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Women's Special Edition

"If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together."

- African Proverb

FEATURING

Dr Christina Koizumi

*Chief Medical Information Officer,
BronxCare Health System*

Editor's
Note

Welcome to the **Women's Special Edition** of enGAge!

"To inspire inclusion means to celebrate diversity and empowerment on International Women's Day 2024 and beyond."

International Women's Day (IWD) stands as a global tribute to the achievements of women across social, economic, cultural, and political spheres. Annually, it serves as a poignant marker of strides taken towards gender parity while spotlighting the persistent journey ahead. In 2024, the campaign theme "Inspire Inclusion" amplifies the significance of embracing diversity and empowerment within all facets of society.

Soumika Das

This year's campaign resonates deeply with the pivotal role of inclusion in realizing gender equality. It urges action to dismantle barriers, challenge stereotypes, and cultivate environments where every woman feels valued and empowered. **"Inspire Inclusion"** calls upon all to appreciate the distinctive perspectives and contributions of women from diverse backgrounds.

A central tenet of "Inspire Inclusion" lies in promoting diversity within leadership and decision-making positions. Women, particularly those from underrepresented communities, continue to encounter obstacles in attaining leadership roles. Through advocacy for inclusivity, both organizations and communities can unlock the boundless potential of varied viewpoints, fostering enhanced decision-making and innovation.

As we commemorate International Women's Day 2024 and contemplate the essence of "Inspire Inclusion," let us reaffirm our dedication to shaping a world where all women are empowered, valued, and included.

In this special edition, Team enGAge spoke with **Christina Koizumi, M.D., Chief Medical Information Officer, BronxCare Health System.** She spoke about the values instilled in her in her childhood, her definition of success and her perspective of the significance of inclusion.

We have an insightful line up of articles.

Anaya Bakshi has written, **Together We Thrive.**

Rajeswari S has written, **Fostering Inclusivity in Technology.**

Rajalakshmi M has written, **Unlocking Potential, Inspiring Inclusion: How Women Leaders Champion Diverse Workplaces.**

Suvarna Sawai has written, **Maintaining healthy Access Management Systems after Deployment.**

Akshayaa S has written, **Journey toward a Happier Self.**

Hope you enjoy reading them

A special thanks to Namita Ghone for the original artwork for the cover page in this edition.

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Reflections on Inspiring Inclusion

" As we continue to grow, it is imperative that we cultivate a culture of a 'thinking organization' while upholding the principles of Respect, Integrity, Trust, and Empathy. A 'thinking organization' culture necessitates an open platform where all individuals are encouraged to share their perspectives and actively participate. As an extension, we need people from diverse backgrounds to participate and drive this culture. The occasion of International Women's Day presents us with a significant opportunity to further reinforce our commitment to inclusivity. Inclusivity is a cornerstone of our organizational ethos and is deeply embedded in our DNA here at GS Lab | GAVS. By embracing inclusivity, we not only enhance our organizational effectiveness but also cultivate a more vibrant and dynamic workplace environment.

Balaji Uppili
Chief Operating Officer,
GS Lab | GAVS

" Every legend from India's rich cultural history has overcome challenges through the inclusive unification of forces. From the timeless epic of the Mahabharat to the valorous defiance of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi, who marshaled fighters from all walks of life against colonial oppression, inclusivity stands as a timeless motif. These legends illuminate the extraordinary potential that emerges when individuals, regardless of background come together for a shared purpose. Through their unity amidst diversity, they exemplify the transformative power of inclusivity, leaving an indelible mark on the pages of history and inspiring generations to come. Inclusivity isn't just a moral imperative; it's the key to unlocking a wealth of untapped potential within organizations and societies alike. By enabling an inclusive environment Organizations can benefit from diverse perspectives, experiences, and talents, thus inclusivity becomes a catalyst for disruptive innovation and unlocking the solution mindset.

Cmd. Pratap Pawar
Vice President, Human Resources,
GS Lab | GAVS

66 It is important for leaders to recognize that creating cultures of inclusion is not simply a nice to have, but an absolute necessity. With a diverse workforce, there are no limits to what can be achieved. Inclusion is a strategic imperative. By embracing diversity in all its forms, we unlock creativity, innovation, and resilience within our teams. Inclusion is about identifying and harnessing the full spectrum of talent and ideas to drive sustainable success in an ever-changing global workforce. If you are not being inclusive, you are not opening up all the possibilities for greatness/success.

Rahul Garapaty
Chief Business Officer,
GS Lab | GAVS

Reflections on Inspiring Inclusion

❝ Inclusivity enhances design thinking for innovation by creating a culture of belonging.

Organizations require approaches to solve complex problems and come up with innovative solutions. Design thinking is one such powerful approach to creatively arrive at impactful solutions, delivering quality products and services. It is a human centered process emphasizing on empathy and collaboration. Inclusivity is a catalyst for design thinking as it helps get a mix of diverse perspectives together. When teams include individuals from various backgrounds, ethnicity, and experiences, they bring in fresh insights and challenge assumptions. An inclusive culture creates a sense of belonging and can help in delivering breakthrough ideas.

