

# chic geek

## About Chic Geek

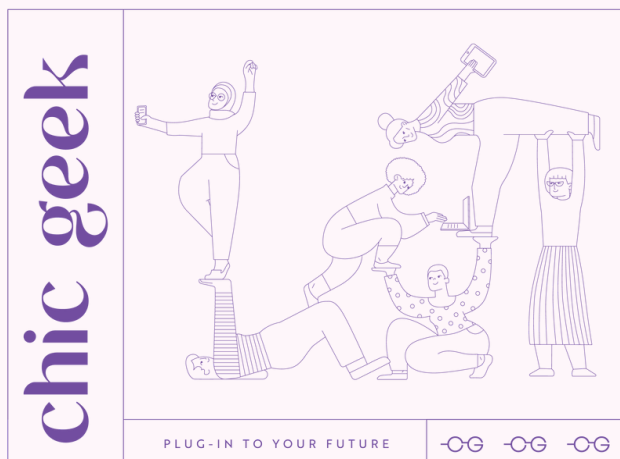
Chic Geek exists to build gender diversity in technology, a sector that's shaping the world we live in. Mid-career women are most likely to leave technology companies and careers because they don't see a clear path to advancement. Our mission is to engage, retain and support intermediate women in tech through programs such as Career Pathing, Events, and our many industry Partnerships.

More women in tech will have a bold and beneficial impact on our future. That's why we help women find their future and forge new paths, ultimately increasing gender diversity in technology.

Founded by Kylie Woods in Calgary, Alberta Canada in 2013, Chic Geek is a non-profit that operates in the spirit of a startup. We operate a business model that strategically builds on our organizational sustainability through public and private sponsorship, company partnerships and grants. We are committed to action-based programming that supports individuals, communities and businesses, while driving positive change regionally and globally.

Chic Geek is driven to create tangible programming and partnerships built for all women in tech and STEM fields, the technology sector, and the companies, founders, and communities driving innovative technology driven businesses and organizations. In short, the organizations and teams changing the world and solving problems in digital transformation areas such as Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, data and analytics, cloud computing and the Internet of Things, SaaS, IT, Fintech, UX, software design, medical, energy and agriculture tech, and many more exciting growing areas of technology!

We know through research that when business and community support women and diversity in tech, we elevate the technology sector and innovation ecosystem as a whole.



## Team

The Chic Geek team is a group of women and men who are passionate about supporting Diversity and women in technology globally. You can read more about them here.

**Kylie Woods, Founder and Executive Director** 

Woods is a passionate social entrepreneur who believes in leading through listening and vulnerability. She's the founder of Chic Geek, a non-profit committed to building gender diversity in technology. Through its Career Pathing initiative, Chic Geek helps intermediate women in technology achieve greater career visibility and invest in their strategic professional networks. Woods was named Top 40 Under 40 by Avenue Magazine and has been profiled in Metro News as one of "Calgary Heroes." And she's on the Daily Hives list of favourite women entrepreneurs in Alberta.

She is the recipient of the 2021 Mount Royal University Alumni Achievement Award, she has also been recognized as a "Need to Know" in Alberta Venture and profiled by the Mount Royal University Summit Magazine in their feature on women in STEM.

Woods represented Alberta in the prestigious International Visitors Leadership Program hosted by the US Department of State and was a voice for women in STEM on an international stage. A proud mom of identical twins, Lily and Mae, Woods brings the lessons learned through her journey as a social entrepreneur into her role as a parent.

She is an experienced community builder with a demonstrated history of working in technology and startups. Background in public relations, marketing and graphic design.



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## FAQ

### Global

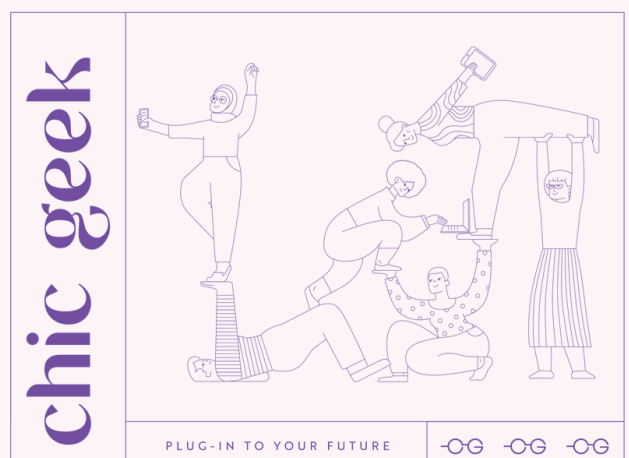
- Women are underrepresented in technology, holding less than 25% of computing roles - something that hasn't changed in the past ten years.<sup>1</sup>
- In Canada, women represent 47% of the total workforce, but only represent 28% - 31% of the Information and Communication Technology workforce.<sup>2</sup>
- It's estimated that 1 million women are leaving technology roles and if we could reduce attrition by just one-quarter, it would keep 220,000 women in science, engineering and technology roles.<sup>3</sup>
- Attrition spikes among women ages 35-40 as 52% of mid-career technical women leave their companies. This is called the Fight-or-Flight Moment and research shows that women are twice as likely to leave as their male counterparts.<sup>4</sup>
- The cost of turnover in technical roles averages \$144,000 USD per employee for full replacement costs which includes lost productivity, recruiting costs, salary, etc.<sup>5</sup>
- The diversity women bring to the table creates more innovate, productive teams and drive bottom line results.<sup>6</sup>
- But why are women leaving tech? Some assume that women are leaving to start families and are seeking more work-life balance. Chic Geek's research shows that's not the case. women are dedicated to their careers, passionate about making an impact in their work. The number one reason women are leaving is because they can't see a path to advancement.
- A study conducted by Indeed found that the biggest reason women leave their technology jobs is attributed to lack of career growth. This was echoed in our own research where lack of career visibility came up over and over again as a barrier for women in technology.<sup>7</sup>
- Isolation is another reason women are leaving technology. When a woman is the only woman on a team or at a site, it makes it difficult to find support or sponsorship.<sup>8</sup>
- A study by LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company found that for engineers, 40% of women in senior and technical roles are "only's," which are defined as the only woman on their team or in the room. When women are "only's" they are 1.5x more likely to consider leaving a profession because biases are more pronounced.<sup>9</sup>
- It's critical for women invest in building their networks because up to 85% of jobs and open positions are filled by networking.<sup>10</sup>

