Retaining Women in Technology

The impact of remote work on the key factors of work experience

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WIT ops
Changing the Paradigm for Women in Tech

The Problem

We keep trying to bring them in the door
But women leave at 2x the rate of men

Early Interventions:
• Community
• School
• College
• Outreach

The Tech Corporation

Policy & Culture
Hiring
Women events
Promotion
Mentoring

HR efforts can bring women in

The problem is inside the work
• 30% leave because of the org climate
• Bad for people of color too
• 50% leave the career within 12 years
• vs 20% non-STEM

WITops: Creating solutions to retain WIT

Women leave tech
50% more often than men

The WIT Retention Project

Deep Dive field research
- Including multiple job roles and industries

Revealing key factors to retain WIT
- What women need to thrive in tech
- The @Work Experience Framework

Quantitative research for validation
- With over 900 people
- The @Work Experience Measure

Critical Intervention Points
- Practical interventions informed by research
- The Ops: Our initiatives

All work at WITops is accomplished by world-wide volunteers

The @Work Framework

Tight Cohesive Team

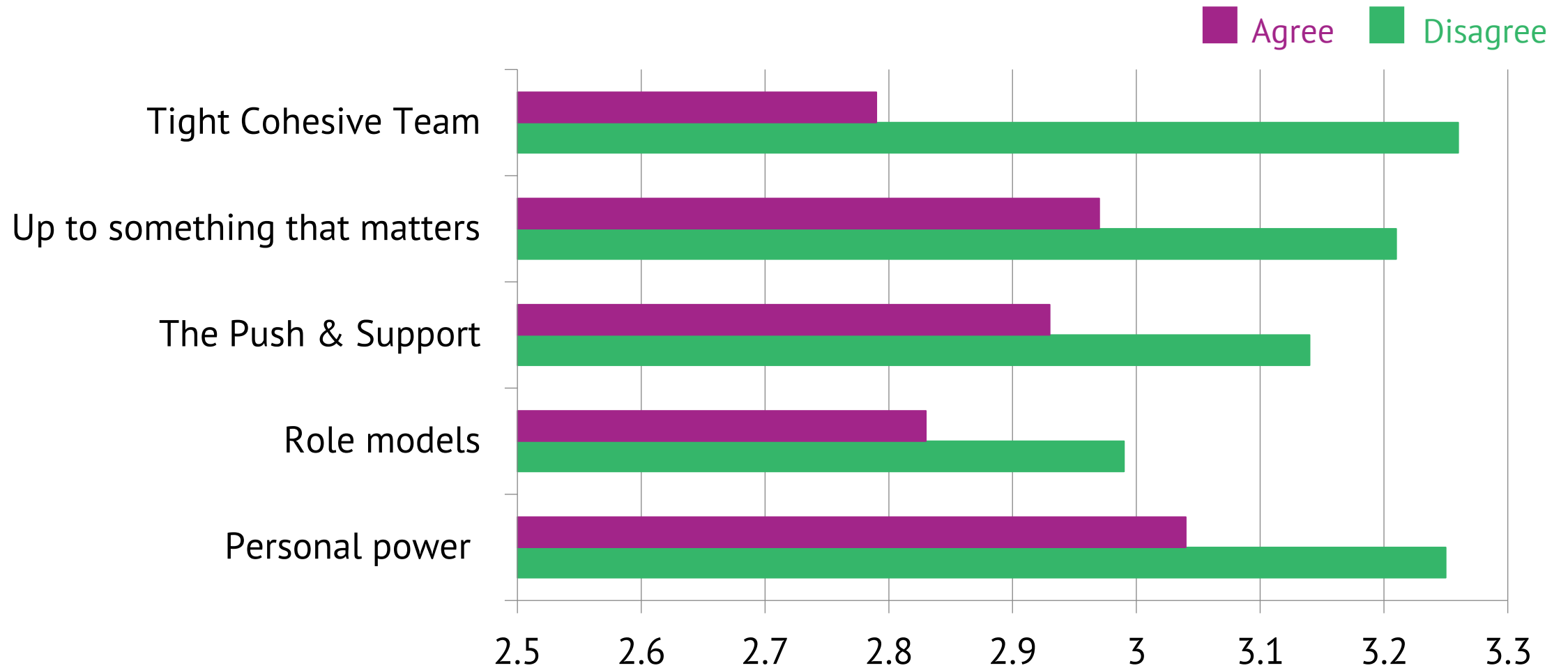Up to something that matters

The Push & Support

Local Role Models

Non-judgmental Flexibility

Personal Power

We may be remote, but we still need to retain women!

