Inclusion & Diversity.

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Nancy Rowe, Chair of the BIMA Inclusion and Diversity Council and Publicis Sapient Inclusion & Diversity Lead, EMEA

The BIMA Tech and Inclusion Report (2019) found out that mental health, stress and anxiety are challenges within the industry and for marginalised groups, such as the neurodiverse, the figures are deeply upsetting with incidences of anxiety and depression appearing much higher at 84%. The report also revealed that 40% of Afro-Caribbean and those of mixed heritage, 31% of Asian and South East Asian and 35% of women have reported experiencing discrimination. Whilst we make efforts to bring people from diverse backgrounds into the industry, we are also driving them away.

These insights compel us to action and for the first time provide a clear sign-post on what to do next.

Introducing the BIMA Inclusion & Diversity toolkit – a playbook made up of a number of guides to get you started. Each guide, focuses on a different aspect of Inclusion & Diversity and is backed up with compelling research, outlining why you should tackle this topic within your organisation. The guides provides essential ‘What you need to know’ information and ‘How to get started’. They give practical assistance to get you going on your I&D journey, the rest is down to you!

Due to the intersectional nature of a person’s identity (how the combination of their gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability etc impacts their experience of discrimination and/or privilege in the workplace) we would recommend that you take a broad view of diversity by reviewing a number of the guides in this toolkit (rather than viewing each guide as a siloed topic).

I’d like to thank all of the BIMA Inclusion & Diversity Council team and their networks in realising this vital toolkit resource for all BIMA members. The guides will be reviewed and updated annually but if you’d like to make suggestions for improvements please reach out to diversity@bima.co.uk.

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How to get Started

The business case for Inclusion & Diversity is, by now, hopefully well understood. Like any change management programme we recommend organisations take a strategic approach to inclusion and diversity in order to drive the desired outcomes. We recommend the desire for change is discussed with those who set the culture, primarily your leadership team, but also employees across the business. Like all business imperatives, you should establish a clear view of the current state (through primary and secondary research) before establishing a vision for the change you want to see and the priorities that are right for your business along with the key performance indicators (what you will measure) over time. Inclusion & diversity is a long game but it is proven to drive both employee engagement, innovation and performance so having a long term plan is not only the right thing to do but also makes good business sense!

Women at work

BIMA

Inclusion & Diversity Toolkit: Gender

The Business case for gender diversity

A McKinsey Global Institute report finds that $12 trillion could be added to global GDP by 2025 by advancing women's equality. (MGI, 2015) People looking to increase diversity at organisations are often asked to "make the case" for why it is necessary. Catalyst research shows that when people feel included, they are recognised for the distinct characteristics they bring to the team – uniqueness – and feel as though they are true insiders – belonging. To begin thinking about inclusion, it is a state in which everyone can: be authentic; contribute fully and meaningfully; grow, develop and thrive. All this directly impacts the bottom line.

Much research has been done to demonstrate that when done well, diversity and inclusion in the workplace can lead to increased revenue, reduced costs, greater innovation, and increased employee engagement, productivity, and commitment. Notably, for companies to most effectively serve the market, their workforce needs to look and think like their customer base.

