Be a Risk Taker

It’s Time to Get Screened

Amna Nawaz

Grace and Grit
Creating places of belonging

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

Edward Jones

edwardjones.com/purposeinaction
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COVER PHOTO BY MIKE MORGAN
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We Mean Business

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Dr. Maisha Gray-Diggs (Dr. MGD) is a rare engineering leader who successfully transitioned into human resources leadership. She is currently vice president of Global Talent, Inclusion, and Experience at Eventbrite.

Dr. MGD believes that to whom much is given, much is expected. She volunteers her time with organizations focused on equity and access for the underrepresented and marginalized; eye, organ and tissue donation; and STE[A]M.

Dr. MGD enjoys spending quality time with her 12-year-old twins, William and Maya, and exploring new frontiers as a continuous learner.

Robin Pedrelli

Robin Pedrelli is cofounder and partner of Vision-Spring, Inc., a WBENC certified women-owned and -operated diversity and inclusion consulting firm offering fully integrated strategic consulting, training, and eLearning solutions with a head, heart, hands approach. The organization helps clients drive sustainable change that enhances workplace culture, increases employee engagement and commitment, and improves business results. The team understands that this work is hard and takes patience and perseverance, and believes that having the support you need can be the difference between success and burnout.

Subscribe to DW magazine diversitywoman.com
What Does It Take?

In Diversity Woman, we devote a great deal of real estate to lauding women who overcome countless obstacles to advance into senior leadership roles so more women can follow suit. In doing so, we often focus on the corporate sector.

The thousands upon thousands of determined and talented women who rise in their organizations are role models for their peers and for young women in the early stages of their careers.

Sometimes we feature a woman whose stage is huge and influence tremendous. In this issue, we have the privilege of shining the spotlight on such a woman, the new weekday co-anchor of PBS NewsHour, Amna Nawaz (page 31).

Nawaz’s ascension to the pinnacle of her profession is groundbreaking. She is the first Asian American and first Muslim American to anchor a nationally broadcast news program.

Nawaz’s success is groundbreaking for another reason. Her visibility. Amna Nawaz is now a household name, joining the handful of folks who anchor national evening news broadcasts. This gives her a tremendous platform to show not just women, but all of us, that anything is possible, that no industry or role is off-limits. Her journey demonstrates that we should never give up on pursuing our dreams, no matter how daunting, even impossible, they may seem.

PBS is just one of many companies that look first and foremost at a person’s skill set, work ethic, and ability to bring great things to their audience (or customers) and to the organizational culture. In this issue we highlight a number of companies that are doing a stellar job of advancing and retaining talented women (page 37). These companies stand out in part because they listen to what their female talent values. In recent years, that has often been flexibility. It pays off, as these companies, by dint of their profitability, demonstrate that elevating women leaders is not merely the right thing to do, but essential for a healthy bottom line. You can learn here what these leading companies are implementing to achieve such superlative outcomes.

Elsewhere in the issue, our Accelerate department (page 23) explains why taking a calculated risk is necessary for career advancement, and how to overcome our natural trepidation to become a strategic risk-taker.

And summer is a time to celebrate health and wellness, as we spend more time outdoors, moving and socializing. It’s a good time to take stock of our health and make sure we are taking the necessary precautions. On page 45, To Your Health focuses on the 12 preventive screening tests every woman should consider to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.

On that note, get out there! Head to the beach, the mountains, or the neighborhood park, and enjoy all that life has to offer. See you there.

Dr. Sheila Robinson
Publisher, Diversity Woman
Our Culture Recipe

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We believe that the success of our business comes only with the success of our employees. We embrace the diversity of the restaurant industry by encouraging it within our company.

careers.toasttab.com
A chance meeting led then—communications executive Lori Spicer Robertson to make a major career pivot. “I met a chief HR officer for a regional bank and he said, ‘You seem perfect for the people-development space. I’d love for you to join my team,’” Robertson recalls. That moment, which she describes as “divine intervention,” catapulted her down the path of a rewarding career in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Today she advocates for equity in the delivery of health care as vice president and chief diversity officer for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. Prior to this role, she served as vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion for Saks Fifth Avenue and also launched Wundher, a membership community that supports women and mothers. Robertson spoke to Diversity Woman about advancing women in leadership and the political headwinds DEI professionals face.

**Diversity Woman: What do you love about the DEI space?**

*Lori Spicer Robertson:* I am a natural problem-solver. If you tell me something’s going on in your life, the problem-solver in me will try to figure out how to fix it. I am also very involved in social justice. I am a natural change agent in that space. So DEI was a professional progression for me in what I enjoyed doing on a personal level.

**DW: St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital makes such an impact in the fight against childhood illnesses. How have diversity, equity, and inclusion played a role in its mission?**

*LSR:* Diversity, equity, and inclusion have been part of the foundation of our existence. They were birthed in the dream of [founder] Danny Thomas of creating an institution where every child suffering from catastrophic illness would have a place to come and be treated regardless of their race or their social or economic status. We just celebrated 60 years last year, so that [founding] was in the height of the civil rights era.

**DW: What are some of the DEI initiatives at St. Jude that you think are having the greatest impact?**

*LSR:* One of our priorities was to understand how to get more women to advance on our faculty. We’ve created this program called WILL—Women in Leadership and Learning. We also had “champions”—women and men who are already faculty leaders or executive leaders to work alongside [newer hires]. We’ve had a number of promotions come out of the program. What I think is unique and intentional in the development of this program is that we also had development programs for the champions. Leadership requires that you have that relational component—that emotional intelligence to excel, but also [the ability] to be a great mentor and coach. Those are components that they took away from the program.

**DW: What’s the most pressing issue DEI professionals will face in the next 18 months?**

*LSR:* Next year is an election year, and I’ve seen the profession become politicized in a way that I haven’t seen before. We go through this cycle of people not wanting to focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion probably every 10 to 15 years. Someone will decide that it’s divisive, and companies will then follow suit and be like, “Well, maybe it is divisive. Maybe we shouldn’t focus on DEI.” I think it will be important for leaders to home in on the value proposition of DEI.
Why are clinical trials so slow?

85% White?

Ask bigger questions.

gene.com/askbiggerquestions
How Do I Safeguard My Ideas?

Dear DW,

One of my colleagues is constantly stealing my ideas and making it seem like they are his own. How do I work with someone who rarely contributes original thoughts yet gets credit for my work?

Signed,
Plagiarized

Dear Plagiarized,

When someone frequently takes your ideas, it shows they lack the confidence, creativity, or knowledge to come up with their own, says Lynn Berger, a New York–based career counselor and coach.

But if you sit back and do nothing, “you are allowing the person to have power over you,” Berger warns.

Keep in mind that it is possible for two people to come up with similar ideas. However, if a colleague often offers the same idea you have, and you’re certain they had access to your ideas or work, speaking up could help to nip the offending behavior in the bud. Berger suggests casually mentioning to this person, “I also had that idea and discussed it with you last week,” and see if bringing it to their attention gets them to back off.

If the behavior continues (and you are unable to keep the colleague from access to your ideas), mention your concerns to a manager. That’s the only way your manager will see and recognize all your contributions, which can have a major effect on future raises and promotions.

Studies have shown that women are less likely than men to tout their accomplishments at work. This is a time when you need to make your contributions known. Document the date you conceive ideas, and if you can, make sure other colleagues are around when ideas are discussed so they can see that you are the originator of the work.

Don’t take a wait-and-see approach. Speaking up sooner rather than later would be the best way to go, “before it gets out of control,” Berger says.

5 WAYS TO MAKE BETTER SMALL TALK

Being able to chitchat can not only help you connect with managers, colleagues, and clients, it can also improve your well-being, according to a 2021 study by University of Kansas researchers. Here’s how to initiate and participate in these light conversations more effectively.

Pursue new interests.
Volunteer. Take a class. Read New York Times bestsellers. Attend a new exhibition. Not only might you find new interests, you’ll also have topics that form connections and grease the conversational wheels.

Research attendees in advance.
If you know whom you’ll be speaking with, see if they’ve mentioned interests on social media that you can use to launch a conversation.

Leverage the chat function in virtual meetings.
Use those moments when you’re waiting for the team meeting to begin to privately message someone you want to build a relationship with. Familiarize yourself with the technology beforehand so you don’t accidently message the entire group.

Prepare conversation starters.
Ask for movie or restaurant recommendations or delve into hobbies. Steer clear of politics and religion.

Ask follow-up questions.
Listening is crucial to successful small talk. The best way to show you’re listening is to ask questions based on what the other person says. You’ll keep the conversation flowing and strengthen the connection in the process.
Only one in four workers believes their company cares about gender equity, and for women of color, equity is even more elusive. That’s according to The Gender Report, one of seven compilations of data to be unveiled in 2023 as part of a national survey titled Inclusion@Work. Researchers surveyed 1,255 workers who identify as either male or female. The survey is a collaborative effort among pollsters Prisca, Momentive, and AAPI Data, and organizations Novartis, Ascend, Multicultural Media & Correspondents Association, the Urban League, and PowerToFly.

Black women were the least satisfied with their company’s efforts, with 21 percent saying their organization prioritized gender equity, compared with 22 percent of Hispanic women, 26 percent of white women, and 29 percent of American Indian women. Just because a company receives high marks for gender equity doesn’t mean it recognizes equity challenges when it comes to race. In organizations that prioritize gender equity, only 25 percent of employees understand that Black employees are disadvantaged—a figure not far off from the 21 percent of employees in organizations that do not prioritize gender equity.

The good news is that gender-based training programs can help more workers comprehend the challenges people of color face. When organizations offer gender-based training, the following occurs:

- The percentage of employees who think Black workers are disadvantaged rises from 19 percent to 28 percent.
- The percentage of employees who think Asian American workers are disadvantaged rises from 6 percent to 19 percent.
- The percentage of employees who think Hispanic workers are disadvantaged rises from 13 percent to 28 percent.

When 29-year-old Kiera Peltz attended a career fair during her freshman year at Brown University, she had every intention of scoring a valuable internship. However, about 75 percent of the employers were tech companies, and the political science major had never considered science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM) as a career path. “One recruiter patted me on the head and was like, ‘Dear child, go learn how to code and come back and talk to us,’” she recalls.

While she didn’t feel drawn to change her major, that incident—and her failure to get the internship—got her thinking about all the middle school and high school students in the United States who, like her, hadn’t been exposed to technology jobs and the skills needed to perform them. She came away with this message: “You can be an Ivy League student and still be turned down by 75 percent of the companies hiring because you don’t have the right skills.”

Not long after, Peltz met some Estonians at an international conference and learned that children in their country commonly learned how to code starting at age seven.

That inspired her to email local principals, asking if she could bring computer science workshops to their schools. “I wanted to create programs for young girls, like me, who would never be encouraged in this area of study,” she says. “Within 20 minutes, I had a middle school reach out and say, ‘How soon can you be here?’”

That marked the official launch of the Coding School in 2013. Since then, the Coding School has provided more than 70,000 hours of instruction to more than 40,000 students across the globe. It has also partnered with such tech giants as Google and IBM, and, in November 2022, received a $3 million grant from the US Department of Defense to provide training to high school students in artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies.

The way Peltz sees it, it’s her civic duty to give back, and providing STEM education is something she’s particularly well suited to do. “I’m the perfect person because I’m not STEM inclined, so I know what’s needed.”
THE NEW FOOD WISDOM

Finding it hard to keep up with the latest advice on healthy eating? Apparently researchers are too. Some foods and beverages were deemed healthy—until they weren’t. Others are now viewed more favorably than they were three decades ago. While there still isn’t consensus—and may never be entirely, as research is always refining knowledge—here are updates from recent research findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Versus</th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>With an eye on cholesterol, the American Heart Association recommended people eat three or fewer eggs per week.</td>
<td>Not only is the amount of cholesterol in eggs no longer a major concern, but a 2023 study found that eating five or more eggs per week could lower your risk of high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>A nightly glass (or two) of wine was encouraged, as research seemed to show that wine reduced one’s risk of heart disease.</td>
<td>Now, researchers suggest slowing things down. For women, 25 or more grams of alcohol per day can increase mortality risk. To put it in perspective, a 5-ounce glass of wine has about 14 grams of alcohol.</td>
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<td>Coffee</td>
<td>The jury was out on whether coffee did more harm than good, as it was found to impact the immune system’s functioning.</td>
<td>New research suggests that your daily Starbucks run may boost your memory. People who drink two to three cups of coffee a day have a lower risk of stroke and dementia than non-coffee drinkers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chocolate</td>
<td>In the early 1990s, studies of the Kuna Indians who lived off the coast of Panama credited their lower death rates from heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, and cancer to their consumption of cocoa, which is found in dark chocolate.</td>
<td>A Consumer Reports study has rained on chocolate lovers’ parade, finding that dark chocolate often contains heavy metals such as cadmium and lead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Milk was commonly touted as a necessary source of calcium for the promotion of strong bones and to prevent osteoporosis.</td>
<td>Researchers say milk may not be as good for us as once thought. Not only do countries that consume the most dairy have higher rates of hip fractures, but milk may also increase one’s risk of certain types of cancers.</td>
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Set Boundaries from Home

Is working remotely wreaking havoc with your work-life balance? Here’s how to reclaim your personal time.