Our Challenge
39-49% thinking of leaving their jobs

The @Work Experience Framework

A Tight Cohesive Team

Dynamic work-focused team where I'm valued

Team Cohesion
is at the core of

# Belonging, Innovation,
& Performance

Women > 1 fosters participation & performance

Put more women on the team – don't distribute them

- Increases women's identification with the team and so their performance
- Increases overall innovation and performance of the team
- Same findings for minority team members

@Work Experience Measure

- Survey of > 900 people
- Number women and
- Overall experience at work

Overall Experience at work
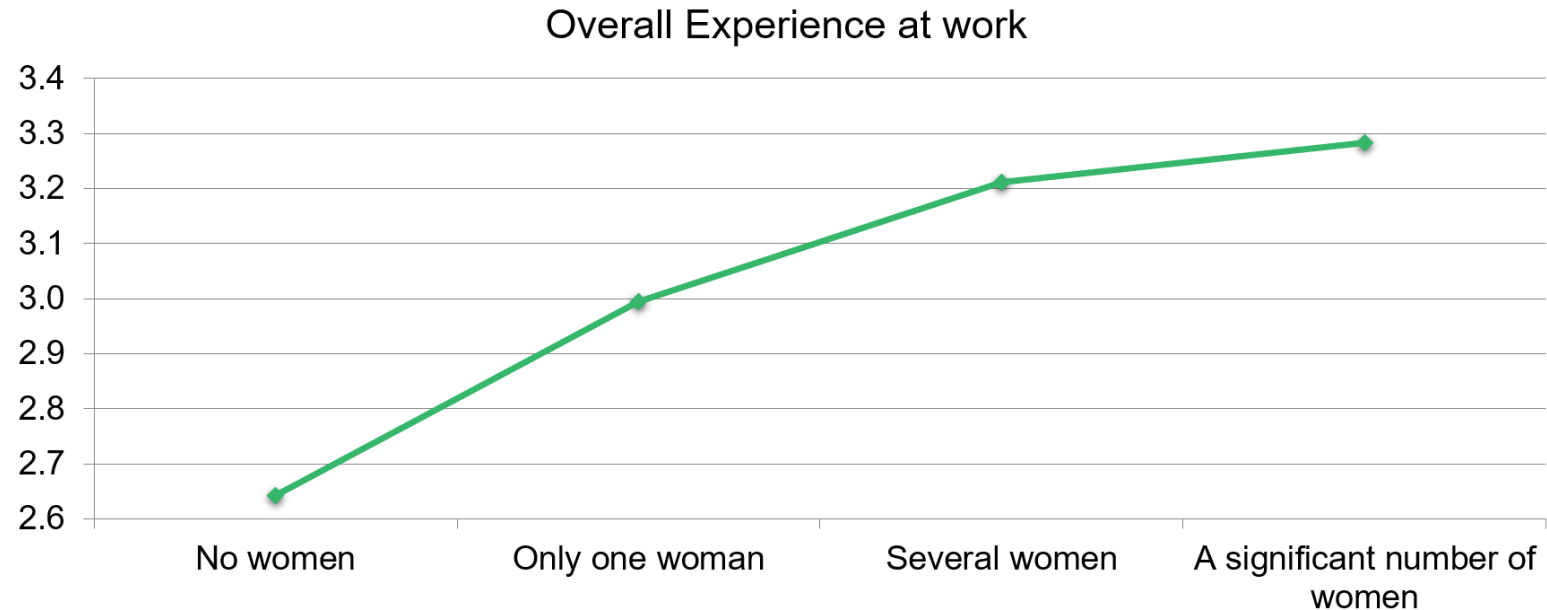
And a positive experience in the workplace for all

What about remote?

