Convening tech leaders to find solutions and take action

Massachusetts has one of the highest concentrations of high technology employment in the country and a diverse base of established and emerging technology clusters. **Improving opportunities for women to thrive and advance into leadership roles in organizations that drive our economy is a priority.**

Following discussions at the Massachusetts High Technology Council's December 2018 and February 2019 board of directors' meetings, a team of directors has developed a program to guide successful efforts in recruiting, retaining, and promoting women into leadership responsibilities across our organizations. Our development team agreed on a process of building a menu of specific practices and/or recommendations in the following categories:

- **Data**: Framing the business case and measuring success

- **Best practices**: Assembling and sharing leading recruiting, promotion, and retention practices

- **Culture**: Sharing how organizations can enhance leadership engagement to drive change

- **Off-the-record "Best Practice" roundtable discussions:** Hosting quarterly discussions (open only to Mass. High Tech members) to discuss how to drive change within Massachusetts tech companies

As described by Massachusetts Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, **"The Massachusetts High Technology Council (MHTC) Women in Leadership Initiative** is a strong example of impactful collaboration among leaders from Massachusetts businesses, professional services and academic centers. Its 'leaders helping leaders' model to identify and expand effective employer practices presents a uniquely promising opportunity for employers to participate in helping solve an important challenge: closing the leadership gap between men and women in the workplace, and I encourage organizations across the Commonwealth to participate in this initiative."

MHTC, together with reacHIRE and knowledge partner McKinsey & Company, held a roundtable hosted by Care.com on July 25, 2019 to discuss the foundational challenge of *recruiting* women. The following memo summarizes the discussion at the roundtable as well as findings from the McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org 2018 Women in the Workplace study.

For questions, input, or further information, please contact Megan Ann Greenfield, McKinsey & Company partner, at **Megan_Greenfield@mckinsey.com**.

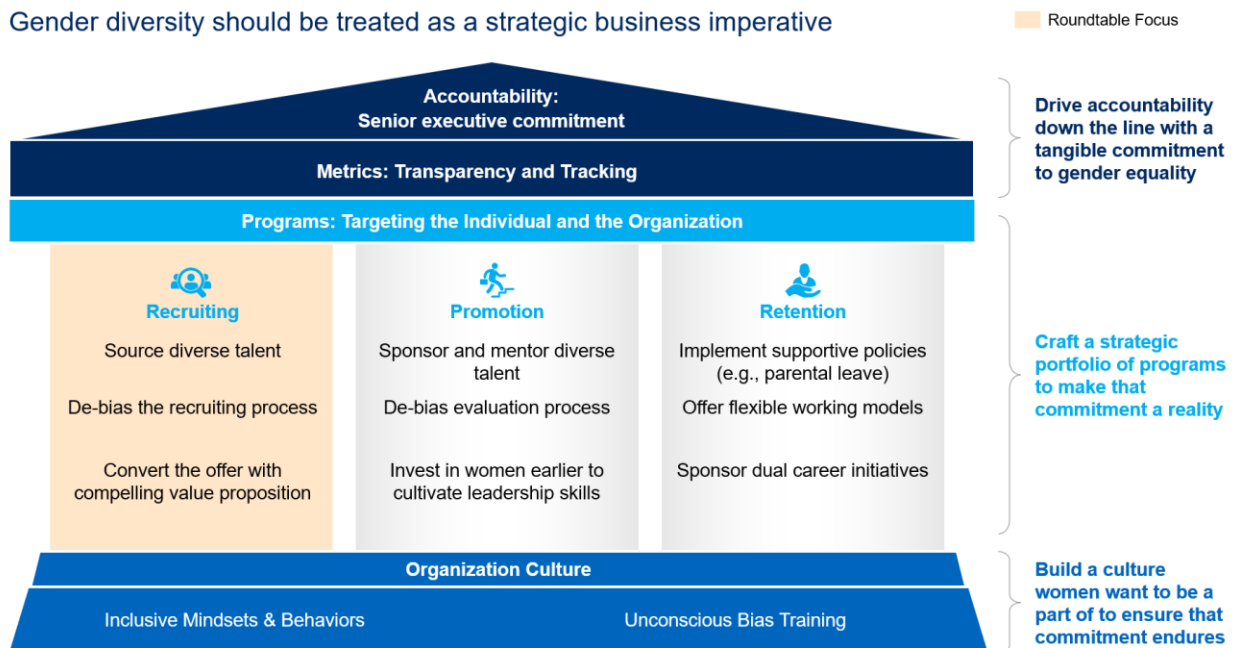* * *

The state of recruiting women in high tech

According to the 2018 McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org Women in the Workplace (WIW) study results, corporate America has made negligible progress toward improving women's representation. Women remain significantly under-represented at all levels of organizations. Hiring and promotions have been identified as two of the greatest drivers of women's underrepresentation. Despite stated corporate commitment to improving diversity and inclusion, fewer than 1/3rd of companies set diversity targets for hiring and promotion, fewer than 1/4th use tools to reduce bias in the process, and fewer than 1/5th require unconscious bias training for employees involved in the selection process

