



Animation Industry Survey - Fall 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACE Canada conducted a Canada-wide survey of animation professionals in the Fall of 2023. The survey found that while, overall, respondents were generally satisfied with work in the animation industry, and enjoyed the work itself, there were still prevalent gender bias in the workplace. Women and non-binary candidates reported the same desire to advance in their careers, they also indicated obstacles to advancement based on their gender identities, based on pre-conceptions from women's inability to lead, to bias against mothers, to fear those in the 2SLGBTQ+ community will impose their views on others. Over 50% of those who responded, stated that having more women in senior / management roles is the best way to dispel those myths. Only 6% of female respondents believed they were paid the same as their male counterparts, and two-thirds of women and non-binary respondents reported experiencing some sort of harassment or discrimination at work.

In terms of advancement, concerns about job security, lack of confidence, lack of training and lack of experience were identified as barriers. In addition, respondents were unclear how to position themselves to earn potential roles, or how to self-validate when they are ready for the opportunity.

Mental health and high stress were also identified as a key concern in the survey. Greater access to mental health supports, such as therapists, was commonly identified, and flexibility to balance work /life demands was important, including a flexible schedule with a mix of in-house and remote work, and the possibility of reduced hours / quotas and a 4-day work week, were identified as helpful factors.

SUGGESTED BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY OF GENDERS IN THE ANIMATION INDUSTRY

Based on results of the artist and studio surveys conducted by ACE CANADA in the Fall of 2023, ACE has consolidated the following best practice suggestions for inclusion and promotion of women in the animation industry.

Training

- Access to professional development opportunities as part of an employee's work day
- Leadership and Management Training to prepare professionals to move into supervisory roles
- Technical job training, specific to each department / field
- Job shadowing and/or mentorship opportunities
- Ongoing support / mentorship once employees have entered into a new role, to help ensure their success

HR Support

- Have regularly scheduled employee reviews, focusing not only on current performance, but their desired career path, so applicants know where they need to grow to reach their desired career goals, but also receive validation when they might be ready to begin applying to relevant opportunities
- Clear guidelines for when artists can use materials in their portfolios
- An understanding of how to perform a skills audit, including portfolio reviews, to advance in a specific role

Recruitment and Promotion and Salaries

- Post job postings internally, so potential applicants have the opportunity to express their interest in a position. This also allows interested artists to see the skillsets expected, to move up into their desired positions
- Equal pay for equal work. Establish pay bands for roles, with wages based on experience / seniority, so professionals with the same experience & qualifications, are paid the same rate for the same job/quota, and salaries are not based on the ability of an artist to negotiate.

Supporting Worker Well-Being

- Greater access to mental health supports, such as therapists
- Flexibility in scheduling in order to accommodate work / life balance
- Flexibility in location of work, without prejudice to advancement, in order to accommodate work / life balance
- Opportunities for Reduced Hours / Quotas and 4-day work weeks
- Establish a clear anti-harassment policy, that is included as part of employee and/or contractor contracts

ACE CANADA - DETAILED SURVEY REPORT

ACE Canada conducted a virtual, cross-Canada survey of animation professionals in the Fall of 2023, to identify barriers and challenges still faced by women and those identifying as women in the animation industry.

