

Career Opportunities

Bridging The Gender Gap In The IT Field

(NAPSA)—Today's labor force is composed of more women than ever before. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports the number of women who are employed in America has risen steadily since 1991. Yet, according to recent surveys, women still account for fewer than 29 percent of workers in one of America's most dynamic industries—Information Technology (IT).

A survey of the Computing Technology Industry Association's (CompTIA) 10,000 professional IT members found more than 55 percent of female members perceive some kind of skills stereotyping based on gender. Of these women, 59 percent feel they have been prohibited from advancing in their field as a result of a "glass ceiling." At the same time, only 29 percent of male membership perceived any type of gender bias or stereotypes in IT.

"Women are a population that absolutely must be tapped into by technology companies," says Fran Linhart, director of CompTIA certification programs. "CompTIA proactively works to encourage women to pursue technical training and certification in computer services and support, so that a greater



Certification and IT training help bring more women into the high-tech field.

number of qualified women will fill high-tech positions."

Certification allows potential employees to consider and apply for jobs that were once only attainable with traditional computer training at universities or vocational schools.

Additionally, potential employers use certifications as a reliable predictor of a future employee's success, which can make a job candidate more desirable. Recent CompTIA research showed that nearly two-thirds of IT managers

see a higher level of service from certified staff, and also that two-thirds of certified professionals saw increased salaries after becoming certified.

To encourage individuals to pursue IT positions, CompTIA and technology organizations like VUE, a leading provider of computer-based testing services, identify certification as the pathway to a career in IT. Entry-level training programs that lead to certifications such as CompTIA A+™ can help position women for lucrative careers in IT.

According to Stephanie Dille, global IT market manager for VUE, "IT professionals must constantly advance their skills in order to stay competitive. Ongoing training and certification is particularly important to women looking to build long-lasting careers in the high-tech industry. Once a woman achieves a certification and obtains her first technical position, she often gains the confidence to pursue further education and acquire higher level certifications, opening up career opportunities."

For more information on certification and training, visit www.comptia.org or www.vue.com/it.