

MAVEN AND ICTC WORKSHOP SUMMARY

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Maven is ICTAM's latest initiative to champion gender parity in Manitoba's tech sector. ICTC is a not-for-profit national centre of excellence that's creating a data/measurement model through its WIT Connect Initiative. They have partnered with us to address barriers for women in tech and create solutions to attract, advance and retain women in the community.

WORKSHOPS

Maven hosted four half-day workshops on October 24 and 25, 2018. Each was facilitated by ICTC's Maureen Ford, Senior Program Manager.

AREAS REPRESENTED

Project Management	Student
Human Resources	Insurance Analyst
Architect	C-Suite
Academics	Electrical Engineer
Business Analyst	Quality Assurance Analyst
IT Support	Recruiter
IT Management	Library IT Coordinator
Software Development	Aerospace Project Manager
Career Services	Not-for-profit

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES

Women currently in STEM, ICT/digital backgrounds, women who have exited and those in post-secondary education were invited. Approximately 45 women attended these sessions.



THINGS WE HEARD FROM YOU

WORKPLACE INITIATIVES/ CULTURE/POLICIES

- Policies like work from home and flexible hours are integral to improving gender parity. It's hard to find part-time employment – which is a huge challenge for many women.
- Men can sometimes create a dominant and aggressive culture and there needs to be more empathy and understanding.
- Women are comparatively more receptive to constructive feedback which can be interpreted as being submissive.
- It's integral to protect/include people with disabilities and chronic illness in workplace policies.
- The more you deliver the more you are expected to deliver. Working long hours and travelling constantly was one former Fortune 500 company employee's experience.
- Maternity leave can be a long time away from a career which can wear on your confidence.

GENDER PARITY

- Working in a male-dominant sector like construction made having a woman boss refreshing.
- Women found men were offered more for the same position. Being transparent about salaries in an organization can help pay equity.
- Some organizations have a lack of diversity at work and a lack of support and inclusion for the LGBT2SQ+ community.
- There is an assumption within companies that men make better developers.

- Women have to either attend professional sports and golf outings or miss out on networking opportunities.
- HR needs to support the idea that harassment takes many forms, which will help more women come forward.

ACADEMIA

- Creativity dies when pressure is on grades and compliancy for scholarships. An educator noted parents as one of the driving forces behind this thinking.
- There is an expectation to create more curriculum like coding, but nothing is being taken off student's plates.
- Having more work-integrated projects in K-12 can help students find the best fit for them.
- Teachers should approach technology as a chance to explore problem solving and creativity.



PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Mindset is more important for a career in technology than a degree. There are a lot of "rockstars" out there who did not go through the schooling system. Let kids be creative.
- Pay it forward by mentoring women in the community.
- Be an advocate of using gender neutral language.
- Blow your own horn – it was observed that it's easier for men to take credit. Women need to get better at taking ownership of their work and standing out.
- Offer training and personal development while employees are away on maternity leave.
- Personal information from resumes should be stripped off by HR before hiring managers review.
- Career development and succession planning in an organization can create retention.
- Start from top management and includes lowest level employees
- Leaders work with employees to investigate their long-term goals
- Create a safe environment to seek change in your role

EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVES

The second day welcomed employers, government and education stakeholders who hire STEM, ICT/digital backgrounds and skilled trade workers. Both men and women were invited to these workshops. Approximately 30 people attended these sessions.



30 PEOPLE ATTENDED

ISSUES IN ATTRACTING WOMEN

- Women are more likely to have gaps in resume.
- Terminology used in job ads can dissuade women from applying.
- Sometimes re-skilling programs have a stigma that the people coming out of them might have been fired or were not be a good fit in their prior organisation.
- Women are not represented enough in each level of the company.
- Too much focus on qualification rather than skills and competencies. It's important to utilize transferrable skills to help make the transition into new work environments.
- Lack of flexibility hinders retention for women.
- HR questions can limit the process to attract some people. Processes should be deliberately and intentionally supporting diversity.
- People working on personal projects outside of work reinforces unrealistic expectations. One woman had different values because she wanted to leave her work at her workplace.

POSITIVE STEPS FROM SOME ORGANIZATIONS



- Better work-life balance and wellness programs.
- Use of tools to remove gender specific terms in a bid to make job posting gender neutral.
- Encouraging women internally to apply for promotions.
- Regular feedback loop with employees on benefits and perks.
- Having specific resource groups for women.
- Maternity benefits are a mechanism to retain quality employees.
- Support in terms of training and reimbursing costs from those trainings.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Canada-Manitoba Job grant is an employer-driven training support program that assists employers to obtain skilled labour. A tech focused initiative for women could help in cross-skilling and attracting and retaining female employees.
- More community impact projects in K-12 could help gain problem solving skills and show students the impact of the work being done in real -world scenarios.
- Many women are in administrative roles which have a lot of cross-over with ICT careers. Providing the opportunities/awareness to women who might not know of these opportunities.
- Men need to act as allies and support the advancement of women in organizations.
- We need to encourage men to take more paternity leave and take care of their sick family members. If we can get more men taking these leaves-there will be way more focus and support for these issues.