Manisha Deshpande
Director, Engineering,
GS Lab | GAVS

❝ Inclusivity transcends mere tolerance; It creates a sense of belonging and acceptance, going beyond organizational boundaries to actively promote equity and diversity in society.

In my experience of almost two and a half decades of being part of this industry where innovation is key, I have witnessed amazing transformations take place as a result of policies which encourage inclusivity. When one whole heartedly accepts working together with colleagues without the prejudice of gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disability, or background, it gives birth to strong creative energies which in turn fuels personal and professional growth. We also open our minds and hearts to create environments where every person is valued and pave the way for a more equitable world where individuals can thrive and contribute.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity and recognize it as a driving force for positive change and collective well-being."

Juzar Roopwala
Director, Engineering
GS Lab | GAVS

“ The first step in inspiring inclusivity is to acknowledge the lack of a level playing field. Women face typical hurdles which in general, men are not exposed to. And the problem lies in the system/culture created by us, which puts hurdles and lot of times, even sets glass ceilings for women. Inclusivity isn't just about inviting women to the table, but we must ensure that the seat is meaningful. Their voices must be heard every time and translated into meaningful actions, as appropriate. In the corporate perspective, the essence of this is encapsulated in a McKinsey report quote - "Representation of women at the top matters to company profitability, but value creation is most strongly linked to having women in decision-making roles

Ajai Kumar
Chief Growth Officer,
GS Lab | GAVS

Building a Brighter Future Together

Sangeeta Malkhede,
Global Head of HR, GS Lab | GAVS

> 66 Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.

- Mother Teresa

The above quote by Mother Teresa is one of my favorites and is a sentiment that resonates deeply with the spirit of inclusion. True inclusion isn't merely about ensuring everyone has a seat at the table; it's about fostering an environment where each individual feels valued, empowered, and capable of contributing their unique perspective and talents.

This philosophy aligns perfectly with the work we do at GS Lab | GAVS. Surrounded by the boundless potential of technology at our organization, I'm acutely aware of the power we hold to shape a truly inclusive future. This International Women's Day, "Inspire Inclusion" isn't just a theme; it's a call to action, a reminder that together, we can build a world where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and empowered.

Diversity and inclusion are not just buzzwords; they are fundamental pillars of a thriving workplace culture. Studies have consistently shown that diverse teams outperform homogenous ones, leading to better decision-making, higher employee engagement, and ultimately, improved business outcomes. Yet, without inclusion, diversity's true potential remains unrealized. Inclusion is about actively listening to different voices, embracing diverse ideas, and ensuring equal opportunities for all. When we prioritize inclusion, we create a sense of belonging where every individual can thrive and reach their full potential.

At GS Lab | GAVS, our commitment to diversity and inclusion, plays an integral role in our success. It is ingrained in our culture and core values of – Respect, Integrity, Trust and Empathy. By future-proofing the workforce in creating a safe and respectful work culture, we are working towards creating an inclusive work environment.

We celebrate the unique perspectives and talents that each team member brings to

the table. By hiring from all regions across India, Middle East, US and UK, we ensure diversity of cultures. We provide equal opportunities for growth and development, ensuring High Performance Work culture is the guiding principle in our processes. Moreover, we understand the importance of representation at all levels of the organization. We are working to increase the representation of women in leadership roles, not just because it's the right thing to do, but because diverse leadership leads to better business outcomes. Being an inclusive and empathetic organization, we actively seek feedback from our colleagues, customers, and other stakeholders through multiple channels. We also thank our customers who join us in promoting our vision for diversity and inclusion initiatives by conducting Role Model Series, addressing our Top Talent and other inspirational initiatives for our colleagues.

Our commitment to inclusion goes beyond the walls of our office. As part of our ESG initiatives, we support the education of underprivileged through various initiatives. Diversity of perspectives go a long way in defining and solving problems of the world.

This International Women's Day let's use our collective voice to inspire inclusion, not just within our organizations, but across society. Let's champion equal opportunities, dismantle barriers, and create a world where every woman, regardless of their background, can reach their full potential. Together, we can build a brighter future, not just for women, but for everyone.

Let's #InspireInclusion, together.

Sangeeta Malkhede

Introducing
Christina Koizumi M.D.
M.D., Chief Medical Information Officer,
BronxCare Health System

1. Tell us something about your childhood. What values had been instilled in you that helped you excel later in your life?

I was raised with a strong sense of conscientiousness, taught to consider others—the community, the Earth, and all its inhabitants—and to recognize that our actions have repercussions and influence on both the planet and those around us. As an individual, I've been encouraged to embrace independence, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

From a young age, I was always urged to follow my heart and pursue endeavors that were deemed "worthwhile."

As the youngest of four children, my upbringing was shaped by our Dutch immigrant mother and Japanese American father, both of whom experienced life during and after WWII.

