

#WorkTrends from TalentCulture
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Meghan M. Biro: On this week's episode of Work Trends, we're talking about diversity and inclusion. What does a successful diversity program really look like? We asked two experts for their takes on DNI. We'll hear from semantic CHRO Amy Cappelanti-Wolf, and author Rania Anderson.

Meghan M. Biro: Welcome to the Work Trends podcast from Talent Culture. I'm your host, [Meghan M. Biro 00:00:32]. Every week I interview interesting people and brands who are re-imagining work. For more information, be sure to check us out at talentculture.com, and join us live on twitter every Wednesday at one-thirty pm eastern, using the hashtag "WorkTrends".

Meghan M. Biro: Thank you for listening to the Work Trends podcast. Now we want to hear from you and what you think about the podcast. What you like, what topics you want us to cover in 2019, and where you think the world of work is going. Please take our very brief feedback survey today and tell us what you think. The survey is live and available at talenculture.com/survey. Thanks again for tuning in.

Meghan M. Biro: I'm joined by my friend and co-host [Kevin W. Grossman 00:01:15].

Kevin W. G.: Meghan M. Biro, how are you doing today?

Meghan M. Biro: I'm doing pretty well. Really excited about all this holiday hoopla. And really what's ahead for us in 2019. These are interesting times.

Kevin W. G.: Absolutely. And based on a feedback survey we did recently with the talent culture and Work Trends community, we're planning even more insightful shows, going to push those boundaries a bit. And taking a new look at HR, recruiting, talent management and leadership and related business topics.

Meghan M. Biro: I know, can't wait. This is all good stuff. I mean, in some ways we're continuing what we've been doing, and in other ways, these are still disruptive times, so there's a lot more to learn and do.

Kevin W. G.: Oh, absolutely, can't wait. It's going to be a great year in 2019. It's been a great year in 2018. So let's get to the news now, since we're talking today about the critical business topic of diversity and inclusion.

Kevin W. G.: So Meghan, I found a recent Tech-Crunch article that highlighted a story about a dozen venture capitalists who spent three days in the south. They were in Charlotte, Columbia, and Atlanta. And they were to learn what it might take to begin investing in those regions as alternatives to Silicon Valley. And what they found were the fact that both racial diversity and diversity of economies, as well as these places having a history of overcoming adversity, for any of us who

anything about history, that's definitely the case. And it's made them wins as these alternatives for startups.

Meghan M. Biro: That's why I'm so excited to talk with our guest about what is making a difference in Silicon Valley and beyond, of course.

Kevin W. G.: Exactly. And according to the same article, if a startup can make it in Orangeberg, South Carolina, a manufacturing town with a median household income of 29,000 per year, it can make it anywhere. And that's just what they're finding in these markets. It's pretty interesting stuff.

Meghan M. Biro: Pretty cool. Well then, let's get to our first guest.

Meghan M. Biro: Our first guest is Amy Cappelanti-Wolf. SVP and CHRO at the tech company Semantic. Welcome to Work Trends, Amy.

Amy C. W.: Thank you for having me, it's my pleasure.

Meghan M. Biro: Where are you calling in from today?

Amy C. W.: I'm calling in from Cupertino, California, which is just about 40 miles south of San Francisco.

Meghan M. Biro: Are you at HQ?

Amy C. W.: Actually I'm in my house with doors shut. Because I've got big dogs that might interrupt this podcast if they got into this discussion.

Meghan M. Biro: If you're out there listening to us at Work Trends, how many of you today are not at HQ? That's the question. And maybe you have some big dogs right outside your door. You know, so interesting that you say so, Amy. So many of us are working in alternative offices and homes and everywhere around the world. So, excited that you're here.

Amy C. W.: Thank you.

Meghan M. Biro: So you've been working on a complete overhaul of Semantic's diversity strategy. What was your big goal when you first started?

