

 **UP THE  
NUMBERS**

 **FAISONS GRIMPER  
LES CHIFFRES**

# 2020 REPORT



**WCT | FCT**

## WHY DIVERSITY MATTERS

For nearly 30 years, Women in Communications and Technology (WCT) has been a leader in advocating the benefits of gender equality in the workplace. Because workplaces are all generally places of business, our work has involved articulating a strong business case for diversity. WCT believes the business case for stronger diversity and inclusion is compelling.

**Diversity increases access to talent.** Many sectors, including information, technology and communications (ICT), compete for talent in high demand labour markets. By persistently ignoring women and other marginalized groups, employers needlessly shrink the talent pool even more.

**Diversity stimulates innovation.** Homogenous corporate cultures tend to be self-reinforcing bastions of “received wisdom” and groupthink. Diversity embeds different life experiences and perspectives in the process of problem solving and opportunity spotting. Research has shown that an innovation mindset is greater in organizations that foster equality and diversity than among those that do not.<sup>1</sup>

**Diversity measurably improves performance.** Research repeatedly demonstrates strong linkages between diversity and inclusion and other key business indicators such as productivity and expansion into new markets. This appears to be particularly true in places where gender diversity is a normatively accepted cultural belief.<sup>2</sup>

**Diversity strengthens governance.** McKinsey has tracked the correlation between diversity and inclusion and corporate governance for over a decade. Its latest report found that companies in the top quartile for gender diverse executive teams were 25% more likely to have above average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile.

**Diverse and inclusive corporate cultures attract talent and foster employee retention.** In a job market where candidates can afford to be selective about where they work, companies that exhibit a commitment to diversity and inclusion have a clear advantage. A study conducted by the jobs platform Glassdoor showed that two thirds of those surveyed indicated that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating job offers.

Year after year, the body of knowledge about the positive impacts of diversity grows. Yet actual change in the rate of inclusion of women in male-dominated sectors such as information and communications technology remains relatively unchanged.

1 “Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters”. McKinsey 2019.

2 “When Gender Diversity Makes Firms More Productive”, Stephan Turban, And Wu and Letian Zhang. Harvard Business Review. February 19, 2019.

# THE NUMBERS

Since 2017, WCT has collaborated with the Information and Communications Technology Council to report annually on where women are in the technology industry and the digital economy in Canada.

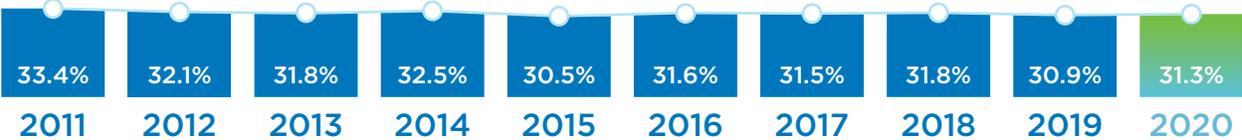
This is not a dynamic data set. The changes in labour force engagement that “Up the Numbers” records are infinitesimal. And that is precisely the point. In choosing to track gender ratios in technology, WCT brings focus on one of the few dimensions of the ICT industry that appear to be impervious to change. In a normal year, we can confidently predict that the current rate of women employed in various levels and professions in the ICT sector will remain within one or two points higher or lower than previous years.

But this was not a normal year. In addition to presenting data from the full year of 2019, 2020’s report also includes data on the rate of women’s participation in ICT.\* As the charts that follow indicate, over the past 18 months, the gender ratios remained virtually static.

This might be viewed by some as good news. Economists the world over have predicted that the economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis will affect women disproportionately harder than men.<sup>3</sup> So some may take satisfaction from the fact that women in tech in Canada have held their own. But the crisis has been a time of opportunity for the ICT industry. The burgeoning of electronic commerce, working from home, home entertainment and the virtualization of absolutely everything has demonstrated the power of technology to address overwhelming challenges. Yet, regardless of one’s perspective, one fact is clear from the data – **even a force as seismic as a global pandemic has not been strong enough to significantly alter the gender ratios in technology.**

“Up the Numbers” tracks the following information:

Figure 1: Percentage of Women in the ICT Sector – All jobs

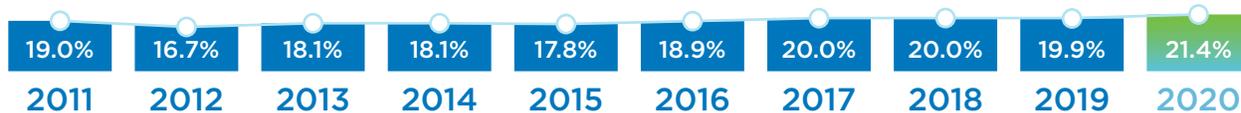


This figure shows the participation of women in the Canadian ICT sector in all roles.