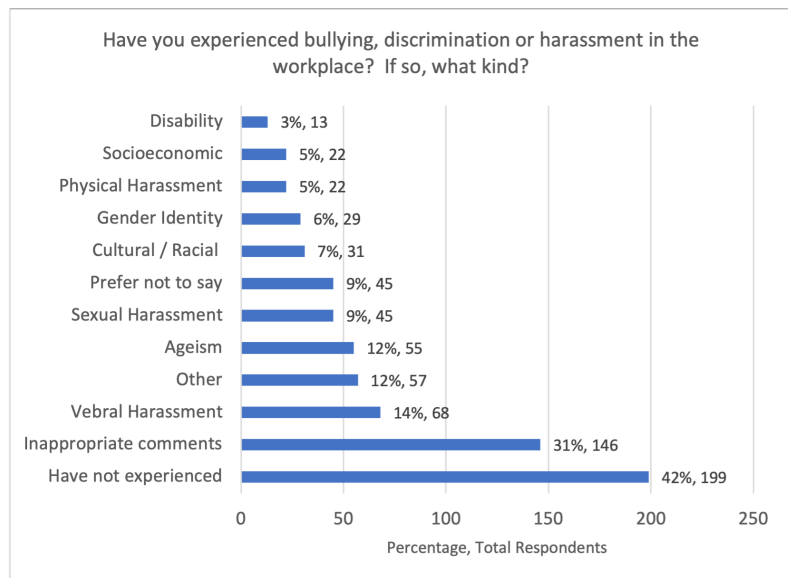
Survey Respondent Demographics

560 artists responded to the survey. Approximately 55% of those who responded were Cis gender women, 27% Cis gender men, and the remainder either not-identifying or other gender identities. A wide range of population groups responded to the survey, with 56% White and 12% East Asian, being the largest groups. Respondents were largely from British Columbia, with 64% of participants based in BC, followed by Ontario with 23% of respondents. 14% of respondents identified as having a disability. 25% of those responding to the survey had children, with an additional 17% of respondents planning to have children in the future, and 10% were caregivers for a disabled/aging family member.

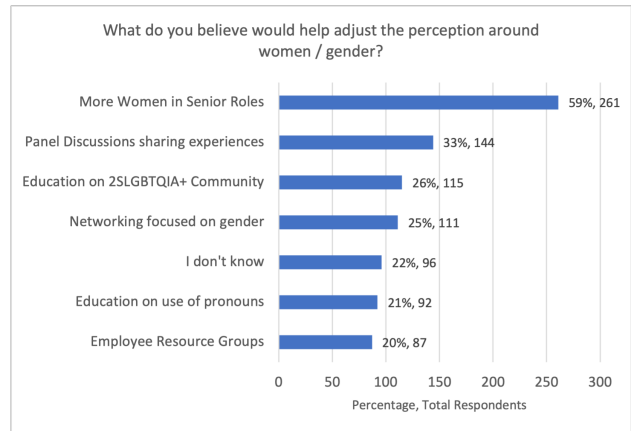
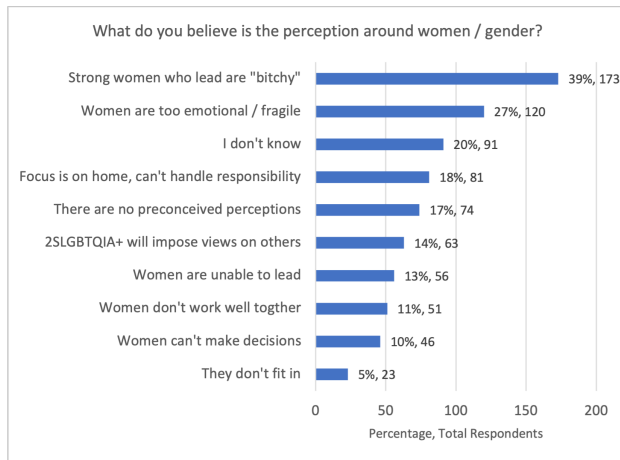
Career Satisfaction

14% of professionals indicated they were extremely satisfied, and 50% satisfied, in their current roles, with 22% responding as 'neutral'. This indicates, that overall, animation professionals are generally satisfied in their careers, with only 3% of respondents stating they were 'very unsatisfied'. In terms of career progression, 64% of respondents indicated a desire to advance their careers in the near future. The largest cause of dissatisfaction overall, was that artists felt they were not being recognized for their achievements. In particular, women felt studio bias, either personally, because they were working remotely, or because respondents were mothers. Others felt they were perceived as not to have career ambitions. This prevented opportunities for advancement, and feeling the need to 'act like a man' to get ahead. Other causes included the lack of female role models and a sense of isolation due to lack of female colleagues.

