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DIVERSITY

# WOMAN™

Fall 2023

Leadership  
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THE 2023  
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100**

## Landing a Pay Raise

GEN Z  
AT WORK:  
**Bold &  
Aware**

Shelley Zalis

# Gender Gap Crusher

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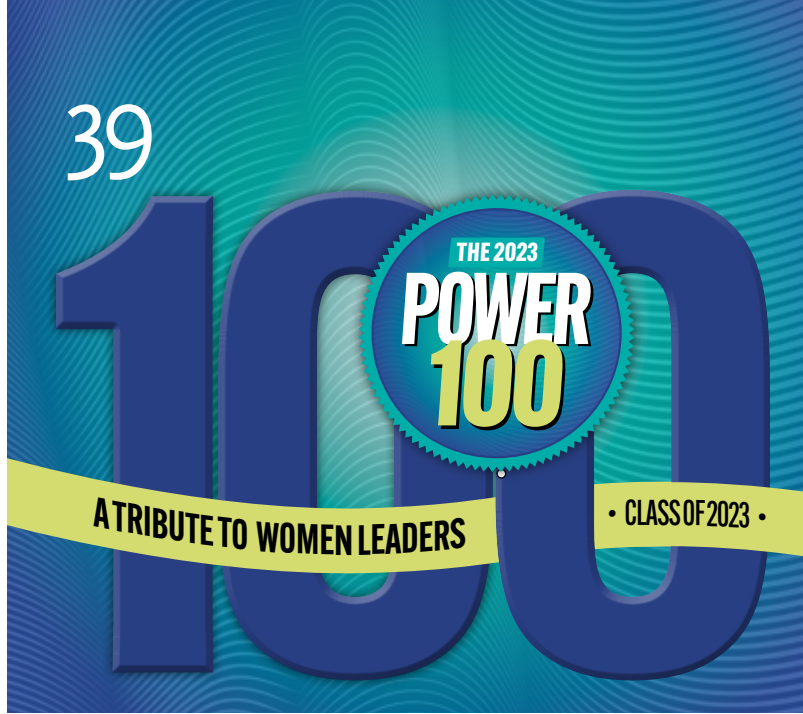


# Powering an Inclusive Future for All

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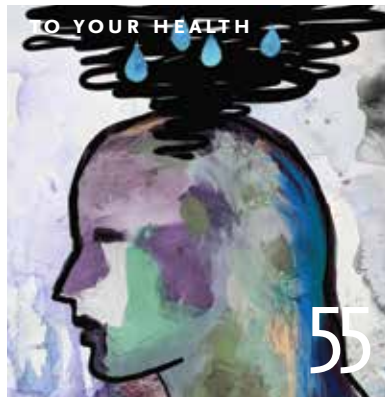
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# Glass Ceiling: We're Coming for You

**W**omen in the workplace have encountered tremendous challenges in recent years. COVID-19, the Supreme Court rulings that overturned affirmative action and invalidated an antidiscrimination law protecting LGBTQ rights,



**We have not only persevered, we have made gains. Once we got the ball rolling, decades ago, we gathered momentum and now can't be stopped.**

and a backlash against DEI programs are just a few examples.

Yet we have not only persevered, we have made gains. The wage gap is closing, going from 65 cents 40 years ago to 82 cents today for every dollar earned by men. Women now make up 33 percent of senior management. Female representation on Fortune 500 boards is 38 percent, a fourfold increase since 2010. Once we got the ball rolling, decades ago, we gathered momentum and now can't be stopped.

I believe that closing these gaps for all women is the next frontier—as evidenced by our feature article in this issue, “The Power 100” (p. 39). The 2023 Power 100 presents a group of rising high-potential mid-level woman leaders, many of them women of color, who are on the fast path to even greater leadership levels. These women of various races, cultures, and identities are powering their companies to higher profitability and demonstrating that business success is inextricably tied to gender diversity. This list, our second annual, is just the tip of the iceberg. In the coming years you will meet hundreds more women on the fast track, and more and more of them will be women of color (with multiple identities, abilities, and perspectives).

Our cover story, “The Chief Troublemaker,” is another example of the new wave of women executives who are crashing the male-dominated corporate beachhead. Shelley Zalis, the audacious founder of The Female Quotient and its Equality Lounges, has never taken no for an answer. She believes that women

must go on the offensive, instead of waiting for men to open the door for them. She envisions a day when, figuratively (and literally) speaking, men will learn to put the toilet seat down. Her remarkable story (page 33) offers inspiration to rising women as well as a road map for closing the gender gap.

That road map is already being drawn. The next generation of women leaders and corporate board members can be found in gen Z, a large cohort of forward-thinking and ambitious young women who have been raised to think like Zalis—that there is no such thing as no, that women are born to lead, and that working together we will exercise our power and make exponential gains. Read more about this generation in our Take the Lead piece on page 25, “Gen Z Is Bringing ‘Main Character Energy.’”

In reading through this terrific, informative issue, I felt heartened—and I hope you do as well. Yes, we have a ways to go. But the scores of inspirational women we shine a spotlight on here represent the future. Because of them and the thousands upon thousands of other talented women in the leadership pipeline, a future in which gender equity is achieved doesn't seem like a pipe dream anymore.

**Dr. Sheila Robinson**  
 Publisher, *Diversity Woman*



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Upfront written by Tamara E. Holmes

## 5 MINUTES WITH TANYA M. ODOM

# The Diversity of Giving

**W**HEN TANYA M. ODOM, equity and inclusion program director for the Walton Family Foundation, was growing up, she never thought her academic successes reflected how smart she was.

Instead, she saw success as the result of having been given an opportunity. “My mother would say, ‘It’s about access and opportunity,’” and tell her she had been provided with plenty of both. “In her own way, she was introducing us to the structures and systemic issues that are part of my work today.”

Now, Odom is applying those lessons to her work at the foundation started in 1987 by Walmart founders Sam and Helen Walton. Prior to that, Odom served as a consultant on DEI issues and worked with multiple United Nations entities on efforts to combat racism.

With her eye on creating a more equitable world inside and outside of philanthropy, Odom talked with *Diversity Woman* about some of the challenges DEI professionals face.

**Diversity Woman:** Talk about your path to diversity and inclusion. How did you come to do this work?

**Tanya M. Odom:** There wasn’t a direct path here. I come from a family that is committed to issues of social justice and equity. I come from a multiracial family. I have a sister with a disability. I grew up in a



service environment. My parents ran a social service–focused program. So community, equity, advocacy—all of those things are just part of my ethos and who I am.

**DW:** How does DEI work in the philanthropic world differ from the corporate sector?

**TMO:** There is a trust-building piece in philanthropy. We really want to make an impact in communities. But they have to trust us. And that is inherently connected to diversity.

Then there is the internal piece—making people feel valued. The private sector has probably done a better job of addressing some of the systems and practices that help people feel like they belong and feel valued.

**DW:** What are the biggest challenges today when it comes to DEI in philanthropy? How can they be overcome?

**TMO:** Philanthropy lacks racial and cultural diversity, and I think that’s something we’re working on. We need to attract more diverse voices and experiences. We need to encourage courageous leadership. We need to help move away from the zero-sum game—this notion that if we make the tent bigger that somehow someone’s going to lose out.

**DW:** How is the Walton Family Foundation using DEI to ensure fair and equitable access to funding?

**TMO:** The Walton Foundation has been doing things related to diversity since its inception. A family foundation

could give to causes that only they care about and that support people like them, but that’s not what this foundation did.

My role was designed to think about how we maximize this commitment to DEI in our work—who we fund, who we invest in, who we partner with, what conferences we attend, how we build trust or strengthen trust in communities.

**DW:** What are some of the highlights of your experience at the Walton Family Foundation?

**TMO:** One is bringing together DEI leaders in philanthropy. We meet monthly. It’s a community of practice and connection, and we share resources, we share experiences, we share challenges, and we share opportunities.



## Recognizing the impact of community leaders

Hope Harley saw an opportunity to educate children in the Bronx on the borough's rich history and co-founded the Bronx Children's Museum.

One person's efforts can truly make an impact. But when our efforts drive change for the greater good, we all thrive together.



To learn more about this community leader and their impact, visit [aarp.org/blackcommunity](https://aarp.org/blackcommunity)

Hope Harley, Cofounder & President of the Board  
Bronx Children's Museum  
Bronx, NY



# Regaining Trust after a Loss of Temper

Dear DW,

I lost my temper in a meeting. How can I regain my team's trust?

Signed, **Short Fuse**

Dear Short,

If it's any consolation, you're not the only one who has had this experience. In fact, more than half of employees have lost their tempers in the workplace at some point, according to one study. With that said, it's important to recognize that losing your temper at work can damage professional relationships, decrease camaraderie among your team, and, in the worst-case scenario, derail your career. Some workplaces even consider angry outbursts a warning sign of potential violence, according to the Society for Human Resource Management, so it's important that you address the situation head-on.

To start, make sure you're clear on why the outburst happened in the first place. Are you under a lot of stress? Are you



experiencing challenges in your personal life that are spilling over into work? Is this the only time this has happened?

Many career experts agree that it's important to acknowledge what you did, and in doing so, let colleagues know that you're aware the loss of temper was not an acceptable way to communicate.

A sincere apology can go a long way toward repairing relationships. Your apology should encompass these points:

- Show that you have regret for your actions.
  - Let colleagues know you accept responsibility.
  - Express your desire for their forgiveness.
  - Get across that you intend to change.
  - Give your colleagues the opportunity to share their thoughts.
- If extenuating circumstances contributed to your loss of temper, and you're comfortable sharing them, your vulnerability

may help to rebuild trust and give you the opportunity to strengthen your emotional intelligence skill set.

Finally, consider looking for training sessions or workshops to help you improve your communication skills so you can find better ways to get your point across. And if losing your temper is a regular occurrence, think about talking to a therapist or seeking other professional help.

## Strategies for Being a Better Listener

**W**hen you use active listening skills, you not only hear what others have to say, but you also understand the message, tune into the speaker's emotions, and have enough insight to provide feedback. Research suggests that managers spend 63 percent of the workday listening. Use these methods to make the most of that time.

**Remove distractions.** Glancing at your cell phone tells the speaker you're not fully present.

**Talk less.** Educational nonprofit the Holdsworth Center suggests aiming to talk 10 to 20 percent of the time and listen 80 to 90 percent of the time.

**Summarize the speaker's points.** Show you're paying attention by paraphrasing key elements of the conversation. For example, "What I hear you saying is you feel you don't have enough support."

**Ask questions.** Increase your level of understanding with questions that gently probe deeper into what the speaker is trying to convey.

**Be intentional with your body language.** A smile or a nod may encourage the speaker to share even more.

**Make use of tools.** Explore podcasts such as *Listening Skills* (its tagline is "the most powerful way to connect with others") by Lyn Lindbergh and apps like *Listening Skills* by MSPL Developers.

DW HOT LIST



Young Entrepreneur: Jada Mclean

## Turning Solutions into Entrepreneurial Success

**F**OR EVERY PROBLEM, THERE'S a solution—and a dedicated entrepreneur can find that solution. It's a philosophy that has guided Jada Mclean, 30, of San Francisco on her quest to make the world better while building a business and forging a professional path that she loves.

McLean first developed an appreciation for entrepreneurship while working in investment banking. She frequently met with entrepreneurs and was inspired by how their companies solved problems for their customers. In 2020, she came up with a solution of her own.

Two major problems stood out to her at the time. In California, where she lived, wildfires were raging. Meanwhile, the country was being rocked by the racial reckoning following the murder of George Floyd.

As company after company pledged their support for social justice and the environment, Mclean wondered how many would actually follow through. That's when the idea for GroFlo was born. "We set out to build a company

that helps amplify brands that are really out there walking the walk," she says.

GroFlo is a platform that connects consumers with brands that share their values. If you're an animal lover, for example, you might use GroFlo to find retailers that sell only cruelty-free products. GroFlo also helps retailers in digital coupon campaigns, and in learning more about their customers.

The idea has gained traction among investors, with GroFlo raising \$1.3 million in funding. While Mclean admits that her background in investment banking provided her with the knowledge and network to help secure the funding, she had to do her research to find the types of investors aligned with GroFlo's mission and willing to support the company's growth.

Mclean describes the work of building her company as a roller coaster, but she wouldn't have it any other way. "I get to identify a problem and create a solution," she says. "Then I get to see that creation live in the world, which is, in my mind, really amazing."

### NEXT

## Destigmatizing Mental Health in the Workplace

**D**ESPITE THE FACT THAT, because of the pandemic, companies began acknowledging the need to provide mental health services for employees, a stigma still surrounds mental health in the workplace, according to a recent survey.

Nearly a third of women have taken a mental health day or time off for mental health reasons, yet only a quarter felt comfortable sharing with their em-

**Etc.** ployers the real reason for their absence, according to Deloitte's *Women @ Work* 2023 study. That's down from 39 percent of women who felt comfortable disclosing mental health absences a year ago.

Those findings may not be so surprising considering that only 25 percent of women said they were comfortable talking about mental health in general in the workplace, down from 43 percent in 2022.

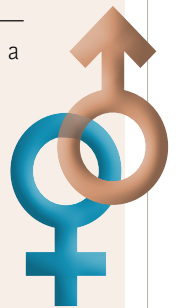
This is how women assessed their own mental health:

- More than half—56 percent—said their mental health was a concern.
- Only 43 percent rated their mental wellbeing as "good" or "extremely good."
- Half—51 percent—said their stress levels are higher than they were a year ago.

The study found that company leaders can do more to show their concern for employees' mental health and well-being: only 40 percent of respondents (5,000 working women in 10 countries) said they get adequate mental health support from their employer.

To help support the mental wellbeing of all, Deloitte recommends that employers take these steps:

- Create opportunities for employees to share lived experiences.
- Let employees know that "it's OK to not be OK."
- Provide employees with access to professional support.







SHORTCUTS

## When Your Email Gets No Response

**T**HE AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME to an email is 10 hours, 40 minutes, and 15 seconds, according to a 2021 study by email monitoring company EmailAnalytics, which is based in Olympia, Washington. During work hours, the average response time drops to 3 hours, 38 minutes, and 31 seconds. If a non-response to one of your emails drags on for days, here's how best to handle it.

**Don't assume.** An unanswered email doesn't necessarily convey lack of interest. Time out of the office, a major deadline, and even forgetfulness can

keep someone from responding in a timely manner.

**Give it time.** If there's no urgent deadline attached to your email request, give the person a few days to respond, or you could come off as annoying or pushy. While there's no hard rule, experts typically suggest waiting anywhere from two or three days to a week.

**Don't shame the recipient.** Pointing out that they haven't responded to your email might make the recipient feel bad and simply continue to avoid you.

Instead, to get their attention, consider phrases like, "I'm following up," "I wanted to get an update on," or "Pushing this up to the top of your email box." Just as important, don't apologize for following up by saying something like, "I hate to bother you."

**Restate your original request.** Politely remind the recipient of the subject matter of the original email.

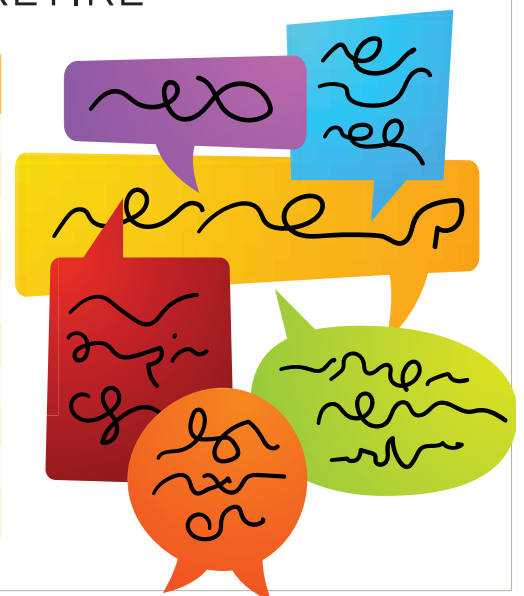
**Provide a clear call to action.** Does the recipient know you expect a response? Make sure you explicitly ask them to respond with the specific information you want. "Please let me know what day next week works for coffee," is better than "Let's plan to get together soon." You might also indicate in the subject line: Response requested.

**Have a cutoff point.** The first follow-up is the most likely to yield results. In fact, the first follow-up email garners, on average, a 40 percent higher reply rate than the original email itself, according to research from global software solutions provider Woodpecker. However, if there's still no response after two or three follow-up emails, your efforts may be better spent elsewhere.

## CORPORATE JARGON WE SHOULD RETIRE

**T**he buzzwords we use may change over time, but the annoyance factor stays the same. Here are some of the most cringeworthy buzzwords from 20 years ago and their eyeroll-inducing counterparts today.

2000s	2020s
Think outside the box	Blue sky thinking
Let me pick your brain	Let's hop on a call
I'll shoot you an email	I'll ping you
Bring your A game	Level up
We want a win-win	We want to be in alignment
Let's take it offline	Let's circle back
This is a paradigm shift	This is the new normal
Do you have the bandwidth?	I have an ask
Let's drill down on that	Let's double-click on that
Let's brainstorm	Let's have a thought shower



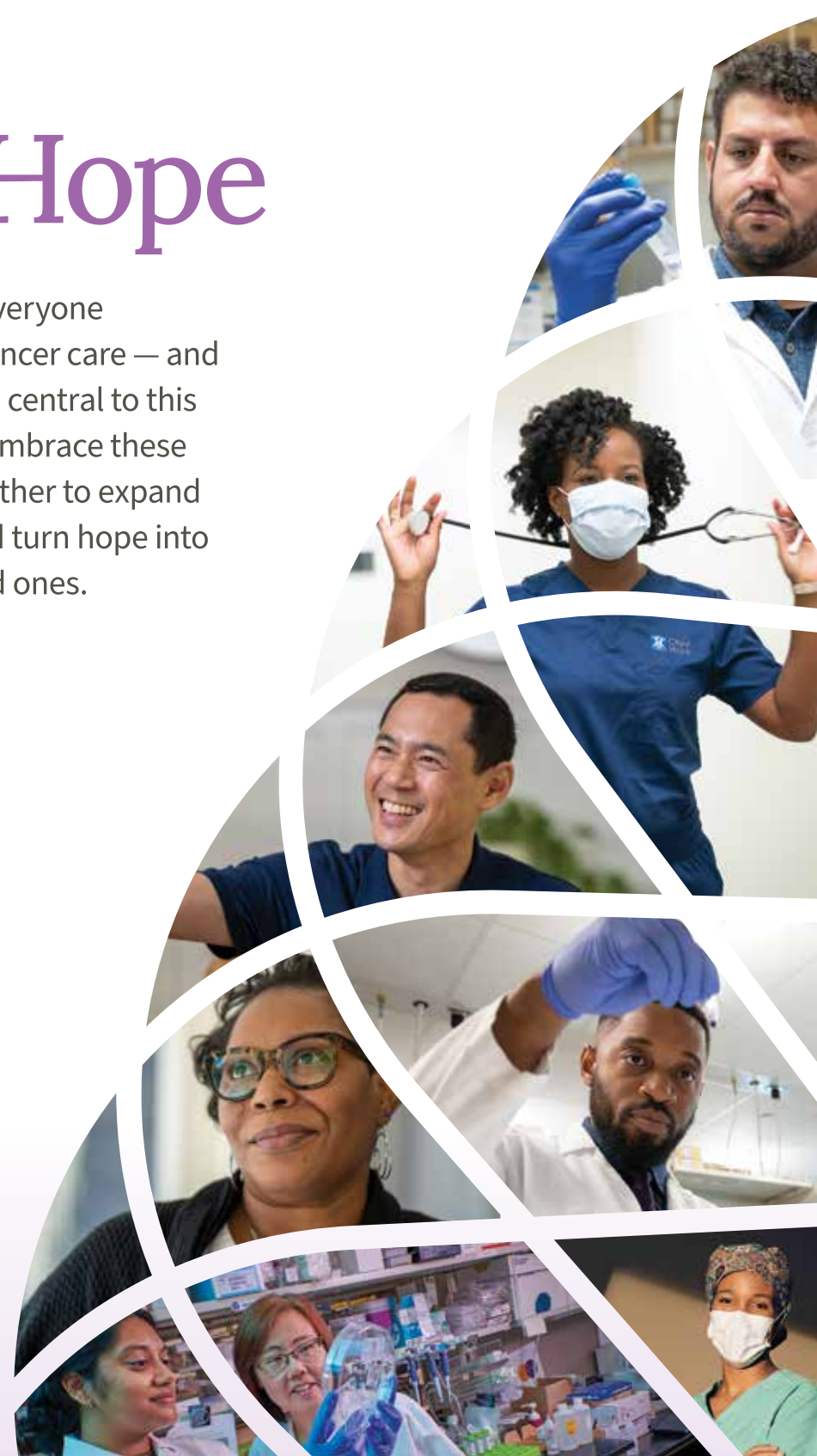
VERSUS



# We Are Hope

At City of Hope, we believe that everyone deserves access to world-class cancer care — and diversity, equity and inclusion are central to this mission. Our clinicians and staff embrace these concepts every day, working together to expand access to optimal cancer care and turn hope into reality for patients and their loved ones.

For more information, go to [CityofHope.org](https://www.cityofhope.org).





## ANATOMY OF ... A GOOD PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOT

# Lights, Camera, Action!

“A headshot really acts as a gatekeeper,” says Shelley Golden, an image consultant and founder of Shelley Golden Style in Burlingame, California. “It can influence whether someone wants to know more about you.”

Whether a headhunter is debating your suitability for

a key role, a conference planner is considering you to deliver a keynote speech, or a potential client is wondering whether to do business with you, your headshot can help sway the decision.

You have only one shot to make a first impression. To make the best of it, Golden offers these tips.



**Decide what qualities you want people to see.** Are you edgy? Cool? Really conservative? A minimalist? “These are parts of your story that people can get from a headshot,” Golden says. Once you decide on the qualities, use your wardrobe, makeup, and the backdrop to emphasize your points.

**Choose the right photographer.** This isn't something you want your best friend to do (unless she's a professional photographer). Golden advises visiting the websites of photographers in your area, seeing the people they've taken photos of, and asking yourself, Do these subjects look fantastic? If so, inquire about other services the photographer provides. Some will include hair and makeup as part of their package.

**Enhance your natural beauty.** Even if you don't use makeup regularly, it can help make your skin look less shiny in a photograph. Lipstick can accentuate your features. “The fuller your lips are, the younger you look,” Golden says. YouTube makeup channels can give some good tips, she adds.

**Be strategic with colors.** If you have fair skin and fair hair, choose softer to medium colors. Those with darker skin tones should embrace bright, bold, and intense colors. Golden recommends that all women steer away from wearing black, blue, and prints when taking a headshot, as they may make you come off as less approachable.

**Smile—or not.** A smile draws people to you, and is inviting, Golden says. However, if you want people to perceive you as quite serious, you may choose to convey that by forgoing the smile in your headshot.

**Update the headshot regularly.** Take a new photo at least every four to five years, Golden suggests. Not only can it be startling to someone if you look 20 years older than your headshot, but an up-to-date image is a way of being authentic. Golden notes, “You're saying, ‘This is who I am, this is who you're getting.’”

If you're finding that people want to meet you after seeing your photo, your headshot is doing its job. “It's telling people you're friendly, you're safe. Come on in. Let's talk further.”



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BUSTING BIAS

# The Superpowers of Gen Z

THE NEW GENERATION OF workers, Gen Z, brings fresh and innovative perspectives that are radically transforming workplaces today. The most racially and ethnically diverse generation, these qualities manifest in the workplace through



**Gen Z ... is eager to make a lasting impact in companies that prioritize embracing their new perspectives.**

a greatly heightened emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Gen Z's unique insights have the potential to be organizational superpowers—qualities that can transform the way that we work today.