While my mother worked as a nurse and my father pursued artistry, our family's financial means were modest. However, we were enriched by diverse experiences and strong influences, particularly growing up in the vibrant cultural melting pot of New York City.

While my siblings gravitated towards artistic pursuits, I found myself drawn to my mother's clinical books and was inspired by relatives and acquaintances in the sciences.

My parents epitomized the American dream, believing that individuals could carve their own paths in both their professional and social lives, without the need to adhere to predefined trajectories. It took me some time to find my own direction, navigating through various academic pursuits and jobs. However, after many years, everything fell into place, and I had my "aha" moment when I realized my calling to pursue a career in medicine.

2. How would you define success?

Success to me is reaching any goal that you set however large or small. Over time, the attainment of smaller goals gradually paves the way for tackling larger ones. It involves cultivating self-belief, identifying one's strengths and passions, and leveraging them to thrive. Equally important to me is the notion of giving back and engaging in endeavors that instill a sense of pride.

3. In your experience, what are some of the challenges women face in pursuing leadership roles?

There are numerous challenges, and the issue persists: As one of my female friends pointed out, "Of course it's still an issue; otherwise, this question wouldn't even arise!" I wholeheartedly agree with her. These challenges include being heard, earning respect, dismantling stereotypes, and overcoming judgmental attitudes: If you assert yourself, you're labeled as "acting like a man," but if you don't, you're perceived as weak. There are countless judgments and preconceptions to contend with.

4. This year's theme for International Women's Day is #InspireInclusion. From your perspective, what role do Diversity and Inclusion play in driving innovation and success?

Having grown up in the diverse environment of New York City, I've had the privilege of interacting with individuals from myriad backgrounds and cultures, both as friends and colleagues.

Inclusion leads to broader range of ideas and perspectives, expanding our minds and hearts to embrace alternative ways of thinking and problem-solving. It allows us to appreciate and respect the diverse journeys and experiences of others, fostering a culture of empathy and consideration.

True inclusion entails breaking down barriers and fostering acceptance across all dimensions, including race, gender, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, educational background, and political beliefs.

5. Looking back on your journey and knowing what you know now, what is the one piece of advice you would have given yourself along the way?

Practically speaking, I would have included studies in business/finance and communications. These fields hold significant importance at a leadership level, and not having acquired a strong proficiency in these areas has proven to be a disadvantage that I am working to overcome. Throughout my academic journey and much of my career, these disciplines appeared to be at odds with the worlds of art and medicine. However, I now appreciate that they are two sides of the same coin for a successful career or organization

6. What advice would you give to young women who are starting their careers now?

For individuals starting a career or considering a change, my advice would be to seek out endeavors that bring satisfaction, happiness, and pride. While many goals are achievable, each requires dedication and perseverance. Embrace every opportunity that comes your way and actively seek out new ones. Leverage your strengths while also addressing your weaknesses, viewing them not as obstacles but as opportunities for growth. Seek guidance from mentors who can offer valuable insights and support. Keep an open heart and mind, continuously expanding your horizons. Remember, life often takes unexpected turns, and it's okay to venture into the unknown, as it may lead to remarkable opportunities and experiences.

About
the Leader

Dr. Christina Koizumi, serving as Chief Medical Information Officer, has spearheaded the transformation of BronxCare's Management Information System (MIS) and Electronic Health Record program into a crucial clinical, administrative, and analytical asset.

Alongside her leadership role, Dr. Koizumi maintains her commitment as an Attending Physician in the Department of Medicine, providing care for patients with HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and general Primary Care since 2005. Additional roles as Medical Director, HIV/HCV Co-Infection Clinic, and Mobile Primary Care programs; Co-Chair, Quality Improvement Committee; and Co-Director, Family Focus Project, further reinforce her dedication to medical practice and community service. Dr. Koizumi emphasizes the importance of maintaining hands-on clinical experience alongside her Chief Medical Information Officer duties, applying insights gained from patient care to drive MIS advancements.

Dr Christina Koizumi

Together We Thrive

In today's dynamic and diverse world, organizations are increasingly recognizing the immense value of **Inclusive Leadership**. It has gone beyond just a polished term, and proven its importance in the way we have been living and breathing.

What exactly is inclusive leadership, and how can leaders cultivate it in our way of life?

Creating the culture where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and talents, regardless of their background, gender, and ethnicity.

Beyond one's differences or perspectives, it is about leveraging the core talents and experiences of individuals for collective success.

Think of it like an orchestra; each instrument, with its distinct sound and character, contributes to the overall symphony. A skilled conductor understands the strengths of each instrument and orchestrates them seamlessly to create a harmonious and powerful performance.

Similarly, in an inclusive team, every individual brings their unique talents and experiences to the table, and the leader fosters an environment where these diverse perspectives can blend into something truly remarkable.

I would like to share an experience here. Years ago, with my first child on the way, a VP of my company congratulated me and inquired about my plan to balance parenthood with work. Eager to prove my commitment and dedication, I expressed my intention to work until the ninth month and resume immediately postpartum. However, he gently countered, explaining the inevitable life change and the pull of my child, even at work. He emphasized prioritizing the child, highlighting the valuable lessons in empathy, time management, and perspective - assets in both life and work.