**Stick to a schedule.** While it doesn’t have to be the traditional nine-to-five, be clear with yourself what your working hours will be. Just as you would shut off your computer at a designated time in the office, give yourself the same courtesy at home.

**Make your absence known.** Group chat and calendaring apps can show when you’re available, so they can let colleagues know when you’re inaccessible too. Set your group-chat status to away or offline when the workday ends, and on the group calendar, block out time when you don’t want to be disturbed.

**Pause your email.** The productivity tool Boomerang has a feature that lets you stop emails from popping up in your in-box until you’re ready to deal with them.

**Schedule correspondence for workdays.** Even if you do decide to work late nights and weekends, don’t broadcast it to colleagues, or they’ll think they can contact you anytime. If you do craft emails—or answer them—during off-hours, schedule them to arrive the next workday morning.

**Disconnect when you have time off.** Whether you’re on a vacation, staycation, or simply taking a mental health day, set your voice mail and autoresponders to let everyone know you won’t be checking messages—and keep your word.
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An annual review not only shows you what your manager thinks of your performance but can also set the stage for your career’s progression over the next year. Follow these steps to make sure you get the recognition—and support—you deserve.

**Be clear on expectations.** Review your job description and previous conversations with your manager to make sure you know which job functions are most important to your employer. Doing this also lets you see if priorities have changed.

**Brainstorm your biggest accomplishments.** Be ready to cite examples of workplace achievements in the areas most valued by your employer. If the manager prioritizes sales numbers, know how many times you exceeded your quota.

**Come up with a personal growth plan.** Women who obtain leadership roles often propose taking on stretch assignments that can benefit them and their organizations, according to Allison Elias, an assistant professor of business administration at the University of Virginia Darden School of Business. Also tell your manager what skill building or training activities your company could offer to help you be more effective.

**Drop any defensiveness.** Even if you don’t agree with a criticism your manager makes, remain calm and respectful. The American Management Association recommends asking a manager to expound on their assessment so you can be clear on the feedback. Put it back in their court by asking what you can do to better meet their expectations.

**See pay increases as a win-win.** Salary transparency laws mean more companies are putting salary information in their job listings, making it easier to see the going rate for your skill set. Yet Elias’s research has shown that women feel more comfortable advocating for others than for themselves. Consider focusing on how more responsibilities—and salary to match—can help you be a more successful team player and better serve the needs and challenges of the organization.

**Get plenty of practice.** Women are more likely than men to experience anxiety when touting their own abilities and negotiating, Elias has found. With a trusted friend or colleague, practice listing your accomplishments and explaining why you deserve that raise or promotion. Negotiation is a skill that can be mastered like anything else, Elias says.
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
Supporting the Sandwich Generation

According to data released in 2022 by the Pew Research Center, “Americans in their 40s are the most likely to be sandwiched between their children and an aging parent. More than half in this age group (54%) have a living parent age 65 or older and are either raising a child younger than 18 or have an adult child they helped financially in the past year.” The National Alliance for Caregiving reports that this group is about 11 million strong, with caregivers most likely being female. I am part of this generation.

I take pride in how fortunate I am to have my 74-year-old mom live with me and my twins. Being with us since their birth, she has been the twins’ caregiver, doing school drop-off and pickup and overseeing much of the afternoon extracurricular activities. My mom is the reason that, as a single mother with young children, I have been able to take risks in my career. She always says it’s her mission to make sure I am more successful in my career than she was in hers.

However, in January 2023, she fell sick and was hospitalized for several weeks. I was at her bedside for over 12 hours every day. In one moment, I went from having a full-time caregiver for my children to being the caregiver for both my kids and my mom. Not only did I have to contend with the concern I held for her, but I was now in the driver’s seat, responsible for navigating terrain I had not traveled before and for which I had no map to guide me. Fortunately, the company I work for, Eventbrite, has benefits designed to aid employees in moments just like this.

I activated Grayce, a tech company that provides resources and support for employees caring for a loved one. My caseworker walked me through all the benefits we were eligible for, which included free transportation, grant money to cover certain expenses, and more. I also set up childcare through Urban Sitter. Almost six months later, I am still working to figure it out, but these resources supplied guidance and support, helping me create a plan when I otherwise wouldn’t have known where to start. I am fortunate to work for a company that provides benefits like these.

To attract and retain talent, companies should think about non-compensation benefits that are attractive to marginalized employees. Solve for them, and you have solved for everyone. While I have learned to ask for help—ask and you shall receive—and have taken advantage of the company’s benefits, which I’m grateful for, there is more work to be done. Benefits and perks are no longer one-size-fits-all.

Meeting the needs of employees, at all stages of their lives, will increase loyalty and drive results. Let’s do the work to ensure all generations and all lifestyles feel included and valued by their employers.

Maisha Gray-Diggs (Dr. MGD) is the vice president of global talent, inclusion, and experience at Eventbrite.
At Amazon, we believe that building a culture that is welcoming and inclusive is integral to people doing their best work and is essential to what we can achieve as a company. We’re committed to building a workplace with people from diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. That’s why we’re proud to be named one of the 30 Best Companies for Women by Diversity Woman Magazine.
Pamela Everhart, a lawyer, never intended to work in finance. But when an attorney at Fidelity Investments reached out to recruit her, she agreed to meet. She loves connecting with people, after all, and quips that she didn’t want to turn down a free lunch.

During that pivotal lunch, she learned that Fidelity focuses not just on Wall Street, but on Main Street—empowering everyday people to save, invest, and build a secure financial future for themselves. Eager to be part of that effort, Everhart signed on.

Over the course of a 28-year career with Fidelity, Everhart has served in various leadership roles, overseeing high-performing public policy, legal, and compliance teams. She has educated and influenced state and federal lawmakers on key policy issues ranging from retirement and data privacy to D&I.

Everhart currently serves as senior vice president and head of regional public affairs and community relations. She is passionate about removing barriers to financial inclusion and closing the racial wealth gap. For example, she deftly aligns employee volunteers with nonprofits around shared goals such as delivering financial literacy programs to hundreds of thousands of students in underserved communities.

Everhart is co–executive sponsor for Aspire (Fidelity’s Latino and Black employee resource group) and a senior advisor for the Women’s Leadership Group. She is also among the executives who helped launch the New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund, a Massachusetts nonprofit investing in organizations that address racism and drive positive social change.

Everhart was appointed to the Steering Committee of the Boston Racial Equity Fund by Boston mayor Martin Walsh. She holds a bachelor’s degree in business administration from the University of Texas at Austin and a JD from Harvard Law School.

**Diversity Woman:** Who influenced you most during your formative years?

**Pamela Everhart:** I give a lot of credit to my mom, who instilled in me that I could be whatever I wanted to be. She instilled in me the importance of staying focused on my dreams and moving forward.

The other person in my life—and I never had the opportunity to go back and tell him this—was my sixth-grade math teacher, Mr. Charles Mathis.
By: Ersin Tatar

[Paragraph about the need for financial literacy and the importance of investment in education and scholarships.]

“A lot of the focus in the past has been on the top students—the top math student in the sixth grade. But sometimes girls pull back, because you don’t want to be the smartest one in the room. You kind of let the boys move forward. Well, Mr. Mathis didn’t let that happen. He knew I was really good in math, and he pushed me. He would give me additional projects and exercises and math quizzes that were separate from the class. I ended up being the top math student in the sixth grade.

He took the time to invest in me, and in my job now, I’m investing in students through the platform of Fidelity.

**DW:** How does Fidelity help empower students financially?

**PE:** We do volunteer events where we go into schools and help kids learn about financial literacy. We’re training the teachers so they feel confident about teaching financial concepts.

Most recently, we entered into a great partnership with the Connecticut Suns, a WNBA team. We are working with some of their kids’ summer [basketball] camps. We’re using these great athletes to reach out to kids and teach them financial concepts.

An initiative we launched earlier this year is called Invest in My Education—$250 million invested in the education of Black and Brown students. This will offer 2,500 students the opportunity to graduate with no college debt. So with their first job, they can start off saving and investing to build a pathway for wealth. Our partner in this effort is UNCF (United Negro College Fund).

We realize that not every student needs a full scholarship. Some just need that last $500 or $1,000 to pay the tuition bill so they can graduate. So we will also be providing persistence and completion grants to educational institutions, for a number of students beyond the 2,500.

[Fidelity is also] investing in nonprofit organizations focused on the pathway from high school to college to work. We want to give those organizations the financial resources they need to support students. We think that with these ecosystem-building grants, along with the persistence and completion grants, we can potentially reach up to 50,000 students.

“I tell my team this all the time, and it’s my motto: always remember that R comes before T; that means relationships come before tasks.”

Another program, and I’m so proud to be able to lead this, focuses on what we call the “mighty middle.” These are kids with GPAs from 2.5 to 3.5. There are lots of scholarships available to very high-achieving students. And then if you’re at the very bottom, there’s money. But in this scholarship program, we’re trying to reach those kids who have the grit, who have the focus, but because of things in their lives may not have achieved that very high GPA—those solid B students who are the engine of our economy.

**DW:** Are there other groups Fidelity is concentrating on?

**PE:** We also focus at Fidelity Investments on women and finance. Some of my business partners have been involved in activities where we are communicating to women how they can take control of their financial lives.

Also in the community, we’re partnering with organizations that are making sure people have good strategies to learn not only to save but to take the next step, which is investing.

**DW:** What key leadership lesson have you learned?

**PE:** It took me a while to realize this, but I don’t have to do it all myself. Sometimes women decide that if the job is going to be done right, we have to do it. It’s okay to pass the ball. I will make sure my team has the resources it needs to be successful, but I don’t have to take every shot. At the end of the day, it’s the team scoring.

I’ve learned to do it in my professional life—and in my personal life as well. During the pandemic, my son at college came home, and I also have a daughter at home. So I’m like, OK, I’m going to cook every day. But that wasn’t working. So I gave my husband a day, gave my son a day, gave my daughter a day, and I had a day.

There’s another thing I learned. I was doing some research on Katharine Graham, the former publisher of the Washington Post. I recall her saying, “Mind on, hands off.” That’s how I am as a leader. I know what my team is doing—my mind is on it but my hands are off. I take the time to hire really smart people, often-times much smarter than me, because then they can execute. I establish a vision, give them direction as to what we’re trying to do, give them tools and resources, and then support them and give them credit. If we do all of that, it’s a winning combination.

**DW:** What advice would you give a young woman aspiring to leadership?

**PE:** I tell my team this all the time, and it’s my motto: always remember that R comes before T; that means relationships come before tasks. As you are moving up in your career, it’s hard to get anything done by yourself. You have to develop strong relationships. People tend to work well with folks they know very well. So I would say spend time to get to know your colleagues, spend time to get to know folks in the community. You never know who is going to be in a position to give you an opportunity.

**DW:** Looking ahead, what excites you most?

**PE:** I am most excited about the Fidelity Scholars, those 2,500 students over the next three or four years who will graduate from college with no debt. I’m going to look back and be so proud that, like Mr. Mathis invested in me, Fidelity Investments invested in the education of kids who looked like me—Black and Brown kids—so they could be put on a pathway to building generational wealth. **DW**
As founder and CEO of biotech firm SiNON, Afreen Allam aims to revolutionize treatment for neurological conditions

By Anna Rappel

When Afreen Allam and her sisters were kids, they loved using their imaginations to concoct potions in the kitchen. She admits that their “weird recipes” sometimes disappointed. But their experiments—the trial and error, encouraged by their mother—helped hone the investigative mindset that serves her today.

Research and development, after all, are at the heart of SiNON Therapeutics, the biotech firm that Allam founded. The company, based in Durham, North Carolina, uses a patented technology designed to more effectively treat people with neurological conditions like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, for example, and the effects of brain tumors.

Allam began pondering how to improve the patient experience as a teenager while volunteering at the Duke Cancer Center, where she saw medication side effects firsthand. After getting a grounding in microbiology and biochemistry, she went abroad to study at the renowned Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), where she spent long hours in the lab conducting nanotechnology research.

Aiming her efforts toward neurological health, she developed an innovative nanocapsule technology that she calls the Carbon Nano Dot. This carbon nanoparticle encapsulates medication, acting as a Trojan horse to deliver the drug across the often-impenetrable blood-brain barrier. (Allam’s company is named after Sinon, who convinced the Trojans to open the city gates, allowing entry to the wooden horse full of Greek warriors.)

A Carbon Nano Dot essentially delivers concentrated medication to a specific site—such as a tumor—while reducing overall toxicity and side effects. Allam’s father, Abdul, who has a degree in organic chemistry, encouraged her to file for a patent, which she did at age 20.

