Breaking Barriers:

Women in Tech Speak Out



A partnership between Reframe WIT, Tech Returners and Sage

Reframe
Women in Tech

Tech Returners

Sage

Executive Summary

This report explores the barriers that have faced women entering the tech industry for too long. Through a survey and qualitative roundtable research, five key themes emerged:

1

Lack of awareness or contact with the tech industry

The first theme highlights the limited exposure and awareness of the tech industry among women, hindering their ability to explore opportunities and develop relevant skills. Exploring alternative entry routes, engaging in self-learning, and building networks within the tech community counters this barrier. Businesses, on the other hand, can influence education and highlight the true variety of tech career paths.

2

Lack of women role models

This awareness gap creates a cycle of limited inspiration and discouragement among aspiring women. Encouragement for women to seek or become mentors, along with businesses actively promoting women into leadership positions and publicly highlighting female role models, are essential steps in creating a more inclusive and empowering environment. Addressing this issue requires a collective effort from society, wherein greater visibility and support are provided to women.

3

Exclusionary hiring process

A complex and inflexible hiring experience across the tech industry was a recurring experience for women. Businesses should encourage alternative hiring methods, adopt clear and inclusive language in job descriptions, and promote flexible working policies. We want individuals to advocate for themselves, ask important questions about job requirements and flexible work culture, and ultimately, understand and prioritise their strengths and values.

4

Confidence

Nearly all women surveyed identified lack of confidence or imposter syndrome as barriers to entering tech. Businesses can provide resources for employee well-being, recognise the value of career breaks, and invest in confidence support. It is important for individuals to seek out and utilise supportive resources, as well as champion and uplift other women and build a positive feedback bank.

5

Discrimination

The final theme explores discrimination, including ageism, sexism, racism, and bias. Businesses should implement training and policies, establish Employee Resource Groups, and adopt anonymised CVs. Individuals can strive to build awareness among allies and speak up against and report discriminatory practices.



This report underlines the urgent need for increased awareness, support and inclusivity to address the barriers women grapple with in tech. Businesses must take the lead as the primary driver for change as they possess the power and resources to implement the recommended strategies and authentically promote diversity. Individuals can help themselves and others as the secondary driver through the suggested recommendations. Together, by taking action, the industry can create a more welcoming and empowering environment for women, leading to a stronger and more inclusive tech sector.

Introduction to research

Reframe Women in Tech (Reframe WIT) conference, held bi-annually, has established itself as the largest gathering of its kind in the North West, uniting 750 people driven by the passion to ignite change and reshape the narrative surrounding 'women in tech.' This event serves as an ideal forum for extracting valuable experiences and insights from the women in attendance, providing a blueprint for creating a fairer future. Recognising this gathering as potential for progress, Sage, Reframe WIT, and Tech Returners embarked on a collective mission.

On conference day one, Action Learning and Insights Sponsor, Sage, conducted a survey involving 102 women currently working in or aspiring to enter the technology industry. This survey explored women's perceptions of the tech sector, accessibility to job opportunities, the impact of career breaks, and more.

On the second day, the survey was followed by a roundtable session of 250 people, 89% of whom were women, with a view to growing a deeper understanding of the following question:

