



Best Practices for the Advancement and Retention of Women in Technology

A prioritized collection of practices from companies in Southeast Michigan that improve the advancement and retention of women in technology related roles. This report is intended to be used by companies who are looking for specific ways to improve their own advancement and retention for these employees.

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I. Executive Overview

This study was created to identify and promote some of the best practices for retaining and advancing women in technology-related roles in organizations in southeast Michigan. Our goal is to increase the number of women in technology-related roles by improving job satisfaction, opportunity and overall equity within our workplaces.

The need is driven by three major factors:

1. There is an ever-growing global demand for technology workers while enrollment in technology degree programs is declining for everyone, and at higher rates for women. The demand appears unlikely to be satisfied by the available and projected future resources. New approaches must be employed to ensure adequate skills to maintain competitiveness.
2. There is a global shortage of knowledge workers today, and in certain industries such as technology, this problem is already severe with women. The data projects a growing decline in numbers each year. Aside from the well accepted need for a diverse workforce in today's global business climate, men generally bring a technical focus and women add a more user-oriented perspective – both necessary for success.
3. Technology workers' attitudes towards their work are changing rapidly and quality of life has become important. Technology workers (women and men) crave new working arrangements that allow them to build work around their lives more so than before.

Based on the study, there are many options with costs ranging from nearly nothing to considerable. Whether adopting one or many of these practices, you should remember two key items:

1. Executive level commitment is necessary for success. This cannot be viewed as just another HR program. Know and believe the business case for making a change and lead by example.
2. The changes that are implemented within an organization will benefit the entire organization, not just women. Quality of life for everyone will improve; retention, advancement and overall job satisfaction will sky-rocket.

The best practices identified in this project range from making benefit packages more flexible, to valuing self management, to having female senior management and role models in place. Many topics here revolve around practices that provide recognition of accomplishment without self-promotion and elimination of assumptions about whether or not people would be interested or qualified, in favor of results or merit-based organizational decisions.

Implementing practices leading toward a more equitable workplace will guard your organization against a continuing loss of women in technology related roles while reducing turnover costs, improving customer satisfaction, increasing organizational flexibility, building new leaders and increasing shareholder value.

II. Problem Statement

In recent years, the number of women working in technology-related fields has declined despite the overall increase of women in the workforce.

One reason for this decline comes from a recent "Catalyst" study revealing that women in the workforce strive for senior leadership positions. However, professionally educated women lack opportunities for key experiences and roles they desire. Consequently, the rate for advancement lags behind their male counterparts. Women are in turn leaving or switching companies to obtain advancement. Women are leaving companies at an all time high.

- *55 percent of women would like to eventually achieve a senior leadership role within their companies, compared with 57 percent of men. (Catalyst, Women and Men in U.S. Corporate Leadership: Same Workplace, Different Realities?, 2004)*
- *Women now occupy just over one-half, 50.5%, of managerial and professional specialty positions in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003), and yet only 2% of top corporate executives are women. As our project shows, having women already in leadership and executive roles in a company is a critical factor in both retention and advancement for all the female employees.*
- *Women and some racial minorities are "significantly underrepresented" in the U.S. technology industry, according to a new study from the industry's trade group. Women made up 32 percent of the tech work force in 2004, a drop from 41 percent at its peak in 1996. With such a decline, fewer people are available overall to work in high-tech, putting the nation at a disadvantage compared with China and India, where universities are graduating hundreds of thousands of science and engineering students per year - in some cases with nearly equal numbers of women and men. (Great Lakes IT Report, June 23, 2005)*

Employee turnover is a costly problem for business. The major investment made during recruiting, hiring, and training the initial employee plus their replacement negatively influences the company's bottom line. The hiring process, training, lack of experience and other factors drive up the cost of doing business. These costs are passed along to consumers and often limit a company's ability to create new jobs and maintain profit margins.

Another reason for this trend is pay. Women with higher education tend to earn less for the same job as their male colleagues.

- *....This occupational disparity contributes to a lack of women in the highest paid jobs. While 18 percent of men employed in IT earn \$70,000 or more, only 8 percent of women earn this much. (The Council of Economic Advisers, Opportunities and Gender Pay Equity in New Economy Occupations, 2000)*

An additional contributing factor is the circle of power and influence. Women feel they are outside of this circle, so they are not able to achieve or inspire. Having an inclusive

environment is important to women.

These are just a few of the challenges local companies are facing today. This situation triggered the MCWT to take action in identifying the "Best Practices" in advancing and retaining women in technology.

III. Approach

To help our local companies and organizations address this critical challenge, MCWT put together a team to define and publish a set of best practices in advancing and retaining women in technology. In February of this year, the Best Practice Team was formed to conduct three workshops using the organizational changing methodology called Appreciative Inquiry, a method for instituting organizational change as well as a style of interacting with other people.

In the workshops, the team captured practices which collectively have a positive impact on the advancement and retention of women in technology fields and then added some creativity to envision what a perfect work environment for women in technology would be. We took some of those ideas and created practical steps or solutions, including the MCWT survey.

The team took the practices identified and created an online survey in order to get a broader perspective on what was of most importance today. The survey was distributed to the MCWT members and the results were used to reduce the focus to the top ten factors, five for retention and five for advancement (full workshop and survey results are in appendices A and B).

We then took the final step by taking what was learned from all the workshops and surveys and creating a tool others can use to improve their environment, in effect, this report.

