Women in Business and Technology

Transcript of Episode 008 - Julia White's journey to the cloud
Featuring: Julia White

Summary: In this episode, Colleen heads to a day-long coding camp at Code Fellows, and Sonia has a great conversation with Microsoft Corporate Vice President of Cloud Platform, Julia White. Have you ever wondered why men are more supportive of gender parity in private than in public? Sonia and Colleen discuss a Harvard Business Review article that points to some answers in social psychological processes.

Find audio and more information at [*Microsoft.com/WIBT*](Microsoft.com/WIBT)

[MUSIC]

Retail's big show, the 2018 National Retail Federation, or

the NRF Conference,

is returning to New York City from January 14th to the 16th.

For more than a century, NRF's annual convention

has been an important gathering for industry leaders.

Microsoft is one of the largest sponsors of this event.

And this year, we are looking forward to having an in depth

conversation around home in online, front of house,

back office, and connected supply.

For more information about the event,

visit www.nrfbigshow.com.

>> Okay, we are going to start with the intro.

You ready.

>> Yes ma'am.

>> Okay, I'm not.

>> [LAUGH] [MUSIC]

>> One things I love to just makes people to feel aware of
and think about is we have this great woman in business and
technology tracks all of our events now.
And I'm participating in all of them across
these difference places I'm going.
And it's just a wonderful community and
to me it's a way to strengthen our diversity in the industry.
And then help support each and have these conversations about
what it means to be successful women in technology.

>> You are listening to the Women in Business and
Technology podcast from Microsoft.
In each episode, you'll hear from women in amazing technology
and business roles as well as male allies who are helping make
the industries more inclusive.
We are diving into programs that promote greater diversity in
the pipeline, and bringing you tips on how to build
a successful career in a supportive community.
Welcome to Women in Business and Technology.
[MUSIC]
Welcome to Episode 8 of Women in Business and Technology.
I'm Colleen O'Brien.

>> And I'm Sonia Dara.

>> On this show we're kicking things off in our

Community Connect segment with a visit to Code Fellows,

a Seattle based Coding Academy,

where I recently learned the basics of HTML and CSS.

>> That's awesome.

And then we'll jump into an interview I had with

Julia White, a Corporate Vice President here at Microsoft,

focused on Azure product marketing.

>> Finally, we'll wrap things up in our cutting

edge segment with a discussion on male allyship and why so few

men are practicing a commitment to gender parody in public.

Sonia, before we get started with the show,

I just wanna check in and

make sure that you have fully recovered from your jet lag.

>> [LAUGH] Thank you for checking in.

Barely, I just got back from my whirlwind Euro trip, that

kicked off with Future Decoded, a massive Microsoft conference,

focused on disruptive technology.

That actually took place in London.

>> Yeah, I saw the stats, there were over 12,000 attendees,

140 sessions.

It seemed like there was a lot going on across the pond.

What was it like to be there on the ground?

>> It was awesome, I had a great experience.

Obvioiusly the energy was super high, I learned a lot.

I was there because I was in charge of one of the sessions

focused on how surface devices are fitting into the modern

workplace, but I also was able to catch a few other sessions.

Future of data, blockchain, and

even Julia White's keynote on workplace innovation.

[MUSIC] Of course,

we'll be hearing from her later in the show.

>> Yes and for our listeners, whether you're interested in

modern workplaces, quantum computing,

or culture transformation, there's great podcast and

presentation content from the event.

Just head to futuredecoded.com to dive in and

get up to speed on the trends.

[MUSIC]

>> Community Connect.

Get involved and stay connected.

>> Code Fellows is a Seattle based, in person

Coding Academy that guides people from all backgrounds to

change their lives, through career focused education.

The organization hosts immersive training to meet industy

needs and improve diversity in the tech scene.

Over 750 students have graduated from Code Fellows since its

founding in 2013.

And 80% of graduates are hired into tech industry jobs within

180 days of graduation.

Code Fellows graduate and lead teaching assistant, Izzy Baer

spoke with me about her decision to enroll in Code Fellows.

>> I was unemployed, but previously

I was a waitress in the service industry for about 13 years.

I wanted to change my life.

I didn't wanna be a waitress anymore, and I

knew that I had the potential to do something that mattered and

make money and be happy and have a great career.

So I tried it out, and I really liked it and I kept going.

And I've never been happier.

>> In addition to the quality instruction that she

has received, the community has been a critical factor in

Izzy's commitment to the program.

>> It feels like home and

it feels like family and it feels like I've found my people.

>> Code Academy enrollment is a significant investment

of both time and money.

Izzy had some great advice if you're considering

making that commitment.

>> I would say, to do your research, come visit the school,

go to an admission's event and take a 101, take a 102 and

apply for a scholarship, apply for a loan and just go for it.

>> I decided to take Izzy's advice and I spent last Saturday

from 9 AM until 8 PM in the Code Fellows class entitled Code 101,

Intro to Software Development and Careers in Tech.

The day long workshop featured hands-on training in HTML and

CSS, a panel of former students, and

an interview with the software developer who has been in

the industry for decades.

At the end of the day, my classmates and

I showcased the websites that we had created.

And it was amazing to remember that the majority of us had

zero understanding of HTML or CSS when the day began.

