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## TGIF: Diversity At Google

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### Presentation Video

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**Presenters:** [Nancy Lee](#), [Nilka Thomas](#) (Diversity); [Fred Sauer](#) (Cloud Playground)



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### Q&A

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Answering questions: [Nilka Thomas](#), [Laszlo Bock](#), [Nancy Lee](#), [Kristen Gil](#), [Jen Fitzpatrick](#), [Susan Wojcicki](#), [David Drummond](#), [Alan Eustace](#)

*Every week, we make an edited transcript of the Q&A from the Mountain View TGIF available to Googlers worldwide. People often ask how much content we remove from the original transcript: the answer is, very little and sometimes none at all. We work very closely with our legal, product and eng teams to see if any of the content of the Q&A would create legal risks or contains inaccuracies. We are vigilant about changing as little of the content as possible so that every Googler can have access to the substance of the TGIF discussion.*

**#1 - Have we experimented with anonymizing prospective employee information, e.g. hiding names, addresses, etc. from hiring committees to see if it makes a difference in hiring recommendations?**

>>Laszlo Bock: So -- so the outside data, as you know, tells us this is a problem. We are running this experiment in Q3. We're going to try it and see if we see it here and see if it makes a difference in our hiring.

**#2 - Most diversity efforts seem to focus on intrinsics, such as gender, race, and age. What about diversity of socioeconomic roots?**

>>Nancy Lee: Yes. Actually, we don't directly ask this question. We don't ask people what their parents made, what their financial background looks like. But we're getting at this in a couple ways. We're actually expanding the schools that we go and recruit from, for example, to those that generally have populations of more underrepresented and underprivileged people.

And then, again, we're also -- I talked a bit about the K-12 and pre-University efforts we have. We're really trying to focus our efforts there on underrepresented minorities. So we are trying to get at this in looking at backgrounds and experiences in hiring that are different than some of the more classic things we look at, which is education and whatnot.

>>Sergey Brin: We're also about to do an experiment where we take 100 Googlers and half of them we're going to halve their salary, and half we're going to double their salary and see how it affects their performance.

[ Laughter ]

>>Sergey Brin: If you want to volunteer, let us know. On average, you come out ahead. No, no, it's a coin toss, but you come out ahead, on average. Yeah, because it's, like, an arithmetic mean, not a geometric mean. You come out ahead. So those of you who are, you know, mathematically inclined should all be jumping up on the stage right now.

>>Larry Page: Didn't they form a group and agree to average the results?

>>Sergey Brin: No, no. The experiment won't work in terms of the performance. They have to -- every person has to stick within their own means.

>>Larry Page: But how do you know?

>>Sergey Brin: No pun intended with respect to the means.

>>Larry Page: Anyway, next question.

**#3 - (Live) I have a question. In general, it seems, well, at least to me, that there are a number of silos when it comes to the issue -- or approaches on addressing diversity. Is there more of an internal push to I guess better market to the rest of the employees in what ways we can contribute without stepping on each other's toes and have more collaborative efforts so we can get a synergy of the great populace that we do have to really address some of these hard issues?**

>>Nilka Thomas: I can address that. So one of the great ways that Googlers can get involved is through the employee resource groups. And we have over 19 employee resource groups.

And the tremendous work -- you know, the work these groups are doing is tremendous. And they're impacting everything from how we're going out and hiring to, you know, sort of how we're changing, shaping our culture. They're doing a ton of stuff in the community. So this is a collective effort. We obviously have a diversity team that's doing a lot. But we depend on the hands and feet of all of you.

So by no means do we need to step over each other. We can be working together to break down those silos and get all the work done that needs to be done.

>>Laszlo Bock: What I would add, too, is, it's a brilliant idea, because if you add up all the people who feel like they're in the minority, they're actually the majority; right?

And the unconscious bias stuff we're talking about, everyone's affected by that; right? And so there's a lot more to be done by sort of looking for where are the areas of common experience and making sure those are addressed than by just doing it piece by piece.

And what's great is, they've started bringing together sort of the different ERG leaders. For the last few years, we've had global summits where they all come together and figure what can we do better, how can we better partner together. And in smaller offices we actually have something called Mosaic, which are groups which look across all kinds of diversity and kind of bring people together in the offices. So we're trying to model that even in places like Mountain View, where you have lots of people who may want to just be part of one group or another. I think there's a lot of value in remembering, we're actually all just people. Right? We have more in common than we don't.

