

T-Mobile Partners with reachHIRE to Power TechX Returnship Program

Emilie Davidson worked as a researcher, teacher and program manager for the state of Colorado for seven years before taking a three-year break to raise her daughter. Upon returning to the workforce in 2019 she applied for dozens of positions each month but received no response.

In a fast-moving technology field, Davidson's hiatus had become a liability.

“One of the things I like about working in technology is that there is a focus on constant improvement and there's always something new to learn,” she said. “But the flip side of that is that it makes it a particularly difficult industry for parents to return to because things are constantly changing. It's really easy to feel obsolete in just a few years' time.”

Davidson got lucky. A friend who worked at T-Mobile tipped her off to a new program the company was piloting that sought to give women professionals returning to the workforce the technical and software skills they need to be successful. Called the TechX Returnship, the initiative was launched in partnership with [reachHIRE](#). It encompasses a six-month, paid training program combined with mentoring that prepares participants to fill in-demand positions.

Programs like the TechX Returnship pay dividends for both returning employees and the companies that hire them. Even after a few years out of the workforce, people with strong technology backgrounds can usually come back up to speed quickly. The program also addresses the chronic skills shortage that has [become a crisis](#) for companies seeking to transform themselves around digital technologies.

Back to Work

Upon completing the program, Davidson moved into a full-time role as a T-Mobile project manager and earned a promotion just two years later.

“I was grateful to have the opportunity to get back into the workforce at the same level I left off. I was able to contribute in a meaningful way right off the bat.”

– EMILIE DAVIDSON, TECHX RETURNSHIP PARTICIPANT

Women have long been underrepresented in technology roles. Although the situation is improving, as of 2018 only [31% of IT employees were women](#), according to Gartner. Deloitte reported that [women represent about one-third of the workforce](#) at large technology companies but fill only about one-quarter of technical roles, a number that has changed little since 2019.

T-Mobile has been a trailblazer in this area, earning a designation as [one of the top 5% of large companies](#) in the area of diversity according to Comparably. The program is in line with what T-Mobile calls its Magenta Values – a reference to the color of the company’s logo – of diversity and inclusion. “We call ourselves Team Magenta and we

are absolutely obsessed with customers and creating a fantastic environment for employees,” says Chief Information Officer Brian King.

The need for such a program became more urgent during the pandemic as job losses skewed heavily toward women. A National Women’s Law Center analysis found that of the 1.1 million people who dropped out of the workforce in September 2020, [more than 80% were women](#). Altogether, [about 2.3 million women left their jobs in 2020](#), accounting for 53% of all labor-force exits, according to McKinsey. As job growth resumed in 2021, [nearly all the net job gains went to men](#), the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported.



The Formula Works

The Returnship started small, with just six participants in 2019, but the nearly 400 applications the program received testified to its potential. It was expanded to 26 participants in 2020 and 37 in 2021. While most enrollees are women, several veterans have also joined. Over the course of the first two years, more than nine in 10 participants found full-time and extended-contract positions at T-Mobile.

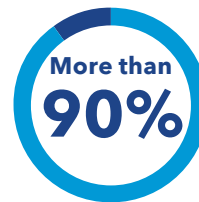
“We now have a formula that works...and we have a formula that we can scale within the rest of our teams and make sure that we’ve got the right level of champions within each of the departments.”

– **BRIAN KING**, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER, T-MOBILE

Soumya Shridharan has a degree in computer science and worked for five years as a software engineer and team lead at technology companies before taking nine years off to raise a family. The Returnship “is an amazing program for those women who are trying to relaunch their careers,” said Shridharan, who is now a T-Mobile operational insights analyst. “It gives me access to a lot of valuable resources and strengthens my soft skills and technical skills. It has completely transformed my life.”

Ashita Punja, a tech support engineer in T-Mobile’s Coverage Solutions Services, agreed. The program “is one of the best things that has happened to me,” she said. “I cherish this moment and all the experiences I’ve had with the support of my manager, my mentor and reachHIRE.”

reachHIRE



Participants who found full-time and extended-contract positions at T-Mobile

About reachHIRE

For almost a decade, reachHIRE has been on a mission to empower women to thrive and rise, partnering with forward-thinking companies to create opportunities for women at all ages and stages of their careers.

From Return-to-Work programs that connect talented women with industry leaders such as T-Mobile, Fidelity, and Wayfair, to the Aurora platform designed to grow your women leaders, reachHIRE is committed to finding and fueling the potential in all professional women and improving the gender talent pipeline for corporations.