**ITC Podcast - Hybrid Work and Women - Kim Jones Alliance**

**Kim Jones**

There are theories about why women aren't at parity with men. The first is that women are becoming less ambitious and so people will look at it thinking that there are not as many women in leadership, it's because they're becoming less ambitious. We saw women step out of the workforce during covid and what we're actually seeing is that women are as ambitious as men and especially younger women, who will freely say that they want to aspire and achieve leadership positions and that they have ambitions.

**Intro**

Welcome to elevate your career. The podcast dedicated to empowering individuals from all walks of life as they navigate the ever-changing landscape of their chosen fields. In this show we'll be bringing on a diverse range of professionals from various career stages to uncover the secrets behind achieving success in any industry. We'll explore how they achieve their career goals and the path they took to get there. Your host is none other than Nicole McMackin, CEO of the Irvine Tech Corporation, ITC. An award-winning Information Technology Solutions and Staffing provider.

Now let's get to the show.

**Nicole McMackin**

Kim Jones, CEO of Kim Jones Alliance, is a transformational career coach and an expert in guiding women to make their careers their own. Kim has a holistic approach to guiding her clients to foster new skills, professional networks and personal practices,

In addition Kim leads selective consulting engagements and organizations seeking to implement culture transformation solutions that foster high-performing work environments.

On today's show we'll be addressing the recently released McKenzie report on the state of women in the workplace, we'll be speaking about the four myths of microaggressions and how this impacts women's career trajectories.

This is a dynamic discussion, please listen, I think you will get a lot out of it regardless if you're male female. Hope you enjoy it!

**Nicole McMackin**

Kim welcome to the show

**Kim Jones**

Thank you so much Nicole, it's a pleasure to be here.

**Nicole McMackin**

I've been looking forward to this Today's show! This episode is gonna be a little bit different, we're going to try something new. Kim is an expert in implementing cultural transformation solutions and she's going to speak with us today about a recent McKenzie study that focuses on women in the workplace and how this study impacts women's trajectories and so this is something that I'm super passionate about and I hope that everyone listening would be interested, not just women, because I think there's some really robust takeaways from this conversation that can be had by everyone, so very excited so let's get to it.

**Kim Jones**

I can't wait! This is one of my favorite topics as well so I am looking forward to this conversation.

**Nicole McMackin**

Tell the audience a little bit about the research that you are really interpreting for us, that McKenzie recently launched.

**Kim Jones**

McKenzie for a few years has been partnering with the learning organization to take a look at the state of women in the workplace and each year they published their findings that are really meant to get behind why women are not making as much progress and advancing in the workplace or achieving the parity that we are all looking for women to achieve with respect to leadership roles and having equal representation in certain male-dominated fields.

It's a really great sort of benchmark for us to take a look at each year to see how the findings are progressing as we encounter things like covid and other environmental changes, as companies implement their diversity equity and inclusion policies, how those are impacting the trajectories of women in the workplace and this year was no exception.

There were some really great findings that helped to glean some insights as to why women are still so significantly underrepresented particularly in positions of power and leadership.

**Nicole McMackin**

I read something and I thought it was coming out of a McKenzie study, but I could be wrong, that just in the technology sector for women, that women were hovering around 18% in STEM for the technology sector and that in the last two years in technology it was getting worse. It was 2.1% less than it had been two years prior, if you could shed some light on for us. Let us know your interpretation of these facts and what are your thoughts about it.

**Kim Jones**

One of the things is that the McKenzie study is not generic, or rather it's generic, but it's not specific to any industry, but if you take the findings and extrapolate them to what we do know about the tech industry, then we can get a better picture.

A couple of things that we know is that Tech in general and STEM, but I'll talk about tech since that's really my background, is that women are subjected to a lot of biases and stereotypes about what constitutes an effective Tech worker. A lot of that correlates with male traits so, for example, if you ask someone to think about an Innovative Tech leader you're going to think about mostly men we all know, who the strong Tech leaders are.

Most of them are men, people think of innovation hand in hand and with masculine traits, we don't tend to think about women's innovations in the same ways. We think about men's innovation, we know that innovation is very important in the tech industry so there are all these biases about what a successful Tech worker looks like and it's not correlated with the types of things that traditionally women are thought to bring to the table.