Great question.

**#4 - The administrative assistant role seems to composed of ~90% women. In the seven months I've been at Google, not a single other male administrative assistant has been hired. Is there context to explain why that is?**

>>Nancy Lee: So this is not unlike other roles, where we're actually tapping a labor pool. And as it turns out, far more women are admins in the application process. And also just in the workforce.

But we do absolutely want to recruit more diversity here as well. And, in fact, 95% of admins, according to that statistic I showed you of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 95% are women. Here at Google, we just extended three offers to males out of 51 this year. So we're doing a little better than that.

>>Laszlo Bock: A very little better.

[ Laughter ]

>>Nancy Lee: Always more to do.

**#5 - (live) I just wanted to make the observation, across four different campuses, about 90% of the women in my computer classes were foreign born, studying in the U.S. So one way to support hiring of a large number of women engineers is actually to fix immigration. So there's a lot going on right now with FWD.US, and the Senate passed an immigration reform bill today, although that's far from a done deal. I wonder what Google is doing currently to get green cards stapled to advanced degrees for STEM fields. Thank you.**

>>David Drummond: I think we've been part of the conversation for many years now, and pushing for immigration reform and also for changing the structure of visas and making sure that high-skilled people get access to -- you know, that are largely trained in the United States can actually work here.

The immigration overhaul -- the bill today is so important because we've been -- we only could make limited progress on the so-called high-skilled immigration issue or the high-level immigration until we dealt with the broader immigration issue; right?

And so that's why it's so important to have comprehensive immigration reform, so we can deal with this at all segments.

So, you know, there's still a lot -- a big issue of getting this through the House. We're part of the -- we're not part of Forward officially. Obviously, those are individuals and not companies.

But in terms of the tech companies, we've been leaders on this issue for a long time.

>>Laszlo Bock: Well, and the policy team has done a great idea. They had me fly out to D.C. earlier this year, I was part of a group of tech folks from different companies who met with Marco Rubio and Orrin Hatch initially to talk about this issue.

And we were the only tech company who said, yeah, definitely staple a green card to every advanced degree, but you should also look at immigration more broadly.

And then we went afterwards with the Policy team to talk to Representative Zoe Lofgren, who is just a few miles down the street and is a great friend of Google. And she said that if you just did the high-skilled immigration, as David was saying, general immigration reform is going to be dead forever, because there's not going to be political will.

So we've actually done a lot of work sort of behind the scenes to sort of get the right thing done for everybody. And what was interesting was, we were the only tech company -- and everyone was there. You know, it was Microsoft and IBM and Facebook and Intel and Cisco. We were the only ones saying, you know, it's actually a bigger issue. It's not just to the benefit of our company. And, by the way, even with the H-1Bs, some of the proposals were, well, yeah, but let's have companies spend \$10,000 or 15 or \$20,000 per H-1B. And our point was, that's going to crowd out a lot of little guys who can't afford to do that. There's been a lot of subtlety.

One last thing. You can help. I normally wouldn't plug this, but there's the Google NetPAC. We're limited as a company in terms of the contributions we can make to different politicians. The Google NetPAC is something you can contribute to. There's payroll deductions, straight deductions. It's on the Web site. But it's a way to contribute to different politicians and causes which sort of are aligned with what we're trying to do. So there's lots of ways to get involved, but that's a great one.

**#6 - Controversies about security contractors and Zagat temps show that non-FTEs can have it pretty rough. We don't control our vendors, but we surely have the power to change this. How do we ensure vendors treat their staff fairly and follow our values?**

>>Jen Fitzpatrick: I can talk about this a little bit. I'm involved in our Maps teams, which have a relatively large portion of our overall TVC population.

And we do pay a lot of attention, actually, in selecting the vendors that we use. We don't pick sort of a, you know, random vendors or even just based on who can give us the best price. We do put a lot of fairly up-front effort into picking vendors that, you know, have a history and reputation for treating their workers well.

