



20 Ways to Cultivate Diverse and Inclusive FRC Teams

Machine Mavericks, Team 7480, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, 2018

- 1) **Try some of the activities in the Machine Mavericks: Working Together Booklet.** Created with FRC teams in mind, this booklet has short activities to get kids thinking about gender in STEM. Visit www.machinemavericks.com
- 2) **Aim to recruit with 50% males and 50% females.**
- 3) **State your commitment to diversity in your workspace, on your student forms, and on your website.** A written statement, up front, can make a strong impression for setting the tone of your team as a welcoming and inclusive place. Moreover, it can make it clear to mentors and parents the high expectations that you set your team to upholding.
- 4) **Reach out to local women's STEM groups for recruitment of team members and mentors:** In Canada, the Canadian Association of Girls in Science (CAGIS), university women's STEM groups, local Girl Guide units.
- 5) **Reach out to community support groups for recruiting.** Non-traditional groups can often be reached by creating partnerships with community organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, continuing education centers, religious centers. Don't be afraid to reach out!
- 6) **Start a team scholarship program.** Help support students who have financial needs by doing extra fundraising or soliciting donations from the community specifically for scholarship purposes.
- 7) **Start a clean-up rotation chart.** A workshop can be a messy place. But, safety requires a certain amount of cleanliness. Everyone has a responsibility to help pitch in to clean. So rather than the job falling into traditional hands, start a chart from the beginning. Make the job clear, simple, and achievable. Give everyone an equal spot to do the work throughout the season.
- 8) **Mark holidays and events.** This is one small ways to show that different team members are taking time out to celebrate with their families or culture. Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Eid, Diwali, Chinese New Year's, Gay Pride Week, Black History month. Simple gestures can go a long way.

- 9) **Encourage families to cook traditional or vegetarian foods when making team meals.**
Encourage teammates to try new foods. This brings diversity of experience into the workshop and can go a long way toward bridging diversity in other areas.
- 10) **Give visible, verbal or written recognition.** When someone goes beyond the norm, learns something new, or achieves something challenging write about it on a team status update, a team newsletter, or take 5 minutes to give a verbal pat on the back in front of the team.
- 11) **Order a set of Knowledge Cards from the Society of Women Engineers.** The cards will help get conversations started about tough diversity and inclusion topics.
https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Society+of+Women+Engineers&ref=bl_dp_s_web_0 Or, try a getting to know you [Icebreaker Ball](#) to spark conversation.
- 12) **Ask all members to take on one administration job *AND* one technical job.** This allows everyone to shine and be challenged in areas that are their strengths and weaknesses. Chart progress so that the team can see who has put in effort to working outside his/her comfort zone. Don't expect perfection; expect learning.
- 13) **Use round robin techniques during group discussions.** Some people need encouragement and time to feel comfortable speaking.
- 14) **Try to post discussion topics or learning goals in advance.** Those who prefer to prepare in advance will appreciate the time to think ahead or prepare.
- 15) **Point out interruptions and stop them.**
- 16) **Point out offensive language or attitudes.**
- 17) **Check in with team members using anonymous feedback or surveys.** One a month ask for team members to take five minutes to write you a note about anything private that they think the mentors should be thinking about. This gives shy people a way to bring up topics. (Anonymity can be optional.) Listen to your team members.
- 18) **Use your social media to show support for inclusion and diversity.** Team pictures can say a thousand words. Also, retweet posts from organizations that support diversity to help spread the word. And, you just might gain some fans who will spread your team efforts!
- 19) **Check your website.** Do you have pictures or space that supports a commitment to diversity? Can you add some? Can you balance male to female pictures?
- 20) **Hang a poster.** Hang a poster with 3-5 simple sentences that can be used by students to contribute to good communication about **speaking up for one's self, supporting others, or fostering creativity.** While you're at it, hang a poster that has your team values on it to help team members make good decisions.