According to a study by Monster, 83 percent of gen Z, when choosing where to work, believe an employer's commitment to DEI is significant. In a RippleMatch survey, 75 percent of gen Zers said they would reconsider applying to a company if they were unsatisfied with its DEI efforts.

A socially, politically, and globally conscious generation, gen Z is determined to use its strengths to help organizations be more inclusive, collaborative, and adaptable to the ever-changing needs of consumers. By dedicating efforts to develop these superpowers, organizations are bound to benefit immensely.

### Championing the future of work: prioritizing flexibility and well-being

Gen Z leads the way in eradicating stigmas and promoting positive organizational approaches to mental health and work-life balance. It is driving companies to expand their offerings of mental health support and to rethink traditional work structures, both strategies that are shown to encourage better productivity and positive employee experience, particularly with caregivers and working mothers. Companies that engage gen Z in spearheading innovative well-being solutions are more likely to succeed in creating workplaces that work for all.

### Taking a stance: encouraging business for social good

Tech-savvy gen Z excels not only in creating viral social media and branding campaigns

that stick but also in crafting messages that convey meaning, purpose, and a call to action. Customers don't solely purchase a product based on functionality—they also purchase based on ethics. Consumers reward companies that take vocal stances on social and political movements—and leveraging Gen Z's commitment to advocacy can enhance a company's reputation and resonance with a broader audience.

### Fostering progress: encouraging mentorship, sponsorship, and cross-generational collaboration

Most gen Zers in organizations hold junior positions, so young professionals in particular recognize the value of fostering growth and mentorship initiatives to break down barriers to advancement. Research shows that all parties benefit from cross-generational collaboration and relationships that nurture career development. Leaders' testimonials reveal that mentoring not only helps establish a lasting legacy but also significantly impacts career satisfaction and progression toward more senior positions for both mentee and mentor. Establishing cross-generational mentorship programs can benefit both the generations to come, and the leaders of today.

Gen Z, the most populous generation in the global workforce, is eager to make a lasting impact in companies that prioritize embracing their new perspectives. To stay competitive and attract fresh talent, companies can leverage this generation to refine their DEI approach, propelling organizations forward and setting new norms of working.

If companies are willing to invest, gen Z's defining diverse and inclusive superpowers will prove to have exceptional, long-lasting impacts on the future of workplaces and society as a whole. **DW**

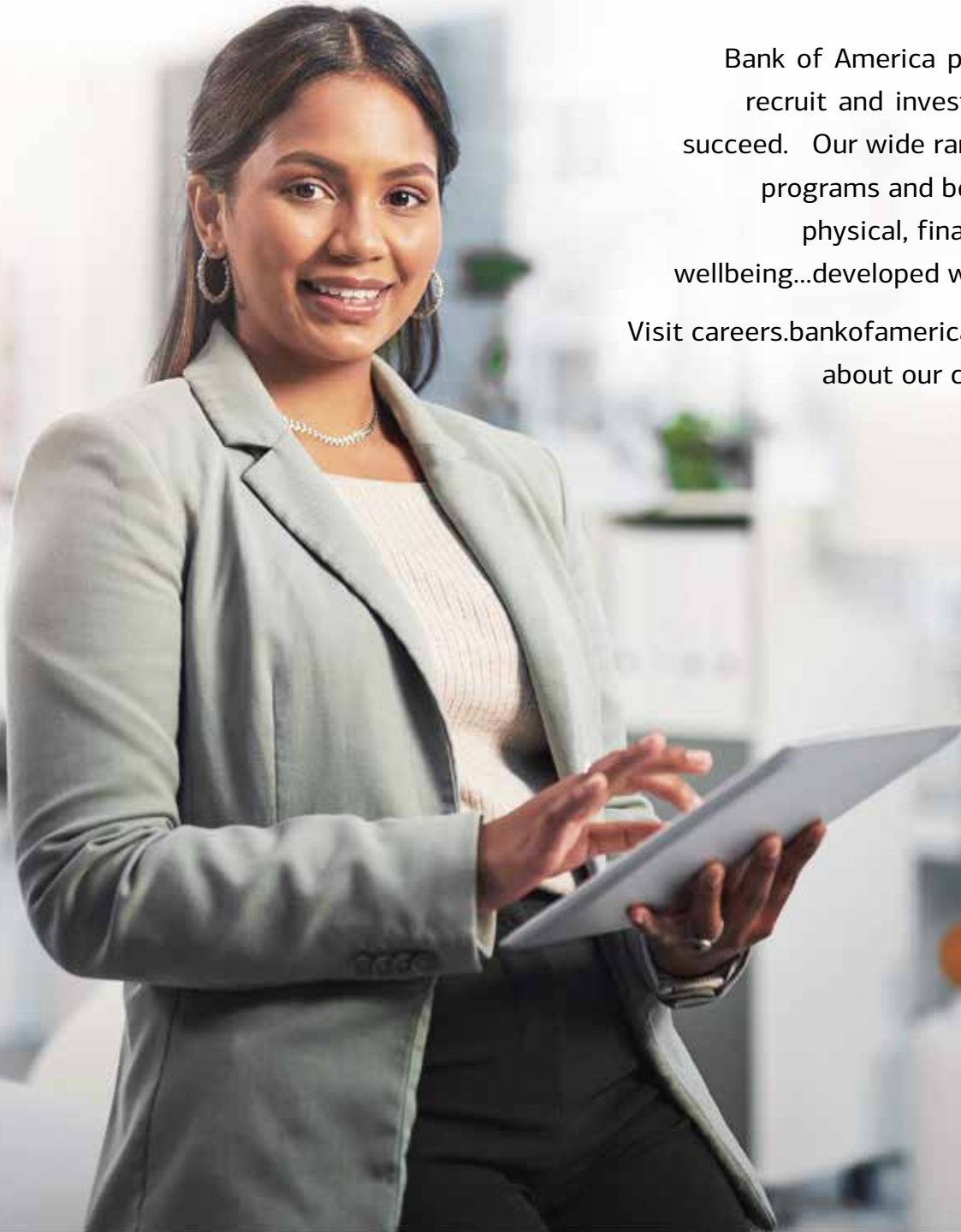
*Na'kia Channey is an Insights and Impact Program manager at Google, where she oversees the production of the Diversity Annual Report, benchmarking efforts, and external engagements.*

THE POWER TO

# create and prosper

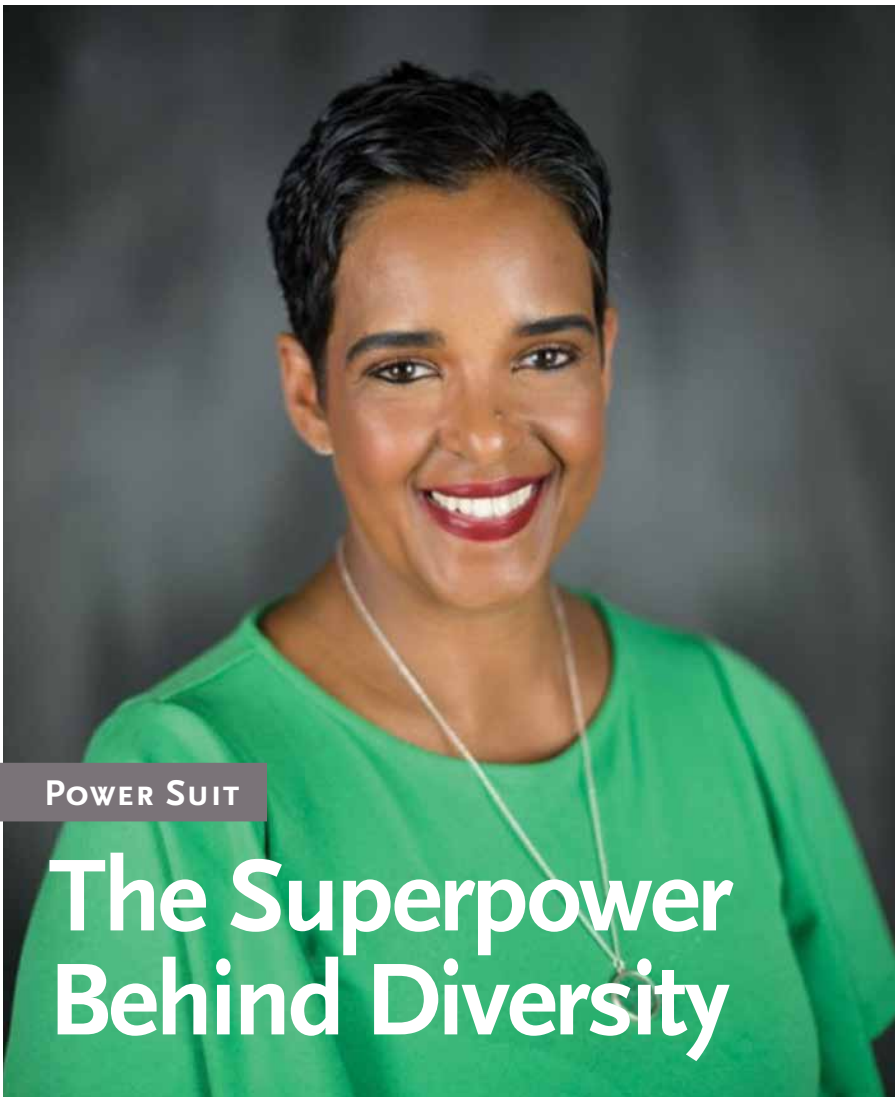
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POWER SUIT

# The Superpower Behind Diversity

*Amazon's Mamar Gelaye says the diversity she brings to the playing field is what propelled her forward*

BY CARLETT SPIKE

**M**AMAR GELAYE'S LOVE OF technology started at an early age. So when Amazon approached her to fill the role of vice president of robotics strategy, she knew the position was a perfect fit.

When she joined the company in October 2021, she brought with her decades of deep leadership experience, having set strategy and driven innovation across consumer and business product, services, and distribution sectors. In this latest role, she leads the team that designs, deploys, and

supports technology infrastructure and devices for Amazon's end-to-end global supply chain.

Gelaye previously worked as chief information officer and vice president for the aerospace and defense company Raytheon Technologies, and in various executive roles with GE Power Services and Finance and GE Healthcare for nearly two decades. Her background as a mechanical engineer laid the foundation for her career as a digital transformation executive.

**Diversity Woman: How did your upbringing influence your career and leadership style?**

**Mamar Gelaye:** I'm a first-generation immigrant from Ethiopia. My upbringing was grounded in that story of being an immigrant. English was not my first

language, and so I really had to adapt in terms of understanding language and culture. We left Ethiopia because there were significant challenges, and coming to the US was an important inflection point for my family. It was an opportunity to restart our lives. My family of origin instilled in me the importance of resiliency, hard work, and a hunger for learning, doing good, and being great in this world. I was raised by lifelong learners, and that's a big part of my leadership as well—to both learn and teach. Those lessons shaped my early years and who I am today.

**DW: What were some of your leadership roles when young? How did they shape you and affect your thought leadership today?**

**MG:** It's so funny because I was always fairly quiet and introspective. I think some of my earliest leadership came out in my writing. I had a teacher who recognized that early in me and encouraged me to use my voice externally. I gave the eighth-grade class graduation speech. That was the first time that I was in a position of leading my peers. It was actually quite surprising, and so I would just amplify the importance of people seeing capability and drawing others forward. In those ways, it's been a big factor in my life and something I hope to do for others as well.

**DW: What advice do you have for others who identify as introverts and feel they may not have what it takes to be a leader?**

**MG:** I am still quiet, very introspective, and a ferocious reader. I do think there should be a celebration of those of us who are introspective, data driven, and science driven. I use that as a superpower, so when I do speak, I absolutely have something to say that's meaningful, well reasoned, and well supported. For those who identify

*“I’ve experienced all the obstacles that you’d expect as an immigrant, as a woman, as an African American. But I’ve used those obstacles to propel me.”*

with that, I would encourage them to be who they are. When they have those moments when they want to lead, they should trust themselves with that.

**DW:** What are some of the obstacles you’ve overcome throughout your career?

**MG:** I’ve experienced all the obstacles you’d predict as an immigrant, as a woman, and as an African American. But I’ve used those obstacles to propel me. I received lots of positive affirmations from people, but I also received negative affirmations from some, questioning why I’m in this space. I try to meet that by first reminding myself of my journey and how I arrived here. None of this was accidental—it was earned.

**DW:** Why did you think the role at Amazon would be a good fit?

**MG:** What compelled me were three things: one, asking myself whether I was using my capabilities to the full reach and scale; two, the opportunity to contribute to work that will be industry transformational; and three, the desire to constantly learn and grow. Amazon is such a vast company, of so many incredible innovations and transformations, that the possibilities are endless.

**DW:** How did you get into robotics?

**MG:** I love taking things apart, putting them back together differently, and understanding how they work, so I was very drawn to engineering. I studied engineering in undergrad, and midway through my mechanical engineering career, I started doing computer programming around control systems and found I really enjoyed the process. That began my journey into technology, automation, and digitization. When you ask what brought me here, I’ve never not been here. This has always been part

of me. I think it’s important that we say those things so other women and diverse talents know it’s possible. I had the benefit of math teachers who saw I was into math, shop teachers who saw I was industrious, and writing teachers who saw that I could write. So I look for those kinds of kids everywhere I go and try to encourage them.

**DW:** How does Amazon support and advance women, and women of color, into leadership positions?

**MG:** There are numerous employee resource groups. There’s Women in Tech, which is focused on encouraging women who are in these technology spaces to advance their careers and capabilities, and create communities. The Women at Amazon group is a critical resource to help the company think big about the way we impact the lives of women inside the business and in the community. A few other groups include Women in Finance and Engineering, the Families at Amazon network that includes Momazonians, and there are many women who proudly participate in our Black Employee Network, Amazon Warriors, and affinity groups. There are numerous others. A lot of them are employee led and orchestrated, which is wonderful, but they also get strong leadership support, and I’m very proud of that.

**DW:** What other initiatives at Amazon help foster women’s leadership?

**MG:** I personally have a number of initiatives that I’m working on in partnership with historically black colleges and universities. Amazon invests in various programs, including our global mentorship program, which creates more than 6,000 mentorship opportunities every year to actively recruit and help more women advance into senior and technology-focused roles.

We launched our annual Shine Summit [in 2022], dedicated to the develop-

ment of Amazon’s Black women leaders, with plans to expand the program for all our BIPOC women leaders. Planning for Shine Latina is underway for 2023. We are also nurturing the next generation of tech leaders through programs like Amazon Future Engineer and our partnership with Girl Scouts USA to develop customized programming to introduce girls to STEM, and through accelerator programs like Catalytic Capital, Amazon’s Black Business Accelerator, and AWS Impact Accelerator.

Lastly, we encourage individuals at Amazon who have ideas to write a paper called a PR/FAQ to present those ideas to leadership for support. I’ve done it a number of times and received positive support.

**DW:** What advice do you have for women, and women of color, who want to advance?

**GM:** So often we’re trying to identify with someone else that we see on their journey and rigidly follow the steps they’ve taken. I just think that’s obsolete. We’re writing new algorithms. I would encourage women and women of color to think about what capabilities they have, what they’re passionate about, what questions they would like to solve, what missions they want to take, and what support and reinforcement they need. Go curate all those things. I can’t wait to see what your algorithm produces.

**DW:** How do you define an excellent leader?

**GM:** We are in an intersectional time when the best leaders will be reflective of a diverse spectrum of talent. While the type of leader needed depends on the moment, an excellent leader needs to be context aware, a creator, someone who brings others along, creates collaborations and orchestrations. **DW**

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*Carlett Spike is a New Jersey-based writer and editor whose work has appeared in AARP.com, Prevention, and Columbia Journalism Review, among other outlets.*

# Reinventing Health Care in Bangladesh



**Lawyer-turned-entrepreneur Sylvana Sinha marries tech with humanity to bring top-quality care to the country of her roots**

BY KIMBERLY OLSON

WHILE SYLVANA SINHA'S FAMILY was visiting Bangladesh for the wedding of a relative, her mother needed an emergency appendectomy. Her mother was being treated at one of the best hospitals in the country, yet the surgery was delayed, and she endured serious post-op complications. For Sinha, the experience was eye-opening. Despite Bangladesh's impressive economic growth in recent decades, it appeared that no amount of money could supply access to quality health care.

As a result, thousands of Bangladeshis were leaving the country every day to obtain quality health care abroad—taking with them billions of dollars annually. Sinha, who was born and raised in the United States, became focused on finding a way to democratize quality health

care in Bangladesh, where her parents were born.

In 2018, she launched Praava Health, based in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital, to deliver quality health care grounded in trust. Thanks to Praava's fully integrated "click-and-brick" outpatient care model, patients can use a mobile app to access their medical records, ask a question, or make an appointment anytime.

When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Bangladesh, Praava was the first government-approved private lab to offer testing. The organization also quickly rolled out Praanno, a digital concierge product that advised patients who didn't require hospitalization how to manage COVID at home. During the first six months of the pandemic, 86 percent of COVID-19 patients who used Praanno were able to recover at home, compared with 49 percent nationally.

Praava is now the fastest-growing consumer health care company in Bangladesh, with plans to build about 30 facilities throughout the country in coming years.

Sinha is actually a lawyer by training. Prior to founding and becoming chair and CEO of Praava Health, she was an associate at Weil, Gotshal & Manges and at Hogan Lovells, and worked as a management consultant at Boston Consulting Group and PricewaterhouseCoopers. She served in various roles at the World Bank in Kabul, Afghanistan, and in New York. She has also served as a social protection specialist at the International Labour Organization, a United Nations agency, and as a foreign policy advisor to the 2008 presidential campaign of then-Senator Barack Obama.

Sinha is a board member at PATH—a global health nonprofit—and a member of both the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Economic Forum's UHC2030 Private Sector Constituency. She graduated from Columbia Law School, earned a master's degree in public administration and international development from Harvard Kennedy School, and has a bachelor of arts (with honors) in economics and philosophy from Wellesley College.

**Diversity Woman: Where did you get your drive?**

**Sylvana Sinha:** My parents were instrumental in encouraging me to achieve my potential. They were immigrants and set an example with the ambition of that journey.

And they were a living example of the possibilities that hard work could create. I was ingrained with the belief that you can do anything. There is something extraordinary about entering the world with that belief, however life might try to beat it out of you. That confidence lives inside of me.

**DW: What challenges did you face while launching Praava?**

**SS:** I'd never worked in health care, so I applied my consulting skill set to solve a

CEO WOMAN



problem. I was forced to approach it with a lot of humility. I literally took a course on emerging market health-care entrepreneurship and another on how to start a company. I went on a global listening tour to learn the operations of health care, starting in Bangladesh, talking to operators, investors, public health professionals, medical professionals. And in Bangladesh, I talked to patients because I wanted to understand their perspective.

Bangladesh is actually doing better on social development indicators than any other country in the region. And to be fair, life expectancy is higher in Bangladesh than in parts of New York City and San Francisco, two of the wealthiest parts of one of the wealthiest countries in the world. So there are lessons from within and outside of Bangladesh that we applied to our model.

**DW: How did you build your team?**

**SS:** I surrounded myself with people who had depth of expertise that I did not—people who had worked in health-care quality management, in health technology globally and in Bangladesh, people who had started health-care businesses in other countries. Sharing what motivates me helped me attract the right kind of people to help build this company.

**DW: As an entrepreneur, what has surprised you the most?**

**SS:** The inefficiency of capital markets. We proved the economics of the business in 10 months, but it didn't lead to investors immediately coming. Eighty percent of venture dollars go to companies headquartered in New York, Massachusetts, and California, although those markets certainly don't have a monopoly on innovation. Even if you're in Detroit or Atlanta, you have a harder time raising capital.

We know that women entrepreneurs are rewarded with less than 2 percent of venture dollars, and most of that is still in the United States. In emerging markets, the Silicon Valley model of "build and investors will come" doesn't really work. And maybe there are some

*"Because we're in an environment where there's scarcity of capital, we're forced to be really scrappy and build a resilient business."*

good things about that. A lot of companies getting venture funding in the West maybe are premature in doing so. Because we're in an environment where there's scarcity of capital, we're forced to be really scrappy and build a resilient business. That's a positive lesson but definitely isn't the way that I thought things were going to play out.

**DW: What sets Praava apart?**

**SS:** We're building a better patient experience. Whenever any of us goes to the doctor, we're feeling vulnerable, so it comes down to the dignity and respect with which we treat our patients.

The average amount of time doctors spend with patients is 48 seconds in Bangladesh. At Praava, you're guaranteed 15 minutes with your doctor. There's clinical evidence that when patients are engaged in the management of their health, clinical outcomes are better. In Bangladesh, unfortunately, you do what the doctor tells you, and you're not encouraged to ask questions. At Praava, in every exam room there's a wall hanging that says, "Mr. Google is not your doctor. Make sure you ask your doctor these five questions." We encourage patients to engage as much as possible.

The dignity and respect piece is in creating affordable access to quality health care. When we entered the market, there were only four international-standard labs for a country of 170 million people, which is absurd. To put that into context, the United States has 3,400 times that level of international-standard labs per capita. So we are creating high-quality patient experiences that create better outcomes so patients can stay in good health at home.

**DW: Are there any upcoming initiatives that you're especially excited about?**

**SS:** We're launching a new version of our app. Through your phone, you will see all your medical records. You can get pharmaceutical products delivered. You can order lab testing to your home within five hours of placing an order; someone can come to your house and collect your sample.

**DW: Describe your workplace culture.**

**SS:** I strongly agree with Peter Drucker's statement that "culture eats strategy for breakfast." So we have invested heavily in building a company culture where every employee feels empowered to carry forward our vision. There's clear evidence that businesses that prioritize their employees first, even before their customers, achieve better financial outcomes and dramatically outperform the S&P 500, for example.

**DW: Why should women helm more health-care organizations?**

**SS:** Less than 13 percent of CEOs of health-care organizations in the United States are women, despite the fact that 65 percent of health workers are women and 80 percent of household health-care decisions are made by women. We need women leading organizations because women are 50 percent of the population and are overrepresented when it comes to [making purchasing decisions about] certain types of products.

**DW: What do you want female entrepreneurs to know?**

**SS:** There's a huge economy happening outside of the United States, and huge opportunities for women entrepreneurs in these markets. If women were to participate at the same level as men, we could add as much as \$28 trillion to the global economy within two or three years.

**DW: Any parting words?**

**SS:** We're very lucky to have served nearly half a million patients in Bangladesh to date, but we have 170 million people in our country, so I'd like to think we're just getting started. **DW**



## MEN AT WORK

# We Are Family

*Ecolab's Dexter Davis has applied his earlier incarnation as a family therapist into leading with empathy*

BY JACKIE KRENTZMAN

**W**HEN DEXTER DAVIS WAS growing up in a majority white community in Columbus, Ohio, he played on his high school basketball team. But sometimes he did not have transportation to practice, which he worried would hurt his standing on his team and its success.

Fortunately, whenever he couldn't otherwise get to practice, his coach would pick him up and drop him off at

home afterward. The coach would also talk with Davis on these drives to make sure things were OK in his life.

Years later, Davis—now vice president of global diversity, equity, and inclusion at the international food- and water-safety giant Ecolab in Minneapolis (which is celebrating its centennial this year)—realized that those seemingly small acts of kindness were actually the first leadership lessons he learned.

“That was how I learned what it means to be a leader and be accountable,” he says. “Leadership means being there for your team or colleagues, and it also means believing in people.”

Davis says his greatest takeaway from that modeling by his coach was the importance of allowing time to get to know people, no matter how busy you are. “That’s how you build empathy and connections, and that’s how you succeed as a leader and make your team and then organization better.”

