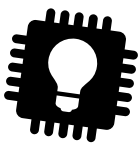


# *MALE ADVOCATES AND ALLIES: PROMOTING GENDER DIVERSITY IN TECHNOLOGY WORKPLACES*

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Produced in partnership with the National Center for Women & Information Technology's (NCWIT's) Workforce Alliance, who provided insight, guidance, and very importantly, access to the interviewees for this study. The authors want to thank all the men interviewed for their time and openness in sharing their personal and professional experiences. We also thank Adriane Bradberry for her significant contributions.

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I think it is super important for men to be seen as gender advocates, because...85% of our leaders are men in this company, and if they are not gender advocates, then the culture won't change — we won't have the right environment.

– male interviewee



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# ABOUT THIS REPORT

## Gender and Technology: Why Study Men?

When considering issues related to gender and technology, most research over the past two decades has focused on women. However, expanding this focus to include men is crucial for several reasons:

-  **Men are often the leaders, power holders, and gatekeepers in the computing workplace.** Enlisting men's participation is vital for change efforts to be truly effective.
-  **Women report that support and encouragement to pursue and persist in technical careers often comes from men.** Given this fact, men already play a significant role in improving conditions for women in technology and computing.
-  **Gender reform is not a women's issue; it is also about men.** We often act as though gender is only relevant when it comes to women, but men are also gendered beings. Like women, they experience pressures to live up to certain gender norms and face costs if they violate these norms. Women and men need to work together as allies in order to change work cultures that prevent all of us from realizing our full potential.

With these factors in mind, investigating men's experiences with gender diversity is important for understanding what discourages or encourages men to become advocates. This knowledge can improve diversity initiatives and facilitate working together to invent new options for women and men.

## Why Is Gender Diversity in Computing Important? The Business Case

**Ensuring a competitive workforce.** The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that between 2010 and 2020, there will be about 1.4 million computing-related job openings in the United States. At current graduation rates, we can fill only about 30% of those jobs with U.S. computing graduates. Highly qualified women and underrepresented minorities are well-positioned to move into these open jobs, yet the industry is failing to attract, retain, and promote this talent. Furthermore, women already employed in the technology industry are leaving at staggering rates (Ashcraft & Blithe, 2010; Hewlett et al., 2008).

**Improving technical innovation.** In large part, we are missing out on the valuable perspectives that women and other underrepresented groups bring to designing the technology of the future. A wealth of research in the past decade shows that diversity improves problem solving, productivity, innovation, and ultimately, the bottom line (Gatton et al., 2007; Page, 2007). We need to ensure that the future technology we design is as broad and innovative as the population it serves. For more information and resources on making the business case, see <http://www.ncwit.org/thefacts>.

## What Are the Goals of This Report?

- ⚡ Provide an “inside look” at how men think and talk about diversity in the technical workplace
- ⚡ Identify the factors that motivate or hinder men in advocating for gender diversity
- ⚡ Explore what diversity efforts men have experienced as successful or unsuccessful
- ⚡ Identify specific strategies to increase men’s participation in advocacy

## Who Should Read This Report?

- ⚡ Senior executives and company leaders
- ⚡ Technical managers or supervisors
- ⚡ Human Resources and diversity and inclusion leaders, managers, or supervisors
- ⚡ Men who are interested in learning more about how they can participate in diversity efforts
- ⚡ Women who are interested in learning more about how to identify and work with male advocates




## How Can I Use This Report to Help Make Change?

- ⚡ Make the case for why gender diversity is important
- ⚡ Talk with men about how they can become advocates and allies for diversity
- ⚡ Share this information with men who are already advocating but are interested in learning more
- ⚡ Share this information with those who want to identify and work with male advocates
- ⚡ Include excerpts or “sound bites” from the report in newsletters, emails, or other communications
- ⚡ Raise this topic at team meetings, workshops, company events, or similar venues

## A Brief Word about Methods

This report is based on in-depth, semi structured interviews with 47 men from technical companies. Participants were recruited by NCWIT Workforce Alliance members using specified criteria for identifying male advocates for diversity (see Appendix for a list of these criteria). All participants held leadership positions in their companies, and most had technical backgrounds, either in computer science or engineering. Most participants had worked in technology for approximately 20 to 25 years, and they ranged in age from 36 to 60, with an average age of 50. Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and took place primarily by phone, although some were conducted in person. Multiple researchers then used qualitative software to analyze these transcriptions. For more information on methods and participant characteristics, see the Appendix, p. 62.

## Notes on Terminology

-  **Computing/technology/technical** – In this report, we use these words synonymously to refer specifically to computing and computer-related professions and industries.
-  **Technical men and women** – We use these terms to refer to male and female employees who work in computer-related occupations or occupations involved in technological design. The authors recognize that gender categories are fluid and that not all people identify with the binary categories of male and female. In addition, we acknowledge that especially when discussing work-life and other issues, this report reflects a bias toward heterosexual relationships, as our sample population primarily identified as heterosexual. We encourage future research that complicates the binary nature of gender and provides more insight into the experiences of employees of varying sexual orientations.
-  **Diversity and diversity efforts** – Because NCWIT’s focus is on gender diversity, we primarily use these terms to refer to gender diversity. At the same time, we greatly value other types of diversity and believe that it also important to consider how women vary in terms of race, class, religion, ability, and sexual orientation, among other factors. While the majority of participants in this study identified as white, we hope to encourage future research into how the findings in this report might differ when considering other dimensions of diversity and intersections between these dimensions. Likewise, the men in our study often talked about different types of diversity, and many of the findings in this report can benefit a range of diversity efforts.



# SECTION 1:

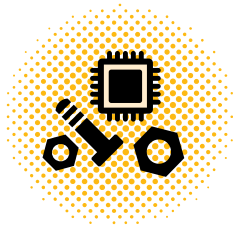
## PIVOTAL EXPERIENCES: WHAT MOTIVATES MEN TO BECOME ADVOCATES?

### The Nutshell: Experiences That Inspire Men To Become Advocates

A combination of personal and professional experiences can profoundly affect men’s thinking about gender diversity in the technical workplace.

Men described various motivations for becoming advocates, including having a minority experience themselves; relationships with their wives, daughters, and mothers; having had female bosses, mentors, or colleagues; attending workshops on bias; and witnessing biases in action.

Men’s stories provide important clues for effective ways to recreate some of these experiences in order to inspire future male advocates.



### The Details: A Closer Look at These Experiences and How They Might Inspire More Men to Advocacy

Nearly all the men interviewed noted that specific professional or personal experiences had changed their thinking about gender issues in the technical workplace (Table 1). Men who considered themselves advocates typically had one or more of the personal or professional encounters detailed in Tables 2 and 3. Often, a combination of these factors was particularly effective in motivating men to become advocates.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES THAT INFLUENCE MEN’S THINKING

Professional Experiences (91% of men)	Personal Experiences (83% of men)
Female Boss	Minority Experience
Learning about Microinequities	Working Wife/Partner
Aware Leaders	Daughter
Data Collection	Mother’s or Sister’s Experience
Seeing Gender Bias	Sense of Fairness

## Influential minority experiences increased a sense of urgency, empathy, and an understanding of bias.

Men noted a wide variety of experiences as a member of a racial or ethnic minority, as the only man in a particular environment, as an outsider in a foreign country, and even feeling left out as a child at school. One man recalled, *"I grew up in a little town in the middle of nowhere, largely economically disadvantaged, and so I had some personal experience about what it meant to start behind the curve, and so I at least like to think I have some sympathy for people who start out with some disadvantage in the environment they are competing in."* These experiences tended to increase men's sense of urgency and passion around these issues and helped them better understand the complexities of being a minority.

## Influential family experiences often played an important role in shaping their thinking about and passion for these issues.

Their families' personal stories tended to make them more aware of women's experiences in two key areas: 1) discrimination, harassment, or more subtle biases in the workplace, and 2) dilemmas related to work-life conflicts. In the first case, many men said that their wives had told them stories of things that had happened at work — stories that surprised them and made them realize how different the workplace could be for women. For example, one man recalled, *"[My wife] experienced sexual harassment, and in working through that with her and understanding the impact that had on her and her job, that sort of hit me: Wow! In addition to trying to perform as an individual...you got to deal with that kind of nonsense; it's a whole other thing that I don't have to deal with."*

Second, almost all the married men, even the men with stay-at-home wives, mentioned watching their wives struggle with work-life decisions at some point. Many of the men with stay-at-home wives described watching their wives wrestle with these issues and ultimately quit their jobs. Other men described witnessing their wives who had decided to continue working juggle their many responsibilities. A few men had taken a more active role in sharing more family responsibilities with their wives, which tended to make these struggles even more poignant for them. Men's varied experiences with work-life dilemmas also affected what they saw as possible in terms of an organization's ability to influence work-life decisions (See Work-Life Concerns, p. 26).

In addition to wives and daughters, men also mentioned being influenced by a mother or sister that they described as intelligent and of strong character, whether or not the mother or sister had actually worked outside the home. In fact, in some cases, the mother had been denied the opportunity to work professionally despite her interest and ability had significantly shaped these men's views.

### Family experiences raised awareness about:

- ⚡ Subtle biases
- ⚡ Work-life concerns

**TABLE 2: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES THAT INFLUENCE MEN'S THINKING**

Personal Experience	Sample Verbatim Quote
<b>Having had a minority experience themselves</b>	<i>In college...[I] walk into a cowboy's bar...somebody like me, with my skin color, has my accent, you feel out of place very quickly...same thing with women...[they] walk into a room where there [are] 20 guys...so I sort of understand it.</i>
<b>Having a wife or partner who has worked outside the home</b>	<i>[My wife] has some influence on me about that as well...She currently runs [department at another technical company]. So she deals with lots of men...so maybe I'm more cognitive about that type of stuff too, right? Because she ran into her own battles moving up...just even subtle things.</i>
<b>Having a daughter</b>	<i>I have a daughter who's now 17 who's very interested in math and technology...and I just observed that to really fulfill her interests, she has to go well outside her schooling context...especially now in high school, and so just sort of started becoming acquainted with the issue for her and my obvious desire that she have whatever opportunities that she's capable of.</i>
<b>Being influenced by a mother's or sister's experiences</b>	<i>My mother was an executive in the private sector as well. And so I think...maybe I always didn't view any real distinction in terms of leadership...or types of roles, or what's achievable and possible based on gender.</i>
<b>Early life experiences fostered strong sense of fairness</b>	<i>You learn things like "Treat people the way you would want to be treated," and I have to say that I saw some things...growing up [in a small town], some racial prejudices and gender prejudices...It didn't feel right, and so somehow for me it became personal.</i>



### TRY THIS TIP

Use this information to help identify potential advocates and allies.

### Three points of entry for heightened awareness:

- ⚡ Female Boss
- ⚡ Learning about Microinequities
- ⚡ Aware Leaders

## Of the influential work experiences men described, the first three (Table 3) tended to be the primary points of entry for thinking about these issues.

**Having a female boss, mentor, or colleague affected men's thinking in at least two ways.** First, even if they were not privy to these women's experiences with bias, working with or for these women provided the men with models of effective, successful women leaders. Second, while working with these women, men sometimes had the chance to hear their stories or witness instances of bias toward them.

One man, upon hearing his female boss's disgruntlement with the company, said, *"Hey I want to go to lunch with you; I want to understand this — what does that really mean?"* This excerpt is particularly important because many men in the study talked about how their female colleagues seemed to confide in them more than in other men — and indeed, some men in the study had heard few, if any, stories from women they knew. Actively expressing an interest in finding out more was an important way to communicate to women that it was safe to talk about their experiences; it also further informed these men about the salient issues.

## A combination of these initial experiences proved quite effective.

For example, one man recounted the following story regarding his experience attending a lecture on bias in the technical workplace:

*Just listening to some of this, I was kind of flabbergasted by the whole thing; I thought it was really quite interesting, right?...And they got done with the talk, and we got up to leave, and I said to no one in particular something like, "Wow, that was pretty interesting, but I don't imagine that there are any parallels like that here." And then (chuckles), an hour later, 20 women let me leave!...Over time all these little things... kept pouring out...[such as] "Here's what it's like to be in this meeting," and I was astonished, and that was what really what got me in.*

**Most of the other men also recounted multiple, reinforcing experiences as important for their evolving understanding and activism.** And, in fact, the remaining two experiences in Table 3 (Collecting Data and Personally Witnessing Biases) tended to follow after men's initial awareness was raised, further convincing men who had initially been skeptical about the extent and prevalence of the problem.

**TABLE 3: PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES THAT INFLUENCE MEN'S THINKING**

Professional Experience	Sample Verbatim Quote
<b>Having worked with talented female bosses, mentors, or colleagues</b>	<i>I think every man needs to have a mentor as a woman once. Because that was very impactful on me — walking into her office to sit down and have a conversation and seeing her there obviously dealing with something that is going on, and she would tell me, and I would go, "What?!"</i>
<b>Attending workshops or reading about unconscious bias or microinequities</b>	<i>I think Hopper was a big jolt. When I stood up after an hour of it...and said, "You know, an hour ago, I would have argued very strongly, differently; now I know nothing." ...I mean that was a revelation...so Hopper was a big kick in the pants.</i>
<b>Having company leaders who raised awareness and required diverse candidates</b>	<i>We had goals, like 50% of all our hiring was diverse. So we had some very strong, passionate leaders who had deeply held beliefs about how to do things.</i>
<b>Collecting data on their own departments or companies and discovering inequities</b>	<i>I went to our internal database and looked at — I mean it was difficult for me because I was not in HR, to get access to other racial information — but I could easily see male, female. So I just counted them. And then I said, "Well, is that good or bad?" I had no reference point at the time, right? So then I went to a couple other organizations...that have...web pages for their members...so I went there and started counting too. So at least I would have some idea of where we stood....And I noticed that overall, unfortunately, we're not doing as well, just based on the raw numbers.</i>
<b>Personally witnessing gender bias in the workplace</b>	<i>We saw two really viable candidates. One was a man, one was a woman...the man actually was introduced to us through somebody on the business side...and some of us viewed him as less qualified...but because of the influence from the business side, we wound up hiring him instead of the woman.</i>



### TRY THIS TIP

Create opportunities for men to work with female mentors, leaders, or managers.

## **MEN'S SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES ALSO MATTER**

Of the men who mentioned school experiences, most talked about the dearth of women in their technical (computing or engineering) programs. For some, this explained the lack of technical women in their current workplaces; for others, this helped explain the strained attitudes they perceived between men and women in technology; still others had seen an increase in women in tech since college and felt optimistic. The fact that schooling influenced men's thinking in these ways highlights the importance of discussing these dynamics with men or boys earlier — in high school and college.



