



TRILLIUM NETWORK
FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING



Gender Diversity and Ontario Manufacturing: Lessons from Five Leading Companies

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The Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing is a provincially-funded non-profit organization that raises public and investment awareness of Ontario's advanced manufacturing ecosystem with the intention of supporting growth and competitiveness. Our offices are located on the campus of Western University in London.

For more information please visit: www.trilliummfg.ca



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Introduction

A skilled workforce is critical to the competitiveness of Ontario's advanced manufacturing sector. Many manufacturers, however, struggle to attract and retain skilled employees. This is examined in recent reports published by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (Wilson and Poirier, 2019; Arcand, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has, perhaps not surprisingly, exacerbated these challenges. Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is emerging as the priority for Ontario manufacturers as we shift towards a post-pandemic economy.

Ontario manufacturers can overcome these challenges by better engaging demographic groups that have been historically underrepresented in the sector. These groups include youth, newcomers to Canada, and women. While we recognize that better engaging persons from all underrepresented demographics is important, this report focuses specifically on women.

Women make up nearly half of Ontario's workforce, but only 29 percent of the manufacturing workforce. Increasing the number and proportion of women in manufacturing, especially in higher-earning industries and occupations, has proven to be an elusive goal for many manufacturers. While the challenges associated with better engaging women are real, they are not insurmountable. In fact, several Ontario manufacturers, including Honda of Canada Mfg., Sanofi Canada, Muskoka Brewery, MAD Elevator, and Cascades, have made significant progress recruiting, retaining, and supporting the career advancement of women. This report presents case studies of each of these manufacturers to demonstrate how they made progress.

Increasing the number and proportion of women in manufacturing, especially in higher-earning industries and occupations, has proven to be an elusive goal for many manufacturers.

We venture several conclusions from these case studies. First, there were no happy accidents. Any progress was the result of conscious and intentional efforts made by company leaders. Second, efforts to engage women and to promote overall diversity and inclusion were reflected throughout broader company strategies, values, and culture. Third, engaging women involved transforming those strategies, values, and culture into policies and practices, and putting those policies and practices into action on the shop floor, in the boardroom, and everywhere in between. Fourth, all five of the manufacturers that participated in this project benefited from their efforts to engage women and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace. Finally, and perhaps most controversially, we determined that the occupational composition of an industry or company matters. We uncovered industry- and company-level evidence of progress engaging women in senior leadership, engineering, and production-related occupations. Unfortunately, we have sparse evidence of any progress engaging women in the skilled trades (e.g. industrial electricians, millwrights/mechanics, machinists). Industries or companies that rely heavily on skilled tradespersons (e.g. machinery manufacturing) therefore face greater challenges engaging women than those that do not (e.g. pharmaceutical product manufacturing). Based on our evidence, we conclude that these challenges are not inherent to manufacturing, but rather to the institution of skilled trades itself.

All five of the manufacturers that participated in this project benefited from their efforts to engage women and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Women and Manufacturing

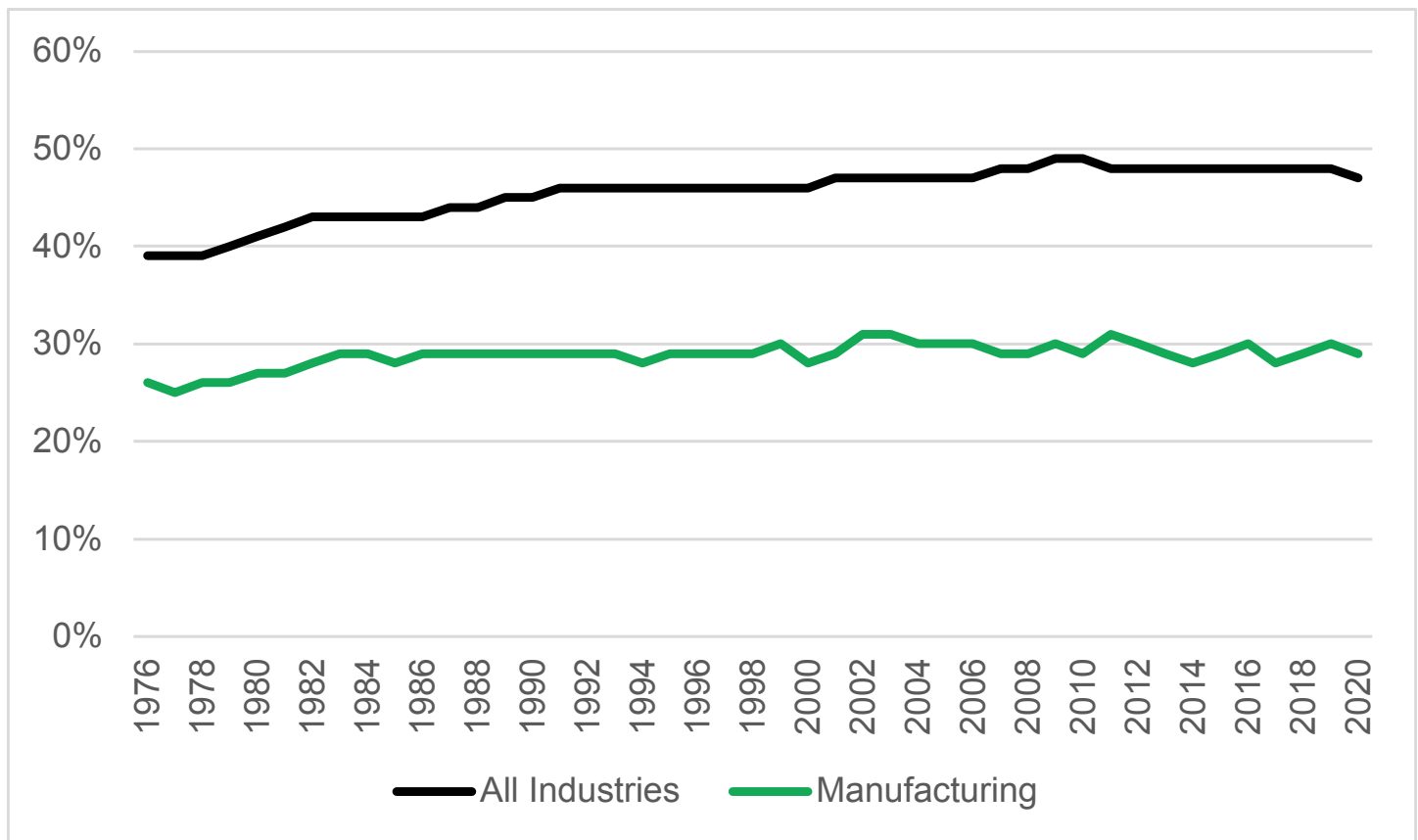
Women accounted for 39 percent of Ontario’s workforce in 1976. This proportion increased steadily throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, reaching a high of 49 per cent in 2009, but falling to 47 per cent by 2020 (an impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; RBC Economics, 2020). Over the same period the proportion of women working in Ontario’s manufacturing industry increased by much less and has remained around 29 per cent since the early 1980s (see Figure 1).