\* Not seasonally adjusted

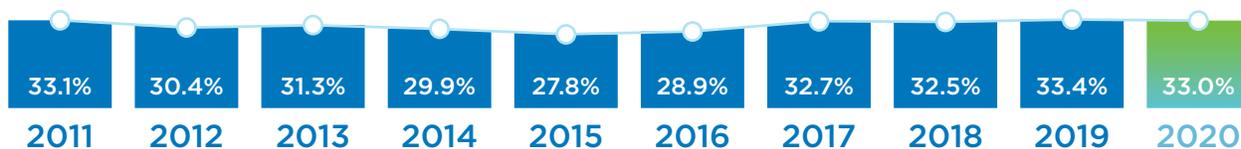
3 World Health Organization. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>

**Figure 2: Percentage of women in ICT roles in the ICT sector**



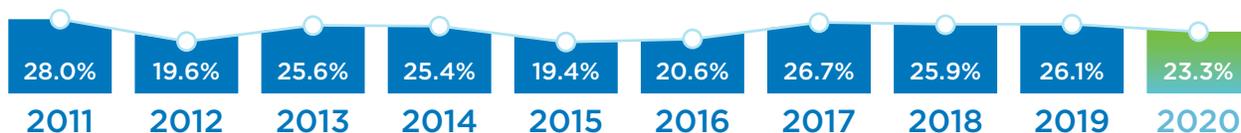
Women in technology roles are an even smaller minority in the Canadian ICT industry. Because corporate leadership is frequently drawn from core functions, the under-representation of women in these jobs has a negative impact on the advancement of women into senior leadership.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Women in the ICT Sector in Management (all jobs)**



Corporate leadership also emerges from management ranks. Women participate in management (across all operations) at a rate slightly below the Canadian average of 35.3 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 4: Percentage of Women in ICT management roles in the ICT Sector**



While only one fifth of the ICT jobs in tech are held by women, there is a larger proportion of them in technology management roles.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb1/en/tv.action?pid=1410033503>

## WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN CANADIAN ICT

Statistics Canada does not track senior management gender data. To estimate where women are in the executive ranks of the Canadian technology industry, WCT has reviewed the websites of the top 100 companies on the Branham annual list of top Canadian ICT companies. Most companies identify their CEO's and senior management teams on their web sites. Now, with three years of data from this exercise, we can see that gender ratios in the C-suites and the corner offices in ICT in Canada don't change much either. We determined that women constitute only 15.2 per cent of senior leadership cadre. And this year there are only 4 women CEOs among the top 100 company heads on the list. One small positive change to note is that the number of companies reporting no women in their senior management teams is smaller than last year – 16 out of the 100 compared to 23 in 2018.

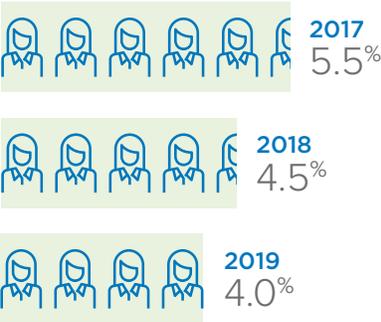
Figure 5: Percentage of Women in Senior Management in Canadian ICT firms



Figure 6: Percentage of Canadian ICT firms reporting no women in Senior Management



Figure 7: Percentage of Women CEO's in Canada's Largest Technology Companies



## WOMEN IN TECH IN THE WIDER CANADIAN ECONOMY

As in previous years, ICTC's analysis of the Labour Force survey gives us a view of the gender ratios in ICT jobs across the whole economy, a fairly invariable percentage in spite of the recent emphasis on virtualization and working from home.