## **Call to Action: How Can You Use This Information?**

- 1 Consider ways that you might recreate some of these influential experiences.** While some of these experiences occurred naturally or serendipitously, making them difficult to replicate, other instances could be recreated in order to help raise awareness and enlist other men as advocates. For example:
  - ⚡ Men gained valuable experiences as minorities at events such as the Grace Hopper Celebration for Women in Computing (<http://anitaborg.org/initiatives/ghc/>) or other predominantly female conferences or events. Make it possible for men to attend such events and implement other creative ways to create “minority” experiences.
  - ⚡ Hold events or workshops related to microinequities and unconscious biases (for more information on these terms, see *Correct Microinequities*, p. 48). Pairing these events with personal, company-specific stories can be crucial for making these workshops more effective and relevant for your company. Telling stories at public events, however, can be risky for women and others. Be sure to be sensitive to this; anonymous stories may be an important component of awareness-raising activities.
  - ⚡ Rotate assignments or otherwise ensure that male employees work with female managers, leaders, or mentors.
- 2 Use this information to identify potential allies and advocates.** While it is important to remember that not all men who have had the above experiences may wish to be involved in diversity efforts, such experiences tend to help motivate men in this direction. Don't be afraid to “test the waters” with men you think may be supportive and talk with them about your experiences in the technical workplace. As the men above note, these stories were often turning points in their thinking about these issues.
- 3 Remember that multiple, ongoing experiences and combinations of different kinds of experiences can be particularly useful.**

## SECTION 2:

# SPOTLIGHT ON FACTORS DISCOURAGING MEN'S ADVOCACY: WHAT ARE THE FACTORS, AND WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THEM?

In addition to the factors that motivated men to participate in advocacy, we also found eight factors that discouraged their participation. Three of these barriers — apathy, a lack of awareness, and fear — also emerged in Catalyst's study of male advocates in the workplace (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). The men we interviewed described the first three barriers below — **apathy**, **lack of awareness**, and **lack of a clear rationale** — as barriers that they thought kept *other* men from supporting diversity efforts. They observed that the next two barriers — **fear** and **the perception that the problem is too large** — still discourage men from advocacy even when they theoretically support diversity efforts. The final three barriers in the chart below — **lack of time**, **lack of consistency**, and **lack of leadership support** — continue to pose problems even for men who are advocates. In this chart, we include quotes to illustrate each barrier, along with recommendations from the men and from prior research for addressing these barriers.



The Nutshell: Key Factor	The Details: Sample Verbatim Quote	Call to Action: Recommendation
<b>Apathy</b>	<i>I think there's, you know, a category of men who don't understand why it matters and don't care and want to spend no time with it.</i>	Men emphasized the importance of focusing efforts where they are most likely to succeed. Men who "don't care and want to spend no time with it" may not be the best targets for your initial efforts. Of course, multiple conversations and experiences, accompanied by data, may over time prod these individuals out of apathy. ( <b>See Pivotal Experiences, p. 9, and Compelling Arguments, p. 19.</b> )



The Nutshell: Key Factor	The Details: Sample Verbatim Quote	Call to Action: Recommendation
<b>Lack of Awareness</b>	<i>I run into plenty [of men]...where they're open to the conversation but they don't feel a compelling need to do anything about it and I would say...a lack of awareness that they have the ability right now to change it. And when I talk to them about it and engage with them, many of them...start thinking about it differently.</i>	When apathy is a result of lack of awareness, more information about the problem can be helpful. Use the information in this report and visit <a href="http://www.ncwit.org">www.ncwit.org</a> for free resources for raising awareness and for making the business case for diversity. Recreate some of the experiences that men in this study said raised their awareness (e.g., having a female mentor.) <b>(See Pivotal Experiences, p. 9.)</b>
<b>Lack of Clear Rationale</b>	<i>So what I don't like is when [name of group] shows up and pulls together a bunch of managers and talks down to us and chastises us, you know...but they won't give us any of the data why we are screwed up, or give us any advice as to how to fix it. So that's kind of the bad side. The good side is, when we... pull our leadership team together and say, "We value this as an organization, right? It is a part of our culture, right?" And if we don't have that agreement yet, then we work to get that agreement. But then once we get it, then it's, "Okay, look at your team....what are you going to do about that?"</i>	Be sure to clearly identify and explain the rationale for diversity-related efforts to all levels of the organization. This is a crucial step that is often skipped, diminishing buy-in and success. Also, make sure that people have the tools and resources to implement these efforts. <b>(See Compelling Arguments, p. 19, and Tip: How Do You Start the Conversation, p. 38.)</b>



The Nutshell: Key Factor	The Details: Sample Verbatim Quote	Call to Action: Recommendation
<b>Belief That the Root Cause is a Larger Societal Problem</b>	<p><i>I don't believe that any of the things I've been exposed to are going to have any meaningful effect, because I believe the scale of the problem is massive....the way that you start getting into this field in elementary school and high school is math and science....But if ...you're a woman, and there's peer pressure in social groups in the math and science classes...Then I'd have to assume there's both going to be pressure and a tendency, a natural tendency, to gravitate towards other things.</i></p>	<p>Nearly all the men in the study commented on two large barriers to increasing gender diversity: the lack of a pipeline for girls entering computing and societal expectations for women. Some saw these as insurmountable barriers preventing them from having much, if any, influence. Others thought that, despite these larger societal barriers, there are still significant changes that organizations can, and do, make to increase diversity. Be sure to publicize successful examples from within the organization or from elsewhere. <b>(See Top 10 Strategies, p. 36, and Work-Life Concerns, p. 26.)</b></p>
<b>Fear, Discomfort</b>	<p><i>Everyone who becomes an advocate had to go through that door where they take the first risk and realize, "Oh, that wasn't so bad"....So I would share and talk about the risk-taking...and how, all of a sudden, it is no longer risk-taking.</i></p>	<p>Share other men's successful experiences as well as their initial fears. Use the men's experiences in this report as conversation-starters. Sometimes it is best for majority-group members to have these conversations together so that they can air their concerns. <b>(See Talk to Other Men, p. 40, and Listen to Women's Stories, p. 37.)</b></p>

The Nutshell: Key Factor	The Details: Sample Verbatim Quote	Call to Action: Recommendation
<b>Lack of Time</b>	<i>People will say, “Right, but I have six other things on my plate”...and they’ll either be sympathetic...and they may even be willing to go help, but they won’t initiate anything.</i>	Time constraints are a real issue in today’s fast-paced workplace. Some of the men observed that often lack of time was an excuse to avoid advocacy, but they also noted that even for committed advocates, finding sufficient time can be a problem. Making diversity outcomes a part of accountability metrics and performance evaluations is an effective way to lessen the impact of time constraints. <b>(See Establish Accountability Metrics, p. 52.)</b>

The Nutshell: Key Factor	The Details: Sample Verbatim Quote	Call to Action: Recommendation
<b>Lack of Team Consistency</b>	<i>The second time around...it didn’t seem to go well...I served my duty for like, two or three years....I guess this is kind of like a service, you do it for some period of time, and you take some effort, some time, and then boom-boom, people move on.... You take kind of a volunteer role besides our so-called “day job,” and that’s something that kind of rotates.</i>	Establishing councils with rotating membership can make progress on policy issues more difficult, but on the other hand, it exposes a wider variety of people to the issues and involves them in devising and implementing solutions. If they are focused on particular problems, such as recruiting, or establishing a formal mentoring program, then these councils may be able to accomplish a lot in a short timeframe. <b>(See Recruit Women, p. 42; Increase Female Leader Visibility, p. 44; and Mentor and Sponsor Women, p. 46.)</b>

The Nutshell: Key Factor	The Details: Sample Verbatim Quote	Call to Action: Recommendation
<b>Lack of Authentic Leadership Support</b>	<i>The leadership was...willing to listen, and we had programs that we were starting to put in place — there were actual things that we were starting to go do....So we were on this kind of nice ramp...we were making the progress locally, but I had no luck really doing very much globally...the connection to the corporate end of this was cordial, but not helpful.</i>	Top leadership support is critical for institutionalization of changes and for making far-reaching policy and cultural changes. When leaders make a visible and resourced commitment to diversity efforts, it can determine whether or not these efforts succeed. <b>(See Challenge Alert: Senior Leadership Buy-in, p. 53.)</b>

## **SECTION 3:**

# **COMPELLING ARGUMENTS: WHY DO MEN THINK DIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT?**

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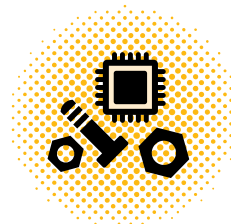
### **The Nutshell: Rationales for Diversity That Men Find Persuasive**

The men in this study gave many reasons for why they believe diversity is important. They also shared the reasons they use to explain its importance to others. Four reasons — or a combination of them — emerged as most prevalent. Three of these could be called “business-case” arguments: 1) to better reach diverse customer bases, 2) to fill talent needs, and 3) to achieve greater diversity of thought and innovation.

In the first business-case, or economic, argument, men noted that a global company needs to be diverse to appeal to its global customers and relate to its non-U.S.-based employees. The second economic argument proposes that hiring women and other underrepresented minorities would help employers find talent for difficult-to-fill technical positions. The third business-case rationale argues that because technical companies rely on innovation for competitive advantage, the diversity of thought associated with a diverse workforce leads to greater innovation. Seventy-seven percent of the men interviewed mentioned at least one of these economic arguments as a compelling reason for valuing diversity; in some cases, they themselves subscribed to these arguments, and in other cases, they believed that appealing to “the bottom line” was a useful way to convince other men.

The fourth reason for supporting diversity was the moral imperative to act fairly to all people. More than one-third of the men (38%) had been convinced by moral reasons to bring more gender diversity into the field of computing and to ensure that female technical employees were equal contributors once they were there.

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# The Details: A Closer Look at These Rationales and How Men Used Them to Talk with Other Men

## Diverse customer bases rationale

**Many interviewees valued diversity because they believed that diversifying their employee base would enable them to relate to their customers both domestically and abroad,** as this example suggests:

*I guess probably the most simplistic way to put it is the world is diverse. And if our customers are comprised of individuals with a multitude of diverse perspectives and backgrounds and attitudes, we need our organization to be as close as possible a reflection of that, to be able to have a better understanding, a better knowledge, a better empathy, and a better ability to cooperatively work among our teams.*

Whatever their definition of diversity, these advocates believed that a diverse workforce would help them relate to customers, which would in turn position them better in the marketplace. One man explained, *“So my perspective on diversity and inclusion is exactly that. I’m trying to figure out how to find the best talent in all these different cultural pools that exist out there, and how we bring them to bear so that we’ll be better than our competition. And we’ll be much more closely aligned with our customers.”* This man pointed out that pursuing diversity in his employee base wasn’t a feel-good undertaking, but rather his company’s economic survival required a change in workforce composition.

## Talent pool rationale

**An equally compelling argument for many men was the need to increase the flow of talent into their companies.** Most of the men interviewed reported having had difficulty finding a sufficient number of skilled employees to fill their hiring needs. One man explained why employee shortage was a convincing reason for him:

*Well, I think there are a couple reasons, one purely from a workforce perspective of this shortfall of workers...we can’t afford to not have one eye on the half of the population not being part of that workforce. There [are] practical issues alone, putting aside whether there is an ethical consideration being brought to the table. That is purely an economic issue.*

**Some men noted that recruiting women was important not only for adding those specific women to the technical workforce but because getting a critical mass of women into the organization was necessary for increasing female recruitment in the future.** Similarly, men discussed the need for a sufficient number of women in leadership positions to create a “tipping point” for attracting additional women. One explained, *“Until I get a broader population of female leaders in the organization, I don’t think that I’ll be able to attract the number of females to the extent that I want to.”* This man had focused on creating female leaders in his department, and then found that it was easier to recruit additional technical women.

**Recruiting a diverse workforce increases the flow of talent.**

Many interviewees recognized that the presence of women suggested to other women that the organization was inclusive and welcoming. Understanding this, some of the men felt trapped by a no-win cycle of not having women in the organization and therefore not being able to attract women. On the other hand, those who had taken more activist stances or had witnessed an influx of women in their departments generally felt optimistic that they could recruit and retain a critical mass of women.

## Innovation rationale

**Some men in the study had been convinced either by studies they had heard about or by their own observations that a set of diverse employees could come up with more creative solutions and products than a set of homogeneous employees.** Two examples illustrate this embrace of diverse perspectives:

*Yeah, I strongly believe the majority of innovation comes up from within the organization. Very rarely have I seen innovation that is truly top-down. And so, I think you want to have an organization that has a lot of perspective and has as broad of a reach across as much of the world, across as [many] experiences as you can. There are only some things that you can legitimately measure in terms of diversity, and female is one of them.*

*It's an area that I try to focus on, with the strong belief that the more diverse population that we have, the broader set of ideas and recommendations that are going to come in. As we get a broader set of ideas coming in, we'll just create better progress, and they [will] solve more and more problems.*

All three of these economic arguments for diversity are based on filling a need that already exists in the work environment: a connection with clients and customers, a shortage of technically skilled workers, or a quest for innovation. All of these “business-case” rationales also have a research basis (Catalyst, 2004; Doz et al., 2004; Gatton et al., 2007; Herring, 2009; Page, 2007). It is important to note, though, there were a cluster of men who, either instead of these rationales or along with these rationales, were motivated to change the status quo because they valued equity.

## Moral imperative rationale

**For many of the men interviewed, the economic arguments were not the only reasons they valued diversity, and for some, the bottom line did not even enter into their reasons.** The men who provided values-based arguments often used phrases such as “the natural thing to do” or “the right thing to do,” as reflected in the following excerpts from different interviewees:

*Yeah, the values versus economics. I mean, I understand the economic argument, but I don't think that's ever really been what motivated me. I think, in some sense, because really the stories aren't about economics — the stories are about justice.*

*We all believed in it, and it was the natural thing to do because it is a better result.*

*It seemed like the right thing to do. I don't think there was a time I woke up and I said this was politically correct, I should go do this. This was the right thing to do.*

*Yeah, I think that's probably at the core of my value system, is just treat people the right way, in a work setting or otherwise.*

Although a smaller proportion of men, overall, mentioned equity or fairness-based rationales compared to economic rationales, the equity rationale seemed to engender the most passion from the men. Previous research also has shown that a “sense of fair play” is the strongest predictor for being a champion for gender reform (Prime & Moss-Racusin, 2009). This finding highlights the importance and power of these moral arguments. As one long-time advocate in this study observed, *“My personal sense...is that it’s got to be around changing the mindset of managers and senior people up and down the corporation....And that’s beyond...getting the data in their hands in training or whatever...you have to do something radical to get there, and I’m convinced that it’s the stories.”* While economic arguments were important in gaining initial buy-in, many men suggested that it was the anecdotes and the moral reasons for change that motivated them to action and that kept them going. (See Listen to Women’s Stories, p. 37, for more information.)

