Gender Diversity Playbook

Why Does This Matter

Diversity and inclusion are important both socially and corporately, with the value of a diverse and inclusive workforce being made increasingly clear. Creating such an organization not only enhances a company's performance; financially, creatively and innovatively (MaRS, 2018), but also serves to create more effective teams by facilitating greater thinking and decision making practices (Phillips, Kim-Jun & Shim, 2011). Increasing diversity involves a holistic approach where ethnicity, race, age, physical ability and gender all play a role in shaping a company's competitive advantage.

One of the most noticeable areas where diversity is lagging within the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) sector is the gender gap, with women, and individuals who identify as women representing only 23% of Canadian technology workers (Hango, 2013). This playbook focuses on this gender diversity gap and acts as a resource to help CEOs and company leaders improve gender diversity within their organizations.

It has been proven that companies who effectively recruit and manage a diverse workforce have a clear competitive advantage:
- Companies who place an emphasis on hiring diverse teams have access to a much broader talent pool and higher numbers of qualified candidates for roles (MaRS, 2018).
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to have higher financial returns than the industry median (Hunt, Layton & Prince, 2015, p.2).
- Team diversity and inclusiveness leads to higher employee productivity and retention (CLC Human Resources, 2012).

In order to be proactive, create more awareness and address gender inequality within the STEM industry we ask you, as a leader, to participate and take action by taking steps provided in the playbook for gender diversity.

This playbook has been developed through research and consultations with industry experts, including human resource professionals, academics, and CEOs. Throughout this process, we have compiled a list of valuable resources which can help further develop your knowledge on this topic. These resources can be accessed at the bottom of this playbook.

Let's Exceed 30%

A study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics found that profits increased by 15% when the share of women in leadership positions went from 0% to 30% (Noland, Moran & Kotschwar, 2016). As stated by Engineers Canada (2017), "30% is universally held as the tipping point for sustainable change". Quotas are an effective way to increase gender representation, which can also increase the overall performance of an organization (Besley, Folke, Persson, & Rickne, 2017).

By enacting this playbook, or pieces of this playbook, you are committing to exceed 30% gender diversity inside your organization within two years. Exceeding 30% is a starting point and the vision is to continuously strive for gender parity to create a culture of inclusiveness where everyone is empowered to contribute to the organization as their authentic self (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013). For those companies rapidly growing in size or who already have a 30% gender diversity makeup, the goal should be to reach parity.

This playbook is not a complete list but rather an initial source of actionable steps that any organization can implement to shape their culture around gender diversity. Many of the steps included will also help drive other forms of diversity within your company as well.

The Playbook: What We Can Do

The Playbook for Gender Diversity includes a list of actionable steps to help leaders build diverse companies and industries over time. We believe these 12 best practices are a great way to start implementing and empowering change in your organization.

By adopting this playbook you are showing through actions that you take the matter of diversity seriously. You are taking proactive measures to address diversity and enact change for your organization and the future of the industry.

We recognize that organizations may be in various stages of growth when committing to implement this playbook. We encourage you to choose those actions that are appropriate to help you take significant steps forward in diversity and inclusion. Some of these steps can be actioned today, while others will take more time to implement or will be more fitting to adopt in later stages in your organization's growth. We have ordered the 12 steps in a way that reflects this.

1. ## Share a Statement of Intent

   The company CEO should make a clear statement in support of gender diversity, which is shared publicly on your website and within the organization, either through your core values, value statement, or employee handbook. It is important that the statement accurately reflects where your organization is today and where you would like to go. This avoids appearing hypocritical, which can have a negative impact on the perception of the organization (Windscheid, Bowes-Sperry, Kidder, Cheung, Morner & Lievens, 2016). An example of such a statement could be as simple as the Salesforce (2018) commitment to diversity:

   "Together, we can reach Equality for all. Equality is a core value at Salesforce. We believe that businesses can be powerful platforms for social change and that our higher purpose is to drive Equality for all. Creating a culture of Equality isn't just the right thing to do, it's also the smart thing. Diverse companies are more innovative and better positioned to succeed in the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

2. ## Nominate Diversity Champions

   Nominate "Diversity Champions" within your organization. Diversity Champions should be individuals who are encouraged to challenge the status quo, keep up to date on current issues and offer an inclusive view on matters you may not have considered. Research has shown the most effective Diversity Champions belong to the majority group and are in senior leadership roles; often this will be a male. Men play a critical role in advancing workplace diversity and can add significant value when acting as gender allies. When it comes to addressing sexism, they face less social risk than women and their initiatives are often more persuasive because they are seen as selfless (Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Hekman, Johnson, Foo & Yang, 2017; Arnold & Loughlin, 2019).

