

While improving work environment for women engineers, corporations/organizations also improve work conditions for all other employees.

Competitiveness requires employee dedication and loyalty: people can bring productivity and innovation. An unpleasant work environment means absenteeism, poor efficiency at work, and turnover of personnel implying additional training cost and time.

Aurecon Australia saw the benefits: if the organisation could reduce the rate of turnover amongst females to the same rate as for males then it would save AUD1.8 million per annum from its bottom line.

IBM says that the workplace is the bridge to market place.

Comments, suggestions or questions?

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Fédération Mondiale des Organisations d'Ingénieurs

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August 2011.



**Corporate programs
to attract, retain
and promote
women engineers**

**Towards organization
competitiveness and project
success**

What it means for a corporation or organizations?

Corporations and organizations must believe in the benefit of the program by evaluating the possible returns in reducing employee turnover rate, lowering the percentage of absenteeism, and improving competitiveness.

Corporations and organizations must be committed to reaching the goals; while supervisors at all levels must be involved and trained, employees must be made aware of the goals and processes;

Corporations and organizations must be willing to invest in activities related to the objectives.

How can women engineers get involved?

Women must realize that later on, they will aspire to climb the organizational ladder; for this, they must get involved in administrative tasks from the very beginning of their career.

Women must clearly and regularly express their aspirations to their supervisor.

Despite family obligations, women must take time to join networks and get mentored.

To get promoted, women must realize that the support of their peers is just as important as the support from her superiors.

Good practice

Corporations and organizations which follow a recognized model driven program for Diversity and Inclusion are more likely to succeed and within a shorter time frame (Catalyst 2010).

Corporations and organizations differ and so should their recruitment, retention and promotion programs. Nevertheless, corporations and organizations must be transparent in their hiring and promotional policies, basing these on competence. Asking employees for their 'talent profile' during their annual review, and using these profiles to fill positions, leads to the better knowledge of employees and the recruitment of more competent in-house personnel.

The elements for recruitment, retention and promotion are:

- 1) Leadership : changing the workforce environment means managing change: management must demonstrate leadership towards diversity ;
- 2) Systematic integration: existing structures, policies and procedures must be changed and aligned with a reward system.
- 3) Change commitment: the corporation or organization must believe in the benefit of such activity ; after evaluating benefits, progress and benefit track records must be kept with readjustment as required.
- 4) Job-level impact by educating employees and holding problem solving sessions where employees themselves come up with the solutions;

5) Behavior support: cooperation for compliance and celebrating small wins are important.

What does not work

1. Setting quotas to achieve specific numbers within a give time: this is the best way to hire unqualified women and introduce a feeling of discrimination among other employees; instead, set a general goal and keep track records of numbers and turnover rates.

2. Impose inflexible and complex rules: while trying to achieve these rules, real objectives are often lost. The supervisor must become familiar with the needs and aspirations of each subordinate, and provide individual conditions to facilitate their work., rather than common rules.

5. A bad manager can do a lot of damage in a short while: prevention requires training and trial periods for aspiring managers; human resource personnel are the best managers' support, and; policies must be instituted to end a manager's term when outcomes are not satisfactory.

References

Catalyst. 2010. Strategy matters: evaluating company approaches for creating inclusive workplaces. New York, USA.