

The Adventures of Women in Tech: How We Got Here and Why We Stay

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The Adventures of Women in Tech is an information-packed, inclusivity-centered book for and about women in tech.

Alana Karen's groundbreaking business book *The Adventures of Women in Tech* amplifies the voices, contributions, and struggles of women managers and employees in the technology sector.

Divided into three parts—belonging in tech, being rare, and serving as examples—the book expands upon the limited stories told about women in the field. Its dozens of profiles, with direct quotes in honest interviews about navigating industry minefields, enliven its chapters. The chapter titles are also clever, as with “The ‘Special Place in Hell’ Question,” which builds on Madeleine Albright's point about women lifting each other up, rather than tearing one another down.

Through wise, level-headed commentary and questioning throughout the book, observations are extracted about the women's variety of backgrounds, ranging from computer science to the arts, and are enlarged to address issues of inclusivity and diversity. The balanced narrative grabs and maintains interest, identifying and guiding emerging themes in the profiles. Some of these include the shared desire to make a difference while enjoying the benefits of flexibility, and the financial independence of tech work.

Although self-described as an anecdotal, rather than an analytical, study (and with clear acknowledgment of its concentrated interviews from the same company), the book uses telling statistics to support and reinforce many of its personal accounts. Findings about women tech workers leaving companies at mid level points are repeated, but with good reason to underscore this issue of concern. Troubling diversity statistics from tech companies, and concern over the lack of minority people who seem to be choosing these careers, lead to an important discussion about ways to offer encouragement and support.

Without any gloss, multiple problems for women working in tech are identified. These include unsettling and detailed commentaries about preferred hairstyles for women at work, and feedback to “dial back” strong viewpoints during meetings. Along with outrageous demands to pick up laundry for a boss or be fired, many of these experiences will stir familiar and disquieting memories for women working in all industries.

Thoughtful reactions to the stories give rise to valuable questions about ways to retain women in tech, including about why life takes women elsewhere, how tech can narrow the gap between the haves and have nots, and whether tech can discover a different way of working, including given the impact of the pandemic. Working toward solutions, the book includes five useful tools for navigating a tech career, while its additional resources address critical topics including perseverance, self-confidence, and leadership. The appendix identifies specific ways to find and be a mentor, as well as to deal with harassment.

The Adventures of Women in Tech is an information-packed book for and about women in tech; it encourages increasing diversity and inclusivity, with extended applications in all fields.

ANDREA HAMMER (May 14, 2021)

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