyst Canada](#)
- [DiversifySTEM](#)
- [Electricity Human Resources Canada Leadership Accord for Gender Diversity](#)
- [Engendering Success in STEM](#)
- [Managing Transitions: Before, During and After Leave](#)
- [MESH Diversity](#)
- [WinSETT Centre](#)

Here are some other resources on gender audits:

[Practice Guide to Auditing Gender Equality](#), Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation

[Integrating Gender-Based Analysis Plus into Evaluation: A primer \(2019\)](#) Treasury Board of Canada