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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Society of Women Engineers and iRelaunch Officially Launch the 2017 STEM Re-entry Task Force**  
Expands Large-Scale Effort to Increase the Number of Technical Women in the STEM Sector

**CHICAGO** (Oct. 25, 2016) – Following the success of the inaugural STEM Reentry Task Force, the [Society of Women Engineers \(SWE\)](#) and [iRelaunch](#) have partnered with a new group of global engineering companies to offer more internships in 2017 for professionals returning to work from career breaks. The 2017 STEM Reentry Task Force is announced on the brink of [WE16](#), SWE’s annual conference and career fair which is expected to draw 10,000 attendees. For the first time, a “call for returning engineers” is part of the WE16 outreach, featuring a programming track specifically for returning engineers and technical professionals.

The 2017 STEM Reentry Task Force members are: Ford Motor Company, GE Power, Johnson & Johnson, Medtronic, Northrop Grumman and Schneider Electric. These six companies have committed to piloting formal reentry internship programs for professionals in engineering and technology who are returning from a career break during the 2017 calendar year.

“Having this new group of prestigious, global companies join the STEM Reentry Task Force validates the success of the Task Force’s inaugural efforts and the high caliber of the returning professional pool of talent. With interns converting to long term hires at rates ranging from 50 percent to 100 percent, the numbers speak for themselves,” said Carol Fishman Cohen, CEO of iRelaunch.

Internships are a perfect vehicle for employers to engage with professionals returning from a career break for two key reasons. The employer can base the hiring decision on an actual work sample instead of a series of interviews, and the employer does not have to make the longer term hiring decision until the internship is over. For reentry interns, the program provides professional development experiences, technical and mentoring resources, and a cohort structure for support during the transition.

“We are so excited to be participating in such an important program that provides great opportunities for technical talent re-entering the workforce,” said Meeta Huggins, director, diversity & inclusion and chief diversity officer, Ford Motor Company.

Medtronic plans to launch its reentry program, *Careers 2.0*, in early 2017. “Medtronic is excited to launch a pilot program through the WISE initiative (Women in Science & Engineering) for experienced interns!” said Ashley Piper, shared talent acquisition, Medtronic. “CAREERS 2.0 is designed to increase the pipeline of female STEM talent who are returning from a two- or more year career break. This program provides the opportunity for professionals to get back into the workforce at a later life stage, and offers a powerful return-to-work strategy for individuals.”

The launch of the 2017 STEM Reentry Task Force builds on the achievements of the Inaugural STEM Reentry Task Force, which includes programs by Booz Allen Hamilton, Cummins Inc., General Motors Company, IBM, Intel Corporation and Johnson Controls. Successful interns from five of these programs will participate in a panel moderated by Cohen at WE16, discussing their experiences reentering the workforce. The participants have career breaks that range from 5-20 years. The panel will take place at the Pennsylvania Convention Center on Friday, October 28, 2016, 2:45-3:45pm ET. The panel is part of the WE16 Reentry programming track, which also includes a keynote discussion on top strategies for engineers returning to work and a workshop on job search tactics for relaunchers.

“This day will be a celebration of the founding member Task Force companies who have launched formal reentry programs in 2016,” said Karen Horting, executive director and CEO of SWE. “The Inaugural Task Force has made a huge impact on women’s representation in engineering and technology. We look forward to saluting them and also welcoming our new partners for 2017.”

If you are a STEM professional ready to return to work after a period of childcare, eldercare or another career break, start your re-entry process by visiting [SWE’s Career Center](#). Post your resume and tag it “STEM Re-entry Task Force.”

If you are an employer interested in supporting women in STEM and becoming a future member of the STEM Re-entry Task Force, email [reentry@swe.org](mailto:reentry@swe.org).

For more information about the STEM Re-entry Task Force, visit <http://reentry.swe.org>.

### **About SWE**

The Society of Women Engineers (SWE), founded in 1950, is the world’s largest advocate and catalyst for change for women in engineering and technology. The not-for-profit educational and service organization is the driving force that establishes engineering as a highly desirable career aspiration for women. To ensure SWE members reach their full potential as engineers and leaders, the Society offers unique opportunities to network, provides professional development, shapes public policy and provides recognition for the life-changing contributions and achievements of women engineers. As a champion of diversity, SWE empowers women to succeed and advance in their personal and professional lives. For more information about the Society, please visit [www.swe.org](http://www.swe.org) or call 312.596.5223.

### **About iRelaunch**

iRelaunch produces innovative products and services for professionals seeking to return to work after a hiatus and for employers recruiting from this talent pool. iRelaunch established the market connecting employers with returning professionals, and coined the term "relaunchers" to describe these individuals. A strong advocate for the unique value that relaunchers bring to the workforce, and for the employers that engage with them, iRelaunch's more than 230 return-to-work programs and presentations to date have reached an international network of over 25,000 people. iRelaunch's deep, multi-year connections with university alumni offices and professional associations expand its reach to millions of relaunchers in the U.S. and beyond. iRelaunch works closely with employers to develop paid reentry internship programs for returning professionals. iRelaunch also works with “umbrella” organizations on initiatives in which groups of member or affiliated companies pilot return-to-work internship programs simultaneously and collaboratively. iRelaunch originated and co-leads the STEM Reentry Task Force with the Society of Women Engineers, through which some of the world's largest companies are piloting reentry internship programs for returning engineers and technical professionals. Universities and professional associations engage with iRelaunch to provide turnkey career reentry programming for alumni and members, through live events, webinars, and online content. The iRelaunch Return-to-Work Conference has been held 19 times since 2008 and is the signature event nationally for the relaunch market, drawing a combined audience of over 5,000 attendees. For more information about iRelaunch, please go to @iRelaunch on Twitter, visit [www.iRelaunch.com](http://www.iRelaunch.com), or email [info@iRelaunch.com](mailto:info@iRelaunch.com).

**Carol Fishman Cohen, iRelaunch CEO and Co-Founder**

Carol Fishman Cohen, CEO and Co-Founder of [iRelaunch](#), consults to some of the world's largest corporations on career reentry strategy and programming. Carol speaks globally about career reentry strategy, and is quoted frequently in the national press. Her [seminal Harvard Business Review article](#) "The 40-Year-Old Intern" focuses on the use of the internship as a vehicle for employers to engage with experienced professionals returning from career break. It was selected as an "HBR article that changed the way I think" as part of HBR's 90th anniversary recognition of HBR articles that made the biggest difference in readers' and contributors' lives. Carol's [TED Talk](#) "How to get back to work after a career break" has been viewed over 1.3 million times and translated into 25 languages. Carol is the co-author of the career reentry strategy book *Back on the Career Track*, referred to as "the Bible of career reentry," and is a returning professional herself. Carol's return to work at Bain Capital after 11 years out of the full-time workforce is documented in a Harvard Business School case study. She is the mother of four Millennials and lives in Boston, MA. Carol holds an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BA in Economics from Pomona College.

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