Women in a minority already feel less connected & accepted

Remote teams already have less cohesion

Remote undermines daily collaboration & intense interaction

Identifying strongly with the team increases cohesion & reduces stereotyping

Manage Cohesion – Remote teams during COVID are adapting

- Foster social connections, help women find common experience to bridge differences
- Increase 1-1 and instant message to replace drop-in relationships
  - Assign work to 2 people to build individual relationships in work – rotate so all connect 1-1
- Remote working sessions need more structure – clear goals, processes, roles and deliverables help everyone succeed but especially WIT
  - See Critique Process as an example https://www.witops.org/design-critiques/
- Ensure all are heard through round robin input, individual evaluations before sharing …

Manage connection within the work

Up to Something Big – Stimulating Work

I love my work, project, or product because the work I do is...
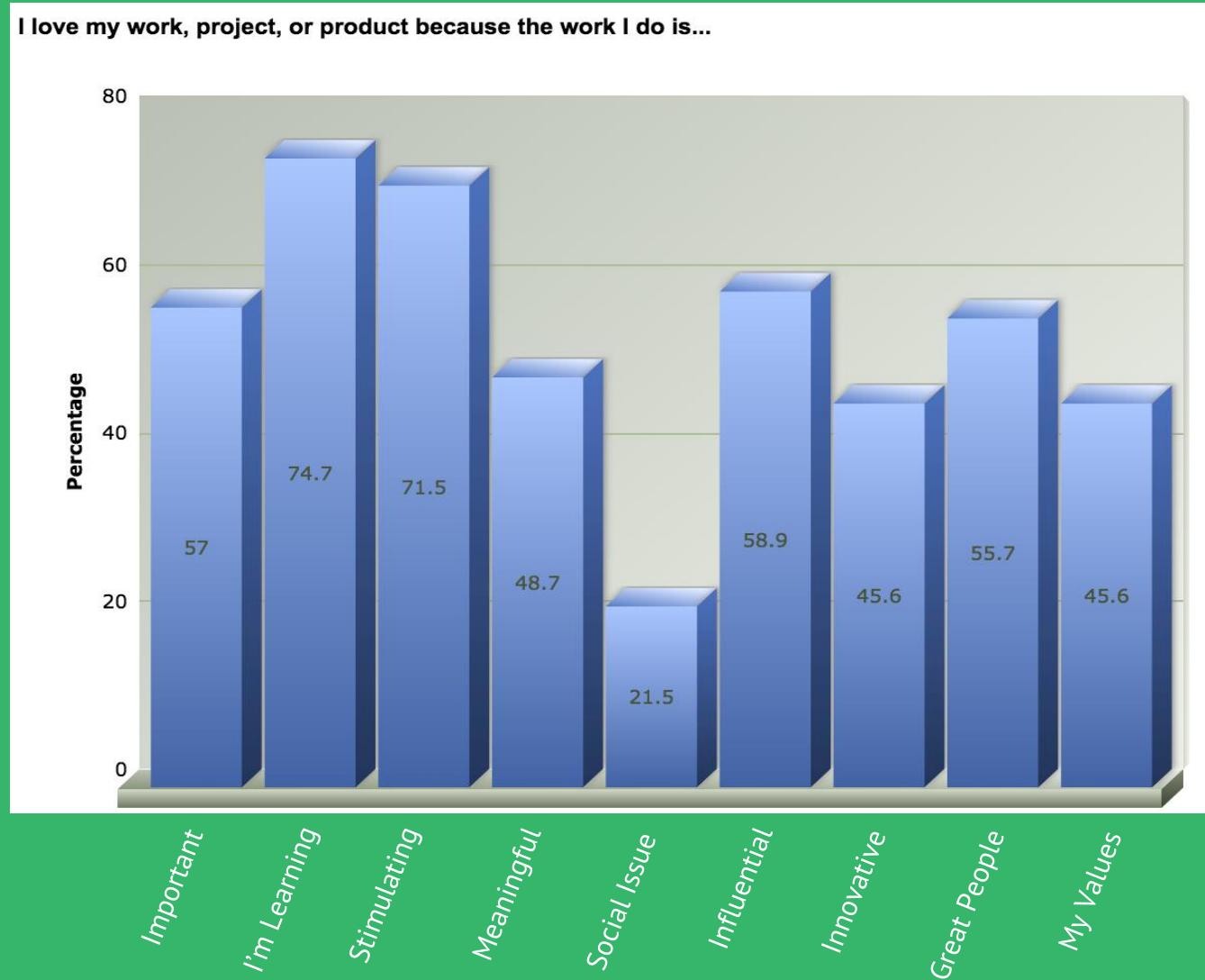
Remote leans on your habits