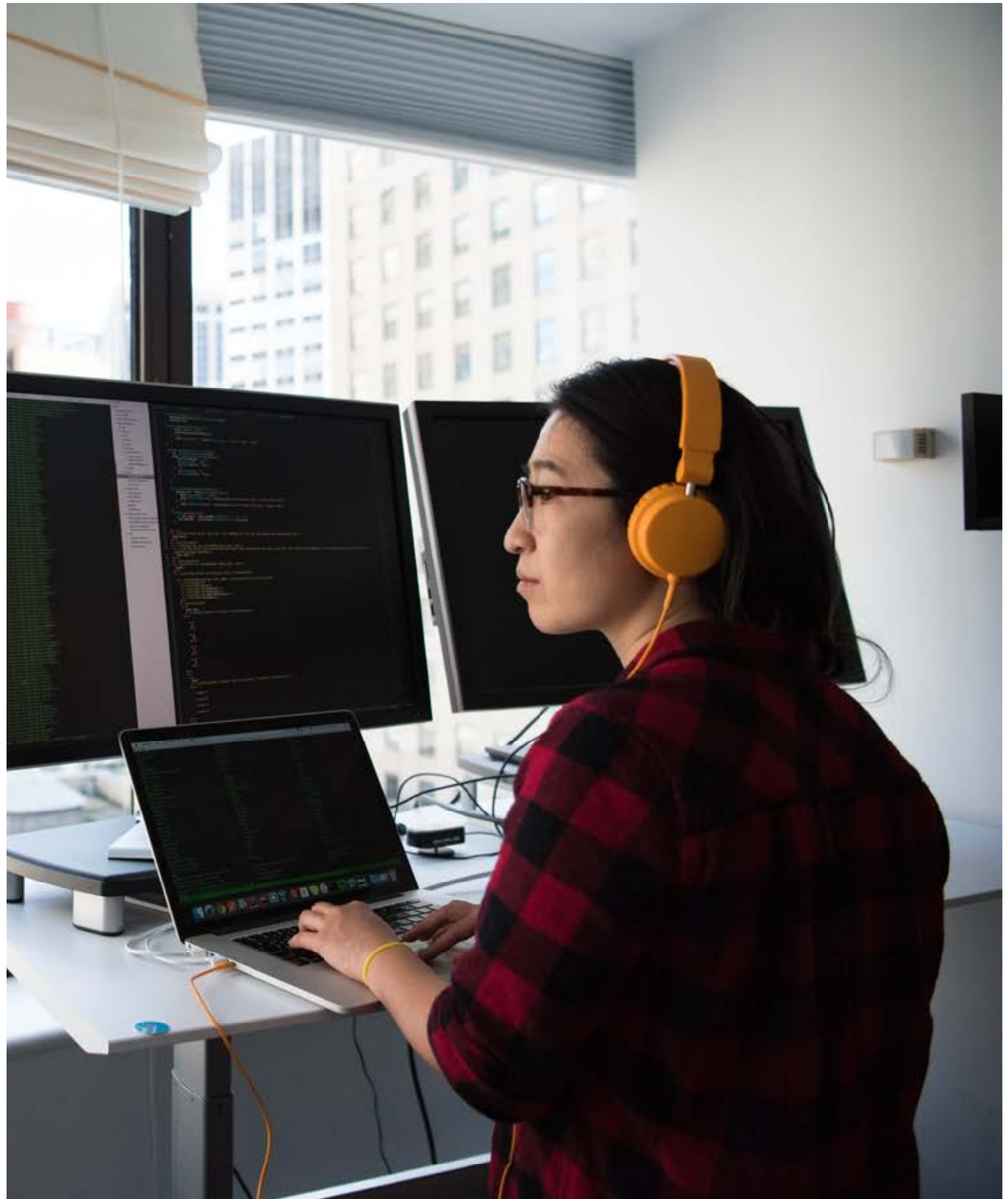
What you need to know

The BIMA Tech and Inclusion Report 2019 cited the gender split in the UK digital industry was fairly balanced at 48% female and 51% male. However the responses to our survey painted a considerably more equal picture than other studies which tend to indicate a heavy male bias within the tech sector and top female representation at best around 25% in technology focused roles. (https://www.statista.com/chart/4467/female-employees-at-tech-companies/)

The report also found that 35% of women feel their gender has negatively affected their career progression compared to 10% of men who feel their gender has negatively affected them. Our survey also found that men outnumber women in leadership roles by 59% compared to 40% for women.

The Gender Gap in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) begins in Education. Women made up 19.4% of UK tertiary education graduates in Information and Communication Technologies in 2015. In the EU-28, women were just 32.6% of those employed in high-tech manufacturing and knowledge-intensive high-tech services in 2017.

Unequal treatment at work is a leading reason women leave STEM careers. Isolation, male-dominated work environments, bias and a lack of effective women role models are other factors pushing women to leave STEM jobs. Once women enter the tech field, they are 45% more likely to leave than men. However, women in Europe are closing the gap in Science and Engineering: In 2017, women made up more than a third (40.5%) of scientists and engineers in the EU-28, an increase of more than 28% since 2007. (Source: Catalyst, 2019.)



How to get started

As a session at 2018s London Tech Week noted, it’s about improving structures that support women (e.g., equal pay, flexible working hours), about not underestimating the power of the role model, and crucially, about taking diversity seriously.

As Suzy Levy, Managing Director, The Red Plate notes:

“ Modern businesses need policies and processes to support all aspects of discrimination, bullying and harassment. But perhaps more importantly, we also need to create cultures where the subtle gender biases no longer go unchecked. If the workplace is architected for only one type of person to succeed, the masculine, self-assured, always-on person for example, we will continue to see very little change in the diversity of our senior teams. It will also limit our ability to bring diversity of thought and innovation to our clients.”

The BIMA Tech Inclusion Report provided 6 practical steps to creating a more diverse workforce:

01. From the top

Whatever the initiative – whether you're looking to increase the numbers of women and BAME in leadership positions or attract neurodivergent talent – it must come with the wholehearted support of senior leaders.

