accenture

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO POWER THE FUTURE OF WORK

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Kristen Puchek:
Businesses today are facing major challenges. And one of those challenges is there's a talent shortage. There's a skills gap, and it is specifically a gap for high-demand digital skills. At the same time, we've seen this great resignation, which I'm sure everyone here has heard that term before. We're seeing a mass exodus of women leaving the workforce both during and post pandemic. So let's put that together. We have millions of people, specifically women, who are actually ready and able to start filling this skills gap for digital skills. But businesses aren't maximizing on that potential. We have an amazing opportunity to recognize that there's this huge talent pool that we've just been ignoring. And what we found in our Accenture research is that when organizations hire more women into technical skills, those organizations are 36% less likely to experience a talent and skill shortage.

Kara Gooch:
And many women may feel that tech isn't for them. Too often we hear that individuals aren't given the space to ask the right questions, the environment to experiment, the environment to learn without fear. Those things sometimes don't exist. Which means psychological safety in those areas and environments are lacking. But that's what we're here to create. Because we need it, because it's necessary. And who are some of these women that were talking, who are some of these people that we're talking about? Too often, we hear that they are women. And since there are so many of us in this room, the multi-facets of that are coming together.

But imagine if we were to unlock the power of women to solve our big talent and skilling challenges. Removing these barriers to entry and creating opportunities to acquire skills. And make this important moment possible to move not just the needle forward, but move the daughters of tomorrow, move the sons of tomorrow forward. And with this, we're noticing a 70% boost of intention to skill when those right conditions are met.

Kristen Puchek:
We took some time at Accenture to unpack this, and we did some research. Spoiler alert: The main thing we found is that not all women are the same. The main thing that we started to find was that first of all, there's a difference when you cut the data looking at the intersection of gender and race-ethnicity, we found there's a difference in the desire to acquire digital skills when you start to look at the data in that way.

So, we found that 24% of Latinx Hispanic women, 22% of black women, 20% of Asian women have a greater desire to acquire digital skills when compared to white women at about 18%. That was one thing that was interesting. Then we tried to understand, well, what kind of conditions have to be in place in the workplace so that we can actually realize that potential. And what we found was Latinx and Hispanic women are more likely to skill when barriers are removed in the workplace. Asian women are more likely to skill when they have access to skill in the workplace on-the-job.

Black women are more likely to acquire new skills when microaggressions are removed in the workplace. White women are more likely to skill when they apply those skills on the job.

This was really, really important for us to understand because the traditional ways that we've been thinking about recruitment and development and learning-related actions in the workplace actually aren't effective in this new world of work. We're not meeting women where they are. We're not offering the opportunity to acquire new skills in ways in which women can actually attain those skills and accelerate within our businesses. So how do we create those right conditions? We'd love to invite Kara to share a little more about her own skilling journey at Accenture.

Kara Gooch
I was called to Accenture's apprenticeship program. Now our apprenticeship program launched in 2016, giving individuals without a four-year degree a chance at a life-changing opportunity to thrive. And the majority of these apprentices are racially and ethnically diverse, and nearly half of them are women. It makes me really, really proud to say the least. I joined Accenture in the program in Nashville in 2020. So the heart of everything shutting down, right. But at that moment, my world was completely opening up and came in within the first cohort of five people in the Nashville office as apprentices. And now very, very happy to report that we now have over 150 coming into our office to be a part of that inaugural cohort.

After graduating from the apprenticeship program one year ago, I was also given the opportunity to be a full-time employee, which I earned my button, my career definitely continues to grow. I have seen the technology space, I have seen corporate function space, and I'm now in change management, which is honestly the best place for me because I can get in front of people and tell them: "Okay, let's do this differently".

The apprenticeship program has definitely changed my life. But a lot of the lives that have been changed are some of the girlfriends that I have behind me. We went through the apprenticeship Ambassador program together. And this is probably one of the moments that I cherish the most because these are my friends and we've grown together. And to say that they might not be in this room physically. But baby, I'm going to bring you with me. And I'll continue to do that as often as anybody gives me a microphone.

Kristen Puchek
When organizations are optimizing their learning culture and creating skilling opportunities for women. Our research shows that we will see a 4.7 trillion-dollar improvement in GDP. Okay, I want to be a part of that, don't you? So, when we leave here today, please, in your own organizations ask these questions. How am I thinking about skilling gaps? How am I thinking about empowering women? Because together we can empower women to power our future.
Thank you.