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Women In Tech: The Key To Success Post-Pandemic

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Leadership

As leaders in technology gather in person and virtually this week at CES to witness the latest innovations, women in tech should be top of mind—especially given the continuing stresses of the global pandemic. Why? Consider the following:

- Only 38% of women in technology feel their organization’s commitment to supporting them during the pandemic has been sufficient, and just 30% say their employer increased their access to flexible work. [\[i\]](#)
- 51% of women in technology feel less optimistic about their career prospects now than before the pandemic, and 57% expect to leave their employer for a new role within 2 years—citing lack of work-life balance as the biggest reason. [\[ii\]](#)

It’s sentiments like these and their impact on the sector that has made the importance of supporting women in tech one of the key trends in Deloitte’s 2022 *Predictions*. If technology companies want to succeed in the coming year and beyond, they need to renew their commitment to advancing gender diversity in tech—especially as COVID-19 moves from pandemic to endemic.

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Progress—but with headwinds

It's true that large tech companies have been making slow but steady progress on female workforce representation, with the proportion of women in technical roles steadily increasing over the past three years.^[iii] In fact, an analysis of 20 large technology companies' annual workforce diversity reports shows that they have maintained their momentum on the gender front in the past two years.^[iv]

But this progress is now showing stress under the strains of the pandemic. According to Deloitte's [Women @ Work global survey](#), women's satisfaction with work-life balance in the industry has dropped to 32% from 70% pre-pandemic. And this is just one telling statistic when it comes to women in tech: in every category surveyed—from productivity to mental well-being—satisfaction dropped by double digits.^[v]

Add this to the still persistent lack of gender diversity in the sector, and the future of advancing women in tech becomes even cloudier. Chief among these challenges are the enduring issues related to retention, pay, and promotion. Half of the industry's female workers drop out of tech by mid-career and women make up less than a quarter of tech's senior leadership roles—with gender bias the top obstacle preventing women from moving into leadership positions.^[vi] It's no wonder that a startling 22% of women in tech are considering leaving the workforce altogether given the impediments to advancing, both old and new.^[vii]

Stepping up efforts

To create value and compete in the marketplace, the tech sector needs to work harder to attract and retain women. Research has repeatedly shown that diverse teams perform better and are more innovative, with diverse leadership proven to produce better business outcomes and provide important role models. ^[viii] Just as important, tech companies can't afford to leave any money on the table right now. According to a recent CNBC survey, nearly 60% of tech executives said finding qualified employees is the biggest concern for their company—an even higher concern than cybersecurity and supply chains. ^[ix]

With the challenges tech companies will face post-pandemic, ramping up their efforts to recruit women is mission critical—and they can start with the following actions:

- **Reach a broader talent pool:** Looking beyond the pandemic, tech companies should consider how their future work model could help them reach a wider and more diverse talent pool. “Work from anywhere” models can expand the pool of exceptional, diverse talent across the nation or beyond.
- **Recruit from overlooked worker segments:** Tech companies can aim to attract women who are returning to work or transitioning from other industries and to upskill “unconventional talent” such as career-switchers and those with gaps in their resumes from child or eldercare responsibilities.
- **Tackle retention and equitable promotion:** Gender bias is the top obstacle preventing women in tech from moving into leadership positions. Formal mentorship/development programs and a focus on training for men and women to spot and sponsor high performing talent along with gender targets for promotions could go a long way toward improving retention and enabling women to progress to senior executive levels.

Getting out in front

The time is now for tech companies to kick their recruitment of women into high gear. Just as the pandemic has fast-forwarded other critical trends such as remote work and digitization, attracting and retaining women needs to be a top focus as well. Companies that proactively develop programs and policies that help women balance caregiving and well-being with work—as well as continue to provide equal opportunities for advancement and pay—can reverse negative assessments forged during the pandemic. Even more, it could very well put tech companies in a stronger position post-pandemic than ever before.

To read more about technology trends, check out Deloitte’s [Predictions 2022](#) or visit the [Deloitte Technology, Media & Telecommunications practice page on Deloitte.com](#).

[i] Deloitte Global analysis of TMT sector respondent data from Deloitte’s [Women @ Work global survey](#), 2021.

[ii] Ibid

[iii] Ibid

[iv] Deloitte Global analysis and 2021 and 2022 predictions based on published diversity reports from 20 large technology companies (with an average workforce of more than 100,000 employees).

[v] Deloitte Global analysis of TMT sector respondent data from Deloitte’s [Women @ Work global survey](#), 2021.

[vi] Ibid

[vii] Ibid

[viii] [“Why diverse teams are smarter.”](#) Harvard Business Review.

[ix] [“Labor shortages outrank cyber threats as biggest concern for tech companies”](#), CNBC, 2021.



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