

Illinois Center for  
**SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

Illinois State University, College of Education  
*Excellence in Professional Development*

705 East Lincoln Street, Suite 313  
Normal, IL 61761

### Benefits of Gender Diversity

- Women are the best and most obvious candidates to fill the void left by aging baby boomers and other demographic changes. [1]
- An organization's success and competitiveness depends upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize the benefits. When organizations actively assess their handling of workplace diversity issues, develop and implement diversity plans, multiple benefits are reported such as:

**Increased adaptability** Organizations employing a diverse workforce can supply a greater variety of solutions to problems in service, sourcing, and allocation of resources. Employees from diverse backgrounds bring individual talents and experiences in suggesting ideas that are flexible in adapting to fluctuating markets and customer demands.

**Broader service range** A diverse collection of skills and experiences (e.g. languages, cultural understanding) allows a company to provide service to customers on a global basis.

**Variety of viewpoints** A diverse workforce that feels comfortable communicating varying points of view provides a larger pool of ideas and experiences. The organization can draw from that pool to meet business strategy needs and the needs of customers more effectively. [2]

- Diversity among employees can create better performance when it comes to out-of-the-ordinary creative tasks such as product development or cracking new markets...[3]
- Women see things differently than men.
  - Women would not have designed the early versions of VCRs that no one could program.
  - Women would not design a PDA specifically or primarily to fit in a man's breast pocket.
  - Women would not design car airbags that are likely to seriously injure or kill people when it deploys.
  - Thirty women were involved in the design of the Ford Windstar.
    - Won the five-star governmental award (the highest) for frontal crash tests.
    - It included such features
      - square cup holders designed for juice boxes
      - reverse sensing system that beeped to warn backing-up drivers of objects in the way.
      - sliding doors on both sides that could be opened by clicks on the key fob.

- First and only gasoline-powered minivan to meet nationwide low emission vehicle requirements and for "green" states, ultra-low emissions requirements. [4]
- Women represent nearly 52% of our population and arguably 52% of the brainpower in this nation. We can't afford to ignore this population. [5]
- There will not be enough white males to fill the positions in the science and engineering workforce in the future. [5]
- The cost of filling the vacancy of a skilled technical employee has been estimated to be over 120%. [6]
- Companies with effective diversity inclusion practices benefit from reduced absenteeism and employee turnover [7]
- Studies have shown that the presence of women in higher management and financial performance of the organization correlates as measured in total return to shareholders. [8]
- Women bring unique talents to law enforcement. Research conducted clearly demonstrates that women officers rely on a style of policing that
  - uses less physical force
  - are better at defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations with citizens
  - are less likely to become involved in problems with use of excessive force
  - implement "community-oriented policing"
  - reduce problems of sex discrimination and harassment within a law enforcement agency [9]

1. <http://www.careerjournal.com/myc/diversity/20070419-hymowitz.html>

2. Greenberg, J. (n.d.) *Diversity in the workplace: benefits, challenges and solutions*, retrieved September 28, 2997 from <http://ezinearticles.com/?Diversity-in-the-Workplace:-Benefits,-Challenges-and-Solutions&id=11053>

3. [http://www.vault.com/nr/printable.jsp?ch\\_id=402&article\\_id=14805372&print=1](http://www.vault.com/nr/printable.jsp?ch_id=402&article_id=14805372&print=1)

4. Tietjen J.S. (2005) *Yes, engineering is a woman's job*. Electronic Design Magazine ED Online ID #10117, April 14, 2005.

5. Metz, (S). (2007) *What is engineering and why encourage students to enter this field?* PowerPoint presentation, September 20, 2007, funded by National Science Foundation Grant to National Academy of Science, Project Lead the Way and National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

6. Vitalari, N. and D. Dell. (1998) *How to attract and keep top IT talent*. HR Focus, V75n12(Dec 1998).

7. Commission, E. (2005) *The business case for diversity: good practices in the workplace*. as cited in Simard C. (n.d.) *The business case for gender diversity*. Retrieved September 28, 2007 from <http://anitaborg.org/>
8. Mannix E. and M. A. Neale (2005) *What differences make a difference?. The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations*. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 6 (2), 31–55.
9. Lonsway, K. (2003) *Hiring and retaining more women: the advantages to law enforcement agencies*. National Center for Women and Policing.