After getting his MBA from University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, Davis rose rapidly. He spent many years in leadership positions in sourcing and procurement at companies such as Target and General Mills. He also had his first stint at Ecolab, as its senior procurement manager. He moved to Securian Financial, where as vice president of talent

management and chief diversity officer, he was charged with talent acquisition, learning and development, management development, and leadership of the firm’s DEI efforts.

In 2022, Davis returned to Ecolab and took on his current role. He came back to a company that was assembling an impressive record on internal and external DEI measures. For example, CNBC named Ecolab one of the country’s Most Just Companies in 2022, honoring it for its record on environmental, social, and governance performance.

**Diversity Woman:** You say your work in DEI is a calling. What do you mean?

**Dexter Davis:** Initially, I did not want to be a diversity, equity, and inclusion leader. I was skeptical that organizations really wanted to make significant change. Plus, the office is often marginalized within a company. Then, when I was offered the opportunity at Securian, I decided to put aside my misgivings—in part because I saw that their commitment was genuine, and that I reported directly to the CEO.

When I dug in, I quickly realized, Oh my gosh, I've been preparing for this my entire career but didn't know it! I had majored in psychology in college. I then became a marriage and family therapist. I loved working with families. I loved working with people and helping them maximize who they are and their potential.

**DW: How did that role as a family therapist prepare you for human resources and DEI work?**

**DD:** I worked a lot with family systems, and I think that approach translates well to a corporate environment. I realized that I could implement the methods I was using with individuals and families to make an impact with a larger scale of people—a team, a corporation.

**DW: You left Ecolab for seven years, then returned. Why?**

**DD:** I know this is a cliché, but first, I realized that it is not always the case that you can find a company that's truly aligned with your purpose and values. I had a very positive experience the first time there, and I only left because I was recruited to a company where, frankly, at the time I could have a bigger opportunity to make an impact.

Then I saw that Ecolab had made a great deal of [DEI] progress in the seven years I was at Securian. I came back and felt I could be truly myself from the get-go. It's rare to find a culture in which you feel you can fit in so well. Maybe sometimes you have to leave to realize this. I had a good experience at Securian too, but I had forgot how much easier it is to work and be productive someplace where you feel like you can bring your authentic self to work. That's what I want for everybody. If we can do any one thing in our job, I believe it is to make people feel confident and able to bring their authentic selves to work.

I know that, like any company, we're not perfect. But from a fundamental standpoint, Ecolab really cares about people, and that makes all the difference and that's what drew me back.

*“Once you get more women in leadership roles, it's amazing how you start having more diverse teams—in every which way, not just gender.”*

**DW: Describe some of your goals and progress toward them.**

**DD:** If you look at our impact goals, many are focused on where we're going from a representation perspective. For example, we want to have 35 percent women in senior management. We want management to be 25 percent people of color. We know having diverse leaders helps us perform better as an organization. We have seen a 35 percent increase in BIPOC executives since 2018.

We have also been successful at building out our employee resource groups. We now have 11, and they are all becoming more and more aligned with our business goals and doing work that also can be leveraged by a broader audience to grow our impact [in the community].

**DW: How can men better support women and be allies in the workplace? What is Ecolab doing in this area?**

**DD:** Number one, we need to make sure all voices, especially women's voices, are heard in the workplace. You must be intentional. This means you must prioritize that in one-on-one meetings, and in larger meetings. For example, if in a group setting somebody brings up a good idea, when you build on that, make sure to say “to Nancy's point,” so it reinforces it was her idea first. It's not good enough just to say we think it's important that [diverse] people are there—we need to make sure their voices are heard, and that they feel in a psychologically safe environment to be able to communicate their ideas.

Mentorship and sponsorship are also key. And once again, it goes beyond

just saying we promote mentorship and sponsorship—you must be very intentional and actually do it. We have done that in several ways. For example, with our Black Leadership Forum, we have set up mentorship and sponsorship opportunities. We also do work around this with our Leadership Development Group. We set participants up with sponsors and mentors, and we also have cohort gatherings where women can freely share ideas.

**DW: What do women leaders bring to the table that people may not realize?**

**DD:** Once you get more women in leadership roles, it's amazing how you start having more diverse teams—in every which way, not just gender. We have discovered that women tend to hire more diverse teams. In turn, that helps our larger goal of more diverse and balanced representation.

**DW: What are you most proud of in your career?**

**DD:** Being here in the Twin Cities when George Floyd happened had a tremendous impact on the city and all its residents, and on Ecolab. I am proud of how I showed up during that. That's where I think I found my voice.

We did about 20 listening sessions, and I could just say how I feel and how my views came from my psychology background. Really, it was simply being there for people that most resonated.

It was so inspiring how this impacted people from all different backgrounds. It changed me and really showed that [my team's] being there made a difference, as well as how our CEO being there made a difference. We related how we would talk to our families, how we would now look at the world differently. Hearing that from the top meant so much to people.

Also, facilitating these discussions and listening helped me process this horrible event. By taking action, and being with so many different voices, I felt less helpless and more encouraged that there can be a reason for hope and happiness. **DW**





# Paying It Forward

## *The Dos and Don'ts of Asking for a Raise*

By JANICE HEIT

**S**HARANYA PRASAD,\* A 32-YEAR-OLD senior director at a media organization, did not ask for a raise at her prior workplace. Like many women, she believed the notion that the workplace was a meritocracy, that her excellence would shine through, and that her company would recognize this and offer her a raise. But after onboarding with her current company four years ago, she hired an executive coach who helped Prasad get over her discomfort—common among women and particularly women of color—with negotiating for a pay increase.

With a laser focus on current accomplishments and future growth within her company, “I put together a document based on my job description that outlined everything I was fulfilling on a day-to-day

and quarterly basis, and then everything I’d taken on beyond my job description,” she says. “And I put together a script, saying things like, ‘I’m looking for growth,’ and ‘These are the ways that I could offer more value.’” She asked for a salary adjustment, naming a specific dollar number, based on her research of comparable roles at peer companies.

The result, a 10 percent raise, was “not as much as I’d asked for but way more than if I hadn’t given that number,” said Prasad.

If you’ve been reluctant to ask for a specific number, you’re not alone: according to research by the Pew Foundation, only 32 percent of men and 28 percent of women have negotiated their starting salaries when they were last hired, with early- to mid-career workers feeling the most discomfort. “We’re often taught

that if you’re doing an excellent job, you’ll be rewarded with a raise or promotion,” says Prasad. “That was a myth I’d held onto for my first 10 years of working. But if you’re doing a great job and don’t advocate for yourself, they’ll say, ‘Oh, she’s doing great, and she’s not asking for anything—nothing’s wrong.’”

Women of color in particular are leery of rocking the boat.

“When it comes to something very important, whether it’s your career or your money, or a personal relationship, you have to be very clear about what it is that you want,” advises Laura Fredricks, author most recently of *Hard Asks Made Easy: How to Get Exactly What You Want* (laurafredricks.com). Her advice: “It’s a

**ACCELERATE**

\* Employees’ names have been changed.

## “Connect the dots between what you’re accomplishing and what the decision-maker cares about.”

conversation, not a confrontation.” Know what you want to accomplish, rehearse your tone of voice and body language, and understand your leverage—or, as Fredricks says, “It will cost them a fortune to find someone else like you.”

Let your supervisor know in advance that you’d like to discuss your compensation. And when it’s time to meet, “walk in, thank them for their time, and then get to it.” Fredricks’s “secret sauce” for any ask consists of two statements and a question. She cites an example: “As you know, the purpose of this meeting is to talk to you about a raise, where I’m asking X amount by Y date. I know you probably have a lot of questions. What are your questions?” And then, she advises, “Be quiet, and let them take it. Do not fill the space.”

What if you’re offered much less than what you wanted? “You could say, ‘Let’s revisit this in another three months,’” says Fredricks. And if your raise is denied or you’re told they’ll revisit your request in six months, she counsels, “Negotiate the time frame, and try to cut the time to three months or less. Keep the conversation going.”

And document the process. That’s what Joyce Frazier, a 28-year-old pharmacist at a health center in Louisville, Kentucky, learned. She knew from HR’s phone call confirming her hire that 90 days into her new position she would receive a 3 percent raise, provided she passed her evaluation and met preset goals. However, upon reaching the 90-day mark and being told by her supervisor that she’d passed her evaluation and exceeded expectations, she discovered that company policy had changed, and 90-day raises were no longer being given. So Frazier set out to turn a no into a yes. She requested a meeting with HR and her supervisor, “getting together all my

notes and the paper trail I’d created during my hiring process.”

Unfortunately, because she lacked written confirmation from HR following her hiring call, “they said I must have misunderstood,” although she knew they had reneged on an oral promise. It took another nine months and a second stellar evaluation to raise her compensation. Frazier’s advice: “Get everything in writing.”

And keep your eye on the prize: “I tried to be as calm as possible, no matter how much disrespect I received during meetings,” Frazier says. One expert on negotiation tools for women of color, quoted in *Forbes*, cleverly suggests requesting a “bathroom break” if you feel your temper rising, in order to restore your equilibrium.

### Know your worth

An increasing number of US states now mandate salary-range information. Sites such as Glassdoor, Indeed, and Salary Expert can also assist. And then there’s social media.

Inverna Diaz, a 27-year-old working in communications and press relations, quickly grew new business for her company in Washington, DC. One year into her position, as she was deciding whether to ask for a raise, her supervisor surprised her with a title change and a salary increase of \$9,000, thanks to an Instagram account calling out the white, male power structure of their workplace. “I don’t know who started it,” Diaz says, “but [colleagues] began posting anonymously about what was going on in their offices, doing what they called a ‘vibe check.’ And everyone was reading it. So I actually ended up getting called in by my supervisor [and offered the raise] before I was ready to have that conversation!”

Executive coach Jamie Lee, who specializes in helping smart women who

hate office politics get promoted and better paid without throwing anyone under the bus ([jamielcoach.com](http://jamielcoach.com)), works with clients to “connect the dots between what you’re accomplishing and what the decision-maker cares about. You want to tailor your communication so that it has their ears perking up. And you want to make sure you’re articulating it in a way that is future focused. When you talk about what you’ve done, what you will do, and the impact of that for the organization, you’re demonstrating thinking at that next level.”

From there, Lee says, “you ask, ‘Would you agree that I’m adding value?’ This makes sure there is buy-in and alignment.” If the answer is no, Lee suggests rerouting the conversation in order to problem-solve. “But in my experience, they almost always say yes,” she says. “And then you respond with, ‘I’m glad you agree. That is why I would like to speak to you about having my pay adjusted so that it’s on par with the level of value I’m bringing here.’ And that’s when you make your very specific request.”

For women at small and midsized organizations, experts suggest timing your ask with your performance review. However, at large or multinational organizations, Jamie Lee suggests negotiating three to six months before your annual review, so that your compensation request can work its way through the system’s decision-makers prior to Q4, when such decisions are typically made. “Otherwise, they’re likely going to tell you, ‘Well, yes, that’s nice, and we agree you’re adding value, but you’ve got to wait.’”

The bottom line is this: When they hired you, your company invested in their future. Your achievements—past, present, and future—are their ROI. So do your homework, role-play your script, set a date with your supervisor, have that conversation, and make that ask! **DW**

*Janet Heit’s last feature for Diversity Woman was “Take the Lead: The Future of Work” (in the Fall 2022 issue). Connect with her at [Janet.Heit.DEI@gmail.com](mailto:Janet.Heit.DEI@gmail.com).*





# Gen Z Is Bringing “Main Character Energy”

*The new generation is redefining the workplace*

BY CARRIE KIRBY

**A**LMA KLEIN, 47, ENJOYS managing a team that is about one-third generation Z. But she says she also has a list of “things they are comfortable with that would have sent me into a coma when I was a junior employee.”

Things like broadly sharing their salary figures. Requesting a one-on-one meeting with a senior manager immediately upon hiring. Disclosing mental health struggles and requesting accommodations.

Klein, SVP creative director at Arc Worldwide in Chicago, recently took some of her junior creatives to lunch and asked them where they get this moxie, or what their generation might call “main character energy.”

“They said that they grew up post-9/11 and witnessed nonstop bad news,” Klein says. Some remember family turmoil during the 2008 recession. They did active-shooter drills at school. They were sent home from high school, college, or their first jobs when the COVID pandemic began. They witnessed the social unrest of the

**TAKE THE LEAD**

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# *We're committed* to supporting diversity

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As leaders in healthcare, we believe everyone should have the opportunity to thrive. Our main goal is to build a team that reflects the diverse communities we serve and to provide more leadership opportunities for women and people of color.

We also have a program to help empower diverse suppliers — like veterans, those with disabilities, the LGBTQ+ community, minorities and women. It's our mission to address the income and employment challenges that act as barriers to health equity.



*Walgreens*



Black Lives Matter movement and the melee of January 6. They live under the existential threat of climate change.

“The world is a scary, chaotic place, so they want to do what’s best for themselves and their careers,” Klein says. “They know the days of being loyal to a company and getting rewarded for it are long gone, so they’re practicing a sort of ‘social unionization,’ where they share their salaries on giant shared spreadsheets and watch TikToks on how to ask for a raise.”

Like Klein, Seattle occupational therapy manager M. Terry Bowman admires gen Z’s confident vibe. Bowman noticed a 20-something coworker, who had recently earned a graduate degree, “putting herself out there for positions that she may not be quite qualified for.” It’s not something Bowman, who at 60 is part of the baby boom generation, would have done when she was just starting out.

To Richmond, California, property manager Noelle Davis, 25, there are several reasons she and her gen Z colleague are often the first to speak up at a company meeting. One is disillusionment with people in power, based on the

difficult events they’ve lived through in their short lives.

“We’ve seen some ‘qualified’ people do terrible, terrible things,” Davis says.

Gen Z grew up watching people rocket from obscurity to superstardom, and define their own careers, often with the help of the Internet, Davis notes. She’s inspired by examples as diverse as (early gen Xer) Jay-Z’s rise from poverty to music industry titan and (late gen Xer) Rishi Sunak’s ascent from an immigrant family to UK prime minister.

They even watched kids their own age build their own entertainment brands.

“People that I watched on YouTube are now millionaires,” Davis says.

### Who is generation Z?

It’s not just an impression or a stereotype: generation Z is different from the other generations in the workplace (millennials, gen X, baby boomers, and a few lingering “traditionalists” or “silent generation” workers in their late 70s or older).

Pew Research, which defines gen Z as those born from 1997 to 2012, notes that these young people belong to the

most diverse generation in American history; nearly half are racial or ethnic minorities. They’re also on track to become the most educated generation so far, Pew reports. A more troubling distinction: along with other younger Americans, gen Z are part of an alarming rise in mental illness and suicide.

### The first true digital natives

What made them who they are? Besides the defining events mentioned above, gen Z is the first generation to truly grow up online.

“We used to say millennials were digital natives, but they actually remember a time before iPhones and before a lot of social media. Most gen Z’s don’t,” says Lindsey Pollak, author of *The Remix: How to Lead and Succeed in the Multigenerational Workplace*.

Growing up with the Internet means growing up knowing that your voice can be heard, that a good idea could go viral, no matter who you are, Pollak suggests. Digital natives are also used to getting all the information they need—immediately.

That means managers will be expected both to listen more and explain more.



**Pew Research ... notes that these young people belong to the most diverse generation in American history; nearly half are racial or ethnic minorities.**

Pollak advises managers to embrace this and give gen Z—and other staffers—the answers they want.

“Because I said so’ has never been a good strategy, but I think it’s even less appropriate with this generation,” Pollak says.

**Living DEI**

Gen Z has grown up in a diverse world and brings that awareness and the resulting expectations to the workplace. This generation was taught from an early age to respect others’ differences and to live the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Sometimes, Davis says, it feels like older generations have failed to absorb these principles, despite DEI trainings at work.

“I’ve had several older managers who have said things about people—or to me—that I know are not appropriate,” says Davis, who is Black. “No one in my age group would ever say those things, because we know that they’re wrong to say in the workplace.”

Bowman notes that the gen Z occupational therapy practitioners she works with are more consistent than others about asking for and using people’s preferred pronouns, a practice she has also adopted.

Gen Z workers are reportedly more likely to request accommodations for disabilities and personal challenges—including invisible ones. This makes sense: the generation has grown up with individualized education plans in school, and much higher rates of diagnoses of conditions such as ADHD and autism.

Companies are by necessity adapting to the heightened demands for accommodations, Pollak says. She believes gen Z is having a positive influence on the issue, raising awareness of the need for

modifications and adjustments, including those for mental health.

“There’s less stigma to asking for the help you need, rather than burning out or getting so stressed that you end up quitting,” she says.

**What gen Z can learn from older generations**

While young workers may have things to teach their older peers and managers when it comes to technology and diversity, there are components of work that they need to learn too, Pollak acknowledges. She’s heard employers complain that this generation lacks “soft skills” like communication and collaboration. That boils down to a unique lack of experience, she figures.

“A lot of them didn’t get the human contact of college and internships and summer jobs because of COVID,” she says. Even pre-COVID, “because of devices, they have just spent less time talking to other human beings.”

Without landlines, most gen Z employees grew up without learning how to answer a phone call that isn’t for them. Media reports reveal that some companies have to hire phone coaches to walk them through fielding work calls.

**The five-generations office**

It’s anything but new for fresh workers to show up in offices—it happens every day. The reason we have unprecedented age diversity at work now is that the older workers are staying longer. About 8.6 percent of people over age 75 (the silent generation) are still employed, and that’s expected to increase to more than 11 percent by 2031, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

How can five generations play nicely together when they don’t even speak the same language? As a *Washington*

*Post* headline put it: “Gen Z came to ‘slay.’ Their bosses don’t know what that means.” Even when the different generations agree on a communications medium, they don’t always understand one another clearly. A recent video uploaded by TikTok user “Charissa” complained that gen Xers hurt millennials’ feelings—by using ellipses when they text.

Pollak offers these tips for intergenerational collaboration:

- **Be specific.** When working with people who have vastly different ideas about the world, precise language helps. “I worked with a company that said that their gen Zers were abusing their paid-time-off policy,” Pollak says. The problem: the policy asked workers to take an “appropriate” amount of time off. A more effective policy would lay out exactly how many days are available for what uses.
- **Assume the best intentions.** Try to understand why workers from different generations do what they do, Pollak advises. One conflict she has encountered is young workers wanting more feedback than older managers are used to providing. “They’re not trying to annoy you,” she tells managers. “They’re trying to get better.” To younger workers: “It’s not because they don’t like you. It’s that no one gave them feedback, so they don’t think they’re supposed to.”
- **Buddy up.** Mentorships often pair the most experienced employees with newbies, and that can be valuable. But Pollak also likes the trend of pairing employees with a “buddy” or a mentor with only a year or two of seniority. This gives millennials an opportunity to recognize their common ground with gen Z and shine. “Millennials grew up with the Internet and social media and all of that,” Pollak says. “They could be phenomenal mentors.” **DW**

*Carrie Kirby writes about travel, money, and technology. She blogs about travel with her gen Z kids at Themilesmom.net.*





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FRESH INSIGHT

# Women on Board=Outcome Stakeholders

**W**e have entered the age of stakeholder activism in business. Investors are stepping up, saying, “Enough is enough,” and demanding companies do right while bringing a profit. Just look at Nia Impact Capital CEO Kristin Hull, who as an investor urged Tesla to



create better business practices. It’s no surprise that investors are concerned. A poor workplace culture, beyond opening up a company to costly lawsuits and payouts, also drains leaders’ mental energy from running the company and giving investors the ROI they expect.

So what can companies do? Include more women on their boards. It has been shown that increasing diversity on boards leads to better fiscal performance.



Why is gender diversity so protective and powerful? Women on boards bring in a diversity of thought, background, and experiences that forces boards to halt “groupthink” and, instead, encourages effort and engagement to more fully consider the issues at hand. Diversity also brings about better financial performance.

### HOW TO GET ON BOARDS

Women face barriers, both perceived and actual, to getting on boards. So how can you move forward into your seat at the boardroom?

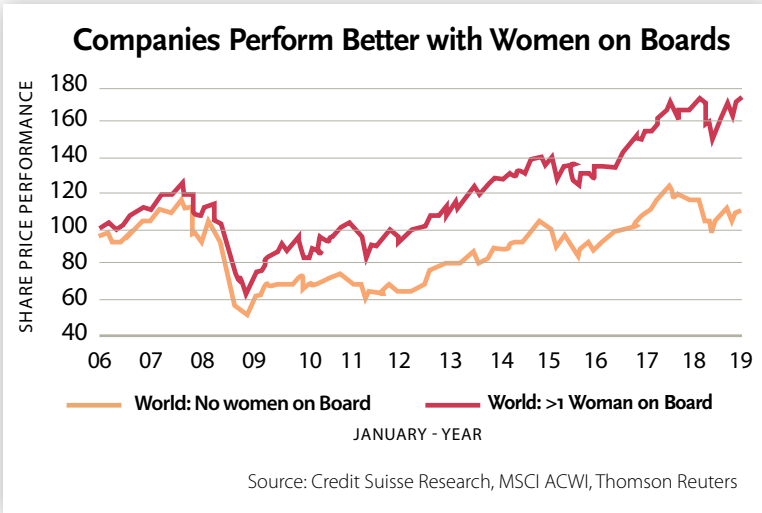
**Seize your power as an investor.** Investors are the first board directors, instrumental in shaping board culture. My organization, How Women Lead, is on a mission to get more women investing in venture, and to get more money into their hands so they wield more influence.

**Be visible.** Author articles or blogs. Take on speaking engagements. Start establishing yourself as a thought leader in your industry.

**Create a clear and specific ask.** Do you want to sit on the board of a high-growth Series D company? Are you looking for a private or public board seat? Not only will this help you to tailor your communications and your pitch, it will also help you with this final tip:

**Network.** Start with the board or the C-suite at your company. Tell them you are considering board service and ask for their sponsorship. Be clear about the value you bring and the board positions you seek. Be narrow in this communication so it is easy for others to remember and act upon.

We—other women, and the business world at large—are waiting. We need you. It’s time to find your place in the boardroom. Companies need your expertise to remain competitive and provide the results their stakeholders expect. **DW**



### What happens when you add more women to boards?

Organizations with more women on their boards are reaping the benefits by:

- financially outperforming their competitors by 15 percent when they have gender diversity on their boards.
- enjoying better share-price performance.
- realizing better risk management and safety. A study of medical product recalls, for example, found that two or more women on boards resulted in high severity recalls being announced 28 days sooner. That protects not just consumers, but also a company’s image.

*Julie Castro Abrams is chair and CEO of How Women Lead and managing partner of How Women Invest.*



# Creating places of belonging

We are proud to support Diversity Woman as they advance equity and shape a future informed by diverse perspectives.

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# CHIEF TROUBLE MAKER

Female Quotient  
Founder  
**SHELLEY ZALIS**  
is out to close  
the gender gap  
one moonshot  
at a time

BY JACKIE KRENTZMAN









“Shelley doesn’t present research studies, issue white papers, or sit around in meetings. Instead, she gets it done.” —Linda Yaccarino, CEO of X (formerly Twitter)

In 2013, Shelley Zalis was fed up. She was at a juncture in her career—she had achieved enormous success as one of the primary innovators in the digital advertising and marketing arena. Still, something was rankling her. She was tired of attending countless industry conferences in which she was just one of a tiny handful of women in the room.

One day, as she was walking the floor at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, she had a revelation.

“Walking around by myself, I was invisible,” says Zalis, the founder and CEO of The Female Quotient. “But if 50 women were walking the floor, in a pack, every guy’s head would turn and they’d say, ‘Where the heck did all you women come from?’”