For more information about Code Fellows, and

to see all of their upcoming courses, visit codefellows.org.

And now, let's get on to the interview.

[MUSIC]

>> I'm excited to welcome to the podcast the Microsoft corporate

vice president of Azure marketing, Julia White.

Julia, welcome and thank you so much for joining us.

I would love for

you to tell us a little bit more about yourself.

Your family and also your soft career a little bit.

>> Absolutely so I am a single mom of two.

I have a 13-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son.

And I have been at Microsoft for 16 years, amazing.

>> That's awesome.

>> Mostly amazing to me.

>> [LAUGH] >> I intended to be here for

2 years in my grand life plan, and here I am 16 years later.

>> Isn't that how it happens?

>> Right, I keep going, I'll stay as long as it's not boring,

and I feel valued.

So it turns out, it's going pretty well.

And I had a chance to do so many different things

at the company and have many careers within the company, so

its been such a great ride.

>> Would love to know a little bit about your work life

balance being a CVP and also a single mother,

any advice you can share for our audience as well.

>> Right, work life balance got to talk about it.

I talk about it as just life,

cuz its just all one thing really, and

it's all mixed together in any one time and moment.

And, to me, what's been essential in being able to have

a career that I love and is fulfilling.

And be deeply involved with my kids is being

clear on what my boundaries are, and not apologizing for them.

And that's something that I had to learn and

didn't just come initially.

And when I had my daughter, my first child, and

I loved working and I would work long hours and it's fine and

I'd usually be the first one in and last one out.

And when I had my daughter, wow I really wanna see her.

Turns out, once you have a kid, you're like hey,

I like them let's go see them.

>> [LAUGH]. >> So I was, I'm gonna go home

and see my daughter, so it means I will leave at five so

I can get home and see her and then put her to bed, and

I can always work after if I need.

But leaving at five was.

My god, that's not what I do, that's absurd.

And so, I was really ashamed, and

I literally would sneak out the back stairs of the building.

Literally, I would not try to make sure no one saw me,

I was slipping out the back,

quietly tip-toe down the stairs in my car so no one would know. Yeah.

>> And I left at five

o'clock to go see my daughter.

I did that for the first month or so and

then I was like what am I doing?

This is crazy.

The energy I'm spending, the shame, the guilt.

It's exhausting and I'm already exhausted enough.

Enough with this newborn.

At the moment, I was this is gonna break me.

I can't do this for the rest of my life.

I want to have a career.

I have a child.

I have to make this work.

And so it was this moment where I sat back and

what's gonna make this possible?

And I have to get rid of all this energy I'm spending on

Feeling bad, and guilt around this, and just own it.

So in that moment I was like you know what these are my hours,

I will be successful in my job, I will get my job done,

and I will work the hours I need but

I'm gonna do it on my way and that works for my boundaries.

So I pivoted instead of sneaking from the back stairs I literally

forced myself and was so

uncomfortable to walk down the hall and

be like bye guys see you, whoop whoop I'm out right?

And I was like, my god!

But then I just, then it cleared it, and

I didn't have to carry any of that guilt or concern.

And people knew that I was doing my job still, and

still meeting my deadlines and getting my projects done.

And it was actually really, warning I had a guy,

he was working for me at the time, come and say thanks for

doing that, thanks for being so overt.

Cuz he was a marathon runner, and he was like,

I have these long training runs I need to go on, and

I need to do And thanks for making that okay.

And that was the feedback I got and the reinforce.

That was actually a wonderful role model I can be.

And I remember a time, my friends were like,

you can be that person, you can be that role model, do it.

And I said okay, let us do this thing.

And it has being, I had keep it even to now in my role.

Like no, this is an important moment.

I'm gonna spend this with my kids.

I'm gonna be there for

the school play and we can work later.

And we'll make this work and I can get my job done.

And I think a lot or women carry and

spend a lot of energy on the guilt and the concern.

And that just eats at you and

it makes you show up less for your job.

It makes you show up less for your kids.

And so that to me of just being unapologetic and owning it and

moving forward was really important.

>> So you have a graduate degree in communication from Stanford.

That's awesome congratulations!

Which is undeniably great training for a marketing role,

like what you're in now.

But after college,

you actually jumped into product management into it.

Were there gaps in your technical knowledge and

how did you go about solving them?

>> Yeah, I know,

I'd never used a PC until I got to my first day at work.

>> No kidding.

>> And they sat me down and they handed me a floppy disk and

a PC and said, get started, and

I literally was like, I've never touched one of these.

But I wasn't gonna admit that, right, so I just was like,

all right, let's do this thing, so I really had communications

and psychology, actually, which these days I use more of my

psychology degree, but I really had to learn all of it.

But I found I just really loved it.

I wanted to learn about it, I like the technology, and so

I was just curious, frankly.

And I guess looking back, in a very growth mindset in terms of

going after and learning the technology, the space.

Once I got hooked on it, I just rolled from there.

>> So it s ounds like after hitting

the West Coast Tech scene, you took a little bit of a break and

headed back to the East Coast for a Harvard MBA.

What was that like and were you trying to look for a change, or

were you deciding to stay in tech?