   Diversity Champions will act as a resource for executives and coworkers to ask questions and get feedback. They will also act as an agent of change within the company, implementing the ideas formulated by employees in an effort to increase diversity (Morrison, 2017). For early stage companies, Diversity Champions should include the CEO.

3. ## Create a Panel Diversity Policy

   Create a *panel diversity policy* in which the company does not allow their employees to participate on any panel discussions unless both women, or individuals who identify as women, and men are participating. Technology, business,

and science are still male-dominated industries and this is often exacerbated at conferences and events with all-male panels and speakers.

If you are asked to speak at an event, participate in a panel, or anything of this nature, do your due diligence and inform the panel committee of your policy. Before you confirm attendance, require that there be multi-gender representation. You may also suggest qualified people that can participate. You can use this email template to promote panel diversity.

4. Expand Beyond your Network

As stated in The 13th Annual Rosenzweig Report on Women at the Top Levels of Corporate Canada, women make up only 9.44% of the most senior corporate jobs, while men hold over 90% of senior executive roles (Rosenzweig & Company, 2018). Resultantly, men are more likely to hear about or promote jobs at similar levels within their networks. Since these networks tend to include fewer women this leads to an unequal opportunity for senior executive positions.

Relying primarily on referrals and professional networks limits diversity in your search for talent (Groysberg & Connolly, 2013; Leonard, 2018). When recruiting, expand beyond personal networks in order to create equal opportunities for positions within your organization.

5. Interview 2 Female Candidates

Johnson, Hekman & Chan (2016) found when only one female or minority candidate is considered as part of a job finalist pool it simply highlights how different they are from other candidates. The likelihood of hiring a female candidate increases to 50% when at least two female candidates are part of a finalist pool.

For executive hires, at least two qualified female candidates must be interviewed.

6. Measure Progress & Track Pay

Track metrics for guidance, such as the gender pay gap and gender employment ratio. These metrics should be recorded and presented in board reports:
- Salary comparisons between all same level employees;
- The ratio of employees by gender;
- The number of women that hold leadership positions.

State publicly on your website or careers page that you measure gender pay gap and gender employment ratio. Use this data to set goals for progress, and take action when evidence of unequal treatment exists (Sojo, Wood, Wood & Wheeler, 2016). Tools like

this [Gender Diversity Reporting Template](#) or [SameWorks](#) can assist with pay equity audits.

7. Offer Flexible Work Policies

Offer flexible work arrangements. While research has shown that women are likely to have more household responsibilities or act as the primary caregiver (Liftstream MassBio, 2017), there is increasing acknowledgment that gender roles are changing. More often, family responsibilities are being shared and both women and men have a greater desire and need for work flexibility (Vandello, Hettinger, Bosson & Siddiqi, 2013; LeanIn.Org, 2018).

In order for these policies to positively impact gender diversity all employees, regardless of gender, should be encouraged to use them. Research suggests that women are often penalized for using these policies (Burkus, 2017), and men are resistant to use them for fear of social stigma (Vandello et al., 2013). To create change, leaders in the company, especially of the majority gender, should publicly advocate for these policies and be vocal when they are utilizing them.

Flexible work arrangements can include the ability to work remotely, allowing employees to choose which eight hours of the day are most productive for them, or a combination of both. A good practice is to set core office hours and then approve adjustments on an individual basis. Most importantly, flexible work should ensure the productivity of the employee, and their team members, is not hindered.

8. Practice Gender Neutral Recruitment

Strive for a gender-balanced hiring and recruitment process. When hiring, including if you are using a recruitment agency, ensure you create gender balanced job advertisements and set mandatory gender diversity requirements. These requirements could include:

a. **Use Neutral Language** When creating job advertisements, ensure titles and language are gender neutral. Use terms like they/their instead of he/she (Sczesny, Formanowicz & Moser, 2016).

b. **Say Salaries are Negotiable** This helps to increase the number of female applicants and will help minimize the gender pay gap. Women and men negotiate salaries differently; men will almost always negotiate salary, while women tend to only negotiate when it is explicitly stated that salary is negotiable. Over time, this becomes one of the drivers behind the gender pay gap (Leibbrandt & List, 2014). Make it explicit in job advertisements that salaries are negotiable.

c. **Have a Diverse Interview Team** The interview team should be gender-inclusive and consist of at least one male and one female, and the committee should agree to a clear set of criteria and use it consistently for all candidates. This will help to reduce the risk of unconscious bias and create a fair and equal hiring process.

d. **Set Expectations for your Candidate List** For all positions, including executive roles, more than 30% of the candidate list (short and long) must be of the minority gender.

    i.   The responsibility is on the company to ensure it finds qualified female candidates. If you are unable to do so, this is a clear sign that you should re-examine your recruitment structure and adjust where needed to exceed the target. Consider tools like textio.com, or working with a diversity consultant, which can help you develop gender balanced job advertisements.

e. **Use Blind Recruitment** Participate in "blind recruitment" where all gender identifying information is stripped from the candidate's resume upon application to remove unconscious bias. Implicit discrimination happens based solely on names (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). When researching the hiring practices of orchestras, Goldin & Rouse (2000) found that when the gender of auditioning musicians was concealed the likelihood of females advancing in the hiring process increased by 50% and their chances of being hired increased several fold (p.2).

