

THE LEADERSHIP

REVIEW

FEATURING

THE MERIT TRAP

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

&

SEPARATING EMOTIONS
FROM FACTS:

An exploration into the black lives
matter movement in Australia + the
workplace.

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

BREAKING
DOWN BARRIERS

LESSONS FROM THE C-SUITE

WITH DR SUSAN ENTWISLE, PIETER
DANHIENUX + JAMIE NELSON



DR SUSAN ENTWISLE

ASSISTANT VICE
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1. AS A FEMALE LEADER IN A HEAVILY MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRY, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO WOMEN LOOKING TO PURSUE A CAREER IN YOUR FIELD?

Technology is an exciting industry to work in. It offers meaningful and rewarding career opportunities. I strongly encourage women to consider a career in this industry. Whether you are only just starting your career, or you are further along and looking for a career change, there's a role in technology for you.

Be bold, set audacious goals, and commit to making them come to life through action. Setbacks happen, use them as an opportunity to learn, adapt and improve, take them in your stride, and do not quit.

Women tend to be over-mentored but under-sponsored in technology. So, don't only seek out a mentor within your organisation — seek sponsorship. Technology is a fast-paced industry with constant change. Be willing to step out of your comfort zone, learn, adapt and seize opportunities that extend your capability and contribution. Push the boundaries of your potential as this is where growth happens.

2. COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT COGNIZANT'S WOMEN EMPOWERED PROGRAM?

Women Empowered (WE) started as a grassroots effort. It is now a global initiative focused on the diversity and inclusion of women. Entering and navigating a career in a male-dominated industry like technology can be difficult for women, so the programme is focused on elevating their work experience and providing the resources they need to thrive, grow and succeed.

It starts with hiring. Cognizant is recruiting more women at all levels in every market. Once employed, we provide training, collaboration, support, mentorship and professional development opportunities for women. Our team sponsors women and is focused on the promotion of women through the leadership pipeline.

We build awareness of women's accomplishments while showcasing their valuable contributions and celebrating their achievements. Through WE, our Australian team has worked with Code Like a Girl to run robotics workshops and other activities to encourage and inspire girls and women in technology.

3. HOW CAN WE INCREASE VISIBILITY FOR WOMEN IN I.T., DIGITAL BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY?

Our industry needs more exceptional advocacy, diversity, and participation to succeed. Formal sponsorship programmes are a great way to start. They can uplift talented women and foster their career progression.

Providing a platform for women who are excelling in their digital business or technology career is also crucial. In showcasing their stories far and wide, you help to increase awareness, inspire others, and drive further participation.

4. WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU BEEN FORCED TO BREAK DOWN TO GET TO WHERE YOU ARE NOW?

I was a mature age student who progressed from TAFE to PhD while working full-time for over ten years. I do not come from privilege. I am a married gay woman. I had to build the confidence and voice to be heard in an environment where I was different. It was not easy.

In my past roles, I have faced challenges relating to stereotypes and biases that I have had to overcome. For example, I encountered preconceived notions of leadership style, technical capabilities, mansplaining and men interrupting me. These factors are limiting and not conducive to building a high-performing workforce.

5. BEYOND LOOKING TO EMPOWER WOMEN, HOW CAN THE TECH AND BUSINESS INDUSTRY LOOK TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES OF DIFFERENT RACES, SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS, RELIGIONS, ETC.? DO YOU THINK THERE IS CURRENTLY A MOULD TO BREAK?

In today's dynamically changing, digitally-driven business world, organisations with diverse and inclusive workforces are leading the way. Many businesses have further to go; however, finally, diversity and inclusion have become a priority for most.

Each organisation must commit to building a workforce that reflects diverse cultures, experiences and perspectives. But this diversity is tokenistic without inclusion. Individuals from different backgrounds need to be invited to the table and given a platform to voice their thoughts and opinions.

Business leaders must be sensitive to the needs and desires of workers from all walks of life and ensure all voices are heard and appreciated. In fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, leaders create a corporate culture where every individual is valued. Not only is this socially responsible, but it is also good for the bottom line.