Women tend to be concentrated within lower-paying segments of manufacturing. In some segments, such as clothing, textiles, and commercial bakeries, women make up the majority of employees. Average annual earnings in these industries range from between \$41,500 and \$44,000, much less than the average for all of manufacturing (\$60,500) or for all Ontarians (\$54,500) (Authors’ Calculations, Statistics Canada, 2021; Table 14-10-0204-01). Conversely, the proportion of women working

in higher-paying segments of manufacturing, including primary metal and transportation equipment manufacturing, tends to be low. The one exception is pharmaceutical product manufacturing, where annual earnings are relatively high (\$72,400) and women comprise 49 per cent of the workforce. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

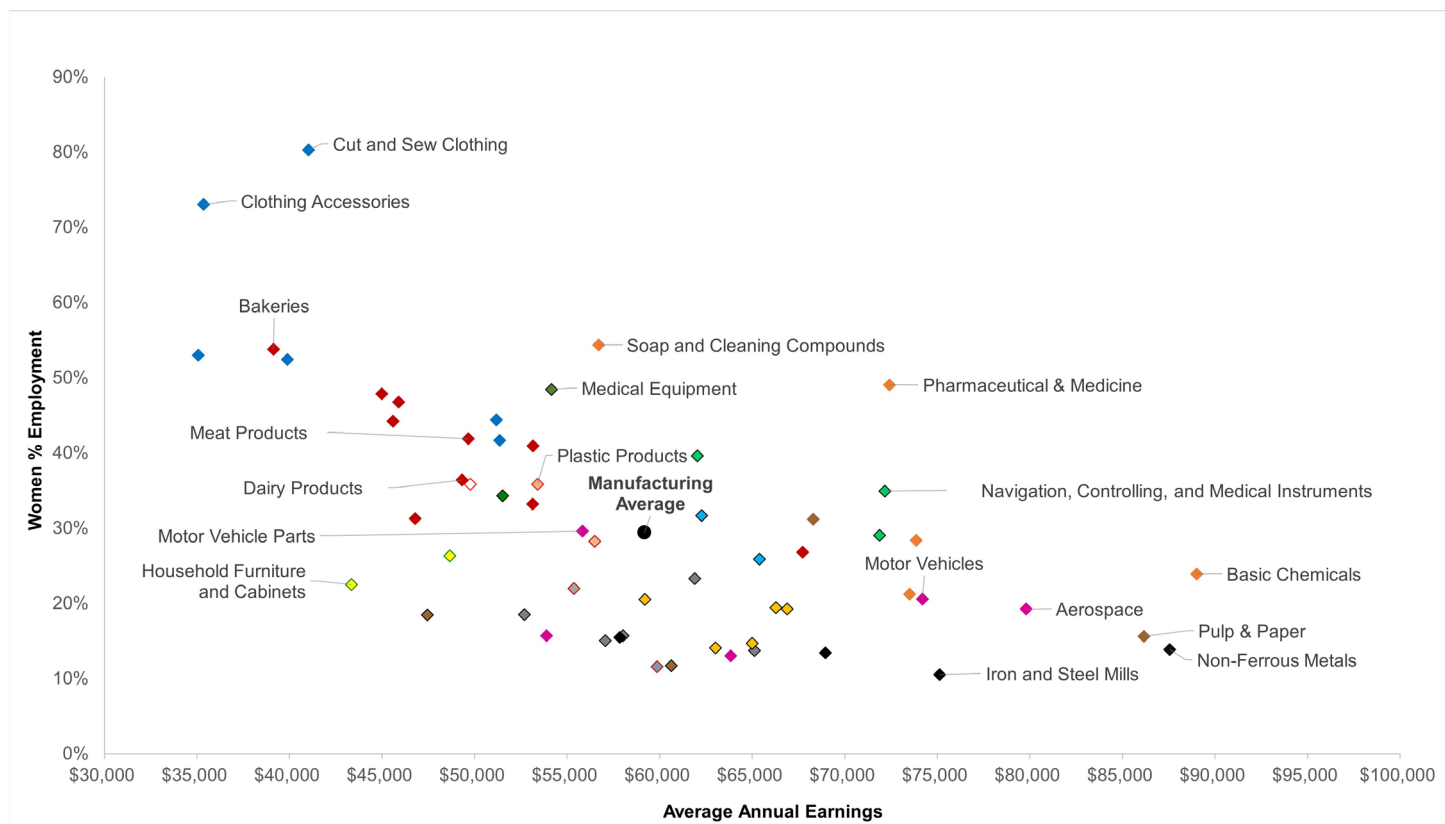
Women also tend to be concentrated in lower-paying occupations within manufacturing. Women are over-represented in lower-paying production, sales and service, and administrative occupations and underrepresented in higher-paying management, STEM, and trades occupations (see Table 1). Women are especially underrepresented in the trades, which are critical to the operation of manufacturing facilities. This has significant implications for industries that rely extensively on tradespersons (e.g. machinery and metalworking).