**Nicole McMackin**

Playing devil's advocate, if you say to me “innovation” when you think of high-tech and bringing things to the forefront, I think of Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Bill Gates. Is that because there are not a lot of women that are considered innovators? I'm trying to think who they are and either I'm not hearing about them or they're not talked about with certain organizations. I don't know, I'll have to look at that and do some research.

**Kim Jones**

It's really interesting that you say that, because those are the names that come to mind when we think about tech innovation, and then it can be this chicken and egg thing. Is it because the men are more innovative and so they're the ones that are starting the companies, but then if you look at what happens in the Venture Capital space and how funding is allocated and the fact that women founded companies only receive between two and 4% of the Venture Capital funding, you start to see that there's an opportunity difference.

If you think about who's building the companies that then get associated with tech leadership and innovation, it is very much biased towards these startup companies that are predominantly being funded in directions of companies that have male founders and we know that there's all kinds of data. It's not just that women are coming forward with their ideas, there is all kinds of bias that plays out there as well, that have to do with the same things, that women are not seen as being as capable of being innovative and leading a high- performing companies that have the potential to achieve unicorn status, for example.

So you have all of the biases that start at the very beginning of who is actually rising in the ranks of being seen as innovative and then taking that back to the McKenzie study.

If we just assume that we tend to look at men as being more capable of being successful in Tech roles, women are often looked at as not being as competent in those roles. That plays into one of the major findings in the McKenzie study, which is this idea that microaggressions, which are defined as behaviors directed towards certain groups, reinforce stereotypes about them.

Microaggression towards a woman in Tech might be “wow I can't believe you're competent in this role” because she might be coming across as someone who's strong in her capacity. People might take a look at that and think “wow, that's really surprising because we wouldn't expect you to be competent” that's an example of a microaggression.

Microaggression could be things like being interrupted in meetings or being excluded from networks that have to do with all men. They could be commenting on something having to do with your gender, how you behave in terms of how it's expected for your gender etc.

Being commented on as being too aggressive as a woman, for example, might not be interpreted as aggressive if that behavior were exhibited by a man. Those are microaggressions that the study showed actually impact women's trajectories in the workplace much more negatively than most people think.

If you think about microaggressions that happen, which women are navigating as part of their work environments, as they're being looked at through the lens of gender, are affecting how safe they feel in the workplace.

How much they're willing to bring forward ideas, how innovative they are, how comfortable being all of the things that we think about as being important leadership traits etc.

When women get subjected to these microaggressions, they actually hold themselves back from very behaviors that could lead them to move forward because they don't feel safe.

Then taking it back to your original question about why are we seeing these statistics going backwards in Tech? I would suspect that there's also a a bias playing out here around this idea that if you are a successful Tech worker, you live breathe and your passion is your work so there's this idea that anyone who's good in Tech is like that's their life, that's their lifestyle, they are of that characteristic where they are living and breathing Tech all of the time.

A lot of women during Covid weren't able to show up in that same way because they had to pull back for caregiving needs or perhaps these environments during that time didn't support some of the things that they had to contend with.

The idea is that these workers are showing up in the same way in an environment like Covid caused a lot of clients that I saw, and some of the data that I saw, caused women to actually exit the field and think about going into other areas.

**Nicole McMackin**

Yes, I think that's very true and statistically speaking there was a recent report that said that within 10 years that a female is working, let's say - in the technology industry, they're actually leaving the industry and the biggest misconception is that they're leaving the industry to start families. They're in fact not, they're leaving the technology vertical to go to completely different verticals, either within the same organization or outside of the organization.

But touching on something you said, that within the field of technology, and you were a CIO, do you feel that is a true analysis of the tech field?

If you're getting into it with the expectation that you have no life, that you have no family, that you're working around the clock - is that something that you saw and felt when you were leading large teams?

**Kim Jones**

Absolutely! Some background on me, I was divisional CIO over at Farmers Insurance for a number of years and the expectation was that we were available when the company needed us to be available to attend to the systems.

For example, we were implementing large projects on the weekends. If we had outages, the expectation was that we would be available to them day or night, there was expectations for long work days because we were often put on projects that had very aggressive budgets and timelines and turnaround times and so the teams were expected to really step up and work a lot of hours in order to perform those functions.