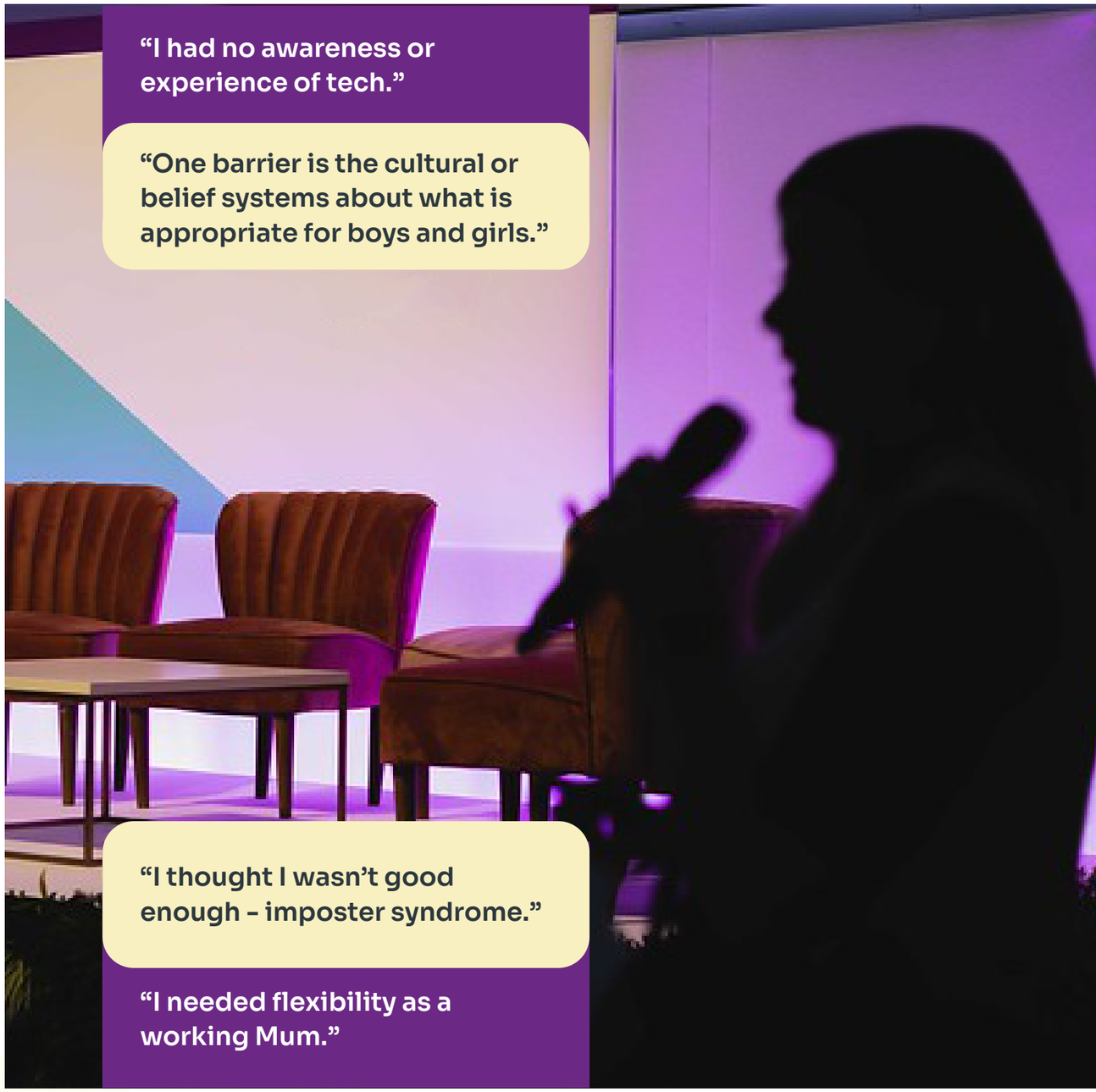
What were your biggest barriers when entering tech?

Reflecting on these barriers, those in the room were asked to draw upon their personal experiences and make recommendations for both businesses and individuals. The goal? To collate these suggestions and create a catalyst for positive change in the tech industry.

From the people in the room on the day, recurring themes emerged and highlighted areas where both businesses and individuals need to concentrate their efforts to enhance gender diversity across the tech industry. While patterns did emerge, it's important to note that there is no single homogenous experience of being a woman in tech, and these insights should be further explored through an intersectional lens. Women have multiple overlapping identities which impact their entry into tech and how they experience the industry.

This report represents these challenges and recommendations, brought together to present an authentic account that sheds light on the challenges faced by these women - in their own words. Together, we're presenting actionable solutions for businesses and individuals to create a more inclusive and thriving industry.

What were your biggest barriers when entering tech?



Theme 1:

Lack of awareness or contact with the tech industry

Responses highlighted that a barrier for women attempting to enter the tech industry is a lack of awareness of it and exposure to it. This undeniably hinders ability to explore potential opportunities, develop relevant skills for roles, and build connections that could generate a network within tech. It's unsurprising that there is a lack of awareness to start with as tech is not emphasised in the education of generations prior to Gen Z, who were among the first to properly encounter coding in schools. However, even today, access to technical learning in schools varies based on location or educational policies.

Regardless of what's happening in schools, there are women out there trying to enter the industry right now. This inherent lack of familiarity with tech and limited visibility of opportunities act as significant barriers, preventing women from fully exploring their potential and contributing valuable diversity of thought to the industry.



Recommendation for businesses:

1. Influence education

To make a difference long term, engage with local schools, educational institutions and support initiatives such as InnovateHer and Digital Her to raise awareness of the tech industry and the breadth of roles it offers. The tech roles of today are different to what they will be tomorrow. Educating, and breaking down the stereotypical notion of what constitutes a tech role will build a horizon where girls want to be part of it, because they see the wide range of possibilities in every sector.

Organise visits, 'field trips' or workshops where women leaders from your organisation share their experiences and insights, inspiring students and debunking stereotypes about gender and tech. Alternatively invite school groups into your office environment to get them excited about the potential career they could embark upon!

Exposing young people to the possibilities in tech and women role models may spark their interest, encouraging them to consider tech as a viable and importantly, exciting career path.