Figure 8: Percentage of Women in ICT Roles in the Digital Economy

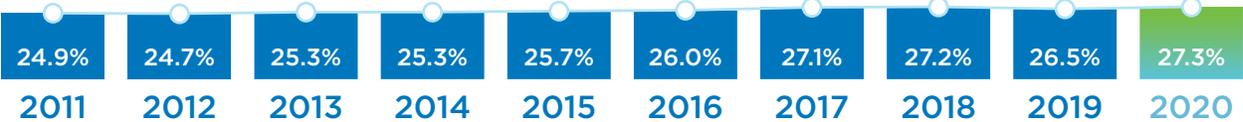
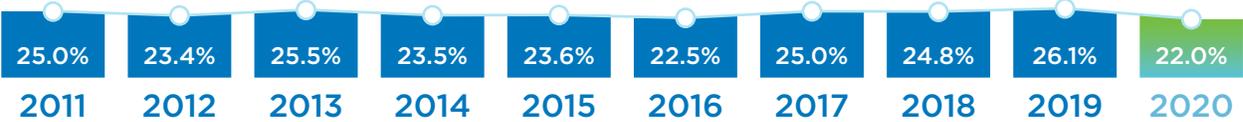


Figure 9: Percentage of Women in Management ICT Roles in the Digital Economy



The decline in women ICT managers in an economy more ICT-dependant than ever is notable.



## SPOTLIGHT ON DIVERSITY 2020

While history will record 2020 as a year of global pandemic, it also brought focus and urgency to the broader fight for equality and inclusion. The death of George Floyd in May opened an outpouring of protest against police brutality and systemic racism on a scale unseen since the Civil Rights era. Demonstrations took place in cities across the United States and their cumulative impact significantly influenced the outcome of the November election.

Demonstrations took place in Canada, too. This movement caused many organizations to reflect on their own positions on systemic racism and the exclusion of Indigenous, LGBTQ and handicapped people. Many organizations, including WCT, issued statements of allegiance with the objectives of the Black Lives Matter movement and made public commitments to do more and be better at diversity and inclusion. Over 300 Canadian organizations took the Black North pledge created by to remove the systemic barriers affecting the lives of Black Canadians.

Then, in December, Industry Minister Navdeep Bains introduced the 50-30 Challenge. The goal of this initiative is to encourage Canadian leaders to turn words and pledges into action. It asks Canadian organizations to achieve two goals: Gender parity on Canadian boards of directors and senior management teams and a 30 per cent representation of under-represented groups in governance and leadership.

The 50-30 Challenge website provides resources for organizations to accept the challenge and meet its goals. In announcing the 50-30 Challenge, Minister Bains outlined the business case for diversity and inclusion, but also its societal imperative. “The existence of systemic discrimination is... a fact,” he said. “The status quo is neither sustainable nor beneficial for Canada. I firmly believe that improving diversity and inclusion in corporate Canada will create a competitive advantage for Canada. Business leadership in Canada should reflect all the voices that helped to shape Canada.”

As a long-standing champion of diversity and inclusion, WCT is a co-creator and supporter of this challenge. Fundamentally it is about setting and achieving targets, something WCT has advocated for three decades. It is an exercise in gathering, analysing and reporting data. We strongly encourage all the organizations in our community to take up the 50-30 Challenge.

## SYMCOR: ACCELERATING THE PATH OF WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

There is a strong business case for gender diversity, and yet few organizations treat it as a business priority. In a 2019 study of over 2300 global organizations, 67% of respondents said that gender diversity was not a formal priority.<sup>5</sup> Research from Accenture shows that on a list of eight business priorities (including financial performance, brand/quality and expansion), diversity and creating a culture of inclusion ranked sixth and seventh respectively.<sup>6</sup> With few organizations making diversity a business priority, the ones that do are forging a path that others can follow.

For over 24 years, Symcor has been a trusted partner supporting all stages of its clients' digital transformation in sectors including finance, insurance, and government. Under the leadership of Symcor's President & CEO, Chameli Naraine, diversity and inclusion are embedded in Symcor's values and built into its policies and business practices. Symcor believes that a culture committed to diversity helps enrich the lives of its employees, promotes innovation and accelerates growth for both the individual and the organization.