This paper and the accompanying presentation are the results of that work. Understand that there are references in here to "women" as a group and generalizations follow. This refers to our group's experiences and feelings and all women.

IV. Best Practices

1. Start Here – the Essential Business Case

The key to success in creating a more equitable workplace is to ensure that there is firm buy-in from senior management. The driver for this is a firm business case. Many of the best practices require very little or no money to implement; the biggest change that must happen is within the culture of the company. Good practices help everyone – by updating the manner in which the company relates to its female employees, it will see positive results in retention and creativity overall. Promoting the advancement of women in technical fields will also lead to highly qualified women seeking employment within the company from external sources, boosting the competitive value of the company within its industry.

Your company will have its own drivers and you will need to define your own business case. Here are the drivers other companies have included in their quest for creating a desirable, equitable workplace.

- Attract and Retain Experienced People
 1. Competition for experienced hires is getting intense, particularly in the high tech space. As numbers of graduates in math, science and technology drop, the competition for these people, and even more for those with experience, will continue to intensify.
 2. You may have a gender gap in turnover rates. This is a quantitative measurement which can demonstrate the need for change.
 3. You may need to reduce overall turnover rate. Again, as the demand for technology-experienced people increases and the supply decreases, look to quantitative measures for overall turnaround rates to determine if you have a problem, and how well you are addressing it.
- Increase customer satisfaction. In general, the lower turnover rate, the more experienced people you have, the higher the overall customer satisfaction.
- Improve flexibility within your organization.

How easy is it for your company to change? The more you become more employee focused, the more committed to the company employees become, and it is easier to implement change with changes that are often employee inspired.
- Become known as one of the Best Places to Work. This can be a powerful incentive for recruitment for women.
- Develop leaders. Lack of leadership and succession planning is one of the challenges facing many companies today.
- Reduce turnover costs. What is your cost to replace an experienced professional or leadership position? How long does it typically take to fully replace the lost person?
- Create shareholder value
 1. Companies with highly committed employees tend to have higher share returns.
 2. A diverse, employee centric organization will exhibit higher levels of innovation and thought leadership.
 3. New and emerging markets require different skill sets

2. Changing Your Culture

You will see as you go through this paper, with the exception of a few specific major items like overall benefits programs, most of the practices and ideas in this report can be accomplished through culture changes that are not expensive to implement. The many experts and books on achieving culture change aside, we believe the practices described here can be implemented throughout your organization with the simple support of top management and leadership by example. As at Deloitte, Arvin Meritor, GM and other companies who have made or are making this transition, the critical success factor is making these practices core to the overall culture with

demonstrated commitment at executive levels. Deloitte also set specific corporate and leadership goals relating to advancement and retention overall, and linked this to their strategic plans. This caused very specific actions as well as means and processes for measuring and reporting success.

A key discovery at Deloitte as they began going through this transition was that the changes benefited all employees, not just women. The effort of getting at the source of the issues at Deloitte, and dealing with the underlying cause (rather than putting a band-aid on the symptoms, i.e. “women's programs”) is one of the primary reasons for their success. The result was broad success, improved quality of life for everyone, and sky-rocketing retention, advancement and overall job satisfaction for everyone in the company.

Lastly, this report is all about what works in other places. You can use the ideas in here to spark similar activities in your workplace; however, there are likely other great practices in your company that you could identify and promote around the organization. Finding out what works and doing more of that – that's what this is all about!

3. The Data

➤ The Data

The workshops produced an extensive list of known and enhanced practices that address issues affecting advancement and retention of women in technology (Appendix A). This list was distributed to the approximately 250 MCWT members, asking them to rate these by priority, for both advancement and retention. The results from the survey (Appendix B) were then the focus for the final workshop, where the specific practices for each of the top five factors was discussed and documented for this report.

➤ Variety in Content and Cost

Notable in the full list of practices as well as the top five for each is the wide variety. This provides many options for organizations wishing to enact some of these practices. Some will be easier to integrate into your culture, while some may not be important for your organization at all. The range of costs implied can impact your decision, but some practices are virtually free, enabling all organizations to affect a desirable change.

Any small step forward is good. One clear message that came through repeatedly in this project was that these programs should apply to everyone – that is, all employees will benefit from these types of changes, and your overall work environment will become more equitable for everyone!

➤ Survey Statistics

The remainder of this paper describes the top five factors for retention and the top five factors for advancement of women in technology, based on the full list of practices presented to the MCWT membership for prioritizing in April of 2005. In asking the respondents to rate the factors or practices by importance to them, there was no consideration of cost. The return rate for the survey was 24% (59 of 250), and all the respondents were female.

4. Retention Best Practices

The top five from the survey are expanded here in order of importance with some practices you can choose from to implement at your company.

1) Benefit Choices

Benefits packages, and in particular, flexible benefit options ranked as the most important factor in deciding whether to stay or leave a company. We recognize that these could also rank as the most costly of the practices throughout this paper. Look to these known effective practices for ways to enhance your benefit offerings, or as opportunities to make change in the future.

A. Cafeteria Style Benefits

Having a “cafeteria style” menu of benefit options to choose from is very effective, particularly in the varied types of households we have today. The best practice identified included allowing a “budget” for benefit spending, choices of types and levels of services for varying costs, allowing people to choose the best options for them. By having lower levels of services available, people with lesser requirements don't feel that they are paying for their coworkers with large families, and people who can choose to be covered through an outside mechanism can receive a small refund from their budget. Everyone can tailor the program to meet their individual needs.