>> You know, really, I wanted to become an East Coaster,

I think in my mind I was like Ive done the West Coast,

I'm gonna be an East Coaster and go to Manhattan.

>> Where did you grow up?

>> Mostly all west coast.

>> All west coast. >> Yeah so

when I have this vision of when my parents went to Minnesota for

a couple of years when I was in college.

So I got to experience it and I'll say, yeah, let's go back.

So I specifically chose an east coast school.

I was like, let's go there and then went to my first winter and

I was like, I'm out of here.

[CROSSTALK] >> It will change your opinion

very quickly. >> Right.

I am not actually an east coaster as it turns out but

that's okay.

I learned a lot.

It was a great experience and interestingly when I was there,

it was when the Silicon Valley was booming in that time.

So I was one of the very very few technologists at Harvard.

>> Nice. >> And we were kinda these

rarities.

And we were kind of,

of course you're gonna go back to Silicon Valley,

of course you're gonna be that person.

Of course I didn't, I came to Microsoft instead but.

>> [LAUGH] >> So many young tech employees

struggle to understand the return on investment in

leaving great jobs like Intuit to pursue MBA's.

Cheryl Sandberg has famously said on Quora that

MBA"s are not necessary at Facebook, and I don't believe

they are important for working in the tech industry.

So what are your thoughts on higher education and

it's relevance in the tech industry?

>> I think it's a personal investment.

I think regardless of what industry you're going to,

I think all education is about investing in yourself.

And of course,

I could be successful here at Microsoft without an MBA.

No one probably, most people don't even know or

care that I have an MBA, and that's fine, I like that.

But I also think it's incredibly valuable in terms of,

particularly as a woman.

If I wanted to change jobs, if I wanted to take time off and

spend time with my children or

something, and come back into it, having that credential and

having that network is a hugely valuable thing.

And so I think if you're moving around or

you're trying to break into new places, or you're trying to have

a nontraditional path forward, I find it incredibly valuable.

And then there's just I learned a lot.

>> Okay, so in terms of pivoting career and

things like that very helpful but

then learning a lot networking.

>> Yeah. >> Very valuable.

>> Yeah so I would do it and it's fun.

>> Yeah I mean why wouldn't you?

>> [LAUGH].

>> So before we dive into your career a little bit more,

I understand that you have some plaques in your office that were

in your father's office, as well.

You were talking about your father earlier.

>> Yeah.

>> Could you tell me a little bit more,

and share any stories or perhaps some leadership lessons that he

might have passed on to you?

>> Yeah. >> You mentioned a little bit.

Absolutely, I have this memory of and

he always had this two plaque in his office and so when he passed

away a few years back now I was like I want those plaques.

So that's why I have them in my office and

there are good stories on both of them.

The first one says when two people in business always agree,

on of them is unnecessary.

And I love that cuz to me that is the essence of diversity.

Before we haven't had like diversity and

inclusion kind of conversations.

It was like fundamentally we need to have different points of

view to get to the right answer and I always encourage, and

I need it myself, too, of like,

what are all the different ways we could solve this problem?

Cuz if we all just have the same group think,

then it's gonna be no good.

And my dad would tell me stories of Kennedy as president and

having too much group think.

And that just to me is, I keep that and I ask people.

I put that in my office people know they should, and

I encourage them to disagree with me.

That's kind of the role there.

The other one It says that good things come to those that

wait only whats left by those who hustle.

And that to me modern day we talk about grit and we talk

about resilience and you got to hustle get things done and

lead and do uncomfortable things >> And

those two things represent those two ideas for me.

>> No, I love that.

That's great and

I can imagine seeing that on your wall everyday.

Kind of keeps you grounded, which is great.

Do you mind telling our listeners a little bit more

about your job as a marketing CVP?

And what does your day to day look like.

It varies widely, but I'd say my energy is mostly spent helping

ensure my team has the coaching and guidance,

and decision making that they need.

And that I'm kind of getting out of their way and

helping them where I need.

And then I have a deep, deep focus on storytelling.

I think the essence of marketing at some level is storytelling.

And of course we have to think about pricing and licensing, and

that, but ultimately engineers craft the product, and marketing

drives the perception and understanding of that product.

At the very root of it, we're human beings, and

human beings like stories- >> Yep.

>> And when we can do that really well,

it turns out a lot of other things comes into place.

So you're in the Azure group and obviously you have very big

cutting edge intersting technology and

right now we've seen that it's really attracting the tech elite

which there's been a bias towards men.

Is that something you're aware of in your role and

have you seen a kinda skew towards men, and do you see this

in the ranks that you work with among marketing and engineering?

I think all commercial technology, which Azure is,

which I spent the past 16 years doing,

it can be very male heavy in terms of both our customer base

as well as the engineering team that builds it.

And so certainly have seen that.

I've seen it change too.

>> Good. >> I've seen it evolving,

which is great.

I think about Even Scott Guthrie who leads the engineering side

of things, and he's got many women on his direct reports.

>> Awesome. >> And I don't think if we

look back several years, it didn't look like that.

And so I think as I look internally in the work we're

doing, and just frankly the strength of the female leaders

of the company or speak to having that bench now.

Also working with our customer base, too.

I think that we still have work to do in terms of the IT

industry being more diverse from a female male representative

perspective, but certainly something top of mind.