Amy C. W.: It was a lofty goal, because I felt like we were doing a lot of activities and trying to do a lot of good in this work, but we weren't getting the results. And so I decided to take a whole different view, to say "Diversity is really about inclusion." And so how do we turn this on its side? And, while numbers are important and they are really the outcome you're driving towards, it's the right kind of environment you create for yourself and for the company.

Amy C. W.: So people want to come, work, contribute, learn, stay. Stick around. And so that's how we're approaching the notion of diversity in the workplace. Is creating that kind of landscape so it happens naturally with how we run our business.

Meghan M. Biro: I love that word, "Naturally." Talk to us a little bit more about what that means to you.

Amy C. W.: Well I'm a big believer ... And probably, in this way, after years of lots of experiences. You've got to bring your whole self to work every day. And if you're not in a place where people celebrate and embrace that, you're not going to be at your best and you're not going to be able to provide different perspectives of your life into the work.

Amy C. W.: And let's be frank, our work life and our home life are blended because of the flexibility we often have, or the work life integration challenges that we're going after. So I'm thinking about "natural" in the sense of, I want to be able to be candid about my perspective, I want to know that what I say counts. I want to at least be involved in some of the decision making so I can help shape it. And I want to bring people out of the margins and into the center so they can be part of this conversation as well.

Meghan M. Biro: Tell us the scoop, what wasn't working about your existing diversity strategy? Because I think there's many others out there who are struggling.

Amy C. W.: It's universal. In tech in particular, especially in Silicon Valley, we're all struggling with the same challenges in terms of representation, mix, do we have the right capabilities to go after this talent in this valley? And so for us, it's really about, how do we think about the addressable market we have in the tech area, and then how do we start to cultivate and build those relationships?

Amy C. W.: So, we're doing a ton of work around, one, building inclusive leadership muscles at the top. Because if you don't have leadership support at the top, these things fail. And very often, it's the activists underneath it that are either underrepresented or trying to get their voices heard. They have to carry this burden and they shouldn't have to. They're the ones looking for health and access. And so it starts at the top.

Amy C. W.: So we've gotten our executive team and our board involved around, "How are we going to shift this paradigm and create the right kind of servant leadership capabilities, where we then begin to build that inclusiveness that we want to strive towards at Semantic?"

Meghan M. Biro: Did you just say "Servant leadership"?

Amy C. W.: I did.

Meghan M. Biro: Whoa! That's a tall order!

Amy C. W.: It is! But it's not new.

Meghan M. Biro: No.

Amy C. W.: I mean, it's been around forever and it's been kind of a buzzword, but it's like, you've gotta lead that way. Because there's too many other competing jobs out there that, if you don't create a place where people want to come because they know you're going to be there for them, then game over.

Meghan M. Biro: And you're so right. As much as we like to say it's everybody, it has to start at the top. It needs to be part of your business function. No question.

Amy C. W.: Yeah.

Meghan M. Biro: How has it gone so far? Tell us.

Amy C. W.: Well, we are about a year into this focus and we're getting some really good traction. So, what we look at, just to let you know, so we do look at numbers. And it's like weighing yourself, if you do it every day you're going to be super disappointed, at least for me. But what I do is try and look navigation ally or longitudinally, like where am I seeing choke points that are now open because we are looking at more diverse types of candidates? How am I looking at the flow of managers to directors? Individual contributors to supervisor jobs?

Amy C. W.: So we're starting to look at parts of our pyramid, so to speak, our organizational pyramid, to ensure we're opening up the flow of movement, both horizontally and vertically. So that's something that we're starting to see some benefit to. And seeing some movement of people that wouldn't have normally had access to those opportunities. Secondly, we're doing a lot of work around gender-neutralizing job descriptions and taking bias out of our hiring practices. Because it starts with the hiring process.