If I could do it differently I would have made it easier for people who weren't able to meet those kinds of schedules, which were primarily women. To be able to accommodate some and have flexibility around how they could work within that environment successfully. What we didn't do is differentiate ever, we said this is expected of all employees and all roles regardless of where you happen to sit within the organization.

When I came in, my personal choice was in alignment with those expectations, because I've always been career minded, I don't have a lot of family obligations, I am able to put in the time and the hours and I didn't fully appreciate when I was coming up through the ranks how much that was excluding other people who had made different choices and that a lot of those people were women.

It was absolutely my experience that this was a limiting factor for so many women and just to share another story that brings the point home is that I didn't start my career in Tech. I grew up through the operation side, I grew up in business, I actually came over to Tech as a senior level leader to run it as a business and to prepare organizations for large scale systems transformation.

All the things surrounding that was my responsibility, I didn't need the technical background for that type of a role, so I felt very comfortable coming in that capacity. When I made the transition over, what was surprising to me is because the representation of women is so much lower in Tech than it is on the business side, is how much stronger I felt bias was a factor in how I needed to navigate my role in the technology side.

While gender bias had always been a big part of what I needed to navigate, even when I was on the business side. I was in senior leadership roles where there weren't a lot of women. Because women were better represented in business - people were used to seeing women more as competent in those roles.

When I went over, it was quite shocking how much more I had to establish my competence, credibility, defend things that were part of my day-to-day decision making, justify things that I didn't see a lot of my mail counterparts having to do, which just added this additional burden to the work that I was doing and made it so much tougher for me.

**Nicole McMackin**

Would you say that in this transition from the business to IT there was the need to be perfect, because you knew that you were going to be judged much harder, having to do double work just to make sure that you had all your ducks in a row, because if you didn't and there was a slip, then it would be used to reinforce the bias “see, she shouldn't be here, she's not capable, she's not from IT”. Were you finding that as well?

**Kim Jones**

Yes, absolutely! I was finding that on a pretty regular basis, there was this idea that I think it's this confirmation bias that we have.

If you look at me coming into it and I didn't just have the gender lens, I also had the fact that I didn't come up through the technology background as a secondary way, that people would look at me and say “I wasn't qualified to do the job that I had”, so there was this idea that anything that I would do, that wasn't perfect or was a mistake or an error, would get judged as confirmation bias, exactly as you said “see, we knew that she couldn't cut it in here in this this type of role”.

**Nicole McMackin**

Did you think that or did you know that was that something? I think it could be both ways, because women feel that there's this overarching negativity or doubt, and it creates self-doubt for us sometimes. We are projecting and feeling that when it's really not out there. Was it out there or was it something that was self-inflicted or maybe it was both?

**Kim Jones**

It's a great question! What I see for most women is they do tend to personalize it and say that it's coming from them. I don't think I consciously thought I had to work hard to establish credibility.

I had to do things with fewer errors to be seen as competent. What I thought was that I had to be perfect to do my job well and I internalized the feedback that I got. If I did something that wasn't perfect and I got feedback in that regard, I took it as a personal flaw. I didn't really see it as other people and other demographics were getting judged much less harshly than me.

We tend to internalize that and think that I'm not good enough and that feeds into what we know a lot of women suffer from as impostor syndrome. They tend to hold their voices back. It's not because we're flawed in some way. In some ways we actually are pretty astute, because we know that we are going to get judged by a different standard.

Maybe it's a different standard, we know that we're going to be judged by a very high standard and maybe we even see that other people aren't being judged as rigorously and we may interpret that to mean that there is something that I am doing wrong.

How come I can't get the same kind of support or assumption of credibility as my counterparts are getting?

Now, I think, there's more awareness of the data to suggest that gender bias plays a role in this. But if we don't really look at that as being part of the playing field and we internalize it and personalize it, it can contribute to exactly what you're saying - that we then start to hold ourselves back, which then goes into what we see in the study which is women are not rising as it's one the factors.

Why women aren't rising as quickly is when they're faced with these microaggressions, they start to hold themselves back and it becomes this cycle.

**Nicole McMackin**

Very interesting! I'll jump in real quick about the “Women in Leadership” course that I run and you are a big part of that and its success, so thank you first and foremost!