Every organization is unique and will be at different stages of growth. You will need to decide exactly how the concept of blind recruitment fits within your hiring practices. Organizations can participate in blind recruitment by:

    i.   Making a statement on your career page that asks candidates applying to remove gender identifying information from their applications.

    ii.   Omitting names or other identifying fields from an application form.

    iii.   Assigning a team member who isn't involved in hiring to anonymize every candidate's information (Crowley, 2018).

f. **Opt for Diversity** All things being equal and ensuring compliance with the Canadian Equity Act, preference will be given to the minority gender.

9. Get Employee Input & Feedback

Create a safe way for employees to communicate any diversity and inclusion issues within the organization:

a. **Create an Avenue for Anonymous Communication** This can consist of anonymous Google Forms, Protected Disclosure Programs or Employee Assistance Programs that allow employees to anonymously share any issues or concerns they may have within the organization. It is often hard for women to speak up if they are regularly faced with defensive responses when an issue is noted (LeanIn.Org, 2019). They may not feel safe to share their views internally. Any anonymous communications should be shared with the CEO and Chair of the Board.

b. **Conduct Annual Diversity Reviews** Diversity reviews can be conducted using anonymous survey tools like Google Forms or Survey Monkey. Ensure you allow all employees to anonymously answer diversity and inclusion statements and questions. Huang (2015) suggested such statements as:

    i. I feel like I belong at [company].
    ii. I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences.
    iii. Perspectives like mine are included in decision making.
    iv. My company believes that people can greatly improve their talents and abilities.
    v. Administrative tasks that don't have a specific owner are fairly divided. (p.1)
    vi. Do you believe the company follows their Core Values and acts on their promise to create a diverse workforce? If not, are there specific examples?
    vii. NPS Survey: On a scale of zero to ten, how likely are you to recommend [company name] as a potential employer to a friend? Why?

Upon the completion of these reviews, any findings should be actioned. Your Diversity Champion(s) could help to ensure plans are developed and implemented in response to feedback collected. This could consist of developing or making changes to existing policies and procedures.

c. **Conduct Exit Interviews** Conduct exit interviews and collect data from those who choose to leave your company. Exit interviews allow employees to express concerns or issues they may not have felt comfortable to bring

forward previously.

Examples of data and metrics that should be captured about those who choose to leave your company:

    i.   What is the ratio of women to men that are leaving the company?
    ii.   What positions do these employees currently hold?
    iii.   If employed for longer than 1 year, had they been promoted or given a raise? If not, evaluate why. If so, ensure the opportunities were equal among all same-level employees.

10. Implement Unconscious Bias Training

Implement a policy that requires all employees, especially managers, leaders and those involved in interviewing, to complete regular and ongoing unconscious bias training in order to better understand their blind spots and create strategies for change. Performance bias has been shown to impact hiring and promotion decisions: "Research shows that we tend to overestimate men's performance and underestimate women's. As a result, men are often hired and promoted based on their potential, while women are often hired and promoted based on their track record" (as cited in Lean In & McKinsey & Company, 2018, p. 9).

It is important to note that while awareness of unconscious bias is critical, it is not sufficient in creating change (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015). Studies suggest that for implicit bias training to be effective, it requires recognition of the bias, a motivation to change and specific strategies to address the bias (Nordell, 2018).

Resources to identify bias and develop strategies for change are:
    a.   General Unconscious Bias Training: The Implicit Association Test is a tool to discover your unconscious attitudes, preferences and beliefs.
    b.   Building Gender IQ Online Training: The e-course was developed in partnership with world-class experts and addresses the root causes of gender inequality, as well as power dynamics and unconscious bias.
    c.   LeanIn.Org's 50 ways to fight bias: The video series and online materials introduce common gender biases, how to recognize them, and how to counteract them.

11. Support your Pipeline

Create or support at least one event, such as a talk at a local university or college, a career fair, a panel discussion or an in-house conference, each year that encourages

minority gender participation in your sector. Report on this event and outcomes internally and in your board report. This event can be creative and should be in the spirit of promoting diversity within your sector and attracting new people into the space.