**It should be noted, however, that not everyone interviewed was convinced that gender or racial and ethnic diversity was important to actively pursue.** Some men were supportive in principle but less active in their actions. These men felt that diversity could be beneficial, but that it is important to let it happen “naturally” or as society at-large progresses. In other words, they liked to think of what they did in support of technical women as “diversity-blind” — support that they would offer any employee who was a strong contributor. One man put it this way:

*The issue of diversity for the purpose of having a culture that is mutually supportive is a very important issue for me. Well, I should say it is a very important issue for a lot of reasons, but the issue of having diversity for diversity’s sake, I don’t know if that is a strong argument for me. I don’t know if that makes any sense, and I don’t mean that in a pejorative way, I just mean that I support women in the workforce just because they are strong contributors, and I respect and understand their position and try to help that along in a healthy way.*

Clearly expressing his support for diversity, but this man also stressed that he valued these employees not because they were women per se, but because they were strong contributors. Other men also described providing strong support for individual technical women, but like this man, they were suspicious of larger attempts to increase “diversity for diversity’s sake.”

**These men’s suspicions underscore two insights that are crucial for reaching men with similar views and concerns. First, they highlight the need to make the rationales for increasing diversity explicit and transparent.** As these men noted, the fact that women and members of other underrepresented groups can be strong contributors is one of the primary rationales for diversity efforts, but it is often not made explicit during implementation. Failing to do so increases the likelihood that some potential advocates may distance themselves from formal diversity efforts, even though they are taking actions on their own to support a diverse range of employees.

**The rationales for increasing diversity should be explicit and transparent.**



**Second, these men's suspicions illustrate the importance of addressing the "diversity-blind" question head-on.** While in an ideal world, "diversity-blind" approaches would make sense, research shows that these approaches tend to perpetuate biases, inequities, and unwelcoming conditions, especially in minority-majority environments (Ashcraft & Blithe, 2008; Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Tatum, 1997). Without information on the limitations of these "diversity-blind" approaches, however, potential allies can be left with the perception that the only options are either/or: "diversity-blind" approaches or "diversity-for-diversity's-sake" approaches.

**Companies need to make clear the limitations of "diversity-blind" approaches.**

## Using These Rationales to Convince Others

**Men highlighted the importance of clearly identifying and articulating the rationale for diversity throughout all levels of the organization.** In fact, they noted that a common pitfall of diversity efforts was this failure to clearly explain why diversity is important. One man put it this way: *"I'd say that any type of quota system that I've seen talked about or participated in, I don't think are effective at all.... So I think they're a real turnoff if you're told, 'We'll hire this percent' or 'We want to have the right mix.'"* He went on to explain that the rationales behind the pursuit of a more diverse workforce were critical for gaining his buy-in. He, like others, needed to understand why he should make extra efforts to improve diversity.

Several of the men elaborated on the pushback they had received to the idea of actively supporting workplace diversity. One man recounted how he shifted these potentially controversial conversations back to a combination of values and data:

*Yeah, I'll generally ground the conversation into a conversation about the value of having as diverse of a population as we can — whether that be female, whether that be location, whether that be background, whether that be style, whatever the case may be. And then, I'll generally reference either numbers that are well known... about what the average diverse population is for an engineering team... and talk about that this is an area that clearly we are not hiring a workforce that is commensurate with what... the population at large are.*

Similarly, another advocate talked about how he explained his rationale for diversity to other men who remained unconvinced:

*To me, changing the conversation to be around creativity.... Given the more creative workforce at the end of the day, our people are really the only true contending advantage, and so if we can get people realizing that we are not just trying to look good to the CEO. We are not doing this to meet legal requirements. That's important, but that is not the only reason. We are doing this because we want a better team, and we want to get better business results.*

This man's statement suggests that he often had to "change the conversation" to remove the focus from points of resistance and shift it to points of potential agreement.

**Shift controversial conversations to values and data.**

**An appeal to social justice followed by economic arguments was most effective.**

Some of the men in the study came to the conclusion that an appeal to social justice through personal stories (the moral argument), followed by economic arguments, was the most effective way to recruit more allies to the cause:

*I used to have the standard answers...which were, "Oh, in the United States it is a legal requirement....And that is why we are doing this, and it is really important that we create a workplace where people feel mutual respect." It's all the things we get trained about, you know, why diversity is important. But I decided to just come up with a more personal story, and then I'll explain the rational reasons to do this. But I wouldn't be overzealous about it.*

As hinted in his observation that he "wouldn't be overzealous about it," this man paid close attention to both the content and the tone of his message to other men. Other men also talked about the importance of tone when explaining rationales for diversity (For more information, see *Talk to Other Men*, p. 40). This thoughtful approach was common among the men who had spent years working on these issues.

Common to all these arguments for convincing potential allies are a combining of various rationales to steer the conversation to shared values. The men who felt that they had successfully made the argument to their superiors and peers also felt that they had enabled change. One remarked, "*We have had our numbers increase substantially. When I took over this particular division four years ago, our diverse population, our women population, was about 10%, and now we're well in the mid-teens, but it's something that we honestly try to focus on.*" He, like others, found success when he was able to get other people to work with him to take steps that would alter the status quo.



# Call to Action: How Can You Use This Information?



**1 Recreate these reasons for men in your organization.** Use the information in this section to develop convincing arguments for men who may not have developed or articulated their own reasons yet. For example:

- ⚡ Many of the men interviewed had been convinced by economic arguments at some point in their conversion to advocacy. Use the data published by NCWIT to show the projected employment shortfall in computer science and information technology (CS/IT) (<http://www.ncwit.org/edjobsmap>) and to show how diversity can contribute to innovation (<http://www.ncwit.org/scorecard> and <http://www.ncwit.org/thefacts>).
- ⚡ Hold conversations about diversity with men and women in a safe setting where their different reasons can surface. Once you know what drives them to care, then you can appeal to them more specifically.
- ⚡ Collect diversity data about your own organization that will convince the unconvinced. You may need to prove that there is little diversity in certain technical areas, or that few diverse candidates are being considered in the hiring process or included in the recruiting process. You may need to listen during conversations about hiring or promotion for hints that bias is at play, and then use these facts to make a case for more attention to diversity.
- ⚡ Don't underestimate the power of the moral-imperative rationale. Appeal to a sense of equity and fairness. When you talk with potential advocates, ask them if they would want their wives, sisters, daughters, or friends treated the way women are sometimes treated in your organization.

**2 Identify which arguments are most effective with different potential allies and advocates.** When you look around at your colleagues and supervisors, you probably can tell which ones seem to take ethical values-driven action and which ones are more motivated by practical or economic considerations. Use your understanding of the influencers in your organization to appeal to them with reasons that will resonate with them.

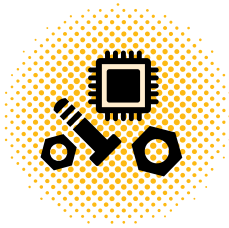
**3 Remember that combinations of different kinds of rationales can be particularly useful.**

## **SECTION 4:**

# **SPOTLIGHT ON WORK-LIFE CONCERNS: WHAT DO MEN SAY, AND WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR COMPANY POLICY?**

Work-life dilemmas were one of the most frequent topics of discussion in our interviews, with 72% of the men talking about the topic. Their varying experiences and perspectives shed important light on how we might move this conversation forward and improve conditions for both women and men in the technical workplace.

Because the overwhelming majority of our interviewees identified as heterosexual and married, our findings reflect this population. We acknowledge, however, that work-life concerns are important dilemmas for partners in a variety of relationships and for employees who identify as single; we invite future research to investigate how these issues play out differently in these varying circumstances.



## **The Nutshell: Men's Views on Work-Life and Company Policy**

In general, men agreed that competing work-life priorities were a significant concern for most employees, and especially for women. They expressed two different views, however, for why this was the case: “individual choice” views and “historical or societal” views.

These two views, combined with four contextual factors — men’s personal relationships, men’s professional relationships, company culture, and men’s role in their organizations — led men to very different conclusions about what the company could or could not do to address work-life issues.

A closer look at men’s evolving views reveal two critical inflection points for moving the conversation and company policy forward. These two inflection points surface in discussions about 1) “personal preference or choice” and 2) the problem being “too big” or “a larger societal issue.”

# The Details: Unpacking Men's Differing Perspectives and Implications for Moving Forward

## To what extent do men see work-life issues affecting the technical workplace?

**Men generally agreed that work-life issues are a significant concern for most employees, but that, to date, these dilemmas have affected women more than men.** This perception is consistent with previous research illustrating that women do share a disproportionate burden in this arena (e.g., Kirby & Krone, 2002; Moe & Shandy, 2010). Some men talked about this pattern in more general terms, primarily noting that they had observed their wives or female colleagues having to make decisions around these issues. A few of the men, though, talked in greater detail about the ways that they had struggled along with their wives, in some cases trying to find alternative solutions, but most often ending up in a relatively traditional place in which the woman cut back her hours or quit her job entirely. This man's story is illustrative of these patterns:

*When we were in grad school, we were like...it doesn't matter that one of us is a woman and one of us is a man...we're totally equal in every regard....You're gonna work on Wall Street, and I'm gonna do this consulting thing, and you know that'll all work out great, and it did for four or five years....And then we said...are we ever gonna go have kids? And so we both said absolutely, and we're gonna make that work too.... But, there's only so many hours in the day...so then it became a function of, well, who should adjust the balance, and you know that's a long conversation, right? And, frankly, we wound up in a very traditional place now. We talk about this frequently.*

In retracing these decisions, many of the men talked animatedly and in great detail about how deeply they and their wives wrestled with these dilemmas and how they had tried to find different or less "traditional" answers. Their stories echo previous research on heterosexual couples working in white-collar occupations (e.g., Moe & Shandy, 2010).

**In contrast, four men talked about how they increased their own family responsibilities or tried to actively encourage both men and women in their companies to take time for family responsibilities.** One man, a senior partner in a large technical consulting firm, said that his company had consciously taken measures to reduce traveling requirements so that both fathers and mothers could travel less and work flexible hours without hurting their standing in the company. Interestingly, he was also a notable exception who thought that — at least in his company — work-life concerns tended to affect women and men more equally. The remaining three men also said that they had either taken time off or had taken a job with a different team because it was an environment that afforded them more time with their families. None of these men felt that they had compromised their careers by doing so. These exceptions are noteworthy in that they highlight the possibilities for men — especially when supported by their company — to take on more family responsibilities without hindering careers.

**When supported by the company, men felt empowered to take on more family responsibilities.**

## What explanations do men give for why women tend to be more affected by competing work-life priorities?

### Individual Choice Explanations vs. Historical or Societal Explanations

Men differed in their explanations for why work-life concerns disproportionately affect women, with some men offering “individual choice” explanations and other men stressing “historical or societal” explanations. Of the 22 men who provided explanations, five men (23%) emphasized individual choice explanations while the other 17 men (77%) stressed historical or societal explanations (Table 4).

**TABLE 4: MEN’S EXPLANATIONS FOR WORK-LIFE PATTERNS**

Individual Choice Explanations: “That’s just the way it is” (5 men)	Historical or Societal Explanations: “We’ve made it the way it is” (17 men)
<i>I don’t have any hard statistical evidence to substantiate...but my sense is I think women ...are maybe not interested, in some cases, of putting in the extracurricular time and effort that I’ve seen from some of the men. But again, it’s very much an individual characteristic, so it isn’t to say that we don’t have super-high-achieving, highly ambitious women. It’s just that I think, you know, you take 100 men, you take 100 women...there’s going to be a greater portion of the men who are going to be willing to kill themselves in the hours and the time and the work.</i>	<i>I think men, because we’re trained from birth in this country, we think we should work as hard as possible for as long as possible and succeed and put food on the table.... Now, it’s very confusing, because the country is going through a transition where most...families have dual-working couples. And we haven’t completed that transition yet. Men aren’t used to the idea that maybe they would...take a bigger role in the family. Women are frustrated by the idea that they’re not allowed to focus on a job as much as a man.</i>
<i>Yeah, I have seen a few people, a few women...when they have a family, some women will stick it out and stay in the workforce; others will go home — it’s just a personal decision.</i>	<i>Women, feel more of an obligation, still, to be present for that part of the family stuff....It’s going to take more than a generation or two to get us to the point where society can accept complete parity in that regard.</i>
<i>Somehow the guys seem to work it out, but women bring it up and say, “I cannot do this.”</i>	<i>[Women have] a lot more challenges raising a family, and just historically, that’s just how we thought — particularly in the Americas over time,...right? We grew up, our fathers, me I am [in my late 40s]. As I said, I think about the generation before me — it was even worse.</i>



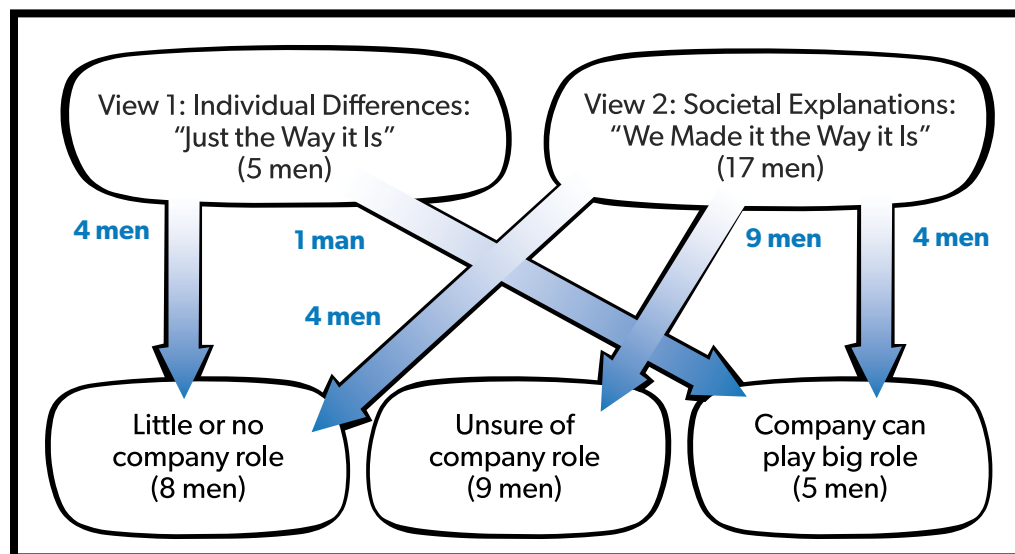
As these quotes indicate, the “individual choice” explanation frames work-life decisions as matters of personal preference or choice, and as simply the kinds of “trade-offs” or “sacrifices” that one has to make. As previous research has shown, this view prevents further consideration of whether the current choices are adequate or whether we should perhaps expand the range of choices (e.g., Kirby & Krone, 2002).