It's really interesting, and I think you've heard it in the courses over the last five years that many women just don't speak up, they are sitting back and we're coaching and saying - listen, here's an opportune time that this is what you would say and let people know or you're presenting and you're sitting in the back of the room and not saying anything because you are feeling so heavily judged and maybe what you're about to say is going to be viewed differently than what another person or a different gender would say and it's really interesting.

We're talking about microaggressions and the whole reason that I started that women and leadership program is because I was presenting to Fortune 500 on the business side and there was no female leaders in the audience, and at the end of my presentation two gentlemen had come up to me and approached me and said “wow, Nicole, that was really great, we weren't expecting that” and I thought to myself “oh my gosh I'm the only woman here, only blond woman” and I I quickly turned and a little bit sassy and I just said “well, my goodness, I don't know if I should thank you or be offended”. But I will tell you probably not a lot of people would turn and say that and call it out in a way that was in gest, but not, and they got the point.

I think that's a huge challenge that women have, not only in the area we're speaking of, but in general. It is about approaching things and calling things out and then in a manner that you know just allows the person to be credible around speaking with women and I think that's a big part and why women are held back in their careers and they're holding themselves back.

**Kim Jones**

I love that example for a couple of reasons. First of all, you were faced with a microaggression in that moment that you may have heard them say “I can't believe you came across so confident, we weren't expecting that”, and it is like saying “a blonde woman like you, we wouldn't expect anything from her in terms of being able to show up in this sort of forum as a leader”.

As a coach I work with so many women, who face this. They're often saying things like “what do I need to do in order to not have that happen” and what can happen a lot is we start to say “how do I fix the environment so that I'm not viewed through this lens of bias” and often it is where we get into the solution part of it, like what you were saying is in those moments, how do you actually show up in those moments.

What can happen is that we can make ourselves smaller, we can be a little bit less powerful, because someone is giving these cues that they don't see us as powerful, which then can affect how we feel about ourselves.

It's so important, as what you did in that moment, to hold your power and say “this comment is not going to diminish me, I'm going to call out the fact that there is clearly bias happening in this conversation” and really how we think about it not as what do I need to fix about myself, but more of how do I stand my ground in those environments, how do I communicate about what I'm seeing in a way that doesn't reinforce this idea that we're playing a gender card or that we are not thin-skinned or emotional etc.

That is what is tough about it. Navigating that environment where you can continue to maintain your power and call out things when it's appropriate to do so, and that starts to shift the awareness, so that people can reflect on what they're bringing to reinforce some of these patterns.

**Nicole McMackin**

You're so right. We both get approached around this topic quite often. How do I say things? It's really thinking about it strategically and always remaining professional in how you do so. I was giving a keynote speech about 2-3 weeks ago in Los Angeles and it was all around women and women in Tech and a gentleman had approached me right after and I had shared with the group that I was speaking to about our women in leadership course and of course what had really sparked me to start and found the course and was this interaction that I had this microaggression and he approached me and I thought it was a really good question.

He said “how do you know that it was a microaggression and that it wasn't just someone saying - hey that was really great, we weren't expecting that, it was just really really good”? And I said “you know, that's such a good question”.

I said that if there were other women seated at the table between the business and IT and I wasn't the only woman in the room, I think I would have taken it like that. I would have taken it as “oh well thank you, yeah I'm glad that that you enjoyed it and we have more to come and I'll be with you all year”, but instead, because the room had no women in it, that I immediately took it as a microaggression and that remains to be seen.

I felt that and if there were other women, if it was even 3 or 4 out of the 13, or 5 out of the 13, I probably wouldn't have taken it that way. Knowing your audience and knowing the validation point, if you're feeling something it is good to take a look at the room and say “yes, I think that's what it is and I feel comfortable moving forward in this statement”.

**Kim Jones**

Absolutely. If you look at the data from the McKenzie report, it suggests how women are much more subjected to microaggressions, they are actually happening, we can measure it. It has been measured, it has been demonstrated to be a factor in women's trajectory, so yes, there is a likelihood.

Even if it could have been probable that this was not a microaggression, but the fact is that microaggressions are very common, so it's not misguided to think that this was a microaggression and especially because we do get subjected to them all the time, it's hard not to interpret behaviors like that in that way.

