WOMEN IN IT: THE FACTS
www.ncwit.org/thefacts

THE OPPORTUNITY

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS ONE OF THE FASTEST-GROWING U.S. INDUSTRIES.

- Technical innovation will play a critical role in virtually every sector of the U.S. and global economy.
- Computing professions rank among the top 10 fastest-growing professions.
- By 2018 there will be more than 1.4 million computing jobs available.

THE THREAT

IF CURRENT TRENDS CONTINUE, THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY WILL ONLY BE ABLE TO FILL HALF OF ITS AVAILABLE JOBS.

This creates at least 2 significant risks...

RISK 1 A SHRINKING TALENT POOL:

THE INDUSTRY IS FAILING TO ATTRACT & RETAIN A DIVERSE RANGE OF COMPUTING TALENT.

- By 2018 U.S. universities will produce only 52% of the computer science bachelor’s degree graduates needed to fill the 1.4 million available jobs.
- Down from 37% in 1985, only 18% of computer and information science degrees were awarded to women in 2008.
- Only 25% of professional IT-related occupations in the U.S. 2009 workforce were held by women—down from 36% in 1991.

RISK 2 REDUCED INNOVATION AND COMPETITIVENESS:

A LACK OF DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES INHIBITS INNOVATION, PRODUCTIVITY, AND COMPETITIVENESS.

- In a study of more than 100 teams at 21 companies, teams with equal numbers of women and men were more likely to experiment, be creative, share knowledge, and fulfill tasks than teams of any other composition.
- A recent NCWIT study shows that mixed-sex teams produce IT patents that are cited 26–42 percent more often than the norm.
- Additional studies indicate that, under the right conditions, teams comprising diverse members consistently outperform teams comprising “highest-ability” members.
FAILING TO RETAIN

NOT ONLY IS THE INDUSTRY FAILING TO ATTRACT NEW TALENT, BUT IT IS ALSO LOSING TALENT ALREADY INTERESTED IN TECHNOLOGY.

In 2003, only one-third of women with a computer science bachelor’s degree were still employed in a science, engineering or technical (SET) job two years after graduation.

Seventy-four percent of women in technology report “loving their work,” yet these women leave their careers at a staggering rate: 56 percent of technical women leave at the “mid-level” point just when the loss of their talent is most costly to companies. This is more than double the quit rate for men.

DID YOU KNOW

THAT HALF OF THE WOMEN WHO LEAVE THE PRIVATE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SECTOR WILL CONTINUE TO USE THEIR TRAINING...JUST NOT FOR YOUR COMPANY.

WHERE WOMEN GO:

49% use their training...

51% abandon their training...

THE SOLUTION

WHAT COMPANIES CAN DO TO OPTIMIZE PERFORMANCE WITH TOP TALENT.

The good news is that companies CAN reverse these dangerous trends, but a new approach must be taken to recruit, retain, and advance diverse talent. Simply reducing female attrition in science, engineering, and technology by one quarter would add 220,000 people to the talent pool.

BOTTOM LINE

WHAT COMPANIES GAIN:

- A stronger workforce and lower attrition costs.
- Increased innovation and efficiency.
- Financial gains and products that reflect the consumer base.

FIND OUT MORE

Improving your technology workforce requires top-level, executive support for implementing reform efforts. To find out more about why people leave computing careers and how you can reclaim this talent, visit www.ncwit.org/thefacts for the full report.

Source information for all data reported in this document is included in the full report.