In contrast, many of the men who stressed historical and societal explanations tended to complicate the idea of “personal choice,” noting that women or men might make different choices if more options were available. As one man observed, *“I think about my own life...and my wife, and she would have probably worked longer if she had been able to find that option [flexible work] with her employer. She’s an engineer as well.”* Several other men said that it had been very difficult for their wives, many of whom had had high-powered careers (some of them also technical), to curtail these careers. Their wives’ experiences led these men to recognize that this was not just a matter of choice, and certainly not a matter of preference.

**The recognition that work-life decisions were not just a matter of choice did not necessarily lead these men to conclude that there was much the company could do about expanding these choices.** As the bottom row in the figure below indicates, only five men thought the company could play a significant role in addressing work-life dilemmas — four of the men who held societal explanations and one of the men who held individual explanations. These men strongly believed that companies have significant power to transform work-life conditions for women and men.

In contrast, the other 17 men were unsure or had concluded that the company could play little or no role in addressing these issues. In general, these men felt that taking advantage of work-life policies was “just not practical or realistic” or “not an option,” especially for those who want to get ahead. Prior research also has found that even when work-life policies are on the books, many employees do not feel that they can take advantage of them without penalty (e.g., Kirby and Krone, 2002; Simard et al., 2008).

**FIGURE 1a: MEN’S VIEW ON WORK-LIFE AND THE COMPANY ROLE**



Exploring how these men came to such differing conclusions is important for understanding how we might move these conversations and company policy forward.

**Witnessing successful work-life policies at use was a key factor in shifting men's thinking about the company's potential influence.**

## **So...what influenced the thinking of the five men who believed that the company *could* play a significant role?**

**These five men said that their thinking shifted primarily as a result of having witnessed or having been part of successful company efforts.** Similarly, men who had seen examples of successful colleagues, especially senior colleagues, taking advantage of work-life policies were much more convinced that these policies could work, even for those who wanted to “get ahead” or be leaders in the company. Also, men who had either taken advantage of these policies themselves or had positive experiences creatively working with their own employees to address their work-life dilemmas tended to be more convinced of the power of these policies for effecting change. Consider the following men's comments:

*We put together a whole work program for the first time ever a year ago, maybe 18 months ago.... We're encouraging people to work one or two days out of their house, right? Which we never thought that way...I wouldn't even think about doing that two or three years ago....And what I find is they're just as productive, and it's kind of getting over the mental block in your head, right?...We just never paid attention to it.*

*I think they [a few senior women] were able to influence the way the entire organization, including me, thought about work-life, and actually change...the way we really thought about it.... I will tell you that...I've seen a number of other women go to part-time, flextime, and it's accepted much more in this place than five, six, seven years ago. I think that's been a dramatic change.*

When the second man above was asked if he thought that this dramatic change also made it more acceptable for *men* to take time off for family responsibilities, he initially responded “no.” After pausing to reflect, he noted that while he had not noticed a dramatic increase in men taking advantage of flextime, he did recognize that some of his own behavior had changed, at least subtly. He recalled one particularly memorable conversation with a female colleague that had inspired him to start taking more time off to spend with his daughters. He went on to explain that he felt that this was important not only for his own family but also for making it more acceptable for his employees, male or female, to make similar choices.

**As these comments indicate, for several of these men, this had been a relatively recent shift in their thinking; not long ago, they also had believed the company could do little to address these issues.** This shift highlights the powerful impact company executives, and even managers, can have when they take the initiative to implement such policies and showcase their success.

## What can we learn from the men who were unsure or thought that the company could have little influence on these issues?

**These men arrived at the conclusion that the company could play little or no role in different but related ways (see Figure 1b).** The four men who held individual choice perspectives tended to conclude that because this was a personal choice or decision, the company could not or should not be very involved. The path to this conclusion, however, was a bit more complicated for the remaining 13 men. As noted earlier, these men frequently questioned that this was a matter of “personal choice,” talked poignantly and in great detail about how they and their wives struggled with work-life decisions, wanting and, in some cases, persistently trying to find alternative solutions to no avail. These men expressed sincere frustration over this situation and described themselves as at a loss to envision how it could be different. This frustration led them to conclude that “it just wasn’t practical” for companies to address the problem, “that it would never work,” or that the “problem was too big” and that we would just have to wait for society to gradually “come around.” This line of thinking also led some of these men to occasionally slip into using language about it “just being a personal decision or tradeoff.” The use of this personal-decision language revealed a tendency to fall back into the “individual choice” perspective, even though these men frequently challenged this perspective at other points in their interviews.

**In contrast to the five men who believed the company could play a significant role, most of these men talked about working in more traditional company or team cultures that placed premium value on “face time” or that offered less flexibility.** This seemed to be a particularly influential factor for some of the men who wanted things to change but did not think such change was “realistic.”

Interestingly men’s position in their company played a role in their work-life views, but less than one might expect. Most of the men interviewed were senior executives, but they held a range of differing positions on this issue; likewise, the few men who were more junior or mid-level managers also held a range of positions. In all of these cases, company or team culture (e.g., requiring extensive face time) seemed to play a more significant role than the interviewee’s particular role in his company. Men holding consulting or other jobs that required a lot of travel, however, seemed to be less optimistic about the role of the company in shaping work-life policy. Interestingly, a notable exception to this was the consultant (mentioned earlier) whose job had required extensive amounts of travel but who had seen his company move to a more local and community-based consultancy model that made it possible for employees to reduce travel, at least temporarily, and without penalty.

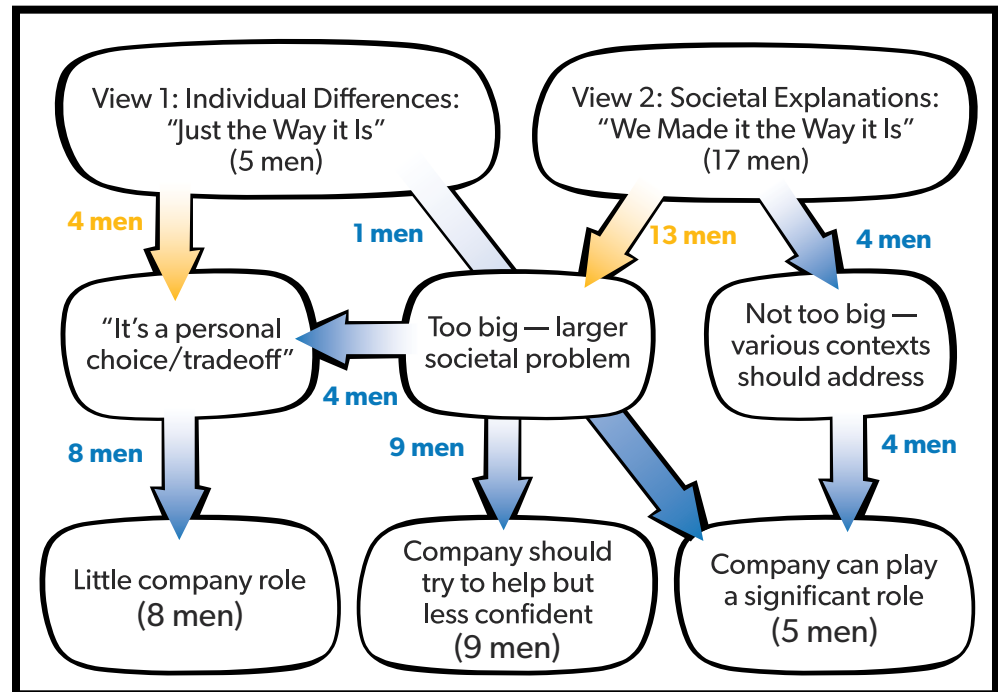


**Two critical  
inflection  
points**



**FIGURE 1b: MEN'S VIEWS ON WORK-LIFE AND COMPANY ROLE — CRITICAL INFLECTION POINTS**

→ = critical inflection point



Analyzing these men's detailed explanations of how they came to these conclusions reveal two critical inflection points — points where exposure to alternative experiences or arguments are particularly important for shifting one's thinking. As Figure 1b indicates, these inflection points are conversations about 1) "personal preference or choice" and about 2) the problem being "too big" or "a larger societal issue." Intervening in the conversation at these critical points is important for expanding perceptions and ultimate conclusions about what is possible when it comes to addressing work-life concerns.



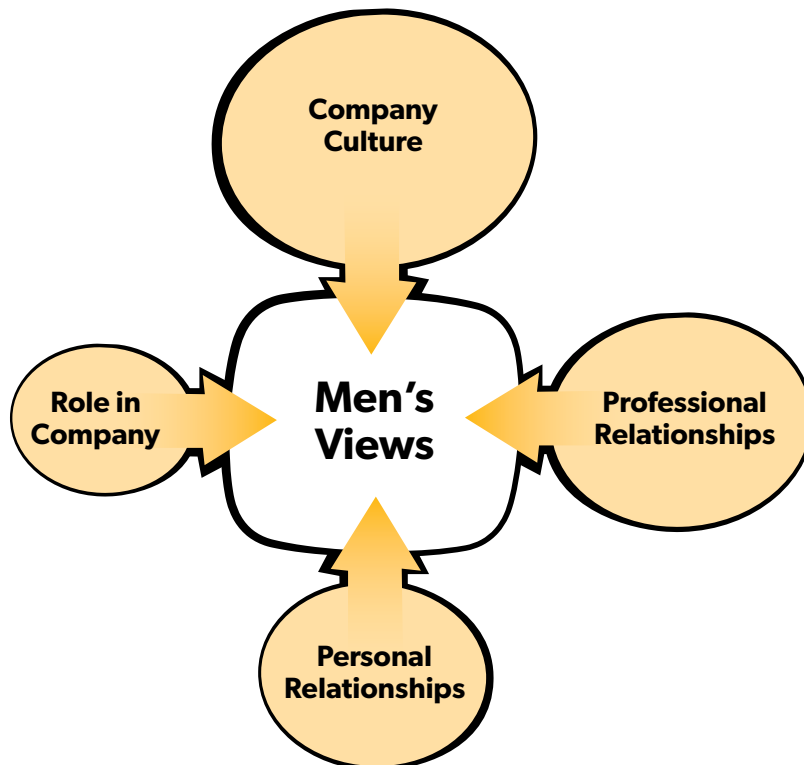
# Call to Action: How Can You Use This Information?



## INTERVENE AT THESE CRITICAL INFLECTION POINTS

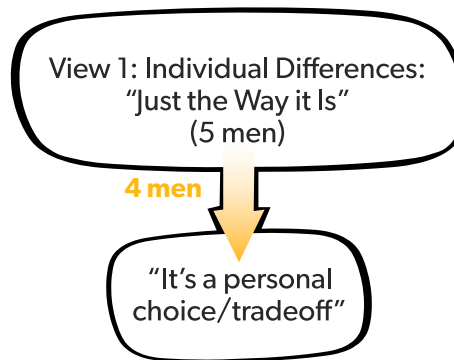
The figure below summarizes the four key contextual factors that influenced men's thinking about these issues, sometimes shifting perceptions at the critical inflection points.

**FIGURE 2. FOUR FACTORS INFLUENCING MEN'S VIEWS**



As noted earlier, **company or department culture** had the biggest impact on men's belief that the company could address work-life issues in significant ways. Only the five men who had seen successfully implemented policies or practices held this view. **Professional relationships** also had some impact in that some of these men had been influenced by watching colleagues (especially senior colleagues) and company leaders use these policies without penalty. Thus, even when company-wide change may not be possible, smaller, localized efforts can have a powerful effect on men's thinking. **Personal relationships** was the most influential factor in determining whether men held structural or individual views on work-life issues. As noted earlier, however, this was not enough to move them to believe the company could successfully address these issues. Lastly, in general, **men's role in the company**, had less of an impact on what men believed about their company's role in addressing work-life tension for employees. Men whose jobs required extensive travel, however, did seem to be even less optimistic about the power of the company to address these issues; even in these cases, however, company culture had a more significant impact in shaping their view of what was possible.

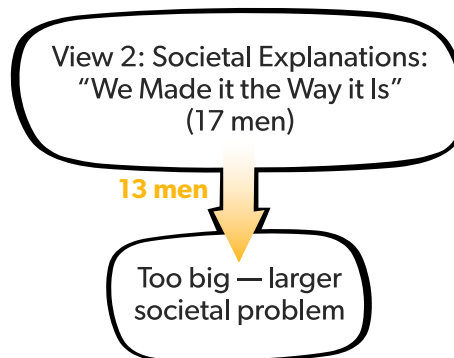
## Intervening at Critical Inflection Point 1: “It’s a Personal Choice”



### **Question concepts such as “It’s just a personal decision, choice, or tradeoff.”**

Research shows that these comments oversimplify the issue and can silence productive discussion (e.g., Kirby & Krone, 2002; Moe & Shandy). Personal relationships were most helpful in moving men past the “personal choice” inflection point. Men who were involved in their own struggles around work-life balance, or who had watched their wives or other colleagues struggle, were more likely to have a more complex idea of “choice or preference.” When comments about personal choice are made, try sharing stories that demonstrate that these choices are more complicated than simple personal preference. Talking about these men’s stories or your own struggles with these issues are ways to intervene and shift thinking at this critical inflection point.

## Intervening at Critical Inflection Point 2: “The Problem is Too Big”



**Question conclusions that “the problem is too big” or that “there is nothing the company can do.”** Provide examples and raise awareness about the success of work-life strategies in other organizations, or other departments or groups in your organization. Seeing these policies in action help illustrate that while the problem may also be a larger societal problem, the company can still have a significant impact. Positive examples at work — whether individual or company-wide — were the most powerful factor in expanding men’s vision of what is possible.