The women at CES had the power of the purse—executives at their companies, they were closing deals. Women must go on the offensive, Zalis realized, instead of waiting for men to open the door for them. She decided to leverage the power of the pack and created her first iteration of the Equality Lounge, initially called The Girls’ Lounge, at the CES conference. It was a safe space for women to gather, be themselves, feel comfortable and confident. They



would revel in their femininity and their power.

“I brought in hair and makeup professionals, and we started doing deals while we were having our hair done,” she says. “I also added a little pink [to the lounge] because I wanted to sensationalize the fact that we don’t have to act like men to succeed.”

That first informal gathering was so powerful that Zalis resolved she would form her own company, The Female Quotient, to work with organizations and leaders to curate experiences, present thought leadership, and design solutions to achieve gender equality in the workplace and beyond. Its centerpiece, the Equality Lounge—renamed both to avoid the word *girl*, a stumbling block for some, and to emphasize inclusion—is a fixture at Davos, South by Southwest, the NBA All-Star Game, and other high-profile events.

“The World Economic Forum estimated it would take 132 years to close the gender gap,”

Zalis says. “That was the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. We created the Internet in 25 years; we put men on the moon in 10 and created a vaccine for COVID in one year. Why should it take 132 years to figure out how to pay Sally the same as Peter?”

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**Clockwise from top right:** Shelley Zalis and Richard Dickson, former senior vice president and chief design officer at Mattel, at the Equality Lounge@Cannes Lions • Shelley Zalis and Shannon Shae Montoya, vice president, head of global B2B marketing, Yahoo!, at the FQ Walking Tour at CES in Las Vegas • Shelley Zalis and Deepak Chopra at the Equality Lounge at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland • Shelley Zalis and a panel at the Equality Lounge@Cannes Lions discussing why leadership training isn’t just a women’s issue.

She decided that if no one else was doing it, she would do it—she would close the gender gap. “I realized the only way to bring true equity for women in the workplace would be to take a moonshot mindset,” she says.

It’s definitely an audacious goal. Brimming with ideas, energy, and boundless confidence, Zalis was going to be the one to take the giant leap for womankind.

“The world is not big enough for Shelley,” says longtime friend and colleague Linda Yaccarino, CEO of X (formerly Twitter).

**S**helley Zalis was raised in a middle-class family in Los Angeles, the daughter of a cardiologist and a homemaker. She and her three sisters thrived in their raucous household, encouraged by their parents to follow their passion, be bold in everything they did, and never to follow the pack. Once Zalis and her siblings were off to college, their mother became the first policy advisor to California Governor Pete Wilson.

“She taught us how to believe in ourselves,” Zalis says. “She would say to us this quote by Oscar Wilde that I love: ‘Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken.’”

“The World Economic Forum estimated it would take 132 years to close the gender gap. That was the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. Why should it take 132 years to figure out how to pay Sally the same as Peter?”

Their father cherished experiences. He never wore a watch, nor would he allow the family to take photos on their vacations. He wanted them to focus on living in the moment.

For their vacations, the family would chase solar eclipses throughout the world. Even as adults, with their own families, each daughter would receive a handwritten letter in the mail every other year from their dad, with a plane ticket and itinerary enclosed, telling them exactly where they needed to be and when. They weren’t allowed to check luggage because they were going to move fast and travel light.

After graduating from Barnard (during college, Zalis says, her education came from life, not a textbook), she began her career in advertising, and in the early 1990s landed in business development at Applied Science International Market Research, better known as ASI. She thrived there, forging long-term relationships with clients. She is fond of saying, “I didn’t do deals. I created relationships.”

Those were the early days of the Internet, and companies were still trying to figure out how to make money on the

nascent web. One day Zalis had an epiphany: ASI’s clients could be infinitely more valuable not only by creating their own websites but also by placing advertising on other companies’ websites.

The company CEO loved the idea, but her immediate supervisor and coworkers did not. They didn’t get it, and they also didn’t get Zalis.

When it came time for her performance review, she was expecting accolades, a bonus and pay bump, and a promotion. Instead, she was taken to the woodshed by her boss.

“The review was like six or eight pages of single-spaced typewritten notes that ripped me to shreds,” she says. “It said that I said yes to clients too often, and I didn’t stick to the company’s cookie-cutter playbook. It also said I pushed coworkers out of their comfort zone by making them work too many hours. In short, I was breaking too many rules. I think that is why I became known as the Chief Troublemaker.”

Zalis wasn’t happy, but she needed the job. Her husband was in medical school (he became a surgeon, and they now have three grown children), and she was paying the bills. Yet she couldn’t bring herself to sign off on the review.

“I looked at my boss, and tears were coming down. And I said, ‘I’m not signing this because you’re wrong. You are making the biggest mistake of your life, and you are going to regret this.’”

Years later, after Zalis had made a name for herself as one of the visionary leaders in online advertising, she asked her former supervisor, who’d remained a friend, if he regretted the review.

“He told me no,” she says. “I said, ‘Why not?’ He replied, ‘Because if I didn’t write it, you wouldn’t be where you are today.’”

Nevertheless, she stayed on. Her next idea, which eventually became industry standard, was usability testing. She also proposed moving all research from offline to online. It was a tough sell.

One day, she was on a panel with Procter & Gamble’s chief research officer, one of the most powerful influencers in the market research realm. She whispered something to him onstage. Afterward, her team excitedly asked her, What was she telling him?



She said she mentioned her idea to move research from offline to online. He loved it and asked her to set up a meeting for the following week. ASI put together a team, but one problem: she wasn't on it. It was a team of all men.

It was clearly time to move on. It was also time to embrace who she was and stop trying to fit into someone else's box. If she was going to succeed, she needed to do it her own way.

"That was my 'heartbeat moment,'" she says. "I will never, ever wait for anyone else to tell me what to do. The next day I left the company."

Zalis launched her first company, OTX (Online Testing Exchange), to test consumer interest in full-length movie trailers and short advertisements for films. OTX flourished, and Zalis was the first female regularly ranked among the top 25 in the research industry. A decade later, she sold the company because it needed to go global, she says.

Shortly after, she started her informal Girls' Lounges and was convinced this was her future and the fulcrum for achieving gender parity. In 2015, she founded The Female Quotient.

"It was time to rewrite the rules of the workplace and fix it," she says. "If I didn't do it, I didn't know who was going to do it."

Yaccarino, who has attended many Equity Lounges across the globe, believes that no matter how audacious it sounds, anything Zalis puts her mind to, she will make happen.

"Shelley doesn't present research studies, issue white papers, or sit around in meetings," Yaccarino says. "Instead, she gets it done. That is the beauty of Shelley. And she welcomes anyone and everyone—from college students to CEOs of global companies—to join her. She has an army of advocates, with everyone equally mobilized to deliver. You are inspired to make a difference when you are around her because of her unwavering conviction."

So when Zalis says every single gap in the workplace—the pay gap, the leadership gap, the childcare gap, the flexibility gap, the sponsorship gap—is fixable, well, you shed your doubts and sign up.

Her reasoning focuses on willingness, intentionality, and conscious leadership. Her conviction is that it's time to stop fixing women and instead fix the system.

"It's not very complicated," she says. "It's about kindness and respect and willingness. Look at our Equality Lounges. We designed them not just for women but for everyone. And soon, men began to put down the toilet seat [so to speak]."

In 2016, Zalis cofounded another company, SeeHer composed of media, marketing, and entertainment executives focused on eliminating gender bias in these industries and on ensuring accurate realistic portrayal of girls and women in entertainment media.

"The idea is, if you see her, you could be her," says Zalis. "But it is not just about seeing her. Representation is going to create change—you've got to use your power to bring about that change."

**C**lose the gender gap? Eliminate gender bias in the media and entertainment industry? All of Zalis's ideas and initiatives sound daunting—maybe even impossible—especially for one person.

But don't tell her that. Talk to her for an hour, and you find yourself inspired by her belief in herself and her fellow female travelers. You think, Maybe she can do it. Her optimism, persuasiveness, and chutzpah could be the spark we need. Maybe together, we—women and the men who support us—can eliminate the inequities that hold us all back.

"I have given Shelley a tagline," says Yaccarino. "Anything's possible." **DW**





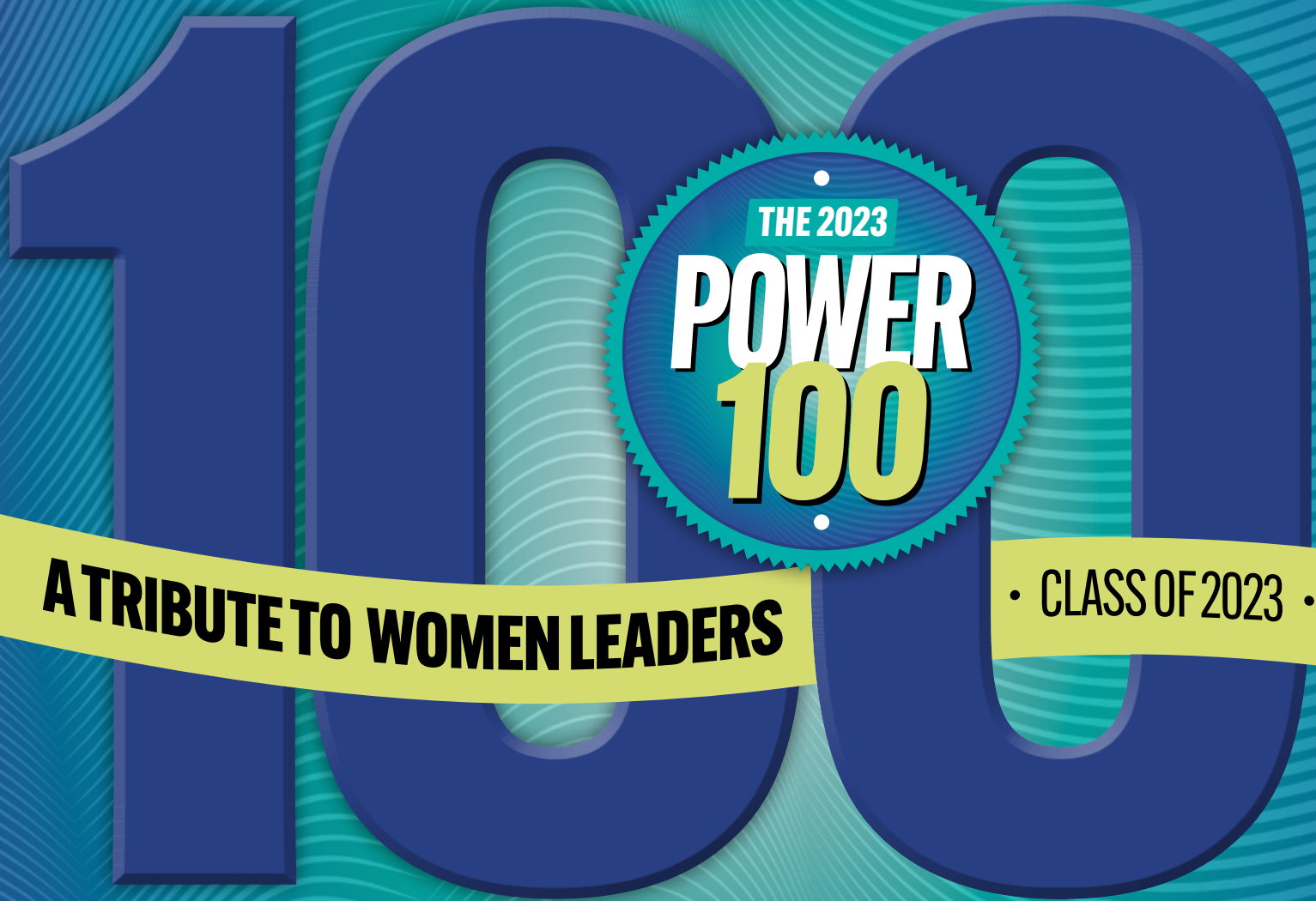
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Female leadership matters



**ATRIBUTETO WOMEN LEADERS**

• CLASS OF 2023 •

*Meet extraordinary women leaders  
who are making their mark*

BY EDDIE LEE & ERIN CHAN DING



**E**nsuring women hold leadership positions—in business, politics, and the community—is so important to a thriving society that the United Nations (UN) has made it a focus under its goal of achieving gender parity and empowering all women and girls.

“Women’s equal representation in leadership matters—not only for achieving gender equality, but for making sound decisions in politics, the workplace, and every area of public life,” noted the United Nations when outlining this goal as part of its 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted eight years ago by all UN member states.

The UN report also points out that women hold just 28 percent of managerial positions. McKinsey & Company, a management and consulting firm, drives home the disparity in its *Women in the Workplace 2022* report, pointing out that only 87 women (and 82 women of color) are promoted from entry-level to managerial positions for every 100 men.

The UN emphasizes that a lack of female leadership often means gaps in planning and decision-making. Because of the gender headwinds female business leaders themselves may have faced, they tend to be highly attuned to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Even with historic challenges in gender parity, remarkable female leaders have burst into leadership positions in every business sector in the United States and continue to fill a pipeline of talent. In *Diversity Woman’s* third annual Power 100, we found 100 emerging, rising leaders in technology, transportation, finance, retail, and medicine who not only have visionary ideas for their organizations but also want to make them more multiracial, gender diverse, and equitable.

These 100 are just a small sampling of the multitudes of women on the rise who are making their mark in their companies and also in Corporate America. With their talent, innovation, leadership, and perspective, they are changing minds by challenging preconceived notions of how a company can be both equitable and highly profitable.

**Note: All titles and companies are accurate as of September 2023.**

### SOPHIA MAJEED

Principal Clinical Scientist, *23andMe*



As a principal clinical scientist, Majeed has been leading 23andMe’s clinical efforts in oncology, including the advancement of its wholly-owned anti-CD200R1 immuno-oncology

antibody from discovery into Phase 1 and 2a clinical trials for the treatment of cancer. While at 23andMe, Majeed co-founded 23andShe, an employee resource group. She joined 23andMe’s Therapeutics group in 2019. Prior to 23andMe, Majeed worked as a clinical pharmacologist at Gilead Sciences, where she contributed to the development of medicines for HIV treatment and prevention and for hepatitis B in adults and children.

*“We created 23andShe, an employee resource group that aims to highlight women’s issues and celebrate our accomplishments while recognizing our distinct experiences based on our racial and ethnic identities. We know how important networking is for career progression, and we organize social events where our members can connect with senior leaders at the company. We also highlight the accomplishments of our members throughout the year to both internal and external audiences to showcase their talents.”*

### KAREN CHONG

VP of Audience Strategy, Age Inclusion, AARP



Chong leads AARP’s initiatives to break through the clutter and engage more diverse audiences. She also leads an enterprise-wide strategy to tackle ageism and age discrimination,

empowering us to choose how we live as we get older. Prior to AARP—the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, serving 38 million members—she led partnership and content marketing teams at leading organizations, including PBS,

The Washington Post Company, and Pearson PLC.

*“As the US 50-plus population grows in size and diversity, AARP will double down our commitment to promote age inclusion as a core element of DEI, continue to fight age discrimination in the workplace, and empower all of us to choose how we live as we age.”*

### JACKIE DACANAY

Director of Culture & Belonging at Fairmont San Francisco, *Accor*



Dacanay began her career with Fairmont Hotels in 2006. Her pivotal role as director of Culture & Belonging at Fairmont San Francisco focuses on connecting more deeply with

employees and, in turn, one another. She has a robust background in human resource expertise, a deep desire to serve the community, and a passion to ensure guests continue to enjoy an exceptional San Francisco experience through authentic interactions.

*“In the next five years, my aspiration is to further advance my position within the Fairmont brand. Through increased representation at the executive/senior level, I aim to inspire others by demonstrating that they can pursue a similar career path and achieve growth within the organization.”*

### RACHELLE CHAPMAN

Director, *The Adecco Group US Foundation*



A longtime employment advocate, Chapman cares about helping veterans and military spouses like herself succeed in the workforce. She leads the Adecco Group Military Alliance

program, an initiative aimed at boosting employment, education, and career development opportunities for military-connected talent. She is also the military liaison to military bases and veterans service officers

## Our Methodology

To compile our Power 100 list, *Diversity Woman* selected talented, high-potential women across all races, cultures, and identities who have been identified by their organization as being on the fast track to leadership and executive roles.



around the country and across the Adecco Group. Chapman joined Adecco in February 2005 as a recruiter. She has also served as its government relations manager and senior manager for the company's Athlete Career and Education Program, which helps Team USA's athletes with career counseling, job placement assistance, and employment opportunities.

*"The Adecco Group US Foundation is passionate about closing the gender leadership gap in the military spouse and women veteran community by investing in programs and partnerships like Dress for Success Worldwide that champion economic independence and the advancement of women through education and employment opportunities."*

**YVKKY HOWARD**  
Director of Social Media and Content Marketing, *Advance Auto Parts*



Howard oversees the organic social media and content strategy, influencer marketing, and copy production.

Prior to her time at Advance Auto Parts, Howard had stops at VMware, Red Hat, Duke Athletics, Arizona State Athletics, and Disney.

*"Advance Auto Parts is committed to developing female talent. I am currently participating in a leadership development program that is geared toward advancing female talent. In this program, we're paired with executive leadership who provides monthly mentoring and coaching."*

**WANDA DRYMAN**  
Director of Client Solutions, *Aflac Group Insurance*



Dryman joined Aflac in 1997 as a customer service representative and has held several leadership positions with

oversight on business processes, operations, analytics, and execution of direct sales strategies. She was

appointed to her current role as director of Client Solutions in 2019. Dryman is also actively involved with the American Heart Association and Curing Kids Cancer. She is a member of Aflac's philanthropic committee and serves on the board of directors for Prisma Health Midlands Foundation.

*"As a Latina leader, my goal is to influence people to bring out their best by building on their strengths and developing opportunities. In five years, I envision my role at Aflac as a servant leader. My heart for people both professionally and personally is the driver of my passion and success."*

**NABA BANERJEE**  
Director of Trust Product and Operations, *Airbnb*



Banerjee's focus is to ensure that guests and hosts have peace of mind as they live, travel, and host on Airbnb. She

spearheads Airbnb's efforts to fight fraud on its platform and preserve trust between Airbnb hosts and their guests. Banerjee has extensive experience creating innovative, customer-centric solutions. She is the first female engineer in her family.

*"Airbnb's initiatives include setting long-term representation goals for women at every level company-wide. Each executive has a diversity plan for their organization, including diverse representation goals for underrepresented groups as well as growth and development plans with a specific focus on diversity in leadership, including women."*

**EVITA "EVIE" GARCES**  
VP, Line Maintenance, *American Airlines*



Garces leads American's line maintenance professionals and oversees all line maintenance operations for the airline's mainline fleet.

She has long been a champion and mentor for other women interested in building a career in aviation. Garces is a member of the Association for Women

in Aviation Maintenance and, in 2019, was named among the Top 10 Corporate Latina Executives of the Year by *LATINA Style*.

*"American Airlines was the first airline to be certified by Fair Pay Workplace, a nonprofit organization that recognizes businesses committed to identifying and remediating pay equity issues. Our Women's Leadership Program is a resource for women leaders and pilots across the company to connect, engage, and grow their network at American."*

**TA JANÉ NOLEN**  
Director, Product Management, *American Eagle Outfitters*



Nolen is a dynamic leader in AEO's technology organization, supporting the American Eagle and Aerie brands' customer

acquisition strategy to deliver a best-in-class shopping experience. She is a passionate advocate for career advancement as a member of the Women@AEO associate network. Nolen also serves on the steering committee of AEO Real Parents, working to influence company decisions and policies that support the unique needs of working parents and their families.

*"I aspire to be a leader who passionately cultivates native genius within my team. My goal is to foster a holistic, healthy environment that empowers everyone to develop and grow, enabling them to reach their full potential and collectively achieve remarkable results."*

**CRYSTAL FILES**  
VP of Enterprise Marketing Solutions, *American Family Insurance*



Files leads enterprise brand strategy, the enterprise creative services team, and operational excellence for American

Family's marketing organization. In addition, she heads up several strategic initiatives for the company, including defining American Family's enterprise purpose and identifying ways to leverage

the company's business as a platform for good.

*"We are committed to the difficult work of building and advancing a diverse workforce. I am empowered to advance equity and truly put DEI at the center of our business. We are focused on hiring, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce that reflects our customers, including more women in leadership."*

**TAMIKA JEAN-BAPTISTE**  
VP and Chief Diversity Officer, *Amgen*



Jean-Baptiste is responsible for developing, operationalizing, and evaluating the execution of DEI strategies and initiatives in alignment

with Amgen's mission to serve patients. Throughout her 22-year career at Amgen, Jean-Baptiste has been an integral part of the leadership team that launched the first field-based employee resource group, Women Empowered to be Exceptional (WE2), which is now a model for Amgen's other field-based ERGs.

*"Aligning my passions with my purpose has always been important. From a young age, I was taught the importance of advocating for myself and others, and I feel like I have been a champion of diversity, inclusion, and belonging throughout my career. It's work I see continuing professionally and in the community."*

**KISHA MODICA**  
Head of Inclusion & Diversity for Apple Retail, *Apple*



In her role as head of Inclusion & Diversity for Apple Retail, Modica and her team design and deliver I&D programs that

support Apple's retail business and team members around the world. Prior to joining Apple, she served as vice president, head of Equality & Belonging for Gap, where she led the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion

2025 commitments and managed teams responsible for employee, customer, and community belonging.

*“Five years from now, I want to be known as a positive disruptor and multiplier of good and hope to continue expanding my capacity for intrinsically connecting to our teams and communities.”*

**JENNIFER ZUMEK**  
VP, People and Places, *AppLovin*



Zumeck is a collaborative, action-biased human resources leader with more than 20 years of experience helping

organizations of all sizes implement progressive talent strategies and build great human resource teams. Prior to joining AppLovin, which makes technologies that help businesses connect with their ideal customers, Zumeck was global HR leader at Amazon Web Services, where she shaped Amazon's organizational design; cultivated a culture of excellence and diversity, equity, and inclusion; and established operating mechanisms for rapid scale for North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. She mentors and develops others in the HR profession and speaks frequently on how it can drive impact and return on investment in business.

*“At AppLovin, we believe the strength of our company is our people. A top priority is to continue attracting and retaining the best talent, and we are proud of the fact that AppLovin's C-suite includes three female leaders and [that] over 40 percent of our employees globally are female.”*

**DEBORAH GOLDSCHMIED**  
AVP Human Resources Business Partner, *AT&T*



Goldschmied has more than 23 years of experience at AT&T in various HR roles. She is an inspiring leader who is committed to

identifying and developing talent and creating a cohesive workplace culture that produces high-performing teams and is a great place to work. Goldschmied is currently responsible for implementing strategic HR initiatives, including talent management, succession planning, workforce planning, employee engagement, and diversity and inclusion for the Integrated and Partner Solutions organization and Public Sector and FirstNet organization. She started her AT&T career in Mexico, where she worked for over 10 years supporting the company's Latin American operations.

*“Five years from now, I envision myself continuing to lead multicultural teams, achieving even greater results. My focus will remain on sustaining a work environment that nurtures talent, fosters collaboration, and promotes diversity and inclusion. I will actively adapt to evolving business priorities, ensuring that strategic people initiatives consistently drive high performance, employee engagement, and a positive work culture. I will contribute to the organization's growth and success, while also mentoring and developing the next generation of leaders.”*

**TEJUANA L. EDMOND**  
VP, Plastic Additives Americas, *BASF*



Edmond is responsible for technical, sales, and commercial activities across North and South America for the plastic

additives business within BASF's performance chemicals. She currently serves on the board of directors for the Houston Area Urban League, an affiliate

of the National Urban League, and is a member of the external advisory board of the University of Texas at Austin's McKetta Department of Chemical Engineering.