Tech is already perceived as "masculine" & women less qualified

Women feel pressure to be interested in socially relevant work

Remote reduces cues and lets in bias in project assignment

Women are already more likely to do team "housework"

But when remote everyone does their own housework!

Manage your habits by making new ones

- Round robin grunt work and team housework
- Seek out boredom: Find out if work is challenging in 1:1s
- Assign work to deliberately, don't ask for volunteers
  - Break up cliques and foster equal access to interesting projects.
- Challenge your bias. If you think "This WIT might not be the right fit"
  - list her skills, successes, and if this is a good growth opportunity for her

& Don't expect young new hires to know when they need challenge

The Push and Support
To take on challenges

From managers and colleagues

Remote undermines making trusted relationships

Women are already less likely to put themselves forward

But within the context of trusted relationships will stretch

Remote shows you to yourself & we try to emulate our ideal self

Maybe the Push will be easier with this self-awareness

Foster trusted relationships with real 1-1 interactions

- Round robin challenging work so everyone has a chance to shine– & no one has to ask for it.
- Give WIT challenges in partnerships to create relationship and ensure support.
- Co-plan the next challenge and career trajectory in 1-1's. Build a trusted relationship with the manager.

Everyone sees getting hard work as a statement of value

Local Role Models
Buddies & guides with more experience
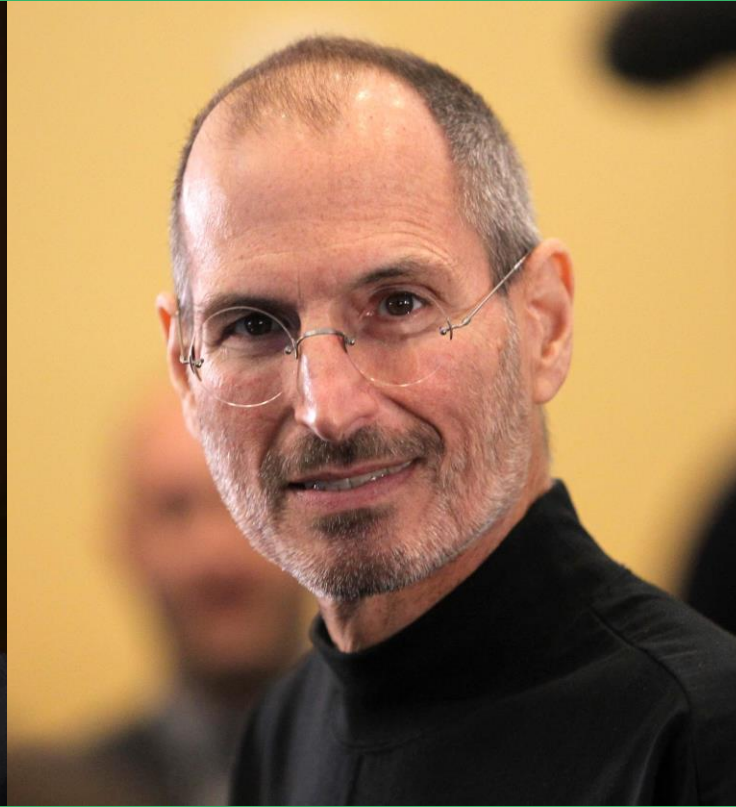
Who live the life I want for myself

Remote is simply isolating

49% of women already don't know what to do to be successful

Remote reduces reaching out, bumping into, & getting help

Remote can make the home lives of senior people visible

Communicating a richer view of the home/work balance of that job

## Build guides, partners, and coaches into the work

- Set up 1-1 with people in the same field to be career guides
- Foster senior – junior experiences by co-assigning work to a pair
- Drop in a lot by messaging – especially early career folks