Amy C. W.: Though, educating managers about how to really think wholistically about a candidate. This notion of "You're going to go hire 100% candidate against the job description" is nuts. You never find someone completely perfect. Yeah, you never find someone completely perfect. And so we've got to be opening up our amature about, hey, we know that they're 70% capable for the job, the other 30% I can help build because they're smart, they're high potential, I'll teach them.

Amy C. W.: And so, how do you kind of build that mindset into our hiring practices so that we can really open up the pipeline to different perspective, different experiences.

Meghan M. Biro: Tell us more specifically about some of these changes. For other people out there who may want to put something in place.

Amy C. W.: Sure thing. Well, we're looking at it like ... We're kind of approaching it with three pillars. The first one's building awareness. We had some good stuff going on. We've got these amazing employee resource groups, we have a strong platform for how we talk about diversity. We've got wonderful awards around being one of the most ethical companies in the world many years running, a CSR.

Amy C. W.: So we've got some really cool things that we just haven't amplified. So how do you start getting people listening and participating in some of the cool things that are already going on? We've also gotten our leadership team and our CEO to be a part of this CEO pledge with PWC, which is a universal thing that we're trying to get CEOs to buy into so they can be part of the change effort. So he's firmly, Greg, our CEO, stepped into that. So there's a whole awareness chain.

Amy C. W.: The next pillar is around thinking about the bias piece of it. So how do you build manager capability, how do you gender-neutralize job descriptions? How do you have diverse hiring slates? So we're going to mandate very shortly that before a requisition can be closed, when you have a req open to hire somebody, you have to have shown that you had a diverse slate. So that you're really opening up the candidacy for people to be considered for the role.

Amy C. W.: And the same thing for diverse hiring panels, which we already have in place. Is that you have to have a diverse panel of people that are interviewing candidates so people see, "Hey, there's people that are like me that are assessing me." So how do you bring more of that into fray? So cleaning up some of the hiring practices I would absolutely suggest. Because that's where things really start to show that you're serious about this stuff.

Meghan M. Biro: That's true. That's where the rubber meets the road.

Amy C. W.: It does, it does.

Meghan M. Biro: What big roadblocks have you faced?

Amy C. W.: Well one, it goes back to "I want to hire in my image." When you do succession planning and you see someone have everybody in their organization as successors to key roles in their jobs and they're not opening up and casting a wider net. So what I'm trying to do is get our leaders to think about, "You don't want to hire in your own image because if you have a homogenous thinking on the team, you're not going to get to the best results."

Amy C. W.: And I always make this comment, it's a bit controversial. But I've never had to rationalize or make a business case about why four white guys are better than a

diverse set of employees in a room, right? So why do I have to make the case for why diversity's a good business decision?

Meghan M. Biro: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Amy C. W.: So, for me, it's really around "Why is this a good business case for how you run your business?" And how do I proliferate that around the company? Or 12,00 employees? Or a 37 or 38-year-old company? Or in 40 countries? So this is a journey. Because to get everybody focused ... And not only it's the right thing to do, but given the right kind of tools they know how to do this stuff, is probably our biggest challenge.

Amy C. W.: Not meeting with resistance, but meeting with "How do I scale it? How do I make it real for folks that can actually take these tools and apply them every day?"

Meghan M. Biro: What have you learned? What are some key takeaways from this process?

Amy C. W.: For me personally, I'm very outcome-driven. That's kind of how I've grown up in the work I do. But sometimes this work is really around building activities that will then lend themselves to outcomes. So the tactics kind of matter. Getting it right around taking bias out, measuring some of the things we want to measure related to candidacy. Slates. The amount of people coming through our interviewing practices. Dashboards. Those things are, I think, really, really critical.

Amy C. W.: Because you can go after that big, strategic goal of diversity, but it's really amorphous if you aren't really clear about the tactics that are going to get you there. So for me, it's been those things really, really matter. And making certain people get it...

Amy C. W.: Those things really, really matter, and making certain people get it, and understand it, and, really, stakeholder management is really bringing those leaders with you, because you can't do it without them.

