



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion  
Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

# Success stories

Stantec

The formation, growth and benefits of  
Women@Stantec ERGs

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## Stantec: The formation, growth and benefits of Women@Stantec ERGs

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Stantec is an active member of the communities they serve. That's why at Stantec, they always design with community in mind. The Stantec community unites approximately 22,000 employees working in over 400 locations across six continents. Their work involves engineering, architecture, interior design, landscape architecture, surveying, environmental sciences, project management, and project economics which includes the initial project concept and planning through design, construction, and commissioning. With a long-term commitment to the people and places they serve, Stantec has the unique ability to connect to projects on a personal level and advance the quality of life in communities across the globe.

## We need women in leadership

Designing with the community in mind is what drives Stantec to succeed. Stantec knows that success begins at the intersection of community, creativity and client relationships. With community and creativity in mind, Stantec recognizes that the minds of all genders must be heard to encourage success for the company and its valued employees. That is one of the reasons why Stantec implemented its women employee resource group (ERG), *Women@Stantec*.

### From conception to fruition

Stantec wants to ensure that it provides a workplace that supports the inclusion and advancement of women to help them reach their true potential. The first ERG was formed in Edmonton, AB in 2015 and was dedicated to education, networking, charitable activities, and community engagement. Later in 2015, the Stantec Diversity and Inclusion Councils were established in Canada and the US. This led to the creation of the Women Leadership Development sub-committee (WLD). The chair of the WLD sub-committee is Asifa Samji, Vice President of Environmental Services. The initiatives of the WLD sub-committee are close to her heart as she relates... "We're offering a pathway to professional development through sessions that focus on empowering women to reach for leadership positions and share topics related to being effective in the workplace."

The sub-committee's efforts are focused on supporting four main goals:

1. Raising awareness and providing training related to unconscious bias throughout the company at all levels;
2. Determining actions for inclusive corporate policies and practices (e.g., recruitment);
3. Implementing a sponsorship program focused on ensuring women have strong advocates for their advancement and development at Stantec; and
4. Facilitating and supporting the formation of women's Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) across the company to inspire and empower women at Stantec to be strong leaders through education, networking, and community investment opportunities.

Since the formation of the sub-committee in 2016, Stantec is continuing to succeed in the form of colleague camaraderie, leadership in women and the overall growth of the ERG initiative.

## Rapid growth for a grassroots initiative

A sense of community has always been the driving force for Stantec. The rapid growth of the ERGs can be attributed to the passion that is felt by the women, and men, who work at Stantec.

“There is this real desire to form a community that brings women together to share ideas and learnings from personal success stories, while allowing for confidence, skill building and meaningful networking opportunities.” – Asifa Samji

One of the clear objectives of the company's overall Diversity and Inclusion strategic plan is the focus on supporting the creation and development of ERGs. These employee groups provide increased awareness, education and employee engagement about diversity and inclusion at work.

The Women@Stantec ERGs are a significant initiative that supports that strategic plan objective. In doing this along with the sense of community and passion that has been created at Stantec, it is no wonder that these ERGs are continuing to be such a success.

## The future for Women@Stantec

In less than two years, the Women@Stantec ERGs have grown dramatically. With 19 ERGs in North America – 13 in the US and six in Canada, Stantec is more than proud of the progress that is being made in support of female empowerment. With the success of the ERGs, Stantec is not stopping. They hope to expand their ERGs internationally where they have new offices.

Stantec is confident that with the implementation of their new diversity and inclusion councils, and the continuing growth of the Women@Stantec ERGs, that meaningful change will be realized, especially as it relates to the gap that exists for women in leadership roles. Stantec hopes to inspire women, and to build their confidence and skills so that they feel empowered to reach for leadership positions.

While the ERGs have been a success for the women at Stantec, we are working to expand the scope beyond gender and be inclusive and supportive of other ERGs. We are also considering ways where we can collaborate with other companies including our clients and community partners so that we can share and benefit from the experiences of each other.

When asked what they hope readers will take away from their story, Stantec humbly answered that their desire was to raise awareness around the inclusivity of women. There are many barriers that must be overcome to create the pathway for women to have equal opportunities, and advancement. In one word, Stantec wants their readers to be *inspired*.

## The Success Story Initiative

There is astonishingly little published that shines a light on diversity and inclusion successes in Canada, though there are many, across a wide range of organizations. Case studies referenced by trainers and leadership tend to be reporting on different countries, cultures, political and economic settings.

The goal of this initiative is to support diversity and inclusion leadership with stories that are relevant to what's happening now, here in Canada. By sharing their stories, we celebrate the successes of Canadian organizations while contributing to learning for everyone that cares about diversity and inclusion.

The employers who have developed initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion as priorities in the workplace are responding to an increasingly competitive economy that's responsive to the diversity of employees – and the country. We are grateful to those who have participated in interviews.

This series of case studies will be published monthly through 2016. Subscribing to our monthly newsletter at [ccdi.ca](http://ccdi.ca) will keep you updated with the latest case studies, which will all be posted online at [ccdi.ca/successstories](http://ccdi.ca/successstories). For more information, contact [mail@ccdi.ca](mailto:mail@ccdi.ca).

## The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion

The CCDI has a mission to help the organizations we work with be inclusive, free of prejudice and discrimination – and to generate the awareness, dialogue and action for people to recognize diversity as an asset and not an obstacle.

Through the research, reports and toolkits we develop and our workshops, events and workplace consultations, we're helping Canadian employers understand their diversity, plan for it and create inclusion.

CCDI's leadership has a proven model that's cultivated trust as an impartial third party. Our expertise is focused on the topics of inclusion that are relevant in Canada now and the regional differences that shape diversity.

A charitable organization that thinks like a business, we have created a niche with our innovative research technology and data analysis that brings a deeper understanding of Canadian diversity demographics and mindsets at any given moment.

CCDI is grateful for the support of Employer Partners across Canada. For enquiries, contact Susan Rogers, Chief Client Officer, [Susan.Rogers@ccdi.ca](mailto:Susan.Rogers@ccdi.ca) or (416) 968-6520, ext 103.

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