B. Purchase or donate vacation days

Another known effective practice in this space that would be far less costly is to allow employees to purchase additional vacation days, or to donate vacation days to other employees, within appropriate limits. This can positively affect the companies' vacation liabilities as well as morale, as employees see additional time for personal needs, or have the ability to donate days to a coworker who may be in some personal crisis. This, along with the extended leave practices below, can be more important to women who often bear the brunt of family care issues and may need additional time away from work at certain times.

C. Extended personal leave or sabbaticals

In IT, it is generally far less expensive for companies to bring back workers who have been forced to take an extended leave than to hire new external employees. As with the flexibility in vacation time, having the ability to take an extended personal leave without suffering compensation or seniority loss upon return can make the difference between staying and leaving a company. This affects women more often than men, although anyone can find themselves in need of additional time for a personal crisis, especially as the population ages and parents need care. The best practice we identified allowed, with restrictions, leave extended without penalty for up to one year, and incorporated the connection program discussed next.

D. Connection programs and “on-ramps”

One of the most interesting practices we found in this area is to combine the extended leave programs with an ongoing connection to the person on leave. The person on leave is assigned a partner within the company and is required to have a monthly check in. This keeps the worker on leave connected to the company, and provides the opportunity to understand what sort of reading or education may be beneficial in helping them to keep from falling behind. Additionally, or as a stand-alone program, is the practice of providing “on-ramps” to speed up integration of workers returning from extended leaves. This has meant, for some companies, providing assistance and guidance before the person actually returns, similar to the connection program, or intensive mentoring and assistance upon their return.

E. Comprehensive medical coverage

No surprise, medical coverage is a key issue for all employees in all organizations these days. The best practices identified included full medical coverage, with options for family coverage, within a flexible package as discussed above.

2) Working Flexibly

Having flexible works options when possible can make the work environment much easier for all employees and provides some of the flexibility often needed for child or parent care.

A. Flex Time

Many companies had practices around flex time. Generally, the simpler ones seem most effective. Define “core hours” where it is necessary to be working (depending on the actual work being done – customer interactions, etc.), and then offer flexibility on the time of day to work outside of that.

B. Utilize technology to enable remote work

This may seem very costly, but in the long term will likely save your organization money in cost of office space and turnover. Sun Microsystems has one of the best practices we found, providing a full set of office tools, defined and managed by the central IT organization, to do any work from any location with internet access, including full access to all internal applications through highly secure internal systems. Costs are kept low through use of current technology such as thin clients, portals and identity management systems.

D. Alternative Work Schedules

The team discovered a number of practices providing different types of alternative work schedules. These included more traditional job sharing, alternate schedules, and working part time with partial benefits. One of the most innovative programs offered “casual undertime”, meaning less time in for short time periods. The intent of this practice is to provide a means for employees to meet sudden emergency needs for additional time off without penalty. For example, a family member in the hospital for a number of weeks or a sudden loss

of day care would constitute a sudden emergency need.

3) Value Self Management

This is another intriguing idea that came out of the workshops and was very strongly reinforced in the survey results. Most companies today, particularly in professional and managerial positions such as those we are addressing here, purport to value self management. The high interest here shows that this is not actually widely practiced, at least not for women in technology professions. Here are some practices that can help the people in your organization realize their potential and be more likely to stay with you. There is a strong connection with these practices and those in other parts of this report.

A. Personal responsibility for career management

Contrary to what appears to be common practice, professional women would prefer to have responsibility and authority for managing their own career. Companies who evidence this behavior encourage a personal focus on defining career paths and development goals, and value and recognize those who continue to move their career and development forward via these means. Employees work with their management to define appropriate goals and plans, and are encouraged and even rated on their effectiveness and completeness in following through. Company cultures that value this behavior tend to reduce entitlement and management overhead, while increasing productivity, job satisfaction, and overall equity in the workforce.

B. Exposure to management

Directly related to the lesser likelihood of women bragging about their accomplishments (see Women Don't Brag Enough in Section 4.4.C below) is the lesser likelihood of women in general getting the same level of exposure to upper management as their male counterparts. Just as research has shown that boys tend to push forward more aggressively in school and often dominate interaction with teachers, the same phenomenon can be seen in many companies as women in general tend to "just get the job done" or "do the right thing" and hope that they will be noticed by their results. Since our culture overall works this way, it is challenging for companies to pay particular attention to this issue and intentionally push forward or hold up achieving women to upper management (and other women) for notice and recognition. As we discuss later in the advancement section, this can be a critical cultural change, costing little or nothing to implement but difficult to maintain a focus on. Companies who are successful here have leaders who talk about this out loud, encourage their management teams to demonstrate this behavior, and lead by example.

C. Emphasis and value put on teamwork

See section 5.5.D below, Senior Management Support of Non-gender Focus, Value Teamwork.

D. Open communication

While most companies try to practice open communications, our survey results show that perhaps we are not as successful as we might think. There are some

organizations who value open communications throughout the company, and these tend to have very loyal employees in general. We do not have a simple set of practices for this - this is a leadership challenge. Leaders will set the tone for the entire company, leading by example and recognizing and valuing others who follow this practice also.

4) Learning from Women in Senior Management

More and more women are working in industries that have been traditionally male-dominated, or at least viewed that way. Some women are advancing into executive positions, and this is something companies should use to their advantage as they develop and implement retention programs. Women are encouraged when they see other women have succeeded before them, and when they know they can benefit from the learnings of those who came before them.