SiNON’s role isn’t to develop drugs, but rather to partner with pharmaceutical companies to make their medications more safe and effective. As a Muslim woman of color without a PhD navigating the white, male-dominated field of biotech, Allam has bumped into plenty of skeptics. But her years of nanotechnology research and her innovative Carbon Nano Dot have helped quell the skepticism, including among prospective investors.

The daughter of Indian and Pakistani immigrants, Allam’s support circle encompasses her sisters, Nida, the first Muslim American woman elected to office in North Carolina, to serve on the Durham County Board of Commissioners, and Arsheen, founder of the clean-tech start-up GOLeaf.

Allam double majored in microbiology and biochemistry at North Carolina State and has an MBA from Duke’s Fuqua School of Business.

She spoke to Diversity Woman about the inspiration behind the Carbon Nano Dot, its game-changing potential, and how pushing confidently forward can turn naysayers into yea-sayers.

Diversity Woman: Your volunteer work at Duke Cancer Center during high school prompted you to work on improving drug delivery into the body. How so?

Afreen Allam: A lot of times, I was part of the patient support program because many patients didn’t have family members or friends close by. As a 17-year-old, it was hard to see how short life is, but also to see all the side effects with traditional forms of chemotherapy.
Two weeks in, I thought I was going to quit because I didn’t know if I could handle how challenging it was to see all these pain points on a day-to-day basis. But I immediately formed a bond with some of the patients. Eventually a lot of them shared their feelings about the side effects that they were seeing with the medications.

We are pumping all these toxins into humans and hoping they end up killing the tumors, but in the long run, they do damage to the rest of the body. And that got me thinking, there has to be a better alternative.

**DW:** How did the idea for Carbon Nano Dot come about?  
**AA:** We came up with carbon-based technology because our bodies naturally have carbon present. We didn’t want to introduce a foreign particle that was going to cause an immune response or some sort of reaction to the body.

We decided to start with neurological diseases because there’s a huge unmet need getting medications past the blood-brain barrier, which is our natural defense mechanism to keep everything [harmful] out of the brain. When a patient has a [neurological condition]—whether it’s Alzheimer’s, a brain tumor, even something simpler like ADHD—we need medications to get there. And currently only 2 percent of the drugs available on the market can actually do so.

**DW:** What challenges did you face as you were launching your company?  
**AA:** [While attending Duke’s Fuqua School of Business], I saw a flyer for the Duke Startup Challenge, a start-up pitch event that lasts the entire year. When I was applying, people said, “Hey, you’re biotech, so you’re not even going to be considered.” And I thought, it’s not a matter of making it to the finals; it’s more forcing me to have deliverables—to put together a pitch deck and a business plan, which I need regardless. Having this format and deadlines to submit this thing will only motivate me to do it faster.

“*I’m very much focused on bringing people together and solving challenges through collaborative work.*”

There were close to 300 applications, and they go through multiple rounds throughout the year. We were one of the 10 [finalist companies]. We had to pitch in front of a room of 400 or 500 people, and the VC who was writing the check said, “I don’t invest in biotechs; I don’t believe in them. The runway’s too long.” I guess too much of a financial commitment. I thought, we worked really hard to get here. There has to be somebody in the audience who could open doors to potential partnerships or investors. I’m just going to pitch as if I didn’t hear what she said.

To our surprise, at the end of the night, they announced our name as the final winner. We took home that $50,000 check, and it was life-changing because that was the first external funding we got that was non-dilutive, meaning we didn’t have to pay any investors back or give up any of the company. It also opened doors.

Maybe six months later, we applied for an NC IDEA grant [for North Carolina–based start-ups] and it was a very similar story. They said, “No biotech has ever won. Don’t waste your time applying.” We applied. We ended up getting that next $50,000, which was, again, non-dilutive money.

**DW:** How would you describe your leadership style?  
**AA:** It’s very much focused on bringing people together and solving challenges through collaborative work. I value everybody on the team—their feedback and their thoughts. They may come up with an idea that I hadn’t thought about. So it’s building a collaborative and empowered team to build a strong foundation. And as you grow, the team brings in people who have a similar mindset and can share the vision of where this company should go.

**DW:** Moving forward, how will SiNON Therapeutics remain competitive?  
**AA:** As a biotech company, maintaining our IP [intellectual property] portfolio is always huge. So making sure that we’re staying ahead of the curve and continue optimizing, but also enhancing our technology. We can’t stop innovating because it becomes very easy for other people to reverse-engineer the technology. Our goal is that, even if somebody were able to do that, we’re already three or four steps ahead of them. **DW**
As a young Syracuse University graduate in upstate New York, Michael Blackshear decided to venture into the insurance world, and the result is a career spanning more than 30 years in professional financial services in the areas of ethics, compliance, and risk management. Blackshear is senior vice president, chief compliance and privacy officer for Ryan Specialty, tasked with maintaining and developing an effective compliance and regulatory risk framework. Named one of the 2022 Most Influential Black Executives in Corporate America by Savoy magazine—a leading publication for Black culture, business, and entertainment coverage—Blackshear considers himself a craftsman in his work. He is also intentional about managing relationships. “You have to figure out your passion and what you enjoy,” he says. “For me, I’m already living that, because I’ve been deliberate in my career. If you don’t spend time managing relationships, regardless of how smart you are, you’ll have challenges being successful.”

In 2022, Blackshear spearheaded a newly formed diversity, equity, and inclusion effort charged with promoting DEI at Ryan Specialty and growing strategic partnerships within the insurance industry and with the communities that are home or workplaces for Ryan Specialty teammates. “It is my opinion that the insurance industry is still struggling with reaching people of color, women of color, and Black women [in particular],” Blackshear says. “The aim of an internal DEI focus is to authentically connect with and invest in people, with the goal of eventually becoming an industry leader in DEI.”

While he admits he does not have all the answers, he roots his approach in data collection and analysis, which has and will continue to inform and shape his strategy and outreach.

Blackshear holds several degrees, including a bachelor’s in finance from Syracuse University’s Martin J. Whitman School of Management; an MBA from the Maurice R. Greenberg School of Risk Management, Insurance and Actuarial Science at St. John’s University; and a law degree from Fordham Law School. In addition to serving as an adjunct professor at Fordham Law School, Blackshear launched a $100,000 endowment in 2023 to support future generations of underrepresented students and increase diversity in the field of law. This was to honor his late father, the Honorable Cornelius Blackshear (former federal bankruptcy judge), who also attended the law school and passed away in 2021.

Blackshear also holds a certificate in managing ethics in organizations from Bentley College, and a certificate from Loyola University Chicago at the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Institute.
"Avoid beating yourself up when you fail. Have the courage to take risks. Lean into the storm."

Diversity Woman: Tell us about your career trajectory and what you are most proud of.

Michael Blackshear: I have been in the insurance industry for over 30 years with a concentration in ethics, compliance, and risk management. I assumed additional responsibilities at Ryan Specialty as the head of diversity, equity, and inclusion during the summer of 2022.

I am most proud of seeing the growth and impact I have had on others’ careers. It is my belief that we all have an obligation to build and guide our future leaders.

DW: How does your firm advance women into leadership positions?

MB: We can do a better job. Our industry can do a better job. It is not enough. The foundation of our DEI program is to have an inclusive and equitable workplace where all employees are valued and evaluated on their performance and contributions.

It is about developing a practice where we give everyone what they need to be successful, where we ensure more visibility of diverse talent and actively move everyone closer to success by making systemic changes that level the playing field. We are still on our journey.

DW: What advice would you give mid-career women of color who are frustrated by the pace of their advancement into greater leadership? What steps should they take or avoid?

MB: Look for sponsors and allies, those who will be your advocates, particularly in the insurance industry. They don’t have to look like you, but they do have to be ready to advocate on your behalf. Identify a sponsor who will provide you with direct, honest, and critical feedback on how best to navigate your career and organization. This individual should be someone you trust, respect, and who has demonstrated a level of success.

Advancement is more than just being the smartest or most technically skilled practitioner in the room; that is just one ingredient to success. It is also how well you manage, develop, grow, and maintain relationships. Do not wait for a favor or an ask; nourish relationships. Avoid beating yourself up when you fail. Have the courage to take risks. Lean into the storm.

About avoidance: Don’t let failure distract you from your goal. There will be failure, disappointment, and fear. Embrace these emotions to help strengthen your leadership style.

DW: You recently took on the task of promoting DEI at your firm. What does DEI mean to you, and how do you experience inclusivity within a workplace or industry?

MB: DEI means building a culture and environment where people can be their best selves and do their best work. I believe our firm, along with our industry, is still in the beginning stages of our maturity model. We have done a good job with recognizing, valuing, and leveraging our different perspectives and backgrounds to drive needed results. However, we still need to enhance the “belonging” aspects of our DEI framework.

DW: If a professional, particularly a woman of color, has the credentials and performance for a promotion yet doesn’t get it, what should that person’s next steps be?

MB: First is not to view this situation as a failure, but a learning, and begin to understand what those other factors were, other than “credentials” and “performance,” that were considered as factors for that promotion.

It has been my experience that, for certain roles, if you make it into the top three, you are all well qualified for that role, and sometimes it is something else that will set you apart.

Advice I would recommend for women of color would be to take a moment to gather your thoughts, debrief on the process with someone you trust, get specific feedback, share with your trusted inner circle for a candid perspective, and do not let this experience define your value. Only you can define your value.

DW: How should people put their full selves into their work and workspaces even if the company culture might not value DEI or is behind in prioritizing.

MB: It is my belief that all organizations should strive for an inclusive and equitable workplace where all employees are valued and evaluated based on their performance and contributions, creating a culture where people can be their best self and do their best work.

I am realistic that my belief is not shared by all, and that our collective DEI journey will create conflict with some, navigate us through tough and uncomfortable conversations, and elicit emotional reactions for those who are directly impacted by our collective DEI journey. Nevertheless, we should all embrace the storm . . . since all storms will end. If something does not challenge us, then we will not evolve and change.

Be bold and bring your full self into your workspace, regardless of the culture. You are that catalyst for change. Be honest with yourself about what you want to bring and who you want to bring it to. And last, see how you can support your organization’s efforts to move DEI forward.

DW: Share a lesson or a piece of advice that has helped to shape your leadership style.

MB: Be aware that there will always be someone smarter than you in the room. Have the courage to tap that intellect and empower your talent so you can execute the necessary changes to see real results. Leadership is about empowering others and trusting the talent in front of you. DW
How to Take a Calculated Risk

Taking a risk can be scary. But avoiding taking a risk can hold back your career. Here’s how to make the leap successfully.

BY LYDIA T. BLANCO

Being risk averse in the workplace and in business can cost more than people realize or bargain for. That’s especially true for Black women and other women of color. In some cases, being risk averse can cost earnings, advancement in the workplace, or confidence and perception of self.

In Dr. Yasmene Mumby’s case, it was her sense of self, and even her health. After years of showing up as a top performer in the workplace, she experienced extreme burnout and the temporary loss of sight in one of her eyes from work-related stress. Because of that, Mumby—a leadership advisor with over 15 years of experience in K-12 teaching, community organizing, strategic communications, and humanitarian aid—decided that she needed to make a choice. Ultimately, she chose herself and her well-being.

Another factor in her risk calculation was deciding she would no longer work for less than the value she added. After years of advocating for herself and not getting the compensation she desired, Mumby bet on herself and started her own business, The Ringgold. Now she works with purpose-driven organizations as a sustainable leadership advisor to consult and collaborate on their organizational ambitions.

“The Ringgold was formed out of me taking a risk,” says Mumby. “It was birthed out of necessity. I was at a crossroads, a point when life pushes you to create something different for yourself, and see the depths of who you are beyond that moment. I was sick of getting underpaid and hearing through polite work-speak, vague platitudes, and fake reasoning that cover up bias, ‘You do great work for us. We’re so excited you’re on our team,’ and all the accolades and all the verbal recognition, but none of it showing up in my compensation or my title.”

Strategizing to win

Organizations must prioritize diversity initiatives, create environments where diverse perspectives are encouraged, and make resources available so that women of color can pursue their aspirations. Until those goals are met, women in the workplace will continue...
to often be overlooked when it comes to opportunities for professional development. For women, taking calculated risks is an essential part of career growth. Studies show that individuals who take risks experience greater success than those who don’t. A study published in *PLOS One* found that risk-takers—even when their risks failed—were more likely than risk-avoiders to be hired and promoted, in large part because the risk-takers were perceived as showing less indecisiveness and greater agency.

“Calculated risks have shown up in my life as an understanding that the work I’m about to do will propel me and grow me in ways I don’t know and might not be prepared for,” Mumby says. “At that time, I intentionally consider, at arm’s length, the supports, resources, and capacities I can access while embarking on this journey toward the unknown. That means I cannot stay within myself, afraid to move.”

Robust support systems, such as career coaches, therapists, and mentors, can help women take risks more confidently. McKinsey & Company noted in a 2018 report that, with the proper support, women find more space to take risks. Mumby, who partnered with a therapist during her decision-making process and journey, advises women to work with career coaches if they have the resources. Coaches can provide valuable guidance on navigating difficult situations and communicating effectively.