I was blessed with such leaders who were inclusive even before the world realized the need of it.

How can we become inclusive individuals before leading others?

1. Embrace Self-Awareness - am I a biased individual?

The journey begins with **understanding our biases**. We all have them, whether conscious or unconscious.

Ask yourself: would your response be different to male team member vs female member? Would you differentiate on parameter of ethnicity in giving an opportunity?

Being aware of biases within you is first step. Start looking at everyone with same glass, put your perspective aside and listen. This is the fist and crucial step towards recognizing and mitigating these biases.

2. Cultivate Psychological Safety

Creating a **safe space** where individuals feel comfortable sharing their ideas, even if they differ from the majority, is essential. It enables people in asking questions, admitting mistakes, and offering constructive criticism without fear of negative consequences.
Ask yourself: Do you take pride in being known as "tough boss"? Do you share stories about how your team is scared to ask you for time-offs?

A safe workplace, leads to **increased employee engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty.**

3. Actively seek out and value diverse perspectives

In decision-making processes, a leader's role is ensuring that everyone has a seat at the table, their voices heard, and their contributions recognized. Decision based on diverse perspective are always proven better for organizations' growth.

Ask yourself: Does most silent person in your team share her feedback? Do you proactively ask a shy intern about what he thought of the presentations?

4. Celebrate Differences

Encourage open dialogue about diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences within your team to develop understanding and appreciation. A team that shares meals, bonds on a personal level, has trust, rapport, and a sense of belonging towards each other.

Ask yourself: How much are you aware about ethnic diversity in your team? Do you wish your team members on important festivals of their culture?

5. Champion Equity and Fairness

Ensure **equal access to opportunities and resources** for all team members, regardless of their background, gender, or any other factor. This includes providing support for career development, training, and mentorship opportunities. This enhances organizational performance and attracts top talent.

Ask yourself: Do you actively work with individual to set their goals as per their competency? Do you provide career plan suited to his/her personal focus area at that moment

6. Lead by Example

Demonstrate your commitment to inclusivity through your actions and behaviors. Be an active role model, advocate for diversity and inclusion initiatives, and hold yourself and others accountable for creating a truly inclusive environment.

Ask yourself: Will you openly advocate inclusiveness within your team and organization?

Embracing inclusive leadership is not a one-time event; it's a **continuous journey of learning, growth, and adaptation.**

How can we keep the momentum?

Remember: Inclusive leadership is a continuous journey, not a destination. It requires commitment, effort, and self-reflection from leaders at all levels.

Building an ongoing learning and development process for yourself and your team on inclusion will yield the benefits such as increased innovation, improved decision-making, enhanced employee engagement, and a more positive and productive work environment.

In today's competitive landscape, embracing inclusivity is no longer a choice; it's the key to unlocking sustainable success and thriving in the ever-evolving world of work.

About the Author

Anaya is an Associate Director, Engineering at GS Lab | GAVS, with 19 years of experience. She has been leading a high-performing team working with Networking customers like Arista and F5 Networks.

She is a saree connoisseur and her other hobbies include reading, singing, gardening.

Anaya Bakshi

Fostering Inclusivity in Technology

What is Inclusivity?

As per, Diversity for Social Impact, *"Inclusivity means making sure everyone feels welcome, valued, and respected, no matter who they are or where they come from."* It is treating everyone fairly, regardless of their background, race, gender, or beliefs.

In the present, there are a lot of discussions around being inclusive. We live in a world surrounded by cutting-edge technology, digitalization, automation, etc. and have we ever thought about this - Are these advancements, innovations, and technological developments inclusive? Does it bring together people to foster better understanding and living for all social beings?

Well, we cannot say that we are 100% there yet, but are taking baby steps to achieve this. Let's discuss Fostering Inclusivity in Technology (FIT) to get fit!

What is inclusivity in technology?

Creating technological opportunities and solutions that includes all, providing people equal treatment and setting up a welcoming environment for all is a broader way to see FIT. This approach could be applied to education, workplace, innovation, governance, among others.

Where have we reached?

Technology must be common to different people - with diverse age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, or socioeconomic status.

A few examples of where we have achieved this can be:

- 'Digital India' campaign seek to provide digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen, leading to empowerment.

- The increase of mobile phones and cheap internet in rural areas have bridged the gap between urban and rural India.

- Online service portals across the world have reduced bureaucratic barriers.

- Agricultural modernization can be a classic example of FIT - Precision agriculture, using technologies like IoT (Internet of Things), help farmers in India increase crop yield and adapt to changing climatic conditions.

- During pandemic, online platforms have played a pivotal role in ensuring continued education, highlighting the potential of technology in democratizing quality education for one and all.

- Online payment platforms like GPay, PhonePe, in India are elevating the social status of citizens demonstrating utmost inclusivity in technology.

Where are we with Global Women Workforce?