A. Accessible Leaders

While an organization may have female employees in leadership positions, they will best serve your retention goals if they are accessible to female employees at all levels

- Create programs that allow for informal and formal interaction between staff and female leadership, such as networking events, mentoring programs, and brown bag lunches.
- Encourage female leadership to actively support other females in the organization. In many cases, women who have risen to the higher ranks of their organization are still afraid to “rock the boat” and will therefore not offer the kind of vocal support that other females may need to continue moving ahead.

B. Women don't Brag Enough

Encourage women to brag about their accomplishments – women tend to be less vocal about their accomplishments or speak to a group's success rather than calling attention to something as their individual success.

- Provide a means for management as well as peers to formally recognize accomplishments; this could include recognition at corporate meetings/events as well as providing more formal recognition programs, e.g., small awards such as gift certificates for which employees and managers can nominate others.
- Encourage female employees to present their work and resulting accomplishments at meetings to help build their confidence.
- Provide formal workshops for female employees that work to build their skills around “self-promotion”: understanding where they want to go with their career, helping them identify their particular strengths to build on, identifying their current and desired networks and helping them devise plans on how to expand and best use these networks, etc.

C. Mentors

See Section 6.2, Best Practices for Advancement, Mentoring

D. Role Models

Provide visible role models at all levels.

- Understand the different needs at each level in your organization, and identify suitable role models for each.
- Individuals will only be accepted as role models if others can identify with them. An executive may not necessarily be the best role model for a recently hired staff employee – this may be due to the perception that people at different levels have different financial and social resources available to them, or that the role model “grew up” in a different corporate era and therefore faced different issues and/or expectations.

5) Senior Management Support of Non-gender Focus

One thing that was repeated again and again in the workshops, and ranked high in the surveys - the sort of change and practices we are discussing in this report are company-wide, and require the heartfelt commitment of the highest level executives, along with a willingness to lead by example.

A. Lead by example

Employees can see the difference between “another HR program” and a genuine desire for change. The primary place they watch for this in the behavior of the executives within the company. Don't just say – do.

B. No Assumptions

When Deloitte dug deep to identify the root causes of their retention and advancement for women issues, they discovered a cultural change was necessary. Deloitte found they were making assumptions about who would be interested in certain roles, opportunities and events, and unwittingly didn't offer the same opportunities to everyone qualified. A significant change for the better was seen after calling attention to this behavior, mapping out ways to change, using more formal methods and reviewing before decisions before acting. Management should not assume a woman would not want to pursue any opportunity available.

C. Accessibility for Meetings

One practice seems amazingly simple but is a surprise to most organizations. Because women are most often responsible for child care and other family commitments, they most often arrive and leave work at specific times each day. Meetings that are unscheduled, spontaneously occurring outside of normal business hours can be impossible for women to attend – and they often turn out to be critical. One cultural change that has been seen to have significant impact is to first, hold meetings during core work hours whenever possible and second, particularly if meetings or “social” events are held outside of core hours, schedule them far enough in advance that most workers can accommodate the time needed.

D. Value Teamwork

Another very interesting practice is the act of appreciating effective or superlative

teamwork. In most of our work today, we work in teams of various sorts, and yet, when recognition time comes around, it is more often for individual efforts and heroics rather than the often greater quality, quantity and service provided by work teams. This is particularly important for women because many of them are happier and more productive when working in teams than individually, and therefore often are missed for special recognition. This again is a cultural change, our workplaces still tend to value the lone star or cowboy heroics, even though teamwork has become dominant, and will require your organization to focus specifically on looking for opportunities to recognize valuable teams and teamwork.

E. Value Time Away from Work

We have noted more than once in this report that women tend to bear the bulk of the family and other external responsibilities, and therefore often cannot make their work the only thing of significant importance in their lives. Company cultures that subscribe to unwritten rules about work above all else will make it difficult for many women to stay, be satisfied, or achieve higher levels of success. If the appearance is that only workaholics advance, or that there is no concern or understanding of outside commitments, many women will feel forced to leave. We would not suggest that this would be an easy change to make, but you see high retention levels for women at some companies, where there is support for a reasonable work day, backed up by executives and leaders who demonstrate this behavior. There is considerable research backing up the notion that all employees, not just women, are happier, healthier and stay longer when the culture within values life outside.

6. Advancement Best Practices

The top five from the survey are expanded here with some suggestions for practices you can implement within your organization. There were some interesting differences in the survey top five factors when sorted by age group, but having already existing female senior management and coaching or mentoring were critical factors for almost everyone. Complete survey results and factors sorted by industry and age are included in appendix B.

1) Coaching

A) Internal Resource Groups

We identified a number of successful practices that have a very positive impact today. Ford has a number of strong internal organizations, the IT Women in Leadership (ITWIL) and Professional Women's Network (PWN), which provide role models, coaching, and a community of people of like interests (supporting the desire for women already in existing leadership positions and mentoring as well). These types of groups may start informally and tend to grow and show longevity when supported by management or leadership, either financially or simply through encouraging women to join and allowing the time away from their usual work.

B) Professional Coaching

There was strong interest in this idea, and a number of our participants had some, generally very positive, experience with this in the past. Companies who can enroll high achievers or potential leaders in this type of service will see advancement and job satisfaction increase. In many companies, the cost of individual coaching may be too high. Your company or an external organization can provide group sessions with coaches, greatly reducing the cost, while keeping much of the benefit. MCWT, for example, recently hosted Denise Ann Taylor, a professional coach, for a three hour workshop for all its members and guests. This group coaching session was hugely successful, receiving extremely high scores on the surveys and many requests for further sessions. The overall cost for this was very small for each person since this was done in a group setting. The attendees benefited from the coaching as well as the community setting.