2. Encourage alternative hiring methods

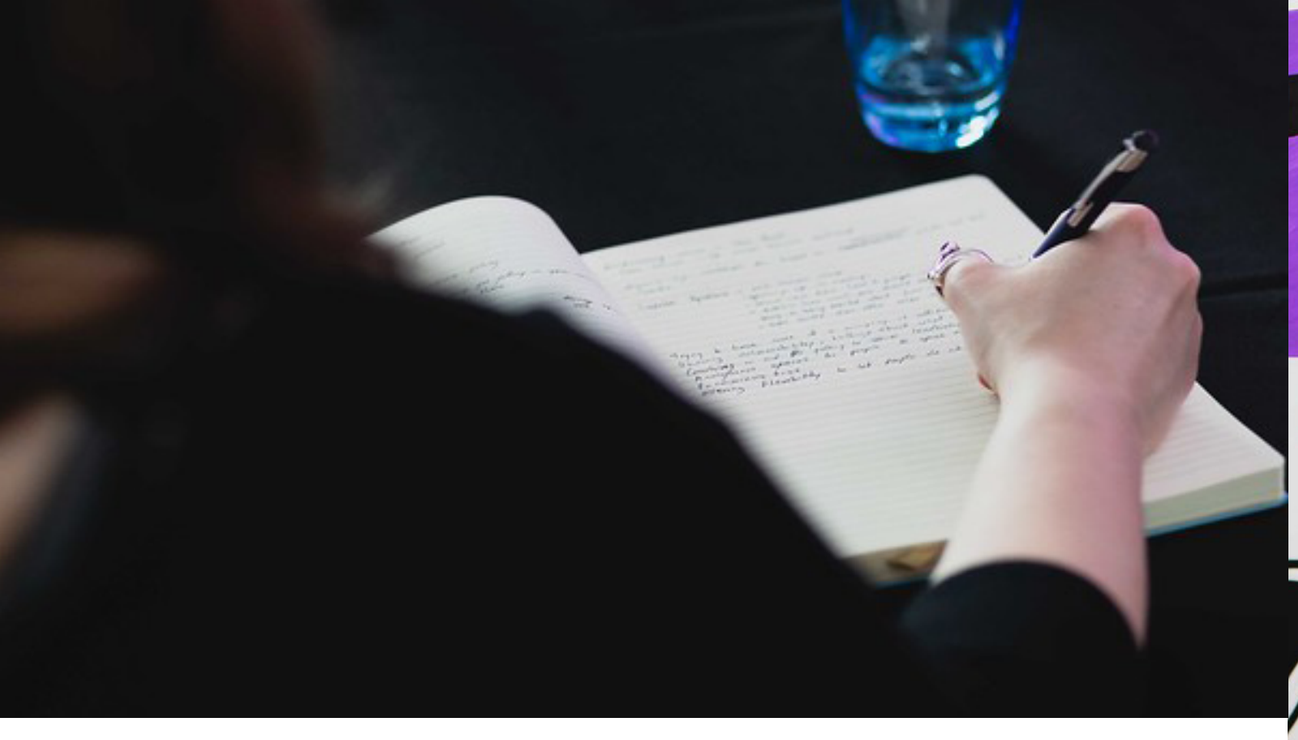
Embrace inclusive hiring practices that recognise the value of diverse talent and offer opportunities for individuals who have taken career breaks or a non-university path to enter the tech industry. Implement Returner programmes that provide structured re-entry pathways, support, and training to individuals returning from breaks, often focusing on women.

Apprenticeships are another way to support women into tech. Offering crucial support through hands-on training and skill development, apprenticeships provide women with practical experience and industry-specific knowledge. Additionally, mentorship opportunities within apprenticeship programmes can offer guidance and role models, helping women navigate the challenges of the tech field.

By actively using and promoting these inclusive hiring methods, you demonstrate your commitment to creating a diverse and supportive work environment for women in tech plus you benefit from motivated women in your tech teams!

50% of women think organisations should provide more special entry programmes such as graduate schemes, returner programmes and apprenticeships.

Sage survey results at Reframe WIT



Recommendations for individuals:

1. Explore alternative entry routes to tech

For women struggling to find a viable entry point to tech, we recommend researching the less traditional pathways into the industry. From Returner programmes and Returnships aimed at those who have taken a career break, to Coding Bootcamps, Academies and Graduate programmes that support women to kick-start their own tech career - there are alternative entry points available. You simply need to know where to find them and assess which opportunity is the right one for you.

