The Status of Women in Tech

In 2018, women held approximately 57% of professional occupations in the US workforce, in the same year they only held 26% of professional computing occupations. Intersectional representation is even more abysmal when broken down by race and ethnicity - 3% of computing workforce was African-American women, 6% was Asian women, and 2% was Hispanic women. On average, the lowest annual salary in computing occupations is greater than $40,000 for the nation, making computing occupations a lucrative field, and one from which women can’t afford to be excluded.

The underrepresentation persists along women’s technical journeys. Only 28% of AP Computer Science test-takers were female in 2018, despite being 56% of total AP test-takers. In 2017, 57% of bachelor’s degree recipients were women, and yet when it comes to Computer and Information Sciences bachelor’s, only 19% of recipients are women. And women are abysmally represented at the executive levels, demonstrated by the fact that only 20% of Fortune 500 Chief Innovation officers were women in 2018.

Recruitment
Women make up roughly one quarter of annual hires in the technical workforce, despite being half the population.

Retention
Women are choosing to leave their tech roles at higher rates than their male counterparts.

Advancement
Women are vastly underrepresented within leadership in the tech industry, especially at the executive level.

Pay
Women, and especially underrepresented women of color, earn less than their white, male colleagues in tech.
The value of women’s technical work

In 2018, female-founded companies received only 2.9% of total venture capital investment. Since 2009, Black-women led up startups have only received 0.0006% of the total tech venture funding.

A 2018 survey revealed that Black and Latina technical women earn on average 90% of what their white male colleagues do for the same work.

Retention of women in technical occupations

- More than half of technical women leave their role mid-career
- Women voluntarily leave the technical workforce at a higher rate than their male counterparts
- 36% of underrepresented women of color cited unfair treatment as their reason for leaving their most recent tech job

Practices for workforce inclusion

- Develop and promote women through leadership training, sponsorship, and clear advancement systems
- Work toward full equity for all employees at every level with annual pay equity audits
- Implement family friendly policy such as parental and family leave and flex time

References:
6. Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS) at National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2017 (CIP 11).
8. Boardroom Insiders, 2018 ("2018’s State of women CIOs in the Fortune 500")
12. CTI. "The Athena Factor 2.0: Accelerating Female Talent in Science, Engineering & Technology," Center for Talent Innovation, 2019