And we do -- we do pay a lot of attention there. We also do things like, for example, in our -- in some of our larger vendor pools, do sort of -- you can think of it as a mini Googlegeist style survey, so we do have a direct read into sort of the collective voice of what's happening in our larger sort of non-Google populations and so that we can understand, right, whether there are, you know, issues or things that are causing, you know, sort of big unhappiness and that we have at least a direct read on that, that we're not going entirely through the vendors to get a point of view on what's going on. So those are a few of the things that we do.

>>Sergey Brin: Is the biggest issue the Zagat temps have the ambience, the service, or the food, would you say?

>>Larry Page: Where are the red paddles? Thank you.

>>Sergey Brin: On a scale of 1-30.

**#7 - (live) Hi. I'm from India. And so diversity has been a big topic there for a few years now. So what happened is a lot of our policy revolves around providing women perks so they do better at university. But over time, you think this would solve the problem. But what's happened is people start perceiving these women as being less deserving. I know that's not the case that's going to happen here. But have you guys thought about something -- I see great efforts going towards getting women in. Have you thought about maybe this sort of perception can build up, and maybe, you know, combating it before it starts?**

>>Laszlo Bock: We'll split it into two questions. So the -- I'll let you guys talk about what happens before they get hired and the capability. So there's two pieces. One is, we're actually investing a lot earlier in people's lives. Like, there's sort of no business reason for us to do K-12 stuff. We actually -- if you look across Google, there's roughly 20 different teams who touch K-12 education, kindergarten through the end of high school. They're doing stuff all over the world. We want to figure out what works best to get more people from disadvantaged backgrounds or who are diverse into computer science, mathematics, engineering. So we're trying to do that.

But the point you raise is a great one, because you often get a question about, you know, why doesn't the leadership team look a certain way or why doesn't our director-plus look a certain way?

And we don't ever want to compromise on quality and we don't want to have the perception of that. And what we need to do is sort of take bigger bets on people. But we don't need to -- but if you just sort of flood the system and say, "In one year we're going to be 50-50 men and women in every country and we're going to be, you know, 12% African American in the U.S.," and we're going to be this and that, you're going to end up, inevitably -- even if you don't compromise on quality, which you don't have

to, you're going to send a signal to those people that you're here because of a quota. And that's toxic and destructive and a bad thing.

And so what our hope is is that over time, since we've seen that our promotion rates are consistent, the hiring is okay, the pay is equal across every gender, that what will happen is we'll recruit more people on the front end, cultivate more people, grow more people in the profession and they'll advance.

The one last thing I'll say is, we've seen internship programs actually have a huge impact on this, where if you hire someone just out of college -- and the group, you know, we have 30% more female technical interns -- or 30% of the technical interns are females, 50% more than last year -- it's still going to take, you know, ten years or eight years or however many years before they're at director level. So some of it is just taking the time to invest in people and grow them and make bets on them.

>>Jen Fitzpatrick: I also think, just having been involved for many years in hiring technical women, we do talk about this issue. And the perception of there being a bar and are we lowering the bar is -- the perception itself can be dangerous. And I think we do pay close attention. And just to be very clear, even as we are hiring more and more technical women, what we are finding is, you know, we are not lowering the bar; we are expanding the pool and going out and finding more great people and putting more effort into finding great people. If you look across the board at the performance of the expand the pool of women that we are bringing in, we are bringing in rock star awesome Googlers. So I think it's also important that we continue to sort of find and celebrate the successes of these expanded pools of people that we're bringing in because, you know, I -- like I said, I pay pretty close attention to this issue, at least within the engineering group, and we are -- we are by no means lowering the bar. If anything, it continues to creep up over time. And we're just working a lot harder to find more great people.

[ Applause ]

>>Alan Eustace: Let me --

[ Applause ]

>>Alan Eustace: Let me add one quick thing there, 'cause a lot of you are interviewers out there.

One of the things that we found when I -- I actually for a long time, I looked at every single packet for women and diversity out of engineering. Anybody we rejected with a score of over 2.5, I read the packet, for a really, really long time. What I found in a lot of these cases was, these are really rare people. We don't get to see very many. You know, a black female engineer in our pool, you know, we're going to see, like, a vanishingly small number of them.

So why don't we spend a little extra time with that candidate? You know, why don't we maybe have them interview with -- you know, if they had a math major and a computer science, why don't we have somebody interview -- both of them from both those disciplines. Or why don't we do more reference checks. Or why don't we do a bunch of things just to make sure that we're not having a false negative in this case.