# Call to Action: How Can You Use This Information?

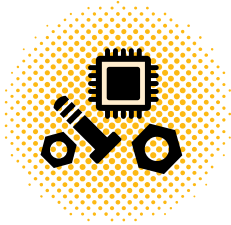


## WHAT WORK-LIFE PRACTICES DID MEN SEE AS SUCCESSFUL?

- 1 Enlist company leaders, or department managers, to publicly encourage flexibility.** Seeing policies in action — even on a relatively small scale — can change people’s minds about what is possible.
- 2 Ensure that leaders also model and take advantage of work-life strategies and policies.** (See Model Alternative Work-Life Strategies, p. 54.)
- 3 Encourage both men and women to take advantage of work-life policies.**
- 4 Implement “core hours” or “no-meeting Fridays” so that all meetings or important in-person events take place during these hours, not early in the morning or late in the afternoon.**
- 5 Allow informal time off as needed.** Flexibility in hours or the ability to make up hours later can help keep employees thriving.
- 6 Plan ahead and build breadth by making sure that no individual is the only person who knows how to do something.** This planning is better for the company in case anyone needs to take leave or cut back on hours.
- 7 Develop off- and on-ramping opportunities.** Some men noted that an important (but often overlooked) part of these programs is ensuring that employees’ early experiences with the company are rewarding so that they want to remain a part of the organization.
- 8 Be creative and enforce the intent of work-life policies.** Several men talked about how it was important to be flexible and creative, going beyond minimum requirements or rigid guidelines, in order to work with each employee’s situation.
- 9 For high-travel jobs, explore and implement creative ways to reduce the need for travel, at least temporarily.** Ensure that these practices don’t informally or formally penalize or stigmatize employees.

# SECTION 5:

## TOP 10 STRATEGIES: WHAT CAN MEN DO TO ADVOCATE FOR DIVERSITY?



### The Nutshell: The Top 10 Ways Men Advocate for Diversity

Extensive coding of the interview data suggested 10 primary ways that men acted as advocates for gender diversity.

This section illustrates each of these ways with example stories or quotes from the interviews, along with tips to try and information on some common challenges. These strategies are presented in this order based on a combination of factors: 1) ease of implementation, 2) logical order of implementation, and 3) how frequently they were mentioned.<sup>1</sup> A summary of these ten strategies is available at

<http://www.ncwit.org/top10maleadvocate> as a handy reference to use for inspiring men to consider different actions they could undertake.

FIGURE 3: TOP 10 ADVOCACY STRATEGIES



<sup>1</sup> For example, the first strategy, "Listen to Women's Stories," was mentioned often, is relatively easy to implement, and is important to do early in one's advocacy journey. The last strategy, "Outreach to Women's Groups," also is relatively easy to implement, but was mentioned less often; this does not necessarily make it less critical. In fact, research suggests that leadership involvement is important for making sure that women's groups are not trivialized.

# The Details: Unpacking the Top 10 Ways To Be a Male Advocate

## 1. LISTEN TO WOMEN'S STORIES

**Male advocates identified listening to women's stories as a crucial resource for their advocacy efforts.** Listening was important for at least two reasons. First, in order to take more informed and effective action, it was important to listen rather than make assumptions about problems or potential solutions. Second, after hearing these stories, men had more detailed examples to share and were better equipped to make the case for change when talking to others in the company. As one man noted:

*I've continued to believe that the stories are where the power is, right? Because every time I've seen the stories in action, people walk away thinking differently. It may take them a while. Some people are more empathetic than others, and they kind of will get these things more quickly. And others will want to argue with them, but I think nobody leaves the same as when they came in.*

**Importantly, these men revealed strategies that other men might use to listen to and learn more from their female colleagues.** First, some companies provided formal venues in which employees could hear about women's experiences and have conversations about them. Another started a formal collection of anonymous stories to add a human touch and to make the discussion specific for his own company.

**Other men's management style helped to elicit these kinds of stories informally from all their employees.** One manager described it this way: *"[I wanted to] make sure that everybody on my team was being successful, knowing each person individually, rather than thinking, 'Well, they are all just engineering units to me.' No! They are people."* Simply asking employees about their experiences in the workplace was the primary way that he and other managers got to know their employees "as people." Men who took this approach to managing tended to hear informative stories from female employees.

Managers also talked about learning to customize their support of technical women from conversations such as these. One man explained:

*I mean we are all people, right? So we all have different desires, and trying to figure out what the desire is up front instead of me showing up and going, "Oh you are a female, I need to connect you to another female so you have that support group." That may be the last thing this person wants. So, it's hard. You know, a lot of these things, I'm learning, there are always kind of this case-by-case basis almost, understanding what an individual needs and aligning support based on their needs.*

In sum, this type of management style helped elicit these kinds of stories from women, increasing these men's understanding and effectiveness in advocacy. Importantly, this approach is good not only for female but also for male employees.

**An inquisitive management style helped elicit stories from women, increasing men's understanding and efficacy in advocacy.**

**In addition to hearing from their own employees, men also reported hearing powerful stories from women who were senior to them.** In fact, many men reported turning points in their awareness when they found out that women they reported to and admired were actually struggling in the company culture. One man shared this turning-point conversation he had had with a female senior leader at his company:

*It finally started to hit me about gender diversity...she was a mentor to me. We were in a big meeting...and she made a comment about how difficult it was for her to be a leader in the organization as a woman. And so, here is someone who I literally was... putting on a pedestal, and now she is saying, "This is a really difficult place to work in, because I am a woman." And I...was like, "Wow," ...and I asked her after the meeting.... "Hey I want to go to lunch with you, I want to understand this. What does that really mean?"*

As noted in the Pivotal Experiences section (p. 9), this leader took an active role in extending this interaction by expressing an interest in finding out more. Taking this active role often enabled men to hear more stories than other men had heard. Indeed, some men in the study had heard few, if any, stories from women they knew, and some wondered how they might best go about learning about these stories. Using the strategies in this section is an important place to start.



### **TRY THIS TIP: HOW DO YOU START THE CONVERSATION?**

Below are some helpful tips for starting conversations with women about their experiences in the technical workplace:

1. Start by talking with female colleagues with whom you already have some level of trust.
2. If you're not sure how to begin the conversation, you can mention that you've been reading about these experiences and were just wondering if she had any thoughts on these issues.
3. Listen and ask questions to better understand the experiences being described.
4. If a female colleague happens to drop a casual comment about difficulties she has faced, mention that you would be interested to hear more.
5. Recognize that women are all coming from different places, so not all of them will want to talk about their experiences at this particular time, or ever.

## **CHALLENGE ALERT! WOMEN HOLD A VARIETY OF PERSPECTIVES REGARDING DIVERSITY AND DIVERSITY EFFORTS**

Men were sometimes unsure how to respond when women had different perspectives regarding diversity or diversity efforts. This confusion sometimes increased their fear about “saying the wrong thing.”

It is important to remember that women, like all groups of people, are not a unified, homogeneous group. Previous research identifies many reasons that women (and other underrepresented groups) might be concerned or have differing opinions about a workplace focus on diversity (Ashcraft, 1996; Claire, 1993, 1998). First, many women already feel that they stand out due to gender and do not want to exacerbate this situation. Likewise, women may have had negative experiences as a result of participation in these efforts. Other women are concerned about the perception that they did not succeed on their own merits.

These are common concerns for any group that is a minority in a given environment. In fact, one Hispanic senior leader in this study explained in great detail that he had held a variety of these positions himself at different points in his life. This firsthand experience helped him understand these concerns and work with other minorities who held differing viewpoints:

*So [when I was younger], I worked very hard in trying to learn English the best I could...I could not be too obvious to people that my background is Hispanic...so now I think...different. So when I ... interact with folks [that say], “Oh, I don’t want to be recognized [as a minority] or anything,” I try to share that I’ve been there, you know, [and] concluded differently...because I think after some point you realize... if you want to win all on your own, you end up having to deliver more than the average, than the majority, and that’s not a fair thing to do....But in my case, it took years to go through that process and realize that.*

**Meeting this challenge:** Being aware of and keeping individual differences in mind can help other men, even those who may not have had their own minority experiences, better understand why women and other underrepresented minorities differ in their perceptions and beliefs around these issues. These differences also underscore the importance of listening and actively inquiring to understand where individuals currently stand on these issues.





## 2. TALK TO OTHER MEN

**Male supporters said that talking to other men is critical for changing the status quo.** Their talk took many different forms: some were private and some public, some were intended to raise awareness and some to encourage action. The more active supporters had intervened privately with other men to correct discriminatory behaviors that they had witnessed. (For more information, see *Correct Microinequities*, p. 48.)

**To start these conversations, men used multiple strategies.** One man talked about bringing articles on diversity and technology to all-male meetings so that everyone could read the relevant stories and statistics and have that knowledge in common for future conversations. Others used brainstorming and open discussion to increase awareness. Still other men talked about the importance of repeatedly “poking” at the issue or dropping casual comments about diversity whenever the opportunity arose in formal or informal situations. One man explained this tactic:

*It's not an afterthought for me. I just come in thinking that way naturally, and I'll look around a table [of men] and go, "Where's the rest of the people," right? I'll ask questions in a not-so-confrontational way that kind of gives people the hint: "Wow, he's really thinking about this." And it's not like, lash out and "What's wrong with you guys?" ... And so I try to do that without, you know, without being, one, too confrontational and [two], I don't want it to be preachy, right? ... But I'll poke [at the issue with] people that either work for me or don't.*

**As in this example, many of the men noted the importance of tone in these potentially touchy interactions.** One man explained how he had learned to change his style after a bad experience.

*I think I'm starting to learn the right tone and level.... Yeah, I had one [experience]. I stood up in front of a bunch of directors, and I put up some statistics, and I basically yelled at them. I wasn't really yelling, but I mean metaphorically: "We can do better!" And what I got — I mean the immediate reaction in the room didn't matter, but what I got later was people froze up, because I was attacking. So I learned that it didn't work at all....*

**Men also observed that identifying which men are the most likely potential supporters was important.** Recognizing that not all men will be open to these conversations, one man in the study described how he decided which men to talk to about these issues:

*I think there's a category of men who don't understand why it matters and don't care and want to spend no time with it. I think there's a bunch in the middle... and when they get challenged, you know, they're smart people, so they think it through.... I spend no time in the [first] category, because those people aren't gonna get it, regardless. I spend most time [with] people that are sort of open to the ideas and are willing to talk about it and think about it.*

Many of the men found that once they started conversations with other men who were initially resistant, in most cases, they could help take these men a step further.



*I run into plenty [of men] who are open to the diversity conversation, but they're not — they don't feel a compelling need to do anything about it. And I would say most of their issues are built-in historical bias about the way it's been, or the way it is, and a lack of awareness that they have the ability right now to change it. And when I talk to them about it and engage with them, many of them start to, you know — the light bulb goes on, and they realize, "I'm helping perpetuate the problem." And I'd say a meaningful number of them then start thinking about it differently...just a little bit more of openness.... There's a category for people who just don't want to engage at all, and that's fine. I don't have time to try and convince them to engage. But the ones that are kind of resistant to it tend to be open to thinking it through. And in a lot of cases, as they think it through, they do eventually kind of come around to, "Oh, I get why I feel this way, and I'm not sure that's good long-term."*

While women also can — and do — hold these conversations about diversity with men, most of the men in the study believed that a different type of conversation could ensue if a man broached the conversation with another man. (See Make Discussions Less Risky, p. 55.)

## **CHALLENGE ALERT! SOME MEN MAY RAISE REVERSE-BIAS CONCERNS**

Some men may react with hesitation or resistance to diversity efforts because they feel threatened or are otherwise concerned about reverse bias. One advocate described his experience with this kind of resistance:

*Many times...some people are very easy to judge things too quickly...versus trying to really learn more about the stuff, so... "What about the reverse bias?...If I'm just a white male, I'm in trouble, right? Because I don't fit in any of those [diversity categories]." So those feelings of threats, they come very easily, and then you have to explain, "No, no....It's just opening a door that would be closed otherwise...and it is good for your business. Let me explain to you why. Let me give you examples of why."*

Another man used a direct — but congenial — approach, pushing one employee to think about how his own biases might be coloring his perspective. He recounted the exchange as follows: *"So his thing was, you know, 'It's actually hurting my opportunities'...he hinted [that this] was what 'folks are thinking.' I said, 'Folks that look like you?'"* This advocate then went on to talk with this employee about some of the economic arguments for diversity, noting that the company policies were not about *"percentages we've gotta hit...but that emerging markets are gonna be critical."*

**Meeting this challenge:** Be ready with historical, economic, and moral arguments, as these men were. Other men also used a combination of techniques, including explaining their rationales for diversity (as described in Compelling Arguments, p. 19), offering descriptive data and analogies, and appealing to the desire to right unconscious biases and historical wrongs. Building open and honest relationships with employees ahead of time is also important, so that when the moment arises, you can push them appropriately. The relationship the second man (quoted above) had built with his employee was crucial for enabling him to ask potentially threatening questions such as "Folks that look like you?" in a nonthreatening and productive manner.



### 3. SEEK OUT WAYS TO RECRUIT WOMEN

**Because men currently outnumber women in the field of technology, male advocates saw active recruitment as especially important.** In fact, this strategy was one of the most commonly reported ways that men in the study advocated for diversity. These efforts typically included inviting female students to apply for internships, requiring hiring committees to interview a certain number of candidates from underrepresented groups, and providing promising minority employees with development experiences. For example, one man took the following approach:

*I went to HR...and I said, "I'd like to have two male and two female candidates please," and they just stared at me and said, "I don't think we can — no one's ever asked that." And I said, "Well, that's okay." And they said, "I'm not sure we can find them." I said, "Well, I'm not going to interview anybody until I get two and two." So it took them like two months.*

After this initial instance, he routinely made requests like this of HR so that he began regularly receiving a more diverse pool of candidates than he had before.