If I'm constantly being interrupted in a meeting and my male counterparts aren't, the next guy who interrupts me may be interrupting men and women at the same rate, but I'm more likely to interpret that in the way that it usually happens or often happens which is these are behaviors that get perpetrated against people in marginalized groups at a much higher rate than in dominant groups and that we know that have an impact on how women and other underrepresented groups progress in the workplace.

It is important that we talk about it, even if it wasn't intended that way, even highlighting it as this is how it could be interpreted, could be helpful for that person to say that I want to stay away from those comments, even though I didn't mean it that way because of how it could be interpreted, it wasn't my intention, but it still had the impact.

A very common microaggression with African-American people is the idea of being articulate. I don't know if you've heard this one like when well-spoken black people are talking in some cases they get feedback like “wow you're so articulate” and that's a microaggression that they often experience and there was actually this one time where I was listening to the most articulate person, who happened to be black, and I wanted to say something about that, but I thought in my mind that it is going to come across to them as reinforcing the stereotype that black people are not articulate, and if I mean this comment as “you are exceptional in the way you just articulated” that could be interpreted as a microaggression.

I think that's the point that you are making, that maybe you really did blow this person away, but because this is such a common thing for women, it can easily be flipped in that direction. So people who offer those kinds of comments need to be aware of that and to manage what they say, and that can be really helpful in starting to move the needle in a better direction.

**Nicole McMackin**

Yes 100%! It's interesting, I had a meeting with UC San Diego a couple of months ago and they were doing a lot of work around this, they actually put out a deck in the CTO, shared it with me and it was all around what we're talking about. Making people aware that the words and phrases that they use could be interpreted or misinterpreted or hurtful and it was really eye opening for me.

I looked at the deck and there were certain words that UC San Diego is teaching their corporate division to stay away from, which I say all the time, which are “I've got a little housekeeping for us to do here today”. I say it all the time and that was one of the words and I was thinking oh my goodness, I shouldn't say that because that really denotes and signals women and housekeeping.

And they were saying don’t use “black and white”, so really trying to be with those words. If you think about it - it's black and white it's divisive, they can't be anywhere close, it's one or the other. Then other words like “my tribe”, “this Is my tribe”.

All these things, that we don't think about, but other people view them and perhaps aren't saying anything to us and coming forth. But it could be misinterpreted, it could be hurtful, it could be a microaggression, and I want to know about it as an individual who cares about that and who cares about people and their success.

I never want something that I have said, to hold another person back or make them feel less than, and so that's an important topic and I am really glad we're discussing it.

**Kim Jones**

Absolutely, I 100% agree with you. It's like we just get conditioned into speaking in certain ways and don't even give it a second thought and understanding and caring enough to understand the impact that it might be having.

I've got some examples I recently came across, as well as using the word “master”. Words like “master bedroom” or “master class” can be offensive to some people and you think that it's really interesting or saying “you guys” versus “you all”, so it's really interesting to think about how we really build inclusive language in the grand scheme of things. How big of an impact does it make in terms of shifting the needle.

I don't know the answer to that question, but it does show a sensitivity that we are thinking about the experiences of other groups and we care enough about how our words land with them, that we are willing to consider and to change things that may not be offensive to us, but could be very offensive to other people especially people who are in marginalized groups.

**Nicole McMackin**

Perhaps even those groups look at it and say that this is not offensive, this is so ridiculous, it's more offensive that you're trying to change that. That could be true, but I think that you could look at that and say that people are really trying.

I hear the opposite also, that it is ridiculous that we're not able to say any longer “master bedroom” or we're not able to say whatever the word is and the connotation and that you know people are making a big deal about it. but I think in the end it just shows that people are trying to be better, to be considerate of others, to have a level playing field and to be inclusive.

You can't really fault them because I hear it on both sides. I hear the direction that we're coming from and saying that these have potential to hold people back, to reinforce their stigmas that they hold in those groups.

Instead of saying that these people are being ridiculous, why are they changing this now and all the criticism about it.

I do think that we have to create a bridge where we are at least trying to make everyone cognizant, and I think it ends up being a better place for everyone.

**Kim Jones**

I couldn't agree more and I actually welcome that kind of dialogue as well, where you know you've got people who look at some of this stuff as overkill or is it really worth putting all the effort into something that may or may not have a big impact.

