



More than Words from Women in BICSI

“The Year of You, the Woman”

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According to a study by [“American Progress,”](#) the COVID-19 pandemic has dealt a striking blow to childcare and 4.5 million childcare slots could be lost permanently. This leaves us short of supporting the nearly 10 million mothers with young children in the labor force. This report estimates that the risk of mothers leaving the labor force and reducing work hours to assume caretaking responsibilities amounts to \$64.5 billion per year in lost wages and economic activity. In August 2020, CNN ran the headline, “Working mothers are quitting to take care of their kids, and the US job market may never be the same.”¹

While these numbers seem awful and daunting, I see this as a year with multiple possibilities and opportunities in the years to come. I will agree with the multitude of experts that this stupid virus has set us back a decade when

it comes to women in tech with five times more women losing their jobs than men. But there is also a decade worth of momentum to jump on! We can turn the tide if we work together. Here are five tips for coming back to the workforce.

Tip 1: Selfcare Matters – Do You First

Stress can release toxins in the body, harm sleep, and create lots of problems. It’s important to make and take time for yourself. Make sure you are sleeping, get that massage, or try a yoga class, maybe some self-help books. Caregiver, home care, and childcare can be overwhelming on top of a job or job hunting. Remember, you can’t care for others if you don’t care for yourself first.

Tip 2: Invest in Yourself

Lots of scholarships exist for certifications, trade schools, and colleges. Investigate what

certifications can do for your career. BICSI has some great ones. If you already have one, look at supplementing or finding something new to increase your job skills and options. Look at companies that are upskilling workers as they may pay for your education and certifications.

Tip 3: Companies are More Open to Remote Work for Some Positions

Job openings are literally everywhere! Make sure you search “remote” work opportunities. Going back to an office full-time may not be necessary.

Tip 4: Apply Anyway

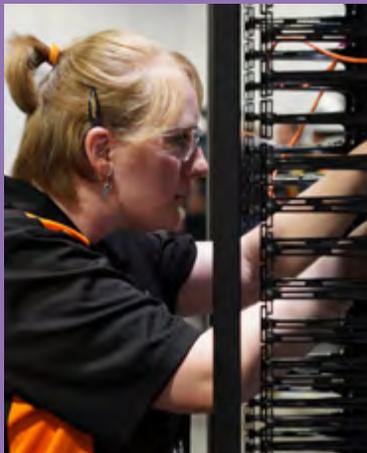
It’s proven that men will apply to a job when they meet 60 percent of the qualifications versus 100 percent for women. Apply anyway!

Tip 5: Network

Speaking of networking, foster yours. Estimates say that within five years, 30-40 percent of our workforce in tech will be retiring. Look in your network and see if those in your circle will help prepare you for the roles they are leaving. Find a mentor (in or out of the industry) to help guide you.

Remember, everyone has had challenges through Covid. If anyone wants to know why you were out of the workforce, tell them. Zero guilt needed. Try freelancing or out-sourced business development, both of which have flexible hours. Even “on-site” workers are finding increased flexible hours from companies. If you need help, ask someone.

¹Anneken Tappe, “Working mothers are quitting to take care of their kids, and the US job market may never be the same,” CNN, 19 August 2020, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/19/economy/women-quitting-work-child-care/index.html>.



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