Meghan M. Biro: No.

Amy C. W.: So often people are like, "This is not a white guy thing, it's a diversity thing." It's an everybody thing. You got to bring everybody into the discussion, otherwise, you're going to fail.

Meghan M. Biro: That's true. And that is not easy to do. Kudos to you and your team, by the way, because there's so many people out there, and I hope you're listening here, today, that are really wanted to know how to get that leadership team involved. Because, you're right, it's not going to happen otherwise.

Amy C. W.: Right.

Meghan M. Biro: You can tell you've been here, done that. Right? Or been there, done that, I should say. I know this fits inside the larger cultural journey you're working on, clearly. How have you been able to measure this, when you talk about tactics and data?

Amy C. W.: Well, first of all, we have created the first ever diversity equity inclusion dashboards for each of our business units. We've got varied business units. Everything from consumer businesses, to enterprise businesses, to products beneath those organizations. They haven't been created, in terms of a static set of metrics, they also are key initiatives that the business leaders are taking on, that are reflective of their particular business needs.

Amy C. W.: We've got this really cool grassroots things happening, related to inclusion change teams. The businesses have said, "We want to shift the representation in this particular business. So, we're going to start putting some real goals in place that will help us get there." Great example, there are studies that show that women are really strong at solution selling. Solution selling is the long game. It's building that deep relationship and looking at the whole portfolio versus trying to get a transactional sell in place to meet a quarterly objective.

Amy C. W.: Because women are so strong in that, and because that's a lot of our strategy, as a company, to build long lasting relationships with customers, because we're in it, to win it with them. Security is not something you joke around about, it's critical to companies. We're looking at an initiative to bring more of the women into our sales organizations, not only because it's the right thing, but, two, they help propel the business. We're doing measurements, not only at an aggregate level of the company, in terms of representation, but we're taking real tactics into businesses that are relevant for that particular business. Make sense?

Meghan M. Biro: Love it. You are doing such interesting work around listening to your employees. What did you hear?

Amy C. W.: Well, the whole impetus before the diversity and inclusion was the culture work, which is why I said, "It's the culture, dummy." Right? You got to get clear about what you're building here. We've been through a lot of change in the company. One, we were a storage and security company. We spun off that business, about a \$7 billion business, about four years ago, super complex. We had some leadership shifts at the top. We made tons of acquisitions. We've done a couple more divestitures, so lots of changes in the company, and lots of microcosm of cultures going on.

Amy C. W.: The first thing we did is, "Hey, it's great that you bring your own culture from your last company into Symantec, but we all got to get clear about what counts at Symantec." A lot of work has been around, what does that future culture need to be in relationship to the kind of company we want to be, from a strategic perspective. We do everything from quarterly pulse surveys, which

surveys about 1500 to 2000 employees across our company on a very regular basis, to understanding engagement, their relationship to their manager, whether, or not, they feel like they are included and belong in this company. We've also done a recent large-scale culture survey to really hear from the employees about what's working here, what are the obstacles, what do they expect from their leadership.

Amy C. W.: What we've come to find is what you would expect to find. One, lots of silos, because of all the acquisitions. How do we get better about integration?

Meghan M. Biro: No surprise there.

Amy C. W.: No surprise there. I mean, that always seems to be the opportunities, like, "I'm in my swim lane. I don't care about the guy next to me."

Meghan M. Biro: Right.

Amy C. W.: The second thing would be around, "Hey, we've had a lot of leadership changes. I want to know that this is a leadership team that's going to take us to the next level of performance." Civility, expectations around transparency, where the business is going, and making certain that we're communicating that on a very regular basis. Those would be the two things we're going after, which fall perfectly into inclusion.

Meghan M. Biro: That makes sense. The fact that employees are consumers is really interesting to me. They want to listen. They want to be listened too, as well. Right?