Learn that flexing for family can work

- Everyone with family is challenged now – Be a model of how to do it well
- Learn that work and management can flourish remotely – reducing travel

New hires need this even more! https://www.witops.org/onboarding/

What about family issues?
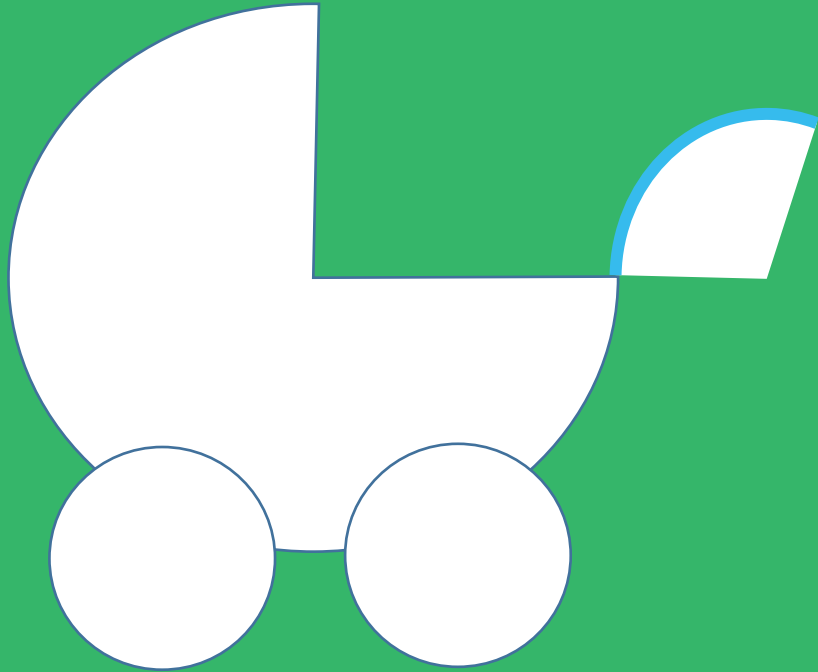
Nonjudgmental Flexibility

From my manager & team

This remote challenges all home/work balance

Calling family support a women's issue reinforces gender roles

WIT worry that caring for kids makes them look like
they aren't pulling their weight

The Pandemic has sent everyone home to manage young kids

And find new ways to include valued hobbies & families

Learn from this experience & build in non-judgmental flexibility

- You already have babies in meetings, less travel, longer delivery dates to accommodate at-home demands
- Meet off hours, pair up co-workers with similar situations, add staff...
- Run a workshop: Let the team co-create what will work for them
- Don't let women go part-time because their partner won't!

Respect for time & life commitments is a key valuing behavior

Retention is an Organizational problem!

Change practices
Don't blame personalities

The Pandemic provides a new perspective

Managing Ourselves

Personal Power
Managing self-doubt

80% of women lose confidence when criticized

Remote changes interpersonal dynamics

49% of WIT already feel invisible and not heard – Remote doesn't help

WIT with > 1 women on the team have higher personal power

Self-perception on video reduces stereotyping & jerk behavior& equalizes power

But also can increase self-criticism & judgement

Manage interpersonal dynamics – Structured processes level the playing field
- The more WIT know the rules & how to be successful the better their self confidence
- Try the Team Onboarding Checklist, structured critique practices, planning poker, and clear roles & expectations for all working meetings
- See managing diverse teams https://www.witops.org/remote

Create awareness with fun – Remote needs group activities
- Use cases from Career Power to foster conversation
  - https://www.witops.org/career-power-the-board-game/
- Learn & monitor Valuing & Jerk Behaviors - More valuing behavior creates self-confidence
  - https://www.witops.org/valuing-and-jerk/

& Create real relationships through 1-1's so WIT are known

Bias workshops don't work!