I think what's more important is the conversation and the consideration around it that we're really understanding our audiences and where people are coming from.

Trying to be sensitive, trying to learn how to pronounce someone's name correctly or to use the pronouns that they prefer. We have to do a little work on our side because there are some implied messages in the statement that “this is overkill” and we shouldn't have to do all these things.

There are some implied messages that I shouldn't have to make myself uncomfortable in any way to adapt what I'm doing, in order to help someone feel included or help someone undo some of the damages of the past, to try to bring everyone into a place where there's better equity.

Sometimes that does mean that those of us who are in dominant groups have to work a little bit harder, to understand and change behaviors that we've been used to not having, to think twice about it.

And are we going to get it right all the time? Is sometimes something going to be wrong? Absolutely, but just making that effort to say that we are thinking about other people and how to do things in ways that help them feel more included and safe is the conversation we need to be having.

**Nicole McMackin**

I agree. Has McKenzie been putting out this study report every year?

**Kim Jones**

I've only been reading it for the last 2 to 3 years, so it's been at least a few years coming out now.

**Nicole McMackin**

I don’t know if it was last year's report or it could be this year's report, but talking about mentors for women and the significance of mentors, the significance of advocates… Did you see anything in this year's report regarding that?

**Kim Jones**

I don't think I saw it in this year's report, but we can certainly talk about why mentorship and sponsorship is so important for women. I'll have to go back and check because I know there were some suggestions that they made for how to counter some of the four key findings that they had, that were holding women back, but like you I'm also wondering if it was this year's report or if it was an a prior report.

**Nicole McMackin**

What are the four items, four segments that are holding women back?

**Kim Jones**

These are the myths that are holding women back or it's not really that they're holding women back these are myths and theories about why women aren't at parity with men.

**First** one is that women are becoming less ambitious and so people will look and think there are not as many women in leadership because they're becoming less ambitious.

We saw women step out of the workforce during Covid and what we're actually seeing is that women are as ambitious as men and especially younger women who will freely say that they want to aspire and achieve leadership positions and that they have ambitions.

The nuance here is that women actually want more flexibility, so that they don't feel like they have to sacrifice everything else that's important in their lives, in order to achieve the levels that they want to achieve.

**Second** one is the myth that microaggressions have a micro impact so we've been talking about this one for a little bit now and that's the idea that microaggressions don't have a big impact on women in the workplace. But in reality they have a very big impact on their trajectory. We've talked about this a little bit, that it tends to make women pull back, not feel safe, not use their voice, not step into situations where they're taking risks, that's actually the **third** one.

**Fourth** and the biggest barrier to women's advancement is the glass ceiling. This is the idea that there is a glass ceiling and that women get to a certain level and they can't penetrate the glass ceiling. There is a perception that they will make it all the way up to a certain level and then I can't get to the C-suite or to senior leadership position.

What was actually found is that it's the broken rung, it's the fact that women are falling off leadership at every step of the way. For example we know that men and women are roughly hired at the same rate, so in entry level jobs men and women are roughly represented 50/50, but when you see that first level of promotion to a first line manager, you see for every hundred men that are promoted only 87 women are promoted.

That cycle perpetuates all the way up so by the time you start getting to the C-suite, you have far fewer women in leadership positions to even choose from, so it's a broken rung, not a glass ceiling. This has to do with another bias, which is the bias that I think most of us are familiar with by now, that women get promoted based on their experience, while men get promoted based on their potential.

If a woman is equal in every way to a male counterpart and they are both up for promotion, they're more likely to look at the woman and say that she is really great, she's doing a good job, we think she's fantastic, however she hasn't done this particular role, we don't think she's ready yet, she doesn't have the experience so we're going to keep her where she is.

Whereas a male counterpart may have the exact same credentials and they may look at that person and say fantastic, done a great job, we think he can do it, we think he has potential, we're going to go ahead and take a chance and promote him.

That's one of the main reasons why you see that broken rung, especially at that first level, because if women don't have a lot of experience then they just have their potential, as men do, and so you see women not getting promoted as fast and that being a primary reason for it.

**Nicole McMackin**

What can we do about that?

**Kim Jones**

One of the things that is recommended is to really objectively lay out what the expectations are for promotion and that they actually be things that are measurable in terms of how this impacts or doesn’t impact in the job that I'm looking for in that position.