C) External Resource Groups

Professional organizations, particularly those which serve a community of people with similar interests, can offer very similar benefits through their programming as well as through the more informal coaching and mentoring that goes on in every gathering. Local groups such as MCWT, the Automotive Women's Alliance (AWA), and the Women's Economic Club (WEC) all offer development or coaching programs and gatherings or meetings where women can benefit from others' experience or points of view. Memberships and programs are usually inexpensive. Interacting with peers from external sources may convey the idea that the grass isn't always greener elsewhere. With the understanding that problems need to be addressed at almost all companies, woman may choose to stay and improve their current situation, thus helping the retention issue.

2) Mentoring

A) Formal Mentoring

Successful formal mentoring programs should be gender neutral (not forcing female/female and male/male only mentoring relationships). The programs of this type we've seen generally involve Human Resources for management and reporting. You will need to allocate specific time periods and resources to mentoring activities and provide a more formal structure. You may also consider adding mentoring to individual's goals to encourage leadership to make time for these activities. Ford has a gender neutral program with mentoring circles, promoting community as well as mentoring in a group (less cost) setting.

B) Informal Mentoring

Informal mentoring can happen whether your organization encourages it or not. Your company can get the benefits of mentoring simply by communicating that you value time spent on mentoring and employees will begin to look for opportunities to mentor or be mentored. You may not have formal events, but at the same time you can make it easier for employees to have access to management, executives and others who can act as mentors. Informal mentoring was of critical importance particularly to the younger people responding to our survey, so this inexpensive change in your company's culture

may have a dramatic impact.

C) External Mentoring

Some companies rely on or supplement internal programs with outside organizations for mentoring programs (Menttium and MCWT are examples of organizations that can provide support in this area). Your organization may be too small or not yet have the right mix of resources to provide the kind of mentoring environment you are seeking, but mentors do not have to come only from within your organization or even your industry. Also consider encouraging your employees to seek out mentors wherever they feel comfortable doing so. External organizations can be brought in to help provide internal training around mentoring or to kick-start your internal mentoring program.

3) Training

A) Defined Training Programs

Employees will only take your training intentions seriously if you strive to maintain training budgets whenever possible (they are often one of the first things to suffer cuts when there are cost pressures). Provide formal training outlines that include designating training hour requirements per job type or position; outline the various training paths and identify which are mandatory (to eliminate unspoken judgments); develop different training curriculums that staff can follow to meet certain training or development goals.

When budgetary needs do require cuts in training offering, consider at least keeping the funding for key skills training. It will show employees that you still value and support their growth, and it can also provide a greater feeling of equal treatment amongst employees.

B) Using Technology

Reduce costs by utilizing technology for training where possible, but realize that some types of training are still best served with a classroom environment. Kelly Services requires employees to complete the first portion of a training class online and then provide the second part in an interactive classroom environment. Consider offering financial and other support for your employees to achieve certifications that are relevant to their position, industry, etc. Many companies, for example, will reimburse costs associated with APICS, PMI, CPA and CFA certifications. Employees do a large portion of the work on their own time but are reimbursed for text book and exam costs, and are given additional days off to study for or sit for exams. Some companies also encourage employees to organize internal groups of employees who are pursuing certain types of certifications and provide meeting facilities and materials.

C) Different Strokes

Consider your audience when developing or deciding on training offerings. Individuals learn differently, and successful training programs take into consideration such things as right brain/left brain learning and classic (mechanical) vs. romantic (artistic) thinkers, and develop programs to address all

needs. Offering a more diverse array of training methods ensures that more people will take advantage of the education.

4) Job Shadowing and Rotations

A. Non-traditional Roles

Another issue is the common practice of slotting women, particularly as they advance up the corporate ladder, into traditional roles, such as HR. One of our participating companies has instituted a Non-Traditional Roles program, allowing them to keep a focus on providing paths for everyone to advance equally in all areas of the company. They do this by encouraging individuals to pursue non-traditional paths and recognizing the individuals and their managers for this.

B. Job Rotations / Fast Tracks

Another excellent practice to provide more opportunities for advancement is through job rotation or fast track programs. Ford has multiple programs providing for different types of rotations or timing, depending on the paths and development plans, allowing faster development and equal access to opportunities to all. These programs facilitate moving into new positions every 9 to 24 months.

C. Executive Sponsors

Another opportunity to providing support for women advancing through your company's ranks is to provide executive sponsors for them. Making a formal program helps ensure equal access. This is quite different from mentoring, in that executive sponsors spend time with the employee specifically helping with a defined career path, and understanding and navigating the company's organizational structure and politics. The programs we know of are typically of a fixed length of time, with specific goals defined at the beginning of the association.

D. Executive Shadowing

A number of our companies have or have had executive shadowing programs. These programs, again of a fixed length of time and typically with specific career advancement goals, provide development and career assistance to the employee and a means to facilitate succession planning and leadership development within the company.

