

VARIOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN TECH

Technology continues to be an undeniably cardinal aspect of today's world, but it's evolution with respect to allowing equal contributions from people irrespective of their gender has only just begun. The tech field is infamous for its patriarchal and stressful work culture seasoned with politics and bureaucracy that results in the decline of skill sets of individuals. The statistics of gender representation in the tech field make it very clear that though the women in this field have excelled but the opportunities present for them are still marginal.

Although, it's been 100 years since the disruption of the gender roles status quo, a lot still remains unchanged. Women continue to make less money than men, and gender discrimination and sexual harassment remain prevalent in the job sector. Just the fact that women carry children, an assurance that our species doesn't go extinct, seems to be an issue. As shocking as it might seem to some, many employers avoid hiring women because they're worried about having to pay maternity leave.

HOW IT HAS BEEN:

- In 1996, a study of U.S. college freshmen by the Higher Education Research Institute indicated that one-fifth of men (20%) intended to major in computer science and engineering. By comparison, only 4% of women planned to major in these fields.
- In 2015, women accounted for almost half (47%) of all employed adults in the U.S. However, they held only 25% of computing roles, according to the National Centre for Women & Information Technology. All things being equal, they should have occupied 47% of computing roles.
- According to 2018 Pew Research Centre data, employment in the U.S. has grown 34% since 1990. However—and brace yourself—STEM jobs have grown by 79% in the same timeframe! Tech jobs are booming. Today, in the face of constantly evolving cyber threats, they continue to boom.

OPTIMIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Closing the gap in tech is important for many reasons. Firstly, women make up 40 percent of the US workforce. With the tech industry being the fastest growing sector and others rapidly shrinking, there will be a disparity between supply and demand for employees if this continues. This is already the case in some tech sectors like cybersecurity.

Secondly, women-led companies and companies with more female employees historically outperform by 3x ones that are male dominant. In fact, in companies where 50 percent or more of executives are women, there are reported higher job satisfaction, better work culture, equal and higher pay, and less female employee turnover. Another study in 2020 by McKinsey found that tech companies with more diversity hire better talent, have more productive employees, and perform better overall. Finally, tech companies with more gender diversity create products that consider all their consumers, building better and safer solutions for the future.

BETTER WORK CULTURE:

Businesses need to provide equal pay to all their employees who hold the same position, whether male or female. They also have a responsibility to educate their employees through training and programs on gender discrimination and promote a safe and comfortable work culture for everyone. They need to implement better maternity leave policies and provide childcare and maternity facilities. In addition, they need to create strict discrimination and harassment policies and make sure they are enforced. If they're not sure how to remove gender biases when hiring, they should hire a recruiting firm that is an expert in the field. Finally, they can invest in their female employees by covering the costs of additional training and education. They can even give scholarships to women who want to pursue a career in tech and work with educational institutions to educate female students on employment opportunities and career options.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN TECH:

Scholarships and Assistance:

Enhancing your skill set should have a single factor affecting it; WILL. There should be no other road blocks for a willing mind who wants to indulge and transform the world for the better. There are many opportunities to enable women in tech to perform to their full potential.

Let's start with coding bootcamps. Most of these programs offer scholarships for women, so if there are some particular ones you've set your eye on, you can always call their admissions office and get information. Nine times out of ten, they will help, whether it's a loan or a scholarship. With traditional universities, the scholarship and grant process is more thorough. Most colleges offer scholarships for women in STEM, and many community programs supporting women.

When it comes to employment opportunities, you will find a lot of support there. From career fairs just for women in tech to individual companies having special programs for hiring women, opportunities are popping in every corner. A simple google search or asking friends and colleagues in the industry can get you far. And if there is a particular company you'd like to work for, check out their website or reach out to them directly. The bigger the company is, the more the chances they will have a division or program focused on hiring female employees.

RESOURCES:

The following programs and scholarships are specifically for women who want to enter or excel in the tech industry.

Coding Bootcamp Scholarships for Women:

Coding bootcamps and certification courses are an excellent way for women with related experience and background to jumpstart a career in tech. Here is a sample of some bootcamp-style programs that offer a scholarship for women and other underrepresented people in tech:

- Flatiron: The Flatiron School offers a bootcamp and certification style courses in a variety of tech topics ranging from cybersecurity, design, and software development. They have teamed up with the National Centre for Women & Information Technology (NCWIT) to develop a scholarship program for their course offerings. Currently, the scholarships are for 50 percent off of tuition.