*“BASF is committed to the development, progression, and promotion of females at all levels of the organization. With our goal of achieving 30 percent female representation in top leadership positions by 2030, complemented by our 30 percent minority representation goal by 2030, we are holding ourselves accountable to ensuring an equitable workplace.”*

**COURTNEY ROBINSON**  
Head of Regulatory Affairs & Policy Development, *Block Inc.*



At mobile payment company Block, Robinson works on issues critical to historically underserved communities

and financial services policy development, particularly related to equal access to the economy and global financial system. She is also a financial services policy expert and attorney based in Washington, DC. Prior to joining Block, she served as senior counsel for the US House of Representatives Committee on Financial Services, where she was responsible for legislative and regulatory matters that affected financial institutions and consumer credit. In addition to her work at Block, Robinson serves on advisory boards for the District of Columbia Department of Insurance, Securities, and Banking; Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta; George Mason University Center for Retail Transformation; and Association for Enterprise Opportunity.

*“Five years from now, I'd like to be further empowering populations who have been historically excluded from the banking system. No matter where my career may take me, I hope to continue breaking down barriers to ensure everyone has equal access to participate in the economy.”*

**LEE HATTON**  
Financial Operations & Global Expansion Lead, *Cash App*



Hatton oversees global partnerships, payments, and investments, as well as global expansion for Cash App. She

has more than 20 years of international experience in the financial services industry and has held senior executive roles in marketing, strategy, and risk in large-scale customer-facing businesses. Prior to joining Cash App, Hatton was part of the global executive team at Australia's leading buy-now-pay-later brand, Afterpay, and was the chief executive officer of UBank, a digital bank in Australia.

*“At Cash App, building a culture rooted in inclusion and diversity is paramount to achieving our mission of redefining the world's relationship with money. Within our workplace, we're focused on transparency and embed checks to combat bias and advance fairness in promotion and compensation.”*

**KRISTEN SHANLEY**  
Director and Head of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, *Cerberus Capital Management*



Shanley is responsible for leading Cerberus's strategy and programming to support and advance the progression of women and

traditionally underrepresented groups in the financial services industry. She also leads the firm's corporate social responsibility efforts. Since joining Cerberus in 2018, Shanley has been instrumental in positioning Cerberus to become the top corporate sponsor for multiple nonprofit organizations across New York.

*“I launched Women @ Cerberus, a professional development and networking group supporting female talent through leadership workshops, executive coaching, mentorship programs, and more. I've implemented enhanced parental*



*leave, family-forming benefits, childcare subsidies, and return-to-work strategy for maternity leaves. These resources and the community we've built help support, advance, and attract female talent at all levels."*

**CANDACE A. SUE**  
VP of Academic Relations and Executive Director of Chegg's Center for Digital Learning, *Chegg*



Sue works with education and policy leaders on ways to use technology to support student learning and success. She is also the

executive director of the Center for Digital Learning, the company's think tank for research and policy issues impacting the future of learning in the digital world. Her decades-long career has spanned multiple sectors, including higher education, transportation, pharmaceuticals, consumer products, and banking. Sue serves on the boards of the San Francisco General Hospital Foundation and The Children's Home Society of California.

*"Chegg creates a family-friendly culture that gives working parents the flexibility they need to do their best work. Also, Chegg's innovative Equity for Education program helps employees pay off their student loan debt. These benefits support all employees and can be particularly beneficial to women, who statistically hold the highest percentage of education debt."*

**DEE BROWN**  
Head of Branded Cards and Lending Business Delivery Office, *Citi*



Brown is responsible for Citi's Centralized Program Management Office, Technology Book of Work Investments

and Prioritization, as well as Partner Integration efforts. In addition, she manages execution of regulatory changes and end-to-end systemic conversions processes. Brown is a certified project management professional (PMP) with over 29 years

of expertise in leadership roles across Citi and has helped forge a path for diverse talent, championing DEI efforts, and advocating for mentoring and sponsorship across the firm.

*"In five years, I hope to be with Citi working closer with our amazing clients while helping to drive diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. I would also like to be part of an initiative to drive conversations focused on helping educate women on how to save money, reduce debt, and build wealth. My goal is to continue educating myself and helping women of color become more financially empowered and secure."*

**SHABANA WALKER**  
VP, West Division Customer Experience, *Comcast*



With more than 18 years at Comcast, Walker has relied on her natural curiosity and a start with yes philosophy to propel her

through increasing levels of responsibility in the company's Care organization. Today, she manages the business processes, tools, and teams that drive exceptional customer experiences.

*"In five years, I see myself continuously building the breadth and depth of business acumen needed to make positive business impacts, while at the same time sharing the table and collaborating with those I've had the privilege to bring along and share in my success."*

**NAMRATA KRIPALANI**  
VP, Customer Data and Marketing Technology Transformation, *Dell*



Kripalani and her team are focused on enabling the business and its customers through high-quality data, with transparency

and privacy as key to growing customer trust. These goals are further enhanced by use of automation and real-time intelligence capabilities. Her team accelerates the company's digitization by driving the innovation, build, and

adoption of the technology platforms that fuel modern marketing.

*"I am grateful to have a career built on driving innovation and influencing change to solve difficult business problems. I would like to continue to grow and develop leadership talent who are not afraid to challenge the status quo and are ready to influence others to drive a transformative point of view, all while creating a collaborative environment for success."*

**JOMY TAN**  
Director, Meetings & Events, *Delta Dental*



An experienced events and hospitality professional, Tan leads the strategic implementation of all annual

meetings, conferences, and events for Delta Dental, the nation's largest dental benefits brand. In her more than 15 years of working in the events industry, she has given back to the community through volunteerism, service on advisory boards and committees, and as an adjunct faculty member of the hospitality and tourism program at the College of DuPage.

*"Delta Dental is committed to continually advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Delta Dental Institute supports female researchers and recently launched a campaign to drive greater diversity in the oral health workforce, which will help address industry gender leadership and other equity gaps."*

**CARLY BRITTON**  
Development Events Officer, *Detroit Institute of Arts*



Britton manages the logistics and planning for the Detroit Institute of Arts' largest fundraisers and other fundraising-

related events and activities. In 2022, events under her purview raised more than \$2 million. Prior to joining the DIA, Britton served as the assistant director of alumni, engagement, and

events for the University of Michigan's athletics department. A former NCAA track athlete at the University of Michigan, Britton also works as a personal trainer and nutrition coach through the company she founded three years ago, Diligent Fitness, which is a virtual community focused on women's lifelong fitness and strength.

**ENNA ZARATE**  
VP, Chief Information Officer, *DHL Express*



Zarate is an experienced executive with over 25 years of experience in the consumer goods and logistics industries.

She has a track record of implementing successful IT strategies and innovation projects that help drive cross-functional business goals and improve customer experiences. Zarate is active in two of DHL's programs focused on the environment and society, GoGreen, which promotes environmental conservation, and GoHelp, which promotes disaster preparedness.

*"In five years, no matter the role, I hope to embrace innovation while providing an inclusive environment where individuals from different genders, ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and abilities can contribute their unique insights, challenge the status quo, and drive transformative change."*

**MAGDELENA MAK**  
Director, Financial Planning & Analysis, *Dine Brands*



Mak is an accomplished finance professional with 20 years of experience in accounting and finance. Prior to joining Dine, she

dedicated over 15 years of her career to the entertainment industry, specializing in financial planning and analysis. Currently, Mak leads the IHOP finance team, collaborating closely with the brand. In addition to overseeing financial functions, she serves as a trusted finance advisor, providing valuable analysis and support for strategic business decisions.



*“At Dine, I am given the flexibility I need to balance my work life and family life. Senior leaders are supportive and understanding when it comes to personal responsibilities. These things help female professionals like myself to advance into leadership positions.”*

**MADELYN JORDAN-DAVIS**  
Senior Director and Associate General Counsel, Employment & Litigation, *DocuSign*



As head of DocuSign’s E&L team, Jordan-Davis oversees employment law advice and support for the company’s global

workforce and manages its portfolio of litigation. She has over 20 years of litigation experience specializing in representing private and public employers in workplace-related claims. Most recently, Jordan-Davis led Twitter’s Global Employee Relations team, was a trusted member of the People Leadership Team, and provided advice and guidance to Twitter employees at every level.

*“DocuSign is narrowing the gender leadership gap by actively removing obstacles that have historically prevented women from reaching the upper ranks. Nearing a fifty-fifty employee gender split, we aim to achieve the same for our leadership team by recruiting with intention and investing in development opportunities for prospective and current leaders.”*

**JOI BASS**  
Director of Diversity and Inclusion, *Dollar General Corporation*



In her role at retail giant Dollar General, Bass ensures that the company’s employees feel safe, respected, and connected in

the workplace. She’s responsible for

fostering an environment where employees can bring their whole selves to work. Bass has about 20 years of experience in retail and operations with companies such as Cargill and Target. She also serves on the board of directors for Longview Queens United, which focuses on uplifting communities through collaboration among women, and on the advisory board of the Applied Engineering Technology Program at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

*“Dollar General is committed to a diverse and inclusive workplace with talent readiness programs designed for women, such as the Women in Leadership Program, the Ignite Mentorship Program, and the Leadership Excellence & Empowerment Program. Dollar General ensures fair hiring and promotion practices, striving for gender balance in all roles and at all levels.”*

**RACHEL DORCELIEN**  
Head of Employee Experience & Development, *DoorDash*



Dorcelien oversees the design and delivery of company-wide experiences and development programs. She leads

global functions, including Learning & Development, Internal Mobility, Employee Experience, and Workplace Strategy. During her four years at DoorDash, Dorcelien has scaled several functions and programs that help form the employee experience today, from founding the Internal Communications and Employer Brand teams, to leading the global employee experience for the company’s initial public offering, to launching three new employee resource groups in as many years.

*“In five years, I’d like to be in a similar seat to today’s, helping shepherd an ever-evolving culture of invention, belonging, and continuous learning. My role grows more complex and dynamic as our company grows. As long as I’m building great things that help employees thrive, I’ll never get bored!”*

**ISHITA MAJUMDAR**  
VP, Data Analytics Platforms, *eBay*



Majumdar leads a diverse team of data engineers, scientists, and software developers to ensure efficient collection,

organization, access, and interpretation of all of eBay’s transactional and behavioral data. She is highly respected in eBay for her vast technology expertise, proactive customer engagement, and execution prowess. Majumdar is a champion for diversity and inclusion and actively invests in growing girls and women in tech.

*“In 2022, eBay achieved gender pay equity. We have also made strides for increasing representation of women and underrepresented minorities in leadership and across the company as a whole—important progress to ensuring the eBay community is a richly diverse, truly equitable place for everyone.”*

**VICTORIA CRAIN**  
VP of Global Compliance Governance and Business Ethics, *Experian*



Crain leads the team responsible for designing, implementing, and promoting a culture of compliance with laws and

regulations, as well as assessing and mitigating risks across the enterprise. Crain is also the co-executive sponsor for Experian’s Black Professionals employee resource group.

*“Over the next five years, I’ll diversify my background to evolve our compliance program through specialized training in financial crime, payments, and ESG programs. As Experian builds financial wealth and health initiatives, our Black Professionals ERG will be a partner to drive the innovations that can help the Black community.”*

**AMY BERNIER**  
Senior Director, Multifamily Product Management, *Fannie Mae*



Bernier manages Fannie Mae’s Multifamily Loan Product Development team and has spearheaded the development of social

impact initiatives to create and preserve affordable workforce housing, increase the supply of units available to Housing Choice Voucher renters, and address inequities for renters across the United States. Bernier started her career as an architect working on affordable multifamily housing communities and has continued this path as a community-based affordable housing developer. Prior to her current role, she worked with lenders and borrowers to further Fannie Mae’s mission of providing liquidity to the market.

*“Fannie Mae is committed to creating a more equitable housing finance system by finding innovative solutions to housing affordability, a core part of our mission. I hope to continue supporting programs like our Positive Rent Payment pilot that has helped over 350,000 households by reporting on-time rent payments to help build credit.”*

**RITA COWANS**  
VP of Internal Audit, *FedEx Services, FedEx*



Cowans is responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the audit activities for FedEx US Domestic Operations for FedEx Express,

FedEx Freight, FedEx Ground, and FedEx Logistics, as well as Audit Special Projects Fraud Investigations. Her commitment to excellence has earned her the FedEx Five Star Award (the company’s highest honor) and Internal Audit All-Star Team Awards. Cowans serves on the FedEx Services Executive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee and is the executive sponsor of FedEx’s Black Professional’s Network.

**“At FedEx, diversity, equity, and inclusion is the fundamental building block of our cultural DNA. We strive to create opportunities to connect people to possibilities. We ensure women are actively considered for all levels of leadership by offering extensive development and mentorship opportunities. These programs are designed to build the pipeline of female leaders and promote diversity of ideas; inspire innovation; and create a culture of belonging.”**

**CARLEY DESILLIER**  
VP, Branch Leader, *Fidelity*



Desillier is a vice president, branch leader in a Fidelity Investments Investor Center. In this role, she co-leads a team of

advisors and advocates for them by fostering a culture that motivates, inspires, empowers, and challenges their development so they can pursue their personal and professional goals while providing a world-class planning experience for the families they support. Desillier is a cochair for Aspire, Fidelity's Latinx and Black employee resource group, where she provides strategic direction and partnership on diversity and inclusion initiatives across the enterprise.

**“I want to be in an executive role model and be a leader of leaders. As a passionate advocate of inclusion and the customer experience, in this executive position, I could have a multiplier effect and impact more people. I could help people meet their goals while being a figure of representation for up-and-coming women of color.”**

**KARINYA VERGHESE**  
VP and Chief of Staff, *FINRA*



Vergheese provides strategic support to the executive vice president in various functions that advance FINRA

Enforcement's operational effectiveness

and strategic goals. She also manages the Operations team within Enforcement. Vergheese joined FINRA in 2016 and served as an associate regional director for FINRA's Office of Dispute Resolution until 2020. Prior to joining the government-organized not-for-profit, she worked as a commercial mediator and conflict resolution consultant in Los Angeles and also spent eight years as a corporate lawyer with major Australian law firms in her hometown of Sydney.

**“Breaking through age, racial, and gender stereotypes has made me passionate about helping other women do the same. In five years, I hope to still be advocating for diverse women in the workforce—particularly in the context of negotiation. Despite our incredible progress, there is still more work to do.”**

**NATALIE FLANDERS**  
SVP, Investor Relations Officer,  
*First Horizon Corporation*



In her current role at the financial services company, Flanders leads the company's investor relations strategy,

maintaining and building relationships with investors and analysts, and effectively communicating the company's financial performance and strategies to deliver shareholder value. Flanders's 15 years of experience at Horizon includes asset liability management, corporate development and forecasting, and liquidity and securities portfolio management.

**“I am committed to seeing our communities thrive, and a strong financial system is critically important. We help our clients purchase their first homes and safeguard their deposits. We support entrepreneurs with loans to start new businesses, expand existing ones, and create local jobs. My goal over the next few years is to help drive the strategies that keep our bank strong and stable so that we can continue to share in the growth and success of our communities. Eventually, I would like to serve as the CFO. In the interim, I am focused on strengthening our organization, including developing the next generation of talent and**

**helping ensure the soundness of our financial system.”**

**RUBY MUÑOZ DANG**  
Director of Marketing and Client Services, *Garcia Hamilton & Associates LP*



Dang and her team are responsible for fulfilling client inquiries and providing portfolio information. They work closely with

the consultant community and co-coordinate the firm's participation in educational forums and conference presentations. Dang first joined Garcia Hamilton & Associates in 1994 as a portfolio administrator. Since then, she has held various investment positions, including equity trader, equity research analyst, and assistant equity portfolio manager. She became a partner in 2014. Dang currently serves on the investment advisory committee for the Employees Retirement System of Texas and mentors college and high school students.

**“Closing the gender leadership gap for women, especially women of color, is what we do every day at Garcia Hamilton. We do this by hiring talented women, mentoring them, promoting them to leadership positions, compensating them generously, and welcoming them to the partnership. Approximately 70 percent of our GHA team are women, and over 52 percent of the firm is owned by women partners. The key to our firm's success has been the inclusion of women in every area and at every level of the firm. We're just getting started!”**

**RITA WONG**  
Executive Director, Head of Parental Launch and New Technologies, *Genentech*



Wong has spent more than 30 years in biotechnology, focusing on development and commercialization of life-saving

therapies in oncology, immunology, and other complex disease areas. She leads a

team that leverages engineering capabilities to develop and implement new manufacturing processes for Genentech's commercialized medicine. An advocate for developing early-in-career talent, Wong started the Process Development Rotation Program at Genentech in 2006 and champions US biomanufacturing workforce development as industry cochair for Workforce Talent at the National Institute of Innovation in Biopharmaceutical Manufacturing.

**“Having a good start to your career is so important. It can be daunting to navigate your first role. That's why my goal is to have successfully scaled a hands-on practical approach for early-in-career technical talents, especially focusing on underrepresented groups. And I want to write my first novel!”**

**VALEISHA BUTTERFIELD JONES**  
VP of Partnerships and Engagement, *Google*



Butterfield Jones has made diversity and inclusion central to her two-decade career. In addition to serving as the global head of

inclusion for Google, she has worked as copresident and chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer of the Recording Academy, which oversees the Grammy Awards; as national youth vote director of the 2012 Obama for America campaign; and as national director of diversity and inclusion for the Alzheimer's Association. She has special expertise at the intersection of tech, entertainment, and politics.

**“I am committed to using my influence to uplift future leaders, close the gender gap, and create opportunities for the next generation of women. I believe everyone deserves to reach their full potential, regardless of gender. That is why I have set a personal goal to inspire at least 50 million women to live their best lives and reach for the highest version of themselves over the next five years. Diversity of thought and experience are essential for success, and I am devoted to creating a world where everyone can thrive.”**



**AMBER JONES**  
Audit Senior Manager,  
Grant Thornton



In addition to her role as audit senior manager in Houston, Jones serves as the local office champion of Grant

Thornton's Black Professionals & Allies business resource group, which helps develop, advance, and retain the firm's Black professionals. She is also actively involved in the company's diversity recruiting efforts and has over ten years of experience serving private and public companies in the energy industry.

*"I'm very passionate about mentoring and inspiring the future leaders of the world. Five years from now, I hope to make partner, continue to help the firm develop a more diverse workplace, and do whatever I can to help those around me continue to excel."*

**LAUREN LACEY**  
VP, Deputy General Counsel,  
Assistant Secretary, and Chief  
Compliance Officer, *The Hershey  
Company*



Lacey has over 17 years of in-house experience, including two tours at The Hershey Company and one at US Foods Inc. She

began her career in Baltimore, Maryland, as a litigator before moving in-house at Hershey. During her first 10 years, Lacey led legal support for litigation, regulatory, marketing, sales, and global businesses (United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil), including the global Chocolate and Sweets & Refreshments SBUs.

*"Hershey has a long legacy of advancing gender leadership that is a key element of the company's enterprise DEI strategy. We have set a goal to have women occupy 40 to 42 percent of all people leader roles by 2025."*

**MONICA OLIVERIO**  
VP, General Administration, American Honda Motor Co., *Honda*



In her role, Oliverio oversees regionalized services including Facilities, Corporate Services, Company

Vehicle Administration, and Indirect Procurement. She began her career at Honda in 1994 as a parts buyer for the Motorcycle Purchasing Division of Honda of America Mfg. Inc.

*"Honda has allowed me to take on new roles and continue learning from my associates and our suppliers. No matter where I am in Honda, my true role is in mentoring associates and helping them reach their full potential. In the future, I see myself holding the door wide open for the next generation."*

**CHEQUETTA DESSOURCES**  
VP of Procurement, Openings  
& Renovations, Americas,  
*IHG Hotels & Resorts*



After joining IHG in 2014 as FF&E procurement manager, Dessources worked as a finance manager and then rejoined

procurement as a director working with various IHG brands, brand supply chain, mainstream brand design, and hotel openings in the Americas region. She was promoted to head of Hotel Procurement Strategy & Support in 2020, and most recently served as regional vice president of Hotel Purchasing Service, Americas, building a critical new capability for IHG's owners to manage turnkey solutions that include sourcing, purchasing, shipping, and installing furniture, fixtures, and equipment. Dessources has been part of three IHG leadership programs—Leading in Finance, Pathways Live, and Ascend—and cochair of IHG's Black Employee Resource Group.

*"My five-year plan revolves around transforming into my best self. I enjoy developing high-performing teams and want to be an integral part of IHG's growth journey. I*

*will champion diversity, mentor, and sponsor actively. Lastly, I will prioritize my personal well-being as I pursue my professional endeavors."*

**SHIREEN BRAUN**  
Head of Client Services, *Insurance  
Quantified*



Braun delivers innovative client onboarding, professional services, and client success programs to clients. She and her team

enable clients to adapt to new market conditions while driving insights for underwriter decisionmaking. Braun is passionate about customer success and leveraging technology and talent programs to drive original service solutions. Prior to Insurance Quantified, Braun held various leadership positions at Bloomberg LP for 14 years, and most recently was managing director, Global Client Success at IHS Markit.

*"Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace is an ongoing effort that requires commitment, dedication, and a willingness to adapt. By taking a holistic approach centered around the women themselves, we can successfully develop and maintain female diversity, leading to a more inclusive and innovative work environment. We do the usual things—ensuring our recruiting, development, [and] policies are equitable and attractive to all—and we do it with a lot of heart. The real difference is in how we operate day-to-day—how we support the mom that needs to walk out to pick up a sick kid, how we deliver feedback, and the collaborative work culture we've built to foster an environment where everyone is empowered to have a voice."*

**CAROL TATE**  
VP, Chief Compliance Officer, *Intel*



Tate leads Intel's global ethics and legal compliance team and global network of ethics and integrity champions. She

co-chairs Intel's ethics and compliance

oversight committee and periodically reports to the audit and finance committee of Intel's board of directors. Before joining Intel in 2016, Tate served as the chief ethics and compliance officer of McCarthy Building Companies Inc., the vice president of compliance and investigations at Flextronics, and senior counsel at Motorola Inc. She has also served as a senior attorney in the US Securities and Exchange Commission and worked as a commercial litigation attorney in the law firms of Wildman Harrold and Thompson Coburn LLP.

*"The future I envision is one in which I have the privilege of being a driving force to not only grow and groom thought leaders within Intel but also to cultivate new pathways for those whose diversity of thought and innovation unleash the power and promise within themselves [and] within each other, and serve the professions and communities they choose."*

**HUMERA SHAHID**  
Head of Diversity, Equity,  
Inclusion, and Talent  
Development, *Intuit*



Shahid has over 20 years of experience in the talent field focused on growing companies fueled by highly engaged

talent. Her aim is to build great leaders who drive powerful cultures and business impact. Her passion lies in building a diverse and inclusive environment where individuals are supported and can do the best work of their lives by learning new skills, taking on challenging assignments, and growing their career in a thriving organization.

*"In the next five years, I hope our workforce continues to reflect the diverse communities we serve, where all employees experience Intuit as a place where they can do the best work of their lives. As a senior leader, my goal is to have our diversity fuel advancements in generative AI and technology innovation in a transformational way for our customers."*



## TRACY JOSHUA

VP, External Supply Chain,  
Kellogg Company



Joshua oversees Kellogg's network of roughly 50 co-manufacturers, co-packers, and third-party value-added

service providers. She is known for her transformational and collaborative leadership style and for her advocacy for greater female presence across the entire supply chain. Passionate about service to the community, Joshua serves on the board of Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council and was appointed to the Michigan Women's Commission by Governor Gretchen Whitmer in 2021.