Another man recounted going to his local university and listening to final student presentations and choosing the ones that he wanted to personally invite to participate in internships. Other men talked about similar efforts at universities and conferences — particularly conferences such as Grace Hopper. Still another man described a carefully constructed internship program that brought in Hispanic students who would otherwise not have considered or been considered by his company. He explained that to create this program, he had to consult with his legal department quite a bit and assure them that it was not a job reserved for certain classes of people, but rather a training scholarship opportunity. He then told each work group that in addition to their normal quota of interns, they could have an additional free intern slot if they selected someone from this program. He went on to explain:

*So the manager would say, "Well if I had six, now I get one more, and I can pick up another project. Oh, that's cool" ....And then I figured out, if I'm not careful in picking those interns, this may backfire. So what we did is.... Kids could not apply — their institutions would have to recommend kids.... We ended up with super strong kids, the best kids from the best schools. Then they go there and the [managers] were like, "Wow, these kids are very good." ...And several of those students came back paid by the teams...that's the key thing. It's taking away that bias at different kinds of levels that people may have without even knowing.*

This senior leader understood that he would need to convince some of his more skeptical managers that diversity did not mean lowering the quality of candidates, and that he needed to do so by ensuring that these were positive hiring experiences. Because he worried that some of these students might be subject to biases and judged more harshly than more traditional candidates, he took great care to make sure that these students were extra qualified. In the short term, this meant that he actually held higher standards for selecting diverse interns. While this approach would further disadvantage minority students in the long run, he felt that doing so initially was important in order to overcome people's initial unconscious biases. Once others saw the initial success and the program became established, these interns were accepted with the same enthusiasm as more traditional candidates.

**Other men also noted that it often took one or two successful rounds of a policy or program before the program was well-accepted and that extra care was needed to ensure that the first couple of rounds were successful.**

One man described this process, noting, *“It really takes three cycles in these big organizations to get things — the first time, it’s new; the second time, there it is again; and the third time, it’s like — the third time, it’s like, it’s here forever, right? And then so it — it’s funny out there...you can’t turn these things on a dime.”*

**Men also felt that it is important not only to actively recruit, but also to make clear to others on the team or in the organization why active recruitment is important.**

As noted in the Compelling Arguments section (p. 19), some men had seen other leaders or managers overlook this step, which, in the end, diminished buy-in from the team or the organization because they were left with the mistaken impression that the push for diversity was simply a “politically correct” effort.

**Providing a rationale was seen as particularly important when it came to active recruitment.** Some of the men in this study took great care in offering their rationales to their team or to the organization. Typically, they offered business-case arguments such as the following explanation: *“I was looking for the best people, but I noticed and always truly had valued the fact that different people tend to bring different perspectives to the table. The more perspectives, and the more variance on the perspectives that you get, usually the better answer you come up with.”*

One values-based advocate shared an analogy that had helped him convince other men of the importance of taking extra steps in the recruitment process: *“If you were driving across town, and every time you got to an intersection, you turned to wherever you saw the least traffic. Okay, so it would move you as fast as you could move, but it might not get you to the football stadium, or wherever, very well.”*

He used this analogy to point out that if you keep your end goal in mind — diverse, skilled hires — then you may have to move toward that goal inefficiently, but in the long run, you will be more successful.

### **TRY THIS TIP: ALLOW MORE TIME FOR THE HIRING PROCESS, AND REQUIRE DIVERSE CANDIDATES TO BE IN THE POOL**

Prior research shows that bias is diminished when the search committee is not in a hurry to make decisions and when two or more diverse candidates are among those interviewed (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010). Men in the study also described the importance of these two techniques in their efforts to diversify the workforce, as illustrated in these two excerpts:

*We have changed some of our approaches to where, when we have somebody to hire...we let them keep a spot open and keep looking for a diverse candidate. So what we have found is that when you constrain things to these little three-month windows of trying to hire, since population, proven with math, is so much smaller, you have got to try some different things....So we have had some success in trying some of those programs where we just get more thinking out of the box and be creative about how we approach it.*

*I’m not going to accept a candidate for a position until I know that you’ve seen at least a number of viable females for the position. And if that takes us a little bit longer to fill the position, so be it. That’s what I mean, is just at least having the willingness and the patience sometimes to do a little bit more to ensure that we get that balance.*

Creative recruiting need not be original; it just needs to be effective. See <http://www.ncwit.org/supervising> for more recruiting ideas relevant to the corporate environment.



## 4. INCREASE THE VISIBILITY AND NUMBER OF FEMALE LEADERS

**Male advocates observed that having diverse role models in leadership was important for the good of the company, for women's career development, for the success of recruitment and retention efforts, and for employee satisfaction and productivity.** The men interviewed focused on two strategies in these efforts: 1) increasing the visibility of existing female leaders and 2) identifying and actively developing future female leaders.

Men believed that increasing the visibility of current female leaders was an important part of larger recruitment, retention, and advancement efforts. As one man observed, "More senior women in the leadership team will attract more females....And that's just simply my approach." Similarly, another man explained:

*All of a sudden, it starts drawing additional people....So if other females see that person as a shining example and want to emulate them, they come in. They can draw talent both externally and internally....So you do that on multiple fronts, and that can really, really help the organization grow from that overall diversity and global-inclusion standpoint without putting in place big diversity programs that need a lot of administrative care to keep moving.*

Increasing the visibility of female leaders and their achievements sends a message that females can be strong contributors and that they will be recognized and valued for their contributions. This strategy also is important because it is something that can begin almost immediately, whereas developing new female leaders may take more time.

Recognizing the time factor, interviewees stressed that all efforts to increase female leadership must involve careful, planned talent development. One man described this process as "*constantly looking at our talent pool across the organization, figuring out where we can promote more women.*" This process often began with open conversations about what an employee seeks from her career. One man described the questions that he feels are important to ask:

*"What do they want to be doing down the road?" I don't care if it's working with me or not, or even working with the same company or not. "What are your goals? Where do you want to go? What do you to do? I want to help you get there."*

**Creating formal opportunities for visibility can not only help existing leaders but also increase the visibility of future leadership.** For example, one man shared that attending a mandated women-speakers series opened his eyes to the female talent they already had at his company:

*[Listening to women's professional talks], you find a lot of talent. And you figure, jeez, we should look to move her up in the organization, right? Because once people see that outside, it changes the perception of [this company], and it takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of time to change a perception out there. I think we're doing a much better job of changing the perception and becoming more flexible.*

**Once managers and leaders identified promising female employees, they took great care to develop these future leaders by encouraging them to take on growth assignments.** One executive reported an increase in the number of female leaders in his department due to active steps to encourage or “nudge” women to apply for higher positions. This simple act of encouragement can be very important, given research showing that women are socialized to be harsher critics of their work, sometimes making them more reluctant to apply for these positions than men (Correll, 2001; Zeldin et al., 2008).

This man and his team did not stop there, however. They also began to wonder how the women themselves viewed the processes by which they had attained their leadership positions. He remembered when the conversation shifted to consider the women’s perspectives:

*Now that we’ve got more women in leadership positions, the conversation started off like, “Wow! What are we doing right? We’ve got to do more. We’ve got to export it to the other parts of the company.” And then it came back to, did we do something right here? Let’s make sure that actually what we did was right...[or was] the process...as much as it could have been, or maybe the process was wrong.*

In response to their thoughtful conversation about female leadership, he and his team planned to interview their female leaders to determine what lessons could be gleaned from the women’s experiences. What is notable here is the team’s openness to learning from their existing employees and not assuming that an increase in numbers meant that they could stop paying attention. They were determined to both find out more and do more to ensure a healthy stream of successful female leaders in the future.

All the men in this study assumed that having visible female leadership has many positive repercussions for the organization, including customers, pushing innovation, providing role models, and attracting new female talent. The ones who were taking active steps to raise women’s visibility stressed the importance of doing so thoughtfully and methodically.

### **TRY THIS TIP: REDUCE BIAS IN PROMOTION PRACTICES**

- ⚡ Editing job descriptions for gender bias to avoid discouraging women from applying for higher-level positions.
- ⚡ Reconsidering leadership skills so that promotions are not just awarded for aggression when negotiation and persuasion are equally valued skills. See <http://www.ncwit.org/supervising>.
- ⚡ Make promotion guidelines transparent and available to ensure equal access and accountability.

See <http://www.ncwit.org/supervising> for resources to help implement these tips.





## **CHALLENGE ALERT! BEWARE OF THE GLASS CLIFF: MAKE SURE FEMALE EMPLOYEES ARE WELL-PREPARED FOR LEADERSHIP**

Because there are relatively few women in positions of leadership in the technical workforce, a company's desire to support them in their careers may end up inadvertently sabotaging their careers:

*We have to make sure that, like any leader, that we're growing these individuals at the right rate, the right acceleration. With the specific cost that I think we're pushing a number of our senior females just too fast.*

Research has shown that women are often placed on what is known as a "glass cliff": they are given leadership positions that are clearly fraught with potential dangers because of a company's preceding financial downturn. If the women fail, they are blamed for the overall failure, and the unpropitious conditions of their appointment are not taken into account. This occurs for women in the corporate world at a rate far beyond that of men (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

**Meeting this Challenge:** Carefully identify and methodically develop female talent with the woman's best interest in mind. Be careful not to inadvertently set new leaders up for failure.

## **5. MENTOR AND SPONSOR WOMEN**

**Men recognized the need for women to be mentored by senior leaders**, noting from their own experiences that all employees — regardless of gender or cultural background — can benefit from a leader who advises them and looks out for them. Similarly, the men also talked about the importance of sponsorship, which goes further than mentoring. As one leader explained:

*A sponsor is really looking much longer-term for the person, helping them get to new positions in the company, looking out for them over a longish period of time. And I think it's almost a little bit more sophisticated than the pure mentoring. Being the active agent for two or three people, helping them or helping the company get them in the right positions, and saying, "Hey, have you thought about this person when you are recruiting?"*

Mentoring and sponsoring were widely considered to be critical to helping women advance in their careers. Indeed, a few men reflected on how their own company leadership and promotion tracks might have been historically and systematically privileged in this regard. One man noted, *"It was almost always the men helping other men move up.... There were no women higher up; there was no one to pull other women up. It's that institutional and social structure combined to keep women from advancing."* He, therefore, believed that developing formal mentoring or sponsorship programs is crucial for overcoming these historical and structural obstacles.



While many men believed that female role models are important, men also recognized that a variety of male and female mentors would be helpful. The following quote demonstrates this awareness:

*I think what you'll generally find within a technology organization where there are a small set of senior female leaders — they're overwhelmed...with mentor requests. And so in many ways, I try to actually get women with senior men, because I think that there is a lot of good things to come from that in both directions. If a mentor relationship is working in a way that it should, both sides are learning a great deal.*

As the quote above suggests, formal mentoring programs often end up being attractive and interesting to both mentors and mentees.

Those men in the study who had served as mentors said that they had helped women with issues such as self-advocacy, positioning themselves well for promotions, issues related to work-life balance, and mid-career decisions. They also reported making their mentees more visible to other senior leaders and generally supporting them through interpersonal challenges at work. While mentoring takes time from both the mentor and the mentee, it can be critical for furthering people's careers and can encourage longevity with a company, particularly for people from underrepresented groups. For more information on mentoring programs and how they can be established or improved, see <http://www.ncwit.org/imentor>.

## **CHALLENGE ALERT! IT MAY BE TEMPTING TO CREATE "MINI-ME'S" WHEN MENTORING**

A few of the men recalled instances in which they had found themselves unwittingly giving women tips or advice that they later realized had not been very helpful. A common pitfall was to suggest that mentees act as they themselves would act in any given situation. One man vividly recalled one such instance from his early advocacy efforts:

*I sometimes went home feeling a little embarrassed....One pretty good story that I think demonstrates that was...I was [working with] a woman that had to go ask for a promotion...and I said, "Here is what you need to do....You need to walk into that room, spring the door open...look [name of manager] directly in the eye and say, 'I expect to be promoted this year. If you look at my track record...you always told me I was exceeding expectations, so I want to be very clear with you'.....So I said all of this, and I sat down, and I said, "Does that make sense?"....She looked at me and smiled and said, "That makes perfect sense. And that is the perfect way to do it, for you....I would never do that....I cannot do it...and it's just not going to work....So now why don't we brainstorm...about some things that I could actually do." And I thought about it later...it's a bunch of men trying to figure out how to teach women to go and be like men....Well, there are a lot of things wrong with that...after I got a little smarter about it, and I am still learning...who knows what I don't know!"*

**Meeting this Challenge:** This interviewee credited this and similar instances with changing his thinking regarding the equation of "type A" aggressiveness with success in the technical environment (see p. 51 for more information on this topic). He and other men stressed the importance of working with women and all employees to find the strategies that would work for them. They also said that ultimately, it would be good to shift the kinds of styles valued by the company.



## 6. NOTICE AND CORRECT MICROINEQUITIES AND INSTANCES OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

Several men talked about the effects of unconscious biases or subtle microinequities<sup>2</sup> and steps they had taken to address these — sometimes with their own employees or teams, and sometimes throughout the rest of the organization. However, not all the men in the study knew about unconscious biases or recognized them in the workplace. One man explained how he sees unconscious biases at play in hiring decisions:

*I don't think it's an outright choice that somebody's making. I think it's a lot of things during the interview process. You know, you are always trying to find the star. You are trying to find a good fit for the team...and a connection between you and that person. And I do think that it is harder to make that connection across the gender line. Again, I am just being totally honest with you. I do think those things kind of drive the ultimate choices, you know. If it comes down to two really, really great choices as far as just the resume goes, the intangibles kick in. And the person is gonna hire — 99% of the time, the person is going to hire the person they are more comfortable with...I think they are more likely to go with their gut feeling at that point. "I got two people at that point, you know, which one do I feel best about?" You know, they are not going to [consciously] boil it down to was he a male candidate or a female candidate, but certainly that could factor in there.*

This man's recognition of how biases typically play themselves out within hiring committees allowed him to talk about bias with his colleagues in a way that they could relate to. He found that his colleagues emerged from these conversations not feeling blamed, but rather recognizing that when they experienced "a connection" or "a gut feeling," it might be a sign that implicit biases may have been triggered. Similarly, many men highlighted the importance of questioning the idea of "fit" with the team, noting that this tended to be a subtle way for well-meaning search-committee members to inadvertently discourage the hiring of diverse candidates.

Some men had been able to hold conversations on their own that would raise individual colleagues' awareness, while others found it important to institute formal efforts to facilitate consciousness raising across a broader array of individuals. (See *Talk to Other Men*, p. 40.) Formal efforts were especially helpful when biases in the company culture were not recognized.

Along with raising awareness, many of the men took small — and sometimes large — steps to correct biases they saw in their workplaces (see Table 5). Several of the men talked about situations in which, because of the inherent power of their positions, they had been able to step in and personally correct an inequity.

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<sup>2</sup> Unconscious biases result when our preexisting beliefs and attitudes about particular groups of people subtly influence behaviors and decisions. Microinequities — closely related to and often caused by unconscious bias — are subtle, cumulative messages that devalue or discourage certain employees, often accumulating in ways that lead employees to underperform, withdraw, and ultimately leave the company. For more information on these dynamics, see *Women in IT: The Facts*, chapter 2, available at <http://www.ncwit.org/thefacts>. For resources to address these biases, see the *Supervising-in-a-Box* series available at <http://www.ncwit.org/supervising>.