Amy C. W.: Right. I think that's been happening the last several years around thinking about your employees as your consumer base, because you want to reflect your ultimate consumer, your customer. But within a company employees, they want what they want, right now. So, don't give me a training I'm not going to use in six months, give it to me, right now. I want to be able to do my job swiftly and effectively, so I need mobile application, because, to your point, I'm on the road, or I'm working remotely, or I need to be able to get to what I can get to quickly.

Amy C. W.: I want to be heard, so we're looking at the employees, back to that servant-leadership, as you are our consumer. How do we run this business where you can be your best, and do your best, every day?

Meghan M. Biro: Absolutely. Listen, Amy, I want to zoom out a bit, and talk about the diversity challenges in Silicon Valley, in general. Why are tech companies so stuck, when it comes to moving the needle on diversity still?

Amy C. W.: Well, here's my opinion. I've moved to Silicon Valley in 2000, and before that I was on the East Coast, in consumer products. I've become a product of Silicon Valley, I guess, because I've been here for so long. But, I think, part of it is, one, I think these companies move swiftly, and fast, and so they tend to just hire

friends, and friends of friends, and family plans. They tend to hire within the same circle, you get homogeneity. I think, one, it's a virtue of the market. They need to be agile and fast, otherwise you're going to lose your market advantage. Two, I just don't think people have thought about it as a real differentiator. They're all about delivering the technology. And, very often, they don't realize that there are other means, by which, to deliver that technology. It means you have to work harder.

Amy C. W.: It means you have to look at a different pipeline. It's not the easy thing to go hire the guy next to you in the coffee shop. It requires you to be outreaching and bringing people, maybe, into the community that aren't here today. So, perhaps, importing some talent and also cultivating the talent you have today. It takes work. And, I think, because things happen so quickly, people don't, maybe, devote that time to that work. That would be my perspective. I think it's sometimes easier just to get the fastest path, but you don't get the better results.

Meghan M. Biro: What's your advice for other HR leaders who are rolling out big changes to their diversity inclusion strategies, right now?

Amy C. W.: Great questions. To me, it's two-pronged. One is, do your math. Know your current population. Know what's reflective in the markets by which you do business, and where you're located. Look at your core sights, and the geography around that. Are there opportunities to tap into talent markets that, maybe, you haven't tapped into? Is it even doable? Very often you put these numbers out there, then when you do the math, it would mean, "Gee, I would have to hire all woman for the next 10 years to get to this number." Well, that's not doable. How do you think in other ways, by which to go after this talent?

Amy C. W.: One, do your math. One, it will make you grounded in what you have to go after, and the complexity around it. And, two, you'll show up as a quant person with your business, which every HR person ought to do. Second, hold your leadership accountable. This is not an HR initiative, it's a business initiative. So get your leaders in it to win it. Hold them accountable, whether you put it into performance, whether you put into a way by how you run your business, which has to be both. You got to hold them accountable and have them be part of the equation. You can't do it on your own, on the side.

Meghan M. Biro: Also, where does retention fall into this? We can hire, but how are we retaining?

Amy C. W.: Amen, sister.

Meghan M. Biro: Right?

Amy C. W.: That's what, I think, is really the keys, because I've seen these companies put tons of money into hiring, and investing all this money into bringing people on

board, and then, a year later, half of them have left. It goes back to inclusion and belonging. Making certain you've got the right kind of capabilities that you're building in them, development paths, mentoring. At the end of the day, people want access. They don't want to get because they're a diverse candidate. They want the opportunity to prove what they can do. So we've got to be open to giving people access that wouldn't normally happen.

Amy C. W.: It's as simple as that, but that's complex in its own right.

Meghan M. Biro: No question about it. Let's talk predictions. You're in the middle of doing this work, right now. But, as you look ahead, say, five, 10 years, what do you hope to see in the future for companies? Do you think this is going to get any easier when the subject turns to diversity and inclusion?