So let's work harder on the false negatives. If I can just get rid of every false negative, we're going to have a great company that's going to have a lot of really smart people. And I'll give you one example of this. When I went through this packet, I saw this packet, it was kind of a coin flip. It was a woman, and she was -- she looked pretty good on things. She had one bad interview. So I called her advisor, who happened to be a friend of mine. And I said, hey, did we make a mistake here?

He said, yeah, you made one of the worst mistakes you probably ever made. That was the best candidate I have ever had in a Ph.D. program. She went to a major university. She's a faculty member. She's doing fantastic.

But we missed her not because, you know, our interview process was hopelessly flawed. It was because we didn't take the time to make one phone call. So for these rare candidates, really think about what could you do in those cases to make sure that you're not making a mistake, because there are very few of these people out there.

>>Nilka Thomas: Just to add to that, we know that we're actually making good decisions. When Alan talks about this extra process, we actually have tracked the data, and we've looked at how people have performed ones they've actually gotten here, and the results are sound. It's often that we have a false negative. And as Alan mentioned, we can't afford it with these candidates, they're in such small supply.

**#8 - The gender wage gap states that full-time working women earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by a man. What is the Google version of this statistic once we balance for job roles and levels?**

>>Laszlo Bock: So we look at this. There's no gap at Google. When you control for performance and level. Obviously, like, someone at a different level has a different salary.

But there's no gap. And what's interesting is, we only started checking for this maybe a year, year and a half ago. But it's a function of the design of our systems, where your performance ties directly to your pay. And, you know, it's somewhat -- it's largely algorithmic. And your manager that is some discretion. So we independently check if the discretion shows any bias. And we haven't found it. So it's -- we do not see that gap at Google for people doing the same job at comparable performance.

[ Applause ]

**#9 - (live) Hi. My question is, I guess in an ideal world, it would be wonderful if everyone took the unconscious bias training and really thought diversity and inclusion and those things were great integral parts of their lives. However, we know that's not the reality.**

**So my question is, what is Google doing to make sure that maybe their employees that are not participating in ERGs that are not doing the unconscious bias workshops because they -- you know, it's not mandatory, these people are also seeing the effects of unconscious bias and how important diversity and inclusion is in their daily lives and their perceptions of people around them? What is Google doing for that?**

>>Kristen Gil: Well, I'd say right now, right here is Exhibit A. I'd also say that it really is -- this isn't something that we can put on the ERGs to solve the problems. But we play a really big role in helping to fix it. Because we are one of those Googlers in those meetings, in those working environments. So we have to bring forward those issues.

But we also have to work with our leadership teams, our managers, and make sure that we raise the awareness amongst the working groups that we're involved in every day. So encouraging your colleagues, working with your manager to encourage the team to be involved and to take the unconscious bias training.

So, again, it isn't up to the minorities to solve the problem. But at the same time, we have a really important part to play.

>>Jen Fitzpatrick: I think it's also worth just letting people know that there is a big effort right now to get all of our most senior leaders to go through the unconscious bias training. I know I've been in rooms with, you know -- you know, many tens of senior engineering leaders over the last several weeks who have gone through this. And so we are also doing a big push to start at the top, right, and make sure that, you know, for our most senior leaders, that we are getting as many of them as possible to go have that training as soon as possible. And hopefully some of the word of mouth can spread from there.

>>Alan Eustace: Last year, half of Larry's staff I dragged to Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computer Science, which is fantastic and is a great thing, you know, almost 4,000 technical women. And they have a technical executive forum where they talk about these issues for women. And it's actually a great forum. And we were the only company of all of them there, they had a bunch -- all the tables were HR people kind of thing, which is no disrespect, but --

[ Laughter ]

>>Alan Eustace: -- you know, they're asking me, how did you get so many executives in one place to think about this issue? So thank you to, you know, the people that support it, Larry and also the execs that went with me.

>>Jen Fitzpatrick: Alan should mention that he's a legend at Grace Hopper, because he rocks it on the dance floor and he's the only guy there.

>>Alan Eustace: This is heaven if you're a guy.

[ Applause ]

>>Larry Page: Do you think -- we've been getting rave reviews about the training. I think we should consider whether every employee should go through it once or something.