Dethra Giles, founder and CEO of ExecuPrep, says, “Good coaches have all the right answers, but great coaches ask all the right questions. A skilled coach can be an asset when it comes to evaluating risk. A good coach will help you understand the potential costs and benefits of taking a risk, including factors like worth versus value, impact on your overall strategy, and potential impact on your reputation.” When working with clients, Giles uses what she calls a 5D framework to assess risks:

1. **Describe**: Be clear about what you want as an experience and outcome. This clarity is critical when using your tribe to help you reach your goal.
2. **Define**: Create your definition of success and unsubscribe to everyone else’s.
3. **Develop**: Develop a plan to act. This plan should account for obstacles.
4. **Deploy**: Actually take the risk.
5. **Do over**: Keep taking risks and following the 5Ds.

**Risk and wellness**

As resilient as people can be, there is often a negative physiological response both when enduring work-related stress in psychologically unsafe places and when deciding to take a leap of faith. Therapists can offer support to manage the stress associated with taking risks, while mentors can provide a safe space for women to discuss their goals and ambitions without fear of judgment. Dr. Tammy Lewis Wilborn, author of *Playing a New Game: A Black Woman’s Guide to Being Well and Thriving in the Workplace*, says women have to remember that “doing well and being well are not mutually exclusive. They can and should co-occur.” She says, “You must prioritize your mental and physical health. The most important way to take care of both are daily self-care activities such as getting adequate sleep, staying hydrated, eating nutritional food, and engaging in movement throughout the day. These seem basic and commonsensical, and they are
Is Risk-Taking Different for Women of Color?

Women, particularly Black women and other women of color, often lack the resources to take risks in the workplace. They may need access to mentors or executive coaches to support them through tough decisions or guide them in navigating tricky business scenarios. When asked whether Black women and other women of color have support when taking risks, ExecuPrep’s Dethra Giles says, “No, they do not, and as a result, Black women are less confident and less likely to take risks. When I refer to support, I categorize it into various forms. Some may argue that Black women have plenty of support, given the numerous programs recently made available to them. However, support is not solely dependent on systems and people. It is also about evidence. Black women frequently lack the evidence required to support taking a risk. For example, how many Black women hold senior positions?”

A lack of representation can leave women hesitant to make bold moves that could benefit their careers, leading to stagnation and loss of confidence in their professional abilities.

KPMG’s study Risk, Resilience, Reward: Mastering the Three R’s, which surveyed 2,000 women from diverse backgrounds who work in a corporate setting, found that “only one-quarter of responding women report that earning a more senior title or promotion has been a strong driver for risk-taking. Fewer than one in five cite gaining greater visibility, although this is slightly higher among extremely confident women. Beyond money, other factors that have encouraged women in the survey to take more risks include having had past success, a leader who encouraged them to go for it, working in a supportive culture, and having more training opportunities.”

Research has shown that BIPOC executives often feel like outsiders who must constantly prove themselves to gain respect and recognition from their peers.

“There is a prevailing expectation for women, especially women of color, to play it safe,” says mental health and wellness expert Dr. Tammy Lewis Wilborn. “We aren’t socialized to take risks. Take career choice, for example. Careers like entrepreneurship or the creative arts that fall outside traditional roles don’t often get support from family or friends because they are viewed as risky. This is why access to mentors is so important. It’s important to know that risk-taking doesn’t have to be big or a one-time thing.” —LTB

foundational, but are usually the first things we neglect when stressed or overwhelmed.”

Mumby says that when she reflects on the timeline of her declining health, she remembers her body speaking to her. “I recognize the signs that led to me being beyond burned out, and my body responding in a way that signaled, ’You can’t continue living and working at this pace, because it’s not sustainable.’”

Lewis Wilborn also emphasizes attunement to the body. “Your body, by its very design, is made to help you survive,” she says. “Pay attention to your feelings and physical sensations and ask yourself, ’What is my body telling me it needs?’ Your body is your most trusted advisor. If you will listen to anybody, listen to your body.”

After enduring a year of eyesight complications before regaining her vision, Mumby is now living out the lessons she learned from exhausting herself. She says she realized that “my work has to be sustainable for my well-being, and that’s threaded throughout the way I work, who I work with, and when I work.”

Mumby has built her business in a way that creates sustainability for her team. “We are full, beautiful, thriving beings, and we shouldn’t be in spaces, namely at work, where people spend most of their time on this planet, that limit us.”

To women calculating risk, Giles says, “You can avoid failure and go no further than you currently are, or you can take the risk and have wild success. Calculated risks are not about never failing. They are about doing the math to reduce the likelihood of failure. This means, ultimately, the math will work in your favor. Do the calculation, and then take the risk.” Bet on yourself. DW

Lydia T. Blanco, a business journalist covering the intersections of equity and culture, is passionate about building community through storytelling.
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Who Are We?

What you should know about psychometric tests—and how they are being applied in the workplace

By Kimberly Olson

Skills and knowledge are key in the workplace. But personality traits—persistence, helpfulness, the ability to manage stress—also influence how well we fare in a role. To assess those traits, many companies use personality testing, a $2 billion industry that’s growing at 15 percent annually.

The recruiting firm Atrium, for example, uses the Predictive Index (PI) Assessment to get a fuller picture of job candidates. “The PI helps us to understand whether a candidate’s personality will align with the role that we are seeking to fill, and helps guide the interview,” says Casey O’Connor, associate director of Learning and Development.

“When used properly, personality tests can provide valuable insight into a candidate’s strengths, weaknesses, and work style, allowing hiring managers to make informed decisions about whether the candidate is a good fit for the position and the team,” adds Tracy Duberman, PhD, president and CEO of the Leadership Development Group, a talent development firm.

There are two main types of psychometric tests—evaluations of personality and aptitude—on the market today. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator reveals people’s natural preferences in four areas: extraversion or introversion, sensing or intuition, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceiving. More than 80 percent of the Fortune 100 use the Myers-Briggs, as do many universities and the US military.

The other main type, the Big Five Inventory, measures test takers across five dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience.

Most personality tests today are based on one of these two types, or a combination. Some tests are industry-specific, such as Suited, which is marketed to law firms, banks, and other professional-services firms.

For hiring and beyond

Organizations use personality tests for everything from recruitment to assembling effective work teams. “Personality tests can be used as a tool to inform and explain differences, including strengths and weaknesses, so employees can better understand one another, potentially reduce conflict, and work together more efficiently and effectively,” says Simone Phipps, MBA,
When Duberman’s organization was hired by a pharmaceutical company to help a new R&D leader manage an existing team, for example, it employed a styles inventory called DiSC. This test determines how people fit into four main personality styles. "By identifying their own strengths and challenges, team members can learn how to work more effectively with others who have different styles." The DiSC assessment may also lead to better collaboration. "Two team members with a Dominant style might clash over leadership or decision-making, while someone with an Influence style [characterized by openness, optimism, energy] might frustrate a Conscientiousness team member who values precision and accuracy," Duberman explains. "By understanding these differences, team members can learn to communicate more effectively and avoid potential conflicts. They can also identify strategies to leverage their strengths and work together to achieve common goals."

O’Connor says that when managers gain a deeper understanding of their employees, they often become better leaders. “The Predictive Index provides tools such as team-building activities and info on team strengths and potential blind spots, in addition to management strategies for each employee, which [managers] can reference to view what drives that employee,” she says. "What environment will they be most successful in? What are the needs of this employee?"

Duberman says such tests can be revelatory for managers. “There are always these incredible ahas,” she says. “They feel that this is a missing piece in their overall careers in terms of being able to lead more effectively. Once you’ve mastered your skills and knowledge, what matters is this soft stuff.”

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**Big Five**
The Big Five model is based on five personality dimensions—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—as well as 30 personality traits within those dimensions. The Big Five framework, while not perfect, has appeared in more than 700 research studies and been deemed reliable by many academics. Various personality tests are based on the Big Five model, including one offered by Truity. 

*truity.com*

**HEXACO**
Another popular test, HEXACO measures six broad dimensions in this framework—honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. HEXACO, which has shown validity in research, is similar to the Big Five tests but distinguishes honesty-humility.

*hexaco.org*

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator**
The world’s most popular personality test, the Myers-Briggs assesses innate preferences, such as “judging” and “feeling.” Unlike Big Five–based tests, which measure people along a spectrum, the Myers-Briggs boxes test takers into 16 personality types.

*myersbriggs.org*

**Enneagram**
The Enneagram test describes nine personality types, such as the Giver and the Skeptic, each with its own virtues, motivations, and fears. Each test taker has a core personality type, which is associated with two neighboring types—called “wings”—that the person can transition into to unlock greater potential. Better suited for people seeking personal growth than those trying to create a better workplace.

*enneagraminstitute.com*

**DiSC**
The DiSC model, designed to capture situational behavior, helps people understand which of four main types they gravitate toward—Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C). The DiSC test can help people find a position that matches their natural strengths and also helps build understanding between colleagues.

*discprofile.com*
Some people are even eager to expand their newfound awareness into other areas of their lives. “They’ll say, ‘Can I have my family do this as well? If I could understand how my spouse or my kids think, that would really be helpful,’” Duberman says.

**Beware bias**

While personality tests can provide insights, experts say they should always be used in concert with other tools. “[A personality test] is not the ultimate deciding factor of whether to hire the person or not,” O’Connor says.

One downside of such tests is potential bias. “There’s evidence that tests do not function similarly for all populations,” says Maria Elena Oliveri, PhD, a psychometric testing expert with the Buros Center for Testing at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln (opinions expressed are her own). “So there may be an incorrect decision being made about promotions or prehire if the individual taking the test doesn’t fit the mainstream population for whom the test was developed.”

While conducting research for her book *The Personality Brokers*, Merve Emre, PhD, associate professor of American literature at Oxford, discovered that Myers-Briggs cocreator Isabel Briggs Myers had been a mystery writer. While Briggs Myers was considered progressive for her time in certain ways, Emre calls her novel *Give Me Death* “horribly racist.” Briggs Myers also believed that women were biologically more prone to feeling than men (and thus originally created a separate Myers-Briggs answer key for them) and wouldn’t test anyone with an IQ under 100 (believing they couldn’t assess their own traits).

Since the Myers-Briggs was introduced in the 1940s, new iterations have been created. But most personality tests have been designed by middle-aged white men, and experts say any such tool inescapably incorporates the creator’s preexisting values and biases.

“These biases may lead to the disqualification of very qualified candidates for hire, promotion, special assignments, etcetera,” Phipps says. “They may also reinforce stereotypes and relegate women or people with disabilities to certain roles.”

Phipps cautions that there may even be legal ramifications if a test is found to be biased against a job candidate. Certain personality tests—or improper use of one—may violate the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, or other laws prohibiting employment discrimination. “An example is a woman who is hearing- and speech-impaired, who sued a supermarket for not hiring her after she failed a personality test that was designed to predict whether she would be friendly and communicate well with others,” Phipps says.

Personality tests may also penalize neurodivergent people. A 2018 meta-analysis of research comprising 4,000 people, for example, found that those with autism score lower on the Big Five traits. Personality assessments may screen out people with mental health conditions too.

**A part of the whole**

Personality tests may provide insights—and lead to helpful, and even fun, discussions—but they’re just one type of data. “Companies overemphasize the efficient, easily comparable personality tests,” says Wendy Smith, PhD, Academy of Management scholar and Dana J. Johnson professor of management and cofounder of the Women’s Leadership Initiative at the University of Delaware. “These tests will vet out the rich diversity that leads to organizational creativity, innovation, and sustainability. Effectively addressing biases depends on using multiple inputs.”

So it’s important to gather other information about employees through behavioral interviews, online qualification screening questionnaires, skills testing, and the like.

Also, upon choosing a personality test, use it for its intended purpose. The Myers-Briggs Company warns organizations not to use its test for hiring, for example, and has even stopped selling the assessment to organizations that insist on using it for that purpose.

Experts urge any organization hoping to use personality tests to reflect on some key questions. “Understand the basis for which you’re using a test,” Oliveri suggests. “Is it for prehire? Is it to find culture fit? Is it for 360-degree feedback? To nurture talent? To engage employees and have a light discussion around the scores? For different purposes, there are different degrees of rigor. For high-stakes decisions, more strict criteria are really important.”
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“I grew up hearing that girls didn’t do this, and girls didn’t do that and did not have a female mentor until I was 55. Dr. Nancy O’Reilly shares many strategies to help women rewind those old tapes and create new ones.” —Judy Hoberman, Author on Leading Women

“In This Together will help us to create community, success, and well-being.” —Gloria Steinem

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PIONEERING PBS NewsHour co-anchor Amna Nawaz has reached the pinnacle of her profession by bringing her whole self and an array of life experiences to her work.