***"I'm proud to be part of an organization and leadership team that is committed to everyone feeling fulfilled and having a seat at the table. As part of its Better Days Promise ESG strategy, Kellogg has set an aspirational goal of fifty-fifty [gender] parity at the management level globally by the end of 2025—and we're on track to achieve it, reaching 45.7 percent at the end of 2022."***

## JYOTI MISHRA

VP, Marketing Analytics, Kohl's



Mishra is responsible for using data and analytics to better serve the needs of Kohl's large and diverse customer base. She

leads a group of highly talented, highly skilled data scientists and insights specialists and prides herself on building and nurturing diverse and inclusive teams. Before joining Kohl's, Mishra held leadership positions at American Express and PwC.

***"At Kohl's, we are committed to increasing BIPOC members and women in senior roles. We continue to make progress by investing at the recruiting stage and ensuring we cultivate and develop underrepresented talent through development opportunities, mentorship programs, and sponsorships."***

## ASHLEIGH GIBSON

Director, Marketing and Strategy—  
Mac and Cheese, Kraft Heinz



Gibson leads the \$2 billion Mac and Cheese retail business at Kraft Heinz, where she is responsible for delivering both the short-term

financial goals and long-term vision for brands in her portfolio. She is also cochair of the company's Black Business Resource Group. In 2022, Gibson was recognized by the Brand Innovators Women in Marketing—Industry Innovation Awards for her thought leadership in CPG—Food and Beverage marketing.

***"Kraft Heinz is committed to attracting, retaining, and developing women at all levels and in all corners of the organization. Five years from now, I plan on being in an executive leadership position where I'm solving problems and creating meaningful impact for different stakeholders—consumers, customers, shareholders, employees, and society."***

## MARISSA VARGAS

VP and Director, Global DEI  
Strategy, Planning, Operations,  
and Messaging, Liberty Mutual



Vargas and her team support and develop the DEI enterprise strategy and plans and lead DEI messaging and team

operations. Through DEI practices and principles, she helps leaders connect more effectively with their teams so they can achieve their business outcomes. Her dedication to the DEI mission in the workplace stems from her early commitment to promoting business leadership in the Hispanic/Latinx community.

***"We've been intentional in building an inclusive workplace that strives to meet the needs of the whole woman, with offerings to support work-life integration, development, expanded family benefits, and more. [The] Liberty Mutual [workforce] is now 54.5 percent women, and we're***

***committed to sustaining progress and ensuring equitable opportunities for women at all levels."***

**SEMOINE MCCRAY**  
Senior Finance Director,  
Shared Services, Lowe's



McCray joined Lowe's in 2021 and is responsible for providing financial leadership and strategic decision support for

human resources, finance, legal, and the office of the CEO. She leads the shared services finance team in managing the spend by each of the areas while driving the most value. Before joining Lowe's, she served as senior finance director over merchant enterprises and Canadian accounts at Fiserv. She also previously held roles at Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems, Equifax, and Cap Gemini Ernst & Young.

***"I am very proud that Lowe's is intentional about including women in leadership teams across all functions and levels in the organization. My favorite experience is the annual Women's Leadership Summit, which is a full day dedicated to celebrating the success and journeys of women internal and external to Lowe's and [is] fully supported by our male allies, who are also in attendance."***

**DOMINIQUE R. JENKINS**  
Assistant Director, Author Events,  
Macmillan Publishers



As part of Macmillan's author events team, Jenkins supports bookstores and other venues and 60-plus publicists

throughout the event process, including tour and event strategy, recommendations, best practices, and tracking and troubleshooting book orders. She provides strategic data to help publicists plan tours in new markets, identifies and shares author event trends and strategy with internal and external event stakeholders, and manages industry-facing trade shows in partnership with the sales, publicity, and marketing teams. Prior to arriving at Macmillan in

2017, Jenkins worked in academic conventions and library marketing at Penguin. She is an active participant in the Macmillan Latinx Voices and Black African American Group employee resource groups, where she helps to amplify the voices of authors of color and create an atmosphere of inclusion.

***"I would like to be on an expanded team where I can continue to create opportunities of discoverability for BIPOC and Latinx authors for bookstores, venues, and readers, using the platform of author events to give the new voices the stage to showcase their work in spaces of inclusiveness."***

## LOLA FAWOLE

VP, Global Human Relations Strategy, Technology and Operations,  
McCormick & Company



At global food industry giant McCormick, Fawole is responsible for the vision, strategy, governance, and metrics

necessary to continue strengthening the company's HR operating model in partnership with global enablement hire-to-retain. She oversees the continued development of the company's HR data analytics and technology strategy and teams as she leads streamlined, standardized, and global end-to-end processes. She is also responsible for enterprise organizational effectiveness, as well as HR global policies, procedures, and risk mitigation. Fawole oversees centralized and administrative facilities and related real estate to ensure an optimal employee experience. She is a member of McCormick's Global HR Senior Leadership Council and has also served McCormick as vice president of its global human relations operations. Previously, Fawole held HR leadership positions with Moen, Energizer, and Johnson Controls.

***"My five-year vision includes leading people and driving global transformational change that has a positive impact on our workforce, customers, consumers, and the communities in which we live, work, and operate. I want to continue to enjoy work that is in service to others and propels inclusive engagement."***

**INGRID MILLÁN**

Partner, *McKinsey & Company*



Millan is a leader in McKinsey's digital supply chain practice, focused on unlocking supply and leap-frogging operations in

consumer goods and life sciences companies. She also leads diversity, equity, and inclusion talent attraction efforts and co-leads McKinsey's Hispanic and Latino Network in North America. Millan cofounded McKinsey's Hispanic and Latino Economic Forum and is currently leading McKinsey's Hispanic and Latino Executive Academy, a training program offered, at no cost, to help organizations make demonstrable progress on inclusion and equity, improve talent pipelines, and unlock the full potential of Hispanic and Latino leaders within companies.

*"I aspire to expand my impact for the next generation of Latina leaders through opportunity creation, apprenticeship, and the continued expansion of structured programs and a network of change agents."*

**MELISSA MIMS**

AVP and Head of US Medical Affairs Oncology, *Merck*



In over 25 years of pharmaceutical experience across several therapeutic areas, most notably oncology, Mims has

led several cross-functional teams, managed complexities, and developed talent. In her current role at Merck, she provides strategic direction and oversight for the US gastrointestinal oncology field medical team. Mims has led medical affairs D&I initiatives and has been instrumental in coordinating and implementing new ways of working across the company.

*"In five years, I want to be impacting global health by leveraging my extensive experience, unique voice, and influence to challenge the status quo and [extract] the power of our people for the benefit of patients."*

**ADRIENNE HUGHES**

Managing Director, National Client Experience Executive, *Merrill Lynch Wealth Management*



An experienced builder and leader of global financial teams, Hughes has long been recognized for successfully

bringing people together across functions, geographies, and generations and for leveraging her teams' diversities in the United States, United Kingdom, and United Arab Emirates. Prior to her current role developing and overseeing national client experience strategy at Merrill Lynch Wealth Management, she led Merrill's Chicago West and Central Florida markets. Hughes has worked on numerous initiatives focused on women and children, people of color, millennials, and gen Zers and is currently on the board of directors for After School Matters, a nonprofit serving more than 19,000 Chicago-area teens.

*"It is a privilege and responsibility to shepherd the wealth of a generation—one I take with the utmost care. Regardless of what we may have been told, our money, our finances, our businesses are personal. Respecting and honoring that and every personal connection is true success."*

**FATIMA KARDAR**

VP, Chief Advisor, and COO of the Office of the CTO, *Microsoft*



Kardar has a passion for technology, for making a positive impact on the world, and for building innovative products that

solve real problems. She is a seasoned technology leader who has experience building and overseeing large, diverse

cross-functional teams. Kardar is the D&I executive sponsor for her division at Microsoft and supports various industry-wide diversity programs, such as the LEAP Apprenticeship Program and Pakistani Women in Computing.

*"AI has the potential to transform lives, empower millions of people, and address some of the most pressing challenges in education, health, agriculture, and more. I hope not just to witness this AI-driven prosperity but [also] be part of driving this positive and lasting impact on the world in an equitable manner."*

**CARLA VINALS, PHD**

VP, Head of Regulatory Strategy for Infectious Diseases, *Moderna*



Vinals has been active in vaccine development for her entire career and played a crucial role in the authorization

and distribution of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. She has been a leader in managing regulatory issues for more than 16 years, during which she has provided scientific evidence to health agencies worldwide. Born and raised in Spain, Vinals studied biology in Belgium and was exposed to the early days of computational biology and human genome sequencing projects. She has led cross-functional project teams in creating vaccines for such devastating diseases as pediatric diarrhea and tuberculosis. She continues to lead efforts in originating new mRNA vaccines and pandemic preparedness programs.

*"In five years, I hope to be actively engaged in learning and contributing to the development of new medicines that have a meaningful impact on people's lives. I also aspire to continue building and leading diverse teams, fostering company growth, and promoting equity beyond gender and labels."*

**CLARA SIERRA**

Senior Director, Business Development and Global Sales, *Moody's Analytics*



As senior director, industry practice lead for Moody's Analytics' asset management segment, Sierra, a

proven leader in strategic planning and marketing, leads the company's C-Suite Client Conversations and builds on existing client relationships to expand the firm's brand and sales efforts in the financial services industry. Prior to joining Moody's, Sierra served as senior vice president and senior business development officer at Amundi Pioneer and held leadership positions at Sentinel Investments and AIG Advisor Group.

*"What I want to see myself doing five years from now is continuing to shine a positive light on the financial services industry. It's a wonderful industry for those who are unafraid to do more and be more and be the change that this industry needs. . . . I want to continue to build my craft, continue to grow in this space but allow other men and women to see me, to see my work—a Latina, an Afro-Latina, a working mom thriving in this industry. If you can see it, you can be it."*

**WENLI WANG**

Partner, *Moss Adams*



Wang leads Moss Adams' China Practice, serving as cultural ambassador and business advisor for clients across various

industries. She is also responsible for the firm's brand building, culture, and team growth and development at its Silicon Valley and Salinas locations and has been involved in numerous firm initiatives, serving on the tax committee, Forum W advisory board, and partner admission committee. Her greatest passion is coaching and mentoring professionals inside and outside of Moss Adams.



*"I am committed to paying it forward and building a legacy. Five years from now, I want to be focusing my impact across the broader firm, developing and empowering a diverse set of partners and senior leaders through intentional advocacy and coaching."*

**MAMTA PATEL NAGARAJA**  
Associate Chief Scientist for Exploration and Applied Research, NASA



In her more than 20 years at NASA, Nagaraja has served in a variety of roles, including program scientist for space biology,

deputy division director for science communications, lead mechanical engineer for scientific instrument design, and instructor of astronauts for space missions. Today, she advises NASA's chief scientist on exploration and biomedical and physical sciences performed by humans in space. Nagaraja is passionate about increasing diversity and inclusivity in science and enjoys mentoring others to help them find their best career pathways.

*"In five years, I hope I'll be in a role where I am able to help people more directly. That could be a leadership role at NASA where I guide a team to be their best selves together as a unit and individually. That could be an opportunity in my community leading teams who are bridging the access gap for clean water. Or maybe a chance to develop low-cost medical equipment for areas around the world, perhaps using NASA technology as a foundational design."*

**JULIA METCALF**  
AVP, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging, Navy Federal Credit Union



Metcalf has over 15 years of leadership experience in the financial services and machine manufacturing industries and is a proud

United States Air Force veteran. Her

passion is creating a culture where employees are inspired to bring their whole selves to work and to reach their full potential. Since November 2021, Metcalf has led the Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team at the not-for-profit, member-owned Navy Federal Credit Union, which strategizes and implements programs and communications for a workforce of over 23,000 employees.

*"Five years from now, I would love for our DI&B initiatives to be embedded throughout every stage of our navy federal employees' careers. Supported by strong allyship, this will allow them to grow into the best professional versions of themselves and reach their potential."*

**CHARLENE POLITE CORLEY**  
VP, Diverse Insights & Partnerships, Nielsen



Polite Corley is passionate about representation in the media. After joining Nielsen in 2009 as a member of the Emerging

Leaders Program, she grew her career through roles in local and national television client service. Today, as a part of the DEI team, she is responsible for thought leadership and leveraging Nielsen data that enables the perspectives, needs, and value of historically excluded groups to be more fully understood. In this role, she regularly collaborates with media industry and advocacy organizations to drive equity and awareness for diverse communities. Outside of Nielsen, Polite Corley is an event speaker, career mentor, adjunct professor, and founding member of the Washington, DC, chapter of Chief, the private network for women leaders.

*"I would like to lead a dynamic team of researchers to deliver insights that guide a more inclusive media industry. I'll be able to do my best work on the job and at home, bringing creativity, energy, and excellence to my organization, my family, and my community."*

**NIKKI KODAMA**  
VP and B-2 Spirit Program Manager, Northrop Grumman



For more than two decades, Kodama has worked at global aerospace, defense, and security giant Northrop Grumman.

Today she oversees all areas of the B-2 program, which includes the development, sustainment, and modernization of the long-range stealth bomber. Kodama is the executive cosponsor of Women in Science and Engineering, an enterprise-wide program that encourages women to pursue technical career paths.

*"Northrop Grumman invests in developing women leaders at various career levels through skills building, mentorships, and networking. Our Women in Leadership and Women in Science and Engineering programs and [our] Women's International Network cultivate inclusive communities of support. Knowledge is power, and organizational empowerment is critical to closing the gender gap."*

**KARENA BROWN**  
Patient Care Nurse Manager, Northwestern Memorial Hospital



As patient care nurse manager, Brown has piloted various initiatives on her unit and is often looked to when hospital

rollouts occur. In fiscal year 2022, her unit was asked to lead a length-of-stay improvement pilot project. Under her leadership, Brown's team identified five solutions to improve length-of-stay on her 30-bed medicine unit, which resulted in building a case for additional full-time social work employees. She was also granted approval to work on a health equity project titled Setting the Tone: Improving Early Identification of Hospital Acquired Pressure Injuries Wounds in Darker Skin Tones, and is currently developing a tool to support skin assessments and pressure injury identification for patients of color.

*"When I think about my future self, I envision myself working in the lane of health equity. I have a passion for creating a more diverse workforce and supporting, growing, and developing the underdogs. In order to provide quality equitable care for patients, you need to have a workforce that is diverse at every level and committed to the mission. Health care is always changing, and if we want to be at the forefront, we have to do things we haven't done before."*

**CASSADY CRAWFORD**  
Senior Data Analyst, Nuveen



Crawford oversees data distribution across all departments at Nuveen, a TIAA investment company. In her role as

senior data analyst, she uses her extensive background in data analysis to guide the transformation of raw data into meaningful insights that will optimize business operations and enhance customer experience. Crawford enjoys using data to solve complex challenges and tell compelling stories that drive organizational growth.

*"I am currently studying to become a chartered financial analyst. Five years from now, I plan to be a portfolio manager. I am looking forward to breaking barriers in a male-dominated industry."*

**ANGIE VINEZ**  
Inside Sales Manager, Panel Built Inc.



As inside sales manager for Panel Built Inc., one of the fastest growing companies in the modular building industry, Vinez

trains and motivates her team members to provide the best possible solution for their customers, set and reach personal and team sales goals, quote large and complex projects, and ensure customers are given superior service. Vinez started at Panel Built's front desk six years ago



and quickly worked her way into management. Her passion is leading others and helping them reach their life and career goals.

*"In the past five years, I've seen Panel Built almost triple in size. We are currently on target to just keep growing! Five years from now, I would love to be heading up a larger sales division and doing what I love most: training salespeople to solve our customers' needs with excellence and great customer service. That's what Panel Built was founded on, and that's what makes this company so great. If I can lead a larger team to do what I am passionate about, I'll be thrilled."*

**HUI WANG**  
VP, Global Analytics and Data Science, *PayPal*



Wang manages the analytics and data science team developing insights, data mining, and machine learning

technologies for PayPal. Her team is responsible for the fraud and risk models that are the backbone of PayPal's risk management and for various AI markup language solutions to support personalization and recommendation, among other areas. In her previous role at PayPal as director of Global Risk Sciences, her team won a ComputerWorld 2015 Data+ Editor's Choice Award and she received the 2016 Women in Payments USA Innovation Award.

*"I hope to continue the work my team and I are doing—leveraging AI and machine learning to create better and safer experiences for people. I'd also love to devote more time to improving diversity in AIML fields, as it has been a passion of mine for several years."*

**LORNA BRYANT, EDD**  
Head of Career Education, *Pearson*



Bryant has spent 25-plus years working to identify and create the most effective educational and postsecondary options for

children regardless of geographic, socioeconomic, or other circumstances. As the first woman in her family to receive a high school diploma, Bryant understands the power of connections and relationships in setting young people on the path to successful and fulfilling careers. Facilitating those connections and relationships has been Bryant's primary professional focus for the past decade, including in her current role as head of career education for Pearson Virtual Schools, notably its Connections Academy online schools for grades K through 12. Bryant's career in education began in the classroom as a middle and high school English and history teacher.

*"I hope to see education transformed such that every young person—regardless of who they are or where they come from—can pursue the career that's most fulfilling to them. And I hope to say that I played a part in opening minds and doors that made that possible."*

**ALLETTA BRENNER**  
Partner, *Perkins Coie*



Brenner focuses her practice on complex product liability litigation, representing clients in court as well as

advising companies on how to think strategically and manage risk before a lawsuit is ever filed. She works with clients in a variety of industries but with an emphasis on the aviation and high-tech sectors and emerging technologies. Brenner also has an active pro bono practice that ranges from representing families seeking asylum in the United States to defending and protecting the rights of people who identify as LGBTQ+.

*"Perkins Coie has long recognized that increasing the number of women in firm leadership is essential to building stronger teams, enhancing workplace culture, and delivering better solutions for clients. In some of our most prominent offices, the majority of partners are women, and firm-wide, approximately half of our executive committee members and practice group chairs are women."*

**MONTERRAT FUENTES-EDWARDS**  
Regional VP, Pacific West Region, *PetSmart*



A proven leader with a passion for both people and pets, Fuentes-Edwards has been with PetSmart for more than 27

years, starting out as a senior store director, moving up to district manager and regional director positions, and now serving as regional vice president for the Pacific West. She has chaired the company's D&I field committee for a decade, and in 2021, she was named PetSmart's regional vice president of the year.

*"We are closing the gap with deliberate steps. About 70 percent of PetSmart associates are women, so intentional leadership development and empowerment is [a] natural priority. Our Women Inspiring Strength & Excellence associate resource group is one of the many resources we offer to foster direct mentorship and development."*

**ANGELA RIEMER**  
VP, Global Policy and Public Affairs, Oncology, *Pfizer*



Before assuming her current role, Riemer led Pfizer's Federal Government Relations team. She began health

policy work at Medco Health Solutions as a director in the company's government affairs division. Riemer is a member of the Silver Spring (Maryland) chapter of The Links and the Montgomery

County (Maryland) Chapter of Jack and Jill of America. She also serves on the board of directors of the Public Affairs Council.

*"Pfizer has parity goals for women at the VP and above levels attached to specific metrics. I am proud that we address gender leadership with this kind of rigor and focus. Pfizer Women's Resource Group provides support, developmental opportunities, mentoring, and networking events to help its members enhance their skills and advance their careers."*

**HELENA YOON**  
Trust Solutions Partner, *PwC*



Yoon brings her deep knowledge and understanding of technology, risk, and trust to some of the firm's premier clients. She

also leads and advises internal DEI initiatives, including the PwC DEI Partner Council, which guides the PwC US leadership team by bringing diverse thinking and insights to the execution of PwC's DEI strategy. Her passion and aspiration is to foster a culture of belonging and maximize potential in talent and teams.

*"I'd like to continue fostering PwC's culture as a model of DEI in professional services and beyond. As a Korean woman and mother, I've experienced PwC 'walk the talk' and hope to amplify this work of cultivating inclusion and trust. In the 1960s, only 18 percent of employees entering the workforce had underrepresented backgrounds, and today it's 48 percent."*

**REVA SHAKKOTAI**  
Financial Advisor and Branch Director, *RBC Wealth Management*



As a financial advisor and branch director of the Manhattan Beach, California, office of RBC Wealth Management,

Shakkotai harnesses her extensive background in finance and economics

to strategize growing and protecting wealth. She also serves on the Anderson alumni board of directors of the University of California, Los Angeles, and is a member of the Beverly Hills Estate Planning Council.

***“In five years, my goal is to have used my leadership platform to influence equitable access to financial advice and products. Women control over half of the wealth in the US, yet they are underserved by the wealth management industry. I would like to change that and put women’s needs front and center.”***

**CARLA H. MCINTOSH**  
VP of Global Talent Acquisition,  
Reddit



McIntosh is responsible for strengthening and scaling Reddit’s global workforce. With more than 24 years of experience leading talent

organizations, she brings a genuine passion for people and a proven record of building world-class recruiting practices and teams. McIntosh most recently served as the US Head of Talent Acquisition for Google’s first-ever US Operations Center and previously held several roles across People Operations. She is also a US Air Force veteran and founded a technical recruitment firm.

***“Reddit is committed to empowering our women employees as part of our community-based culture. Over half of our executive team are women, and we offer a curated professional development curriculum, mentorship programs, and women-focused ERG groups that are all geared toward the development of our women employees.”***

**AISHA FLETCHER**  
VP, Communications, US Brands,  
Restaurant Brands International



Fletcher leads communications for iconic RBI brands, including Burger King, Popeyes, and Firehouse Subs. She

brings a multifaceted skill set to her strategic approach with expertise across many functions of her role, including franchisee, executive and internal communications, and public relations. She is passionate about building and retaining high-performing teams and understands the importance of the infusion of diverse perspectives and inclusion in the brands she supports.

***“I see myself working with a team who is diverse and whose unique perspectives go beyond guiding how something is communicated. Instead, we are communicators who use our deep understanding of audiences to influence leadership teams on what problems to solve and where time should be spent that takes storytelling and culture to the next level.”***

**SANDHYA RAWAL**  
VP, Strategic Initiatives and Corporate Development, Elixir, Rite Aid



Rawal is an innovative leader dedicated to improving patient outcomes by focusing on efficient care delivery. She

previously worked at McKinsey, supporting a variety of health-care companies on strategic and operational transformations. Rawal then joined Rite Aid’s leadership team, partnering with executive leadership on Rite Aid’s “whole health” mission for their patients.

***“In five years, my goal is to continue to further our US health care system in its service of patient access, outcomes, and experience. In addition, I hope to continue to support diversity in leadership across health-care and serve as a mentor for the next generation of leaders.”***

**URSULA WORTH**  
VP, Channel Sales and Strategic Partnerships, Samsara



Worth is a channel and alliances executive with more than two decades of experience across various industries, including

mainframe technologies, distributed applications, Cloud/SaaS, MarTech, artificial intelligence/machine learning, transportation/logistics, and IoT. An accomplished leader who is passionate about partnerships, Worth has expertise in channel development, channel management, direct sales, marketing, strategic planning, partner enablement, operations, and global e-commerce strategies. Worth is also an award-winning singer/songwriter.

***“Samsara takes proactive measures to increase the representation and retention of women and underrepresented individuals in leadership positions by strategically recruiting from a pool of talented candidates at the leadership tier and by running a company-wide mentorship program that caters to women at every level and promotes professional development.”***

**DOMINIQUE WHITE**  
Engineering Lead, LCLS-II HE Project, SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory



White is an engineering lead for the LCLS-II HE Project, the first X-ray free-electron laser facility to be based on continuous-

wave superconducting accelerator technology, at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. A strong believer in promoting STEM education, she was a founding executive committee member for SAGE-S, a camp that gives high school students a look into the world of the National Labs.

