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[Mike](#)

[If Apple had more female engineers, would 'Geo' be so Hot?](#)

The world needs more women engineers. There's nothing new in that statement—we hear it all the time.

But something I hadn't previously heard is this: The United States needs to *double* the number of female engineers—to three in 10—in order for the nation to capitalize on the intellectual capital of women and attain its true potential for innovation.

That forceful advice comes from [Margaret Bailey](#), the Kate Gleason Chair and professor of [mechanical engineering](#) in RIT's [Kate Gleason College of Engineering](#) in remarks on the RIT news podcast [Studio 86](#). The *specificity* of her call to action—that we need *three in 10* women engineers in this country—is what makes it such a compelling point (as opposed to a wishy-washy phrase saying the world needs more female engineers). In the news biz, it's also what we call a story's "news hook"—a reason why comments sometimes "[make news](#)."

Bailey says reaching a "critical mass" of 30 percent female engineers (more than twice the current number)—along with achieving other diversity goals—will lead to more and greater technological advances. Hear the full interview and find out about the efforts of RIT's [WE@RIT](#) group, which works to encourage girls and young women to pursue studies and careers in engineering, on [Studio 86](#).

And, I can't help but wonder: Would a female engineer have designed a "friendlier" Apple iPhone—one that would've been more open from the start (making the "cracking" by "[GeoHot](#)" unnecessary)? I should add, I have no idea about the gender makeup of Apple's iPhone engineers (maybe there were some women on the team); and, more likely it was marketing behind the decision to close the iPhone to all but a single telecom company. But, you never know: Maybe having a few more women engineers in [Cupertino, Calif.](#), would make Apple less inclined to "make war" over consumers' cell-plan preferences—leaving "[GeoHot](#)" free to solve more pressing matters (like [why people are having so much trouble getting "Hannah Montana" tickets!](#)).

Have a great weekend!

1. [David H Dennis](#)

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Much as we would love to see more women engineers, I think Steve Jobs negotiated the deals personally that made iPhone what it is for good (overwhelmingly) and for bad. I don't think the sex of anyone would have overwhelmed the business calculations involved. Even a female Steve would have negotiated the same deal because, among other things, Visual Voicemail requires the cooperation of the cell phone service provider to work. Hope that helped. D

2. [Louis Wheeler](#)

Dec01

No, the world doesn't need more women engineers; it needs GOOD engineers, irrespective of their sex. Equality had once been a goal of Feminism, but apparently, no longer. There is no proof that women engineers have a special capacity to please customers; at best, they know what pleases them. Sometimes, that pleases female non-geeks. There is no proof that women engineers are making their employers extra money by producing "Politically Correct" products for women. This is just Feminist politics that you are spouting. It is sexual bigotry. There are GUY things and GIRL things in this world. Technology tends to be a Guy thing. That is, a disproportion number of Guys are into technology. This means that the fewer number of Girls, who choose to be into technology, are out competed. You seem to be unaware that Apple computers has been into "friendlier and easier to use" technology from the beginning. The Macintosh was the original easy-to-use computer, but, even then, that was only relative. Computers have always been hard to use. Wintel capitalized on cheaper, harder to use computers and it won 90% of the computer market. Apple is "making war" over consumer's cell plan preferences because the cell phone business is a mess. Almost all cell phones in the world are sold locked to a carrier; so the iPhone is no different. The iPhone is so HOT and SEXY that many people wanted to use it on other networks. If the iPhone had been a dud, like most Smart Phones, who would care? The reason that Apple had to sign an exclusive five year contract with AT&T is that breaking into the cell phone cartel is very difficult. Apple is changing a number of common practices by introducing the iPhone. There is no Front-end Subsidy as is common on most Smart Phones. You aren't fooled into thinking that the hardware is cheaper than it really is. And cell phone hardware that serves the customer's needs counts, now. Instead, there is a Back-end Subsidy that makes Apple a partner in the iPhone's success. That Back-end Subsidy will pay for software upgrades which will improve the iPhone over time, thus, increasing its potential customers. Apple had to deal with AT&T's lack of 3G service through out most of the US. Next year, because of better chip technology and an expanded AT&T 3G carrier service, Apple will be introducing a HSDPA 3G iPhone. But that hardware will still be incompatible with Verizon. There are hints that Apple and Google will combine to make an end run around the Cell Phone carriers, including AT&T. But, the pieces are not in place for that possibility. The point is that new and improved iPhones will appeal to increasing numbers of customers who currently have basic cell phone service. The reason for the iPhone's success will be that most Smart Phones are too hard for ordinary people to use. Many of those customers will be women. But, that will not necessarily be the result of women engineers. Many men slave their lives away trying to please women and are often quite good at it. It is Feminist propaganda that ONLY women can please other women. That is SO lesbian. Do we need more women engineers? Yes. BECAUSE they are women? No. It is because they can find a place where they can serve the customer's needs, male and female. There are men who like soft and feminine products. We need diversity. We need more choices. But, that have to be GOOD choices, not political choices. We have a capitalistic economy. It is only by serving customers needs that companies prosper. Women engineers will be given a chance to compete, but there is no guarantee that they know, any better than men do, what will please those customers. We have to let the market decide. Your prejudice in favor of women is unseemly.

3. [Brett](#)

Dec01

First, limiting the iPhone to one carrier was a business decision, not a technical one. The gender of Apple's engineers is irrelevant to this discussion. Second, flexibility is not necessarily the same as friendliness. In some cases, Apple products are made easier to use by limiting options. While this may frustrate tweekers, simpler IS easier. Activating a new iPhone is quickly done by the customer online. If Apple had sold the iPhone unlocked, activation would have involved choosing a

carrier, and it is possible that none of them would have made the investment to support online activation. Another way apple makes products friendlier is by "building the whole widget" (hardware and software). By working with one carrier, Apple was able to get AT&T to enhance their service with custom software to support visual voicemail. Once you have experienced random access to your messages through a touch-screen interface, you will not want to go back to retrieving voicemail the old fashioned way. Due to Apple's long-term exclusive arrangement with AT&T, I expect we will see other exceptional services unique to the iPhone.

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