BY JACKIE KRENTZMAN

A LIFE IN FULL

PHOTO BY MIKE MORCAN
Being uncomfortable is Amna Nawaz’s default mode by choice

Named the co-anchor of the PBS NewsHour in January, Nawaz is the first Asian American and first Muslim American to anchor a nationally broadcast news program. The fact that she has fit in seamlessly is in large part a tribute to her lifelong ability to lean into and navigate uncomfortable situations in which she has frequently been the “first.”

Nawaz, 43, grew up in Alexandria, Virginia, just outside Washington, DC, with her parents and two sisters. Her father, a TV reporter and anchor in his native Pakistan, moved to the United States for better opportunities for his children and to work at the IMF and World Bank. Theirs was one of the few families of color in Alexandria. As a result, Nawaz had to figure out from an early age how to both fit in and retain her identity.

Adaptation became second nature and, as her career progressed, her great advantage.

“I had a unique upbringing, as I would spend the entire school year in the States and all summer in Pakistan,” she says. “I grew up thinking it was normal for everyone to speak two languages, have two sets of friends in different countries, and eat different foods.”

Every Wednesday at the Episcopalian school Nawaz attended, students were required to appear at chapel. “The pastor led us in prayer and hymns,” says Nawaz. “The school told my parents, ‘Amna does not have to go.’ But my parents said, ‘No, she will go. Her friends are there, and she can learn about her friends’ faith this way.’”

The outcome of Nawaz’s upbringing was a comfort level with unfamiliar and discomfiting situations. “I learned it’s OK to be a little uncomfortable, to carve your own path and live your own way,” she says. “I learned how to feel at home wherever I was.”

When Nawaz graduated from the University of Pennsylvania (where she captained the field hockey team), she

Moderating PBSNewsHour’s presidential debate in 2019.
planned on pursuing a law degree. She had never considered a career in journalism. But in August 2001, Nawaz took a gap year before law school and accepted a fellowship at ABC News in New York. A month later came the World Trade Center terrorist attack. “Everything changed for me,” she says. “I saw what the best journalists in the world did under the very worst of circumstances. At that moment I knew I couldn’t imagine doing anything else.”

Her rise was meteoric. In 2003 Nawaz was hired at Dateline NBC in its investigative unit. “In 2010 she shared an Emmy Award for the NBC News special Inside the Obama White House. She was promoted to bureau chief and correspondent at NBC’s Islamabad bureau. In 2015 she moved to ABC News, anchoring election and national political coverage. She joined PBS in 2018 and received a prestigious Peabody Award the next year for her reporting on a PBS News-Hour documentary series The Plastic Problem. In 2019 she became the first Asian American and first Muslim to preside over a presidential debate when she co-moderated the 2019 Democratic debate in Los Angeles.

Nawaz became a familiar presence to TV viewers. Her straightforward, calm, and incisive reporting went over well with viewers looking for information and sometimes comfort when learning about such distressing and momentous events as Hurricane Katrina; the January 6 attack on the US Capitol; the school mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas; and presidential elections.

Her multifaceted identities—Muslim American, South Asian American, female, first generation, and, as she puts it wryly, Virgo—have, like it or not, rendered her an exemplar in the public’s eye. Nawaz says she does not struggle with the burden of this representation, as she strongly believes she can bring excellence and balanced reporting to her work while representing just one identity—that of Amna Nawaz.

“I don’t represent Muslim Americans,” Nawaz says. “We are the most diverse faith group in the entire world! I say I bring my whole self to what I do. When you show up with your whole and full self and are not afraid to be vulnerable, you can connect with people on a human level.”

“I firmly believe we are nothing more than the accumulation of all our lived experiences,” she continues. “We are not robots, but we can and must bring to our work fairness, accuracy, and fidelity to the facts. I am always asking myself, ‘Am I being fair to this person, this community, the facts of a given story?’”

PBS NewsHour senior executive producer Sara Just says the challenges and discrimination Nawaz has faced make her more effective when reporting stories, particularly those in which people have traditionally felt excluded or misrepresented by coverage in mainstream journalism.

“I think it’s essential we bring our life experience to our job as journalists, which helps us empathize with and understand our subjects,” Just says. “Amna represents that...
in such a beautiful way—mother, wife, daughter, sister, Muslim, Asian American woman, former college athlete, and much more. All these sides of her give her relatability for the audience.”

Co-anchor Geoff Bennett, who is Black, says that Nawaz has taken the discrimination and barriers she has faced as a Muslim American woman in a male-dominated industry and used those experiences in her favor.

“Being a ‘first’ can be a blessing and a burden, and Amna does it entirely as a blessing,” says Bennett. “She is always thinking about voices that are underrepresented, making sure they are fully incorporated into the story and seen. As journalists of color, we have the added responsibility that everyone is fully represented, and their humanity and fullness are brought to the fore.”

Her capacity to show up at a story as Amna Nawaz, ever-curious person, empathetic human being, and professional journalist committed to fairness and accuracy, informs the breathtaking scope and diversity of her reporting. She has covered politics, natural disasters, wars, environmental and health-care issues, and so much more.

Bennett says her ability to cover that broad range is evidence of the two sides of the coin that are necessary to make it to the top.

“Amna is equal parts grace and grit,” he says. “She leads with empathy, which is so important, as she is encountering people at the worst times in their lives. She is also a tenacious interviewer, holding to account those who hold a seat of power.”

Nawaz says that finding the human element in every story goes beyond her duty as a journalist.

“I have never forgotten a 12-year-old girl, an Afghan refugee in Pakistan,” she says. “Because she was the youngest, her family couldn’t afford to send her to school—they needed her to help with the family business of making carpets. Then she met someone who admired her skills and paid her part-time for stitching so she could go to school. She was so smart and hardworking. I thought if she grew up anywhere else in the world, she would be running the country by now.”

One reason Nawaz connected so deeply with this young girl—as well as many other people she’s interviewed who were facing monumental challenges—is that she held up a mirror to her own life. “I am aware that but for a blink of fate, my life could have been very, very different,” she says.

Coming to her work from a human perspective has made Nawaz a groundbreaking journalist in another respect. She freely talks about how her experience of reporting on horrific events, such as hurricanes, war, terrorist attacks, and, perhaps most significantly, mass shootings at schools, has been traumatic. She notes that journalists go to places where terrible things happen, rather than places where good things happen. Historically, journalists have downplayed or ignored the personal impact of the events they

Reporting at the Uvalde shooting; Haiti earthquake
witness. Today, Nawaz is an advocate for mental health services for journalists. She makes a point to frequently check in with younger journalists at PBS to see how they are doing and to offer resources. She is candid about how her own therapy has been instrumental in her ability to process what she has witnessed.

“For most of my career I didn’t acknowledge [PTSD] was a problem, largely because it was not talked about,” she says. “If you covered an awful story, the culture was, Get over it and move on.”

The turning point for her, she says, was the Uvalde school shooting in 2022. She didn’t realize how distraught she’d become while covering the story, and how it had triggered her lifelong battle with anxiety, until her husband gently brought it up and suggested she find a therapist.

“My husband recognized that I was clearly suffering and came to me and said, ‘You are not OK—you have run out of places to put these things.’”

That is just one example of how her husband, Paul Werdel, and their two young daughters help keep her grounded. Werdel, a former New York Times product manager, has been instrumental in her ascent, especially after she joined PBS in 2018. He left his job to be the primary caregiver for their children.

When asked how tense that negotiation was, Nawaz laughs. “It wasn’t a negotiation at all! He came to me, in the single greatest gift he ever gave to me: ‘Hey, what if we try this for a few years? I want you to focus on you, give it your all, and not worry about relieving the nanny or rushing to make the train to work on time.’ He took on that tenuous dance of childcare and keeping up with kids that every working parent knows so well.”

The arrangement has an added benefit, Nawaz says. “Not only am I eternally grateful, but we think it is also revolutionary for our daughters, as it shows that a family can look a lot of different ways.”

Nawaz is sympathetic toward working women who juggle a demanding job, a family, and other obligations. She believes that if you can make the work segment of a complex life fulfilling, it can relieve the pressure. Her advice is to work where you are wanted, respected, and nurtured.

“If you surround yourself with people who treat your dreams with the same care you do, who see where you can be in five years, and who are willing to tell you the hard things along the way, that will make you better and get you to where you want to go,” says Nawaz.

“Also, trust who you are. You don’t have to dim your light or dull your edges to get where you want to go. We all know who we are at our core. The goal is to build a network, inside the workplace and outside, so that others see you for who you are in full.” DW
MEET THE COMPANIES SETTING THE STANDARD  

DiversityWoman Media’s
BEST COMPANIES for WOMEN 2023

BY ERIN CHAN DING
Women have shifted their priorities when it comes to what they want from work. Even as the life-altering rhythms of the COVID-19 pandemic have subsided in the past year, millions of women have realized that work flexibility is not just a “nice-to-have” but an essential part of integrating their careers into their everyday lives.

The best companies understand that to retain and promote women, they need to flex.

The Women in the Workplace 2022 report—a collaboration between LeanIn.org and McKinsey & Company, and the largest study on the state of women in Corporate America—notes that “after the pandemic forced Corporate America into a massive experiment with flexible work, enthusiasm for flexibility in all its forms is higher than ever.”

Only one in 10 women wants to work mostly on-site, the report said, and more than 70 percent of human resources leaders say that remote work has allowed them to hire and retain employees from more diverse backgrounds.

Despite increased workplace flexibility, which has led to greater job satisfaction, women continue to face substantial headwinds when it comes to leadership, especially in regard to that crucial first step. Only 87 women are promoted for every 100 men from entry-level position to manager, resulting in an ongoing imbalance of women in management roles compared with men.

But the best companies have not only discovered ways to flex that make their work environments especially hospitable to women; they also value and actively retain and promote women. We found 16 organizations with an intense focus on supporting and advancing women and are proud to call them Diversity Woman Media’s Best Companies for Women in 2023.

Here is what they’ve done.

**BEST COMPANIES FOR WOMEN 2023**

**Amazon ONLINE RETAIL**

Women lead several of Amazon’s largest and most important divisions, including Amazon Fresh, global diversity, and the company’s delivery experience.

- Amazon’s global mentorship program creates more than 6,000 mentorship opportunities every year to actively recruit and help more women advance into senior and technology-focused roles.
- Amazon prioritizes equal pay, and women can earn between 99.8 and 100 cents for every dollar that men have earned in the same jobs.
- The company’s Women at Amazon group is a critical resource to help the organization think big about the way women’s lives are impacted, inside the business and in the community.

“For women looking to thrive in an innovative, global environment, Amazon offers that opportunity. Here, you can come and succeed in music, work with authors and publishers, or build robots. Amazon allows you to chart your own path in your work and in your career because we truly believe a good idea can come from anywhere and anyone.”

– Tonya Hallett, vice president, people experience and technology, global delivery services
AT&T
TELECOMMUNICATIONS
AT&T considers women critical to its foundation and places an emphasis on supporting women’s career development and advancement throughout the company.
• AT&T provides family-focused benefits to support the total well-being of its employees as working parents. It offers 24/7 virtual parental support, reproductive health benefits, paid parental leave, family planning resources, and career counseling after parental leave.
• In 2021, women made up more than 30 percent of AT&T’s US-based workforce, with 36.6 percent in senior leadership positions.
• AT&T has various programs that help foster growth and leadership support for women, including the International Women’s Program, which is focused on providing a supportive and inclusive workplace experience for women employees internationally and the Women of AT&T employee resource group. One of the country’s first female employee resource groups when it launched in 1972, Women of AT&T now has more than 15,000 members.

**Bank of America**
FINANCIAL SERVICES
The company’s Leadership, Education, Advocacy and Development (LEAD) for Women employee network has more than 45,000 members and connects, develops, and elevates women across 65 global chapters.
• The bank works with nearly 200 external partners and more than 600 colleges, universities, and community colleges—including historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and tribal colleges.
• Bank of America’s 24-member management team includes eight women and is more than 57 percent racially, ethnically, and/or gender diverse. Its board of directors is 53 percent diverse, with 33 percent—or five—women. The bank’s 2022 summer internship class was composed of 45 percent women.

“We know that when women thrive, whole families, whole communities, and whole economies thrive. That’s why we are committed to investing in women by being a great place to work for our women employees, supporting our women clients, and empowering women in communities around the globe.”
— Cynthia Bowman, chief diversity, inclusion, and corporate social responsibility officer

**Cisco**
TECHNOLOGY
As part of its commitment to increasing representation company-wide, Cisco has a program for women in mid-level positions to grow in their leadership. The focus on women in leadership has contributed to a rise in Cisco’s female vice presidents, which has reached 25 percent, and female members of the executive leadership team, which is at 42 percent.
• From fiscal year 2020 to 2022, Cisco grew its workforce of employees who identify as Black by 60 percent from entry level through managerial positions, by 94 percent at the director level, and by 160 percent at vice president and above. Its overall commitment has been to increase Black representation of entry level through managerial positions by 25 percent, and director through vice president and above by 75 percent from 2020 through 2023.
• The company runs a program for women who are early in their careers, giving them the framework to build community, empower one another, and create career visions. Participants are 1.4 times more likely to stay at Cisco and grow their careers at the company.

