

IPO Virtual Roadshow: Gender Diversity in Innovation

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The Corporate Landscape

💡 Primary Mission

- 💡 Innovate to create better products; monetize innovation
- 💡 80% of US patents are filed by companies, so corporations have a leading role in this issue

💡 More Centralized Innovation (compared to universities)

- 💡 However, the reliance and import of innovation varies by company
- 💡 The mechanism(s) by which innovation is protected or monetized varies
 - Corporations likely rely more on non-patent innovation and legal protections including, for example, trade secrets, design patents, trademarks, and copyrights.

💡 Clearer Decision Processes (compared to universities)

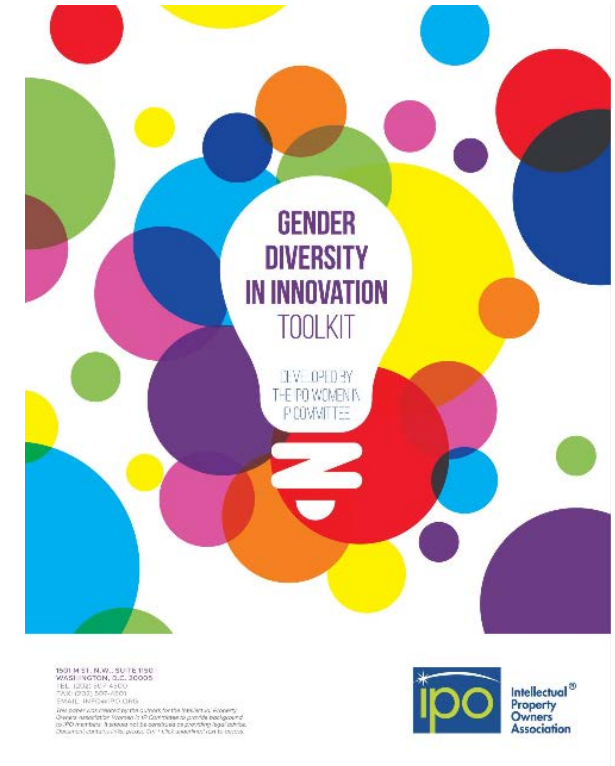
- 💡 However, decision process varies widely by company
 - Attorney decision, researcher decision, R&D management decision, business decision, etc.

IPO Diversity in Innovation Subcommittee

💡 Two Goals

- 💡 Increase Awareness of the Gender and Diversity Disparity in Innovation
- 💡 Create Tools to Assist Organization in Improving their Diversity in Innovation
 - Toolkit available on IPO website at:

<https://www.ipo.org/index.php/diversity-in-innovation-toolkit/>



Gender Parity in Innovation 4-Part Cycle

Gender Parity in Innovation Process



STEP 1 – Increase Awareness & Support

Raising awareness and internal support is an essential first step in making significant change within an organization. Increasing awareness is important in all organizations, but is especially important for those having leaders and/or employees that are largely unaware of gender disparity in innovation and are devoting little effort to addressing this issue. Awareness and support should be an ongoing, regular activity.

Ongoing

STEP 2 – Discover Root Causes

Organizations that are most effective at implementing change are those that spend time up front assessing the key root causes for their current state. As such, organizations that devote time to understanding the causes for their gender disparity will be able to address those specific root causes with targeted programs and thereby be more effective at implementing systemic, long-term change.

STEP 3 – Develop Short- and Long-Term Programs

Once root causes are identified, organizations should develop a mix of short-term and long-term programs that address the specific root causes identified in step 2. This section is organized by root cause identified and within each root cause chapter suggests short-term and long-term programs that other organizations have found effective at addressing the specific root cause.

STEP 4 – Launch & Monitor the Programs

This portion of the toolkit focuses on ideas for successful program launch as well as suggested metrics and/or monitoring activities that will enable an organization to measure the success or progress of the gender diversity programs/efforts. This section also provides tips for when and how to go back to steps 1 and 2 routinely to raise awareness and support and to see if new root causes (or unexplored root causes) develop.

People-Related Root Causes

Inventors or Potential Inventors

- Lack of awareness of the invention submission process
- Inventors are too busy
- Confidence Gap
- Perfectionist Tendencies
- Female and Diverse Employees don't self-identity as inventors

Managers of Inventors or named Inventors

- Female and Diverse Employees are Not on Programs with High Likelihood of Patent Filing

IP Professionals (attorneys and agents)

- Attorneys/Agents Intimidating or Too Busy

Process-Related Root Causes

- Invention Submission / Patenting Process is Biased, Intimidating, or Unclear
- Patenting Process Not Known

Culture/Environment-Related Root Causes

- My Organization Doesn't Support or Is Not Welcoming to Female or Diverse Inventors
- Pipeline / Leaky Pipeline

Unique Challenges for Female & Diverse Corporate Scientists

💡 Female and Diverse Scientists are Often Not on R&D Projects that Lead to Patent Activity at the Same Rate as their Non-Diverse or Male Colleagues

- 💡 Risk profile
- 💡 Less networking
- 💡 Success at other programs
- 💡 Work/home tradeoffs

💡 Potential Ways to Address this Challenge:

- 💡 Training for Lab Managers to remind them of the value of female and diverse employees on these teams
- 💡 Employee Rotation onto and off of highly innovative projects
- 💡 Sabbaticals or temporary assignments on highly innovative programs
- 💡 Brainstorming sessions (weeks, days, hours) for a diverse employee group on a highly innovation problem

Unique Challenges for Female & Diverse Corporate Scientists

💡 The Invention Submission Process is Biased, Intimidating, or Unclear

- 💡 One person makes the filing decision and can potentially be biased or limited in network
- 💡 Attorneys can be intimidating to diverse/female employees
- 💡 Invention submission processes that are ad hoc risk not being known to diverse/female employees

💡 Potential Ways to Address this Challenge:

- 💡 Have a single, consistent invention submission process
- 💡 Corporate accessibility of the process to create accessibility and clarity for all
- 💡 Communicate the process to diverse groups of people in the organization (eg: African American employee network, Hispanic employee network, Technical Women network, LGBTQ employee network, Employees with Disabilities network, etc.)

Unique Challenges for Female & Diverse Corporate Scientists

💡 Leaky Pipeline

- 💡 The reasons why female and diverse scientists leave corporate jobs differ from why they leave university jobs.
- 💡 Female and diverse scientists are listed on patents at a lower rate in corporations than in universities, and leave corporate R&D positions at higher rates

💡 Potential Ways to Address:

- 💡 Create development and learning opportunities for female and diverse scientists
- 💡 Recognize their unique contributions
- 💡 Understand the root causes for why retention within your organization is low (if it is low)

Thank You