Awesome, I've never found it to be an unfriendly place as

a woman though.

>> That's good.

>> At all.

>> And so you're saying that it's improving a little bit more

the percentages and?

>> Yeah, I think the stats aren't awesome, but

they're getting better and

certainly internally we've made some nice changes.

So, for sure, internally things will look different.

Despite being few women through the years in

commercial technology,

it's always been a very welcoming experience for me.

>> And before Azure you were on Office, and

you had a very big launch in March of 2014, the Office for

iPad launch, which was a huge deal for us at Microsoft.

And you were praised for not only your awesome demo skills,

but also your sense of style, by Mashable editor Lance Ulanoff,

who tweeted, quote, I think Julia White's very cool leather

jacket should have its own Twitter account, end quote.

And by the way,

those of you who can't see us in the studio right now,

she's wearing an awesome leather jacket with us today.

So we've talked a little bit about personal style in this

podcast and how it can contribute to confidence.

But given that tech product launches don't typically spark

fashion discussions, I can't help but

think about this comment through a gendered lens, right?

>> Yeah. >> So

if a man had been wearing a leather jacket do you think

someone would have made the same comment?

>> Right. >> How do you feel about this

comment?

And did you in any way liken the comment to the media's obsession

with the appearance of women,

especially when it comes to politicians and how everyone's

commenting on Hillary's pantsuits, things like that?

So, we'll love your thoughts on that.

>> Yeah. I would say,

there is certainly in my experience truth in that,

as a woman,

people will evaluate my looks more than we would see with men.

So, that's true.

I do think in general though, human beings evaluate each other

based on looks, and I think that's just a human thing.

It was interesting that a non-profit foundation did

a bunch of research, and they showed that the millennial

generation doesn't have biases based on race and gender and

other things that older generations might have had.

>> Interesting. >> But yet,

there's still biases based on appearance.

>> Hm. >> So it seems to be a very

human instinct that we're dealing with here.

Which, you know,

you kind of have to understand versus take personally.

>> Yeah. >> And

that's how I think about it.

Ultimately, as someone in the public eye,

I think people look for authenticity and confidence.

And, if your style accentuates that and works with that,

I think it'll be a favorable thing.

If people see that maybe you're looking, or dressing, or trying

to be something that you're not, people will call you on that.

So, I think as much as there was fashion, blah, blah,

it was really about whether it was authentic and

whether it was really me and I'm still wearing a leather jacket.

That is what I do,

it wasn't like I put on something phony for this event,

and so I think that's what resonated with people, and

what doesn't resonate with people, whether you're a man or

a woman from those kind of situations.

>> There was this article we actually just mentioned in our

previous podcast, Women in the Workplace 2017.

The study was by Lean In and McKinsey and it revealed that

women are 18% less likely to be promoted than their male peers.

This has compounding effects,

only 21% of C-Suite roles are held by women.

How do you tackle statistics like this on your team, and

ensure that there's an awareness of these biases?

And how do you defend against these statistics playing

out on your team?

>> It's such a good topic, and such an important one.

This is where, I'm a big believer,

women need to help women, and men need to help women, too.

But women need to help women.

And this one where we can make a big difference in

recognizing these biases, which are almost always subconscious,

or unconscious biases.

And kind of micro-inequity level,

these are not gross inequities happening in this place.

And a couple pieces of it,

one is that women, we need to take stock of how we show up.

And I think this is true for men and women,

let's be clear, but I think women are more socialized to

do things when they speak and make a statement.

Instead of saying this is what I think we should do, we say,

this is what I think we should do.

And that makes it a question, not a statement.

And there's this great anecdote of,

you go to the doctor cuz you're not feeling well,

you walk in the room and someone says, how do you feel?

And someone says how do you feel?

Which one's the nurse?

Which one's the doctor?

It could be man or woman, but there's a sense of ownership and

confidence and knowing your business.

And I think, making sure women are aware that those kind of

things can lead to people viewing them in a certain way.

And I see this with men, too, to be clear.

So it just, I think, happens with women more often.

So there's those things that I've worked super hard to take

all of that kind of out of my language.

I've just beaten it out of my cells.

>> Nice. >> So there's something

we can all do.

But then there's recognizing it in a system.

And I've absolutely seen it, and I've absolutely seen change.

So, great example, on my team, when I co-joined on the Azure

team a couple years ago, there was a really talented woman,

at least I was really impressed with her work.

And we got into the people review, and

she had two levels of men above her, between her and I.

And they would say, yeah, she's great, but

she's a little emotional.

She's great, but she has to vent a lot.

And I was like.

And so I was like, how about we stop talking about her style?

How about we start talking about her impact.

>> Yeah. >> What has she done?

>> Her work, yeah.

>> What has she accomplished?

Let's focus on how she's done it here for just a second, and

suddenly it cut through all of that.

She's killing it, right?

She's having a huge impact.

She's solving problems, she's breaking through boundaries, and

I was like, fine, if there's a style thing that is causing

her to be less impactful, or create chaos on the team,

then that's feedback to her, but that's separate of her impact.

And really helping people just even have language around that,

that there's style and then there's impact.

And if we're gonna have, back to my father's plaque,

different voices, and different points of view,

then different styles come with that, and that's great.

