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# The company building a brighter future for women in tech

*For more than 50 years, Acxiom has helped pave the way for trailblazing women.*



According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), women comprise 48% of the workforce, yet only 27% of jobs in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) are held by women. Acxiom, a customer intelligence company headquartered in Conway, Ark., is determined to help change those numbers.

“We believe in empowering our women associates,” says Melissa Metheny, industry group vice president at Acxiom. “Equity has always been a priority.”

With long-standing initiatives such as flexible work hours and domestic partnership benefits, Acxiom has been building an inclusive workplace culture for more than 50 years, but its leaders are always looking for ways to expand the company’s efforts.

To that end, in 2019, Metheny cofounded Acxiom Women LEAD (Leadership Enrichment And Development), one of the business resource groups tied to the company’s IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Awareness) Council, which was developed to advance cross-company diversity and inclusion. LEAD aims to foster gender equality and increased opportunities within the company through education and networking. Currently, about 30% of Acxiom associates are members of the program. Participation by all genders is encouraged, as the company believes that equality in the workplace is not just a problem for women or minorities to solve. With the help of the program, Acxiom has seen a significant increase of women having the opportunity to be in senior leadership roles.

Acxiom’s goal of empowering women in tech extends beyond the company through partnerships with organizations like [Girls of Promise STEM Initiative](#) and [Girlstart](#). Both introduce girls from diverse backgrounds to the STEM field through education and internships.

“These programs are powerful because they show young girls and women the possibilities of working in tech,” says Beth-Anne Bygum, chief security and compliance officer at Acxiom. “It’s been an incredible opportunity to be able to work with Acxiom’s leadership to support not only current employees but also the next generation that will shape the future of technology.”

As part of IDEA, Bygum also cofounded Acxiom’s Black Employee Network (ABEN) in 2020. The group provides education, tools, and opportunities to Black associates to support their professional and personal development. To create additional development opportunities for its underrepresented associates and improve overall diversity in the tech field, this year Acxiom launched a new Executive Leadership Team Sponsorship Program, wherein 62% of employees being sponsored are women, and of those 57% are women of color.

These efforts have not gone unnoticed. Acxiom was named to *Fortune’s* Best Workplaces for Women list for 2021. “It is an honor to be leading Acxiom at a point in time when all the hard work our women associates and their advocates have done is being recognized by such a prestigious publication,” says president and CEO Chad Engelgau. “This recognition just encourages us to do more and continue the amazing legacy we have established to date.”