Figure 1 - Women as a % of Ontario’s Workforce, 1976-2020



Source: Statistics Canada, 2021; Table 14-10-0023-01

Figure 2 - Women as a % of the Workforce and Average Earnings in Select Manufacturing Industries



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2021; Table 14-10-0204-01 and Statistics Canada, 2016; Census Table 98-400-X2016319

The myriad reasons why women are underrepresented in most of Ontario’s manufacturing industry are well documented. A recent Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) report identifies challenges related to work-life balance, a lack of promotion and advancement opportunities, male-centric work cultures, and outright sexism and discrimination (CME, 2017). Other reports identify the importance of women mentors and role models, of which there is a short supply (Manufacturing Institute, 2017). These conclusions are echoed in a substantial academic literature.

This report does not engage in further discussion of the reasons why women are underrepresented in manufacturing; as noted, these are well documented elsewhere. Rather, it focuses on the strategies, policies, and practices of five Ontario manufacturers that are making measurable progress in recruiting, retaining, and supporting the advancement of women. We believe that the five case studies presented in this report not only provide evidence of progress, but also offer insight into how manufacturers can improve women’s employment opportunities and outcomes. The benefits

of doing so are substantial and increasingly important for manufacturers seeking to access talent from all demographics of society as a means to develop competitive advantages.

Table 1 - Median Annual Earnings and Women as a % of Select Manufacturing Occupations in Ontario

Occupation	Median Annual Earnings (2016)	% Women
All Occupations	\$50,127	29%
Management (NOC 0)	\$90,633	24%
Finance and Administration (NOC 1)	\$49,871	58%
STEM (NOC 2)	\$69,548	20%
Sales and Service (NOC 6)	\$39,985	47%
Trades and Transport (NOC 7)	\$54,183	6%
Production (NOC 9)	\$41,833	32%

Sources: Statistics Canada, 2016; Census Tables 98-400-X2016370 and 98-400-X2016281

Gender Diversity and Five Leading Ontario Manufacturers

The following case studies provide insight into how five Ontario manufacturers successfully implemented policies and practices to improve gender diversity and inclusion. These case studies also comment on other aspects of the companies' broader diversity and inclusion practices. We are extremely grateful that these companies chose to participate in this project. They are all leaders in their respective industries and champions of diversity and inclusion. We are proud that they are part of Ontario's advanced manufacturing ecosystem.



large urban centre. HCM offers competitive wages, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement in a modern production facility. Their internal data showed that women who applied to HCM proceeded through the recruitment process with the same degree of success as men. Company leaders, therefore, concluded that if they wanted to increase the proportion of women at HCM, it was incumbent upon them to modify their recruitment practices. One of the foremost ways they did this was through an event designed to attract women applicants: Women@Honda.

Women@Honda is held every two weeks. Advertised publicly, each event is attended by approximately 20 women. The event is designed to increase participants' comfort and familiarity with HCM's 900-acre production complex, an environment that can be intimidating. Participants are welcomed in a boardroom where they are served refreshments and learn more about HCM. This is followed by a 45-minute plant tour and an overview of the recruitment process and HCM's contract production program (the point of entry for most applicants). After a Q&A session with current HCM associates, participants are invited to formally apply and book their first interview.

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Honda of Canada Mfg.

Honda of Canada Mfg. (HCM) operates a vehicle assembly and engine manufacturing complex in Alliston, where they employ over 4,000 people who manufacture Honda Civics and CR-Vs. The first assembly plant came online in 1986, the second in 1998, and the engine plant in 2008.