According to a survey by Women in Tech Stats 2024, here are some interesting facts:

- Women hold 28% of all jobs in computer and mathematical occupations, and 15.9% of jobs in engineering and architecture occupations.

- The United States Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) labor force represents only 23% of the total U.S. labor force.

- In the European Union, women make up only 19.1% of the information and communication technology sector.

- Women hold 32.8% of entry-level positions in computer science-related jobs.

- Just 10.9% of those holding CEO or senior leadership roles are women.

- The industry standard for the percentage of women employed in tech career positions is 26%.

Recent research findings indicate that fewer than half, 47% of women in the working-age bracket are actively engaged in the global workforce. In certain countries, this percentage plunges even further. This means that for every two men employed, there is only one woman. Moreover, women tend to earn lower salaries compared to their male counterparts and are disproportionately subjected to gender-based discrimination.

It is evident from the above, that there is a clear need to further empower women through improved access to education and create meaningful opportunities in tech zones.

Even though we talk about gender equality and diversity, in the tech world, we can still see that women are not represented and paid enough.

Diversity and inclusivity are key to IT performance. Diverse teams perform better, hire better talent, have more engaged members, and retain workers better than those that do not focus on diversity and inclusion, according to a report from McKinsey. Despite this, women remain widely underrepresented in IT roles.

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According to Women in Tech Network, it will take about 133 years to close the economic gender gap.

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What can Technology do towards FIT?

Technology can pave way for greater inclusion of people by digitizing user platforms, reducing or mitigating long hours of travel for women, extending educational and professional programs at all levels to people in all walks of life, mainly at workplace, considering women for higher tech position and onsite opportunities while still allowing them to have a work-life balance. Inclusive and diverse workforce will narrow the gender gap and increase the overall participation in the global labor force, nurturing a stronger and more sustainable economy for all of us.

Can AI help? Why Not?

Recently, it has been observed that AI models have shown bias towards certain underrepresented groups of people, primarily due to biased training data or algorithms used to train them. They have exhibited bias in areas such as facial recognition, determining parole decisions bias against certain minority groups, hiring, and recruitment.

What can be done?

- AI can be properly utilized to create inclusive design solutions that accommodate a wide range of users, including disabled people and people with different intellectual abilities.

- AI-driven chatbots, virtual assistants, and educational platforms have the capability to offer guidance, resources, and educational sessions covering areas like unconscious bias, cultural awareness, and inclusive methodologies.

- Natural language processing and computer vision technologies can develop more simplified and user-friendly products and services giving more access to all users. E.g., products to have multi-lingual features and more visual aspects.

Why Is FIT Important?

1. **Innovation in products and services**

   According to a report by The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), when employees are hired from diverse backgrounds, a company will benefit more from their ideas and skills. A diverse workplace where inclusion is at its core, means there is more access to different points of views, skillsets, creative visions, approaches, and experience which is more likely to result in a tech company producing more innovative products and services for users and clients.

2. **Social responsibility**

   Tech companies are socially responsible to not only be diverse but foster true inclusion as well. Any technology, product or service should be a creation of not just one country but the whole world.

3. **Increasing the talent pool**

   Skill shortage is a visible problem in the tech world. Creating equal opportunities for all aspirants would bring in diverse talent pool into an organization, make it an inclusive and a great place to work.

Hear Women Leaders Speak

❝ Technological transformation now provides new avenues for the economic empowerment of women and can help contribute to greater gender equality in the professional world.

Yulia Aslamova
Head of Asia, DRIM Global

❝ From access to education and healthcare to opportunities to pursue economic and financial independence, technological advancements have the power to break down the barriers that impede women's progress and enable them to fully participate in the economy.

Bindiya Vohra
Co-founder & Director
- Digital Solutions at
ThoughtSol Infotech Pvt. Ltd.

❝ The rise of digitalization is one of the driving forces that is playing a vital role in bridging the gender gap. Digital transformation has provided new avenues for the economic empowerment of women and helped contribute to greater gender equality.

Smriddhi Goyal
Co-Founder & CEO, Sekyo

About
the Author

Rajeswari is part of the Solutions and Strategy team at GS Lab | GAVS. She has been involved in technical and creative content development for the past 18 years. She is passionate about learning new technologies, gardening, music and writing. She spends her free time watching movies or going for a highway drive

Rajeswari S

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Unlocking Potential, Inspiring Inclusion

How Women Leaders Champion Diverse Workplaces

Inclusive leadership goes beyond simply having a diverse workforce. It is about creating a culture where "**everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique talents and perspectives.**" This approach not only fosters a positive work environment but also unlocks significant benefits for the organization as a whole.

Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft says it beautifully - "The most critical attribute for a leader in today's world is the ability to bring diverse perspectives together." We live in a complex and interconnected world, where people of different backgrounds and different opinions need to coexist. And that holds true for an organization as well.
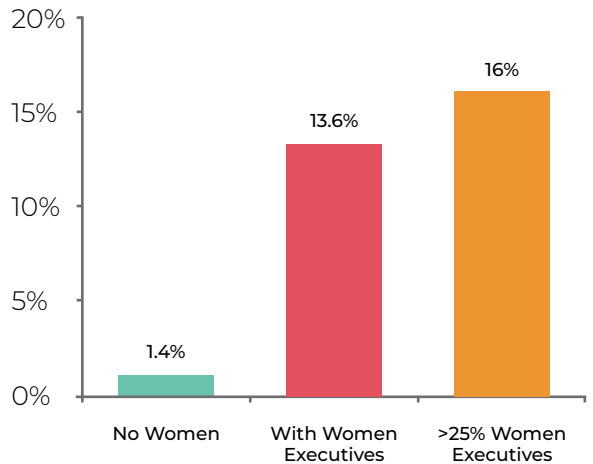
Individual Potential needs to be unlocked

Studies have shown that inclusive leadership leads to increased employee engagement, satisfaction, and productivity. When individuals feel valued and heard, they are more likely to be motivated, invested, and willing to go the extra mile.

- McKinsey & Company reports that companies with diverse leadership teams are 21% more likely to outperform their peers on profitability.

- A Deloitte study found that employees who feel included are 6 times more likely to be engaged at work

Profit Margin by Propotion of Women on ExCo - FTSE 350 2022

Category	Value
No Women	1.4%
1-24%	11.1%
25-49%	15.6%
50%+	17.1%
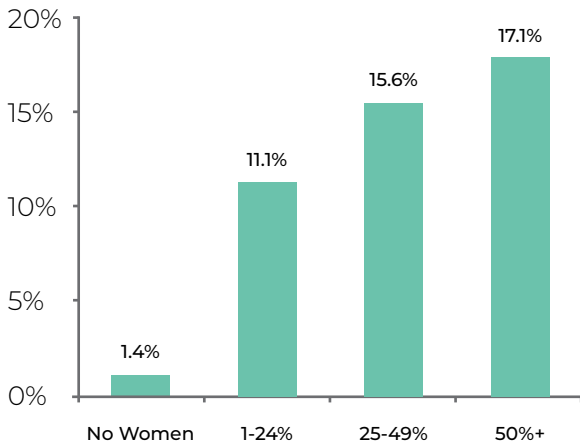
Profit Margin 2022 - FTSE 350

Category	Value
No Women	1.4%
With Women Executives	13.6%
>25% Women Executives	16%

## Innovation and Creativity can be boosted

Diversity of thought is considered the cornerstone of innovation. By fostering an inclusive environment where different perspectives are welcomed and valued, organizations can tap into a richer pool of ideas and solutions. This leads to **more creative problem-solving, improved decision-making, and ultimately, enhanced innovation**.

- A study by Forbes Insights revealed that companies with inclusive cultures are 2.6 times more likely to report exceeding their innovation goals.

- Research by Cloverpop suggests that teams with greater diversity of thought are more likely to come up with novel solutions.
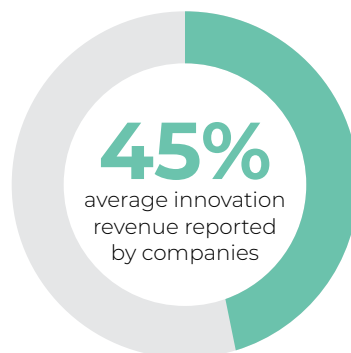
EXHIBIT 01

Companies with More Diverse Leadership Teams Report Higher Innovative Revenue

Companies with below-average diversity scores

26%
average innovation revenue reported by companies
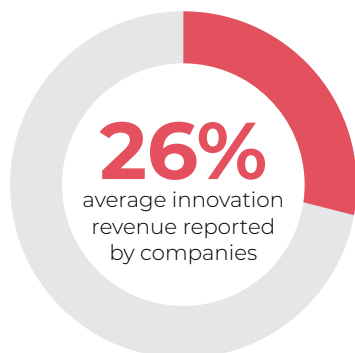
Companies with above-average diversity scores

45%
average innovation revenue reported by companies

Source: BCG diversity and innovation survey 2017 (n=1,681).
Note: Average diversity score calculated using the Blau Index, a statistical means of combining individual indices into an overall aggregate index.

Impact on Employer Branding and Talent Acquisition

In today's competitive job market, attracting and retaining top talent is crucial. Organizations with a reputation for inclusive leadership are seen as more attractive workplaces by diverse candidates. This not only strengthens employer brand but also widens the talent pool, leading to a more skilled and diverse workforce.

- Glassdoor reports that 67% of job seekers consider company culture when making employment decisions.

- A study by Adecco Group found that 78% of workers are more likely to stay with a company that promotes diversity and inclusion.

Building a Strong and Resilient Organization

Inclusive leadership fosters trust, collaboration, and psychological safety within teams. This creates a more resilient and adaptable organization that can better navigate challenges and thrive in a constantly changing environment.

- Research by the Center for Creative Leadership suggests that inclusive teams are better at managing conflict and resolving complex problems.

- A report by BCG highlights that companies with diverse leadership teams are more likely to outperform during economic downturns.