E. Special Assignments

Special assignments, in particular those with high visibility, can be a significant career booster. It is important to include very clear deliverables and goals of the assignment so that every chance of success is offered, and, as Deloitte knows, it is crucial to ensure that everyone qualified gets the opportunity to pursue these special assignments. It's easy to make incorrect assumptions about what some people may or may not want to do. Also, with cultures in some organizations that allow off-hours or unscheduled meetings that not everyone can attend, women may not know of the opportunity until it's too late. Lastly, because of the tendency for women to not be as aggressive in pursuing opportunities, you may miss consideration of some of the best people for the job. Both Deloitte's programs

and Ford's Six Sigma Black Belt Program have a process that works to ensure equal access for all employees.

5) Formal Career Paths

Similar to Section 5.3 above, the strong desire for career management and personal development impact both retention and advancement. Because women are often less likely to self-promote for recognition or advancement, many prefer to rely on more formal processes for recognition of accomplishment. This section goes further to discuss ways to provide formal career paths and better management of this toward advancement of both women and men in technology careers. Kelly Services is particularly successful with many of these practices.

A. Clearly Defined Goals

Our work uncovered more than one company where the culture valued and practiced strong career and personal development, particularly in providing clearly defined goals, steps, skills, and paths toward advancement within the company. Places like Kelly Services, where this is the usual practice, find it easier to ensure equal opportunities for everyone, and advancement becomes more certainly associated with development and achievement. The survey reinforced again that providing clear deliverables and managing expectations well helps people feel more in control of their own development and career growth, and provide a sense of accomplishment and achievement that enhances job satisfaction.

B. Value Self Management

See Section 5.3 above on Value Self Management

C. Define Career Roadmaps

This was mentioned briefly above, but was designated important enough to elaborate. There is a strong desire for more clearly defined paths or roadmaps for career development. This is often particularly true in technical fields, where it is logical and perhaps easier to define a written plan that can assist a person moving forward in their career development.

D. Value Technical Career Paths

Another area particular to technical career paths is the perception that management paths are more valued than technical, and in many cases, there is no way to advance within a company while choosing to stay on a technical path. At Sun Microsystems there are dual career path structures – one managerial and one technical. Both paths are valued equally within the company, and so technical people feel free to choose to stay on a technical growth path.

V. Next Steps

The results of this study indicate a wide variety of options to help you make improvements in advancement and retention for your female employees in technology related roles.

Companies like Deloitte who have proven the difference these practices can make, set specific corporate and leadership goals related to equitable advancement and retention overall, and linked this to their strategic plans. In most companies it is necessary to monitor, measure and report - demonstrate the improvements resulting from your new practices – so that you can continue and grow these efforts for the long term health and growth of your organization.

Our recommendation to you is to:

- Take a look at your own company, understand your own advancement and retention state. Are retention and advancement rates different for men and women? Are they different between managers/staff and executives?
- Set goals. Define metrics and timelines for measuring your success. Deloitte uses differences in retention rates, number of partners and directors, and others.
- Review this report, select some of the practices in here that are appropriate and implementable in your organization.
- Make sure you have support from the very top levels of the company. Tie this to a higher level strategy or objective.
- Create a plan to implement, monitor and report your success –
- And then go do some more!

Appendices

Appendix A: Workshop Data and Results

Phase 1: Discover

What practices have we discovered that have been successful in the past at increasing the advancement and retention of women in technology?

Grouped categorically:

- Provided clear business case to show value of these programs – drove company-wide change, long term commitment by senior management. Show value to the company's customers
- Having committed leaders who ensured the practice of diversity, rather than just a diversity program made the difference. This was the driver for cultural change.
- Externalized – made the program public – helped with internal commitment, recruiting, continuity and accountability. Also provided good PR for company, increased company value.
- Providing internal recognition critical – lets people know of successes, lets people know how important this is to the company, lets people know who they can talk with when they face similar challenges.
- Made it part of the company's strategic plan, reported status at board meetings
- Any programs rolled out to try to equalize the disparities were open for all people in the company. They became part of the company culture.
- Top level management stayed involved through measuring and reporting progress and leading by example

- Offered mentoring programs, to everyone equally. Successes included programs with all women or with both men and women mentors, and that are internal as well as external to the company
- Had female role models
- Had roles models at the same level (more in common)
- Had females already in senior level roles in the company
- Were able to participate in women's networks at various levels in the company

- Provided means for reward and recognition equally (women don't brag as much)
- Ensured equal opportunity access to roles leading to advancement or promotion. Began by asking everyone qualified if they were interested, didn't assume the women wouldn't be for family or other reasons
- Women who had a clear personal commitment to advancement, who aspired to more, were more likely to advance
- Early promotion to management – program that recognized ability early, promoted
- Provided “trial job” program, 9 month trial, equal opportunities for advancement
- Provided job shadowing program – with company executives, with business customers
- Placed greater emphasis and value on teamwork rather than competitive
- Placed emphasis and value on self- management and development
- Managed expectations well, provided clear deliverables
- Had coaching opportunities – professional coaching, casual peer coaching