Like other Ontario manufacturers, a large proportion of HCM employees have recently retired or are scheduled to retire soon. Coupled with the generally tight labour markets, this posed a challenge for the consistently busy automaker. Several years ago, HCM leadership predicted that they would face mounting staffing-related challenges if they continued to rely primarily on a recruitment strategy that attracted several times more men than women. This was especially so given their location outside of a

The Women@Honda event has proven a resounding success. Over 98 percent of participants ultimately apply to work at HCM. Since Women@Honda began in July 2018, the proportion of women in the contract production program increased from 16 percent to 29 percent. In addition to expanding the talent pool available to HCM, the event has additional benefits. Women develop strong relationships with other women in their 'cohorts,' which differs from the past when many cohorts included only one or two women, leading to retention challenges related to isolation. Women are also increasingly likely to refer other women within their networks to participate in Women@Honda, which is critical for a large manufacturer whose recruitment practices rely to some degree on referrals from its existing associates.

HCM has also established a successful Women in Manufacturing Business Resource Group (BRG). Spearheaded by one of their plant managers, the BRG is open to women from all departments and occupations. One of their most important initiatives involves STEM Days, where girls from local primary schools spend time with HCM associates to learn about career opportunities in manufacturing. These initiatives are an important part of longer-term strategies to ensure that manufacturers have access to talent and that young Ontarians are aware of the opportunities available to them in manufacturing.

While they have made significant progress through the Women@Honda event and other initiatives, HCM employs very few women tradespersons. This, however, is something they view as an opportunity. HCM recruits apprentices from within. Given the steady increase in the proportion of women associates, there is optimism that more women will apply to such programs in the near future. Representatives of HCM also recognize the potential to use pre-apprenticeship programs to boost internal recruitment efforts.

The same representatives offer additional insight into the process of attracting and engaging women. First, it is critical to collect data, establish baselines, and measure progress. Without data, it is impossible to determine whether your practices are successful. Second, communications personnel play an important role, both internally and externally. Recruitment material should be revised to ensure that it is gender-neutral and that it does not discourage women from applying, and imagery inside and outside the workplace should showcase diversity. Third, zero-tolerance policies for harassment or inappropriate behaviour are an absolute must, as are leaders' willingness to enforce these policies. Finally, trust in your current workforce - they are likely well prepared to embrace diversity, especially when leaders communicate their goals and intentions. This was certainly the case at HCM.

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Sanofi Canada

The pharmaceutical industry is a standout performer among Ontario manufacturers when it comes to recruiting, retaining, and supporting the career development of women. One of the leaders within the pharmaceutical industry is Sanofi Canada. A subsidiary of France-based Sanofi SA, Sanofi Canada provides medicines in several therapeutic areas and are also active in consumer healthcare. Sanofi Canada employs more than 1,100 people who manufacture vaccines and other biopharmaceutical products at its Sanofi Pasteur site in Toronto.

Sanofi Pasteur employees are thought to be just as diverse as Toronto's population. Nearly half of the company's manufacturing workforce are women, who are well-represented across almost all occupational categories. Women make up 46 percent of leadership positions, 64 percent of the Toronto-based manufacturing senior leadership team, 49 percent of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) employees, and 47 percent of production and quality control employees.¹ Moreover, 62 percent of recent promotions to leadership positions have been women.

Several factors support diversity and inclusion at Sanofi Pasteur. First, the company's employees have very specialized skills, and are often recruited from abroad. The highly specialized nature of work in the biopharmaceutical industry leaves little room for bias and international recruitment efforts support ethnic diversity. Second, the occupational mix in the pharmaceutical industry differs considerably from other manufacturing industries. The pharmaceutical industry employs a much higher proportion of STEM personnel when compared to other segments of manufacturing. These personnel include microbiologists, chemists, and other life science professionals, an occupational group that traditionally includes a higher proportion of women than other manufacturing-related occupations (e.g. engineering, trades). Third, Sanofi Canada has consciously implemented a number of policies and practices that have proven effective at supporting diversity and inclusion and provide the resources necessary to properly implement them.

The Sanofi Canada policies and practices that support diversity and inclusion are evident during recruitment, selection, and onboarding. The company uses gender neutral and inclusive language in recruitment material and job advertisements. Recruiters, who are themselves diverse in terms of gender

¹ Women make up four percent of Sanofi Canada's trades employees. This is consistent with the average for all manufacturing in Ontario.

and ethnicity, receive training that ensures that Sanofi Canada's values are 'embedded' into conversations with recruits and applicants. There is also an expectation that the final slate of candidates for most positions will include at least one woman and one man. Sanofi Canada has also discontinued the practice of asking applicants about current or recent salary details, which can disadvantage women and exacerbate existing pay differentials. Instead, the company bases compensation on the attributes of the position and the abilities of the candidate. This, according to company leaders, required substantial updates to HR-related processes and documentation.

Sanofi Canada dedicates time and resources to diversity and inclusion initiatives beyond recruitment, selection, and onboarding. Employees have access to a number of e-training resources, including short videos (or 'nudges') that help keep diversity and inclusion top of mind. Employees are encouraged to engage in diversity-related conversations, often through the company's Inclusion and Diversity Council, where they share their personal experiences. Many employees participate in company-sponsored employee resource groups. These groups include Women Inspiring Sanofi Excellence (WISE), Alliance for DiVersificAtion, iNclusion, and Enrichment (ADVANCE), PRIDE Connect and Mosaic. Sanofi Canada is also active in several organizations that promote and advocate the advancement of women in STEM and skilled trades, including the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWEST) and the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology (SCWIST). The employee resource

groups and membership in CCWEST and SCWIST help to communicate Sanofi Canada's commitment to diversity and inclusion to broader professional networks within and outside the company. This, in turn, supports the recruitment, retention, and career advancement of women and other underrepresented persons in an industry where access to talent is critical to success but often scarce.