***“I’m excited to see SLAC continue to invest in the Women@SLAC Employee Resource Group mentorship program. For years, it has connected women across the lab. It teaches early-career***

***employees how to advocate for themselves and shape their careers, putting more women on track for leadership positions.”***

**ALI MINNICK**  
General Manager, Global Business Advisory Services,  
Slalom Consulting



Minnick is responsible for setting the global direction for the 3,500-plus business advisory consultants at Slalom,

accelerating customer impact and market growth by driving innovation. With nearly 20 years as a strategy consultant and business leader, she pushes the boundaries of what is possible for herself and those around her. Outside of Slalom, Minnick is a founding member of Chief, a private group for C-suite women that is committed to supporting female leaders.

***“We’ve made a commitment to achieve gender parity across Slalom by or before the end of 2025. As of 2021, 44 percent of our new hires were women, and in total, we are at 40.2 percent female employees. Our most recent executive hires—including our CTO, CMO and chief of people—are women.”***

**CHANTAL RANDOLPH-SCHALL**  
VP of Operations, Sodexo



Randolph-Schall’s international hospitality experiences range from fine-dining restaurants to hotel catering to aviation

lounges. Her career started in West Africa, where she first discovered her passion for the culinary arts. Randolph-Schall’s dedication to food service and to service in general is reflected in her time both inside and outside of Sodexo. She is an avid participant in her community, supporting local community farming practices and refugee career placement in the food and beverage industry.



*"In five years, I would like to be preparing for my next role. My team's communal goal is to support our businesses that are evolving in the food and beverage landscape. I want to be the sort of mentor that gave me priceless advice, cheered me on, and told me to be fearless."*

**MELISSA ANDREWS**  
DoD Sales Engineering, *Splunk*



Andrews leads the Department of Defense sales engineering teams at Splunk. She is a career sales engineer who entered the

field through a training program at Oracle Corporation. A skilled technical presenter and facilitator, she is adept at working with customers to discover their pain points and helping them use technology to address them, as well as keeping them informed and trained about advances. Andrews is also the vice president of Splunk's Black employee resource group, BEAMS.

*"We must increase the numbers of women of color in leadership. Not only will it help inspire others, it's important that the perspective we bring to leadership is heard in our companies. I'd like to be a senior leader in a technical sales organization or an executive chief of staff."*

**ARNITA CURTIS**  
VP, Product Management, *Sprout Social*



Curtis has played an instrumental role in scaling the product team at Sprout Social and has been integral to the company's

growth, from Series B funding to initial public offering to more than \$300 million in annual recurring revenue. She helped build a world-class product team

that expanded sevenfold, increasing headcount from 30 to 350-plus full-time employees across key product functions, such as engineering, design, and product management. Thanks to her strong leadership, the product management team has also grown from two people to 50-plus during this period. Currently, Curtis leads the company's largest product line and oversees other key departments, such as product operations.

*"In five years, I want to continue prioritizing quality time with my family. As for my career goals, I aim to lead large products at a successful company with over \$1 billion in revenue. And on top of that, I want to give back more to the community by volunteering and participating in philanthropic efforts."*

**CHERIZZA LUNDY**  
VP of Strategy and Chief of Staff to the CEO, *Stitch Fix*



Lundy is responsible for developing and driving Stitch Fix's wide enterprise strategy, overseeing the overall

execution of the company strategic plan through objectives and key results, and cascading the strategy to the organization and the board. In addition to her role leading strategy, Lundy manages the day-to-day operations of the Stitch Fix executive team, provides direct support to the CEO, and leads corporate internal communications. Prior to joining Stitch Fix, she worked as a cross-functional strategy and operations individual contributor in the office of the CEO at Google, where she co-led Google's 2020 racial equity commitments.

*"In five years, I would like to be doing much of the same as now, which is being in a leadership position at a company during a time of transformation. I am passionate about working for organizations that are in service to their clients—helping them do something better, smarter, or faster."*

**LINDSAY WILLIAMS HIRSCH**  
VP, Strategy & Portfolio Governance, *Sysco*



Williams Hirsch oversees Sysco's end-to-end strategic planning process and governance of the company's

strategic initiative portfolio, the Recipe for Growth, delivering programs on time, at budget, and with expected benefits. She works closely with the executive leadership team to ensure progress and focus on Sysco's strategic priorities. While attending Harvard Business School, Williams Hirsch led Manbassadors for the Women Student Association, which engaged men on campus to actively promote gender equity at the business school and beyond.

*"At Sysco, everyone has a seat at our table. This is demonstrated by the diversity of our executive leadership team; Sysco's longtime sponsorship of Women's Foodservice Forum, which provides unparalleled development and networking opportunities; and our strong Colleague Resource Group network, including the recent addition of Mothers Offering Mentorship, launched to support working moms."*

**ALISA DALTON**  
Senior Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Culture & Belonging, *Target*



Dalton leads the team responsible for Target's DE&I progress and strategy, focused on building a diverse workforce,

equitable work environments, and inclusive guest experiences while driving positive societal impact. She reports directly to Target's chief diversity and inclusion officer and SVP of Talent & Change. With more than 15 years of experience, Dalton has built high-performing teams and driven progress across Target's business. She is passionate about creating cultures of

belonging and support that help every team member achieve their full potential.

*"Having spent 15 years at Target across Operations, HR, and now DEI, I have a profound appreciation for our frontline team members and leaders. In the next five years, I want to advance a sense of belonging in a way that has reach into the communities we live and operate in."*

**WHITNEY PENNINGTON RODGERS**  
Current Affairs Curator, *TED*



Pennington Rodgers is an award-winning journalist and media professional. Prior to joining TED, she was a producer for *Dateline NBC*,

*NBC's* primetime newsmagazine. During her time in the media industry, she earned both an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award and a News & Documentary Emmy for her contributions to the *Dateline* special "The Cosby Accusers Speak," an exclusive, in-depth group interview with 27 of the women who accused actor and comedian Bill Cosby of sexual misconduct.

*"TED is the archetype for promoting world-changing ideas like closing the gender gap. From amplifying women's voices in our content to philanthropically supporting initiatives that empower women to appointing women as leaders in our own organization, TED is doing the work every day to make true gender equity a reality."*

**TIEISHA SMITH**  
Head of Tech Partnerships, Acceleration, and Culture Transformation, *TIAA*



In her role, Smith builds strategic partnerships with leading tech companies, industry alliances, nonprofits and

academic institutions. She also drives TIAA's culture transformation and acceleration initiatives. She shapes and



leads the TIAA Technology Guild Network to advance technical craft-based collaboration and speed innovation and partners with TIAA India to integrate and globalize best practices and tech culture accelerators. A champion of DEI in technology, Smith has developed strategic technology partnerships from the ground up with such organizations as Year UP, Girls in Tech, and Blacks in Technology.

**“Closing the gender leadership gap at TIAA starts with our CEO, Thasunda Brown Duckett. In her role, Thasunda has prioritized gender equity, which is visible within our Executive Committee and the Client Services & Technology organization leadership team—more than 50 percent are female—of which I am a member.”**

**NANDITHA VIJAYARAGHAVAN**  
Chief of Staff and Marketing,  
*Trusted Family*



Vijayaraghavan has a foundation in marketing and brand communications that allows her to bridge stakeholder

silos and foster cross-functional collaboration. She is a values-led leader with a proven record for creating high-performing international teams, leading strategy, and managing change across physical and digital environments. A passion for continuous improvement helps her hustle between people leadership, growth marketing, and organizational efficiency. She also serves on the DEI Committee of European Women on Boards, a consortium of national organizations that aim to build a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**“In five years, I envision myself continuing to drive meaningful change as a DEI practitioner. My goal is to have played an active role in creating more inclusive workplaces and communities, where diversity is celebrated and equity is a reality. Also, I aspire to be a thought leader in the field, sharing insights and best practices, and advocating for policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion on a broader scale within the tech ecosystem in Europe.”**

**SUE COLLARD**  
VP, Strategy and Operations for  
Belonging, Equity, and Impact,  
UKG



Collard establishes diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI&B) as a business imperative that aligns with the values

of UKG’s global customers and partners. She leads strategic programs—including UKG’s DEI&B foundational learning curriculum, ambassador program, and sales enablement/customer engagement program—while focusing on increasing DEI&B engagement, transparency, and accountability across the business. With more than 30 years of experience, Collard is breaking down non-inclusive and non-equitable patterns of thinking and developing sustainable processes to drive social and business impact at UKG.

**“Beyond the clear and compelling goals we’ve set to increase equity of representation for women in leadership roles at UKG, we’re helping to level the equity playing field for all people through our purpose-driven partnerships, social impact campaigns, and products—like the UKG Great Place To Work Hub—that empower companies to lean into the business imperative of DEI&B.”**

**JESSICA MUENCH**  
Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion  
Officer, *United Airlines*



Muench leads transformational change through a holistic strategy to embed DEI throughout the business and enhance

relationships with employees, customers, communities, and commercial partners.

**“We’ve set aspirational goals and built in accountability for progress, including growing senior leadership representation for women and people of color, interviewing diverse slates of candidates, and**

**maintaining pay equity. We’re developing leaders from within and recruiting for greater opportunities and access to long, lucrative careers at United.”**

**DAPHNE HOYTT DICKERSON**  
VP of Global Communications,  
UPS



Hoytt Dickerson oversees social impact, human resources/operations, and brand communications at UPS.

In her previous role, she was group director of strategic communications for The Coca-Cola Company North America Operating Unit, where she oversaw external brand communications. Her career spans more than 20 years in in-house communications roles and at global communications firms. Hoytt Dickerson has delivered award-winning campaigns, crafted innovative communications strategies, and managed corporate communications efforts.

**“Led by one of the few women Fortune 50 CEOs, UPS is working toward 30 percent women in global full-time management by 2025. Alongside our 71 chapters of women’s business resource groups, we’re building development programs that support women’s advancement. We’re also reviewing employee survey results, hiring initiatives, succession planning, and more.”**

**TIANA CARTER**  
AVP, Human Resources Strategy  
and Planning, *USAA*



Carter is a visionary and execution architect who moves the business and people forward with innovative solutions and

measurable results. Reporting directly to the chief human resources officer, she serves as chief of staff, using over a decade of human resources and client services experience to drive a high-performing team through a culture of

connectivity, innovation, and collaboration. Carter oversees board operations, change management, HR’s budget, and business operations.

**“My ultimate career goal is to become a CHRO at a Fortune 500 organization. When you consider the evolution of the global workforce—advancing technology, increased life expectancy resulting in longer careers—knowing how to manage, motivate, and move a multigenerational, ethnically diverse workforce is going to be critical to the success of future CHROs.”**

**RENU BLANKINSHIP**  
Chief of Staff, *Versana*



Now chief of staff at industry-backed fintech Versana, Blankinship joined the company in March 2022 as director of

marketing and talent to spearhead these initiatives and cultivate company culture. She started her career at JPMorgan Chase & Co. as a salesperson on the structured credit and secondary loan trading desks, covering hedge funds and proprietary trading desks for par and distressed bank loans, high yield and investment grade bonds, credit derivatives, and structured credit instruments. Blankinship then served as a senior relationship manager for evaluated pricing and data license solutions at Bloomberg. Most recently, she founded a creative event planning company serving the New York area.

**“Versana is a female-led fintech with a 47 percent female team—a great example of how diversity at the top leads to an inclusive culture throughout the organization. We are committed to closing the gender leadership gap by actively recruiting female talent, promoting women to leadership positions, and fostering a collaborative culture. At Versana, diverse perspectives are not just welcome but vital to our efforts to transform the syndicated loan market.”**

**GENY DOSS**

VP, CMC Small Molecule Operational Quality, *Vertex*



During her time at Vertex, Doss has led the buildout of the quality assurance CMC development, and

commercial and distribution functions to support the company's products. She has advanced in her role to build many new functions in quality assurance regulated areas to accommodate Vertex's growing pipeline and commercialization of its cystic fibrosis products. Prior to joining the Vertex team, Doss worked in a range of manufacturing, analytical chemistry, and quality-control roles supporting pharmaceutical product development and manufacturing.

*"In my 17 years at Vertex, I'm pleased to see how much progress we've made in increasing representation of women at the director and above levels. Vertex has taken a thoughtful and intentional approach to ensure our talent processes are fair and equitable. For example, we require diverse interview panels for all roles and diverse slates for director and above roles."*

**ANITA PATEL**

VP, Pharmacy Services Development, *Walgreens*



Patel joined Walgreens from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where she led the COVID-19 response and

vaccine distribution across the country and supported seasonal influenza efforts in ensuring access to vaccines and medications. She has 19 years of experience in the health-care industry and, bringing a breadth of immunization knowledge to her role, serves as an expert resource on the subject.

*"Walgreens's community pharmacies serve about 100 million patients across the country annually. In five years, I will continue striving to advance our pharmacy services as the needs of our patients and pharmacists continue to evolve. In the process, we will continue reimagining how local health care improves societal health and well-being."*

**MARTA CODINA**

SVP, Branch Banking Customer Experience Leader, Consumer and Small Business Banking, *Wells Fargo & Company*



A veteran of more than 40 years in the financial services industry, Codina serves in an enterprise level role at

Wells Fargo with the National Advice & Acquisition team and is responsible for strategies and execution around customer experience across all branches. She leads the team responsible for governance of Voice of Customer surveys and feedback. She started her career as a teller during high school in Houston and also worked as a regional manager for US Bank, leading the retail banking division across several states. She joined Wells Fargo in 2001 and has served in the company as a regional development manager for Iowa, area manager for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, and region bank president for Wells Fargo Bank, overseeing retail and small business banking branches in four midwestern states.

*"I see myself using my voice in even bolder and more impactful ways. Lifting up and supporting women—especially diverse women—has been my mission. Having started my career at a time when women were not supported, I have seen and lived the disparities. Whether it's in professional or social settings, I will use my voice to educate and advocate."*

**LAUREN GELLHAUS**

VP, *Wilshire*



Gellhaus is a vice president serving on Wilshire's client solutions team, focusing on pension plans and sustainability.

Prior to joining Wilshire in 2022, Gellhaus was the head of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing at the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, where she developed the ESG strategic vision and road map for the investment management division's initiatives. She is a chartered alternative investment analyst. In her spare time, Gellhaus serves as a court-appointed special advocate, advocating for children in the child welfare system.

*"While closing the gender leadership gap takes time, progress is expedited through intentionality and leadership buy-in, of which Wilshire has both. Wilshire seeks to maintain a workplace that values diversity, inclusion, mentorship, and belonging, holding itself publicly accountable through an annual report illustrating its internal commitment and external engagements around diversity."*

**THAMARA SUBRAMANIAN**

Equity Audit and Strategy Manager, *The Winters Group Inc.*



Subramanian is passionate about tackling the root causes of inequities and creating opportunities for all to thrive. At The Winters

Group, she conducts diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) audits and facilitates strategy planning for clients. She is a frequent speaker and coauthor of the book, *Racial Justice at Work: Practical Solutions to Systemic Change*. Subramanian is an AmeriCorps alumna, a former Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and an avid volunteer with Girls on the Run and Big Brothers Big Sisters Kansas City.

*"I hope to continue learning and growing in my leadership by propelling meaningful and sustainable social change that serves all communities, particularly those historically marginalized. Ideally, I hope to move the needle and shift our thinking on what it means to create social impact, partner with communities, and foster a world where everyone can prosper."*

**MARIA JULIANA MORAES**

Senior Director, Product, *ZipRecruiter*



Moraes leads the matching (search and recommendations) and job-seeker apps (messaging, mobile, and home) for ZipRecruiter's

product teams. She has a passion to do more of what she's currently doing—to inspire her teams to push and succeed in disrupting the job search market, make it a reality for people to get hired and for businesses to hire great candidates, and see leaders on her teams grow and motivate their teams to become even more mission driven and passionate about what they do.

*"I feel inspired by the decisive and intelligent women in leadership at ZipRecruiter. Representation matters, and I hope that witnessing women leading our product team—a traditionally male function—encourages more of us to pursue leadership roles."*

DW





## Finding Mental Health Resources

*The landscape of mental health care has shifted as more individuals and companies recognize the importance of tending to mental well-being*

BY NORA ISAACS

**T**HE PANDEMIC WREAKED HAVOC on our individual and collective sense of safety and well-being. Whether they were experiencing sickness, loss, anxiety, depression, or isolation, few people were left untouched by its impact on their mental health.

“When the pandemic hit, I knew I had to be back in therapy,” says Jade Thomas, a senior channel sales executive at a San Francisco Bay Area software company.

### TO YOUR HEALTH

Luckily, Thomas had a referral for therapy through a mental health provider under contract with her company’s health insurance provider. But unluckily, it was hard—especially as a woman of color—to find a therapist who was a good match. It took her a few misses to finally land on someone she connected with to help see her through the difficulties and unpredictability of the early pandemic.

Thomas was not alone in experiencing challenges during that time. According



to the World Health Organization, the global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by 25 percent in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, racial and ethnic minority groups experienced disparities in mental health and substance misuse related to the pandemic. A report from the Centers for Disease Control revealed, for example, that symptoms of depression were reported 59 percent more frequently by Hispanic adults (40.3 percent) than non-Hispanic white adults (25.3 percent) in the United States in April and May 2020.

During the pandemic, many more people sought out mental health resources to cope with the uncertainty and stress that accompanied this global event. Since then, mental health awareness has increased and the stigma has decreased, causing a shift in how our culture handles care and how people find the resources they need.

## GETTING THE RIGHT CARE

The slow and steady decrease in the negative perception of mental health care has been attributed to many things. Social media has enabled people to reach out more widely to find connections and resources. At the same time, high-profile celebrities, athletes, and politicians have come forward to share their mental health journeys. And with the pandemic, many people reached a point where their mental health could not be pushed aside any longer.

As conversations about mental health have increased, so have people's desire to seek help. For people of color, however, there can be obstacles to finding a safe place. "I really wanted a therapist who's a woman of color, particularly a Black woman, but that is incredibly difficult to find," says Thomas, who describes herself as Black biracial. "When I'm with someone like me, I think that even if this person doesn't have all of the details, I know they get me. Without it, I have a lot more explaining to do." On a list from her insurance company, she says,



were only two options for a Black female therapist—and both had full practices.

## EMPLOYERS FILLING THE CARE GAP

As mental health care becomes more visible, many companies are stepping in to fill the care gap. According to a report from the Society of Human Resources Management, *Mental Health in America: A 2022 Workplace Report*, three out of four organizations offer mental health resources or planned to offer these benefits within the coming year. A survey the same year from the American Psychological Association found that 71 percent of workers believe that employers are more concerned about their mental health than in the past.

As the need increases, some businesses are, either directly or through partnerships, finding new ways to meet the need by expanding mental health coverage, adding company wellness days off, and spearheading initiatives such as resiliency programs and meditation workshops.

D'Shonda Brown is a mental health care advocate who has seen positive

changes in accessing care through the workplace. Her first exposure to talk therapy was via her father's workplace employee assistance program (EAP), through which she found a therapist during a period of intense anxiety and depression. "I was very hesitant about going to therapy," Brown says. "No one in my family had ever talked about it, and I was scared to address my issues." Once she found support, and began discussing her experiences with anxiety and depression with those around her, she found that others began opening up about their own challenges.

Brown sees a shift in the way people are accessing care. "The conversations that millennials are having are not the same conversation my parents were having," she says. She started a new job at a media entertainment company in 2019, right before the pandemic hit. When it did, she began experiencing emotional distress. Brown went to her HR department, and they worked out a plan for her to take a mental health break—the first of its kind for this start-up, she says. "They were really open to it, and it made me feel seen and heard that I could communicate my mental health needs."

Now the company is in the process of creating a policy for mental health leave. She sees this as progress, and encourages employees to reach out for support before they are overwhelmed. “We are people first,” she says.

## THERAPY . . . AND BEYOND

As the mental health landscape shifts, experts see a move away from traditional EAPs to handle employees’ mental health support, which critics say can have long wait times due to lack of available therapists.

Instead, many companies are looking toward technology and innovation to provide a more flexible and personalized approach. One example is Modern Health, a mental health benefit provider for companies; employers purchase its services and then offer their employees access to the platform. The services follow a culturally competent model designed to meet each person where they are on their mental health journey.

In this evidence-based model, called “stepped care,” individuals are paired with

the best modality of care based on their needs and preferences. Members have multiple care options they can engage in simultaneously, ranging from clinical to preventative. For example, if a person is best suited for therapy, they can take that route. But Modern Health acknowledges that therapy isn’t the best cultural fit for every person, according to Dr. Jessica Watrous, a psychologist and the director of clinical and scientific affairs at Modern Health. The platform’s options include a coaching network geared to specific areas of concern, such as a financial coach; a vast library of digital content; and a series of workshops for parents, their children, and caregivers.

## GOOD FOR THE BOTTOM LINE

Whether they offer therapy, podcasts, workshops, or meditation apps, employers are starting to better understand that helping employees manage stress and prevent burnout has many benefits. Among them are increased employee retention, boosting productivity, and attracting new talent. It also helps to

save money. “Individuals with a behavioral health concern have three and a half times the number of medical claims, across all medical health spending,” says Watrous. In other words, when people are suffering from mental health issues, they have more physical problems, which cost their company money. “Mental and physical health are connected—that is a piece people often don’t think about,” says Watrous.

As mental health care continues to come out into the open, consumers and employees will have more of a choice about how and where they can address their challenges. There is a lot of progress, but also a lot of work to be done, according to Watrous. “At the end of the day, I’d love to see people be really invested, and proactive care that supports people on a regular basis instead of waiting until people are in a crisis,” she says. “It’s good for employees, and it’s good for business.” **DW**

*Nora Isaacs is a writer and editor living in the San Francisco Bay Area who writes about health, spirituality, and sustainability.*

# Accessing Mental Health Care

**Your mental health care coverage depends on the type of insurance you have. Many group health insurance and private health insurance plans offer coverage, although they aren’t legally required to do so. Here are a few ways to find resources:**

### Ask your employer or insurer

Employees can reach out to their human resources department or directly to their health insurance company to understand how best to take advantage of a company’s mental health benefits. Some might offer employee assistance programs (EAPs) that provide support, and others might contract with a behavioral health provider such as Modern Health. [Modernhealth.com](https://www.modernhealth.com)

### Know what is covered

Affordable Care Act marketplace plans cover behavioral health services, inpatient services, and substance abuse treatment. In addition, the federal parity law says that insurers that do provide mental health coverage must supply mental health/substance use disorder treatment that’s equal to or better than physical health coverage.

[Healthcare.gov/coverage/mental-health-substance-abuse-coverage/](https://www.healthcare.gov/coverage/mental-health-substance-abuse-coverage/)

### Find a referral organization

If you would like to find a therapist who is a good fit, a referral organization is a good place to start. One example is the Black Mental Health Alliance (BMHA), which offers confidential referrals for those seeking mental health services through an expansive database of culturally competent and patient-centered licensed mental health professionals. [Blackmentalhealth.com](https://www.blackmentalhealth.com)

### Download an app

Therapy apps can connect you with a licensed therapist virtually. One example is BetterHelp. Customers—who pay a monthly fee—take a quiz to help match with the right therapist based on preferences, location, and availability. There are also apps aimed at a specific audience: for example, Pride Counseling specializes in the LGBTQI+ community, and Faithful Counseling provides therapy for the Christian community. [Betterhelp.com](https://www.betterhelp.com)





## Unleash Your Career

Barclays is committed to building a supportive and inclusive culture, where women of diverse backgrounds feel confident in bringing their whole selves to work. We strive to prepare female colleagues for the future with the right learning and development resources, so they can reimagine what is possible for their careers at Barclays, and feel empowered to be their best selves, both professionally and personally. At Barclays, we believe that everyone has the potential to continuously grow and develop. And because you don't need a title to be a leader, we're also committed to cultivating the leader in you, whether you're in a leadership role or not. Explore opportunities at Barclays today so that you can unleash your career.



