



My credentials: BSE, bioengineering, University of California, Berkeley; JD, Northwestern University School of Law
My work location: San Diego, California
Words I live by: Figure it out as you go.
My personal philosophy: Make someone else's job (or life) easier every day.
What I'm reading now: *The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business* by Erin Meyer
My first job: Oregon State University summer STEM program leader
My favorite charity: Al Otro Lado
My interests: Surfing, hiking, reading, and building things with my daughter
My family: My husband, Dustin, and our 2-year-old daughter, Callin

Company: Fish & Richardson P.C.
Industry: Law, Intellectual Property
Company Headquarters: none
Number of employees: 1,159
CEO: John C. Adkisson

Increasing Diversity in STEM

Although more and more women and minorities are being exposed to STEM fields, retention remains an issue. We need to devote time and energy to the advancement of underrepresented people within STEM, rather than just recruiting them.

So much of STEM is still a boys' club, where unwritten rules have been passed down for generations from man to man, without ever including people who don't fit the mold. Often, those in power wonder why STEM fields continue to be male dominated when so many women have the talent to succeed. But those same people invite younger colleagues who look like them to lunch. Unofficial networking has a huge impact on the careers of junior people, and we need to make sure that is more equitable.

Breaking Down Barriers for Women in STEM

The biggest barrier to closing the gender gap is that the highest levels of power in both academia and industry are male dominated. More and more women begin college with a STEM major, but nowhere near 50 percent of graduates are women.

Many women who begin STEM careers fall out within a decade, and very few make it to upper management. That has nothing to do with their abilities, but everything to do with the institutions that have dominated STEM for generations. Women are spoken over in meetings, their presentation styles are criticized or discounted, and their careers take a huge hit if they have children.

Implicit bias against women—especially against women of color—halts their advancement. People tend to gravitate toward those who

make them feel comfortable—who think like them. That has kept STEM stagnant for generations, and has kept the gender gap alive and well.

STEM 5 Years down the Road

The next five years will likely be a rebuilding time for women in STEM. Some of the advancements we've seen over the past decade were erased by the pandemic. Women (especially mothers) have left the workforce at a much higher rate than men. We will need flexibility from companies and universities as classrooms and workplaces reopen.

It is my hope that people who have had to take time away from work during the pandemic will be invited back into the workforce and given opportunities to succeed. I am hopeful because if anyone is prepared to overcome and succeed, it is the women who have pursued STEM.