Gender diversity should be treated as a strategic business imperative. To do so, organizations should ensure three critical elements:

1) **Strong top team accountability and commitment** to gender equality,
2) A **strategic suite of initiatives around recruiting, promotion, and retention** to ensure women progress in the pipeline, and
3) **A culture** of inclusive mindsets and behaviors

Exhibit 1: Gender equality framework

Gender diversity should be treated as a strategic business imperative

Roundtable Focus

Accountability:
Senior executive commitment

Metrics: Transparency and Tracking

Drive accountability down the line with a tangible commitment to gender equality

Programs: Targeting the Individual and the Organization

Recruiting	**Promotion**	**Retention**
Source diverse talent	Sponsor and mentor diverse talent	Implement supportive policies (e.g., parental leave)
De-bias the recruiting process	De-bias evaluation process	Offer flexible working models
Convert the offer with compelling value proposition	Invest in women earlier to cultivate leadership skills	Sponsor dual career initiatives

Craft a strategic portfolio of programs to make that commitment a reality

Organization Culture

Inclusive Mindsets & Behaviors   Unconscious Bias Training

Build a culture women want to be a part of to ensure that commitment endures

To drive both broad and tactical initiatives meant to improve gender diversity and inclusion, efforts should be business-led and HR-enabled to work. The remainder of this report-out includes tactical steps to address some of the most common obstacles to gender diversity and inclusion in the recruitment and hiring process. These actions include those sources from both the 2018 McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org Women in the Workplace study and the MHTC Women in Leadership Recruiting Roundtable discussion.
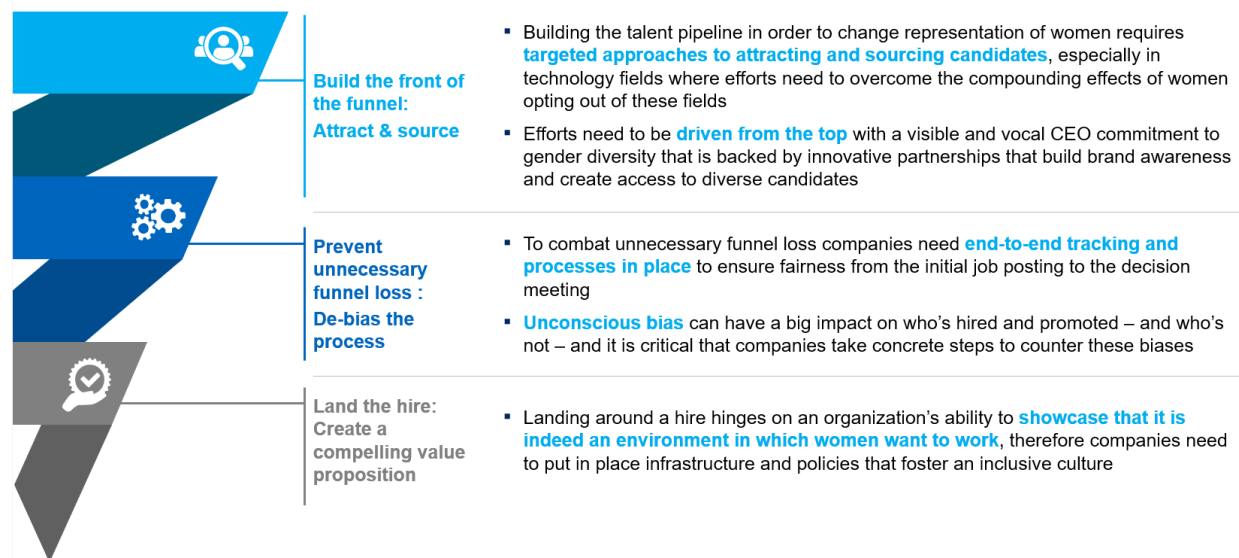
Improving recruiting of diverse profiles

In order to recruit more diverse talent organizations, organizations should have strategies that address each stage of the recruiting funnel (Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2: Recruiting framework

Leading organizations have focused initiatives on each stage of the recruiting process

Build the front of the funnel:
Attract & source

- Building the talent pipeline in order to change representation of women requires **targeted approaches to attracting and sourcing candidates**, especially in technology fields where efforts need to overcome the compounding effects of women opting out of these fields
- Efforts need to be **driven from the top** with a visible and vocal CEO commitment to gender diversity that is backed by innovative partnerships that build brand awareness and create access to diverse candidates