Real-World Examples of Inclusive Leadership

Several organizations have successfully implemented inclusive leadership practices, leading to demonstrably positive outcomes. Here are a few examples:

- **Accenture:** The Tech giant has established a **"Diversity & Inclusion Council"** led by the CEO, Julie Sweets, to drive inclusion initiatives across the organization. This has resulted in a significant increase in employee engagement and a more diverse workforce.

- **Salesforce:** It launched its **"Equality Trailblazer"** program, which provides mentorship and career development opportunities for women and underrepresented groups. This program has contributed to increased female representation in leadership positions.

- **Unilever:** The company implemented an unconscious bias training program for all employees. This resulted in a more inclusive work environment and improved employee relations.

My Personal Journey with Inclusive Leadership:

I have been lucky enough to have received mentorship and sponsorship from leadership team at GS Lab | GAVS. I have always felt empowered to share my ideas and perspectives in meetings and decision-making processes. This experience has not only fueled my own growth and development but also inspired me to become a champion for inclusive leadership within my team and the organization as a whole. I want to work with our employee experience team to :

- Promote awareness and understanding

- Help create a culture of open communication

- Help empower diverse voices

- Champion equal opportunities and equity in the organization

- Hold myself and others accountable

As we celebrate International Women's Day, let us remember the critical role women leaders play in fostering inclusive workplaces. By embracing inclusive leadership practices, we can create environments where everyone feels valued, empowered, and able to contribute their best. This not only benefits individuals but also leads to stronger, more innovative, and ultimately, more successful organizations.

Moving forward, let's continue to:

- Advocate for inclusive leadership practices.

- Challenge biases and promote awareness.

- Empower diverse voices and perspectives.

- Build workplaces that are truly inclusive for all.

- Together, we can "Inspire Inclusion" and create a future where everyone thrives.

About
the Author

Rajalakshmi is part of the CEO's Office at GS Lab | GAVS. When she is not working, she is fond of making herself aware of what is happening in the world and loves to understand why people behave the way they do. The means to these ends include reading, running, travelling and starting conversations with different types of people!

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Sources

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- Forbes Insights: The Value of Diversity and Inclusion

- Deloitte: Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter

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Maintaining Healthy Access Management Systems after Deployment

With the growing number of applications that are required by users and the secure access to those, it becomes inevitable over time to invest in an Access management solution like Okta, Azure, ForgeRock, among others.

At the time IAM systems are configured they adhere to the initial security roadmap as was defined at the time of implementation. Over time however, they accumulate rules, roles, mappings, users, etc. that may or may not be in line with the current security roadmap. If the access management system is integrated with a Governance system, there are lesser chances of accumulation. In standalone systems they would require timely pruning and audits.

Some of the ways to maintain the health of IAM systems.

1. Audits

Take at least a yearly audit of the IAM system.

- Applications and environments: Pull reports of all the integrated apps and environments and confirm if all of those are still required and necessary. Usually, defunct systems need to be taken offline as they can as they may be the weakest link for attacks.

- **Users:** Users who have left the organization or are in a password expired state or in deactivated state can be cleaned out. Sometimes users who have left the organizations still occupy licenses.

- **Mappings/Rules:** Look at all the mappings or rules that help define how a user is assigned to a group, role, or application and verify if there are sufficient users who get assigned using those rules or can they now be recombined into some of the newer rules that have been created since then.

- **Groups:** Are all the groups created still relevant? Any groups with no users might be a case for deletion or retrospection.

- **Administrators:** Find out how many users have superpowers as administrators or even lesser administrator powers and are they needed? This is where usually PAM and Governance systems help streamline privileged access.

- **Licenses:** Check how many licenses are used to suffice for the remaining year.

- **VLDAP / Radius services:** If enabled, check for active usage, or disable them.

- **Password policies:** Ensure that password policies are complex enough if enabled and have not been diluted for exceptions.

- **Login Policies:** Ensure Login policies that dictate password/less MFA are in line with the security guidelines.

- **Identity Providers:** If there are Identity Providers configured, enable any checks that validate that users coming in from these connections have the same domain as that of the identity provider.

- Integration with SIEM Logs from the IAM system can be forwarded to SIEM solutions for further analysis. Ensure this feature is enabled.

2. Certificates

Applications integrated with SAML require certificates for signing and encryption of assertion and in some cases requests and responses as well. If certificates are generated by the organization, then make sure they are renewed at periodic time intervals as mentioned in your security posture.

If certificates are generated by the IAM system, make sure they are periodically updated. This may need an activity to update the new certificates in the corresponding SAML service providers (applications).

Applications integrated with OIDC use a pair of certificates to sign the JWT which is the access and identity token to prove the identity of the sender. The renewal will not require any action on the integrated apps as the public certificate is available at the JWKS endpoint for the IAM provider. In addition, there are certificates for enabling application communication over the HTTPS. These certificates will usually be provided by the cloud provider for SaaS. For self-hosted applications they will be generated by the organization either using some internal or external certificate authority.