Amy C. W.: Oh, God. If I had this answer I would probably be sitting on a beach someplace writing a book or something, drinking a Mai Tai. You know, I think in my ideological view, which I'm pretty practical, but I have to think about it this way. Is that, in 10 years, diversity isn't even talked about, because it's so much a part of how we operate. I gave an example recently, in that, the days when you are applying for college, or you're applying for something, or voter registration, you have to mark, "Are you a Caucasian? Are you African American? Are you American Indian? Are you Hispanic?" Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. You know, those boxes really don't matter anymore, because we're so blended.

Amy C. W.: There's no single box that represents an individual these days. Everyone's growing up in different environments, with different people coming together to create families. I'm hoping some days those boxes go away, because they don't matter. Because it's what people bring to the table every day, and that's considered the diversity we're looking for. Then, from that, flows those types of representations. That would be my hope, is that we're not talking about diversity, anymore, because it's so ingrained in what we do every day. It's not even an initiative, it's just a way of life.

Meghan M. Biro: Listen, Amy, thanks for stopping by and sharing all this wisdom with us. You definitely are well-suited for your role.

Amy C. W.: Thanks, Meghan. It's great talking to you and happy Friday to you, and your listeners.

Kevin W. G.: Meghan, you know, I always love hearing how companies innovate from the inside out to embrace the power of diversity and inclusion that drives growth and adaptability. The research has been there for a while, now, showing us that.

Amy C. W.: Yeah, it's so critical today. And companies, really both big and small, across all industries, even our little culture universe.

Kevin W. G.: Absolutely, Meghan. Totally agree. Now, next, I spoke with Rania Anderson, a diversity expert and author of the new book, *WE: Men, Women, and the Decisive Formula for Winning at Work*.

Kevin W. G.: Rania, thank you so much for being on WorkTrends. In your book, *WE: Men, Women, and the Decisive Formula for Winning at Work*, you map out exactly what men can do to support women at work. From your perspective, what are the most common questions that you hear from men, when it comes to gender equality at work today?

Rania Anderson: Yeah, Kevin, what men are asking me for are specific guidance and specific actions they can take. The what to do, rather than the what not to do. Men share with me that they're often left out of these conversations, or when they're involved in them, it's all about the negative, the shaming, the blaming, sexual harassment, unconscious bias, rather than what they can proactively do to improve their own business performance by working more effectively with women. What steps they can take to recruit? What actions they can take that will increase retention? How they can lead with women?

Rania Anderson: I strive, in the book, *WE*, to be prescriptive in that way, and provide a framework that both, men and women, can take to work better together.

Kevin W. G.: Don't you think that this is where a big part of inclusivity is so important, right? Because, when I hear men, especially in the past two years, with the Me Too Movement, and Time's Up, and other movements that are really helping to empower women in the workplace and beyond, more so than we've seen, like I said, even in my lifetime, or my wife's lifetime, for that matter. When I hear men saying, "Wow, I don't know what to say anymore." I get irked by that, because my first thought is, "Maybe you shouldn't be saying anything then, if that's the question that you're asking." Because I just feel like, why are you treating people differently, especially women?

Kevin W. G.: Why are you treating people differently, especially women, when it comes to the workplace? I mean, we're all trying to get things done and grow and sustain the business at the end of the day. Why do you feel that you're doing that? So, I guess I wanted to dig a little bit more into that then, because I'm sure that you hear that, too, right? The men are like, "I'm so afraid to say anything."

Rania Anderson: Yeah.

Kevin W. G.: But it shouldn't be about that though. It shouldn't be about being afraid, right?

Rania Anderson: Totally, it shouldn't be about being afraid. But men, as you say, some of them are being immobilized and so, what I do is to steer us away from just talking about the negative and fixing the negative and the sexism. Because that only gets us to neutral and neutral is not good in my book. So, what I focus on is how

do we go from where we are to where we want to be, which is to have high performing teams that are gender balanced and where we have diversity of thought and people feel included. So, I try to steer the conversation away from this worry and angst, which, like you say, why do you have it or how can you address it? But more towards how do we make this more productive? And then I feel that the space is open, men feel invited and engaged in the conversation, and then I can go back to some of the harder topics.