>>Laszlo Bock: So we're -- it's available to everybody at that go/unconsciousbias link. And, you know, we have a goal to get thousands and thousands of people -- we just started it this quarter and our goal is to get thousands and thousands of people through it. One of our bottlenecks is actually facilitators. So sign up for it, if you believe -- if you enjoy it, if you get something out of it and you want to learn more, you can also be a facilitator. And that's one of our scaling issues.

It would be great if everyone went through it. But, actually, even if everyone doesn't, if most of us do, it will change the way the place works; right? Because, for example -

>>Larry Page: All right. I think he's trying to sandbag on the OKR.

>>Laszlo Bock: Yeah, okay, we have an OKR.

>>Larry Page: The OKR, we're going to have to do things like that in some form. And I think it's great that we have some initial success with that program.

**#10 - Laszlo's email said that we were going to start to share numbers about gender breakdown. Will numbers for other diversity groups also be shared in the future? Age distribution would be of great interest to some of us.**

>>Nancy Lee: Yeah, I'm happy to take that. The answer to the question is that, yes, we actually do hope over time to be able to share more demographic information. There's a site that we're going to be launching, you'll see an email post-TGIF email, that contains the gender data that we've shared with you today, and even more. And lots about how you can get involved with all these OKR initiatives.

But this is actually a good opportunity for me to say that one of the problems that we have is that we don't have enough information about other types of categories, ethnicity background, sexual orientation. Many of you hold that information, you know, very near and dear. And we completely understand that. But it will actually help us if you disclose that information to us so that we can start looking at which populations might not be experiencing Google in the same way.

So we have an effort where, for example, here in the U.S., we're going to go back out with ethnicity requests. And I'll tell you why. Because right now, only 36% of Googlers at the new orientation where we ask this actually disclose their ethnicity. So the vast majority of us haven't provided that information. So we don't have reliable information to share with you.

So please, please do disclose.

***#11 (live) So you talked a lot about what things Googlers can do to encourage young women to go into computer science degrees or other tech degrees. But a disproportionately large amount of Googlers are here. So what can we do to ensure that we're doing enough internationally in schools and other things to encourage women to pursue tech degrees?***

>>Nancy Lee: Yeah, we actually -- we have a bunch of efforts. A good example of this is in Israel, where in Tel Aviv, [Michal Segalov](#) is actually someone -- a female engineer who goes out and every week brings girls into the Google Tel Aviv campus and talks to them about these things.

So there's a do-it-yourself kit that you can actually -- it's universal. You can use it for all kinds of different outreach for schools. And we have -- we really do have people doing this worldwide.

>>Kristen Gil: So, yeah, I'll just add that that program they've put it sort of in a box so that it's really easy. And we're trying to light up the Women@Google chapters to help bring is that in all of the different offices.

But I do have to say, we really do have a challenge here in the U.S. And it's not just with girls and underrepresented minorities. We actually only offer in the U.S. -- computer science is only offered in 5% of the high schools here. So we have some work to do. And I think Google can actually help move the needle on how we can get computer science in more of the high schools as an onramp. We have to both make it interesting for and attractive to girls and underrepresented minorities. But we also just have to solve the supply problem of computer science here in the U.S.

>>Susan Wojcicki: I was just going to add -- make a similar point that Kristen did here. But, I mean, it's something -- an issue I really care a lot about. I actually just wrote an op-ed piece that was published in CNN to all of the girls in the world and explained why I thought tech was such a great field and why I'd really encourage more to enter that field.

But then I also look at that as a mother of daughters, and I'm trying to sign up my daughter and get her interested in using her computer, and I will say it's really

challenging. And I've brought this up, like, where do I send her? Like, in Silicon Valley, where do I send her to be with other girls where she'll be interested?

I sent her to a program and she came back and she said, "Everyone in my class is a boy." So, it was not a positive experience.

And so here we are. I feel like even here, we don't have great opportunities for her to go be with her friends and have a really good time. And I think that's one of the things I have brought up that I'd really like to see us investing in more. On the positive side, I see a lot of nice online courses, which I think is scalable. But getting my daughter to do that probably might not work that well.

[ Laughter ]

>>Larry Page: All right. Maybe that's a good place to end. Let's thank all of our presenters on this important issue.

[ Cheers and applause ]

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