And we shouldn't look at it as bad, or wrong, or ineffective.

We look at is as diversity, and perspective, and

then let's look at the impact that comes from that.

And honestly, I think you just need to create a language and

an open conversation, and

a comfortable way to have that conversation within the team.

And that's certainly what I've done and as an example,

that individual's now a senior manager on my team has done

incredibly well, because in that moment

I was able to identify that, educate my team, and

champion her, and so I think those are examples of that.

>> You mention about the upward intonation kind of not being

super sure, and I would love your thoughts.

This has been an article that circulated at least on our WDG

threads before of including emoticons or emojis in emails,

or using the word just.

Like, just checking in to see, as it's almost like you're

tiptoeing and not sure if you're bothering the person.

What are your thoughts on that?

And if that's someone's natural way of asking should I change

it, or should they be more assertive,

and then I know emoticons was a big thing that people were like,

does that make you less professional?

And there's a gendered lens on that as well.

>> Yeah, you know, it's a tricky one and

I'm a believer that you have to be responsible for

how you show up and the norms within the organization,

and yet, and I also am not a promoter of assimilate.

So it's this interesting balance, I'm probably going

to talk out of both sides of my mouth for just a second on this

one, but that's [LAUGH] the reality of life.

So there are things that human beings can do to make themselves

appear less capable, less competent, and less confident,

and those things are what you suggested of Or,

I think we should do this versus we should do this.

It's saying the same thing, it's a different way of saying it.

And I think knowing what power you hold has a big indicator of

whether that's the right or wrong approach.

So, as an example, I have been coached to say more of, I think,

versus we should do this.

>> Interesting. >> Because I have a certain

personality, and I'm a certain level,

and that comes with power in itself.

And so you have to compensate for

that, because if I find I'm in a powerful position,

if I'm also super dictatorial,

it'll feel like everyone just has to run.

Versus no,

I'm just actually ideating, what do you guys think?

So, this is where I see, again, men and

women do this, I think it shows up with women more.

And based on social norms that is part of our society that I

don't want to ignore, and it will be naive for us to ignore.

And so, there is some accountability and,

unfortunately, more burden that does fall women to be recognized

and then to decide what to do about it.

Again, I go back to humans really smell out authenticity.

>> Yeah. >> And they smell out competence

and confidence.

And so, I use emoticons, and

sometimes I think, is that too girly?

And I'm like, I don't care, and I'm also at a place where I feel

like I have enough power that it doesn't matter.

But, you have to be thoughtful on moments of that and for

example, I was very conscious when I started working at

Microsoft of what I wore.

I was one of the few women in that division when I started in

servers, and I didn't want to stand out too much, I just

wanted to be me, but I didn't want to stand out too much.

So there's a balance,

that I'm trying to walk that of both being authentic to you but

also understanding the norms that you're dealing with.

>> So, you mentioned being at a higher level,

you almost have to tone it the other way, right?

>> Right. For someone early on in their

career, though, would you think that they should do a little bit

more of the, less I think, and I recommend we do this, or

we should do this emojis.

I'm thinking of- >> Yeah.

>> Microsoft Academy College hires coming in, ACE hires.

>> Right. >> Who are still unsure of what

they're doing.

>> Sure. >> But how do they come across

of still being confident, but also they're learning.

>> Yeah, I think you always want to demonstrate you're competent.

And competence means that you know what you're talking about,

you believe in what you're talking about, and you're like,

I have data.

I'm not just like hey, here's my opinion.

No, this is what we should do.

But I also think it's a personality.

You know, I'd hate for us all to be robots, and no emoticons, and

no, like let's be humans too.

Like that makes our work place fun and our customers and

our products better.

So I'd say bring your personality but

don't trade it off at not looking competent.

Any of that might, I don't have black and white lines on that.

>> That's great.

>> But I would say that would be my general rule.

>> Okay, good to know. Julia White approves emojis.

>> [LAUGH] >> I'm a user of.

>> Awesome, so there's been some talks about how job descriptions

through a gendered lens can affect the type of candidates

that you can hire, and what they would actually be attracted to.

Have you seen any improvements and

I can imagine for engineering and marketing and how some of

those lenses of JDs or job descriptions would be written.

Do you see improvements?

And is it really that simple of trying to add in

maybe a few more words that would speak more to women or

anything like that would actually Actually impacted?

>> Yeah, you know, there are actually some pretty cool online

tools that even will, just you drop your job description in and

it tells you whether there's words that are kind of have

gender biases or not or will attract different kinds of

talents of different ethnicities and different genders too.

So I think looking at the language in your job

the interesting thing that I love is that

I found that the things that come back as more gender neutral

more likely attract women in minorities also attract people

more of growth mindset or people in the growth mindset.

So I was like,

how interesting that that has a multiple effect on that one.

So I think it's something certainly to be aware of and

getting the job description to be appealing,

super important and

being cognizant of things that women tend to not apply for

jobs unless they're fully qualified,

where men will tend to apply for

jobs even if they're not qualified.

And so, that's also in screening the candidates and

pulling people up and saying, hey, I know you don't have 10

years of work experience, but I think you're right.

And giving them that confidence is important.