While satisfaction levels are high, there is still room for improvement. 67% of women, and 50% of non-binary stated that they did not believe they were paid the same as their male counterparts. Two-thirds of women and non-binary respondents, reported experiencing some form of harassment or discrimination at work. The most common form of harassment was inappropriate comments, but sexual and verbal harassment was identified by roughly 10% of female respondents. Ageism (12%), was another form of discrimination identified by respondents, both in the survey and in the comments.



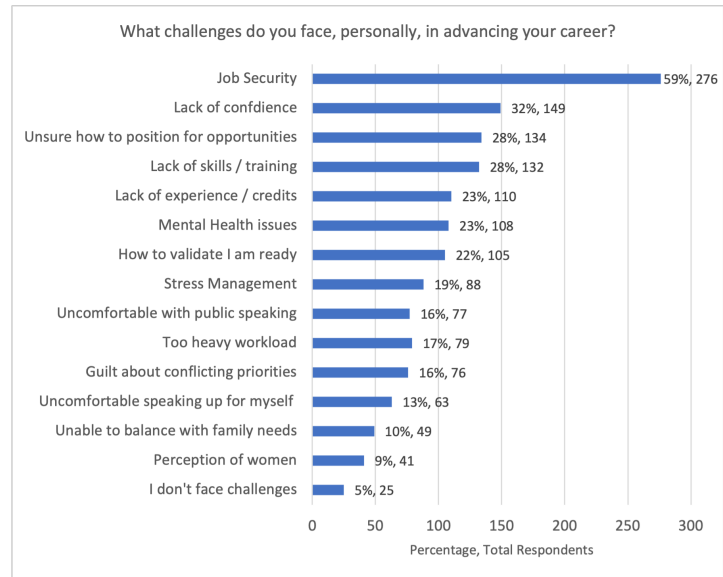
Women still believe there are still strong preconceptions tied to gender, with 41% of women stating that they feel strong women are considered “Bitchy”, 31% believing there is the perception that women were too ‘fragile’ or ‘emotional’ for leadership roles, and 23.5% stated that it was believed women’s focus is on the home and they are unable handle more responsibility at work. Over half of women stated that the best way to address these preconceptions are to have more women in senior / supervisory roles, which would work to disprove these myths and provide a specific example of how to handle these roles. Those in the LGBTQ+ community also felt they are faced with misconceptions.



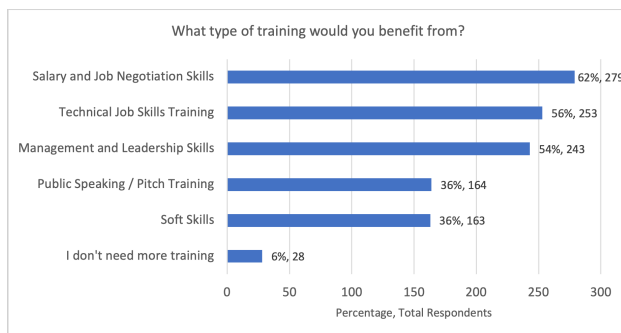
Career Growth

Career growth and opportunities for career growth was identified as an important point of satisfaction for animation professionals. 25% of women and non-binary respondents were currently looking to advance in their careers, and 65% of women and 73% of non-binary respondents hoped to advance in the future. These numbers were similar to those of their male counterparts, but females and non-binary respondents often indicated obstacles to advancement due to their gender identities.

