

Dear TWF friends

If you haven't already read it – here is a [link](#) to the now infamous memo published over the weekend by an unnamed male Google engineer on one of the company's internal mailing lists criticising Google's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion and the way the company's "left bias has created a politically correct monoculture that maintains its hold by shaming dissenters into silence."

According to the memo which is titled "Google's Ideological Echo Chamber", the reason women don't make up half of the company's technological and leadership positions is because of "genetic differences" in their preferences and abilities which explain why we don't see equal representation of women in tech and leadership. Men are more likely to value "things" whereas women value "people" and have more openness to "feelings and aesthetics rather than ideas," according to the memo. Men, by contrast, have a "higher drive for status".

Taking into account the differences in distribution of traits between men and women, the author suggests ways to address them to increase women's representation in tech without resorting to discrimination. He acknowledges that Google is already making strides in many of these areas but suggests more can be done:

- "Women on average show a higher interest in people and men in things. We can make software engineering more people-oriented with pair programming and more collaboration. Unfortunately, there may be limits to how people-oriented certain roles and Google can be and we shouldn't deceive ourselves or students into thinking otherwise (some of our programs to get female students into coding might be doing this).
- Women on average are more cooperative. Allow those exhibiting cooperative behavior to thrive. Recent updates to Perf may be doing this to an extent, but maybe there's more we can do. This doesn't mean that we should remove all competitiveness from Google. Competitiveness and self reliance can be valuable traits and we shouldn't necessarily disadvantage those that have them, like what's been done in education. Women on average are more prone to anxiety. Make tech and leadership less stressful. Google already partly does this with its many stress reduction courses and benefits.
- Women on average look for more work-life balance while men have a higher drive for status on average. Unfortunately, as long as tech and leadership remain high status, lucrative careers, men may disproportionately want to be in them. Allowing and truly endorsing (as part of our culture) part time work though can keep more women in tech.
- The male gender role is currently inflexible. Feminism has made great progress in freeing women from the female gender role, but men are still very much tied to the male gender role. If we, as a society, allow men to be more "feminine," then the gender gap will shrink, although probably because men will leave tech and leadership for traditionally feminine roles."

In response, Danielle Brown, Google's new VP of diversity, integrity, and governance, wrote to staff saying the memo "advanced incorrect assumptions about gender," adding: "I'm not going to link to it here as it's not a viewpoint that I or this company endorses, promotes or encourages." Numerous Google employees and ex-employees have used social media or blog posts to condemn and debunk it. However, a number have expressed their support for the memo.

At TWF, we are watching with fascination to see how the story will unfold. While we strongly support the pro-diversity stand that Google has taken and its leadership on this front within the tech industry – at TWF, we also passionately believe in open discourse and that honestly owning up to biases is better than people pretending they don't have them, since we all do. We hope that Google's response will acknowledge this while continuing to vigorously promote access to opportunities for women and minorities. As always, we would love to hear from you with your views. Please email me at su-mei.thompson@twfhk.org.

Warm regards

Su-Mei Thompson
 CEO, The Women's Foundation

UPCOMING EVENTS

MENTORING PROGRAMME

2017-2018
 INFO SESSIONS



Mentoring Programme 2017-18 Info Sessions

This August, TWF will be launching the ninth year of our highly acclaimed Mentoring Programme for Women Leaders. This best-in-class programme will match 50 high potential protégés with 50 of HK's most successful women leaders. All interested applicants must attend an Information Session to find out more about the benefits of the Programme

curriculum and content, the commitment required of participants, and the selection and pairing process.

[Please click here for the list of sessions.](#) NOTE: Attendance at one of these sessions is a compulsory component of the application process. Please choose ONE session only.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS FOR ASPIRING FEMALE DIRECTORS

August 16, 2017
8.00-9.30 a.m. / KPMG



Pathways to Success for Aspiring Female Directors

TWF is delighted to invite you to a panel discussion for aspiring female board directors. Our speakers who include Diana David / Financial Times, David Graham / HKEX, Kirti Lad / Harvey Nash and May Tan / Link REIT will discuss how to position yourself for a board appointment, getting prepared for board service and the good and bad of being on a board.

