



# Playbook

[www.womenintechdorset.co.uk](http://www.womenintechdorset.co.uk)



# Table Of Contents

<b>2</b>	<u>About WiTD</u>
<b>3</b>	<u>WiTD Playbook</u>
<b>4</b>	<u>Building a Better Tomorrow</u>
<b>11</b>	<u>Meet the Team</u>
<b>12</b>	<u>Our Contact</u>



# About Women in Tech Dorset

We are a women in tech community in Dorset with the aim to create a safe, collaborative and engaging space where women can learn from each other and be inspired.

Through creating a playbook we seek to showcase good practice in tech and tech-enabled businesses for industry to commit to growing towards.

Our measure of success is increasingly inclusive workplaces, where diversity of thought contributes to business growth.



# WiTD Playbook



Dorset is a bustling hive of creative and technological activity, where the father of wireless communication Guglielmo Marconi set up his wireless station and the founder of the internet Sir Tim Berners-Lee started his career. With good courses at local colleges and universities, there is ample scope to broaden and increase the workforce, ensuring businesses grow and thrive. Women in Tech Dorset (WiTD), has the mission to empower and uplift our extraordinary community of technical talent. We're here to unlock learning, engagement and growth opportunities, but we cannot make this transformation alone.

Imagine a future where companies in our ecosystem don't just meet the status quo but exceed it in championing the success of women and embracing diversity within their organisations. We passionately believe in this vision and are committed to igniting a dynamic conversation around diversity and inclusion within our sector. It's not just a matter of principle; it's a recognition of the ever-expanding impact women are making in our industry.

To make the tech industry a more inclusive place for women, we are calling on Dorset businesses to work with the unwavering support of our dedicated WiTD community and all who stand with us. Our playbook is designed to supercharge their influence and pave the way for others to thrive in this arena. Together, we can make this vision a reality, and it starts with your action today.

# Building a Better Tomorrow

We invite you to embark on a journey of positive change, one step at a time. Begin by selecting at least five action items from the list below, and with these initial choices, elevate your impact and start creating a meaningful difference. These action items have been collated from extensive focus group consultation, focusing on best practices in our sector.

Join us in shaping a brighter future for all in tech by;

- Reducing bias in talent acquisition
- Developing and promoting an inclusive social culture, and
- Providing equitable development opportunities





## Reduce bias in talent acquisition

Hiring women in tech roles requires a commitment to diversity and inclusion. By following these guidelines, companies can create a more inclusive and equitable environment for women in tech roles, ultimately benefiting from the diverse perspectives and talents they bring to the table

1

**Gender-Neutral Job Descriptions:** Craft job descriptions that use gender-neutral language and focus on skills and qualifications rather than gender-specific attributes

2

**Diverse Interview Panels:** Ensure that your interview panels include a diverse range of employees, including women, who can provide different perspectives and reduce bias

3

**Promote Internally:** Actively seek to promote and mentor women already within your organisation, offering them opportunities for advancement

4

**Equal Pay:** Conduct regular pay equity audits to ensure that women in tech roles are paid equally for equal work

5

**Flexible Work Arrangements:** Offer flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or flexible hours, to accommodate the diverse needs of women in tech, and ensure that these are advertised by default

6

**Family-Friendly Policies:** Implement family-friendly policies, including parental leave and childcare options where possible, to support work-life balance

7

**Support Networks:** Encourage the formation of women's support networks within your company to foster mentorship and provide a sense of community

8

**Continuous Improvement:** Regularly assess and update your hiring practices and policies to adapt to changing needs and feedback from your female tech employees

9

**Set and Review targets:** Set targets to improve the representation of women and underrepresented groups

10

**Returner Programme:** Introduce a returner programme to assist those who have taken a career break to bring their expertise back to the workplace



## Develop and promote an inclusive social culture

Retaining women in tech roles requires a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. By following these guidelines, companies can create an environment where women in tech roles feel valued, supported, and motivated to stay and thrive within the organisation

1

**Mentorship and Sponsorship Programmes:** Establish formal mentorship and sponsorship programmes to support career growth and development for women in tech

2

**Inclusive Company Culture:** Foster an inclusive company culture that values diverse perspectives, and actively promotes diversity and inclusion initiatives. Support this with transparent reporting mechanisms

3

**Counter Stereotypes:** Support and expand programmes teaching tech skills to people of all ages

4

**Leadership Opportunities:** Create pathways for women to advance into leadership roles within the tech department and the organisation as a whole

5

**Recognition and Rewards:** Recognise and reward the contributions and achievements of women in tech through formal recognition programs

6

**Women's Health and Wellbeing Support:** Introduce policies, offer resources and wellbeing programs to address areas around women's health. Provide support for employees affected by workplace discrimination

7

**Flexible and part-time working:** Establish clear, fair and transparent processes for flexible work requests, enabling parental leave systems to support both parents

8

**Regular Feedback and Communication:** Establish open lines of communication for feedback and regularly seek input from women in tech roles to understand their needs and concerns

9

**Exit Interviews:** Conduct exit interviews and leverage the insights gained to inform future policy development

10

**Education:** Enable volunteering that challenges gender stereotyping in the school curriculum and explore funding and support of tech expertise in education



## Provide equitable development opportunities

Developing the technical and professional skills of women in tech roles often requires innovative and inclusive approaches. While these guidelines may be challenging to implement, they can significantly enhance the development of technical and professional skills for women in tech roles, fostering a more inclusive and equitable workplace

1

**Flexible Career Paths:** Develop alternative career paths that accommodate breaks for caregiving responsibilities, enabling women to re-enter the workforce and continue advancing their careers

2

**Mandatory Mentorship for Leaders:** Mandate that senior leaders mentor and sponsor women in tech roles within the organisation. Tie leadership evaluations to the effectiveness of mentorship

3

**Inclusive Hackathons and Projects:** Organise inclusive hackathons and collaborative projects that prioritise diversity and require cross-functional teamwork, providing opportunities for women to lead

4

**Transparent Promotion Criteria:** Clearly define and communicate promotion criteria and ensure they are applied consistently and fairly for all employees, irrespective of gender

5

**Investment in Continuous Learning:** Allocate a dedicated budget for continuous learning and skill development, allowing women in tech roles to pursue advanced degrees, certifications, or specialised training

6

**Safe Spaces for Feedback:** Establish safe spaces where women can provide candid feedback on workplace challenges, and take concrete actions based on their insights

7

**Intersectional Inclusion:** Recognise the intersectionality of identity, and create programs and initiatives that address the unique challenges faced by women of different backgrounds within tech roles

**We invite all businesses in Dorset to join hands and shape a brighter future in tech for all**



# Meet The Team



**Seemin Suleri**  
*Co-Founder & Director*

Seemin is a trailblazing figure in the dynamic tech industry, renowned for her remarkable achievements in fostering innovation and spearheading transformative initiatives. With a profound expertise in cultivating and guiding top-tier autonomous teams, she has been instrumental in orchestrating paradigm shifts within various organizations, redefining their cultural and technological landscapes.



**Sharon Jones**  
*Co-Founder & Director*

Confident in facilitating and supporting individuals and businesses in product development and rapid prototyping, and with a commitment to digital empowerment Sharon hosts maker and innovation workshops with established businesses and start-ups, schools, colleges and youth groups, aiming to inspire our next generation of engineers.



# Our Contact



[team@womenintechdorset.co.uk](mailto:team@womenintechdorset.co.uk)



[www.womenintechdorset.co.uk](http://www.womenintechdorset.co.uk)