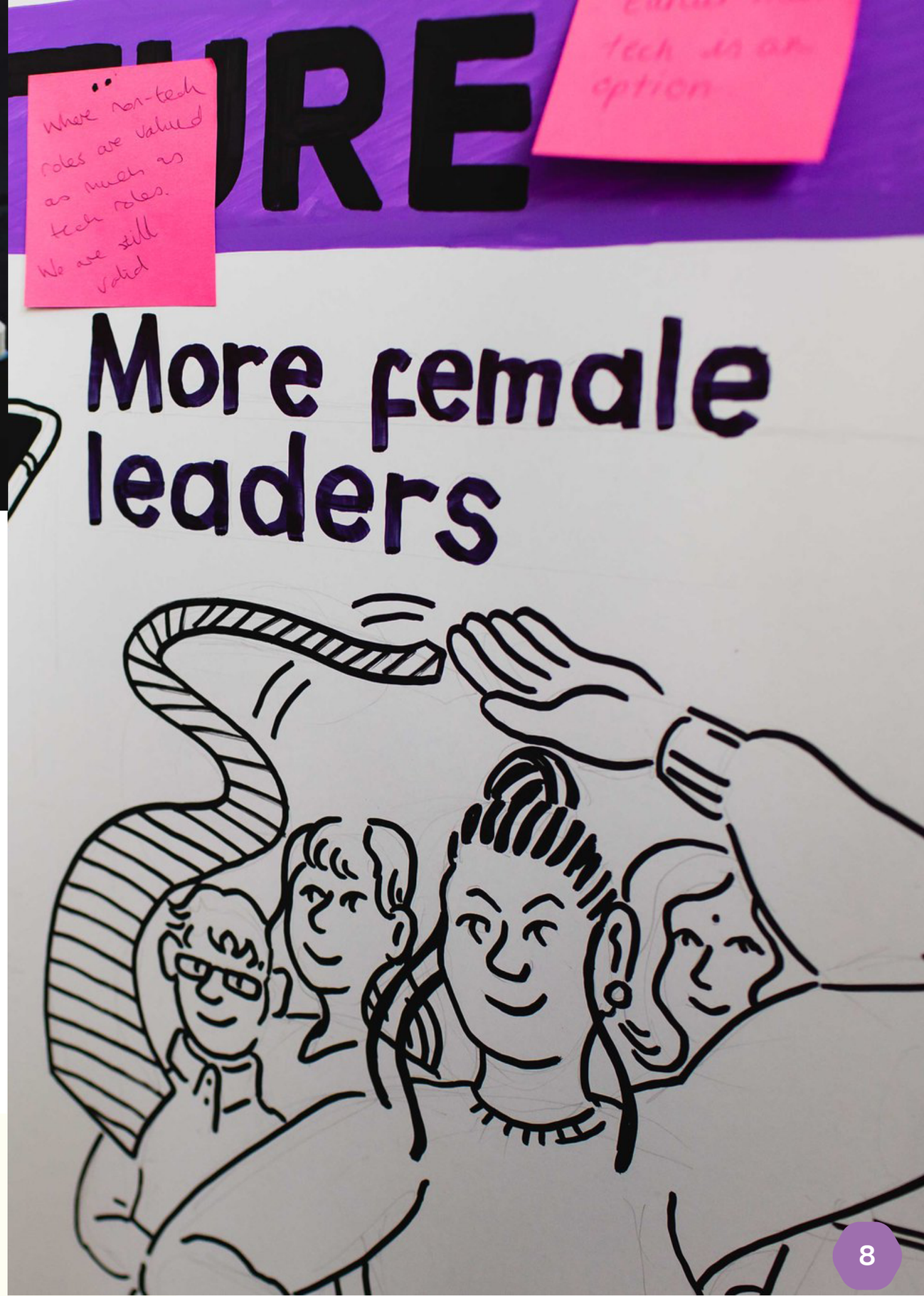
It's also important to recognise that not all roles in tech are coding roles. We can empower more women and girls to step into the industry by highlighting the array of opportunities beyond software engineering. From project management to UX and design to data analysis and cyber security - there are endless roles to be explored. It's essential to broaden the narrative and showcase these varied career paths with a view to inspiring women to envisage themselves in a role that suits their passions and skills.

2. Self-learning and building knowledge

Online learning platforms provide flexible and accessible options for women to learn tech skills at their own pace and in their own environment. However, not all online learning platforms are free or low-cost, excluding those who cannot afford to pay for this learning. We recommend exploring the range of courses and tutorials available and digging deeper into the ones that are relevant for you and your circumstances (free options are highlighted in our Resources section).

3. Build a network

Struggling for visibility of opportunities, or simply have some questions to ask about a potential future in tech? Start to build a community. A great place to start is Meetup.com and Eventbrite - both have an array of events and workshops that are free to attend and pride themselves on inclusivity. Use LinkedIn or Twitter to ask for recommendations from people around you. There are supportive and safe-space networks out there providing access to peers, mentors, events, conferences and online communities. Building relationships can lead to helpful insights, context and even job referrals!



Theme 2:

Lack of women role models

A lack of awareness of the tech industry is only compounded by the lack of women role models within the industry. This gap creates a harmful and self-perpetuating cycle that needs to be addressed. The absence of role models can have detrimental effects on women trying to enter the industry, as without visible examples of women like them, who have succeeded and thrived in tech careers, aspiring women lack inspiration, encouragement, and realistic belief in their own potential.

Perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing the perception that tech is a male-dominated domain creates a sense of exclusion and limits opportunities for women. Additionally, the lack of representation can result in scarcely available mentorship opportunities, hindering professional development and growth.



Recommendations for businesses:

1. Support women into leadership

As simple as this sounds, actively providing opportunities for women to take on leadership roles requires a cultural shift that some businesses are yet to master. As a business owner, leader or senior member of the team, take time to understand how to foster a supportive environment that promotes the growth and development of women employees.

This could be through providing mentorship, training, and development opportunities such as The Confidence Collective - a programme designed to develop and empower women to own their own unique journey into the next stage of their career. Another alternative is #IAmRemarkable by Google which aims to improve the self promotion, motivation and skills of women and underrepresented groups and challenge the social perception around self promotion.

As a business, actively encouraging women to pursue leadership positions can increase their representation at all levels.

