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.

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:
2. Be aware of how you represent STEM and your organization, personally and at work.
3. Advocate for and implement people-friendly policies.

On Microaggressions
Sometimes unconscious, microaggressions are subtle, mundane exchanges that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to individuals based on group membership.

Microinsults, microinvalidations, and microassults perpetuate stereotype threat and create a hostile work environment.

On Implicit Bias
Unconscious bias refers to the assumptions and conclusions we jump to without thinking. Everyone has unconscious biases. Being aware of these biases is the first step to combating them.

On Stereotype Threat
Stereotype threat refers to the concern with being viewed through the lens of a stereotype. It is caused by cues in the situation that remind people of negative stereotypes.

Anxiety over confirming these stereotypes can impair an individual’s ability to perform up to their full potential.
References

For: Why Does it Matter?


For: On Stereotype Threat


For: On Implicit Bias


For: On Microaggressions


Recommended Readings

For more information on these topics, please consider reading the rest of this series at wwest.mech.ubc.ca/diversity.