



Attracting and Retaining Technical Women—What Works?

Strategies Within—Forging New Realities for Women in Science, Engineering, and Technology...

The voices of 100 women, together, welcome the challenge...

The voices of 100 women, together, take the challenge...to create a brighter future by sharing personal experiences and success stories to expand and enhance National Policy to attract and retain technical women for a stronger, more vibrant US workforce.

How can we recruit viable candidates using best practices?

*If you don't like
something, change it.
If you can't change it,
change your attitude.
Don't complain.*

*—Maya Angelou,
Author, Actor*

- Build and publish on the web a recruitment kit containing strategies and tools to recruit more effectively—with the goal of constructing a diverse candidate pool.
- Develop a registry of graduates to allow rapid compilation of statistics—to greatly aid in the formulation of diversity goals and targets.
- Establish a web-based National Repository of Resumes to help employers consciously build a diverse pool of well-qualified candidates based on keyword-information to match experience with job requirements.
- Establish a web-based National Repository of Job Openings for scientists and engineers and prospective employees.

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How can we motivate employers to recognize outstanding women?

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead,
Anthropologist

- Provide incentives to employers who have advanced capable women in their organization.
- Provide avenues for women to pursue education and training in leadership and management to ensure a well-qualified pool is available when opportunities for advancement arise.
- Establish a prestigious Presidential Shattering the Glass Ceiling Award that fosters competition to win, recognizing organizations that have done an outstanding job of bringing women into senior positions.

How can we establish a flexible workplace to accommodate family needs?

Having family responsibilities and concerns just has to make you a more understanding person.

—Sandra Day
O'Connor,
Supreme Court Judge

- Construct a national standard for basic, flexible workplace benefits (e.g., paid maternity leave/paternity/family leave, support for affordable, universal childcare).
 - Provide incentives (i.e. tax breaks) for companies that institute these policies and funding for expansion of existing programs.
- Establish a national awards program to recognize and reward employers.

How can we reshape the image of scientists and engineers?

Risk: You cannot discover new oceans unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore.

—Unknown

- Fund a national image campaign—change the stereotypical image.
- Foster the idea that science and technology are dynamic fields.
- Provide positive role models.
- Establish a national policy that encourages cooperative arrangements between the real science and technology culture and mass media to interject these images into daily life to help sustain the more direct efforts.

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*If we keep on doing what
we've always done, we'll
keep on getting what
we've always got.*

*—Barbara Lyons,
Writer/unknown*

What are the next steps?

Capture the ideas generated during the Forum to initiate a grassroots effort at each participant's organization to broadcast this message at both local and national levels.

Some examples from the local efforts are:

- Institutionalize the goal of diversity and provide the tools to achieve it. Make diversity a part of the strategic plan of the organization and a vital component of its values. Senior management must model the way by seeking out women for top jobs and grooming the women at lower levels of the organization for future advancement.
- Make flexibility an integral part of the workplace:
 - Offer flexible schedules to employees and encourage managers to work with their employees to make this happen, injecting a new vision of the “best” career path.
 - Define “flexibility” for employees as having the freedom to adjust their career trajectory to accommodate the other forces in their lives, including family issues.
- Create a toolkit for recruitment and retention of women—helping hiring managers build the most inclusive candidate pool possible. Provide female candidates time during the interview process to discuss issues with women in the organization (e.g., local women's organizations [internal–external], school districts, day care facilities, etc.).

Together, we can make a difference!

These ideas were generated at a one-day Forum sponsored by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, and the Society of Women Engineers. A more comprehensive report is available: T. Back, D. Bishop, R. Bonanno et al. “Attracting and Retaining Technical Women—What Works?” LLNL UCRL-AR-137573,

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