



Retail Women in Tech secures nonprofit status to help bridge industry leadership gaps

Global community targets the "broken rung" in career advancement for women across retail and technology

NEW YORK — January 5th, 2026 — [Retail Women in Tech \(RWIT\)](#), a global community for women and allies in the retail and technology sectors, has officially become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The transition allows the group to scale its efforts to fix the "broken rung"—the barrier women face at the first step into management, where they are promoted at lower rates than their male peers by rebuilding mobility through community, mentorship, visibility, and advancement.

While women represent 52% of the retail workforce, per data from the [Institute for Women's Policy Research](#), and drive the majority of purchasing power, they remain underrepresented in leadership roles. According to [Women in Tech Stats 2025](#), "for every 100 men promoted to manager, only 87 women and 82 women of color get the same promotion. This leaves far fewer female candidates available for higher-level positions down the line, making it nearly impossible for them to ever catch up in terms of representation within these roles."

RWIT's goal is to achieve leadership parity across both retail and technology by 2030. By focusing on one-on-one connections and centering on people rather than professional profiles, the organization is building a new system for leadership development.

"What began as a single conversation has evolved into a powerful global movement. We're here to close the leadership gap in an industry where women already drive the workforce and purchasing power. This nonprofit status helps us scale our impact by centering on people and real connections, honoring every career season," said Shannon Flanagan, RWIT founder.

RWIT provides several programs designed to rebuild career mobility, including:

- **Cultivating Belonging:** Organizing city meetups, volunteer days, and role-based circles to foster community.
- **Building Bridges:** Creating cross-sector connections that break down industry silos.
- **Opening Pathways:** Offering mentorship cohorts, internships, and bi-weekly career enablement sessions.
- **Amplify What's Possible:** Sharing "Power of WE" stories and honoring "Women to Watch" to increase visibility.



Membership in RWIT remains free. As a nonprofit organization, RWIT can now accept tax-deductible donations to fund these programs and infrastructure. Many employers offer matching programs, which can double the impact of individual contributions.

"Retail has communities and tech has communities, but none bridge the two or include every role, level, and ally. RWIT fills the gap with a cross-sector, multi-level, multi-generational organization built to move our industry toward parity. I am incredibly proud of the nonprofit status that allows us to scale our vision and achieve our mission to even greater good across the retail and tech segments," continued Flanagan.

Attendees of NRF 2026, January 11–13, at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in New York City, can engage with RWIT in several ways, including:

- Jan 12, 2026: Connections Over Coffee. [Details and RSVP here.](#)
- Jan 12, 2026, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. EST: NRF morning meet-up at the Reality Interactive booth (1709)..
- Jan 13, 2026: Retail Open Doors at NRF. [Details and RSVP here.](#)
- Jan 13, 2026: Couture & Code 3.0: The Official NRF After-Conference Mixer. [Details and RSVP here.](#)

About Retail Women in Tech

Retail Women in Tech (RWIT) is a global nonprofit organization dedicated to driving parity and strengthening mobility within retail and technology. Founded on principles of radical inclusion and advocacy, RWIT unites and empowers women and allies to build today's workforce through community, mentorship, visibility, and opportunity. RWIT was born from the truth that while women power retail's workforce and purchasing decisions, they remain underrepresented in leadership across all sectors.

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