3. Directory integrations

Usually IAM systems are connected to AD or other HRMS systems in absence of a Governance/ Provisioning engine. For these connections either a dedicated connector is available from the IAM system or some custom mechanisms are used. For out of box connectors make sure the versions are the latest or plan to upgrade the connectors if IAM systems do not automatically upgrade them.

4. Passwordless and MFA

Recent advancements in Passwordless and MFA have made available the latest and best phishing proofed mechanisms for login into application. Plan to migrate to these. Some of the older mechanisms like knowledge based secret Q are outdated in this age of AI.

5. API Integrations

For APIs the authorization engine will add effective scopes to tokens. Make sure the scopes are still relevant.

6. Latest Updates

Familiarize with the latest features of your IAM product. Since deployment many new features must be added and those could be explored for additional security enhancements.

Along with these general guidelines there may be more product specific ones. Be sure to check with your vendor for those.

As a part of our cybersecurity support practices these audits are a yearly activity which are made available for our clients on demand basis.

To know about our cybersecurity solutions:

Click here

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Suvarna is an Identity Architect at GS Lab | GAVS, with over 16 years of experience. She is leading a dynamic team of 30+ dedicated professionals, working in areas such as One Login, Okta, SailPoint One Identity Manager, and beyond. Beyond the realms of technology, Suvarna is a multifaceted individual with diverse interests like cooking, reading, traveling, trekkking, and teaching.

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Journey toward a Happier Self

Happiness is never a destination, but a process where we create and recreate the feeling in different ways.

We often assume that feelings are automatically generated and cannot be controlled. But the fact is that we all have a choice on how we want to feel and with some practice we all can get there without suppressing any emotions. All of it depends on what we focus on, how much we expand our perspectives, and how we align our lifestyle daily.

Sometimes we get disappointed when circumstances turn out differently. When we can't control everything, why do we expect it to meet our expectations? Instead, if we can focus more on things that are impactable, we can save ourselves from expectational disappointments in areas that cannot be controlled. In many cases, expectational disappointment becomes one of the main reasons for inhibiting happiness.

Happiness, our mood is often impacted by our perspectives. When it comes to

perspectives, there are always two or more angles to any situation. This leads to one of the easy tricks for achieving a happier life. It is to train our mind to think more frequently from a cheerful perspective. Optimism will always be in favor of pleasant emotions and that in turn could make our life so much simpler. This also explains how gratitude practice can be helpful for us to focus more on good things in our life.

Often our ability to think from a positive angle is blurred by unhelpful thoughts and unpleasant emotions from the past. Also, mental rigidity makes it harder to accept other helpful perspectives. If we practice letting go of unhelpful thoughts/emotions and start understanding the new sides to it, we will be able to gain more clarity in life, leading us to a happier life. This is also why training our mind to stay in the present (being mindful) helps in increasing our happiness levels. Past and future predominantly create more worries/fears in our mind.

Choosing therapy can help us release past traumas and unresolved conflicts in the mind. It can also be utilized for improving ourselves in different ways. In both cases we start bringing positive changes in ourselves. Through that we can create a positive environment for others as well as become a happier person. It helps us in healing the wounds inside ourselves, giving more space to expand our potential and become our better version of ourselves.

Therapy can also help in building a healthy lifestyle and vice versa. Having a healthy lifestyle makes life simpler and easier to work on other issues within ourselves. Hence, having good sleep, nutrition, relationships, and lifestyle becomes essential for our well-being. Meditation, which can be mindfulness or breathing practice, can be helpful too. Some kind of exercise, such as yoga, Zumba, swimming, walking, and so on, can also be a form of meditation, helping us cleanse our energy better.

A good lifestyle also involves having enough time to be involved in activities that we are passionate about. Figuring out our passion and learning new skillsets always gives a good feeling that enables us to expand our potential. When we expand our potential, we tend to generate more pleasant emotions and get to explore our inner self more efficiently. The next time we give some reason to avoid additional work or trying a different activity, let's ask ourselves "Is it just my situation or the mindset that's stopping me from trying it?"

Our quality of life can be much better if we can make ourselves happy more frequently. However, many times we fail to recognize or celebrate happy moments. Instead, the human mind often focuses more on failures based on expectations or

worries about losing the current state of happiness in the near future. If we can recognize and cherish how happy we are at this very moment, that itself can increase our happiness levels. Let us cherish every positive outcome that makes us happy and create many more for the days to come.

About
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Akshayaa Sridhar is a Psychologist with experience in counseling. She has completed her master's degree in HRD Psychology from Madras University, followed by a specialization in corporate, family & school counseling. She has been working with Corporates such as Accenture and in her personal capacity has been working with private clients too.

She deals with all kinds of relationship issues, improving work productivity/academic focus, stress management, motivational issues, personal growth & development, family problems and other issues related to managing one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.

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Anyone associated with GS Lab | GAVS may reach out to Akshayaa at Akshayaa.s@gavstech.com and discuss their personal and professional challenges with her.

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