

Allyship – everyone has a role to play

Speakers: Rehani, Commercial Banking, Australia

Nina, Risk, Hong Kong

Sanjeev, Audit, UK

Samantha, Legal, UK

Emily, Global Liquidity and Cash Management, United Arab Emirates

[Rehani] It's not that I actually see blatant racism. It is sometimes happening at a very subtle, nuanced, unconscious level [but] it's not subtle, it's not nuanced, it hurts.

[Nina] When you have to leave some part of yourself, that huge part of yourself at the door, when you come into work, you are not performing at your best, you are not even close.

[Sanjeev] It can make you feel inauthentic.

[Samantha] Having an ally has given me hope that I can start bringing myself, who I am, to work.

[Text on screen] An ally is vocal
An ally is supportive

[Rehani] An ally is a person who speaks on your behalf. Who actually stands up and recognises there is a problem or there is some kind of a bias, whether it's implicit or explicit.

[Sanjeev] An ally must understand that under-represented people often feel worried and scared that if they call out behaviours themselves, there could be an impact for them. So the majority have to speak up for the minority.

[Samantha] They will listen, they will learn, they will recognise their own privilege and use their platform to help change the narrative.

[Text on screen] Ethnicity exclusion is my problem
Ethnicity exclusion is your problem
Ethnicity exclusion is everyone's problem

[Emily] If you don't have an ally in a company, you might feel excluded, you might feel discouraged, you don't feel part of the family.

[Nina] After George Floyd in the US, I was struggling. The allyship actually came from a very, very unexpected place. So, somebody who couldn't look or be completely more different from me, he sent me a text message: "I have no idea the kind of challenges it is that you've been through or that you will continue to go through but I'm here for you if you want to talk."

While I'd been sitting there thinking, maybe this isn't something I can talk about at work, maybe I do need to leave my blackness at the door. That message kind of made me feel okay to speak about it.

[Rehani] One of my team members was having a rather difficult conversation with a customer, and the customer said, "Look, I want to speak to your manager."

I introduced myself and the first thing the customer said was, "Oh, wait a minute, I wanted to speak to a manager. I don't want to speak to somebody from a call centre."

And I feel sometimes when I face a situation where I'm being stereotyped, I almost have a voice in my head of everyone who supported me before. So I have the strength to then calmly address the situation without really getting upset.

[Sanjeev] If you don't have the allies at the top, it's very difficult to create the change. However, the change will only come through influence, and you can only influence if you've got allies across the organisation at all levels.

[Text on screen] Allies raise awareness
Allies build confidence
Allies break down barriers

[Rehani] If we have enough allies and if we have people talking about the problem and talking about how we can improve and create a level playing field, when my two young daughters come into the workforce, they are going to be valued for what they bring to the table rather than the colour of their skin or the accent that they have.

[Samantha] It's about awareness and educating yourself, and speaking up to try and make a difference.

[Text on screen] Now is the time to get involved
Now is the time to drive positive change
Now is the time to be an ally

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