12. Improve Diversity at the Board Level

When you make diversity a priority throughout the organization, it gives you the right mindset and tools to create diversity at the board level as well (Huber and O'Rourke 2017). An organization's board can often set the tone for how the company operates, what goals they set, and which initiatives they view as a priority. Therefore, it's important that there is a diverse set of perspectives at this level.

For early stage companies, your board may only include founders and first investors, without much opportunity for adding additional board members. However, as your company grows and your board becomes more formalized with hired expertise, there is great value in building a diverse board of directors.

When it comes to decision making in the boardroom, women can add a different set of perspectives, experiences, and viewpoints. They are also more likely to dig deeper on issues by asking more questions, leading to more thorough discussions at the board level (Liswood 2015). Yet, in a 2017 study by McKinsey, it stated that in the United States only 19% of board positions are currently held by women (Huber and O'Rourke 2017).

In order to accelerate gender diversity on boards, Huber & O'Rourke (2017) and Konrad, Kramer & Erkut (2008) suggest the following:

 a. Expand your search criteria beyond executives with prior board experience. Look for the right expertise.
 b. Create and maintain an active pipeline of female candidates and expand beyond personal networks. Ask recruiters for female candidates. Ask women to suggest female candidates.
 c. Ensure nominating committees include women.
 d. Educate your board on the benefits of gender diversity.

To learn more on how you can accelerate gender diversity on boards, refer to the article "How to Accelerate Gender Diversity on Boards" by Celia Huber and Sara O'Rourke.

Following Through on Your Commitment

The 12 best practices listed above are meant to be a playbook to help organizations lead the way in creating diverse and inclusive workforces. These practices rely on participation from both the employer and employee. Implementing policies that create progressive change requires continuous review, revision and implementation, and results must be measured.

By implementing this playbook, you are committing to exceed 30% gender diversity inside your organization within two years. You commit to taking action in decreasing the gender gap and creating diversity and inclusion within your organization to enable change in your industry. You agree to be open to constructive feedback and to be a leader in creating awareness when it comes to gender inequality in the workforce.

Resources

Templates & Training Materials	
Template	Email to Promote Panel Diversity, Sequence Bio
Template	Panel Diversity Policy, Sequence Bio
Template	Gender Diversity Reporting Template (pay equity audit), Sequence Bio
Test	Unconscious Bias - Harvard Implicit Association Test
Certification	Building Gender IQ
Video	50 Ways to Fight Bias, LeanIn.Org
Article	Implicit Bias Strategies for Change

Diversity Champions	
Article	The role of a diversity champion, PES
Article	Six signature traits of inclusive leadership, Deloitte

Recruitment & Retention	
Article	When Tech Firms Judge on Skills Alone, Women Land More Job Interviews
Article	How Blind CVs Impact the Recruitment Process, People HR
Article	How "Blind Recruitment" Works and Why You Should Consider It, Fast Company
Article	5 Diversity and Inclusion Questions to use at Your Company
Template	Annual Diversity Review Survey, Survey Monkey

Website	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety: Employee Assistant Programs (EAP)
Research Paper	Orchestrating impartiality: The impact of "blind" auditions on female musicians
Website	Textio - Writing Tool for Gender Inclusive Job Postings

Equal Pay & Pay Gap	
Article	Equal Pay Assessment, Salesforce
Article	Equal Pay Pledge, Glassdoor
Article	The Gender Pay Gap by the Numbers, LeanIn.Org
Study	Every Step You Take - Ontario's Gender Pay Gap Ladder, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Website	Pay Equity Audit Tool - SameWorks

Leadership & Board Diversity	
Article	Who has to 'lean in' for equal gender representation in leadership roles?
Article	How to Accelerate Gender Diversity on Boards
Research Paper	The Impact of Three or More Women on Corporate Boards

Additional Supporting Articles	
Article	Great Leaders Who Make the Mix Work, Harvard Business Review
Article	Why Diversity Matters, McKinsey & Company
Article	How Diversity Can Drive Innovation, Harvard Business Review
Article	The Secret History of Women in Coding, The New York Times

Additional Supporting Reports & Studies	
Report	Tech For All: Breaking Barriers in Toronto's Innovation Community, MaRS
Report	The 13TH Annual Rosenzweig Report, Rosenzweig & Company
Study	Gender differences in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science (STEM) programs at university, Statistics Canada
Study	Opening the Path to a Diverse Future, MassBio & Liftstream
Study	Women in the Workplace, LeanIn.Org
Study	Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students, PNAS

Additional Websites	
Website	Engineers Canada: 30 by 30
Website	Employment Equity Act: Employers Obligations
Website	LeanIn.Org

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