

Culture, not pay, the crucial factor behind lack of gender diversity in tech and IT transformation

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Wednesday, 8 March 2017

Culture, not pay, is the critical factor behind the lack of gender diversity in the technology and IT transformation fields, according to Venquis.

An analysis by the specialist change and business transformation consultancy found that an overly technical and 'geeky' image, combined with a lack of understanding about what attracts and motivates female professionals, has contributed to the lack of gender diversity in the industry. This comes at a time when research reveals that the gender pay gap within technology is the smallest of any professional field, however the proportion of women working in the sector is the lowest at any point since 1984. It was previously thought that the disparity in pay was a major contributing factor, however Venquis' analysis has proved otherwise.

Barnaby Parker, CEO of Venquis, comments.

"Culture is at the root of the lack of diversity. The technology industry has essentially been designed, developed and implemented by men. Even the language used in training material is rooted in masculinity and it doesn't exactly create a welcoming environment or allow female professionals to know that technology is even an option for them. Too few organisations make a real, concerted effort to target female professionals effectively and create a culture where they might actually want to work. We have to accept that male and female professionals generally look for different things from an employment contract, they're attracted by different factors and can offer different skills. It therefore makes clear business sense to make an actual effort to specifically target women, rather than just carrying on doing what you've always done. The evidence is very clear that a diverse workforce is a strong force for good in organisations".

Venquis recently hosted its 'Women in Business Transformation' breakfast, where Phil Pavitt, CIO at Specsavers, spoke.

"The benefits of a diverse workforce are almost endless and there is significant evidence that suggests female professionals can bring broader and more considered decision-making. They may also be calmer, less likely to take dangerous risks, make more profitable decisions, be better communicators, more innovative and contribute to increased morale among work-forces. So why are so few women working in the sector? Culture. Yes, it takes effort and some investment, but improving diversity levels makes clear business sense. Rather than doing the same old thing over and over again and expecting different results, why not look to reach out to schools and get involved in personal mentoring and sponsorship. That way, you're not only developing a pipeline, you're also promoting your business. Firms should also put considerably more effort into the types of job specifications that they're advertising. Instead of focusing only on technical skills, they should also promote attributes such as adaptability, creativity, collaboration and innovation, that are also likely to appeal to women. After all, if you told most people the minutiae of what you do, it would probably sound very boring. However, if you told them that you were part of a team that changed millions of peoples' lives, or developed the next game-changing medical device, it would

sound considerably more exciting and therefore more likely to catch the attention of someone who may not previously considered tech as a career choice. The time for talking about doing something is done, it's time to start doing."