DATE: Wednesday, August 16

TIME: 8.00 - 9.30 a.m.

VENUE: KPMG, 8/F, Prince's Building, Central

TICKET: HK\$200pp. A light breakfast will be available.

All proceeds will go to TWF's programmes to advance women and girls. [Register here.](#)

SECRETS TO SUCCESS

SEHR AHMED



Sehr Ahmed shares her Secrets to Success!

TWF is delighted to present the next session in our not-to-be-missed Secrets to Success series featuring outstanding female leaders sharing their first hand experience, insights and advice from their own leadership journey. We are looking forward to hearing from Sehr Ahmed, Founder and CEO of Executive Edge, a global coaching and consulting practice. Prior to this, Sehr held HR leadership roles across Asia Pacific for ABN AMRO Bank, AIG, McDonalds and globally for IFM Investors.

DATE: Thursday, September 14

TIME: 12.30 - 2.00 p.m.

VENUE: KPMG, 8/F, Prince's Building, Central

TICKET: HK\$200pp. A light lunch will be available.

All proceeds will go to The Women's Foundation Cambridge Scholarship Scheme which sends deserving Hong Kong students to pursue the MPhil in Multi-disciplinary Gender Studies. [Register here.](#)

BOARDROOM LUNCH

FIFTH LUNCH OF THE SERIES



30% Club Annual Boardroom Lunch!

TWF and the 30% Club HK are delighted to announce the fifth annual 30% Club Boardroom Lunch which brings TWF's list of aspiring and accomplished women directors face-to-face with chairmen, CEOs and advisors to Hong Kong's leading companies for simulated boardroom discussions on key issues facing boards today. If your company is interested in sponsoring a table, please [click here for more information.](#)

DATE: Friday, September 29

TIME: 12.00 - 2.00 p.m.

VENUE: The Asia Society Hong Kong Center, 9 Justice Drive, Admiralty

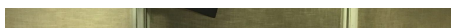
TWF PROGRAMME UPDATES



T.E.E.N. Programme update

Last week, our TEENs visited the Equal Opportunities Commission. Through interactive activities and case studies, they learned about the anti-discrimination ordinances and explored thought provoking concepts like the difference between equality and equity. The TEENs have also been exposed to photography and film-making workshops to equip them with the creative skills for their upcoming community projects.

TWF IN THE SPOTLIGHT



TWF Deputy CEO on RTHK



TWF Deputy CEO, Rita Ching was interviewed last week by RTHK Radio 1《精靈一點》on her experience of positive education. Listen to the programme [here](#). (Interview starts at 1:00:45, conducted in Cantonese).



TWF's Girls & STEM Study in the SCMP

Last week, TWF's recent study on why girls in HK are not opting for STEM subjects was mentioned in the SCMP's article on "How Hong Kong women are levelling the pitch in the male heavy tech industry". Read the story [here](#) and access our study [here](#).

WHAT WE'RE READING

Our top picks for recommended reading and listening on the key trends and breaking stories on women and gender:

- [Hong Kong Gender Pay Gap Double Singapore, Half Korea's](#) (Bloomberg)
- [Their Identities Denied, Afghan Women Ask, 'Where Is My Name?'](#) (New York Times)
- [No Longer Seeing the World Through Men's Eyes](#) (New York Times)
- [This CEO Turns Women's Ideas Into Thriving Businesses](#) (Forbes)
- [Why This Woman Created An MBA-Like Program Solely For Female Students](#) (Forbes)
- [Clare Smyth On Becoming The UK's Top Female Chef: 'In A Kitchen There's No Difference Between Sexes'](#) (Huffington Post)

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