Diversity in the Atlantic Canadian Water Industry

WEFMAX Hosted by the Atlantic Canada WWA
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Study Overview

• Initialized by ACWWA IDE Committee in developing Terms of Reference as a new committee

• Two parts:
  • Quantitative and Demographic Survey - Fall 2019
    • 120 Respondents
  • Qualitative Survey – Summer 2020
    • 10 Interviews – Water Industry Participants
    • 3 Interviews – Equity-recognized Groups

• ACWWA-focused survey questions included

• Draft report submitted to the IDE committee in February 2021

• Recommendations reviewed by HR Expert
## Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produce</th>
<th>Produce baseline demographic data of the Atlantic Canada’s water industry population.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>Identify areas within the water industry that lack in diversity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Evaluate the level of commitment of those working in the water industry.</td>
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<td>Determine</td>
<td>Determine why members are more or less likely to be retained and/or recruited in the water industry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish</td>
<td>Establish recommendations.</td>
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Research Framework

Demographic survey based on Statistics Canada

Q&Q surveys and analyses to measure commitment to industry:

- Affective commitment - emotional attachment to the workplace.
- Continuance commitment - cost associated with leaving the workplace.
- Normative commitment - sense of obligation to stay in the workplace.

Factors that affect commitment:

- Work-life Balance (WLB)
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- Sense of Belonging
- Diversity Climate
Demographic Results

1A. Generational Distribution by Gender

- Female, < 45: 29%
- Male, > 45: 37%
- Female, > 45: 10%
- Male, < 45: 24%

1B. Age Distribution of ACWWA Members

- 60+: 7%
- 50’s: 22%
- 40’s: 29%
- 30’s: 27%
- 20’s: 15%

1C. Ethnic Origin of ACWWA Members

- European: 46%
- North American: 41%
- Aboriginal: 4%
- Latin/Central/South American: 2%
- Asian: 6%
- Other: 5%

1D. Category of Job

- Consultant: 23%
- Utility: 26%
- Service Provider: 13%
- Academic: 8%
- Government: 21%
- Other: 8%
- Student: 1%
Key Takeaways

- **Gender gap in respondents over the age of 45 years**
- The gender gap decreases for respondents under the age of 45.
- There is a lack of ethnic diversity in the water industry.
- There is a low percentage of individuals identifying as LGBTQ+.
- Most respondents were in one of three job categories: utility (26%), consultants (23%), and government (21%).
- **Utility and Government reflected a gender gap**, with nearly twice the number of males as females.
• **Sense of Belonging** and **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** predicted employee’s affective and normative commitment.

• Those who identified as female reported significantly lower levels of belongingness and work-life balance and were less likely to view their workplace as being socially responsible.
  - 60% of women in their 30’s reported low levels of WLB compared to 30% of men.

• **Affective** commitment higher for BBs/Gen Xers.

• BBs/Gen Xers reported higher levels of belongingness, WLB, and more viewed their workplace as socially responsible.

• ACWWA volunteers reported higher levels
Qualitative Results – Sense of Belonging

• Strong sense of personal relationships and professional networking
• Time in industry = better fit
• Increased diversity = increased sense of belonging
• Perception that the industry is dominated by middle-aged white men
• Mentorship/role models important
Qualitative Results – CSR

• Inherent to the industry
• More could be done to promote industry
• Need support from management
• Link to improving diversity climate
• Need to do more humanitarian work
Qualitative Results – Leadership

• *Central theme* in interviews

• Significant impact on experience in the industry

• Closely tied to WLB and diversity climate

• Some responsibility in terms of CSR
Qualitative Results – Equity-recognized Groups

- **Must be intentional** in engaging/including equity-recognized groups:
  - Difference between espoused commitment and actual commitment
  - Demonstrate and promote any *actual* commitment to EDI
- Outreach with young people to provide *opportunities* and *information*
- **Barriers:** willingness to hire professionals of diverse origin, lack of support, underemployment, competitive salary, and adult literacy
- Lack of women in wastewater compared to water

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**INCLUSION, DIVERSITY & EQUITY COMMITTEE**

**DUTIES**

The main goal of the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IDE) Committee is to assist the Atlantic Canada Water and Wastewater Association (ACWWA) in creating an inclusive, diverse, and equitable membership and to establish an organizational environment that recognizes, encourages, celebrates, and effectively utilizes each individual member’s talents.

Other goals and objectives of the IDE Committee are as follows:

- Build diversity in the Board so that organizational decision making is informed by a wider range of experience and knowledge;
- Incorporate inclusion, diversity, and equity into committee action plans and support all ACWWA committees in doing the same;
- Establish an IDE session at the ACWWA Young Professional Seminar and/or Annual Conference by offering topics about IDE or nontechnical issues that may appeal to a wider audience and encourage participation by new members or attendees; and
- Submit recurring “Diversity Moments” or other IDE Committee features to each magazine publication.

Encourage diversity of visuals (e.g., pictures) in the ACWWA magazine, calendar, website, and other publications.
Qualitative Results – ACWWA

• Strong sense of belongingness and appreciation within volunteers for the ACWWA

• Most felt as though the ACWWA was socially responsible
  • Lacking: Local charities and humanitarian efforts

• Feeling that ACWWA was trying to be more diverse
  • Lacking: LGBTQ+ community and First Nations

• Work-life balance was manageable
Key Recommendations – Industry

- Numerous recommendations and action items listed in the report based on quantitative results, qualitative interviews, and related industry research

- Recommendations grouped in themes: Leadership, Sense of Belonging, CSR, WLB, and Diversity Climate

- Contributions by HR specialist at Acadia
Key Recommendations – ACWWA

- Appropriate networking opportunities
- Formal mentorship program
- Outreach at the high school and university level
- Engagement with equity-recognized groups through guest speaking invitations, networking opportunities, inclusion in board meetings, scholarships, work terms
- Training for members on EDI issues
- Employee Resource Groups
- Establish metrics/action items
Acknowledgements

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- Survey and Interview participants

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A.D. Foulis Chair