- Had style training
- Modified culture / unwritten expectations – very long hours, very late or very early meetings are difficult for women with children. Changed culture to eliminate as much as possible these very early or late meetings, very long hours, unscheduled after hours meetings. After hours social events can also be very difficult, and having them provides advancement opportunity for people with child care responsibilities, typically men. Made efforts to schedule social or networking events in advance (so people can plan), some held events during regular work hours
- Provided training opportunities
- Had communications (differences in) training, gender diversity training
- Provided support for participation in outside activities of relevance or value at work
- Offered diversity awareness programs
- Focused internships and co-ops on recruiting women, used women-centric materials for college recruiting
- Had flextime, alternative work schedules, telecommuting, “casual undertime” (less time in for short periods), job sharing, part time with part benefits options
- Had extended personal leave or sabbaticals with guarantee of work on return
- Women who do leave for a while and come back have a better time of it if they make the effort to keep up with their business or industry while they are out (not so much catching up to do).
- Provided a way to keep people on leave connected to the company, making returning easier, faster and less costly
- Provided lactation rooms
- Had family centers – place to bring your kids to work occasionally – kids training – bring your daughters to work day
- Values aligned – the company had and lived by clear values, those values aligned with individual's – possibly more important to women

Phase 2: Dream

1) All about confidence, recognition

Personal coaches

Bragg book

2) Flexible

Time - Core Hours

Benefits – menu

training – more time available

Jobs – rotations, flex schedule, core commitment

Work locations

Mentoring

Pervasive in culture

executive involvement, buy in

Business case

Make no assumptions

3) Dream Cloud

acceptance of social work mission

ability to telecommute

daycare, showers, lockers, lactation room

more men taking family leave

ability to come and go without consequences (PT, LOA)

Networking maps (M/F)

No sports

entry level training

ELP

Non-traditional work environment

unlimited training (for women)

formal career pathing

strong mentoring roles, aggressive

integrate newer tech, etc. into in work environment – welcoming for young people (IM, Text pg)

Equal opportunities – no assumptions

Phase 3: Design

Initial DESIGN plan

survey

facts – shock factor

cost benefit analysis

how to do your own bus case

Deloitte bus case, other examples

How to fill in your own details

Do PowerPoint pres

Survey Results: Focused good practices on these:

Top 5 Retention Factors:

1) Overall benefit pkg and flexible benefit choices

- Cafeteria Style Benefits
- Ability to purchase days off
- Extend personal leave or “sabbaticals”
- Have connection programs and “on-ramps” for personal leave returnees
- Comprehensive medical coverage

2) Flex time, alt work schedules, telecommuting and satellite offices

- Define “core hours”, offer flex around this
- Utilize technology to enable remote work (Sun)
- Define graduated pay scales per work circumstances
- Offer flextime, alternative work schedules, “casual undertime” (less time in for short periods), job sharing, part time with part benefits options (Deloitte)

3) Emphasis / Value placed on Self Management

- Personal responsibility for managing your own career
- Exposure to management
- Support of management
- Program to emphasize and put value on teamwork (women's invisible work)

- Value open communication
- 4) Existing female senior management
 - Know your problem: US stats and your company's stats, managers vs. top executives
 - Accessibility to female leadership
 - Bragg - confidence, recognition, Provided means for reward and recognition equally (women don't brag as much)
 - Mentoring (gender neutral), access to male and female leadership
 - Visible role models, at all levels, and why they are
 - 5) Overall culture of non-gender focus w. visible support of senior management
 - Lead by example
 - Cultural change: make no assumptions, ensure everyone has the same opportunities, the same invites
 - Cultural change: use core hours for meetings to ensure accessibility
 - Cultural change: key meetings scheduled in advance to ensure accessibility
 - Cultural change: value teamwork
 - Cultural change: value time away from work (do only work-aholics advance?)

Top 5 Advancement Factors:

- 1) Professional Coaching
 - Internal Resource Groups (Ford's ITWIL and Prof Women in Leadership)
 - Sessions with professional coaching (MCWT with Denise Ann Taylor, individual or group coaching sessions)
 - External resource groups (MCWT, AWA, WEC)
- 2) Mentoring programs – gender neutral or specific, time allocated
 - Formal mentoring programs (gender neutral), access to male and female leadership – allocate time
 - Informal mentoring – value time spent on this - access to management, executives
 - External mentoring programs (Menttium, MCWT)
- 3) Training
 - Maintain training budgets, designate # training hours per job type, mandatory (eliminates unspoken judgments)
 - Key skills training even when cutting budgets
 - Utilize technology for training (cost savings) with improvements – IE. group sessions for follow-up
 - Create/provide training appropriate for all audiences- right brain/left brain, classic (mechanical) and romantic (artistic) thinkers
- 4) Job Shadowing or Rotation prgms
 - Non-traditional roles program (helps keeps women, particularly management and executives, from being slotted into traditional jobs like HR)
 - Job Rotation/Fast track programs: Ford's 3 jobs in 2 years
 - executive sponsors for career pathing
 - executive shadowing program
 - Special Assignments program: equal opportunity for high visibility roles (Ford Six Sigma)

5) Formal, understandable career paths

- Program to (value and) clearly define goals, steps, skills, path (ensure equal opportunities); provide clear deliverables and manage expectations well
- Value self management, emphasis and value on self- management and development
- Define career roadmaps, including IT management career path
- Value technical vs. management careers, provide equivalent growth / path (Sun)
- Competency center coaches

Appendix B: Complete Survey Results

Here are the full results of the survey. There were 59 respondents of 250 surveyed. All respondents were female. Results were sorted on the other demographic factors, age and industry.

