



## Resources for technical women at the Intern or Entry level in Industry

### Getting to know the issues:

Anita Borg Institute: Ramsey, N. and McCurdock, P. (2005). Where are the Women in Information Technology? ABI report available online at:

[http://anitaborg.org/news/publications/wherearethe\\_women.pdf](http://anitaborg.org/news/publications/wherearethe_women.pdf)

Catalyst: About Catalyst Women in High Tech

<http://www.catalyst.org/files/fact/BitbyBitfactsheetfinal.pdf>

*Note: The issues presented as key for entry level technical women are based in a systematic review of the research literature by the Anita Borg Institute.*

### Key issues at the intern and entry level

#### 1. Managing transition and expectations from student to apprentice

A key challenge for any new intern or young new hire, whether male or female, is managing the transition from being a student to being an employee.

In their seminal book, “Strategies for Career Management”, Dalton and Thompson (1986) identify developing the following competences as crucial success for technical employees at the entry level:

- **Technical accuracy:** strive for accurate, detailed work
- **Develop a broad perspective:** think of the work you are doing in relationship to what others are doing in the organization, and think of your manager’s needs for your work to achieve the broader goals of the unit
- **Discipline:** strive to meet deadlines and see your responsibility through the end
- **Demonstrate initiative,** but ask questions and communicate frequently with your supervisor
- **Develop a clear understanding of the communication** expectations of your supervisor.

#### Further reading:

The University of British Columbia guide to transitioning into the workplace for science students: [http://www.coop.apsc.ubc.ca/students/handbook/mss\\_handbook/17-workshop10.pdf](http://www.coop.apsc.ubc.ca/students/handbook/mss_handbook/17-workshop10.pdf)

The University of California Berkeley's Career Counseling tips for successful internships:  
<http://career.berkeley.edu/Internships/IntTips.stm>

Use the company resources that can help answer your questions about the work culture and typical issues for interns, such as the Microsoft Jobs Blog:  
<http://blogs.msdn.com/jobblog/articles/JobBlogFAQ.aspx>

Employers' who which to help support their new hires through the transition may read:  
Trainor, Michalene and Varma, Gale H. (1983). Engineering Student to Technical Employee: Identifying Graduates' Needs in the Transition. Journal of College Placement, 44(1): 27-35.

## **2. Developing social networks within the organization:**

A key determinant of success in any career is developing networks within outside one's immediate group. While it may be natural to form ties to other interns or people you work with every day, make an effort to create relationships to people who have different backgrounds and roles, as well as those who are more experienced, so you may learn new things from them.

Recommended Reading:

**Uzzi, Brian, and Dunlap, Shannon. How to Build Your Network.** Harvard Business Review, December 2005 Issue. Reprint # R0512B. Online at  
[http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbrsa/en/hbrsaLogin.jhtml;jsessionid=IWFXTXA5NTWUAKRGWCB5VQBKE0YOISW;\\$urlparam\\$kNRXE2ULYRiR52NiWJYH5SF?ID=R0512B&path=arc&pubDate=December2005&referral=null&\\_requestid=114602](http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/hbrsa/en/hbrsaLogin.jhtml;jsessionid=IWFXTXA5NTWUAKRGWCB5VQBKE0YOISW;$urlparam$kNRXE2ULYRiR52NiWJYH5SF?ID=R0512B&path=arc&pubDate=December2005&referral=null&_requestid=114602)

## **3. Learning to negotiate**

Women at all levels have been shown to receive lower salaries than their male counterparts. An essential skill to develop over time is negotiation. Here is a short Wall Street Journal article on the topic:

<http://www.collegejournal.com/salaryinfo/negotiationtips/20010321-asher.html>

- When you want to dig into the issue at a deeper level, we recommend the following books:

Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever, 2003. Women Don't Ask: Negotiation and the Gender Divide. Princeton University Press.

Bazerman, Max H. and Neale, Margaret A. 1992. Negotiating Rationally. New York: The Free Press.

## **4. Making Yourself Visible and Getting Heard**

A key challenge for entry level women is making themselves visible and gaining influence even without formal authority.

Cohen, Allen and Bradford, David (1991). Influence without Authority. New York, Wiley.

This book is a resource on how to persuade your peers, your superiors, and your subordinates, too, even when you have no formal authority.

Tannen, Deborah. (1995). The Power of Talk: Who Gets Heard and Why. Harvard Business Review, September 1995.

Deborah Tannen, also author of the book “Talking from 9 to 5, Men and Women at work”, explores the communication styles of men and women and shows how communication styles affects who gets heard in the work setting.

### **5. Managing your Manager**

Research shows that at the early career stage organizational success is significantly determined by one’s immediate supervisor. Therefore, you need to manager your manager efficiently.

Girl Geeks recommends the following strategies:

[http://www.girlgeeks.org/business/rhic\\_managing.shtml](http://www.girlgeeks.org/business/rhic_managing.shtml)

### **6. Finding a Mentor:**

One of the most important ways you can advance as a technical woman is through mentoring. Ask your HR department about in-house mentoring programs, or use the following tools to get started.

- Fast Company looks at mentoring trends in high tech companies:

<http://www.fastcompany.com/online/17/womentoring.html>

These books explore mentoring, how to find a mentor and the key to good mentor relationships in depth:

Shea, Gordon F. 1999. Making the Most of Being Mentored: How to Grow from a Mentoring Relationship. Crisp Publications.

Wellington, Sheila, and Spence, Betty. 2001. Be Your Own Mentor: Strategies from Top Women on the Secrets of Success. Random House.

Once you find a mentor, use the Mentoring In a Box: Technical Women at Work, jointly produced by the Anita Borg Institute and the National Center for Women and Technology, available at: <http://www.ncwit.org/practices.box.html>