- Hackbright Academy: Hackbright was created in 2012 with a single focus — make tech careers more accessible to women. This coding school is mainly focused on software development skills and career prep, and they partner with a number of companies to help get their graduates employment opportunities.
- DevPoint: DevPoint is a Salt Lake City-based computer coding and development education program. They offer a scholarship of 50 percent off their programs in an effort to get more women in computer programming.
- Grey Campus: Grey Campus offers a number of courses and programs related to computer science, engineering, and security. They are offering 100 scholarships for women worldwide. The assistance covers 100 percent of the program fees and are designed to get more women into data science and full stack development roles.
- Coding Dojo: Coding Dojo has campuses all over the world and a three-stack software development bootcamp. They also have The Women in Tech Scholarship, which offers \$1,000 to aspiring female computer programmers who need financial assistance to launch their careers.

➤ **COMPUTER SCIENCE AND STEM SCHOLARSHIP:**

Many scholarships are available for more formal degree programs in science, technology, and engineering. Science Ambassador Scholarship: Funded by the hilarious card game Cards Against Humanity, this four-year scholarship will give the winner a full ride to the school of her choice, as long as her field of study is within engineering, math, science, and technology.

- Society of Women Engineers: They offer a wide variety of scholarships to anyone who identifies as a woman and plans to go into engineering, engineering technology, or computer science. Applicants need only apply once and they'll be considered for all eligible scholarships.
- SMART Scholarship: This scholarship from the Department of Defense (DoD) covers the full cost of tuition up to \$38K. It's open to those pursuing a technical degree in one of 21 STEM disciplines prioritized by the DoD, as long as they're willing to accept post-graduation employment with the department.

➤ **ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTING WOMEN IN TECH:**

Many groups aim to promote diversity and inclusivity in the tech field.

SOME INITIATIVES

Global Women in Tech: Founded in 2017, this non-profit parlayed its partnerships with various organizations into innovative programs aimed at enhancing the educational and professional development of women in STEM in Romania. Their goal is to give these women access to career opportunities, knowledge, and programs that will bolster their chances of success in STEM fields.

Women in Technology International: Women in Technology International has been at the forefront of the advancement of women in business and technology since 1989. WITI helps Fortune 500 companies, SMBs, and start-ups build diverse and inclusive workplaces for minorities, which of course includes women.

Women Who Code: This organization's efforts are geared towards realizing its ultimate goal, which is to build a world where more women are in positions of power in STEM. They want to see women as board members, executives, founders, software engineers, technical leaders, and VCs.

➤ COMPANIES SUPPORTING WOMEN IN TECH:

Take a peak at what some big shot companies have done to advance women's rights in a traditionally patriarchal field

Google: In 2015, Google backed groups that help women in tech. Meanwhile, their employees in Europe have been training people to develop digital skills as part of a worldwide initiative called "Grow With Google". Four years ago, 48% of the people they trained were women, thanks to programs like #IamRemarkable and WomenWill.

Deloitte: Deloitte is one of the leading professional services firms in the country. It provides audit, business process, financial advisory, risk advisory, and tax solutions. Its Women in Tech program identifies steps to foster diversity and inclusivity in IT and supports career progression for women in tech.

Airbnb: An American company that operates an online marketplace for different types of lodging, Airbnb doesn't have one specific program for women in tech, but it has implemented several policies and struck up

partnerships that aim to advance belonging, diversity, and inclusivity in their workplace.

Freddie Mac: Chartered by the US Congress in 1970 to support the country's housing finance system, this company is committed to creating opportunities for and developing women leaders. They even started a campaign called #LeadTheWay, which champions women's rights in the workplace and promotes the advancement of women to leadership positions.

Netflix: This February 2022 report says the company's global workforce and more than half of its leadership was female. Meanwhile nearly 11 percent of its US workforce is Black, while about 9% is Hispanic or Latinx. Those percentages are significantly higher than other tech companies.

There is no doubt that technology is perpetually advancing and what it'll achieve in the years to come is incomprehensible. But without equal participating opportunities for everyone, this advancement will be short-lived. Reforms in the work curriculum has started but still there's a lag that needs to be addressed and overcome. For a better and higher performing society, we need to build and maintain it together.