**Men stressed the need to question each other whenever the idea of "fit" or other "gut feelings" arose in recruiting and promotion, as this tends to be a key way that biases can creep in.**



**TABLE 5: WAYS MEN CORRECTED INEQUITIES**

Intervention	Sample Verbatim Quote
<b>Change wording in job announcements and discussing bias with hiring managers</b>	<i>I went through all of our job descriptions and edited out where there was a gender bias, just in terms of almost what I would have considered beforehand throwaway words. They really weren't that meaningful. But then I went back and looked at them with a more critical eye and said, "No, these are really much more gender biased. They're going to put people off from applying." And then the people that do apply, we're going to apply that job description to the measurements that we employ when we are talking to them, but they are not appropriate. When I made changes across to some of my staff's job descriptions, [they asked] why am I changing their job descriptions? So we got to get into that discussion.</i>
<b>Read resumes gender-blind and interview all women in the applicant pool</b>	<i>Before we do any hiring, we do blind resume reads...I put the software at something like 300% so that when a resume pops up, I can't see names or any identifying characteristics. Then I read skill sets and then prioritize the resumes....Once we do the phone interviews, the blindness is kind of gone. [If there is a woman in the phone-interview pool,] I will bring her in for an interview. I don't do that for a policy sense, but, yes, for gender. I definitely would bring the woman in. It's just so rare to get the female resume, so when I do see that, I do bring in the women applicants. Always, if they make that initial cut.</i>
<b>Call attention to processes for deciding promotional opportunities</b>	<i>We have a promotion cycle where...we review people for promotion to the next level...I didn't tell people this in advance that we'd be timing the conversations...how long did we take talking about men versus women. And I found that we spoke 50% longer about the women than the men. And...I didn't specifically draw any conclusions but pointed out that this was interesting. I think most tech people, if you give them a very concrete thing like that, I'd say most people were shocked by the data; they didn't believe that...but I thought it was a very useful tool to say, are we inherently biased here for some reason? What's causing us to ask more questions about women than men?</i>
<b>Help women brag</b>	<i>Everybody wants to know about how to write a good brag sheet....One of the things that I do in the class is talk about models of success and what models of success are like. We talk about schemas a little bit. We talk a little bit about gender schemas, and I pulled out a little bit of the research that says, here is what happens...and why women get thought about differently than men.</i>





Intervention	Sample Verbatim Quote
<b>Encourage sharing all employees' successes</b>	<i>I ask each of my direct reports to kind of give me a synopsis of the accomplishments of the year and, you know, the only rule, you can talk about anything that you think is relevant, but you have to mention everybody in your group at least once, you know, as far as something positive that was done to contribute to the overall success that we've had as an organization. I publish that, and I distribute it to the whole group.</i>
<b>Actively include women's voices and opinions</b>	<i>A lot of times, the women's voice kind of gets drowned; it's left out in a sense. I tend to play that role of connector in group settings. So, I am always the one to say, "Wait a minute — [woman's name] has something to say...Or, you know, "[woman's name] looks like she wants to get in here, but [man's name], you just keep talking and we can't hear over you."</i>
<b>Check inappropriate comments from men</b>	<i>When somebody says something, and you get a reaction from somebody else in the room that is not an appropriate reaction, then you sort of try to call them out and make them listen.</i>

Every one of the actions listed above helped correct inequities that otherwise would have gone unchecked. The men cited in this section were all informed about the presence of unconscious biases, and consequently, they all took it upon themselves to raise awareness and change attitudes and behaviors. For more information on unconscious bias and what to do about it, go to <http://www.ncwit.org/resources> and select "unconscious bias" under "Categories."



### **TRY THIS TIP: CONTROL THE MESSAGES IMPLIED BY YOUR PHYSICAL OFFICE ENVIRONMENT**

Sometimes, seemingly unimportant details, such as wall décor or office organization, can send the wrong message. One man talked about situations in which desk placement influenced perception of female employees.

*There was one great story [about] a program manager. Her cubicle was outside her male manager's office, and people were constantly coming out just presuming she was the admin, could schedule a meeting. And of course, the solution was she moved her office to the other end of the building. I heard about this story a while ago. So I had my exec-admin about a year or so ago, promoted her into a business-operations manager role and she was like, "Okay, what are the first things you want me to do?" And I said, "The first thing I want you to do is move your desk as far away from me as you possibly can. Like, go and sit on another floor, go sit at the other end of the building, because if you stay close to me," and it was a problem because we have to keep shuttling back and forth, because we still work closely together. I said, "If you stay close to me, people will still keep giving you the old stuff, and it's going to piss you off, and it's going to confuse them. So go way away."*

Research has shown that the way a physical space is set up sends messages to people about whether or not they belong (Hattenhauer, 1984). In addition, gender-stereotyped environments have been shown to measurably reduce women's anticipated success in the field (Cheryan et al., 2009).

### **CHALLENGE ALERT! THE IMPORTANCE OF "TYPE A" AND "AGGRESSIVE" PERSONALITY STYLES IN TECHNICAL COMPANIES REMAINS A POINT OF CONTENTION<sup>3</sup>**

Previous research has investigated how the value placed on "aggressive" types of communication styles disadvantages talented women and men who do not subscribe to these styles (e.g., Babcock & Laschever, 2003; Eisenberg, Goodall, & Trethewey, 2010; Simard et al., 2008). While much of this research has focused on how women experience these dynamics, this topic also came up frequently in our interviews, providing a unique look into men's perspectives.

Interestingly, this was perhaps one of the most hotly contested topics, with men holding vastly different perspectives. Some men believed that "aggressive, Type A" personalities were inherently necessary for success in the technical workplace, while others felt that historically this has been true but that change was desirable. Comments such as the one below illustrate the first position:

*Oh, you have to be! If you're not aggressive in this field, you're done. You have to go do something else....What aggressiveness looks like in this field is that you got to be a self-motivator, period. If you're not a self-motivator, you're not going to make it....It's building relationships; it's not having that fear to go up to an executive and asking, will you be my mentor, right?*

Other men, however, insisted that the organization should evolve to value different kinds of communication styles and that this would actually be good for all employees, including men. As one man observed:

*We need to all work together the way we are....Don't make us all try to turn in to type-A, argumentative, pound-the-table bullies; instead, have the system be accommodating of the forceful type-A personality, you know...and have it also be accommodating of the person that is great at connectedness and wants the right thing to happen because it should happen, not because they have to go through a hissy fit for it to happen.*

While "Type-A, argumentative" styles and styles involving "connectedness" often are traditionally associated with men and women respectively, in reality, both women and men use a variety of communication styles. As a result, the push to value multiple communication styles, as this man suggests, ultimately improves conditions for women and men who do not conform to more traditionally "masculine" styles.



<sup>3</sup> We use the terms "Type A" and "aggressive" here because these were the terms most commonly used by the men when talking about this topic.

At this point in time, however, valuing multiple communication styles is especially important for women (and some members of other underrepresented groups), given research showing that when these employees do enact more “aggressive” communication styles, they are often penalized for such behavior in ways that men, especially white men, are not (e.g., Eisenberg, Goodall, & Trethewey, 2010; Hewlett et al., 2008; Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008; Simard et al., 2008). Indeed, some of the men recognized that this environment could put women in a double bind. While they saw this situation as unfortunate, they still insisted that an aggressive personality was critical for success in technology. Other men, however, saw this double bind as an important reason for expanding the kinds of communication valued in the company. One man described how his organization had, in fact, begun to change its values. The men’s vastly different views on this topic highlight the challenge in addressing biases that are based on personality and communication styles.

#### **Meeting this Challenge:**

**The first step is to open up honest conversations about this topic.** While there are no easy answers for addressing these differences, the fact that this was a significant point of contention among the men in this study suggests that it is an important topic. Men noted that having these conversations was difficult, but necessary for raising awareness of alternate possibilities.

**When and where possible, advocate for cultural change that values multiple communication and leadership styles.** Consider alternative personalities and communication styles when hiring, as different communication styles will work well with different clients and regions (e.g., some countries and clients do not respond well to aggressive, dominant personalities). When promotion decisions are being made, advocate for employees of all personalities, and speak up if a more passive but hardworking employee is being held back because of personality differences.

## **7. ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY METRICS FOR DIVERSITY**

**As the adage goes, what gets measured gets done. Many of the leaders in our study talked about the importance of establishing metrics and measuring progress for a variety of diversity efforts** — from examining the gender and racial/ethnic composition of their workforce to establishing metrics to diversify internship programs, interviews, new hires, promotions, and the composition of project teams.

As one leader explained:

*Right from the beginning, you've got to be very conscious — you've got to sit there and say, "You know, I've got to pay attention to how this is working. Am I diverse enough? Do I feel comfortable when I look at my workforce distribution? Can I say that I'm doing the right things?" Then after a year or two with that, it just simply happens. It does become the way you work. It becomes your standard process."*

**This man's experience underscores how a focus on metrics and measurement can create a ripple of change throughout an organization.** As mentioned in the Pivotal Experiences section (p. 9), men reported that collecting this type of data helped raise their own and others' awareness of discrepancies in the workplace. Other interviewees said that requiring people to collect data on their activities served to shine a spotlight on the need for diversity initiatives. Two leaders said that they require formal measurement from the people who work for them.

*I actually have at my organization level — [on a] quarterly basis, I get a snapshot of diversity, and we look how we measured — beyond just having a generic program in place, we measure our results. So we look at every promotion; we look at every hire. And we look across all the levels of leadership, all the way up to my level....It's not a quota-based model, it's focus-based, that's what I like to call it....Because it's important that we pick the best talent, no matter what we do. But that really then leads back to how we do talent development.*

*So you [have] a plan for the year, and the plan is based on you setting your milestones or goals....This is what you expect to do, and this is how we're going to measure it... which is actually a good thing. It forces you to sit down and think about what you do. And I was always asking them to put one in about diversity.*

All the men who discussed metrics felt that instituting formal measurement and accountability enabled changes in both procedure and attitude. When leaders show their active interest in diversity, managers and employees are reminded of this priority on a regular basis. This focused integration has the potential to change the culture. Metrics with enforced accountability alert people to inequities and set the stage for long-term change.

## **CHALLENGE ALERT! SENIOR LEADERSHIP BUY-IN FOR ACCOUNTABILITY IS CRUCIAL FOR COMPANY-WIDE SUCCESS**

Research shows that top leadership commitment is one of the most important elements for creating company-wide change (e.g., Kalev et al., 2006; Mannix & Neale, 2005; Metzler, 2006). Many of the men in the study were members of the executive team in their companies and could provide this support themselves. Those who weren't emphasized the need for buy-in from top leadership to establish metrics and institutionalize systems of accountability. As one man observed:

*I think formalizing it and having top leadership buy-in is critical. I think you need to make sure that you get the senior leadership team buy-in and some type of formal review process to keep it on everybody's radar...making sure everybody is sensitive to it. But it needs to be something that is definitely on the radar screen for the senior levels of the company.*



In some organizations, however, obtaining this buy-in can be a significant challenge.

#### Meeting this Challenge:

1. Identify and meet with other like-minded individuals in the organization, and brainstorm ideas for making the case and gaining this kind of support.
2. Identify one or two likely advocates at the senior level whom you might approach to get their support initially. Access resources for making the business case with senior leaders at <http://www.ncwit.org/thefacts> and <http://www.ncwit.org/scorecard>.
3. Start small. Many of the men in this section identified successes that they were able to achieve simply by working at the team level. Showcasing these successes can be a persuasive way to argue for replicating these strategies throughout the organization.

## 8. MODEL ALTERNATIVE WORK-LIFE STRATEGIES AND ENCOURAGE USE OF EXISTING POLICIES

**Men recognized that, although flextime or other work-life policies might be in place, the implicit culture of an organization often discouraged taking advantage of these policies.** Flextime and telecommuting were not standard practice in many of the organizations included in this study, and many men were skeptical about the power of the organization to successfully address these dilemmas. (See Work-Life Concerns, p. 26 for more detail.)

Many of the men, however, supported flexible work hours for their own employees, allowing them to work from home one day a week, for instance. Some of these men admitted having been wary of these alternative work arrangements at first, but changed their minds once they either watched their employees become more productive or needed an alternative work arrangement themselves. Two men talked about this change of perspective:

*I find that some people that are challenged with their personal demands, that they are better employees, because if you give them a chance, they are going to put in hours night and day that normally you wouldn't expect. But they'll meet and/or exceed what you want them to do.*

*I let them work one or two days out of their houses. I wouldn't even think about doing that two or three years ago, right? And that's the difference today, and what I find is that they're just as productive.*

These men noticed what the research shows: that alternative work-life arrangements can actually increase work output (Richman et al., 2008; Roehling et al., 2001). For more information about flexible arrangements, see <http://www.ncwit.org/the facts>.



Some men went beyond theoretical and logistical support for solutions to work-life dilemmas by publicly using leave or telecommuting policies and setting aside time for themselves to attend family events. Men agreed that people in positions of power should allow for and also model creative work-life balance strategies if these practices are to become accepted.

### **TRY THIS TIP: SCHEDULE FLEXTIME FOR THE ENTIRE DEPARTMENT**

One way to encourage use of company flextime policies is to institute broad-stroke policies that apply to everyone. When everyone is participating, then individuals don't feel guilty and don't feel that they are jeopardizing their career when they work alternate hours or telecommute. As this man noted:

*[Employees] will opt to not take advantage of some of these flexible work programs. And so the recommendation the team came back with was, let's identify one day a week, and let's basically designate that day as nobody in the division is able to schedule meetings — it's a no-meeting day. And what the recommendation was, that the reason why that's important is that it addresses the concern that people have of missing something.*



## **9. MAKE DISCUSSIONS OF GENDER LESS RISKY**

**Men observed that it was sometimes easier for them to bring up gender issues because they were unlikely to be perceived as speaking in their own self-interest.** About half the men believed that when men advocated for gender diversity, they might be seen as more “credible” or “selfless,” since they were not as personally invested in the outcomes of such advocacy.