# Don't Hit the Panic Button!

*Here's how to understand the recent rise in interest rates—and navigate the impact of inflation on your pocketbook*

BY SHERYL NANCE-NASH

**T**HE FEDERAL RESERVE ANNOUNCED a rise in interest rates in late July, after having hit the pause button in June on raising rates. The Fed also hinted that there could be more hikes before year-end. Fueled by the need to tamp down inflation, the Federal Reserve has pushed up rates 11 times since March of 2022. Over that period, it has raised rates by more than 5 percentage points—the fastest cycle in history.

Interest rates are at their highest since 2001, elevating borrowing costs to a 22-year high. According to the Fed's recent statement, the overarching goal is to return inflation to the

Fed's 2 percent objective. Inflation has softened from a high of 9.1 percent in the summer of 2022, but the pain has not been completely alleviated, as anyone who's been to the grocery store knows.

For sure, high interest rates are likely to continue to be a topic of discussion, as there may not be significant downward trends until the end of 2024 or early 2025.

Keep your seat belt on and drive carefully through the continued high-interest-rate environment. Knowing how to navigate the terrain is critical for your financial success. Some experts weighed in on how to make the most of your money, and the mistakes to avoid when interest rates are high.

## Seize fixed-income opportunities

High interest rates can be a boon for fixed-income investments like bonds

(government, corporate, or high-quality bond funds) and CDs, allowing you to increase the return on your savings. “They offer attractive yields and provide a steady income stream. Consider diversifying your portfolio with these options,” suggests Michael Ryan, personal finance coach and founder of financial literacy website Michaelryanmoney.com.

Think short- and medium-term though. Avoid long-term bonds that offer fixed interest rates and impose high penalties on premature withdrawals. Increase your positions in short- or medium-term investments. “Pair short-term bonds with floating-rate debt instruments and Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities, because the adjustable rate is comparatively less sensitive to rising interest rates,” says Wayne Bechtol, a senior tax accountant with personal loan marketplace Fiona.com. Scott Custis, a certified financial planner at Money Scientific, a registered investment advisor firm, says his fixed-income

investment choice for clients is short-term (three- to six-month) Treasury bills. In an environment in which interest rates are expected to rise, short-term bonds are most effective, he says. “If new T-bills are being issued at 5 percent, and three months later, they're expected to be at 5.25 percent, we reinvest at the higher rate when the T-bill matures. In academia, T-Bills are considered risk-free. You're guaranteed your principal and interest are backed by the US government,” he says.

However, make sure these options align with your financial goals and liquidity needs, points out Lauren Mendoza, cofounder of Bank Standard, a small-business lender. To find the best solutions, evaluate several



## Interest rates are at their highest since 2001, elevating borrowing costs to a 22-year high.

financial institutions and compare their interest rates.

### Rethink purchasing big-ticket items

When interest rates are high, it might not be the best time to make major purchases that you'll need financing for, such as a new car or home. "High interest rates can make borrowing substantially more expensive, raising monthly payments and overall costs," says Tracy Cauley, a chartered financial analyst with VEM Medical.

Patience can pay off. If you wait for interest rates to fall, you could save significant sums of money over the longer term with the lower rates.

However, if you must take on debt for a major purchase, shop around for the best possible interest rates. You can always consider refinancing down the line, when interest rates might be lower. "It's also important to focus on improving your credit score and lowering your debt-to-income ratio in order to secure the best possible interest rates for the time," says Carter Seuthe, CEO of Credit Summit.

### Prioritize debt repayment

High-interest rate periods are a good time to pay down high-interest debt. "Focus on debts with the highest interest rates, such as credit card balances, to reduce interest expenses and improve your financial standing," says Ryan. When interest rates are high, more of your payment goes toward interest rather than principal reduction.

### Understand how high rates impact the stock market

Rising interest rates can have an impact on the stock market, causing volatility. "Investing in long-term, stable options such as blue-chip stocks or index funds can help reduce the risks associated with short-term fluctuations," says Young Pham, cofounder and the CMO of Bizreport.com, a business and finance website.



### Capitalize on assets that thrive during high interest rates

If you have the financial wherewithal, it may be an ideal time to invest in real estate or other assets, since their prices tend to decrease when borrowing becomes more expensive. "However, it is vital to conduct thorough research and analysis to make informed investment decisions," says Paul Martinez, founder of Ecomsidekick.com, a provider of information about starting, building, and growing e-commerce.

### What not to do

Don't panic.

One pitfall to avoid is rushing into fixed-rate mortgages or loans just because the rates are high—though it might seem like a good idea to lock in a rate before it increases further. This can backfire. "Many people learn this the hard way, only to watch rates fall a year later," says Johannes Larsson, founder and CEO of Financer.com, a provider of financial comparison services.

When interest rates are high, avoid getting caught in the trap of risky investments that promise high returns. Remember the saying "If it's too good to be true, it probably is"? Keep that in mind. "Interest rates are cyclical, and what goes up must come down. I've seen too many people make rash decisions based on short-term interest rate spikes, only to regret it when the rates stabilize again," says Dennis Shirshikov, a professor at the City University of New York who teaches finance, economics, and accounting.

### Don't use your credit card frivolously

Be cautious about relying heavily on credit cards during high interest-rate periods. Accumulating credit card debt can quickly become overwhelming, so spend within your means and avoid carrying high-interest balances.

### Stay on top of adjustable-rate loans

If you have an adjustable-rate loan, be on the lookout for potential interest-rate increases. Be proactive by evaluating the impact on your monthly payments and consider refinancing or adjusting your loan terms to mitigate risks. "Keep track of any adjustments to your interest rates and plan your budget accordingly," says Percy Grunwald, cofounder of Compare Banks, a financial comparison website.

### Keep your eyes on the prize

Don't neglect savings and emergency funds. "It's crucial to maintain an emergency fund regardless of the interest-rate environment. Avoid neglecting your savings or using them to chase higher returns. Having a financial cushion will protect you in case of unexpected expenses or changes in circumstances," says Grunwald.

### Leave timing to destiny

Forget trying to predict interest-rate movements. Basing investment decisions solely on rate fluctuations is a risky endeavor. "Instead, focus on your long-term financial goals, diversify your investments, and consult with a trusted financial advisor for personalized guidance," says Michael Ryan.

Navigating high interest rates can feel like walking a tightrope, but with the right strategies, you can make the most of your money. **DW**

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*Sheryl Nance-Nash is a freelance writer in personal finance, business, travel, and lifestyle topics. Her work has appeared in Money, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and Newsday, among other publications.*





## POWER TRIP

# It's in the Cards

*In the market for a travel rewards card? Here's some expert advice.*

BY SARA J. WELCH

**D**EAR READER, I HAVE a confession to make.

I don't have a travel rewards card, even though I've been a travel writer for over 20 years. When I was a full-time travel reporter, I used to go someplace new every six weeks. Then I had my daughter, and now, as a freelance writer with family responsibilities and a full-time, non-travel-related job, I just can't get away like I used to. So my only credit card is one I've had since the '90s. Its only benefit is that it doesn't charge an annual fee.

But now that I've reported this article, that's going to change. As I learned from talking to the experts quoted here, even if you travel only once a year, you can make rewards cards work for you. Just be sure to do some research (fire up that "incognito"

browser!) and keep the following ideas in mind.

## Consider the two card types

A card can offer either cash back or travel rewards (i.e., points). "I classify credit cards in these two categories, and there are pros and cons to each," says Sally French, a San Francisco-based writer who covers travel and loyalty rewards programs for NerdWallet. Cash-back cards, which pay you a percentage back on all your spending, "are great if you're busy and don't want to spend too much time thinking about credit cards. They come in all sorts of flavors, meaning you can find ones that target whatever you spend the most money on."

Travel rewards cards, which give you points or miles for your spending, have



their own subcategories, French says. "General travel rewards cards basically give you a made-up currency you can use to book travel or exchange for other rewards via certain brand partners," she explains. The other type of rewards card pays you in points

or miles specific to a brand—say, Hilton Honors or Southwest Airlines.

Both types of rewards cards "are a lot more work to manage [than cash-back cards], but if you travel often, especially for work, they're also much more rewarding," French says, listing free checked bags, seat upgrades, and hotel room upgrades as among the perks offered by various travel rewards cards. "Some cards get you into airport lounges so you can work before your flight in a space that's quiet, with plenty of working outlets and even dedicated rooms for making conference calls. These sorts of perks make business travel better."

If you're organized about your finances and willing to put in some research, it's not hard to find a rewards card that fits your personal spending, says Beverly Harzog, a credit card expert for *U.S. News & World Report* and the author of five books on personal finance, credit cards, and related subjects.

### Start with your finances

Where do you spend the most money? On groceries? Gas? Dining out? Some cards offer bonus points in certain categories, notes French, such as 3 to 5 percent on gas, groceries, office supplies, or even Internet service. Harzog uses one rewards card primarily to earn miles, and reserves another exclusively for dining out because it offers a higher percentage in that category. (She also has a cash-back card for groceries.)

### Find out your credit score(s)

Your score, a three-digit number from 300 to 850—designed to predict how likely you are to repay a debt—is based on the credit reports that are issued by the three nationwide credit bureaus (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion). Generally, lenders look for stable employment history and timely bill payments, as well as how many types of credit you have and how often you apply for credit. Reports can vary depending on the information gathered by each of the bureaus, notes the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an agency set up by the federal government to protect consumers from predatory lenders.

You can request a free copy of your credit report every 12 months from each credit bureau (go to [AnnualCreditReport.com](http://AnnualCreditReport.com) to learn more). This could be a good opportunity to check for errors or discrepancies; sometimes, debts owed by family members or even people with names similar to yours can wind up on your report by mistake.

Don't apply for cards you have no chance of getting, and don't expect top rewards if you don't have excellent credit.

You might have seen offers for cash-back cards paying 2 percent on all spending. But that rate is typically offered to

those with excellent credit, cautions French. "Excellent" translates roughly to a credit score of at least 800, so if you're not there yet, you might get only 1 percent. Similarly, the better travel rewards cards expect a credit score of at least 740, Harzog says.

### Don't neglect snail mail

Look at offline as well as online offers, Harzog notes. "Sometimes you can get a better deal from an offer that comes in the mail."

### Apply for all your cards within two weeks

Every time you apply for a card, you get what is known in the trade as a "hard inquiry" on your credit report. That can lower your credit score by up to five points per application—which can add up if you're applying for several different cards. However, "if you file all your card applications within a 14-day period, it counts as only one hard inquiry," Harzog says.

### Explore some popular options

"Three of the best rewards cards right now are the Chase Sapphire Preferred, Chase Sapphire Reserve, and Capital One Venture X," says Caroline Lupini, managing editor of credit card and travel reward information at *Forbes Advisor*. "All three earn flexible travel rewards that can be redeemed directly through their portals or transferred to their airline and hotel partners. "These cards offer lots of flexibility and don't lock you into one type of mile or point."

Lupini says that even people who take just one trip annually can benefit from the \$95-per-year Sapphire Preferred card, which pays two points per dollar spent on travel and dining. You also get a \$50 annual hotel credit on stays booked through the Chase portal and some insurance coverage for trip cancellations and delays. Points can be used to pay for flights and hotel stays with Chase's partners, which include Hyatt Hotels and United Airlines.

"Some Hyatts can be booked for 3,500 points a night, and I personally just booked a flight from Brussels to Prague during high season for only 6,000 United



miles," Lupini says. These cards often have very good welcome offers, notes Harzog; for example, Capital One Venture Rewards offers a 75,000-mile bonus to new members, and Chase's cards pay 60,000 bonus points if you spend \$4,000 on purchases in your first three months.

A newer card people might want to consider is the Wells Fargo Autograph Card. There's no annual fee, and members can earn three points per dollar spent on purchases in categories including travel, gas, phone plans, dining, and even streaming services.

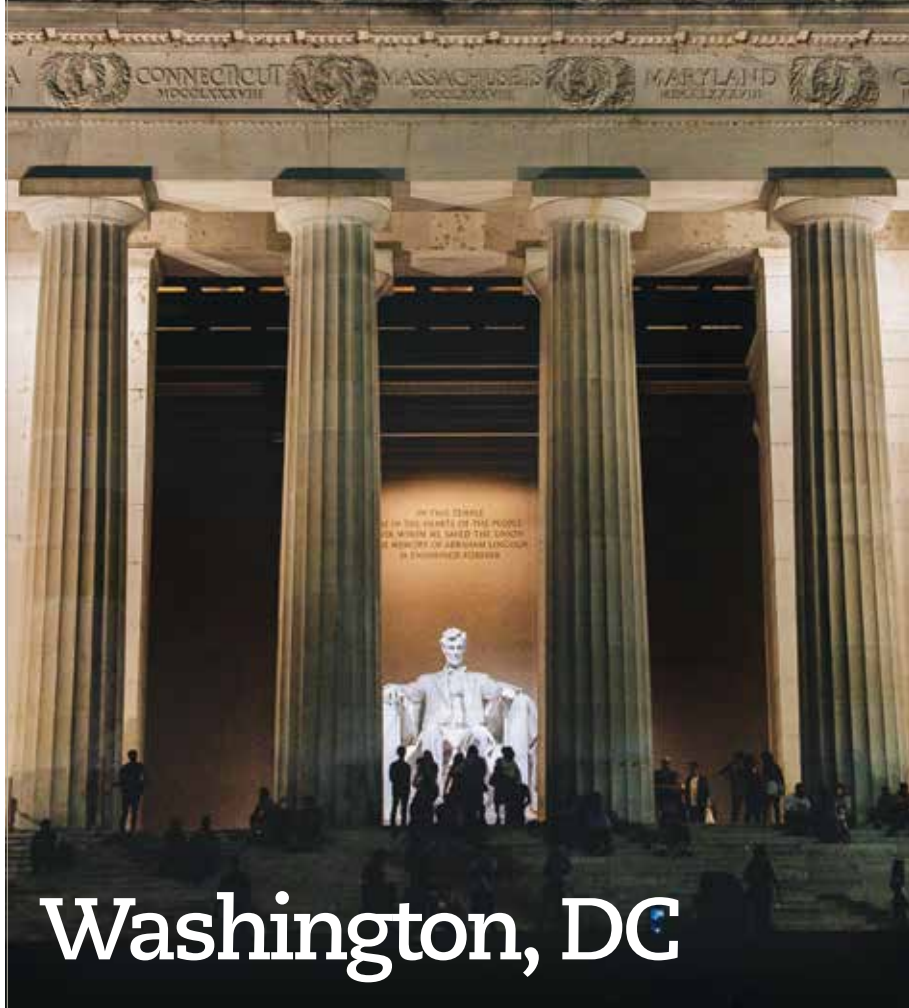
### Look hard at the annual fee

If what you'll save with the card isn't more than what'll you pay to have it, what's the point? Again, this will depend on the type of traveler you are. The Chase Sapphire Reserve costs \$550 per year, but that gets you an annual \$300 travel credit and up to \$100 for the TSA PreCheck or Global Entry application fee, not to mention numerous other benefits, including access to Priority Pass, a collection of about 1,200 airport lounges worldwide.

### Bottom line: read the fine print

Ultimately, "there's no one-size-fits-all answer" when it comes to choosing a card, Lupini says. "You have to read the fine print," Harzog says. "Some of these cards have complex rewards systems, but when you figure out how they work, you can make them work for you. I earn about \$4,000 a year from my cards, and I don't try very hard." **DW**

*Sara J. Welch was pregnant with her daughter when she wrote her first article for Diversity Woman 16 years ago.*



# Washington, DC

BY BLESSING NTEKUME

**P**ERHAPS MORE THAN ANY other city in the country, Washington, DC, is where history and culture—along with an awareness that consequential decisions are being made in nearby halls of power—combine to create an unforgettable experience for visitors. From iconic landmarks and leafy parks to world-class museums and jazz clubs, this city offers a surprisingly diverse array of attractions.

## MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS

No visit to DC is complete without immersing yourself in the rich history found at its renowned monuments and museums. The **Smithsonian Institution**, a treasure chest of knowledge, comprises a remarkable 21 museums (and the National Zoo), including the sobering and exhilarating **National Museum of African American History and Culture**. Less well known, the **National Museum of Women in the Arts** reopens in October, after a complete renovation, with an exhibition of grand-scale sculptures by women that show off the museum's reimagined spaces (running through February 2024).

## CULTURE

On the edge of the Potomac River, the **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts** showcases top-flight performances from classical music and ballet to jazz and Broadway theater favorites.

The city where Duke Ellington was born and raised is a jazz mecca boasting a wide collection of clubs where you can revel in this quintessentially American genre. The exuberant **Blues Alley**, one of the oldest jazz supper clubs in the country, provides an intimate setting for world-class performances. A larger venue, the **9:30 Club**, hosts both established and up-and-coming musicians. The **DC Jazz Festival**, a sprawling celebration of the dynamic art form, is worth planning your trip around. Held in early September, the series spans dozens of venues and performers, and culminates in a weekend of concerts at the Wharf, beside the Potomac.

## OUTDOORS

While the **National Mall** and the **Lincoln Memorial** are at the top of everyone's list, you can also discover lesser-known yet

equally absorbing outdoor attractions. Rent a bike and explore the picturesque **Chesapeake & Ohio Canal**, where you can cycle the scenic 185-mile towpath parallel to a once-busy, now-restful waterway. Begin in Georgetown and, as you take in the views, learn about the early history of transportation. **Meridian Hill Park**, with its cascading fountains and lush greenery, offers a peaceful retreat within the city—a perfect spot for a relaxing afternoon picnic. The **United States National Arboretum** is a horticultural haven, boasting diverse plant collections and serene landscapes that invite exploration and contemplation.

## WALKING TOURS

To delve deeper into the city's history and culture, sign up for a walking tour, sampling the city's legendary sites or exploring its lesser-known, quirky delights. You can unearth the secrets of DC's historic neighborhoods, such as **Georgetown** with its charming cobblestone streets and historic architecture, or the vibrant **U Street Corridor**, once a center of African American culture during the Harlem Renaissance and now filled with lively music venues, boutiques, and eateries.

Or join an offbeat tour, like the Smithsonian Associates' historian-led retracing of **John Wilkes Booth's escape route** after assassinating Lincoln.

## STEPPING OUT

## RESTAURANTS

The food scene is as diverse as DC's scores of embassies. Start with our country's own cuisine: **Oohh's & Aahh's**, a local gem renowned for its soul food, serves up mouthwatering fried chicken, collard greens, and macaroni and cheese. At Ethiopian-inspired **Keren Restaurant**, assorted savory stews and other delectable dishes are served atop injera, the country's traditional flatbread. Or go European with the classic French restaurant **Le Diplomate**, long a favorite of power players. Who knows? At the next table, you may find a movie star or your senator. **DW**



## FUTURE OF WORK WITH CATALYST

# It's Up to Leaders to Stop Workplace Racism

THE US SUPREME COURT decision in June to reject affirmative action in college admissions was also a blow to corporate diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in US companies. It's now more important than ever to recognize



that racism is a real and present issue in workplaces, not just in this country but across the globe.

Catalyst tackled this issue in our newest report, *How Racism Shows Up at Work and the Antiracist Actions Your Organization Can Take*. We surveyed more than 5,000 women, men, transgender, and nonbinary employees from six countries (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States) to ask about their experiences of racism in the workplace. What we found was distressing though, sadly, unsurprising: 66 percent of employees from marginalized racial and ethnic groups have experienced racism in the workplace, and half have experienced racism in their current job.

Sometimes, the racism described was obvious, but other times it was insidious, flying under the radar in the form of offhand comments or other exclusionary behaviors. Participants told us about everything from blatant harassment—such as racist jokes, slurs, and other derogatory comments—to degrading comments about their bodies or cultures, to assumptions about their intelligence, cleanliness, or language abilities. Some described being blamed for COVID-19. Others reported experiencing employment and professional inequities including pay gaps, being passed over for a promotion, or being assigned more or less work than coworkers because of their race.

We looked closely at who is most likely to be targeted with racism in the workplace. While women (51 percent) and men (50 percent) from marginalized groups experienced it to about the same degree, trans and nonbinary employees (69 percent) reported experiencing the most racism by



a disheartening margin of nearly 20 percent.

These findings are certainly validating for employees of color and those from other marginalized groups who experience racism on a daily basis. But white colleagues may be surprised to learn just how pervasive this issue truly is.

A key reason for this is that whiteness is considered the norm at work—and though we often don't realize it, employees, policies, strategies, and more are valued and assessed through a white lens. As a result, many characteristics inherent to the identities of people from marginalized racial and ethnic groups are devalued.

One of the most unsettling takeaways from the survey was just how often the culprits were those in positions of power. When respondents named the instigator of the racism they experienced, 41 percent of the time it was a leader in their organization. It's important to note that leaders also dictate the culture that allows coworkers, customers, and clients to engage in racist acts.

The findings in this report show that it's imperative that company leaders work to make systemic change to address racism and decenter whiteness from corporate culture.

Biases need to be identified and removed from hiring practices, promotion criteria, and company policies. People of color must feel safe to come forward when they experience racism in the workplace. And reported and observed incidents of racism need to be addressed at every level of an organization in order to create an environment of physical and psychological safety for all employees.

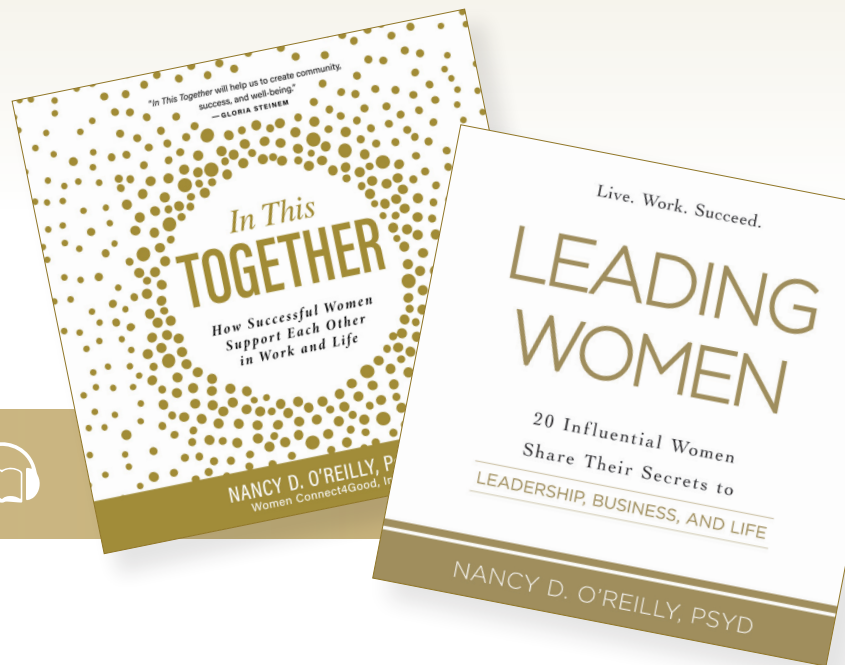
Recognizing all the different ways racism shows up at work is just the first step. **DW**

Diversity Woman is pleased to present a new ongoing column partnership with Catalyst, a global nonprofit promoting gender equity and workplace inclusion supported by many of the world's most powerful CEOs and leading companies. Founded in 1962, Catalyst drives change with preeminent thought leadership, actionable solutions, and a galvanized community of multinational corporations to accelerate workplace equity—because progress for women is progress for everyone.

DR  
NANCY

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