

January 29, 2015

Project Title: Women's Experiences in Small IT Firms in Canada

Principal Investigator: Tracey L. Adams, Department of Sociology, Western University

Co-investigator: Erin Demaiter, Department of Sociology, Western University

Letter of Information

1. Invitation to Participate:

You are being invited to participate in this study, which seeks to examine women's experiences working in small information technology (IT) firms in Canada.

2. Purpose of the Letter:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information required for you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research.

3. Purpose of this Study:

Existing research on gender and organizations suggests that larger organizations may be friendly to women because formal policies in these environments have helped to overcome casual gender-based discrimination in the workplace. There is less research on women working in smaller firms. The purpose of this study is to examine whether smaller, more informal and less bureaucratized organizations are more (or less) friendly to women working in IT.

4. Inclusion Criteria:

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are: 1) English-Speaking, 2) Currently working or previously worked in a small IT firm, 3) Above 18 years of age, 4) Female.

5. Exclusion Criteria

Men and women who have with no experiences working in small firms are not eligible to participate in this study.

6. Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your experiences working in a small IT firm. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. With your consent, the interview will be audiotaped. If you do not wish to be audiotaped, I will take notes. I will be using pseudonyms in the transcripts of the interview, as well as in the research paper generated from the data and analysis. Interviews will take place at a location convenient to you, or over the telephone. There will be a total of 20 participants in this study.

7. Possible Risks and Harms

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. Nonetheless, it is possible that a participant may experience stress when recounting experiences at the workplace. If you experience distress, the interview will be halted and a referral will be made to a counselor.

8. Possible Benefits

Information gathered from your participation in this study may provide a better understanding of women's experiences of working in small IT organizations; however, you may not benefit directly from participating in the study.

9. Compensation

You will not be financially compensated for your participation.

10. Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. You do not waive any legal rights by participating in this research study. Participation will not affect your employment.

11. Confidentiality

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. Interviews will be saved on a personal computer and backed up on a hard drive. Both the computer and hard drive are password protected, and the files will be encrypted. All data will be stored in accordance with Western's University policy (for a minimum of 5 years). Paper documents will be shredded after the 5 year period. Electronic files will be deleted after this time. If the results are published, your name will not be used. If you choose to withdraw from this study, your data will be removed and destroyed from our database. While we will do our best to protect your information there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so.

12. Contacts for Further Information

If you require further information about this research you may contact Erin Demaiter via e-mail at edemaite@uwo.ca or the principal investigator in the Department of Sociology, Professor Tracey Adams at (519) 661-2111, ext. 85142 or via e-mail at tladams@uwo.ca. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or the conduct of this study, you may contact The Office of Research Ethics (519) 661-3036, email: ethics@uwo.ca

13. Publication

If the results of the study are published, your name will not be used. If you would like to receive a copy of any potential study results, please contact Erin Demaiter (co-investigator) or Professor Tracey Adams (principal investigator) through the contact information above.

14. Consent

If you agree to participate in this research project and accept the conditions outlined above, please sign the attached consent form and return it back directly to me before the interview.

Thank you for your participation

Sincerely,

Erin Demaiter (Co-Investigator)

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Consent Form

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I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the study:

Participant's Name (please print): _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

I agree to have the interview audio-recorded (please initial):

YES _____

NO _____

Person Obtaining Informed Consent (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____