



FROM THE EDITOR
BY KRISTINA URQUHART

Leading the change in manufacturing

Despite accounting for nearly half of the workforce, women comprise about 29 per cent of the Canadian manufacturing industry, and that number has been stagnant for almost 40 years. When it comes to the skilled trades, only about four per cent of jobs are occupied by women.

These stats are especially of concern for a sector that is already experiencing a labour shortage – 85 per cent of Canadian manufacturers are currently struggling to fill job vacancies, according to a 2019 report by Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

The industry has been talking about ways to solve the skills shortage for years, such as hiring and training people from underrepresented groups including women. But still that number hovers at 29 per cent, stymied by things like outdated perceptions of manufacturing, traditional hiring practices, inflexible job schedules and workplace cultures that can be challenging for women to navigate.

This issue is systemic and requires more than a simple fix of “hiring more women.” In an effort to highlight this, the Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing, a non-profit that raises awareness about the advanced manufacturing sector in Ontario, takes a new approach with its latest report, *Gender Diversity and Ontario Manufacturing: Lessons from Five Leading Companies*. The report contains case studies from Ontario manufacturers who are walking the talk when it comes to increasing gender diversity, as well as 10 lessons for the value chain to consider as they evaluate their DEI policies and existing barriers that unintentionally exclude women.

Those barriers include, but are not limited to, the language used in recruitment processes or within the workplace itself, as well as compensation based on past salaries – which tends to perpetuate ongoing pay inequalities between men and women, say the report authors.

Trillium Network found that there is a correlation between companies making a concerted effort to develop robust gender diversity initiatives

and attracting top-level talent. And when there’s talent, there’s a competitive advantage.

Each featured manufacturer has implemented a comprehensive strategy to recruit, retain and advance women. Among other initiatives, Honda of Canada Mfg. holds a Women@Honda event every two weeks for women interested in learning more about the company.

At MAD Elevator, where women make up 40 per cent of the management team, leaders check in with employees about whether the manufacturer is sticking to its equity and inclusion commitments, which include diversity and anti-violence training. When COVID-19 hit, the company paid

Each manufacturer featured in the Trillium Network’s report has implemented a comprehensive strategy to recruit, retain and advance women.

a sum equivalent to the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit to its employees who couldn’t find child-care, so that they in turn could pay relatives to babysit their kids.

Policies like these may be unusual in the manufacturing sector, but Honda, MAD Elevator and the other three companies profiled prove that they don’t need to be. One of the report’s key takeaways is to involve women, particularly when it comes to planning practices intended to support gender equity and diversity (and the same goes for race, age and other demographics).

Inviting diverse voices to the table makes good business sense – different perspectives can help to highlight blind spots, shake up the status quo and establish out-of-the-box strategies to ensure your company stays on the path to success. There’s no better time to start the conversation – International Women’s Day is March 8.

Speaking of expanding our knowledge, I’m pleased to introduce a new column to *MA*, Word of Law, which will cover legal issues in manufacturing, from intellectual property (IP) to financing. Lorraine M. Fleck, in-house legal counsel for a CPG company, will be one of the column’s regular contributors. If you’re thinking about new ways to grow your business, read her IP primer on p. 8. | **MA**

CONNECT

[@AutomationMag](#) [✉ kurquhart@annexbusinessmedia.com](mailto:kurquhart@annexbusinessmedia.com) [in /company/automation-mag](https://www.linkedin.com/company/automation-mag)

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

AL DIGGINS, Chairman of the Board, Treasurer and General Manager, Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium
DAVID GREEN, Technology and Business-to-Business Consultant
SHELLEY FELLOWS, Chair, Automate Canada
KARIN LINDNER, Founder and Owner of Karico Performance Solutions
DAVID MCPHAIL, President and CEO, Memex Automation
NIGEL SOUTHWAY, Business Productivity Consultant and Author on Lean Thinking
BILL VALEDIS, Support Systems Developer, KINITO Support Systems

MANUFACTURING AUTOMATION

Your resource for Canada’s industrial automation news

Reader Service

Print and digital subscription inquiries or changes, please contact:
 Urszula Grzyb,
 Audience Development Manager
 Tel: (416) 510-5180
 Fax: (416) 510-6875
 Email: ugrzyb@annexbusinessmedia.com
 Mail: 111 Gordon Baker Rd., Suite 400,
 Toronto, ON M2H 3R1

EDITOR

Kristina Urquhart
 kurquhart@annexbusinessmedia.com
 Tel: 416-442-5600

GROUP PUBLISHER

Paul Grossinger
 pgrossinger@annexbusinessmedia.com

MEDIA DESIGNER

Graham Jeffrey
 gjeffrey@annexbusinessmedia.com

ACCOUNT COORDINATOR

Debbie Smith
 dsmith@annexbusinessmedia.com
 Tel: 416-442-5600 ext 3221

COO

Scott Jamieson
 sjamieson@annexbusinessmedia.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Thomas Burke, Grant Cameron, Lorraine M. Fleck, Treena Hein, Paul Hogendoorn, Jacob Stoller

Manufacturing AUTOMATION is published seven times a year by:



Annex Business Media
 111 Gordon Baker Rd.,
 Suite 400, Toronto, ON, M2H 3R1
 Tel: 416-442-5600
 Fax: 416-442-2191

Printed in Canada **ISSN 1480-2996**
Publication Mail Agreement #40065710

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Canada – \$43 per year
 United States – \$75.50 (US) per year
 Foreign – \$86 (US) per year
 Students – \$20.50 per year

ANNEX PRIVACY OFFICER

email: privacy@annexbusinessmedia.com
 Tel: 800-668-2374

Occasionally, *Manufacturing AUTOMATION* will mail information on behalf of industry related groups whose products and services we believe may be of interest to you. If you prefer not to receive this information, please contact our circulation department in any of the four ways listed above.

The contents of *Manufacturing AUTOMATION* are © 2021 by Annex Publishing & Printing Inc. and may not be reproduced in whole or part without written consent. Annex Publishing & Printing Inc. disclaims all liability in respect of the results of any action taken or not taken in reliance upon information in this publication.

Funded by the Government of Canada



Association Partner

