

## Why does it matter?

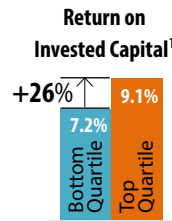
The business case is clear. Among other benefits, gender diversity can:

- Increase financial performance;
- Provide access to more talent;
- Strengthen innovation;
- Improve governance.



Gender diversity has a positive effect on **team innovation** in radical research<sup>2</sup>

Having a critical mass of 30% or at least 2 or 3 women on a board **decreases groupthink**<sup>6</sup>



Fortune 500 companies with the most and least women Board Directors; 2004-2008

Also: +16% Return on Sales<sup>1</sup>

**Women directors:**

improve a firm's ability to navigate complex strategic issues<sup>3</sup>



positively influence board strategic direction & tasks<sup>4,5</sup>



## First Steps: Communication

What do you communicate about your company? How do you represent science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers? Do you:

- Use gender-inclusive language?
- Use photos that show both men and women in technical roles?
- Talk about your corporate values?
- Tell people that you value diversity?

Check: websites, reports, staff meetings and communications, shareholder meetings, etc. Are you communicating, explicitly and implicitly, that your company is a great place for both men and women in STEM?

## First Steps:

### People-Friendly Policies

It isn't about women-friendly policies - it is about people-friendly policies. Create a welcoming workplace that respects employees' lives outside the office:

- Offer flexible working arrangements;
- Encourage parental and adoptive leave for both men and women;
- Provide benefits that work for people in a wide range of situations;
- Provide professional development.

Check: do your policies match your practices? A policy that staff feel they cannot use is worse than no policy at all.

## Be a Leader

Everyone has a role to play in increasing gender diversity in STEM. No matter what your position is, there are three simple things you can do to be a leader:

1. Be aware of your own biases. Take the Harvard implicit bias tests at [www.implicit.harvard.edu](http://www.implicit.harvard.edu).
2. Be aware of how you represent STEM and your organization, personally and at work.
3. Advocate for and implement people-friendly policies.

If you would like to learn more about gender diversity, visit [wwest.mech.ubc.ca/diversity](http://wwest.mech.ubc.ca/diversity)

## On Microaggressions

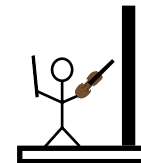
Sometimes unconscious, microaggressions are subtle, mundane exchanges that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to individuals based on group membership.<sup>11,12</sup>

Microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassaults perpetuate stereotype threat<sup>7,8</sup> and create a hostile work environment<sup>9,10</sup>.



## On Implicit Bias

Unconscious bias refers to the assumptions and conclusions we jump to without thinking.<sup>14</sup> Everyone has unconscious biases. Being aware of these biases is the first step to combating them.



Women are **50%** more likely to advance in an orchestra audition if they **can't be seen**.<sup>13</sup>

## On Stereotype Threat

Stereotype threat refers to the concern with being viewed through the lens of a stereotype.<sup>17</sup> It is caused by cues in the situation that remind people of negative stereotypes.<sup>15,16</sup>

Anxiety over confirming these stereotypes can impair an individual's ability to perform up to their full potential.<sup>18</sup>

## References

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## Recommended Readings

For more information on these topics, please consider reading the rest of this series at [wwest.mech.ubc.ca/diversity](http://wwest.mech.ubc.ca/diversity).

## About eng•cite

eng•cite is the working name of the Goldcorp Professorship in Women in Engineering at UBC. The Professorship – established in 2014 – is a vital aspect of the UBC Faculty of Applied Science's efforts to promote the engineering field to young women, to meet its goal to increase female enrollment in Engineering to 50% and to address a national shortage of Engineers expected by 2020.

The Goldcorp Professorship is a catalyst of change for the engineering field, with a commitment to help UBC become the national leader for gender diversity in engineering. Dr. Sheryl Staub-French, who holds the Professorship, works with teachers, counsellors, parents and high school students to promote engineering education, and provide mentorship and role models for young women who might not otherwise consider or pursue engineering education and careers.

Find out more at: [engcite.ca](http://engcite.ca)