Symcor's dedication and ongoing leadership in fostering a workplace with programs and policies that support the advancement of women have earned the recognition of 2020 Company of the Year by WCT.

Ms. Naraine has expressed, "I am extremely pleased that Symcor has been named Company of the Year by WCT. This award recognizes our foundational commitment to accelerating the contribution of women in the technology arena. The under-representation of women in Canada's technology industry is a national workforce issue that must be addressed for Canada to reach its full potential."

By applying a company-wide focus on accelerating the representation of women in technology, Symcor has achieved impressive results. Women constitute 51% of Symcor's total workforce, significantly surpassing the Information and Communications industry average of 31%. Symcor's executive leadership team is 64% female and Symcor's board of directors is 33% women. Though Symcor is very proud of these statistics, Ms. Naraine and her leadership team recognize that there is always room for continuous improvement.

In 2018, Symcor formed a resource group called EMERGE, sponsored by Ms. Naraine and representatives from the senior leadership team. EMERGE had a mandate to be an inclusive forum to **empower, motivate, encourage, recognize, grow** and **educate** Symcor employees on their leadership journeys. Sophia Soilemetzidou, a long-standing member of the EMERGE team, describes the strong commitment she has experienced from the senior leadership team: "Without the strategic intent, support and guidance that we had from our executives, it would have been impossible to succeed in the creation of EMERGE. They gave us the power to decide what the future would look like and supported us while ensuring that we considered all angles. They were with us every step of the way, sharing the EMERGE mission and ensuring that it brought value to Symcor as a whole."

Symcor's foundational policies ensure that employees are treated with respect and provided equal opportunities regardless of race, gender identity or background. An Executive Corporate Social Responsibility Committee (ECSRC) is accountable for Symcor's diversity and inclusion practices to implement programs that maintain an inclusive environment representative of the community in which Symcor operates.

Symcor is proud to be at the forefront of accelerating the path of women in Canada's digital technology sector. When provided the opportunity, women can drive innovation and growth, playing a significant role in shaping our nation's digital future.

<sup>5</sup> "Women Leadership and the Priority Paradox". IBM Institute for Business Value. Michelle Peluso, Carolyn Heller Baird and Lynn Kesterton Townes authors.

<sup>6</sup> Getting to Equal 2020. Accenture. [accenture.com/ca-en/about/inclusion-diversity/\\_acnmedia](https://www.accenture.com/ca-en/about/inclusion-diversity/_acnmedia)

## APPENDICES: DIGITAL ECONOMY LABOUR FORCE

ICTC's labour market research captures critical economic and labour market indicators, helping to inform competitive business planning, as well as strong human resource strategies and decision-making related to the ICT sector. Combined, this research forms the foundation for driving the development of a more prosperous Canadian ICT sector and a highly-skilled workforce able to compete in the global digital economy.

The sum total of workers (workers that are employed in these occupations, as well as workers that are currently unemployed, but actively seeking employment) in these occupations and all other non-ICT occupations in the ICT sector represent the total digital economy labour force in Canada.

The table below summarizes the core ICT occupations:

Index	National Occupation Classification (NOC)	Occupation Title
1	0015	Senior managers – trade, broadcasting and other services, n.e.c.
2	211	Engineering managers
3	213	Computer and information systems managers
4	601	Corporate sales managers
5	1123	Professional occupations in advertising, marketing, and public relations
6	1253	Records management technicians
7	2133	Electrical and electronics engineers
8	2147	Computer engineers (except software engineers and designers)
9	2148	Other professional engineers, n.e.c.
10	2161	Mathematicians, statisticians and actuaries
11	2171	Information systems analysts and consultants
12	2172	Database analysts and data administrators
13	2173	Software engineers and designers
14	2174	Computer programmers and interactive media developers
15	2175	Web designers and developers
16	2241	Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians
17	2281	Computer Network Technicians
18	2282	User support technicians
19	2283	Information systems testing technicians
20	4163	Business development officers and marketing
21	5223	Graphic arts technicians
22	5224	Broadcast technicians
23	5241	Graphic designers and illustrators
24	7241	Electricians (except industrial and power system)
25	7242	Industrial electricians
26	7243	Power system electricians

[www.wct-fct.com](http://www.wct-fct.com)

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