Sanofi Pasteur is an integral component of Ontario's advanced manufacturing ecosystem and are leaders within the industry when it comes to diversity and inclusion. The company achieved this success despite limited flexibility in their production schedules, which is part of the nature of biopharmaceutical manufacturing. They do, however, endeavour to be flexible when possible. This is evident in their implementation of staggered start times, which has helped to increase female participation in their workforce over time. This – coupled with other initiatives like accommodations for family care – encourages an environment where gender parity can thrive.

Importantly, Sanofi Canada provides the resources necessary to implement and promote diversity and inclusion initiatives internally and to communicate them externally. The company received the Women in Governance's gold-level Gender Parity Certification in 2019 and are currently the only Ontario manufacturer to achieve this accreditation.² We look forward to learning more about Sanofi Canada and its industry-leading diversity and inclusion initiatives.

² Kruger Products achieved silver-level certification and Cascades achieved bronze-level certification in 2019.



Muskoka Brewery

Located in Bracebridge, Muskoka Brewery is one of Canada’s preeminent craft breweries. The brewery was founded in 1996 and has experienced substantial growth over the past decade. During this time, it has emerged as an industry leader in regards to its product offerings, marketing, and employment practices. Muskoka became the first craft brewery in Canada to commit to a living wage for its employees in 2016. Moreover, they have established near gender parity across the organization, and work diligently to ensure that women are present in all facets of the company.

One of the most significant barriers to engaging women in manufacturing is related to scheduling and work-life balance. Rigid production schedules are often at odds with childcare and other familial commitments, commitments that continue to fall disproportionately on women. However, identifying opportunities for flexibility, wherever possible, and subsequently implementing practices that support flexibility, is essential for manufacturers seeking to attract and retain women. The approach at Muskoka is to organize the workday with employees’ work-life balance in mind rather than asking employees to organize their lives around the workday.



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AT MUSKOKA BREWERY
We welcome everyone
**WE PROUDLY STAND FOR
 EQUALITY, RESPECT, INCLUSION,
 AND ALWAYS SPEAKING UP**
 ANY BEHAVIOUR REFLECTING RACISM, SEXISM, HOMOPHOBIA,
 TRANSPHOBIA, ABLEISM OR AGEISM IS NOT PERMITTED HERE

INCLUSION
 RESPECT
 KINDNESS
 LEARNING
 EQUALITY
 LOVE
 WELCOME
 LISTENING
 OPEN MINDS
 SUPPORTIVE
 COLLABORATION
 GROWTH
 POSITIVE
 COMMUNITY

PEOPLE FIRST, PINTS SECOND

Policies related to working-from-home, flexible start times, and leaves of absence support this strategy. On occasions where access to childcare services is limited (like PA days), children (and dogs) are allowed in the workplace. Equally importantly, Muskoka has established norms and guidelines regarding when people are not expected to work and are not available to their colleagues, an important yet often overlooked element of flexible scheduling. While these policies help Muskoka attract and retain women specifically, they also support the brewery’s broader recruitment and retention practices. To paraphrase a senior manager, this helps employees give their full effort at work and in their life outside work.

There are several reasons why gender, diversity and inclusion are part of Muskoka’s strategic priorities. A focus on diversity helps attract top talent, including employees who are diverse in age and bring different perspectives on work organization. As a consumer-facing brand, a focus on diversity also helps Muskoka communicate its values to a broader audience. Muskoka Brewery has made a point to prioritize diversity in all their advertising. These steps include diversity in visual representations and creating beers that reach all audiences. In 2020 the brewery launched Born This Way IPA with proceeds supporting diversity and inclusion initiatives. The brewery acknowledges that they are at the beginning on a long and important journey and continuously learning on how to improve their diversity and inclusion practices.

Alongside their Diversity and Inclusion committee, the brewery's leaders have developed a diversity statement that guides the organization. They regularly review company policies and documents to ensure the language used is inclusive and that job descriptions do not discourage women from applying. The latter often involves removing or modifying certain words, especially those related to physicality (e.g. heavy lifting), if they are not a significant job component.

Muskoka uses several other mechanisms to foster a diverse and inclusive environment. Hiring managers explicitly communicate fundamental tenets of company culture and values to candidates during job interviews and ask candidates questions that help determine if their values are in line with those of the organization. They conduct regular performance reviews that are holistic and designed to solicit feedback from employees. Through these reviews, team members work together to identify self-directed career development opportunities that support Muskoka's goals. These also create opportunities to identify potential mentorship relationships; something research has found to be critical in supporting the retention and advancement of women in manufacturing.