But actually, in terms of getting great candidates in and

making sure we have a retract, retain and diversities,making

sure they interview and meet people that look like them.

Whether that be a lesbian person, maybe a black person,

maybe someone from Asia.

It doesn't matter but, someone who really reflects them

in that process, so they know that hey I'm not the first one.

And it's a culture that will listen to me, and

that I have a voice in this culture.

So I think that is really, really powerful.

And then with that is also human again if I go back to my

psychology degree,

human beings tend to hire people just like them.

And it's not because we're bad or we're racist, but

we just, we hire like people, it's just a human instinct.

And so, I'm like, own that.

Don't be ashamed of it.

It's just a human thing.

Once you own it and accept it,

then you can do something about it.

So I know that, and so

on the interview loops you have to have diverse perspectives.

You have to have diverse people.

Otherwise you're going to get people who just look the same

and talk the same.

So I think really understanding that, and getting that, and just

accepting it versus being like, no, no people aren't like that.

I'm like yeah they are, they're humans.

Just move on, let's do it.

Recently, we just had a conference, Microsoft Ignite,

in Orlando and you had a chance to meet our former FLOTUS.

>> Yes. >> Michelle Obama,

do you mind telling us a little about that?

>> First, she's awesome, which was great, but so

many different interesting points she made.

But the one that I think is kind of resonated with me is

the diversity of slates and the network, right?

And she made this point, talking to Brad Smith,

our President in legal affairs,

hey my network looks a lot different that your network.

And so my ability, she's like, I bet I know a lot more black

women than you do [LAUGH], which was funny but true.

>> Hilarious, saying that to Brad Smith.

She cracks me up.

>> [LAUGH] But that's the truth in the organization, too, of,

hey, if I bring in diverse people,

they have a diverse network.

They also represent a diverse customer base,

which is our truth.

And so I think, that to me, when you really understand

that that diversity gets us the best outcomes and

gets us the business results.

Which I love now seeing hard science proving that gets people

to believe, no it's just the right thing to do versus no,

there's bottom-line impact in that and the only way you do

that is having these different networks that you can tap into.

>> WIth the prevalence of code academies and free resources

online, technology continues to democratize year over year.

Do you think that the tech world will continue to provide jobs

to people who don't have a background in any technology,

even as the tools and language become more pervasive and

accessible?

>> Absolutely, because I think about myself.

I had an undergrad in communications and pyschology.

Like, how am I leading Azure?

And so it's true for me, it has been.

And I actually think that this shift,

call it democratization of technology.

Is really great for women, and

I didn't have a STEM background, and yet

I'm in technology, and I think most human beings would consider

me pretty deeply technical, because I was curious, and

I was learning, and people were learning to share with me.

And I think the next generation coming up is much more

technology advanced than certainly my generation,

and so they're already more fluent in it.

Just because technology is so much more pervasive and

then also the technology's becoming with Cloud.

We're not having to rack and stack servers and

have to understand all those pieces of it.

You really just spin up an API and the write code against it

and that's something my kids program on Minecraft

>> Awesome.

>> And it's absolutley within their reach, and

they've never taken a class on it.

It becomes much more innate to them, and so,

I do think it opens up a lot more diversity versus

just looking at a traditional STEM Background for

feeder into technology that it becomes broader, and

I think that's great from making tech more diverse.

>> We've referenced Marian Wright Edelman's quote on this

podcast quite frequently of, you can't be what you can't see.

As a successful woman in technology,

do you feel the pressure to have a public persona,

to demonstrate to women overtly that your path is possible?

>> I don't honestly feel pressure, but

I think it's an opportunity.

And, interestingly, as an anecdote,

I used to be terrified of public speaking, like absolutely.

>> That's hard. Am terrified. >> That's hard to believe!

>> I don't, really. I tell people

this story because I'm like,

if I can overcome my fear of public speaking, so can you.

I did it because I thought it was important and, I thought,

I wanted to share my story in terms my technology and

the impact it could have, and

that's what pushed me into being more public.

But then, when I saw the response, it was so powerful,

in that people are hungry to see a senior woman and talking about

technology and demoing the product and I thought,

gosh, this is something I can do and this is the way I can help.

And so to me,

it's all opportunity and I get up there and

do it because I want other women to know they can do it too.

And I wasn't born great, let me tell you.

>> Wooh!

I won the best members of public speaking.

And other ways too let's be clear.

And other ways lets be clear.

[LAUGH] Have a lot of work.

But I think if you're a female in technology and

youre willing to do it, its great.

Cuz we do need more people out there and people look up and

say that can be successful too.

Again I think it mattered to me,

it matters to people coming up and so if I can help, great.

That's awesome.

I know Twitter going up after any presentation you've done,

but specifically the one that we had at Inspire.

>> Yeah. >> Whereas you and

three of us other women who were presenting with Satya.

And it was very positive, what I saw.

>> Yep. >> At least like hey,

there's four women on stage presenting, which was nice to

see and kind of the camaraderie being built around them.

>> We just had our big customer event Ignite, and we had many,

many, many women presenters.

And there was a bunch of Twitter on it and

there was some question of like thank you Microsoft for

focusing on it too, like, hey is that artificial?

And we manufactured women on stage.

And I was like, gosh, are we?

