



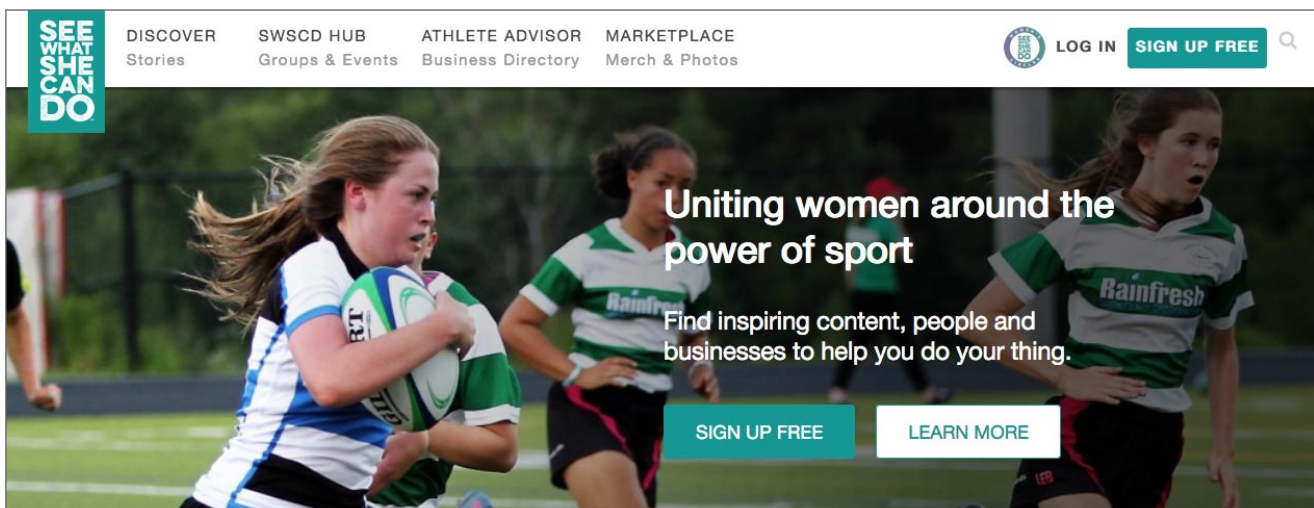
Inspired to Inspire Change

Women’s lives are undoubtedly enriched by recreational activity, competition and the sense of belonging that comes with being part of a team. Yet too often, women and girls choose to abandon participation in organized sports altogether, often because they lack the information, role models and connections they need.

The research bears this out, showing that while similar numbers of boys and girls start out in sport, more boys stay involved through to late adolescence and across their lifespan. Girls, however, drop out of sport at a rate of 1 in 3 versus 1 in 10 for boys – a rate that has seen little change in recent years despite efforts to level the playing field.


A self-described problem-solver, Caroline Wiley set out to tackle this imbalance by encouraging women to stay in the game. Combining her professional business and marketing experience, education

(she holds an MA in Recreation and Leisure Studies from the University of Waterloo), passion for sports photography and love of sport, she recently launched [SeeWhatSheCanDo \(SWSCD\)](#), an online “sport-related ecosystem in which women are valued, have the power and agency to tell their own stories and the ability to find community,” Wiley says. “It gives women who want to be active the power in numbers and a place to have a voice. When it comes to gender equity, representation matters.”



SEE WHAT SHE CAN DO

DISCOVER Stories SWSCD HUB Groups & Events ATHLETE ADVISOR Business Directory MARKETPLACE Merch & Photos

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Uniting women around the power of sport

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Women need information, resources, and most of all encouragement to stay active throughout their lifetime, Wiley points out. SWSCD is a business that provides these key elements by bringing together athletes, content creators, community builders, and local businesses to promote the interests of active women. The main drivers of the site include:

Powerful storytelling

SWSCD features articles, member stories, and social media posts designed to raise awareness of women in sport, amplify conversations, provide motivation, and inspire female athletes to achieve their goals.

The recent “[See How She Got Started](#)” multi-media campaign created in partnership with [Ontario University Athletics](#), for example, showcases the varied backgrounds and experiences of 90 talented female student-athletes, highlighting their individual journeys in sport and how they made their way to the varsity stage. The project also served as a research exercise, providing insight into how the athletes were first introduced to their sport, how they balance schoolwork and athletics, and where they find inspiration to excel.

SWSCD offers a platform for athletes to share their own stories in their own words, helping to “break through the noise of social media – which, by and large, does not have the best interests of girls and women at heart,” Wiley explains. “We’ve designed

it to be an open, inclusive community, but from a decidedly female perspective.”

Community building

The site’s online discussion board allows women with similar interests to:

- connect with each other online and in person;
- find information about activities taking place in their communities;
- form local groups based on common interests;
- promote events;
- share solutions to common problems and issues they may be encountering.

When it was identified that the pandemic was limiting opportunities for women in sport, for example, SWSCD supported opportunities for them to meet in person and connect virtually around their shared interests, rather than around specific sport and recreational activities. Branded “SWSCD Women’s Circles”, groups focusing specifically on Women and Dogs, Women Coaches, and ParAmazing athletics were created in conjunction with private, not-for-profit, municipal, and elite-level athlete partners eager to have a positive impact on their communities.

SWSCD also enables individual and business members to create their own specific groups and events on the platform. Again, the goal is to provide women and their supporters with the technical tools to be the difference in their own lives and in the lives of those around them.

Marketing support

SWSCD provides marketing support and technical tools to sport organizations of all levels, individuals, teams, municipalities, and local businesses so that they can create and share their own content to support their programs, services, products and brands. The SWSCD Athlete Advisor Business Directory provides a low-cost, convenient avenue for sports and recreation organizations to build awareness and aim their message directly at female clients.

The site's business directory allows individual users who are active SWSCD members to search for vendors and services in their area, and to rate and review these businesses and organizations based on their interactions with them.

"Women are rapidly rising in influence and importance as consumers of athletic products and services," Wiley says. "They are a major investment opportunity for business."

Blending business with social profit

Wiley believes for-profit solutions such as SWSCD can help to "move the needle" on issues related to gender equity – particularly female participation in athletics – by leveraging the power of technology and fostering a greater sense of professionalism among sports and recreation associations, with more emphasis on planning and data-driven decision making to help advance the interests of women and girls. A willingness by sport organizations to embrace different processes and to enter into partnerships with the private sector, however, are key to seeing results.

Most volunteer-run sport organizations have good intentions when it comes to promoting gender equity but struggle with operational challenges such as limited financial and staffing resources that hamper the speed with which they can actively embrace cultural change, Wiley says. A siloed

approach to management inherent in many publicly funded sports and recreation organizations can also prevent new approaches from reaching fruition.

"Many sports organizations have lofty goals around gender equity," she says. "Services like SeeWhatSheCanDo give them the opportunity to apply new ways of doing business that enable collaborative, collective and community-oriented services that will ultimately result in delivering greater value to their consumers and members."



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