2. Highlight women role models publicly

Businesses can play their part in increasing visibility of women role models by highlighting the achievements and stories of women in your organisation, both internally and externally. This could be done through various channels such as your company website, internal newsletter, social media, events and press. Celebrating those accomplishments inspires others, challenges stereotypes, and creates a genuinely more inclusive and diverse image of your company.

3. Community groups

If it doesn’t already exist, encourage the creation of a Women’s Leadership Group within the organisation. This group could function in a number of ways, but the key ingredient is that it is led by women, for women, to ensure their voices are heard at all levels of the organisation, including leadership level. Women’s Leadership Groups can be run so that in businesses that are majority-led by men, there are women’s voices and experiences contributing to and affecting policies, as well as creating a safe space for women to share.

4. Visible, tangible development paths and progression

Businesses must recognise the value of employee development plans and clear paths to progression in creating an inclusive tech industry. Regularly reviewing and updating these plans provides employees with focus and direction. By prioritising and supporting their implementation, businesses empower women to navigate their careers effectively and gain clarity on their way into leadership roles, if that is their goal.



Recommendations for individuals:

1. As a woman in tech, be seen

Respondents at Reframe WIT stress the importance of visibility. Wherever possible we encourage women who are already established in the field to step forward, be seen, and share their stories. By voicing experiences, successes, and strategies for overcoming obstacles, women in tech can serve as inspiring role models and create a sense of empowerment for others. Through community engagement and knowledge-sharing, women in tech can contribute to breaking down barriers, fostering inclusivity, and building a stronger support network within the industry.

2. Seek or become a mentor

A key recommendation is for women to seek out mentors or coaches within the industry. This provides access to a source of valuable guidance, empathy and support which helps navigate the challenges and opportunities of the industry from a different, more seasoned perspective. Not sure where to access them? Try a call-out on Linkedin or join a community that could point you in the right direction.

For women in more advanced positions in tech, why not consider becoming mentors? Sharing expertise and serving as mentors for other women can contribute to the growth and advancement of gender diversity in the field whilst potentially developing new skills and behaviours of your own.



Theme 3:

Exclusionary hiring process

One of the most prevalent barriers facing women entering tech was an overly complex and quite frankly, intimidating job application process. This obstacle not only hampers diverse hiring practices but also limits the number of women applying for tech roles. We found that technical job descriptions and hiring processes often lack clarity, inclusive language, and important insights into flexible work culture.

“I didn’t put myself forward, when I should have.”

“There’s a lack of flexibility within roles to allow for caring.”



84%

of respondents have seen a job that they are really interested in but not applied for it

Sage survey results at Reframe WIT

Of these respondents:

71.8%

haven’t applied because they didn’t think they have the right skills

80%

didn’t apply because they didn’t think they had the right experience

56%

didn’t think they were good enough



Recommendations for businesses

1. Does the role require a degree?

Having a degree as a requirement in a job description can create a sense of immediate exclusivity and is often detrimental to the inclusion of diverse talent, particularly for women (and men) originating from varied socio-economic backgrounds. This is especially true for roles like software engineering where relevant experience or self-learning often outweigh formal education. According to data from the National Science Foundation, isolated by field of study, women earned only 18% of computer science degrees at the bachelor level in 2021 so if your organisation is looking to attract more women applicants, remove the requirement for a degree.

"Diverse teams make every member of that team a better engineer, better able to design and deliver inclusive solutions which meet the needs of society."

Julia Adamson, MD for Education and Public Benefit at BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

2. Clear, gender-neutral, jargon-free role descriptions

To attract more women applicants, it is crucial to adopt more inclusive language and minimise the use of jargon in tech job descriptions. By incorporating gender-neutral terms and avoiding masculine-coded language, we create a welcoming environment for candidates of all genders. Top tip: running job descriptions through gender decoders can assist in ensuring that the language used is not unintentionally biased towards male applicants.

It is essential to keep the descriptions clear and realistic. Instead of searching for an elusive 'unicorn,'focus on finding the right humans with the skills and qualifications that are genuinely necessary for the role. Emphasising 'soft skills' or as we prefer them to be called, 'human skills', alongside technical expertise supports the drive for inclusivity, as it recognises the immense value brought by strong communication, decision-making and so on. These types of skills are often developed during career breaks (often taken by women) so by including them, your business is rightly recognising the value of behaviours developed during - something that brings real power to a technical team.

In job descriptions and hiring messaging, organisations could actively promote the inclusion of talent from non-technical backgrounds, acknowledging that diverse perspectives and experiences bring unique value and representation to a team. By implementing these practices into hiring, organisations create a more attractive and inclusive brand image, foster a more inclusive workplace and present a more relevant and realistic opportunity that appeals to a broader range of applicants, including women.

3. Broadcast your flexible working policies

Our research showed that shouting about your flexible working practices during the hiring process and beyond is crucial to attract more women to the tech industry. Recent research from Catalyst shows that women consider work flexibility as a higher priority when making career decisions, than men. Furthermore, a survey conducted by AnitaB.org found that 93% of women in tech value work-life balance as a critical factor in their job satisfaction and the responses from those in the room at Reframe WIT wholeheartedly support this.