And I went back and I looked and it wasn't true.

Every one of those women on stage was the expert in

the area, the engineering leader and that and I was like, wow.

That to me that was a moment of reflect, and

of course I was back on Twitter like, nope, not artificial.

This was actually just how it worked out.

We have that many fantastic female leaders.

>> According to a study by NCWIT, 57% of professional

occupations in the 2016 U.S. workforce were held by women.

But women held just 26% of professional computing jobs.

That number has remained relatively static over the past

several years unfortunately.

How is your relationship to that statistic changed since you

first entered the tech world to now as a very successful manager

of people in a very critical business?

The stats haven't changed,

which you could get super depressed about.

And I think about my daughter coming up and

she's super interested in science, math,

computers, and my God, I haven't left the world better for her.

But it's not done, I'm not done yet.

>> Not done yet. >> Not done yet.

Here we are and sometimes, there's like the final blocker

is the hardest and you see the world break.

The interesting thing that I reflect on while the stats

haven't changed, my experience, for sure, has.

Like when I first started 16 years ago at Microsoft,

I was the first woman to ever have a child in that division.

Yes, and no one in my management chain had dealt with someone

going on maternity leave, I was their first.

And so I was, there wasn't even a language around it and, okay,

how much time are you taking off?

Everyone was friendly about it,but

it was this foreign thing.

And there's wasn't any level of real conversation happening

about diversity and inclusion.

And now, I think about where we are 16 years on,

and maybe the stats aren't a lot better.

But we have language around it, it's comfortable, we're so

much more educated about it.

So that to me is the basis of real change coming.

And that we've stopped pretending and trying to

ignore it or hope it away to no, let's embrace this thing.

And to me the pivot is now that we understand that diversity and

general diversity thought and

perspective drives business outcomes.

Now that shifts like suddenly was from like the nice thing to

do, to the right thing to do, to like my gosh we have to do it or

we're not going to be competitive.

,That's the shift that I see.

What would be your advice to women who feel like they may be

being underpaid?

>> If you think that you're underpaid,

you probably are, I'd start with that.

And it come back to fundamental, frankly negotiating skills.

And interesting story is when I was at Harvard Business School

we had a negotiations class.

And they show you all the statistics about you know men do

better in negotiations than women and blah blah.

And so of course all the women in the class were like well yeah

maybe in the rest of the world but

certainly not at Harvard Business School.

And so we all did our negotiation exercises and

went through the process and guess what?

Women fared 50% of what men did in the negotiations

at Harvard Business School.

Right, no better we were horrified.

And I was like jeez, if we can't do it here then what's going on.

That proved to me that it is true, and

it is a real world thing.

So if you are feeling underpaid, then ball's in your

court on this one to do something about it.

And that's about how to have a productive conversation

about really getting some data about what your work value is.

And now there's luckily some great services online you can go

see and compare yourself and get some data.

Versus in the past we was kinda just guessing and

asking friends.

So you can go get armed with data.

And frankly you can go interview and look at other jobs.

See what kind of offers you're getting, or

what kind of salary their options are.

So then with that, bend your arm to actually have a database

conversation with your management team.

To just say hey I think this is the kind of value I'm bringing,

and this is the kind of compensation

package that I think's according to that.

And there's lots of wonderful ways to do that.

There's lots of terrible ways to go about

having that conversation.

So, being thoughtful about having that conversation with

your management, and it's never til you're so upset.

And you're so, I call it hygiene issues, when It's gotten so bad,

it's a hygiene issue, and you're like I need a raise!

That's never gonna be productive,

just like if you go to a friend and you're super angry at them,

you know, it's better to address that earlier.

So going in and saying, hey here's what I aspire to, and

this is what I like, and this is my career success, and

I'd like to be making this much money, and how do I do that?

And start there, and then keep pushing from there.

>> I wanted to pivot and

talk a little bit more about this social media movement

that's recently surfaced.

The hashtag me too project,

founded by Tarana Burke about ten years ago.

But it's regained momentum recently when Alyssa Milano used

her Twitter account to amplify the movement.

The hashtag has been

used over two million times on Twitter alone.

,And I would love to know a little bit more about what has

been your message to your team in the wake of this movement?

And any advice you would have for

women who are considering a job in, or

commitment to the incredibly male-dominated tech industry?

>> So it's certainly an important topic, and I'm really

glad that there's a public conversation going on about it.

So that it creates the opportunity

to have the conversation,

which is the first step on any of these type of things.

I'm so thankful I actually don't have any kind of first party,

sexual harassment stories to share and

it's super clear that I'm in the minority.

And, that's not okay.

And certainly we have a lot of work to do on it,

having the conversation is the first step.

And then making sure that you, as a leader, as myself,

that I'm having a zero tolerance for that.

But to do that is saying that is one thing, doing it's different.

And that means you have to have to be aware of what's happening

in your organization, and you have to be attuned to it.

You have to take claims really seriously, and make sure that

there's a safe place for people to come and tell you.

And I've had that a few times of having a woman come to my

office and share her story.

And I'm like I'm on it, and

absolutely take it super seriously and take action.

And I feel very fortunate that Microsoft has such clear

policies and support around this.

So it's been something that's been handled incredibly

well here.