### Regional

- Women in Alberta hold only 22% of technology roles
- According to the Innovation Capital Working Group Report, "The successes of a technology ecosystem are directly related to the ability to attract and retain talented people." In Alberta, there is a lack of mid-level talent that is currently being sourced from other jurisdictions.<sup>11</sup>
- Technology is a fast-growing industry with ambitious targets for 2030, including: 2,000 technology companies, \$20 billion in annual revenue from those companies and 100,000 technology jobs.<sup>12</sup>
- Through 1:1 interviews, Chic Geek understands that emerging technology companies seek to leverage diversity, equity and inclusion practices to attract and retain talent in a highly competitive marketplace.

### Local

- In the Rainforest Alberta Ecosystem Scorecard 2021, Diversity emerged as a key gap. While the Calgary Innovation Ecosystem is welcoming, it is not as diverse or inclusive as it needs to be.<sup>13</sup>
- Based on the same study, individuals in Calgary value DEI more than the overall Innovation Ecosystem, which indicates that the ecosystem needs to prioritize DEI more.



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## Programming

Career Pathing - hand curated, monthly 1:1 connections to help women in technology grow their strategic networks and access to role-models, increasing career visibility and retention

Corporate Partnerships with some of Canada's most successful technology-driven companies to support diverse hiring, employer brand building and employee engagement

Diversity Motherboard - a growing hub of information on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion practice in the sector

## Impact

- Created and implemented Career Pathing and the Diversity Motherboard in 2022
- 14,000 individuals in the Chic Geek community, spanning regionally and globally
- 170+ mentors in Chic Geek's Career Pathing program, expanding the number of role-models available to women in technology
- 30+ corporate partnerships with technology companies on the forefront of innovation
- Ran 15 events (virtually and in person) over 2021/2022 collaborating with over 20 partners to bring voice to women in technology to an audience of over 695 in total
- Secured \$305k in funding in 2021 with a goal of \$700k for 2023
- Strategic partnership with Momentum's AWS re/Start program to provide Career Pathing to cohort participants
- First hand impact on women in technology - please see our Career Pathing interviews here to learn more about the direct impact we make on women in the technology sector

## DEI in Tech

**\*Often referred to as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).**

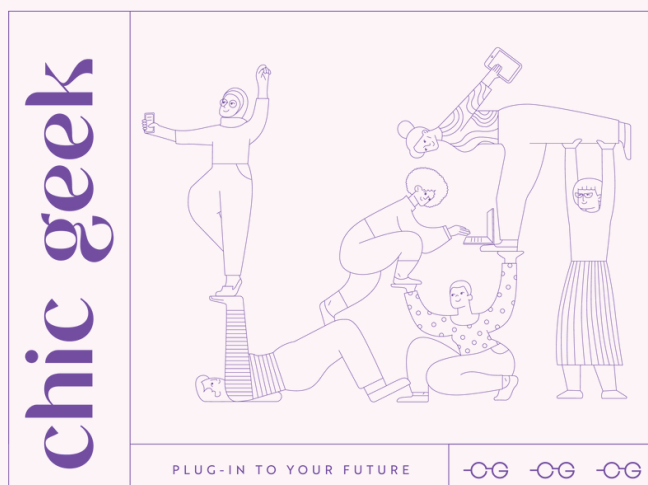
Through its primary research, Chic Geek has identified that there is a wealth of information available about diversity, equity and inclusion. However, a significant gap exists between theory and practice. Companies in Alberta are building DEI practices from the ground up every time instead of leveraging an existing knowledge base formed from real-world practice.

DEI remains theoretical, but not practical. More supports are needed to guide companies through the practice of DEI.

Through a sentiment analysis on Career Pathing data, Chic Geek has identified that women experience a more negative outlook on careers in technology when they're working for a company that does not have DEI programs.

Women who participate in Chic Geek's Career Pathing have increased feelings of anticipation, trust and joy, which can combat the loneliness and isolation they often experience as a minority in non-inclusive workplaces.

There was a large increase in fear and a moderate increase in anger and sadness for women whose companies did not have DEI programs when speaking on the topics of hurdles in their career path.



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## In the News

Please see [Chic Geek's news page](#) for the latest media coverage and government and industry releases and announcements.

### Talking Tech

Chic Geek founder Kylie Woods and Chic Geek and areas-specific individuals from Chic Geek are available to media and community to discuss topics such as:

- The importance of female retention and leadership in Alberta's booming tech sector and the state of women in technology and STEM careers
- Building gender diversity in technology and DEI practice and
- Stopping the leaky talent funnel when it comes to women in technology
- How to engage young women and girls in Science and Technology and foster their strengths and interests
- Topic, Impact and Solutions on the subject of: biases (gender and other) in the science and technology sectors locally and globally



**Kylie Woods, Founder and Executive Director of Chic Geek**

## Media Contact

Looking for other media sources in technology?

We are eager to help the media connect with those in the tech sector who may add to and enhance coverage and offer needed voices and perspectives - if you are looking for an area expert or specific source, please contact us; we may be able to assist:



### Theresa Tayler

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## Boilerplate

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