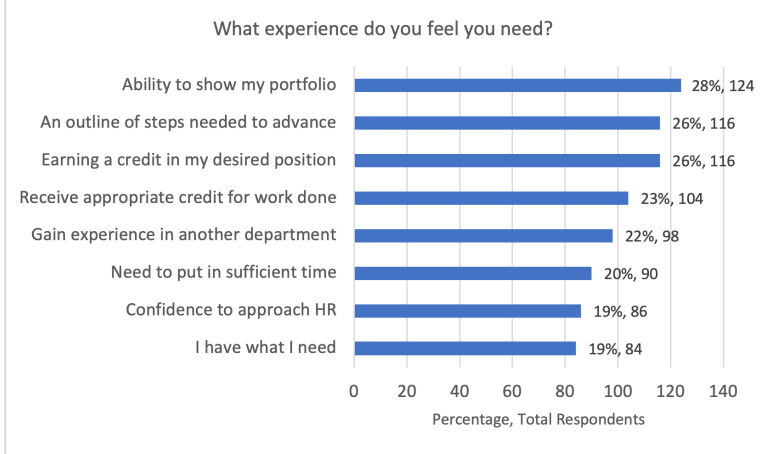
The major obstacles to career growth were concerns about job security, lack of confidence and a lack of skills/training and/or experience to move up. Respondents also reported that they were unsure how to position themselves for potential opportunities or validate that they were ready to advance. Mental health issues and stress management were also identified as obstacles.



79% of respondents thought training programs were helpful. The types of training respondents were looking for were predominately salary and negotiation skills (61%), technical job training (56%) and leadership and management skills (54%). Only 6% of respondents indicated that they did not need any more training. Other popular requests included soft skills and public speaking/pitch training, each at 36%. Comments included from artists, indicated that they would like professional development to be included as part of their jobs, instead of just being quota-focused, but felt it was difficult to attend training, if expected to do so outside of work hours / on their lunch breaks, or if they needed to come into studio for training, if working remotely.



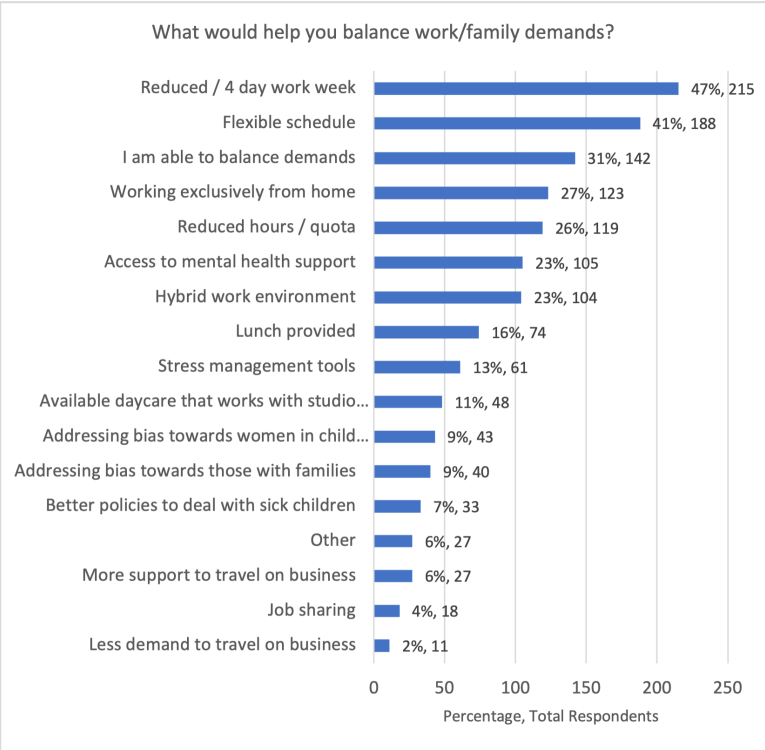
The external barriers faced by respondents, were more varied, the most common response being lack of opportunity. Respondents also identified being ‘pigeonholed’ and they would like support from HR professionals within studios to advocate for their needs and outline the steps and skills to advance in their careers, and have opportunities to gain experience in other departments, as well as the possibility to job shadow. The ability to show their abilities through sharing their portfolios and earning a credit in their desired position, were also key. Respondents also expressed frustration in their comments about lack of internal job postings, to allow themselves to access opportunities.