By showcasing flexible working options, such as remote/hybrid work or flexible hours, employers demonstrate a commitment to supporting diverse needs, leading to increased interest and participation of women in tech roles.

4. Display salary

A simple change that organisations can make is to display the salary in a job description - be it a specific number, or a salary banding. It promotes transparency and ensures that women have access to the same salary information as men - an important path to reducing the Gender Pay Gap. By knowing the salary range upfront, women can self-select roles that align with their expectations. Salary transparency can also attract diverse talent by signalling a commitment to fairness and equal opportunity.

5. Representation

The importance of having diverse representation throughout the application process, particularly at interviews, was raised repeatedly by participants. As a business, make a conscious effort to have diverse interview panels that include women and specifically women leaders. This equally applies to seeking representation from other underrepresented groups who face their own barriers in tech, for example people of colour or those who are neurodiverse.
Doing so helps eliminate unconscious bias and ensures a fair evaluation process. Diverse interview panels also send a message of inclusivity to candidates and are a tangible way to demonstrate a commitment to developing a diverse workforce.

The importance of diverse representation includes the need for individuals with caregiving responsibilities to be involved in top-level decision-making in businesses. Similar to the notion that technology should not only be created by and for white, middle-class males, leadership positions within companies should also reflect the diversity of their customers and employees. This would ensure policies and processes are designed with real consideration for the needs and perspectives of the diverse individuals they serve.

6. Inclusive interview practices

Inclusive interview practices could play a crucial role in increasing the representation of women in tech. An effective strategy is providing interview questions to candidates in advance. This approach is more realistic of a working environment and allows interviewees to prepare, showcasing their skills and knowledge without being caught off guard. It helps level the playing field and reduces potential biases that can arise from thinking 'off the cuff'. This is particularly important for neurodivergent individuals who often have unique processing styles and may require more time to process information or formulate responses. By providing the questions in advance, it allows them to prepare and organise their thoughts, reducing potential stress and anxiety during the interview.

Providing feedback after interviews is vital. Silence can leave women with a sense of failure, leading to low confidence and imposter syndrome. Constructive feedback offers valuable insights, enabling candidates to take that away and improve, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment that encourages women to pursue tech careers with confidence.

Recommendations for individuals

1. “Don’t ask, don’t get”

For women aiming to enter the tech industry, it is crucial to advocate for yourself and your needs during a job application process. Don’t hesitate to ask for any accommodations you require to ensure a supportive interview process. If a job description or hiring manager fails to provide essential information regarding salary, progression opportunities, or flexible working practices, push yourself to ask these questions. Remember, it is simply a request for information that others also need to know. That insight will help you make informed decisions about whether to pursue the role and invest your time and energy into it.

Speak up about the aspects in your career that may be non-negotiable, such as work-life balance or professional development opportunities. By asserting your needs and priorities, you contribute to shaping a fulfilling and empowering career journey in the tech industry, plus you’re normalising the asking of valid, justified questions.

2. Know your strengths and values

In an overly complex or challenging hiring process it can be easy to try and mould yourself to the requirements of others. Whilst to some extent this is a natural and often useful way of demonstrating your relevance to the role in question, it is equally important to remember to focus on your strengths and truly understand what is important to you.

To gain clarity on your path in the tech industry, start by identifying your strengths and priorities. Take time to reflect on your achievements, experiences, and skills. Create a list and seek feedback from trusted friends or colleagues on where you have added value and what they consider your successes. Clarify what matters most to you professionally and personally, and determine your goals and aspirations. With this clarity, you can create a personalised roadmap that will serve as the ladder to your own journey.



“Your consumers are not all university-educated, young white men, so why are the people building your tech?”

Theme 4:

Confidence

Our research revealed that nearly 100% of 250 women identified lack of confidence or imposter syndrome as a major barrier to entering tech. However, it should be stated that confidence is strongly situational and organisations must recognise the urgent need to make their workplaces inviting, welcoming and inclusive of women. This is not a new challenge, yet it is concerning that there remains a persistent lack of action or support in addressing it.

It is imperative that we stop shying away from workplace discussions about confidence. Ignoring it will not make it disappear, but acknowledging and actively addressing it can lead to meaningful change. Recognising this common struggle from the very beginning of the hiring process and extending support throughout career progression and leadership should be on all agendas. It is time to take action and foster an environment that empowers women to thrive.



Recommendations for businesses

1. Supportive resources for employee wellbeing

One step to addressing the pervasive issue of low confidence among women in the industry, is normalising and embracing initiatives such as coaching, mentoring, access to counselling and therapy. Not only does this benefit employees, research indicates that organisations with robust mental health support systems experience higher productivity and employee wellbeing and a supportive mentoring relationship can boost confidence and career development. In fact, companies that provide mentoring programmes witness a significant increase in employee retention.