“At Cisco, our purpose is to power an inclusive future for all, so it’s critical that we amplify the voices of our women across the full spectrum of diversity. Our focus on pay parity, sponsorship, and mentorship is all in service of building a pipeline of future leaders who reflect the customers and communities we serve. I’m proud to share that 42 percent of our executive leadership team are women. We know how critical it is for women to see females sitting at the leadership table, and we’re committed to getting them there.”
— Gloria Goins, chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer
Dell Technologies
TECHNOLOGY
Dell Technologies offers networking, formal training, mentoring, and a number of resources to help advance the company’s female employees around the globe.

- Dell has committed to making 50 percent of its global workforce and 40 percent of its global people leaders those who identify as women by 2030.
- Dell has created a leadership development and coaching program for high-performing individuals to build key capabilities and support their careers at Dell.
- The company’s employee resource groups, such as Women in Action, provide development, leadership, and networking opportunities to attract, empower, and retain women.

“At Dell Technologies, our culture and our people are key differentiators. Who we are and how we work with and for each other set us apart. We have been advocating for and championing inclusion for decades. Diverse perspectives allow us to access new levels of creativity and innovation, consider multiple experiences and backgrounds, and readily anticipate the needs of our customers worldwide. Increasing representation and retention of those who identify as women at all levels is essential to our long-term strategy. We take pride in the progress we’ve seen around the world and remain committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone can perform and be their authentic selves.”

– Vanice Hayes, chief culture, diversity, and inclusion officer

Dollar General
RETAIL
The leadership at Dollar General believes that diversity and inclusion begin at the highest positions, and the company focuses on equipping leaders to catalyze cultural transformation and model inclusivity at every level.

- Dollar General spent more than 18,000 hours in 2022 on training leaders in inclusiveness.
- The company’s senior leadership is 45 percent female, and its entire workforce is about 66 percent female.
- More than 100 of Dollar General’s officers have sponsored the development of underrepresented talent yearlong through the company’s Develop 2 Lead initiative.

“We believe diversity and inclusion start at the highest level, and positioning others for success is a fundamental part of our leadership philosophy. Dollar General-created programs provide formalized avenues for developing underrepresented talent. Our Women’s Executive Development Cohort, Women’s Professional Network employee resource group, and other development programs work to foster and advance women across stores, distribution centers, our private fleet, and corporate office.”

– Dr. Johné Battle, chief diversity officer

Edward Jones
FINANCIAL SERVICES
Edward Jones strives to be a place of belonging, where diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded throughout the firm. That’s because the leadership believes that different perspectives make for better business.

- Edward Jones has 12 firm-sponsored, volunteer-led business resource groups (BRGs), with membership available to all of its 52,000 colleagues. The groups include Asian American and Pacific Islander, interfaith, Black/African American, Hispanic, veterans, remote connections—and women, the largest group. As of March 2023, the company has about 6,000 BRG members, with 70 percent of them women.
- The firm has improved its financial advisor representation to 23 percent women—above the industry average—and continues to grow that figure.
- Edward Jones has committed to working toward diverse representation of women and people of color throughout its organization—starting with the C-suite and continuing with leadership in its home office—by ensuring that women are hired and/or developed into those roles at the same rates as men. It has also committed to transparency with its measures to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“We are relentlessly committed to do more—to attract, develop, and engage a diverse workforce and to foster an inclusive culture. When we talk about diversity, we mean every aspect of diversity, including women, diversity among generations, people of color, different faiths, backgrounds, and experiences. We’re investing in our colleagues in a variety of ways—increased flexibility and choice for financial advisors to run their practices, and more professional development opportunities, which we believe will have a positive impact on our financial advisors and our clients.”

– Jennifer Kingston, head of enterprise diversity, equity, and inclusion

DIVERSITY WOMAN  Summer 2023

diversitywoman.com
Fidelity Investments
FINANCIAL SERVICES
The number of women in Fidelity’s workforce is rising. Much of the growth is driven by new hires, 42 percent of whom identified as women in 2022. Working toward gender parity in leadership levels has also been part of its multiyear strategy.

• Fidelity’s benefits include emotional well-being services, generous paid time off, and benefits to facilitate caregiving, including resource-finders and concierge services to help accomplish tasks outside of work. Fertility, adoption, and healthy-pregnancy programs support associates on various paths to family building, and nursing support services and expanded parental leave help new parents manage the transition back into the workforce.

• Support networks offered by affinity groups include the Women’s Leadership Group, Women in Technology Special Interest Group, and Raise, a support network for working caregivers. The company also provides leadership development programs designed for women at all levels of their careers.

• A six-month return-to-work program that is open to all often attracts women who have taken a career break to focus on raising a family. Participants get access to work opportunities, return-to-work readiness assessments, professional development, and options for networking and mentoring.

“Fidelity is a great place for women and people from all backgrounds to build their careers. We work to create a culture of inclusion. We know that women often take on the lion’s share of caregiving and household management, so we consistently evolve our benefits to help our associates manage their responsibilities at work and at home.”
– Wendy John, head of global diversity and inclusion

Genentech
BIOTECHNOLOGY
Genentech’s long-term gender-diversity strategy has seen gains in representation across the company. It continues to advance its ambitious 2025 Diversity & Inclusion Commitments, focused on fostering belonging, advancing equity, and transforming society.

• Among Genentech’s directors and officers, 51.7 percent identify as women. The company has also launched mandatory inclusive hiring and training modules for all employees.

• Genentech says it maintains pay parity, with no effective pay difference among genders or races.

• The company launched two new leadership enhancement programs: the Genentech Leadership for Executive Advancement and Development program, or gLEAD, which partners with Columbia Business School to strengthen and advance the leadership skills and capacities of the company’s senior talent from underrepresented groups; and the Asian Leadership Academy, a partnership with McKinsey that gives participants the opportunity to work through leadership development modules, and take part in teamwork exercises.

“We have been working diligently for nearly two decades to build a workforce that is reflective of our increasingly diverse world while fostering a workplace culture where all employees feel like they belong and can thrive. That means listening to our employees, analyzing and addressing the gaps and areas of opportunities across our organization, and transparently setting goals and sharing progress. Our organization is attractive to women and other historically underrepresented groups in STEM because we support our DEI commitments with concrete actions and results, including consistently maintaining pay parity across Genentech.”
– Cari DeLoa, head of data and insights, chief diversity office, CDO

Google
TECHNOLOGY
In 2022, Google built its most representative workforce yet. Women have achieved their highest-ever level of representation across Google’s tech, non-tech, and leadership roles—both in the United States and globally.

• Black and Latinx Googler representation is at its highest ever in tech and non-tech roles and in leadership positions, with 5.2 percent Black representation and 4.3 percent Latinx representation in leadership. A record-high percentage of women were hired in leadership positions in Asia-Pacific countries.

• Google manually reviewed more than 5,000 job postings across Europe, Africa, and the Middle East with the goal of increasing representation of women, Black talent, and people with disabilities. During the review process, the company reduced bias in content and wording for job titles, requirements, and responsibilities.

• Google has met its racial-equity commitment of increasing its leadership across Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations by 30 percent—three years ahead of its 2025 goal.

“I think women are drawn to Google because we offer a community and support network that is second to none. Women at Google truly have the opportunity to leave their mark and make a positive impact on the world. More now than ever, women at Google are leading the charge in our business growth. While we have more work to do, we have made a commitment to closing the gap and putting women—particularly women of color—in more seats at the table.”
– Cassandra Johnson, vice president of customer care and vendor management office
Intel

**TECHNOLOGY**

Intel has met or exceeded several of its 2022 inclusion goals when it comes to representation of women and people of color. The company surpassed its goal of 1,500 women in senior leadership roles across the globe, ending the year with 1,646 women in global senior leadership.

- In 2022, women represented 30 percent of salaried early-career technical hires at Intel.
- Intel has continued to integrate its Executive Warmline, which is staffed by case managers who work with executives requesting internal transition and career navigation support. Of those who used the Executive Warmline since its launch in 2021, 82 percent have stayed at Intel.

“I think sponsorship is critically important, especially for women and people of color. Our research shows that, especially in senior ranks, this is the greatest opportunity to drive greater progression for diverse talent.”

– Dawn Jones, chief diversity and inclusion officer and vice president of social impact

Hershey can claim a long legacy of commitment to advancing women and people of color into leadership positions. The company had its first female board director in the 1970s, and Michele Buck currently leads Hershey as its CEO and board chair. Women run some of Hershey’s largest areas, including its salty snacks division, sales, innovation, and investor relations.

- Hershey’s board of directors includes five women, or 42 percent of its seats. Twenty percent of its executive committee are women, and 30 percent are racially diverse. Its global workforce is nearly 50 percent female.
- The company has installed a new early-in-career executive committee talent review to highlight future leaders who are women and people of color. It also created a Leading Snacking Powerhouse Accelerator Program and a mentoring platform to advance women and people of color.
- Hershey has achieved aggregate pay equity for US salaried women and people of color.

“At Hershey, there are so many women leaders in visible, mission-critical roles. This is a place where seeing is believing. The company does not just talk about supporting and promoting women; it is ingrained in the culture, and you see it across the leadership. The visibility of leaders and the opportunity to work with so many amazing women are attractive to many candidates and were a key reason I joined Hershey.”

– Amber Murayi, vice president, strategy

At JPMorgan Chase, women represent nearly 50 percent of the firm’s global workforce, 39 percent of its operating committee members, and 27 percent of its senior leaders.

- Taking into account factors such as an employee’s role, tenure, seniority, and geography, in 2022 those who identified as women were paid 99 percent of what men were paid.
- JPMorgan Chase’s Women on the Move initiative provides women inside and outside the firm with opportunities to succeed in their professional and personal lives by expanding women-run businesses, improving women’s financial health, advancing women’s career growth, and supporting women and girls in communities globally.
- JPMorgan Chase offers a wide range of programs and resources to support working parents, including 16 weeks of paid parental leave for US employees (regardless of whether they’re the primary parent), lactation support, adoption/surrogacy assistance, infertility benefits, childcare options, mentor programs, and education.

“At JPMorgan Chase, we know that having a diverse workforce reflective of the communities we serve helps to foster a stronger corporate culture and drives more favorable business outcomes. That’s why I am proud to work for a firm that remains committed to championing diverse perspectives and where women represent about half of our global workforce—brining unique talent and experiences.”

– Sam Saperstein, managing director and global head of Women on the Move
Target

RETAIL

The contributions of women—including female leaders, team members, partners, and suppliers—are at the root of Target’s success and the fulfillment of its purpose to help all families discover the joy of everyday life.

At Target, 56 percent of team members, nearly 50 percent of its leadership team, and one-third of its board of directors are women. In 2022, women represented more than 50 percent of promotions across all levels at Target.

- Nearly half of Target’s stores are run by women, and nearly 40 percent are run by people of color. Global female representation is close to or exceeds 50 percent at all levels.
- Target pays all team members equitably, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.

“Target has a longtime commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that includes a focus on equitable representation, advancement, and experiences for women. Over the years, we’ve cultivated programs and opportunities to help women thrive at Target, including our team-member-led Women’s Business Council, development programs for diverse engineers, and accelerators for emerging businesses. Through our focused DEAI strategy, we’re committed to making even more progress for women across our organization.”

— Kiera Fernandez, chief diversity and inclusion officer and senior vice president, Talent and Change

Toyota

AUTOMOTIVE

At Toyota, women are among the top leaders across the enterprise in North America, including Toyota Motor North America and Toyota Financial Services.

- Women make up 24.2 percent of the company workforce, including 26.8 percent of managers, with 23.7 percent at executive levels. Seven of the 13 manufacturing plants in North America are run by women or people of color.
- In 2022, Toyota spent $5.96 billion with diverse suppliers, contracting with more than 150 minority- and women-owned suppliers.
- Toyota’s company-wide employee resource group, Women Influencing and Inspiring Toyota, has hosted Toyota’s biggest annual development event for women—the North American Women’s Conference—for over 10 years.

“As we transition to a mobility company, we recognize the transformative power of innovative thinking that only comes with diversity of thought and experience. That’s why it’s a core mission to recognize and celebrate diversity at all levels, to drive a culture of inclusion where every team member can thrive, and to provide equal access to education for the jobs of tomorrow.”

— Tellis Bethel, group vice president of Toyota Motor North America Social Innovation and chief diversity officer

Wells Fargo

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Wells Fargo makes it a priority for employees to see and feel that they are being represented across all levels of the company, particularly at executive ranks. The company strives to foster an environment of inclusion and belonging so that staff can bring their full selves to work.

