

Over 20 years of research demonstrates a correlation between organisations with high gender diversity in leadership and several measures of organisational success.

Gender diversity is linked to employee satisfaction,¹ improved governance and innovation. It is also associated with financial benefits, including a positive impact on firm value.²

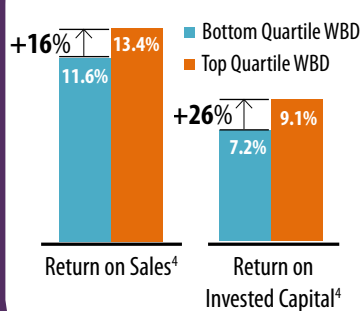
While some boards do currently have female members, discrimination still exists as women are more likely to be board members than chairs.²³

To benefit from gender diversity, organisations should avoid tokenism and ensure there is a “critical mass” of women represented.^{17,21,22} This means having at least 2-3 women, or at least 30% of the board.

While correlation does not indicate causation, there is a clear relationship between an organisation’s gender diversity and aspects of their success. Longitudinal studies found a correlation between promoting women to executive positions and high profitability over 20+ years.⁸

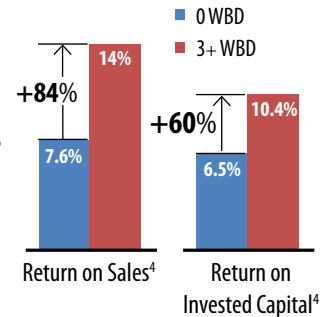
In order for change to occur, a paradigm shift is needed where organisations’ leadership values diversity, recognises the challenge of expressing diverse opinions, and aims to support the professional development of all employees.¹⁸

Economic Benefits



Fortune 500 companies with the most women on board of directors outperformed companies with the least.^{4,5,6,7,8}

Similar results apply to Canadian corporations.⁹



*WBD: Women Board Directors; stats from 2004-2008

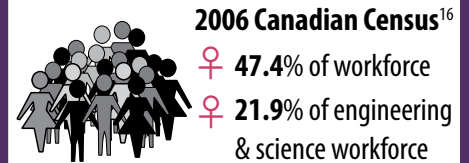
Improved Governance

Gender diverse boards are more likely to allocate effort into corporate monitoring, and increase participation in decision-making.¹⁰

Women directors:

- improve a firm’s ability to navigate complex strategic issues¹²
- positively influence board strategic direction & tasks^{11,14}
- women are more “prepared to push the ‘tough issues’”¹³
- reduce conflict on boards¹⁴ & negative corporate social practices^{15,24}

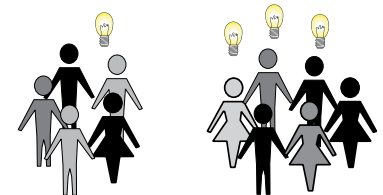
Access to More Talent



Diverse hiring increases the recruiting pool¹⁷ and is a more effective use of talent and leadership¹⁸

More Innovation

If a group includes more women, the collective intelligence rises¹⁹



Gender diversity has a positive effect on team innovation in radical research²⁰

Having a critical mass of 30% or at least 2 or 3 women on a board decreases **groupthink²¹**



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Recommended Readings

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About ONWiE

The Ontario Network of Women in Engineering (ONWiE) was formed in 2005 between all the schools and faculties of engineering across Ontario. The objective of this network is to work collaboratively to support current female engineers, students, and encourage the next generation of women to pursue careers in engineering.

Find out more at: <http://www.onwie.ca/>