By prioritising mental health resources and mentorship opportunities, businesses can create a supportive environment that empowers women to overcome self-doubt and imposter syndrome.



believe organisations should provide more coaching and support

Sage survey results at Reframe WIT

2. Recognise value in career breaks

Sage's survey revealed that one in three women in tech takes a career break and research shows that the primary reason is due to childcare responsibilities. It's also important to consider that studies indicate that re-entering the workforce after maternity leave or caregiving duties can be challenging.

When organisations overlook candidates with career gaps, they miss out on valuable female talent. Unfortunately, 75% of women perceive career breaks as negatively impacting their professional trajectory, often fueling imposter syndrome. By recognising and appreciating the transferable skills and behaviours gained during these breaks, companies can reshape the narrative. Embracing diverse perspectives and experiences acquired during a break not only empowers women and supports their advancement but also fosters a more inclusive and varied tech team.



of women at Reframe had a career break.

Sage survey results at Reframe WIT

3. Invest in confidence support

Businesses can invest in confidence-specific support for women at work by financing participation in programmes such as The Confidence Collective and #IAmRemarkable with Google. Such programmes and courses can have a profound impact on women's professional growth and success in the tech industry whilst also allowing businesses to demonstrate a level of care and support as their employer. Choose initiatives which provide a structured framework and resources to help women overcome imposter syndrome and develop a strong sense of self-assurance and clear objectives.

4. A multifaceted approach to inclusive workplaces

It is essential that businesses adopt a multifaceted approach that addresses policies, practices and cultural aspects in order to truly commit to creating workplaces that not only attract but also empower, nurture and retain women in the tech industry. From ensuring pay equity through conducting regular Gender Pay Gap reporting and addressing any disparities, to flexible work practices and representation at all levels. There is no one solution, but a multitude of methods that must be considered to create that all important inclusive workplace.



describe the tech sector as a welcoming employer to women

Sage survey results at Reframe WIT

Recommendations for individuals

1. Champion women and build a praise culture

Championing women in the industry is a small action that can be done by anyone of any gender, in any role and at any level but allocating that time to support and uplift women in tech has a profound impact. It increases visibility of an individual - something which can be particularly important for more introverted personas - and amplifies their voice and position in the industry they want to grow in. Encourage a praise culture amongst your peers - this can be achieved through creating recognition channels, informal awards, feedback channels or simply, if you see something great - shout about it.

2. Surround yourself with allies

It is important for women to seek out a community of allies within the workplace that support their journey and offer a safe space. Identifying a small group of supportive allies in your colleagues, that share your values and can provide guidance, mentorship, and advocacy will stand you in good stead during moments of low confidence.

3. Social media sharing

Vulnerability on social media is not something everybody is comfortable with, yet the impact of it can be felt far and wide. For women in tech, and those in leadership positions particularly, sharing your experiences of support received, moments that have challenged you and insight into the realities of your journey can be hugely helpful to others. Sharing authentic stories contributes to a culture of truth and vulnerability, in turn inspiring and reassuring others at different career stages (or the same stage!) and demonstrating that there is power in opening up.

4. Build self-belief through tools, programmes and communities

Take time to engage in self-development programmes, utilise confidence-building tools, and join communities that empower women in tech. Seek out resources, workshops, and mentorship programmes that help cultivate self-belief and professional growth. (See final page of report for Resource area).

Recognise that no one knows everything and embrace a growth mindset. Stay curious, invest time in ongoing learning opportunities, and be open to new ideas and perspectives. Collaborate with diverse colleagues to foster a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing.

5. Create a positive feedback bank

Anisah Osman Britton, Founder & CEO of 23 Code Street, a women's coding school where each paying student funds a lesson for a disadvantaged student in India, provides insight into how she reminds herself of her achievements in moments of uncertainty. In a folder on a computer desktop, in an office drawer or in the Notes on your phone, slowly build a collection of positive feedback and achievements to review during moments of low confidence. This can be screenshots of something as simple as a colleague providing some encouraging feedback, or an objective you reached after weeks of hard work. Documenting and revisiting affirming feedback can serve as a reminder of your capabilities and boost self-assurance.

Theme 5:

Discrimination

Discrimination remains an uncomfortable and significant barrier for women in the tech industry, encompassing many layers from ageism, sexism, racism, gatekeeping and bias - both conscious and unconscious. This influences everything from the hiring process to development opportunities. To create a more equal tech industry, addressing these challenges is crucial.



“Employers have a bias that women with kids won’t be available as others.”

“Inappropriate comments from a manager and colleagues.”

Recommendations for businesses:

1. Training and policy

Businesses can combat bias and discrimination by implementing mandatory training that addresses these issues and provides effective strategies for employees. For example, Diversity and Inclusion Training helps raise awareness of unconscious biases, encourages empathy, and includes specific guidance on how to support and champion individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Businesses should develop policies against discrimination and harassment, ensuring they are widely communicated and easily accessible to all employees. Establish a confidential reporting mechanism to address any concerns or incidents quickly and effectively.

2. Employee Resource Groups

Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERG) or affinity groups that focus on specific communities or underrepresented groups. ERGs could represent many groups of people, from women to global majority employees to LGBTQ+ employees. These initiatives can offer guidance, support, and resources to employees while promoting dialogue and understanding further into the business. ERGs ensure that voices are heard and support is provided when needed plus they are instrumental in contributing to your bigger Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) strategy.