- As of 2022, 25 percent of the operating committee members who report to the CEO, and 55 percent of all employees, are female. In 2021, 44 percent of executives were female, compared with 41 percent in 2020. In addition, 53 percent of female executives received promotions in 2021.
- Wells Fargo has developed diversity, equity, and inclusion performance objectives for its leaders. Factored into leaders’ performance evaluations and compensation is their ability to increase gender, racial, and ethnic representation that’s consistent with affirmative action goals and equal-employment opportunity principles.
- Wells Fargo created its US-based Glide—Relaunch program to connect with individuals seeking a return to work after a prolonged period of time due to caregiving and other life events. The eight-week “returnship” gives participants the support necessary to make a smooth transition back into employment.

“At Wells Fargo, representation matters, as it enhances our ability to tap into the power, creativity, and insights that come from a diverse range of experiences. That’s why we are committed to offering the resources and tools for women to thrive in their careers. Understanding their uniqueness and how best to ensure their voices are heard, incorporated, and leveraged to improve business results is important for our company.”

— Kristy Fercho, senior executive vice president and head of Diverse Segments, Representation and Inclusion
Inspiration starts with inclusion

At Pinterest, our mission is to bring everyone the inspiration to create a life they love. Join us at pinterest.com/careers.

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An annual checkup with your doctor is no longer enough. Here are 12 screening tests every woman should consider.

**To Your Health**

**BY BEV LUCAS**

If you’re feeling fine and haven’t seen the doctor lately, you might think that—unless you get sick—there’s no need for a visit. But you might want to rethink this assumption.

“Even if you’re healthy, doctors recommend several screening tests to prevent potential health problems or detect them in their earliest stages before there are any signs or symptoms,” says Wanda Nicholson, MD, vice chair of the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) in Rockville, Maryland.

Be aware that many preventive health experts say that if you’re healthy, you don’t need to have a yearly physical to get your screenings done. As an alternative, they suggest scheduling multiple shorter visits that take place over time. The tests a woman needs, and when she needs them, depend largely on her age and risk for developing particular conditions. Most of the following recommendations, from the USPSTF and the Women’s Preventive Services Initiative (WPSI) are for nonpregnant women at average risk.

**PREVENTION IS THE KEY**
The USPSTF is an independent volunteer group of national experts in disease prevention, and many primary care providers follow their advice. The WPSI is a national coalition of health-professional and patient organizations with expertise in women’s health. “While both groups issue recommendations on many of the same health topics, the charge of the WPSI is to fill gaps in preventive service recommendations for women,” says Amy Cantor, MD, WPSI advisory panel member. That means some WPSI recommendations are more expansive than those from the USPSTF. For example, WPSI suggests screening all women for anxiety, but the USPSTF sets an age limit. Others are unique to WPSI (for example, screening for urinary incontinence). Advocacy of screening tests and other preventive services from both groups are backed up by strong scientific evidence showing that they promote good health and are likely to improve how long or how well a person lives.

Other health-professional organizations, such as the American Cancer Society, also issue evidence-based recommendations. While there is not always absolute agreement on which age to do these tests, screenings are one of the most important things to do for your health. “It’s incredibly important for Black women, in particular, to be aware of the need for screening and other preventive services because of the high rates of diabetes and high blood pressure and of death from breast cancer in the Black community,” says Dr. Nicholson.

Keep in mind that some screening tests can have risks as well as benefits. So it’s important to have a conversation with your health-care provider about which preventive screenings you need and the pros and cons of getting them.

And it’s good to know that most private insurers cover a range of women’s preventive services, such as mammograms and screening for cervical cancer, at no cost to you—even if you have not met your yearly deductible.

### RECOMMENDED SCREENINGS

1. **Anxiety and depression.** Last year, for the first time in its history, the USPSTF issued a recommendation for doctors to screen adults under age 65 for anxiety during routine medical visits. The WPSI suggests screening women for anxiety regardless of age if they have not recently been screened. Both groups advise screening all adults for depression.

2. **Breast cancer.** The USPSTF recommends beginning mammograms at age 40, a change this year (from its earlier suggestion to begin at 50) based on new evidence; the task force advises continuing the tests every other year to age 74. The WPSI recommends that screening start at age 40 at the earliest and 50 at the latest, and take place every one or two years, continuing through at least age 74, with age alone not being a reason to stop. The American Cancer Society, in contrast, calls for most women to start screening at 45. If you have concerns or questions, such as when to stop screening, Dr. Cantor suggests you and your health-care provider approach decision-making as a shared process. “That includes a discussion about the benefits and harms of screening, an assessment of your values and preferences, and consideration of factors such as life expectancy, comorbidities, and health status,” she explains.

3. **Cervical cancer.** The USPSTF and WPSI recommend a Pap test for cervical cancer every three years in women ages 21 to 65. Every five years, women ages 30 to 65 should have a high-risk human papillomavirus (hrHPV) test alone or in combination with a Pap test.

4. **Colorectal cancer.** Both groups recommend colorectal cancer screening for women, starting at age 45 and continuing to age 75. Several tests are available, including colonoscopy and two types of stool tests that can be performed at home and sent to a lab for analysis. You and your doctor should consider a variety of factors (risk, convenience, insurance, etc.) in deciding which test may be best for you. How often to undergo screening depends on your risk of developing colon cancer and the test chosen.
DID YOU KNOW...?

- **Anxiety disorders** affect about 40 million adults in the United States each year, but women are more than twice as likely as men to experience it. Women are also twice as likely as men to experience depression.

- **Breast cancer** is the leading cause of cancer death for Black and Latina women in the United States and is the second leading cause of cancer death among women overall.

- **Approximately 11,500 new cases of cervical cancer** are diagnosed every year in the United States, and about 4,000 women die of it. Latinas have the highest rates of developing cervical cancer, but Black women are more likely than women of other races to die from this disease.

- **In the United States, about 10 million people have osteoporosis** and 80 percent of those are women. White and Asian women are at greatest risk, but Latina and African American women are at risk too.

5 **Osteoporosis.** The USPSTF and WPSI recommend bone density screening for all women age 65 or older. The test most commonly used to measure bone strength is a type of X-ray called DEXA scan. How often you need follow-up testing depends on the results of your first test.

6 **Diabetes.** Both groups advise screening to check for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes in adults ages 35 to 70 who are overweight or obese, even those who have no symptoms. The suggested interval is every three years. Additionally, the WPSI recommends screening for women who had gestational diabetes during a pregnancy. If you weren’t screened in the first year after giving birth, or your first screening test was negative, screening at least every three years for at least 10 years after pregnancy is recommended.

7 **Hypertension.** The USPSTF and WPSI recommend an in-office blood pressure check yearly for all adults ages 40 and older who do not have hypertension. Every three to five years is reasonable for 18- to 39-year-olds with normal blood pressure who are not at increased risk for hypertension. Anyone at an increased risk for high blood pressure should also be screened annually (those at greater risk include Black adults and overweight or obese adults).

8 **Hepatitis C.** The USPSTF and the WPSI recommend a blood test to check for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection at least once between ages 18 and 79. Earlier or additional screening should be based on whether risk factors of HCV infection are present.

9 **HIV.** Both groups recommend a blood test for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) at least once between ages 15 and 65. Earlier or additional screening may be called for if there is an increased risk of HIV infection.

10 **Urinary incontinence.** Loss of bladder control, or urinary incontinence, is a problem for many women. The WPSI recommends screening for it annually.

11 **Vision.** The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) advises people with no vision problems to have a complete exam once in their 20s and twice in their 30s. An eye exam is also recommended for anyone age 40 or older with no vision problems if they haven’t recently been screened. Your eye doctor will tell you when to return for a follow-up exam. People with vision problems and those with medical conditions, including diabetes or high blood pressure, or a family history of eye disease, are strongly urged to get a complete eye exam before age 40.

12 **Dental.** The latest advice from the American Dental Association (ADA) is to see your dentist regularly to spot dental health issues early on. How often is regularly? According to the ADA, “there is no one-size-fits-all recommendation. Some people need to visit the dentist once or twice a year; others may need more visits.”

Bev Lucas is a freelance writer in New Jersey. She frequently covers health-care issues affecting communities of color.
Oftentimes, it’s difficult to find women in technology roles—especially in leadership. At Fidelity, I’ve seen quite the opposite. Not only have I had the pleasure of being mentored and managed by women within technology, but I’ve also found opportunities to lead in areas such as cloud engineering that have traditionally been male dominated.

At Fidelity, women are driving strategy and innovation conversations, being recognized for their contributions to technology, and being empowered to lead organizational change while continuing to build on their personal and technical skills.

I started my career at Fidelity in the LEAP program as a recent college graduate, uncertain, but eager to see what my career would potentially evolve into. Now I’m able to reflect on the opportunities to influence, showcase my technical skills, and develop many of my behavioral skills through experiences given to me while working in technology. Fidelity has provided me the space to be authentic and intersect my passions with my career, presenting myself as a whole person each day.
The Pros and Cons of Investing Apps

What to consider before you press the buy button

By Tanisha A. Sykes

In the digital age, it’s easier than ever to invest. Today’s apps allow everyone, from neophytes to seasoned investors, to study investments, access market data, and manage portfolios. Experts say it’s never too late to start—but not all investing apps are created equal. “Investing apps have revolutionized how individuals manage their finances, making investing more accessible to the masses,” says James Allen, a certified financial education instructor (CFEI) and CPA who founded Billpin.com, a personal finance blog offering guides to improve financial well-being. “However, some apps can also encourage frequent trading, leading to a lack of diversified investments.”

First, educate yourself about the fundamentals needed for investing success—and the risks involved—then supplement your financial strategy with the right tools. Some apps focus on education and advice only, while others—including those discussed here—enable the user to buy and sell stocks, mutual fund shares, bonds, and so on. Before choosing an investing app, consider these pros and cons.

THE PROS

Easy access. Especially if you’re relatively new to investing, select an app that’s easy to use and doesn’t require a lot of technical know-how—an app like Betterment, which is designed to make investing easy whether you want to pay for a home or pad your retirement. Betterment automatically tracks your investment progress and reviews your options at each step. Also, select an app that will grow with you, one that offers robust research tools, various account types, and low fees, so you don’t get the urge to switch over the long term.

Allen’s top pick is Spire, “based on factors like user-friendliness, educational resources, and cost,” he says. Plus, you can access your portfolio from anywhere at any time.

Education. Investing apps can demystify investing for those who are less familiar by offering real-time stock quotes, investment research tools, customizable portfolios, and trading capabilities, empowering users to make informed decisions,” says Clint Proctor, editor in chief of InvestorJunkie.com, a site for DIY investors. He
Educate yourself about the fundamentals needed for investing success—and the risks involved—then supplement your financial strategy with the right tools.

adds that the content, tools, and resources, including tutorials, articles, videos, and quizzes, enable users to learn about investment strategies while making informed decisions. Apps like Ally and SoFi score well in this area. One of Proctor’s top picks is Acorns because, he says, “it’s effortless to use and offers a great way to start investing without much knowledge of the stock market.”

**Low cost.** Traditionally, online trading of stocks requires a commission, and some brokerages still charge fees to complete trades. You can start trading for as little as $5 with some apps. While most mobile apps are generally free to download and use, and many offer zero-commission trades, “there may be fees associated with specific accounts or investment types,” says Proctor. For example, buying mutual funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs) may require users to pay a management fee or expense ratio. “Features like low or no account minimums, low fees, and fractional shares make investing easy and accessible to everyone,” he adds. Robinhood tout the fact that investors can start building their portfolio with just $1, commission-free. Still, for every app, make sure to read about the fee structure before you invest to avoid any surprises.

**Investment options.** Many investing apps offer a plethora of investments, from stocks and bonds to ETFs to mutual funds. Some provide the chance to trade cryptocurrency. Others, however, focus on education, letting you do the buying on your own. “You will be able to trade securities such as stocks, bonds, ETFs, and options if the app is an online broker such as Robinhood, Fidelity Investments, or Charles Schwab,” says André Disselkamp, a personal finance expert and cofounder of Insurancy, a company managing business insurance and corporate pensions for start-ups. “Other instructional applications, like Wealthbase, do not allow trading with real money.”

**THE CONS**

**Hidden fees.** While many investing apps have a low entry cost, Wayne Bechtol, a certified finance professional in Texas, advises investors to look out for hidden fees like expense ratios, advisory fees, custodian fees, and commissions—fees that can lurk behind the fine print. Bechtol says, “Some apps show no or low fees, but they charge a fee for transferring money into or out of your account.” And don’t forget about monthly fees, which may seem low but add up, especially regarding the return on investment. Do the math to determine if those fees are worth it.

**No guarantees.** The best apps offer educational resources, customer support, and a transparent fee structure, “but investing money through investment apps does not guarantee returns,” says Bechtol. “Your money’s safety depends on the nature of your investment, which has nothing to do with the app.” It depends, he says, on your technical knowledge and luck! Any form of investing involves risk, which means your investments can rise or fall due to market conditions and uncertainty.

**Lack of personalized advice.** Investing apps are great if you’re starting out or have little to invest. Still, suppose your financial situation is more complex, or you’re considering investing more money. In that case, you may want to speak to a financial professional who can help you craft a plan to achieve your goals. Finance expert Bechtol argues that the biggest pitfall of investing apps is trusting the app to think for you. The app can help you to make decisions, but it’s up to you to know the pluses and minuses of each decision, he says. Otherwise, the results can be disastrous. Consider speaking to a professional if financial guidance is a priority.

