



## PROMOTING WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY: THE MITCHELL WAY

While many aspects set Mitchell apart from other successful, growing technology companies, chief among them is Mitchell's strong, visionary leadership team that sets the tone for a thriving employee culture, referred to internally as *The Mitchell Way*. Mitchell was founded in 1946 and is known for its longstanding commitment to the advancement of all employees through training, development, and individualized career plans. However, in recent years, Mitchell has successfully increased the number of females being promoted to senior leadership positions with dramatic revenue results.

Companies today understand having a diverse array of voices and perspectives across the organization is critical to continued business success. According to Deb DeHaas, Chief Inclusion Officer and Managing Partner of the U.S. Center for Corporate Governance at Deloitte LLP, "In today's globally interconnected world, where stakeholders are more diverse than ever, board and management diversity are essential for organizations to thrive in the current business environment."

With this in mind, Mitchell made a strategic business decision to better support the development of women in the workforce and focus on preparing them for promotion into leadership positions.

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Today, Mitchell's higher-than-average numbers related to female leadership are the result of strategic planning, targeted programs and a commitment shared consistently across the company's executive team. From 2014 through 2017 alone, the number of women on Mitchell's Executive Leadership Team increased by 38 percent.\* Since the team became 50 percent female in 2016, Mitchell has seen more than a 17 percent growth in overall company revenue.

For companies looking to achieve similar success, Mitchell's story highlights a number of specific tactics that can be adapted for companies of all sizes, across all industries, to create a more welcome workplace for women to assume higher positions of leadership.

## Innovative, Employee-led Programs

Mitchell's Women (m)Power Network was developed in 2013 as an employee-led initiative to support the professional development of female talent and their advancement into senior positions within the company. The Women (m)Power Network offers innovative programs throughout the year aimed at developing leadership skills and addresses critical topics, including women in technology, assertiveness, salary negotiation, and financial planning. The group's speaker series events feature technology leaders both from outside and within the company who share their experiences and advice.

The initiative is supported by the company's Executive Leadership Team, including Nina L. Smith, Executive Vice President and General Manager, Casualty Solutions at Mitchell. Ms. Smith is responsible for a team of 577 employees nationwide and serves on the steering committee of Mitchell's Women (m)Power Network, whose programs have resulted in the promotion of numerous women to senior leadership positions within the company. Ms. Smith's leadership since 2007 has helped build a workforce that is 48 percent female overall, and 66 percent female within Casualty Solutions, including many individuals in both technology and leadership roles.\*

## Employees Embody the Brand

MG Kristian, Senior Vice President of People & Workplace (P&W), believes one of the most powerful ways to strengthen the company brand is through supporting employees in owning and aligning their personal brands. This belief is reflected across P&W's employee development programs, including "Owning Your Personal Brand." This training, aimed at helping employees see and understand the ways in which others may perceive them, helps participants make strategic changes to this perception through expanded awareness, and internalize the significance of a strong brand. Programs like these underscore the ways in which a strong personal brand connects with a strong company brand and illustrate the ways the two are mutually beneficial for business.

Further, Mitchell encourages its employees to exemplify the company's five Culture Commitments – grow, care, pride, trust, and purpose – at both a company and individual level. For example, at an individual level, the P&W team fosters an environment where each employee



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feels “I can grow” while ensuring at a company level that “We grow profitably.” Connections between company and individual values are clearly articulated in company messaging and displayed prominently throughout the office.

## The Essential Factor: Executive Leadership Commitment

For companies looking to incorporate some of the innovative practices implemented at Mitchell, it is imperative for buy-in and support to come from the top. The true culture creators in a company are the senior executives, whose tone and approach affect what is considered acceptable and worthwhile within that environment. Building on the history of founder Glenn Mitchell, the company follows “The Mitchell Way” – core values that serve as a guide when interacting with clients, business partners, and colleagues. Additionally, beyond verbal affirmation of internal initiatives, allocating funds to support specific programs demonstrates an even stronger level of commitment.

Each year, Mitchell invests in Career Tracks, an internal career development conference with three educational “tracks” tied directly to Mitchell’s brand value pillars. The conference is sponsored by the executive team, and entirely project-managed by employee volunteers who develop new leadership skills outside their primary area of focus. Sessions and workshops educate and cross-train employees in effective approaches to leadership, networking and career development. Because the program is employee-driven, employees gain exposure to multiple areas of the business, hold a high level of personal commitment to ensuring the success of the program, and the overall cost of the program is reduced. Mitchell’s approach to the execution of the conference serves as another example that implementing new initiatives and developing employees does not need to be complex and costly, but rather can emerge organically from within the company, its people, and its values.

## Importance of Measuring Statistics Related to Women’s Leadership Initiatives

A program is only as effective as its impact. The only way to truly understand impact is through relevant measurements and statistics, tracking results and progress across multiple data points. For companies committed to implementing culture, diversity, or leadership development programs, it is essential to start with a baseline understanding of where the company is currently positioned. From there, programs and initiatives can be developed and implemented to strategically grow those numbers. Partnerships with industry organizations can also be helpful in building on these practices and highlighting successes so other companies can learn from them. In the Southern California market, organizations such as Athena San Diego serve a key role within the STEM community in highlighting rising talent on an individual level and delivering effective programs at the organizational level. In 2017, an independent panel of judges awarded Mitchell the Athena Company of the Year Pinnacle Award, acknowledging Mitchell as a leading company committed to the advancement of women in technology.



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A goal such as growing the number of women in leadership positions becomes more achievable when it is part of a larger discussion held at all levels within the company. Through deliberate planning and implementation of focused initiatives, such goals become a reality. Over time, the success of women's leadership initiatives like Mitchell's reflect a larger move toward greater diversity and inclusion, mirroring the company's diverse set of clients and business partners across the globe. An additional benefit of such initiatives is the strengthening of working relationships while building a stronger business. For companies interested in furthering their own commitment to increasing the representation of women in leadership positions, Mitchell's initiatives offer concrete solutions for building additional success stories.

For more information about Mitchell visit [www.Mitchell.com](http://www.Mitchell.com) or contact:

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*\*As of September 13, 2017*



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## Created in association with Athena

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*Athena is a 501(c)(6) business organization based in San Diego. Athena specializes in professional development for women in STEM. Offerings include programs, mentoring, workshops, and the annual Pinnacle Industry Awards and scholarships for women in STEM (through the Athena Foundation).*

For more information about Athena visit [www.AthenaSD.org](http://www.AthenaSD.org) or contact:

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