TOP 10 OVERALL RETENTION FACTORS

Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices
Flex Time, Alternative Work Schedules, Telecommuting options, Satellite Offices
Emphasis / Value placed on self-management
Already Existing female senior management
Overall culture of non-gender focus with visible support of senior management
Receiving clear deliverables / non-vague objectives
Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations
Greater focus on teamwork
Casual Peer Coaching – tie
Networking options within the company / held during work hours; Networking maps - tie

TOP 10 OVERALL ADVANCEMENT FACTORS

Professional Coaching
Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside
Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts- tie
Job Shadowing or Rotation programs - tie
Formal, understandable career paths
Already existing female senior management – tie
Receiving clear deliverables / non-vague objectives – tie
Networking options within the company / held during work hours; Networking maps – 3-way tie
Casual Peer Coaching – 3-way tie
Female Role Models – 3-way tie

TOP 5 RETENTION FACTORS BY INDUSTRY

ADVERTISING / MARKETING	AUTOMOTIVE
Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices	Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices
Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices	Receiving Clear Deliverables / non-vague objectives
Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management	Early Promotion to Management
Rewards & Recognition, Entry Level Programs, Public Recognition through any means	Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management
Construction	Consulting
Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices	Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management
Casual Peer Coaching	Rewards & Recognition, Entry Level Programs, Public Recognition through any means
Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management	Female Role Models
Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices	Already existing female senior management
Education	Healthcare
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices
Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations	Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management
Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management	Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices
Already existing female senior management	Formal, understandable career paths
Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices	Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations

Information Technology	Insurance
Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices	Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management
Greater focus on teamwork	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices
Family Centers, Daycare, Lactation Room, Shower Facilities	Extended family leave w/ guarantee of job on return / Family leave that both genders are encouraged to use
Extended family leave w/ guarantee of job on return / Family leave that both genders are encouraged to use	Casual Peer Coaching
Manufacturing and Production	Science
Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices
Receiving Clear Deliverables / non-vague objectives	Internships / Co-ops with focus on women
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management
Rewards & Recognition, Entry Level Programs, Public Recognition through any means	Extended family leave w/ guarantee of job on return / Family leave that both genders are encouraged to use
	Receiving Clear Deliverables / non-vague objectives
Telecommunications	Utilities
Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices	Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations
Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations	Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management
Already existing female senior management	Already existing female senior management
Greater focus on teamwork	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices

TOP 5 ADVANCEMENT FACTORS BY INDUSTRY

ADVERTISING / MARKETING	AUTOMOTIVE
Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside	Casual Peer Coaching
Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts	Job Shadowing or Rotation programs
Female Role Models	Formal, understandable Career paths
Professional Coaching	Professional Coaching
Receiving Clear Deliverables / non-vague objectives	Female Role Models
Construction	Consulting
Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations	Already existing female senior management
Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management	Formal, understandable Career paths
Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices	Professional Coaching
Greater focus on teamwork	Casual Peer Coaching
Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management	Diversity programs, formal gender diversity training
Education	Healthcare
Formal, understandable Career paths	Receiving Clear Deliverables / non-vague objectives
Female Role Models	Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside
Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts	Rewards & Recognition, Entry Level Programs, Public Recognition through any means
Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside	Family Centers, Daycare, Lactation Room, Shower Facilities
Professional Coaching	Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts

Information Technology	Insurance
Receiving Clear Deliverables / non-vague objectives	Greater focus on teamwork
Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts	Trial Job periods before moves, promotions or planned job rotations.
Professional Coaching	Networking options within the company / held during work hours; Networking maps
Emphasis / Value Placed on Self-Management	Job Shadowing or Rotation programs
Greater focus on teamwork	
Manufacturing and Production	Science
Formal, understandable Career paths	Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations
Rewards & Recognition, Entry Level Programs, Public Recognition through any means	Rewards & Recognition, Entry Level Programs, Public Recognition through any means
Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts	Casual Peer Coaching
Networking options within the company / held during work hours; Networking maps	Diversity programs, formal gender diversity training
Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices	Job Shadowing or Rotation programs
Telecommunications	Utilities
Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside	Professional Coaching
Already existing female senior management	Already existing female senior management
Networking options within the company / held during work hours; Networking maps	Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside
Casual Peer Coaching	Early promotion to management
Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts	Female Role Models

TOP RETENTION FACTORS BY AGE

Under 25 (3.5%)	Greater Emphasis on teamwork Training – time set aside, unlimited amounts
26 – 35 (22.8%)	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management Emphasis / Value placed on self-management Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices Already existing female management – tie Extended family leave w/ guarantee of job on return - tie
36 – 45 (31.5%)	Already existing female management Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices Emphasis / Value placed on self-management Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management
46 – 55 (30%)	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management Emphasis / Value placed on self-management Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices Receiving clear deliverables / non-vague objectives
Over 55 (12.2%)	Overall Benefit Package & Flexible Benefit Choices Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management Already existing female management

TOP ADVANCMENT FACTORS BY AGE

Under 25 (3.5%)	Casual Peer Coaching Early promotion to management
26 – 35 (22.8%)	Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside Professional Coaching Job Shadowing or Rotation programs Receiving clear deliverables / non-vague objectives Formal, understandable Career paths
36 – 45 (31.5%)	Professional Coaching Already existing female senior management Female Role Models Receiving clear deliverables / non-vague objectives Networking options within the company / held during work hours; Networking maps
46 – 55 (30%)	Professional Coaching Mentoring Programs – Gender neutral or specific, Personal Coaches, Time set aside Receiving clear deliverables / non-vague objectives Already existing female senior management Overall Culture of non-gender focus with visible support of Senior Management
Over 55 (12.2%)	Alignment of values, social causes, & management support of membership in outside organizations Already existing female senior management Flex Time / Adjustable Work Schedule / Telecommuting Options / Satellite Offices