02. Get the data

Assumptions are dangerous. So before you launch initiatives, find out what the reality is for diverse groups in your company. Gather data from recruitment exercises, inductions, appraisals, surveys and exit interviews to establish whether you have diversity issues and what they are and most importantly why they exist. Think about the levers you can influence in order to affect your diversity 'mix'. Talent in (recruitment) talent up (progression) and talent performance (engagement and management of attrition).

03. Enlist help

From tackling discrimination to championing neurodiversity and training mental health first aiders, ask for help in diagnosing issues, identifying solutions, and training the people who can improve the situation.

04. Talk about it

So much of the shift required to truly celebrate diversity is cultural. It requires individuals to feel able to break the silence about their mental health, their loneliness, their stress or cognitive difference. And it requires organisations to create the right environment for that conversation to take place. You can start to make that change by appointing mental health first aiders or neurodiversity champions, by running general awareness sessions and by holding events that celebrate diversity.

Examine all of your organisational systems or processes and evaluate each one in turn (with input from colleagues) to evaluate any potential barriers they may pose from a gender perspective. E.g. your recruitment processes, how and where you recruit (both early careers and experienced hires), how performance and career development is managed and measured across the organisation, how promotions are decided and conducted, how parental leave is handled both before, during and on return to work?

05. Support managers

Managers are on the frontline of supporting teams with a diverse range of needs, and they need help to do the job effectively. Ensure your managers have the training to spot and understand issues. And give them the toolkit to make the adjustments necessary to offer real support.

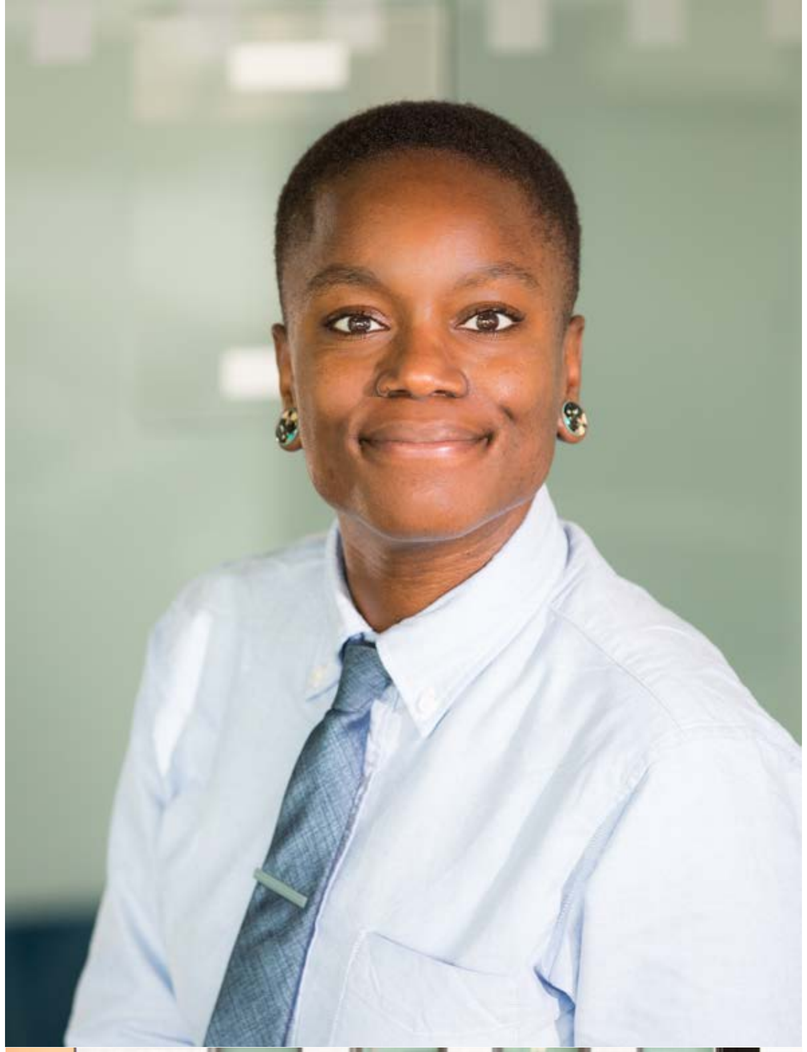
06. For change to work it must be inclusive

Changes to our industry and the way we work have to be led by the communities it concerns. For example, a manager who is neurotypical cannot make the workplace more neurodivergent friendly without letting the neurodivergent voices be heard and empower them to lead the way. Managers can provide the structure and the channels for this to happen, but to make a difference change must be led by the diverse individuals who have a lived experience of the barriers we have identified.

Signpost to other sources of information

https://www.techtalentcharter.co.uk/home

https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-matter-ten-years-of-insights-on-gender-diversity



Thank you.