One man described how he actively assumed the role of advocate in a hiring situation to relieve the pressure from one of his female colleagues:

*There's a meeting to discuss hiring, and the woman manager is the one pushing for the woman hire, right? Then I think...people can sort of roll their eyes and say, "Oh you are just pushing, you are just saying that because she is woman, right? And you are a woman." So I try to avoid that. If I see a good woman candidate, I don't want to leave — [woman's name], who is my colleague in this meeting — I don't want to leave [her] in the position of having to sort of advocate for the woman candidate. If I think she is good, I'll speak up for her first to make sure that it doesn't fall on [woman's name].*

Likewise, another man noted, *"If you are in the minority group, and you are advocating for the minority, you become "the vocalist." ...I think that, generally, that puts people into a frame of mind. From my own experience, I have always found it easier to advocate from a majority position."*

**Another man agreed that men can be convincing representatives for gender issues but noted that it should be done carefully.**

*Sometimes, when a woman is advocating — I'll just state a few obvious things first — it is going to come across like women trying to lobby for the rights of women. As a man, on the other hand, you can...say, "No, this is just important for all of us." But then there is also a more subtle or complicated thing about lobbying for something and you are not really qualified to speak to the issue. The way I have coped with this is to try to use the stories I have heard and say, "Well, here is what is going on out there," and "Here is what I am hearing from people."*

While acknowledging the potential risk for women in such discussions, about half the men did not think that gender mattered when it came to advocacy. One explained:

*In the big scheme of things, I would say no. And why I would say that is, because if the person is a true advocate and is a true leader, and they can — so they're doing it for the right reasons, and that becomes transparent. I'm advocating on this for all the right reasons; it's just something that I believe in and I'm passionate about, and I'm going to lead our organization in this direction. If they are truly doing it for the right reasons, and they truly are transparent and candid, I don't think it matters.*

**No matter the gender of the advocate, there may be nervousness about bringing up topics of diversity.** One man talked about how he overcame that hesitation: *"At first, I thought I was — I got pretty nervous at doing it, at first, the first couple times, but then I realized, 'Hey, they actually listened to me. That's pretty good. Let's try this again.'"* It is important to recognize that even though male leaders may hold positions of power, they may also feel vulnerable when bringing up "risky" topics. As many of the men noted, taking small steps in advocacy can build confidence and lead to more significant actions later.



### **CHALLENGE ALERT! BE CAREFUL NOT TO SILENCE MINORITY-GROUP MEMBERS**

Some men worried that while they thought that they could be helpful as advocates and make the conversation less risky, they might simultaneously "speak out of turn" or say something that they were not really qualified to say. A related challenge is that while it can sometimes be easier for majority-group members to speak up on behalf of diversity, this also can lead to a reinforcement of existing power relationships, in which issues, ideas, and solutions only become credible or important when majority members bring them up. This may seem like a no-win situation, but there are useful strategies to prevent this.

**Meeting this Challenge:** Majority-group members can speak up and make situations less risky while at the same time partnering with women or other minority-group members to make sure that they also are heard in these conversations. Several men said that they had actually strategized with women before meetings to make sure that they both had a part in the discussion in ways that felt comfortable for both of them. If you witness an instance in which someone is silenced, it also can be helpful to debrief afterward and strategize for the future.



## 10. WORK WITH FORMAL AND INFORMAL WOMEN'S GROUPS

**Many of the men in this study observed that it had been important for those in positions of power to actively and visibly support groups established for women and other underrepresented employees.** They observed that such support is vital not only because it strengthens individual morale, but also because it strengthens the status and influence of these groups within the organization. The men reported a number of different ways that they had shown support, including participating when invited, requesting invitations to attend, providing funding, and even making sure that other men, especially top leadership, supported, attended, and interacted with these groups as well. As noted in the Pivotal Experiences section (p. 9), attending groups such as these was sometimes a powerful first experience for learning about these issues.

**Some men, whose awareness had already been raised by either personal or professional experiences, talked about additional ways that men can support these groups.** They described joining women's organizations at their companies. One explicitly "joined on as a male advocate for the women's organization," another said that he sat on panels and contributed to group conversations, and others described attending events that the women's groups sponsored, as in this example:

*"We as the executive team went and spent an evening with [the women's leadership council]. We sat through the whole agenda, listened to them speak, and then we spent a bunch of time with them afterwards hearing their thoughts on how they thought [company name] was moving towards more gender diversity. So now we... all go and attend those sessions at least twice a year, attend their meetings, and they also have them quarterly amongst themselves. And, you know, we have learned a lot from them on how we drive more gender diversity."*

**Some leaders described active participation in women's groups, beyond attending and listening.** For instance, one man joined a technical women's group as the resident "male advocate" and served as a liaison to more male-dominated teams in the organization. Another was invited by a women's council to provide input on a particular issue and ended up participating in the group for more than two years and helping them put forward policy changes for the entire organization.

The men in this study reached out to women's groups and supported their efforts in a variety of ways. What they all seemed to have in common was a respectful approach in working with these groups. They recognized that the women's groups were self-governing and set their own priorities. The men sought to find ways that they could further those agendas rather than imposing their own.

### **TRY THIS TIP: ARRANGE FOR A GROUP OF MALE AND FEMALE EMPLOYEES TO ATTEND THE GRACE HOPPER CELEBRATION**

Many interviewees had been positively influenced by alliances with organizations that focus on women's representation in computing, such as NCWIT and the Anita Borg Institute, or by attending The Grace Hopper Celebration for Women in Computing.



*Women in my organization would come to me every so often and say, “Can I go to Hopper?” ...Then I and our CIO went, and we just had doozy of a time. It was wonderful....I made a whole bunch of contacts there and started getting people to provide resumes...and I am taking all the women in my organization. I’ve told all of my directors and senior managers, which is about 15 people — male or female, they are all going. They are all going to go and attend the conference, because I think it will be an eye-opener for the men.*



### **CHALLENGE ALERT! WOMEN’S GROUPS ARE NOT A SOLE-SOURCE SOLUTION**

When asked about his involvement in diversity initiatives, one man, who was relatively unaware of diversity issues and less active in his support for technical women, mentioned a women’s group at his company. He had only vague ideas about what they did in this group and had never inquired about it. In his mind, though, his company was well on track for honoring diversity because this group existed.

**Meeting the challenge:** This example and others in which the men knew that there were women’s groups, but had no idea what they did, suggest the importance of men reaching out to these groups to learn more, and of the groups themselves publicizing their foci and inviting influential men to their meetings and events. Operating women’s groups in isolation diminishes the status and potential influence that these groups can have.

# Call to Action: How Can You Use This Information?



Some men in the study used just one of the strategies described in this chapter, while most used a combination. Many factors mediated the success of the men's efforts, including the men's personalities, their relative power within their organizations, and the organization's readiness for change. It is worth noting that of the four men who were theoretically supportive but inactive in this area, none had tried a single one of these strategies. Use these ideas to help move men from support to action.

- 1 Consider ways that you might share some of these strategies.** Just because men are theoretically supportive does not mean that they feel confident about how to act. Even men who had employed some of these strategies expressed a desire to find out more about what they could do. A good starting place for helping men take action is to share what other men have done in corporate settings. The *Top 10 Ways to Be a Male Advocate* resource is a handy brochure that captures the essence of the strategies presented in this section (<http://www.ncwit.org/top10maleadvocate>). Sitting down with a potential ally and explaining one of the more relevant strategies in detail, while sharing quotes from men in the study about how they thought about it, will help make the strategies seem more actionable.
- 2 Use this information to identify potential allies and advocates.** If you have seen a man in your organization use any of these strategies, then you can identify that person as a potential advocate for technical women. It may be useful to hold a conversation with him, telling him that what he has been doing was recognized by this research as a promising strategy. It is also an opportunity to share other actions that he could also take.
- 3 Use this information to start formal or informal discussions with larger groups of women and men.** Male-only, female-only, or mixed groups can compare their own experiences and challenges with those included here or in the *Top 10 Ways to Be a Male Advocate* brochure. This discussion can help refine and tailor these strategies to fit your organization's environment.
- 4 Remember that a variety of people implementing a variety of strategies over time is what will eventually change the status quo.**

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We started this research with the assumption that men were an integral part of the gender-equity equation in the tech industry. We ended the research with a deeper understanding of what arguments and experiences draw men to advocacy, as well as some concrete ideas about what sorts of steps they have taken to ensure a more diverse workforce and leadership team.

We learned that experiences of being a minority or an outsider and watching what their wives, mothers, and daughters had experienced were some of the influential personal experiences. Learning about the ways that their female colleagues and superiors were struggling with being a minority in the workplace, losing talented female employees because of work-life imbalances, or needing to use family-leave policies themselves were some common professional experiences that led men to become advocates for diversity. We have seen the many different ways that male leaders have shown their support in the workplace, from seeking out and listening to individual women's stories to changing recruitment, promotion, and hiring practices company-wide.

Through the rich qualitative data from this study, you have witnessed the men's thoughtfulness, their many nuanced perspectives, and, in some cases, their transformation over time. It is clear from the data that all the men in this study were part of a continuum of support for gender diversity. The most activist among them had had their awareness raised at multiple points. A series of experiences and conversations had prompted them to become advocates and to feel comfortable using their influence.

Many of the men believed that concrete steps could be taken to ensure a more diverse, equitable work environment — steps such as creating accountability infrastructures, recognizing and examining unconscious biases, and holding open conversations about gender and fairness. Some men offered advice for enlisting other men to the cause. This advice included providing data on inequity, encouraging male employees to have female mentors, creating empathy, and appealing to a sense of fairness. Both women and men have a role to play in bringing more women into the technical workplace and ensuring a welcoming and creative environment once they are there.

We end with nine recommendations for all our readers, male and female:













## Nine Final Recommendations

- 1** Draw information from this report to help you identify potential male allies and advocates.
- 2** Use the rationales for supporting diversity provided by the men in this study when talking with potential male allies and advocates in your organization.
- 3** Consider ways of recreating some of the personal and professional experiences that these men had in order to enlist other men.
- 4** Think of ways that you yourself might use some of the Top 10 strategies. How could you also share them with others?
- 5** Take the parts of this report that resonate the most with you to start formal or informal discussions with groups of women and men.
- 6** Share examples of successes with recruiting, hiring, promotion, and work-life balance programs company-wide to raise awareness and confidence that things can change for the better.
- 7** Enlist top leadership support to facilitate the development, implementation, and enforcement of far-reaching policies.
- 8** If you don't have access to top leadership, focus on departmental managers, encouraging them to enforce existing policies and implement the many promising practices for improving diversity.
- 9** Above all, don't be discouraged by lack of progress. It takes a variety of people implementing a variety of strategies over time to create visible change.

# APPENDIX:

## METHODOLOGY AND PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

This report is based on in-depth, semi structured interviews with 47 men from technical companies or departments. The research team worked with the NCWIT Workforce Alliance (WA) to identify likely participants for the study. Fourteen companies are represented in the study. WA members used the criteria below for identifying and recruiting men from their companies. Men recommended for interviews engaged in at least one, and usually several, of the following kinds of activities:

-  Raises awareness within the organization (or externally) about the importance of women's participation in technology, diversity, and innovation.
-  Participates in internal organizational gender-reform efforts — e.g., diversity committees, teams, or other kinds of groups working on issues related to gender.
-  Participates in outreach efforts to increase women's participation in technology.
-  Sets (or helps implement) policies or programs designed to increase women's participation in technology.
-  Makes an effort to formally or informally mentor technical women.
-  Makes an effort to sponsor technical women or make their accomplishments more visible.
-  Encourages technical women to pursue or apply for advanced positions.
-  Encourages girls or young women to pursue education and careers in technology.
-  Talks with colleagues and employees about unconscious bias and inclusive communication strategies.
-  Intervenes when witnessing inappropriate or differential treatment.
-  Seeks out diverse perspectives when making decisions.
-  Significantly participates in domestic work.

All men held leadership positions in their companies, and most had technical backgrounds in either computer science or engineering. The characteristics of interview participants are shown below.<sup>4</sup>

Profile of Participants	
<b>Age</b>	Range: 36-60 years old
	Average: 50 years old
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White: 68%
	Latino/Hispanic: 14%
	Asian: 5%
	African American: 3%
	Native American: 0%
	Other: 11%
<b>Marital Status</b>	97% married
	3% single
<b>Wife Employment Status</b>	56% stay at home
	22% work-part time
	19% work-full time
	4% declined to state
<b>Parenting Status</b>	86% have children
	91% of these have at least one daughter
<b>Years in Computing/IT Field</b>	Range: 17-40 years
	Median: 25 years
<b>Level of Influence on Policy and Hiring in Organization</b>	High influence: 41%
	Medium influence: 30%
	Low influence: 29%

<sup>4</sup> We were unable to collect data about all characteristics for every participant.

Before beginning the interviews, the research team drafted potential interview questions and worked in conjunction with the WA to develop the final semi structured interview protocol. Sample questions included, but were not limited to, the following:

- ⚡ Thinking of the various places you've worked or over the years, how would you describe the general environment for technical women in computing/IT?
- ⚡ To what extent have you been involved with policies or programs to attract and retain more women in computing and technology (or other diversity policies, programs, or efforts?)
- ⚡ What other kinds of things do you do to promote gender (or other types of) diversity?
- ⚡ What role do these policies or programs (or other efforts that you've described) play in the technical workplace — why are they important or necessary? (Or are they?)
- ⚡ What experiences inform your thinking about these issues or prompted you to support gender diversity in the technical workplace?
- ⚡ What has helped you be successful as you have supported gender diversity in computing? Or more generally, what do you think makes diversity efforts successful?
- ⚡ What experiences have made it difficult or have discouraged you from supporting gender diversity in computing? Or what has kept these efforts from being successful (or limited their success)?
- ⚡ To what extent do you talk with your male colleagues about these issues, and what is that like?
- ⚡ Thinking back on the ways that you've seen diversity efforts be more or less successful, what advice would you give to others?

Follow-up questions were asked as appropriate to probe further into men's individual answers. Interviews ranged from 45 to 90 minutes and took place primarily by phone, though some were conducted in person. Approximately half the interviews were conducted by a male researcher, and the rest by female researchers. All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Transcriptions were then analyzed with qualitative software by multiple researchers. To begin the analysis process, the research team established a set of a priori codes based on our research questions. Each researcher independently read through a subset of interviews, identifying themes and additional codes. The research team then met to discuss initial themes and to compare coding patterns, establishing inter-rater reliability. Example code categories included "experiences that influenced men's thinking," "kind of advocacy men participate in," "reasons men think that diversity is important," "things that make change efforts successful," and so on. Once all coding was clear and consistently used within the research team, each of the remaining transcripts was then coded by two different analysts. Throughout the analysis process, the research team met repeatedly to compare coding and themes and to develop or refine additional codes.



Our people are really the only true advantage....We are not doing this to meet legal requirements....We are doing this because we want a better team and we want to get better business results.

– male interviewee



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