Restructure *how* we work

Remember

Impostor Syndrome

Is the internal noise
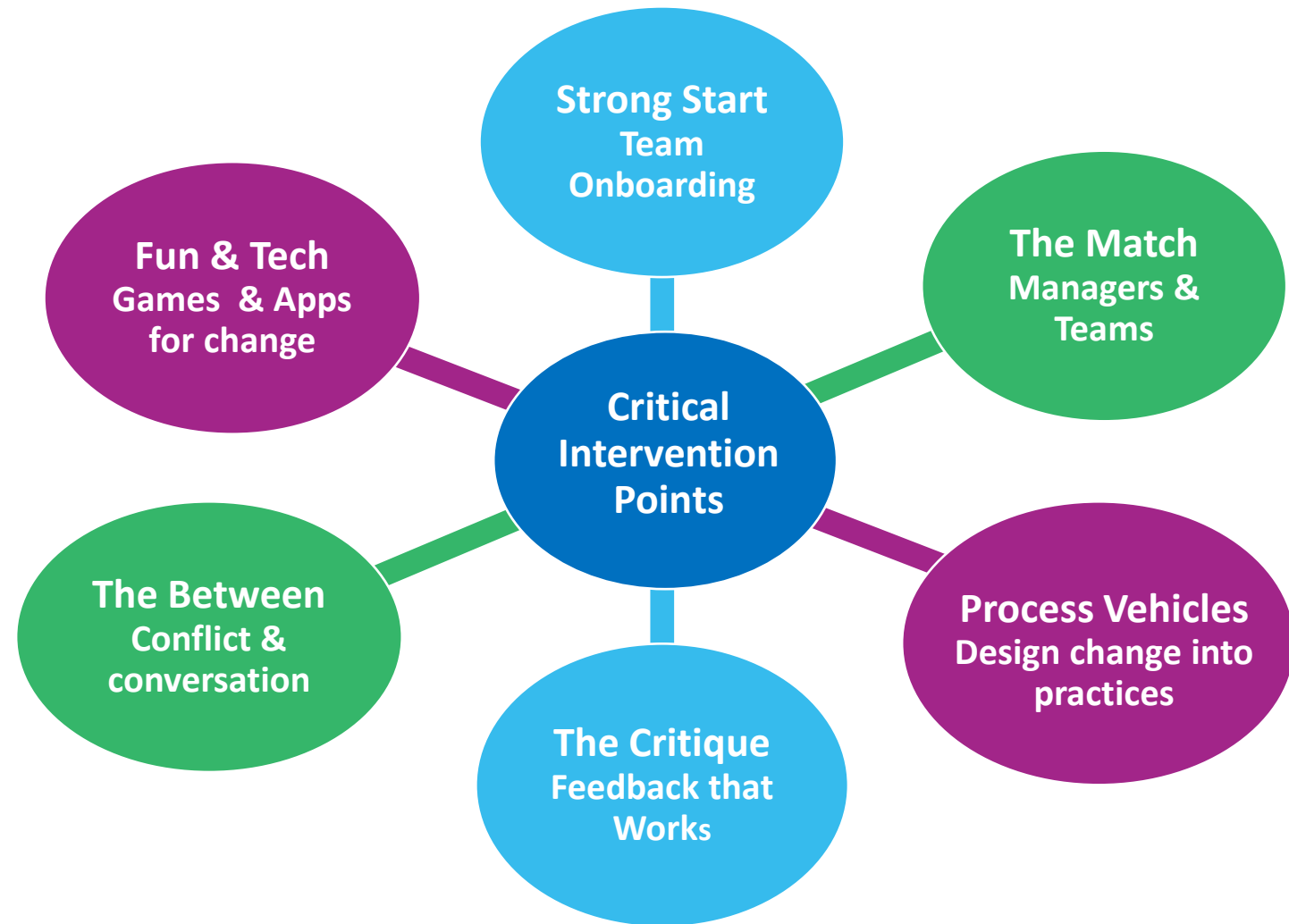of taking on a challenge