3. Anonymised CVs

Using anonymised CVs, where identifying information such as name, gender and age is removed, offers significant benefits for promoting gender equality. Anonymised CVs help mitigate biases and prejudices that can unconsciously influence who we choose to hire. By focusing solely on skills, qualifications, and experience, anonymised CVs provide a fair and equal evaluation process, levelling the playing field and creating opportunities for women in tech to be assessed purely on their abilities, without being hindered by gender-based assumptions or stereotypes.





“I was treated as a junior by men.”

“You have to be thick-skinned.”

Recommendations for individuals:

1. Build awareness amongst male allies

Diversity in tech is everybody’s issue and we’re all responsible for creating change. There are many male allies amongst us in the tech industry playing a vital role in breaking down barriers and creating inclusive environments that empower women in tech. It is essential that we recognise this and encourage more men to speak up from their position and advocate for women when needed and most importantly, continue to raise awareness amongst other male colleagues.

2. Speak out

A resounding piece of advice from women across this research was to speak up when you see or hear something that needs to be challenged. Through speaking up, everyone has the power to actively contribute to creating a more inclusive tech industry. Whether it’s addressing biased comments, advocating for diversity and inclusion initiatives, or calling out discriminatory practices, voicing concerns and taking a stand against inequality can drive positive change.

Just like in this research report, it is essential for women to harness their voices and use them as powerful tools for building a supportive and fair environment. When women speak up, they not only advocate for themselves but also inspire others to do the same, shaping a future where diversity and inclusivity thrive in the tech sector.

Appendix

Useful links and resources:

As we conclude this research, we want to equip readers with the tools and opportunities that can propel your aspirations further. In this section, we've curated a collection of valuable links, resources, and events aimed at supporting women to thrive in the tech industry. Whether you're just starting your journey or looking to advance your career and head for leadership, these handpicked gems are here to bolster your confidence, enhance your skills, and foster a community that champions your success.

Reading and Viewing:

- Women in Tech – A Practical Guide to Increasing Gender Diversity and Inclusion by the BCS – Chartered Institute for IT
- The 'No' Club by Linda Babcock, Brenda Peyser, Lise Vesterlund, Laurie R. Weingart
- From the Stage to the Cloud: Five Lessons I've Learnt as a Woman in Tech by Amaya Souarez
- Let it Go by Dame Stephanie Shirley CH
- TED Talk: What it Takes to be a Great Leader by Roselinde Torres
- The Working Parents Guide by Nadim Saad
- The Book You Wish Your Parent's Had Read (And Your Children Will be Glad That You Did!) - Phillipa Perry
- The Squiggly Career by H. Tupper and S.Ellis
- No Hard Feelings - by L.Fosslien and M. Duffy
- Radical Candour by Kim Scott

Pathways to Tech:

- 23 Code St
- Tech Returners
- Coding Black Females
- Code First Girls
- STEM Returners
- Northcoders
- Women Returners
- Women of Wearables

Events:

- Reframe WIT
- #ReturnToWorkWeek by WM People
- Women in Software Awards
- Women in Tech Festival
- Women of Silicon Roundabout

Free online coding courses and support:

- freeCodeCamp
- Codecademy
- Mimo App
- Khan Academy
- Google Codelabs
- YouTube: The Net Ninja
- YouTube: Programming with Mosh
- YouTube: Web Dev Simplified
- CodeWars
- Flexbox Froggy
- Flexbox Zombies
- Web Accessibility Practice
- Learning CSS with Flukeout
- Udacity
- Coursera

Networks and Communities:

- Women in Tech North
- WM People
- R-Ladies Meetup
- Queer in Tech
- North West Diversity and Inclusion Meet Up
- Pride in Leadership
- TalkTalk Women in Tech
- InterTech LGBT+ Diversity Forum
- Women in DevOps
- HER+Data
- Tech Leads North West
- Tech and the City
- Mothers in Tech
- MotherBoard Movement
- Girls in Tech

Programmes for Self Development:

- #IAmRemarkable
- The Confidence Collective
- Aspire Her
- More Than Mum

Workshops:

- Future Female Society

Acknowledgements

Thank you to those who participated in Sage's Roundtable Research at Reframe WIT in Manchester 2023. Your unwavering vulnerability during the discussions were instrumental in shaping the content of this report. The willingness to share experiences and insights created an environment of support and empowerment that left an undeniable impact on everyone in the room.

Those contributions provided the foundation for the recommendations presented in this report. Your collective voices have lent strength and authenticity to our findings, making it possible to offer meaningful guidance to both businesses and individuals seeking to foster diversity and inclusion within the tech industry.

We would also like to express our appreciation to our research partner, Sage. Your dedication to understanding and supporting women in tech is commendable and we're grateful for our partnership.

Together, your efforts have transformed this report into a powerful testament to the transformative potential of collaboration and a shared purpose. We believe that the insights shared here will drive positive change and inspire the tech community to create a more inclusive future.



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