Mental Health

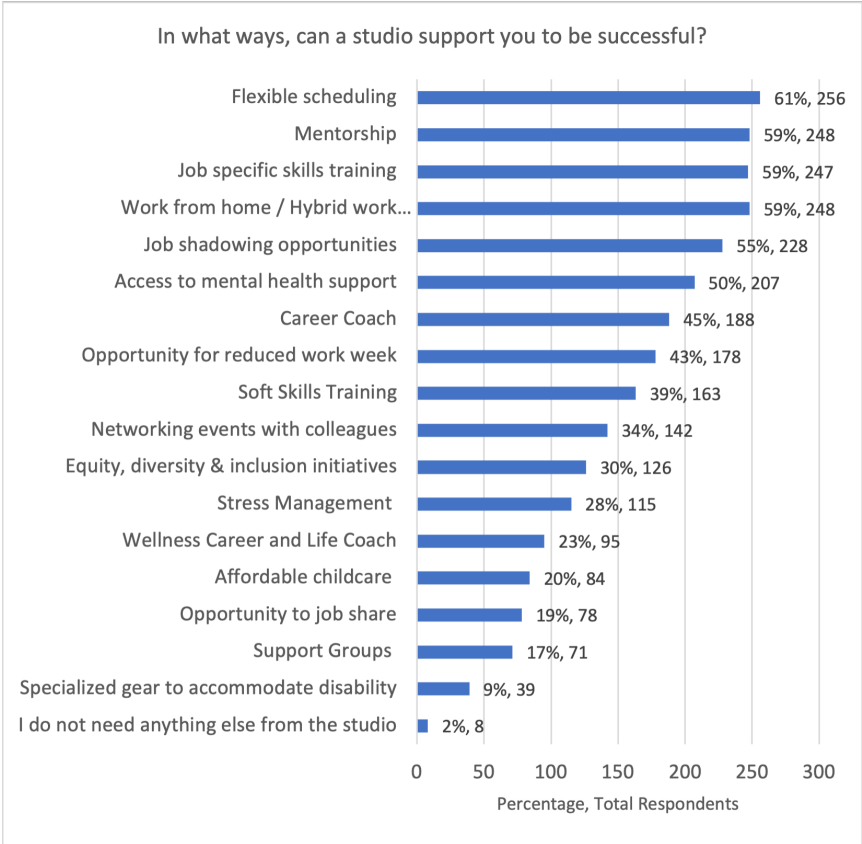
Issues and concerns around mental health were noted throughout the survey but specifically, 50% of respondents felt mental health support, such as therapists, was key for studios to supporting artists. In terms of balancing work and family life, only 32% of respondents felt they were able to manage both. Key items identified to help maintain balance were opportunities for hybrid/remote work, and flexible scheduling, including opportunities for reduced hours / 4 day work weeks, as well as mental health supports.

Additional studio support requests also included career coaching, EDI initiatives, job shadowing, mentoring and specific job skills training.



Studio Support for Success

Artists' viewpoints on how studios can support their careers included: flexible scheduling / hybrid work environments, Mentorship/Job Shadowing opportunities, career coaching, equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, soft skills training and job specific skills training, as well as access to mental health supports, were the most commonly identified ways that studios could support animation professionals in their success.



Support from Organizations like ACE CANADA and Women in Animation

Respondents are keen for organizations, like ACE Canada and Women in Animation to provide knowledge, skills and soft skills training, mentoring, career coaching and networking opportunities, as well the chance to gain experience. This demonstrates that programs, like ACE Canada, that provide both skills training and hands on experience, as well as a focus on building personal confidence and presenting yourself for job opportunities, is hitting the mark, in terms of addressing the needs of animation professionals.