WITops
Cultural Change by Design

Remote Work is an Opportunity
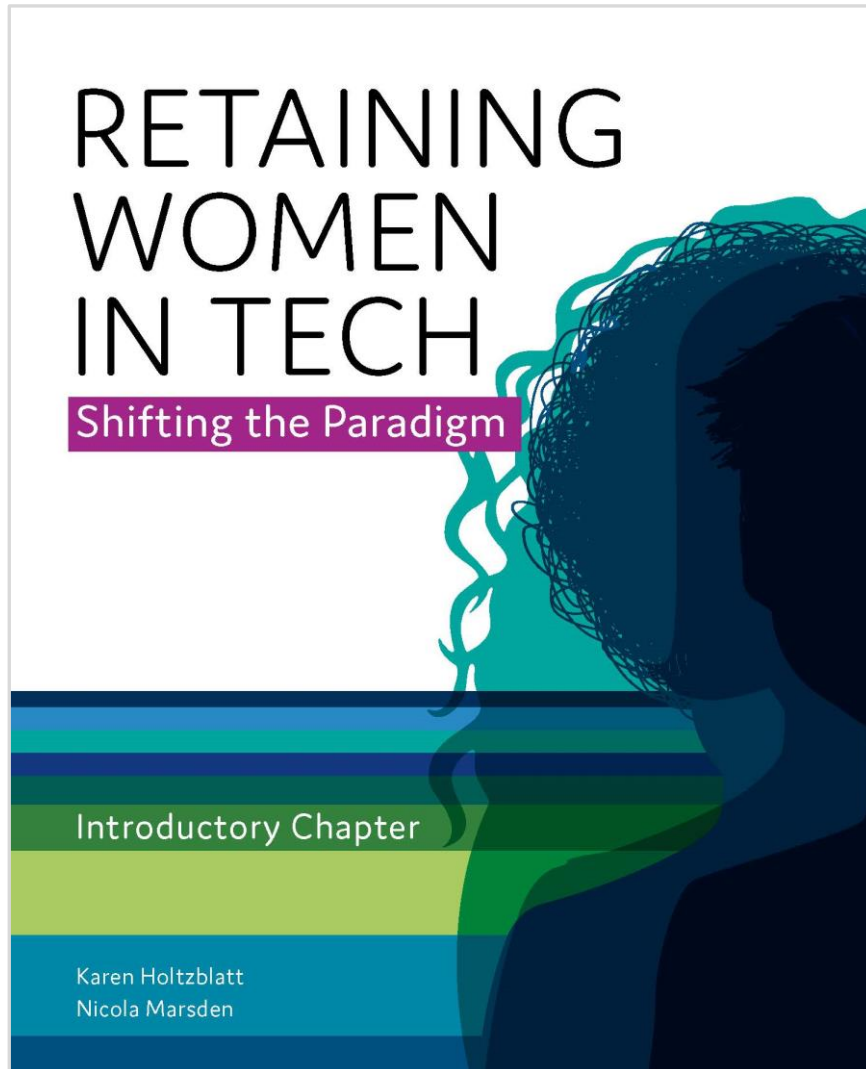
WITops: Creating Practical Solutions

Key Processes

Managing the Interpersonal

Sneak Attacks

Strong Start Team Onboarding

Fun & Tech Games & Apps for change

The Match Managers & Teams

Critical Intervention Points

The Between Conflict & conversation

Process Vehicles Design change into practices

The Critique Feedback that Works

Deliberately redesign processes to change the culture

Get a sneak peek! Free!

Karen Holtzblatt and Nicola Marsden

Why can't tech companies retain women?

How can companies transform their work culture?

Women in tech leave the field twice as often as men Women report more stereotyping, hostility, and feelings of not belonging – even after 40 years of awareness.

Learn

Understand our perspective and findings gleaned from our deep dive research into the work lives of WIT & the literature.

Try

Try our tested interventions, practical techniques for onboarding new hires, work practices, interpersonal dynamics, & nudging change.

Manage

Shift how you manage diverse teams. Get the benefits of diversity to produce innovative results while women thrive.

Introductory Chapter: http://www.morganclaypoolpublishers.com/womenintech/

Join Us!

WITops
Tax-exempt non-profit

www.witops.org

See our Videos

- **The Valuing & Jerk Project**
- **Team Onboarding**
- **The Critique Process: Depersonalizing work product review**
- **Remote Contextual Design**
- **Managing Remote Diverse Teams**
- **Watch for Career Power Cases!**

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for Women in Tech