Kevin W. G.: Yeah, that's a really, really good point. I know that in my incarnations in the world of work over time, I haven't always done everything in the best way, I guess I'll say, when it comes to working with women and or men, for that matter. But one thing I have learned is that, again, being more inclusive, more transparent ... I'm using buzzwords, but this is really important. Communication and feedback are really, really critical in any relationship inside or outside of work period, right?

Kevin W. G.: So, those are the things that I've worked on is when it comes to working with and for women and, again, and or men, is just really being more communicative on a regular basis and being clear with each other, setting boundaries as well. Again, I'm not talking about the extreme negatives that we opened up with, I'm just talking about just setting boundaries and when I'm available to meet and discuss and just things that we need to do to have better healthy working and personal relationships, right? Don't you think?

Rania Anderson: Absolutely, so let me build on that and use a very specific example. So, if I have a male manager say to me, "I don't know if I should go to lunch or mentor or interact," or, "I don't know how to act anymore," I steer the conversation toward, okay, if you're not ... We can deal with that and I wanna deal with that, but even if you're not mentoring, you can be an advocate or a sponsor for someone. So, in other words, you don't feel comfortable going to lunch with your female colleague, okay, let's address that and we can talk about that in a lot of ways, but that doesn't preclude you from being in a meeting with her and amplifying what she's saying. Or recommending her to leadership for opportunities. Those are things that you can do regardless of whether you're concerned about these other things. And, in fact, that sponsorship and advocacy and allyship of ideas and getting both of you to advance, both the men and the women to advance, are more helpful than giving advice to women. Women have been given plenty of advice and what they need more today is opportunity.

Kevin W. G.: Right, yes. And the advice and also ... And you reference being, for example, in meetings, and listening is another critical skill or critical thinking skill, much less a better human skill as opposed to interrupting. And I know that's one thing that, unfortunately, I've struggled with in the past with both men and women during meetings is interrupting. But I know that that something else is listening more, letting people ... Everybody have their time and their space and

supporting that when it is their time to actually speak. So, I think that is really important.

Kevin W. G.: I wanna talk a little bit more about your framework. I believe that includes eliminate, expand, encourage, and engage. So, can you talk a little bit more about that?

Rania Anderson: So, I wanted to provide a framework for people to think about their interactions. And eliminate is about, what are the things we need to stop doing in our workplace that make it harder for women? Both sexism and practices that discourage the advancement or participation of women. For example, if you just randomly have 7 AM meeting for no hugely important business reason, you're probably adversely impacting women more than you are men, because today still more women have more home life responsibilities than men do. So, looking at things that stand in our way.

Rania Anderson: Expand is about the recruiting side, which you're very familiar with, Kevin. How we go out and specifically target so we can have more diverse candidates, both in the way we frame our ads and the way we interview. It's this issue around don't just be a mentor, be a sponsor. So, those are two examples of expand.

Rania Anderson: Encourage is around the retention area. How do we acknowledge the efforts of women differently than we do of men? One interesting piece of information is that if you say to a woman, "Good job on closing that sale," she will not really feel as recognized as if you would say to her, "Great job on closing that sale. I know that client was a real pain, that you spent a lot of hours, you had to do all these hard things to get that client." She likes to be acknowledged for her efforts. How we give women feedback, we know that women don't get feedback in the same way men do.

Rania Anderson: And lastly, how we engage as leaders in those championing initiatives in our organization. But also being real about our own work life demands and demonstrating that all of us have work life demands so that those things don't get associated with just women. So, for example, Kevin, if you needed to leave to take one of your daughters to some sort of practice, or do something with your daughter, you would tell everyone that's why you are leaving the office. I call it leaving loudly. You wouldn't just say, "Hey, I have an appointment outside the office." You'd say, "I'm taking my daughter to x, y, z."