Again, I think as a technology industry,

we have a lot of of work

to do in terms of what we see in the media and other things.

Clearly there's more problems to kind of fare it out and

understand in that place.

Reporting it and making it known is a invaluable thing.

It can be really uncomfortable for the victim, and so I'm also.

Each circumstance is a little bit different and

I'm never gonna tell a victim hey you have to go do this,

if that's something that they're not.

They've already been through a lot.

And so let's be thoughtful and

considerate of their world too versus like take a stand.

But In an organization like Microsoft or

others that's supported, men take that up like

absolutely because there's incredible support around it.

Sadly, I can't see every organizations like that.

Hence, you have to make that decision.

But if you can make a change and you can stand in how that

result, then absolutely that's your best path.

But if it's not and these stories that I'm reading online

and these really uncomfortable stories of like, months and

years of discrimination and harassment.

Man that's a really uncomfortable place to be.

>> So Julia, any final thoughts?

>> Just coming off the heels of our night conference, and

I'm heading into three conferences in November.

Certainly top- >> Casual.

>> [LAUGH] Yeah, right.

Certainly top of mine.

And, one of the things I love to just make sure people are aware

of and think about, is we have this great women in business and

technology tracks at all of our events now.

And I'm participating in all of them across these different

places I'm going.

And it's just a wonderful community, and

to me it's a way to strengthen our diversity in the industry,

not just at these events but in the industry.

And help each other and help support each other and

have those conversations about what it means to be successful

women in technology.

So I love that, encourage people to participate, and

I'll certainly be at as many as I can possibly be at.

>> So Julia where can our listeners find you online?

>> The place I spend most of my time is on Twitter which my

handle is @julwhite Jewel White and

that's the best place to reach me.

>> Thank you so much for joining us.

>> Yeah, thanks for having me.

[MUSIC]. >> Cutting edge,

our take on stories in the business and technology world.

[MUSIC]

>> We're diving into an article that was published in

mid-October in Harvard Business Review.

The article, written by David G Smith and

W Brad Johnson, is entitled Lots of

Men Are Gender Equality Allies In Private Why Not In Public?

The article first sets some ground rules,

citing the research of Debra Meyerson and Megan Tompkins with

the National Science Foundation's Advance Program at

the University of Michigan.

They found the allies need three traits in order to create

institutional changes that support diversity.

The first trait,

they must have insider knowledge of the organization.

The second trait, they must show a genuine understanding

of the cost of inequality for

everyone, in addition to the organizational bottom line.

And the third trait, they must demonstrate

an honest commitment to what is right and just.

You're probably thinking hey,

I know a lot of men who have all of those traits.

So why are so few of my male friends vocally or

actively committed to the cause?

The article goes on to describe the three unconscious processes

that quote Create timidity and perpetuate silence.

The first of these processes is the bystander effect,

when a group of people witnesses something unjust, and

they tend to think that someone else will act.

The second process is conformity,

the desire to belong to a group of people which can prevent us

from acting against what we think is the majority opinion.

The third process is psychological standing, or

the sense of having skin in the game.

Many men don't want to overstep any unspoken boundaries to

advocate for gender parity because,

as men, they don't think that it's their place.

Research shows that interventions can be helpful in

overcoming these social psychological processes.

But the article asserts the importance of reframing gender

equality as a leadership issue, instead of a women's issue.

And it's because it's the leaders who are the ones

responsible for demonstrating integrity and

creating a safe work environment.

Personally I really appreciate this reframing, while a company

may have some staffs dedicated to diversity and

inclusion initiatives.

It's really up to everyone to commit to a workplace that value

different experiences, backgrounds, and

thinking styles.

While getting every company employee committed is a tall

order, charging our leaders to demonstrate active advocacy

feels like a strategic first step.

Leaders are visible and they can prompt change.

So unless male leaders are publicly practicing their

allyship, we can't expect that their direct reports will

feel empowered to demonstrate any commitment to gender parody.

If you're committed to male allyship,

consider this challenge.

Practice being an ally more loudly, whether that means hey,

you're advocating for

a company benefit that doesn't directly impact you.

Or ensuring that no one on your team is routinely interrupted,

that's a start.

You can do it guys, I believe in you.

[MUSIC]

All right Sonia, I have a meeting in 30 minutes,

I know you have to get back to work too.

But I have to say,

I'm really proud of the episode that we came up with.

>> Me too, I agree, and Turret listeners if you agree,

you should let a friend to know.

We always appreciate getting new fans of the show, so

if you know someone who would like this podcast,

tell them to check it out.

You can find us on Apple Podcasts, Google Play, or

wherever you listen to podcasts.

Be sure to subscribe and leave us a review.

As always, if you have any feedback or questions,

please email us at wibt@microsoft.com, or

tweet us @microsoftwomen.

As communications professionals, it has nagged at us a bit

that our sign-off hasn't been totally crisp for

the first few episodes.

So with that in mind, we're going to be wrapping the show

with a more distinct call to action for our listeners.

>> And for this episode that action is, drum roll please.

To try your hand at coding, there are a ton of great courses

that you can access for free online.

[MUSIC]

Your assignment until next time, head to code.org,

click on the Learn tab and try out an hour of code.

[MUSIC]