Muskoka demonstrates the importance of aligning company culture and values with policies and practices. The brewery's efforts are not limited to individual campaigns or initiatives but are built into everything it does. For Muskoka, the benefits are numerous. Aligning its values with communications and marketing practices signals its commitment to diversity and inclusion to customers and employees alike. This, in turn, supports recruitment efforts by broadening and deepening the talent pool interested in working at Muskoka. It also creates a virtuous cycle, facilitating the retention and career development of an increasingly diverse team. We are excited to learn more about diversity at Muskoka in 2021 (stay tuned)!



MAD Elevator

During the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, MAD Elevator sprang into action to make sure their employees could balance their commitments to both family and work. The leaders of the Mississauga-based manufacturer of elevator fixtures and cab interiors recognized how challenging it was for employees to find appropriate childcare during the crisis. Their solution was to pay employees' relatives an amount equivalent to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) to take on childcare duties, ensuring that their employees' employment and earnings were not interrupted. The company also loaned laptops to employees' children to support their transition to online learning. MAD Elevator recognizes that diversity and inclusion initiatives often extend beyond the workplace, in this case, they are designed to be inclusive of employees in their roles as mothers and fathers.

These initiatives demonstrate MAD Elevator's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and the values-based hiring practices that have contributed to its growth from 90 to nearly 200 employees in the past three years. The company's recruitment and retention practices derive from the regular feedback and high levels of engagement of its diverse workforce. For example, when employees indicated to managers that they valued spending time travelling and with their families over other benefits, the company introduced an enhanced vacation policy tied to employee tenure. This has resulted in improved retention. In fact, there has been no turnover among the cohort of employees hired since this policy change. Furthermore, while other manufacturers faced labour shortages, MAD Elevator was able to rely on its employee referral program to provide work for students during the summer of 2020.

Retention is an important goal for MAD Elevator's diversity and inclusion initiatives. The company aims to be a place where employees can grow their careers, not a stepping stone to other opportunities. MAD Elevator's human resource leaders use employee feedback - including surveys and one-on-one conversations - to identify how they can support employees' career advancement. These conversations are part of the company's strategy to create succession paths for employees within the organization. Employee feedback has also resulted in expanded upskilling, cross-training, and coaching opportunities for employees, regardless of their current occupation.

The focus on retention begins with a concerted effort to recruit and hire the right people. MAD Elevator focuses on recruiting

employees whose values and attitudes are aligned with the company's, especially as they related to diversity and inclusion. New hires participate in orientation and onboarding activities that include diversity training, as well as workplace violence scenario training. Leaders regularly consult with employees to ensure that the company is upholding its commitment to diversity and inclusion. They conduct surveys to determine if employees are proud of the work they do, are actively seeking other employment opportunities, would refer others to work at the company, and are satisfied with their job. This proactive approach helps company leaders identify successes and address concerns on a regular and ongoing basis.

Company leaders actively encourage employees to form friendships within their diverse workforce. This originated with a three-month 'buddy system' designed to help socialize new employees. Based on the results of an employee engagement survey, this system helped increase retention and led to decreases in the number of employees seeking other employment opportunities. MAD Elevator's management group, 40 percent of whom are women, also seek to establish connections with employees. One of the ways they do this is by taking planned daily walks through the plant. This personal style of management lets employees know that managers are accessible should they need to discuss anything.

MAD Elevator relies extensively on data gathered through employee surveys to develop and implement policies and practices. One such policy that resulted from these surveys is related to flexibility and work-life balance. The company offers opportunities for flexible or part-time work, whereby employees can organize their schedules around childcare. Mothers and fathers alike take advantage of this initiative. Another is related to the aforementioned support for employees and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Authors' note: we have yet to hear of any company that has offered such comprehensive help to employees' families during these challenging times. Great work, MAD Elevator!). These practices are a testament to MAD Elevator's proactive approach to diversity and inclusion, an approach that is increasingly valued by today's workforce.



Cascades

Cascades is a Quebec-based paper product manufacturer that employs over 12,000 people across its international operations. Its Ontario operations span Toronto, Burlington, Guelph, St. Mary's, Mississauga, Vaughan, Trenton, and Belleville, where they employ over 1,500 people. Cascades' approach to diversity and inclusion demonstrates the important role that executives and senior management play in putting policies into practice. It also demonstrates the importance of diversity policies that are clear, transparent, and communicated widely.

Motivated to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities, Cascades uses a data-focused approach to determine where it can improve its human resources processes. The company tracks the proportion of men and women in each occupation, including senior leadership positions. This has resulted in a direct focus on ensuring that women are offered the opportunity to advance into leadership roles, and that they are retained in those roles once they attain them. It also resulted in specialized diversity and inclusivity training for managers and recruiters and a company diversity committee.

In 2016, Cascades committed itself to gender parity goals across all levels of the organization. To do so, they developed a policy on workplace diversity and inclusion, and under the policy, a Women in the Workplace Program. Details for both the policy and program are publicly available on Cascades' website.³ Company executives outlined Cascades' parity goals and how it expected its managers to implement them at a meeting with approximately 200 senior managers in the following year. At this meeting, they explained how these policies would be put into practice. Two key elements of these practices involved improving equity and inclusion in performance reviews and leadership training. For example,

³ <https://www.cascades.com/en/sustainable-development/communities/empowered-employees/women-workplace-program>

To attract more female applicants, Cascades' job advertisements include 'feminine-coded' language designed to attract female applicants and that explicitly note the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

the leadership training covers coaching skills, emotional intelligence, and integrating Cascades' values and culture in leadership. Company executives continue to highlight these policies and practices at annual meetings to ensure that senior managers are aware of and have adequate resources to properly carry them out.

