CEO Brian Humphries on Leveling the Playing Field for Women in Tech

Human potential is boundless and precious. It's the wellspring of innovation, creativity, reinvention, and growth. To tap into all of this generative power, those of us who lead organizations are responsible for ensuring that all people feel they belong, are valued, and can safely be their full, authentic selves at work.


CEO Brian Humphries Visiting Associates in India

I've been thinking about how essential diversity and inclusion and a sense of belonging are at the company I'm privileged to lead, Cognizant. I'm convinced that working effectively across identities tied to gender, culture, generation, race, and sexual orientation leads not only to greater innovation and productivity but also to deeper understanding of and engagement with our clients and their needs.

One aspect of Cognizant's focus on diversity and inclusion is to advance gender equality for women who are pursuing or progressing within careers in technology. One of the ways we elevate the experience of work for women is through our global Women Empowered program, which is committed to developing more women leaders at all levels of our company. And as part of this program, we have previously set a goal of employing at least 100,000 women around the world by 2020.

I'm proud to say that we've done so ahead of schedule and are now 100,000 women strong across 48 countries, representing more than a hundred nationalities. We view this as a milestone—not an end point. We're making other related strides as well by:

- Strengthening our overall talent pipeline: 40% of our total new hires so far this year are women.
- Advancing diversity in our leadership pipeline: More than 400 of our women associates will graduate by year end from "Propel," our enterprise-wide women's global leadership development program, launched in 2018.
- Focusing on governance: Two women now serve on Cognizant's Board of Directors, and half of the Cognizant U.S. Foundation's Board of Directors is female.
- Investing in women in tech: The foundation recently awarded $4.1 million to the National Center for Women & Information Technology, a non-profit community that works to increase girls' and women's meaningful participation in computing.
- As a result, *Forbes* named Cognizant to its list of "America's Best Employers for Diversity 2019" and to "Best Employers for Women 2018." And AVTAR, one of India's leading talent strategy consulting firms, along with Working Mother Media, named Cognizant among the top 15 best companies for women in India.

We are also partnering with our clients. In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness month, we are delighted to support The Estée Lauder Companies and their annual campaign to fight breast cancer by participating in the October 10 Tech Day of Pink. #TechInPink2019, #TimeToEndBreastCancer.

A commitment to diversity and inclusion and gender equality can change not only what organizations are capable of achieving but also what the world as a whole can achieve. As the Economic and Social Council of the U.N. recently reported, "There's simply no way that the world can achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals without also achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls."

When I look at the diversity and inclusion progress we've made as a company, I'm encouraged by how far we've come. But I also recognize how much farther we need to go. As such, our leadership team is determined to drive even greater diversity and inclusion throughout the company and to heighten awareness of this need across every industry.

Click here to read more on how Cognizant is leveling the playing field for women in tech.

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