

HumanCapital

REALISING BUSINESS STRATEGY THROUGH PEOPLE

Vol. 25 Issue No. 10 Mar 2022 ₹130



REVERSING THE SHE-CESSION

Mandeep Kaur

LOOKING THROUGH THE GENDER LENS

Kankana Barua

THE UNSAID BIAS & HOW TO BREAK IT

Nishath Usmani

MAKING AMENDS

Renu Bohra

MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Swati Rustagi

A GOOD INITIATIVE?

Dr Deepika Pandita

WOMEN IN TODAY'S WORKFORCE

www.humancapitalonline.com

Deferred Dream Or An Imperative Initiative?

The ability to acknowledge and encourage the distinctiveness of a diverse workforce improves performance, fosters innovation, attracts talent and brings a positive effect on the Company's Culture.

BY SHARON S. RAJKUMAR



Gender Inequality.... Gender Disparity.... Gender Pay Gap.... Gender Snapshot....and the list goes on!

Are these mere buzzwords, or is there some veracity to these terms?

In any organisation, a diverse workforce is naturally formed. It represents the full spectrum of human differences: religion, gender, race, sexual orientation, age, lifestyles, personality traits, perspectives, opinions, education, to name a few. Not just diversity in demographics, but diversity in thought too. In the current day scenario, diversity is welcomed; else we will all be univariate clones!

What is important, therefore, is inclusion - the feeling of belonging, the extent to which teams feel valued, respected, accepted, and encouraged to fully participate.

The immediate question thus, is: How do we make workplaces inclusive? What role does leadership and culture play in shaping inclusive organisations?

At Happiest Minds, Inclusion and Diversity are fundamental to our culture and core values. We are an inclusive community, where each member is seen for who they are as individuals.

How is this possible?

- Integration:** With the mission of “Happiest People. Happiest Customers” and with Core Values – SMILES (*Sharing, Mindful, Integrity, Learning, Excellence and Social Responsibility*), Happiest Minds has integrated inclusion into our core values by being mindful, by embedding it into work practices and behaviour, and by ensuring accountability throughout the organisation. In Talent Acquisition or Talent Management, our approach is one of inclusivity - non-discriminatory in our hiring, sensitive in our policies with gender-neutral language, wheelchair accessible buildings and mindful when it comes to benefits. Our D&I Journey started with the formation of the D&I Council with a mix of members across competencies and across gender groups.
- Imperative:** The business case for diversity & inclusion cannot be over-emphasised. Our leadership team reflects the changing marketplace and looks at innovating inclusively. From a 20% gender ratio, we have been able to step it up to 26.1% and for campus hires the ratio stands at 38%. The goals of the Executive Board percolate down to the teams and are tracked on a quarterly



“Leaders create a safe environment where the team can speak up, be heard, and feel welcome. It fosters collaboration, facilitates constructive discussion, and garners actionable feedback that can be acted upon.”

basis on what went well and what could be better. Leaders create a safe environment where the team can speak up, be heard, and feel welcome. It fosters collaboration, facilitates constructive discussion, and garners actionable feedback that can be acted upon. This has been corroborated by the responses in our internal Happiest People Pulse and the external Great Place to Work® Survey - that we are physically and psychologically a great place to work. Our real-time ‘Happometer’ gives us real-time insights into what our members are thinking and feeling about inclusion in the workplace. This helps us define and assess challenges and opportunities.

- **Intervention:** The Company trains all its members on the Company’s D&I goals and focuses on why they are important, what is expected of them in their interaction with one another, how to be aware of and overcome bias. This sensitisation training on inclusion is mandatory for everyone and has brought in fairness and objectivity in the areas of hiring & onboarding, speaking & listening, assignments, assessments & growth

opportunities, reducing prejudices and preferences considerably.

- **Initiatives:** Our inclusion initiatives have been simple, yet powerful in promoting workplace diversity & inclusion.

Supported by the Diversity Champions in the D & I Council, some specific programmes are Women Care, Women Development, Hiring Women-in-Tech, Reward & Recognition Programmes and other special programmes to engage and bring in differently-abled and specially-abled persons.

- **Communicating:** This is done through various channels including a diversity page on Glassdoor, Series on D & I as a Business Accelerator, Being Different is Being Powerful, More Culture – More Power, Support to Empower, Share Load – Share Love, inspiration stories of women leaders and multilingual signage that serves as a gentle reminder that we are part of a greater, diverse world regardless of the language spoken in the office.
- **Celebrating:** International Mother Language Day, International Men’s Day, Cultural celebrations by expanding the holiday calendar to be inclusive and Independence Day celebrations with the family and children.
- **Collaborating:** Wellness of Women Campaign along with the HappiZest team, Aura Learning Circles, a platform to share and learn from one another, Panel Discussions with women leaders in our client-organisations, Vaccination drives for individuals with special abilities, in conjunction with *Samarthanam*.

Our initiatives have been amply rewarded by the recognition we received from Great Place to Work® as the Top 50 Best Workplaces for Women, for the 3rd year in succession). We have crossed a

significant 'milestone' of 1,000 Aura members

Here are a few tips on how to integrate inclusive practices throughout the organisation:

- By creating a community with a strong sense of belonging.
- By instilling values that every member understands that all that the company stands for and all that is being done will revolve around the values espoused.
- By endeavouring to combine efficient work with a balanced life.
- By encouraging people to connect, communicate and celebrate the essence of life along with work.
- By fostering a culture of expression by open feedback and mechanisms which provide a platform to employees to give continuous feedback and suggestions on generic and specific areas.
- By empowering employees to act as change agents and revolutionise ways of operation with fresh perspectives.
- By building a network of transparent lasting relationships within the organisation that exhibit integrity and mutual trust.
- By nurturing a learning environment and innovative thinking.
- By striving to be an eco-friendly organisation and inculcate good corporate citizenship.
- By establishing a corporate social responsibility plan that will give each Happiest Mind the opportunity to work together on projects that benefit the community outside.
- By embracing and respecting diversity while working together as ONE.

Now more than ever is the strong need for every organisation to realise the full potential of its people by creating safe and inclusive workplaces.

“Sensitisation training on inclusion is mandatory for everyone and has brought in fairness and objectivity in the areas of hiring & onboarding, speaking & listening, assignments, assessments & growth opportunities, reducing prejudices and preferences considerably.”



D & I is a strategic priority that strengthens competitiveness, supports innovation, seeks to drive business results and enhances the team's experience.

Happiest Minds is a gratefully diverse, mindfully inclusive company. A diverse & inclusive climate will out-think, out-innovate and out-perform every single time. The ability to acknowledge and encourage the distinctiveness of a diverse workforce improves performance, fosters innovation, attracts talent and brings a positive effect on the Company's Culture. It is an immediate imperative that cannot be ignored!



About the Author

Sharon S. Rajkumar, PhD, is Vice President & Happiness Evangelist, Happiest Minds Technologies Ltd. Prior to this, she has worked in the corporate space for 6 years and thereafter was into Academics for 14 years. She had been a Professor at Christ University Institute of Management and Professor and PGP Chairperson at Bharathidasan Institute of Management, Tiruchirapalli – Bangalore Campus. Sharon holds a PhD in the area of Servant-Leadership, an MPhil in Entrepreneurship and an MBA from Bharathidasan Institute of Management, Tiruchirapalli.



**SUBSCRIBE
NOW!**

**Are you keeping up with
the world of knowledge?**

**Get access to more than 20,000 articles by signing
up to Human Capital Online Library & E-magazine.**

Visit www.humancapitalonline.com

or

+91-7535077222