**Gamification supports risky decisions.** If you’re used to seeing a burst of streamers or balloons every time you make a trade, beware that these gamified elements can lure you into making riskier moves. “For example, the Robinhood app gamifies investment and encourages users to invest without understanding the consequences fully,” says Bechtol, an advisor at Fiona, an online marketplace where consumers can compare financial offers from various companies. That’s where making emotional rather than logic-based judgments can enter the fray, says Disselkamp. That’s one reason the US Securities and Exchange Commission and the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority have increased oversight of investing apps with gamelike features—to ensure that deceptive practices do not target younger or inexperienced investors.

The beauty of investing apps is that most are easy to navigate, simple to grasp, and relatively inexpensive for investors to join. But every investing app has associated risks. Therefore, it is up to you to do the due diligence by asking trusted family and friends for referrals, reading customers’ reviews, and testing out the app before investing. Then think about your saving and retirement goals and create an investing strategy to help you get there. Make sure you understand the ins and outs of the investing application before you press buy.

Tanisha A. Sykes is a personal finance and career development expert and seasoned journalist. Follow her on Twitter @tanishatips.
Mornings and evenings are particularly demanding and hectic for Aliah Berman, global chief diversity officer at ad agency TBWA/Worldwide and the mom of three kids. “I’m running at full speed from the moment my day starts until I drop into bed at night,” she says. “I function at my best when I have time each day to transition between what’s required of me as a parent and what’s required of me as a professional.”

To ensure she has the energy and focus to thrive in both roles, Berman likes to build in time to set intentions at the start of her day, to process the day’s events in the evening, and to relax and take care of her own needs at night.

But she doesn’t always have time for these transition periods from work to home life, and says she often struggles to disconnect from work.

She’s not the only woman dealing with this issue. Events of the past three years have reshaped the workplace. More people are working from home, some or all of the time. More companies have placed new emphasis on their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. And more employees are searching for meaning in their work. Still, women in leadership roles say work-life balance remains a struggle; companies have a long way to go to improve representation and equity; and meaningful work is sometimes elusive.

Here are the top five challenges, and how women address them.

1. Setting boundaries

Working from home or on a hybrid schedule can be a blessing and a curse. Laure Rudelle Arnaud, chief people and impact officer at Brevo (formerly Sendinblue), appreciates the flexibility. She has four children, including one with a disability, and says she’s grateful to be able to take time off for doctors’ appointments or to care for her kids when she needs to.

“I’m extremely intentional about having flexibility in my working hours,” she says. Brevo, an email marketing platform, allows employees to work at home, in the office, or a hybrid of the two—whichever meets their needs. The company also endorses flexible work schedules and supports parents with 22 weeks of fully paid parental leave and childcare in some cases.

But working from home can also blur work-life balance, says Jackie Cureton, chief diversity officer at link-management platform Bitly. “When your office space is a few steps away from your kitchen, there’s an expectation that you’re available even on the off-hours.”

Boundary setting can be tough, and Cureton says leaders need to be intentional about it so they and their teams have healthy work-life balance and don’t get burned out. At Bitly, where the workforce is scattered around the globe, she says they’re conscious of time zones when scheduling meetings. And employees are urged to speak up when they need time off or more flexibility in their workday.

“We encourage the team to be honest when they need accommodations,” Cureton says, adding that the company fosters a culture of understanding that everyone has different priorities when it comes to work and home life.”
2 Finding more meaning in work
Employees want challenging and interesting work, with leaders who inspire and motivate them. They also have high expectations for transparency and accountability, says Tara Ataya, chief people and diversity officer at Hootsuite, a social media management platform. She says Hootsuite creates space for everyone’s voice to be heard.

“We don’t ask people to fit in,” Ataya says. “We ask them to be who they are. And then the role of the organization is to get the best out of who they are.”

People want to know that their work is meaningful and provides value to an organization, Aliah Berman says. “I keep in mind that the needs of different individuals on my team may differ and do my best to keep an open line of communication with my team so that I’m attuned to their needs,” she says.

3 Dealing with the disparity in equity and representation
Women, especially women of color, are vastly underrepresented in the C-suite. Among organizations’ senior leadership, about 25 percent are women, and just one in 20 are women of color, according to the Women in the Workplace 2022 survey by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org.

“There’s still an imbalance in terms of representation,” Cureton says. “We’ve seen some progress, but we often see regression at the same time. I don’t often see many who look like me in the room where decisions are made.”

That can create a sense of isolation. Women of color often feel pressure to succeed and fear making mistakes or standing out for the wrong reasons, which they worry could put opportunities for their peers at risk, Berman says.

“These things can contribute to burnout at a higher and faster rate than other groups,” she explains. “From pervasive microaggressions to lack of leadership representation to unequal pay, women of color are spending time and energy that should be reserved for the already challenging and time-consuming workplace demands on issues that do not impact other groups.”

More than 80 percent of companies report increasing their investments in DEI, according to 2022 Gallup research. But employees contend these efforts are lacking, with only 31 percent saying their organization is committed to improving racial justice or equality at work.

Berman says DEI leaders often feel like they’re competing for significance with other business demands. At TBWA, her team communicates its DEI commitments, progress, and opportunities and showcases the leadership’s support for the efforts. They’ve launched employee resource groups (ERGs) and mentorship and development programs to strengthen the pipeline of women of color, and they provide learning sessions to address workplace disparities, bias, and microaggressions, as well as one offering equitable feedback.

4 Protecting mental health
Reports of layoffs, mass shootings, police brutality, and ongoing political divisiveness are creating uncertainty and anxiousness that affect everyone. Plus, employees have been dealing with individual challenges over the past three years.

Company leaders need to put mental health at the forefront. “The mental health of our employees has always been a priority, and that matters now more than ever,” Ataya says.

Hootsuite has developed benefits programs to support employees’ mental health and encourages transparent conversations between managers and their teams so managers understand how they can support employees during difficult times.

“For many of us trying to make sense of the past three years, the way we think about the role of employers and colleagues has changed forever,” Ataya says. “It’s been a time of learning but also an important time of unlearning the past.”

One way Bity addresses mental health is by encouraging employees to have honest conversations when they’re struggling. The company also suggests managers not hold meetings on Fridays, and it allows employees to log off a little early ahead of the weekend if they’ve met their responsibilities and requirements for the week.

5 Staying connected
When workforces are distributed around the world, it’s easy to feel disconnected. Making employees feel included and supported depends on enabling them to connect in whatever way they choose.

“Three years after the pandemic started, and with some of our recent changes, such as a new CEO, we’ve really been feeling the need for connectedness, so we continue to look at ways to connect our people in person and virtually,” Ataya says.

Hootsuite has resumed larger in-office meetings but also gives employees the choice and flexibility to choose what works for their lifestyles, she adds.

For employees who prefer face-to-face interaction, Ataya says they’re piloting programs, such as live ERG events or Q&As with the company’s CEO that allow coworkers to mingle.

There’s another important element for connection. The bottom line, Ataya says, is that women in leadership need to support one another and lean on one another for “mentorship and championship.”

“Celebrate each other’s successes,” she adds. “It’s important to cheer on and empower other women. Even little wins are still wins. When I’m in meetings or discussions, I also try to make the conscious effort to amplify the voices of other women in the room. By acknowledging their contributions and ideas, it helps give them an equal opportunity to speak and be heard.”

Erica Sweeney is a freelance journalist whose work has appeared in the Washington Post, Men’s Health, Business Insider, Good Housekeeping, and other publications.
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- Inclusive product development
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The vibrant capital of Mexico is one of the world’s largest cities, with more than 20 million people, or approximately one-sixth of the country’s total population. Mexico City provides a kaleidoscope of politics, culture, and rich history. But despite the vast breadth of the city’s geography and populace, the composition of quaint neighborhoods—from Condesa to the Centro Histórico—makes it feel accessible to travelers.

The city is a natural wonder. Built atop a dried lake bed and surrounded by the Cordillera Neo-Volcánica—or the Neovolcanic Range—it basks in year-round tropical temperatures that nurture a unique biodiversity. Fir and pine forests. Cacti. Pepper trees. Jacaranda. And the confluence of world-class museums, dining, shopping, parks, and history mean that Ciudad de México, or CDMX as it’s nicknamed, promises a lively, varied destination.

**FLAVORS OF THE CITY**

Whether you want to dine on a rooftop or grab a quick bite of street food, Mexico City serves up an array of delicious cuisine. For a luxurious, inventive meal in a charming environment, start with Enrique Olvera’s award-winning restaurant Pujol. Find other flavors to satisfy your palate at Quintonil, which offers a sophisticated modern take on Mexican tradition. For reliably superb tacos, visit Taquería Orinoco, Tacos de Suadero, or El Hidalguense, to name just a few.

**CULTURE**

Dive into art, anthropology, architecture, and more at the city’s wealth of museums. Standouts include Palacio de Bellas Artes, Museo Nacional de Historia, the vast and wide-ranging Museo Nacional de Antropología, and Museo Frida Kahlo, in the vivid blue former home of the iconic artist, filled with her paintings, colorful decor, and dramatic dresses. If you’re in a playful mood, check out the Museo del Chocolate (MUCHO)—the origins and history of cacao, native to Mexico, are deliciously fascinating—or the Museo del Juguete Antiguo México, the largest toy collection in the world. Without even entering a museum, it’s possible you’ll stumble across seminal public murals, which tell a history of their own; wander the courtyards of the Secretaría de Educación Pública for an astonishing series by renowned muralist Diego Rivera.

**OUTDOORS**

If you need a break from the urban hustle, kick back in one of the city’s heavenly parks. The popular, expansive Bosque de Chapultepec spans nearly 1,700 acres of trees, fountains, museums, a zoo, and more, including a cinema in the middle of a lake accessible only by pedal boat (which becomes your movie seat). In the cosmopolitan Condesa neighborhood, the 22-acre Parque México offers terrain for walking, skating, or a lively game of soccer. For a longer day trip, check out Desierto de los Leones, located on the outskirts of Mexico City. Despite its name, it’s neither desert nor populated with lions but is a forested national park with stunning views and gardens.

Top, Palacio de Bellas Artes; right, Museo Frida Kahlo
It’s Time to Close the Gender Gap. How?

Despite progress made over the last decade, we’ve yet to achieve gender equality in the workforce. According to the World Economic Forum’s *Global Gender Gap Report 2022*, it will take 132 years to close the global gender gap and 59 years to reach gender equality in the United States. McKinsey & Company’s *2022 Women in the Workplace* report reveals that for every 100 men who are promoted to manager, only 87 women and only 82 women of color are promoted. This problem is compounded over time, with women making up 48 percent of the workforce at the entry level but just 28 percent at the senior level. And women are leaving leadership positions at an alarming rate. In fact, McKinsey reports that for every woman promoted to director level, two women directors are choosing to leave.

So what do we do about this? I would argue that the challenge is not just about solving the problem but more about a willingness and commitment to address it. To achieve equity in the workplace, we must understand how our actions or inactions amplify or support the systemic dynamics already in place. To close the gender gap requires understanding, commitment, and action.

To create strategies that produce desirable outcomes, organizations must first acknowledge the problem and understand what’s driving it. To get at the root of the problem, measure both diversity and inclusion. Look at your demographic makeup, promotion rates, development opportunities, and access to mentoring and sponsorship. Examine your policies and procedures—from where and how you source talent, to your interview and onboarding processes, and your level of equity in company policies, in compensation and benefits, and in performance/talent management procedures. Assess employee experience as it relates to access to leadership, social inclusion, work-life balance, recognition, and well-being.

Once the problem is defined, there needs to be a willingness to address it. Leaders must consider barriers that limit success, have the courage to make difficult or controversial decisions, and confront any resulting pushback. If the goal is to end disparity and dismantle the barriers that prevent women from advancing, then we need to acknowledge that fair outcomes require us to treat people differently. To close the gap, we may need resources, development, and leadership programs that focus on women, and we need to stand by those programs despite resistance. We need measurable goals, and talking points to counter arguments that these goals result in favoritism in hiring or promoting less qualified candidates. We need to address microaggressions, bias, and other behavioral norms. This is where organizations often fall short—they’re not willing to deal with scrutiny or backlash even though they know these programs are justified and necessary.

Finally, take systemic action. To effectively combat disparity in the workplace, your DEI strategy should tackle three key areas: organizational culture, individual behaviors and attitudes, and policies and procedures. You need to set achievable goals, institute policy changes, and hold people accountable. To ensure buy-in and engagement across the organization, support those policies with training, resources, and opportunities for dialogue. Policy changes without engagement are doomed to fail, and training without policy change will result in nothing more than short-term awareness building. Instead of trying to fix one thing or address one issue, focus on transforming your organization so that all people can succeed. **DW**
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