As part of these initiatives, Cascades focused specifically on attaining gender parity in its management committee, which is composed of company vice-presidents. To do so, it established a two-pronged approach to leadership development, identifying and training high performers in leadership skills via the LIFT program and further developing senior leaders in constructive leadership via the LEAP program (both programs were developed by the Ivey Business School). These efforts have paid off, and in 2020 nearly half of Cascades vice-presidents were women.

The company's diversity and inclusion efforts are not reserved for those in executive roles. To ensure its recruitment practices reflect the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion, Cascades offers diversity-related training to managers, supervisors, and recruiters. This training helps to remove bias from the process of recruiting and selecting new candidates. To attract more female applicants, Cascades' job advertisements include 'feminine-coded' language designed to attract female

applicants and that explicitly note the company's commitment to diversity and inclusion. These advertisements also include testimonials from female employees working in occupations where the proportion of women has historically been low. The company is reviewing data from the past three years to help understand the longer-term impacts of these initiatives.

Cascades is committed to diversity and inclusion for all of its employees, regardless of age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, or occupation. As part of this commitment, they established a diversity committee with broad employee representation. Company executives encourage the committee to provide input on any policies and practices the company develops. Outside of this, Cascades provides employees with several avenues for direct feedback, including an ethics hotline that employees can use to flag concerns anonymously via phone or email.

The results of Cascades' diversity and inclusion initiatives have had demonstrable and positive impacts on the company. The company received a bronze-level gender parity certification from Women in Governance in 2019. This makes them one of only three Ontario manufacturers to hold this certification at the time of writing. In the immediate future Cascades hopes to increase the number of women working in its Ontario production facilities and achieve gender parity on their board of directors.



Ten Lessons from Leading Manufacturers

The five case studies provide evidence that several Ontario-based manufacturers are making real and measurable progress recruiting, retaining, and supporting women's career advancement. These case studies also provide important information for manufacturers seeking to do the same. In this section we identify 10 important and actionable lessons that we learned from these case studies and that are backed by research.

1. Progress is the result of conscious and intentional efforts.

All of the manufacturers that participated in this project made progress through conscious and intentional efforts. They were relentless and persistent in the pursuit of these goals. Their strategies, policies, and practices were embedded within company culture and values. None of them made progress as the result of a happy accident. All of them were humble and recognized they have more work to do.

2. You can't track progress without data.

*'If you don't know where you're going,
you'll end up someplace else'*
- Yogi Berra

Collecting and analyzing data is critical. This includes data collected from internal and external sources. Good internal data is absolutely critical. However, we were surprised to learn about manufacturers that claimed to have active diversity and inclusion initiatives but had no demographic information about their workforce at the ready (note that none of these manufacturers participated in this project). Some claimed that their Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) were

not equipped to provide anonymous information about the age or gender of their workforce. It is our opinion that these manufacturers were either being disingenuous or needed a new HRIS (or maybe both). External data is often used in combination with internal data, and often for the purposes of benchmarking.

In addition to quantitative and statistical data, the manufacturers that participated in this project relied on conversation-based feedback to guide and augment their diversity and inclusion initiatives. In fact, many of these initiatives were implemented as the result of conversations with employees. It is therefore important to have mechanisms through which employees can provide this type of feedback. At least some of these mechanisms should be proactive. Company leaders should not hesitate to initiate conversations about diversity and inclusion. They should also be ready and willing to respond to all forms of feedback in a timely and collaborative manner.

3. Be flexible about flexibility and balanced about work-life balance.

Much of the flexible scheduling that is so common in many other sectors has eluded manufacturers. The reality is that manufacturers need people to come to work and be in certain places at certain times, most of the time. However, options for flexibility do exist, even though manufacturers face constraints related to production schedules. These options might include staggered start times or condensed shifts. They might include allowing employees to choose their own shifts on certain occasions. They might include different options for different occupational groups. They may be a matter of equity rather

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They should also be ready and willing to respond to all forms of feedback in a timely and collaborative manner.

than equality. If you can realistically offer a benefit that is valuable to Employee A but not Employee B, why should Employee B hold you back?

Improving flexibility improves work-life balance. The benefits of effective work-life balance programs are extensive, and include higher levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Masterson et al., 2021). It is important to remember that achieving work-life balance means organizing work around people's lives, not the other way around. Flexibility and work-life balance are valued by employees regardless of gender. However, they are especially valuable to women, who continue to bear the brunt of child and family care responsibilities.

If you are a manufacturer and you don't know where to start, ask those who are intimately familiar with your working environment and their lives outside of work--in other words, your employees. If you signal to them that you are willing to offer them something valuable, they will give you ideas to help make that happen.

4. Involve women.

Women should be involved in the design, implementation, and review of any policies or practices designed to support gender diversity. This includes recruitment and selection processes, communications and promotion initiatives, onboarding, training and development programs, and feedback mechanisms. The same is true for other demographics, including younger persons. A strategy to recruit people in their 20s that is wholly conceived of by persons in their 60s is likely to fail.

