

Achieving greater gender diversity within the tech workforce remains a top priority for many organisations. However, with female tech talent currently represented at only 20% across Australia¹, the industry still has a long way to go.

¹ Seek analytics (<https://analytics.seek.com.au/>)

“Diverse teams consistently outperform homogenous teams and produce stronger (business) outcomes – provided an inclusive culture operates, where all ideas or contributions are valued and considered.”

Research has proven that diversifying a workforce through gender equality can lead to:



Improved
company
innovation



New customers
and a diverse
client base



Increased employee
performance
and morale

(Source: Research conducted by The Workplace Gender Equality Agency - <http://the100percentproject.com.au/author/100percentproject/>)

This report has been created to assess the landscape of women working within the tech and digital industry across Australia and specifically explores:

- Drivers for women working within tech
- Representation of women within the industry
- Female leadership within the industry
- Challenges for employers in sourcing top female tech talent and what they can do to overcome these barriers

DRIVERS



95% of women stated that having access to **flexible working arrangements** was an important factor to them

Interestingly, over **70%** of surveyed professionals rated **pay & bonuses** as a key driver for them, whereas; only **41.7%** of hiring managers considered this to be a potential motivator for females within the tech industry

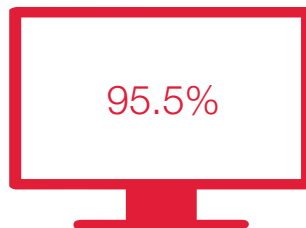


70.1%
Professionals



41.7%
Hiring
Managers

SKILLS



95.5%

95.5% of hiring managers believe they are **proactively encouraging their staff to upskill and futureproof their career**



72.5% of female professionals feel they **need to upskill and futureproof their career...**



...but **only 47.5%** are actively doing so

LEADERSHIP



93.5%
Hiring
Managers



90%
Professionals

Both hiring managers and professionals strongly agreed that there is still a current disparity between the number of men and women in leadership positions within the tech community

CHALLENGES FACED BY HIRING MANAGERS



Lack of female applicants in proportion to representation



Lack of female candidates with the required skills sets



Females are not progressing into senior positions

SOLUTIONS

Based on the findings, Robert Walters has identified the following key recommendations to encourage attraction and retention of top female talent.

Attraction

Look beyond technical skills

Employers can fill skill gaps by thinking beyond the limited pool of experienced local talent and identifying professionals with soft skills and non-tech backgrounds, or junior professionals with the appetite and potential to learn. The upskilling can be worth the training investment.

Consider flexible working choices, including options for both parents

Beyond salary and benefits, several other factors can be attributed to improving staff retention. A cohesive strategy for supporting women during maternity leave and providing a structure for their return is vital in mitigating employee attrition. More importantly, companies should extend both adequate leave and flexible working options to working fathers as well.

Focus on sourcing strategy for roles where there is low female representation

Ensure you fully understand current market representation of gender in each skill set when hiring. For example, it will be harder to source female talent for architecture and engineering roles, which currently have the lowest levels of female representation across Australia (9% and 13% respectively). To achieve a greater gender balance, employers must consider alternative sourcing channels and be able to demonstrate development and promotion opportunities at the early stages of hiring.

Recognise that pay & bonus is a key driver for females

Tech specialists are increasingly receiving multiple job offers and counter offers when considering new roles, so employers need to recognise that pay and bonuses are not only a key driver for males, but for females too. Keeping tabs on market changes which are impacting salaries is absolutely essential.

Share your story

If your organisation is a high achiever in gender diversity – share that message in the market. An employer brand that embodies gender diversity will be an employer of choice and attract top talent.

Write inclusive job adverts

Harnessed correctly, advertising can be an incredibly effective way to attract a diverse range of candidates. Removing any gender bias can make a surprisingly significant difference to the number of females applying for roles.

Retention

Establish mentoring programs

Articulate clear opportunities for progression and cultivate an environment where women are encouraged to lead high-visibility projects to showcase their leadership skills.

Sponsorship and mentoring programs are a proven way to help professionals progress to more senior roles in their organisations, which increases retention and gender diversity in management and leadership roles.

Create an inclusive environment

Employee events can provide highly visible and engaging demonstrations of an organisation's commitment to gender diversity.

Information sessions are a good way to include employees and raise awareness of the organisation's values and expected behaviours. Importantly, senior leaders should commit to attending such events.

Equal pay

It may seem obvious, but companies must ensure female employees are paid the same as their male counterparts and this should be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Medium to long-term strategy

Showcase STEM careers and development at schools and universities

Employers should be promoting the education of STEM careers in universities and schools. Breaking down any current gender bias or false stereotypes about STEM from a young age will encourage more females to undertake courses and majors within STEM areas.

Develop your technical specialists

If an employer can earn a reputation of upskilling their technology specialists, they can benefit in a number of ways, not only reaping the benefits of increased knowledge of specialisms such as AI and automation, but also attracting and retaining in-demand specialists with their investment in training and development.

Professionals must be pro-active in futureproofing their careers

As technology remains central to organisational strategies across every sector, female tech professionals must ensure they adapt and upskill accordingly.

There is much to gain for those who are brave enough to step outside their comfort zone and embrace new opportunities, whilst also taking their learning into their own hands through enrolling on additional courses or qualifications.

Set targets

To promote a more gender balanced workforce, employers should have quotas in place for the number of employed females. However, simply imposing quotas is not just enough – there should be adequate support in the forms of policies to facilitate these targets, with accountability running right through the organisation.

Roles with a high percentage of female talent

- Technical writing **46%**
- Testing & quality assurance **37%**
- Business analyst **31%**

Roles with a low percentage of female talent

- Architects **9%**
- Networks & systems administration **9%**
- Engineering **13%**

Seek analytics (<https://analytics.seek.com.au/>)

This whitepaper is based on a survey conducted to better understand existing perceptions of females working within the tech industry and gathered the views of over 80 hiring managers and professionals across Australia.