Kevin W. G.: Again, very decisive, clear communication. And it sounds like even more so with women than with men, right, is what you're suggesting there, too. And I completely agree. I know that my wife and I ... You know who Doctor Brene Brown is, yes?

Rania Anderson: Of course. Yes.

Kevin W. G.: So, my wife and I are consuming a lot of her work now. And we're doing it together and it's very much making even our own partnership much more closer. I really love the work that Brene does. And one of those things that I have been on recently when I was just passing in one of her books is being able to sit with your discomfort for a few before you make that next step, open your mouth, do something, say something, whatever, when you're in situations like this and to understand why you're feeling that way and I think that's really important. I think maybe for me, as a man, I would recommend to other men to be more in touch with that, right. Why do I feel the way that I feel right now in this work situation and what what can I do to rectify it so it doesn't snowball in the wrong direction as well?

Rania Anderson: Yeah, I love what you just said about that discomfort and you are just not comfortable and also recognizing that part of your discomfort is you're not, not necessarily you Kevin ... The person in that situation may not be expert at that type of relationship yet. That we are novices at doing this type of work and we feel uncomfortable because we haven't practiced it enough. So fine, let's try it and the response from our teammates, and this is where women come in, is when you try something, Kevin, in the workplace that you're trying for the first time and you don't get it exactly right, I have to be tolerant and understanding and assume positive intent, so that you will try it again and you will become more comfortable with it and feel like repeating it.

Kevin W. G.: Right. Exactly, exactly. So Rania, what's your message to those listening who feel that their employers, just they're not doing enough to promote diversity and equality at work. What would be the one thing that you'd say first?

Rania Anderson: If you work in that kind of workplace, don't be discouraged because your personal action, that's what the book WE is all about, is your personal action. So, even if we're working at Weinstein and Company, you can create an environment with your team that is inclusive. And yes, it would be much better if the entire organization would do so, but even if they're not, taking daily simple actions that make a different workplace for both men and women creates better results.

Kevin W. G.: Exactly, completely agree. And I can tell you on behalf of all those I've ever worked for or with and or who have managed and through today and the future and my own wife and two young daughters that I have, I thank you for the work that you're doing, 'cause I think it's very important for the workplace today. I think that a lot of times, for the longest time, unfortunately, we flail a lot, right? We flail a lot in our professional and personal development and we need guideposts, such as your book. So, that you for that work that you've done, Rania.

Rania Anderson: Thanks, Kevin. I want to tell the listeners that it's not as ... We make it out to be so complicated and like we can't solve it, and it's not an intractable problem. It

is a problem that can be solved with simple daily interactions and the types of things we've been talking about: listening, being proactive, being intentional about the way we interact. Not to help women, I think that's one of the biggest things that I wanna convey. We're not doing this to help women. We're doing this to help ourselves and to help our organizations, to help our businesses and to help our economy and to help our society. And when we look at it through that lens, that we all win, it gets much easier to take a step forward.

Kevin W. G.: Excellent. Well, thank you so much for ending on that note, Rania, and it has been pleasure having you on WorkTrends.

Rania Anderson: Thanks, Kevin.

Meghan M. Biro: Yeah, good stuff, Kevin. I love hearing why we actually need to actively, that's the key work, recruit, retain, and advance more women into leadership.

Kevin W. G.: And more men supporting that mission. Empowering it and thriving within it.

Meghan M. Biro: Thanks for listening to WorkTrends from TalentCulture. Join us every Wednesday at 1:30 PM Eastern for a live Twitter chat with our podcast guest. To learn more about guests featured on today's show, visit the show notes for this episode at TalentCulture dot com. And help us spread the word. Subscribe to WorkTrends wherever you listen to podcasts. Leave us a rating, review, an iTunes, share WorkTrends with your coworkers, your friends. Look forward to it. See you next time.