

Forming a WiN-Canada Local Chapter

Below you will find a step by step guide to launching your own WiN-Canada Chapter.

Step 1 - Build Your Leading Group

- Find people who actively want to be involved in forming a local chapter, and in developing and participating in local chapter and WIN Canada activities.
- Encourage people to participate from the various companies your local chapter will represent as well as people from a variety of work groups and backgrounds i.e., PWU, Society, Management, BTU, etc. Representation from all facets in the organization will provide buy-in for your chapter and will help in obtaining management's support. Don't be discouraged if people adopt a "wait and see" attitude, 2-3 people can easily launch a Chapter and host an initial meeting.
- Pick a date, time and place when all your potential leading group (LG) members can get together. Be creative, someone's patio or a local coffee shop may be the ideal venue!
- Obtain supporting materials and resources from the WiN-Canada Executive Director or Board member. Building a strong WiN-Canada is part of their mandate so you can count on encouragement and support.

Step 2 - Hold First Meeting of Leading Group

- Discuss the WiN Canada charter so the purpose and goals of the WIN organization are clear to everyone and will be adopted by the local chapter. A local chapter charter can be written for adoption by the membership once you get up and running.
- Decide how formal or informal the structure of your chapter will be. Sometimes, it is better to start small and grow in size and formality. Both types of Chapters exist in Canada and all have been successful – it is really about approaching WiN in a manner that makes sense for your environment and circumstances. WiN's Executive Director would be happy to provide examples and guidance to help you decide what might work for you.
- Brainstorm ideas for meetings and member involvement.
- Decide who is best positioned to request sponsorship of WiN meetings and activities from management. A proposal which promotes diversity and leadership development may get you the small amount of funds needed to get started.
- Discuss whether the chapter is to represent a region or a single company. If regional, define the boundaries for the region.
- Decide on a name for the local chapter.
- Invite the Executive Director or a WiN-Canada Board member to attend your meeting to offer assistance and share experiences.
- Plan to obtain support and endorsement from LG members' respective companies.

Step 3 Obtain support from your Company for the launch of a WiN Chapter

- If a single company local chapter, set a date to meet with senior management of that company to share the proposal for the launch of a WiN-Canada Chapter. Tell them about WIN-Global and WiN-Canada, share some of WiN's successes and

explain how we add value to the industry. Explain how you see your Chapter working and identify some potential activities you may take forward. Invite them to your first meeting to demonstrate their commitment.

- Explain your personal commitment to WiN and find out what your company might support on work time if this is a development activity for you.
- Find out what the company would like to see reported to them about your Chapter's activities.
- Find out what their level of financial commitment could be – in the early stages of a new Chapter, all that may be required is providing members and potential members the time to attend the WiN meeting and some refreshments. Later on, as you develop programs, you can seek funding for particular activities e.g. a Science Club for Girls.
- Consider ways to make this a win-win by identifying charities the company already supports that the Chapter get involved with, e.g. Habitat for Humanity.
- Find out what societies are supported by the company, such as the Canadian Nuclear Society and Young Generation Nuclear that the local chapter could work with.
- If the local chapter is representing a region, each LG member should carry out similar activities with her own company.
- If you don't get support from your Company it is harder to have an active Chapter but not impossible. Like any organization, if enough people want to be part of something, they usually find a way. You may need to start small and do this entirely outside of work. Once you are established, go back to your company with a business case and try again – WiN-Canada Board Members or our Executive Director would be happy to help you develop your 'pitch'.

Step 4 - Launch the Local Chapter

- Set a date for launching the local chapter and obtain the materials required for the meeting. People will need to be assigned specific roles such as: booking a speaker(s), obtaining a venue and arranging for its set-up, ordering food and beverage, advertising the meeting, obtaining thank you gift(s), registering the participants, taking minutes, thanking speakers, etc

Advertising

- If possible, talk to the Public Relations Department to gain relevant information for creating and posting an advertisement for the chapter meeting on the company's Intranet, in a company newsletter and for posting hardcopy bulletins. If a regional chapter, each LG member should work with her own public affairs, employee communication or human resources department to have the meeting advertised.

Promotional Activities

- You might want to set up a WIN Canada booth in a public area of your company. At this booth, e-mail addresses of potential members can be taken, information on WiN Canada and LG contact information handed out, as well as advertisements for the upcoming launch. The ideal materials needed for this event would be: WIN membership forms, WiN Canada Banners, WiN Canada pamphlets, contact

information, and pictures of national or global Women in Nuclear meetings, if available.

- It's a good idea to put your booth or table in a high traffic spot such as a cafeteria or library or front entrance, to allow the maximum number of people to learn what WiN is all about (remember to get permission first!) If people see an advertisement on the intranet or on the door of a building, they may not read it (We are all very busy people) If the informal promotion takes place over a few hours or a few days, then people at their own leisure can stop by and ask questions and engage in conversation with you.

Step 5 - Hold First Meeting

- Acquire materials needed for first meeting i.e. pamphlets, banners, WiN Canada Charter, membership forms, sign-in sheets
- Pick a spot large enough to hold all the people who may wish to attend. You may gauge this number from the responses received to the advertisements and from the e-mails received. It is recommended an Agenda be circulated electronically, with a request to respond, to help you plan for the number of people who might attend – remember you will also get people showing up at the last minute so have enough chairs and refreshments on hand to make everyone feel welcome.
- Guest Speakers - For the first meeting it is recommended a member of the WiN Canada Executive be asked to participate, or a Chair from an existing local chapter. These individuals have knowledge of what WiN is all about and of the many activities members can get involved with.
- Possible WIN topics to discuss: What WiN is about, what other chapters do, future events that are proposed to be covered, special events that WiN Canada has actively participated in.
- Possible other topics to discuss: Leadership development type topics, diversity topics or simply having women from your company talk about their position, what their department is accountable for, what their career background can be fascinating and enlightening for participants.
- Show pictures of WIN events to engage the participants;
- Consider handing out a survey to identify people's interests: i.e. how much do people know about radiation?. What careers does the membership have: i.e., technicians, trades, engineering, clerical, etc.? What future events will be interesting to people? Is there anyone who wants to become more active within the chapter, by taking on a LG role or chairing a committee, or organizing a WIN event?
- Take e-mail addresses of the attendees for developing a communications list for advertising future chapter events. Make it easy for people to sign up for membership.

Step 6 - Hold a Post Launch Meeting with LG

- Discuss the positive points and lessons learned from the first meeting. What went well, what could be better next time, etc.
- If you handed out a survey or feedback forms, discuss information received. This can help you develop your annual plan. It should be recognized that this plan

should always be flexible enough to add or replace programs and/or activities should the LG or membership so request. The aim should be to have meetings that will engage the membership and keep them coming back for more.

- Agree a path forward i.e., the next meeting date, the focus of the next meeting.

Step 7 – Make it sustainable

- Appoint someone (usually the Chapter Chair) to participate in monthly WiN-Canada Board teleconferences.
- Talk to people about WiN and encourage more women and men to join.
- Create some content for the WiN-Canada website promoting your Chapter.
- Celebrate your success at launching a WiN Chapter – WELL DONE!