

Medtronic Honored for Supporting Women Engineers

The Society of Women Engineers awards Medtronic and Engineering Director Jim Borowick for ongoing contributions to diversity and inclusion

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Inclusion, diversity, and equity (ID&E) are not programs at Medtronic. Instead, ID&E are values that are central to the company's identity and workplace.

The Society of Women Engineers **recently recognized these values** by awarding Medtronic its 2021 Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Award, which recognizes a company's efforts to create a pioneering D&I program. The organization also awarded Medtronic Engineering Director Jim Borowick with the Rodney D. Chipp Award, which celebrates a man or company who made a significant contribution to the acceptance and advancement of women in engineering.

"The [award recipients] have lived and learned through significant contributions to the engineering community, and they continue to lead in their careers and personal lives," said Rachel Morford from The Aerospace Corporation in El Segundo, Calif., and president of SWE. "They are leaders paving the way to empower and inspire future women engineers across the globe."

The **commitment to advancing ID&E at Medtronic** starts at the top and cascades down to each employee. Leadership is held accountable for reaching ID&E goals, and there are plans to expand accountability deeper into the organization in the future.

“We are taking bold actions to ingrain inclusion, diversity, and equity even deeper into our company’s DNA,” said Dr. Sally Saba, chief inclusion and diversity officer at Medtronic. “Ultimately, we believe it will lead to more innovation and creativity that will help us alleviate pain, restore health, and extend life for even more people around the world.”

Breaking gender barriers in engineeringIn awarding Medtronic, the SWE organization acknowledged Women in Science and Engineering (WISE), a company initiative focused on increasing gender diversity in technical leadership roles. From building career development toolkits to providing professional coaching to early career talent, WISE works to foster an inclusive work environment for women in a field that continues to be predominantly comprised of men.

Through outreach programs, WISE helps young women overcome career hurdles such as a lack of role models or biased gatekeepers. Events at middle schools and high schools also give rise to new, creative opportunities to show young women what a career as an engineer can look like.

To remove barriers to opportunity and **support more women along the path toward professional engineering and scientific roles**, the company also offers competitive college and high school internships. In 2020, Medtronic hired its most diverse group of interns in the company’s history – globally, 61% were women. Many participants go on to become full-time employees, where new-hire programs help them grow and connect with opportunities.

“Our Women in Science and Engineering initiative focuses on creating both a tone at the top and a culture that fosters belonging for our women engineers,” said Shannon Vittur, an engineering director at Medtronic who chairs WISE. “Through our programs to attract, retain, develop, and advance women in STEM, we now have 31% of our science and engineering roles along with 28% of our technical management positions filled by women. These exceed industry benchmarks, but we still have work to do.”

A Medtronic engineer doing his part for equityThe SWE organization also honored Borowick’s work to establish a partnership between Medtronic and the University of Minnesota’s College of Science and Engineering (CSE) that includes mentoring, events, and internships aimed at removing barriers and helping women thrive along the way. More than 350 students and employees have participated since it began seven years ago, and it continues to grow. This year an additional 150 will participate, including

another 60 women from Medtronic with science and engineering backgrounds volunteering to be mentors for first-year women students.

Borowick, who helps secure \$25,000 for the program each year from Medtronic, says his motivation stems from the fact that only **a small percentage** of women enrolling in college declare engineering as a major, and many leave engineering before their junior year. He witnessed this firsthand when his sons' friends left engineering programs he encouraged them to pursue. And they were all women.

"If universities aren't retaining talent, then we're not going to have that in our pipeline," Borowick said.

Kristina Yates, a systems engineering manager, led the partnership for the past year. The former WISE mentor said she benefited from the SWE and WISE programs at Medtronic early in her career and wants to pay it forward.

"Having the WISE community where you can openly talk about these things lifts you out of that place of, 'I'm alone, and I'm not sure I can do this,'" she said. "I think something that can be difficult for a lot of women is you feel like you're the only one when you have a struggle or concern, but really that's not the case."

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