Women should be visible throughout the organization. If you hope to recruit women, some of your recruiters should be women. If you hope to hire women, your hiring committee should include women. The research is quite clear: companies that do not include women in their recruitment and selection processes are unlikely to hire women (Johnson et al., 2016). Communications and promotional materials should include female employees. Those materials should be genuine and sincere. If those materials show images of women working on the shop floor, a recruit that tours your facility will expect to see women on the shop floor. If those materials are disingenuous or lack sincerity, prospective employees may lose interest at a critical point in the recruitment process (Kroeper et al., 2021).

Women should be visible throughout the organization. If you hope to recruit women, some of your recruiters should be women. If you hope to hire women, your hiring committee should include women.

5. Recognize biases. Then minimize them.

Recruiting, retaining, and supporting women's career advancement should be the result of good policies and practices, not mandates or quotas. This means removing barriers that unintentionally exclude women. Language biases are among the most common barriers in this respect. Using gender-neutral or feminine-positive language in internal and external documents is of the utmost importance. This is especially important in the recruitment and selection process. Removing these biases during the recruitment process is an obvious place to start. Doing so has been made easier by Microsoft Word, which now includes features that check documents for inclusive language with the intention of removing gender, age, ethnicity, and disability biases.

Compensation biases are especially common in manufacturing. Removing these biases can help manufacturers recruit and retain women. These biases often result from existing pay differentials between women and men. When present compensation is based on past compensation, these differentials become entrenched. Entrenched and biased pay differentials are a sure way to foment job dissatisfaction. One way to remove these biases is to base compensation on codified values associated with knowledge, skills, and abilities - not on past compensation with another employer. Doing so likely requires that companies review human resources policies and practices.

6. Be transparent and communicative about diversity.

It is important to communicate diversity and inclusion initiatives, values, policies, and practices publicly and emphatically. This helps ensure accountability. Be upfront with employees and other stakeholders about what you are doing and why. Communicate results and evidence of progress regularly. Learn from manufacturers that have made progress - many are happy to share. For example, Cascades publishes its diversity and inclusion policies on its website. Muskoka's commitment to diversity and inclusion is evident in product labelling and visible to employees, customers, and suppliers the minute they walk into the brewery's front door. MAD Elevator's human resource managers speak regularly about their progress - and their challenges - at conferences and other public events. If access to a skilled and talented workforce is important to your company, then this is one of the most important branding exercises you will ever do.

7. Identify and promote pathways for career development.

Manufacturers place a premium on recruiting and hiring employees who have potential to advance within the company. Job-seekers place a premium on employers that can identify pathways for career development and communicate how they, as employers, will support that career development. To improve the recruitment and retention of women it is important to identify these pathways. Moreover, it is equally, if not more important, to provide examples of other women who have advanced via those pathways. Research shows that exposure to counter-stereotypical role models (e.g. female electricians and millwrights) is especially valuable (Dasgupta and Asgari, 2004). Gender-oriented mentorship programs - the subject of a subsequent Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing report - are also useful, and have positive impacts on employee retention (Dennehy and Dasgupta, 2017).

8. Get everyone on board.

The most successful diversity and inclusion initiatives are understood and appreciated by everyone from senior leaders to newly-recruited employees. Leaders play a critical role in communicating their vision and plan to other managers and employees throughout the organization. Those involved in recruitment, selection, and other human resource functions also play a significant role. The latter group is particularly important in ensuring that the company's values are communicated to applicants and employees alike, and that applicants and employees' values are aligned with those of the

company. This is yet another reason why soliciting input and feedback from employees is valuable, especially during the development stage.

9. Provide the necessary tools and resources.

Even the best-laid plans are doomed to failure if they lack the resources necessary to execute them. Leaders will need time to review, update, and communicate policies and practices. Other managers and frontline supervisors will need training and guidance along the way. There will also likely be costs associated with communicating and promoting these initiatives (e.g. web design, signs, advertising). If properly designed and implemented, however, the benefits of these initiatives, which are designed to support recruitment and retention, will far outweigh the costs.

10. There's no time like the present.

Get started. That might mean collecting data. That might mean benchmarking (we can help). That might mean having conversations with employees. That might mean something else entirely.

Your workforce may be more ready than you think. In fact, they may be wondering why you haven't started already. Ontario is becoming more, not less, diverse. Younger generations of employees expect the demographic composition of their employers to be similar to that of their world outside of work (Meister and Mulcahy, 2016). For most, that means the number of women should be roughly equivalent to the number of men. If your company can achieve this, then you can expect to have at least one advantage over your competitors.

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Conclusion

Ontario manufacturers must attract and engage the best and brightest that our workforce has to offer if they are to remain competitive. As it stands, 50 percent of our best and brightest are women. Attracting and engaging women has proven challenging for many manufacturers, although these challenges are not insurmountable. This report identifies five manufacturers that have successfully addressed these challenges. In so doing, it provides insight into how other manufacturers can make progress with diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The report also demonstrates that, as a sector, manufacturers have a substantial amount of work to do when it comes to better engaging underrepresented demographics. This is a subject that we at the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing will be paying close attention to in the future. Finally, the report highlights several persistent challenges, including those related to skilled trades. These challenges may be best addressed with some new insights, and we at the Trillium Network are happy to be part of those conversations.

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