Prevent unnecessary funnel loss :
De-bias the process

- To combat unnecessary funnel loss companies need **end-to-end tracking and processes in place** to ensure fairness from the initial job posting to the decision meeting
- **Unconscious bias** can have a big impact on who's hired and promoted – and who's not – and it is critical that companies take concrete steps to counter these biases

Land the hire:
Create a compelling value proposition

- Landing around a hire hinges on an organization's ability to **showcase that it is indeed an environment in which women want to work**, therefore companies need to put in place infrastructure and policies that foster an inclusive culture

Build the Funnel: Sourcing and attracting

Building the talent pipeline requires targeted approaches to attracting and sourcing candidates, especially in technology where efforts need to overcome the compounding effects of women opting out of these fields.

What works:
- **Demand leadership commitment:** Make a vocal and visible CEO-level commitment to specific recruiting and retention targets for gender (e.g., join the 30% club, HeForShe Campaign, make a "panel" pledge)
- **Create targets with "teeth":** Tie your gender diversity targets to an incentive structure and actively track progress
- **Consider web presence:** Create a careers website that makes all candidates feel welcome and actively publicizes what your organization is doing to promote gender diversity, including gender-friendly policies (e.g., parental leave, women specific leadership development)
- **Team up:** Partner with key women networking groups and sponsor events to build brand awareness (e.g., MHTC Women in Leadership, Grace Hopper, Society of Women Engineers)
- **Target early:** Cultivate leads through college or even high-school engagement programs to normalize careers in technology and build name recognition early on
- **Create micro-campaigns:** Directly target candidates with customized LinkedIn ads or leverage current employees by tapping into existing women's networks within your organization (e.g., invite current women employees to advertise open roles using their social media accounts)

- **Debias the job posting:** Utilize tools that flag gender-biased language found in job postings and ensure that job requirements are truly necessary since women are more likely to apply for jobs for which they meet most of the criteria
- **Utilize tech women-focused recruiting sources:** Utilize tools and databases focused on women in technology. For example, PowerToFly enables organizations to create a micro-site to engage with a diverse talent pool, create blog content, and host chats during which leaders can speak directly with candidates
- **Tap alternative talent pools:** Return-to-work programs are a valuable, often overlooked source of women talent. These programs fill the pipeline with professionals who offer a wealth of experience, energy, and diverse perspectives to an organization. Comprehensive on-ramp programs such as reacHIRE that include the sourcing, re-skilling, and placement of this talent pool have shown to successfully bring seasoned professionals back into the workforce in a seamless way that drives impactful results. Return-to-work programs have also shown to contribute to gender workforce planning as well as illustrate the company's overall commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Prevent Leakage: De-biasing the recruiting process

To combat unnecessary funnel loss, organizations should have a standardized process to enforce fairness from the initial job posting to final negotiations.

What works:
- **Debias the resume screening process:** Utilize automated resume screening tools to reduce bias or commit to name-blind resume screening
- **Debias the interview:** Set clear consistent evaluation criteria for each job before the recruiting process begins
- **Debias the interviewer:** Require unconscious bias training for employees that are involved in the screening process and provide "nudges" throughout the interview process to serve as reminders of what was taught in training
- **Diversify your interview panels:** Create a recruiting and interviewing team that looks like the candidates you hope to attract
- **Re-think the technical interview:** Look at your technical interview and see if aspects of it are inherently biased or may not directly get at the skillset needed for the actual job (e.g., women tend to do less well at whiteboard coding interviews but not worse when it comes to job performance)
- **Debias the decision meeting:** Institute a fairness observer to monitor the decision making for bias and have the express role of identifying and raising issues around bias in the process
- **Think culture add, not culture fit:** Instead of asking culture fit questions, consider how a candidate would add to the culture to avoid unwittingly creating a non-inclusive environment or selecting candidates based on irrelevant criteria
- **Trust your data:** Track and analyze your outcomes to note bias

"Land" the Hire: Converting from candidate to employee

The ability to land talented hires hinges on an organization's ability to create cultures in which women feel valued and believe they will succeed.

What works:
- **Create a culture that women want to join:** Strengthen the employee value proposition by not only making sure the organization has supporting policies (e.g., parental leave, flexible work) but also pursue initiatives to create an inclusive culture

- **Cultivate diverse candidates with a mentorship program:** Help ensure candidates understand what it is like to work at the organization for "people like me" by instating a mentor program for high potential candidates that focuses on building a real relationship with the candidate throughout the entire process
- **Ensure all candidates have a "closing plan":** Set closing plans in place for all diverse candidates before the last interview so the plan can be set into motion as soon as the offer is made.

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