Then evaluate your candidates equally on meeting those criteria and so if you have a situation where people of equal experience. If you say that we need this criteria in order to be promoted, if that person male and female, both don't have it, then you're automatically saying that we're not promoting either one of them or we need to change the criteria versus “oh well he doesn't have it, we'll give it to him, she doesn't have it we don't think she's ready”.

Making all of that objective and then also just highlighting that this bias exists so that people can really be more self-reflective about whether or not they are applying bias when they're looking at female candidates.

**Nicole McMackin**

Kim, as a CEO of your company, you're traveling and going throughout the country and talking to C-level executives about this and having them implement, based upon these four myths, some things that corporations could be doing, some trainings that your senior managers, vice presidents need to be having to make sure that there is no bias in hiring.

And it's not just with women, it's a lot of different underrepresented groups and so it's very important work that you're doing.

It's important to talk about the broken rung. We hear different reports are now coming out and people stepping forward and saying that there is no glass ceiling, it's now the barrier for Zoom or teams that are holding women back, because women aren't willing to go back into the office and so they're holding back their own careers.

And as we know, it's for organizations that are just completely on Zoom or virtual. Networking opportunities are specifically very difficult for women and that's where often people, who are in a network and who know one another, those are the ones that traditionally get promoted and so they are saying that this Zoom ceiling, they're calling it, is in effect, not necessarily the glass ceiling, but tell us a little bit about that and what are some solutions for that?

**Kim Jones**

What you're pointing to here, I think, is the fact that there's this expectation that workers return to the office and we know that the biggest negative impacts of returning to the office are people who are in caregiving roles, which tend to be women and women have been leading the the forefront of wanting the flexibility.

They are willing, in many cases, to say no to jobs that don't give them the flexibility that they're looking for, which then leads to this whole idea that women aren't as ambitious, when in fact, they are, but they're looking for flexibility.

If you assume that in a zoom environment you do have challenges that you need to overcome in order to be as effective, so let's just say that all other things being equal, there is flexibility and that there is some hybrid component and, if you're on Zoom more often, you have to figure out how you're going to be effective with networking and maintaining culture and all of the things that come with being in person.

The thing about zoom and my experience has been really the intention around how you need to use it effectively. We know, for example, that remote work can be very effective, but it needs to be structured in certain ways so that you don't lose connection with people.

It means you have to manufacture the connection a little bit more, you have to be more intentional about how you use zoom to connect with people, to network, and then, I think, it's also really important to scrutinize what is the kind of work that people should be in person for.

If you have an organization that wants some kind of a hybrid structure, it is really understanding what kind of work should be done in the office versus what should be done in zoom and for all workers to play in an environment where that comes forth in the most effective way.

I think what you're seeing right now is the result of the job market shifting. Companies are now looking at this as an opportunity where workers are not as likely to move because there isn't the kind of job environment we had a few years ago where people were able to find jobs easily. You see a lot of companies using this to bring back people into the office without really thinking through what that does to some of the folks that are going to be negatively impacted by that.

Do we really need people to be in the office to the degree that we want them to be in the office? Those kinds of things where we could meet in the middle.

We're accounting for the flexibility that will benefit under-represented groups and also being intentional about when we are in person and how we network, whether it's in person or virtual, that's all thought through so that people don't have obstacles resulting from not having really thought through those implications.

**Nicole McMackin**

It's interesting if you listen to and read the statistics on diverse groups and the ROI that they bring against non-diverse groups and it could be, and it shows up everywhere.

People have been talking about it for years, but what you're saying holds true and it's going to be a lot of work because the people that now are not going to be able to have a hybrid work or go back to the office or relocate after they've already relocated somewhere else because of the cost of living.

There are going to be minority groups, women and others so I think that the corporations have a lot of consideration to make and work to do in regards to how we bring hybrid back to the office and considerations around that.

Another thing that was really interesting that I heard a couple of weeks ago on the radio whereI think they were quoting Wall Street Journal or other news source and they were saying that jobs are moving back to the office and employers are looking for individuals who are going to be on site, and those are going to be the individuals that are going to be compensated higher than people who are working remote, as well as those are the individuals that are going to be elevating their career.

They're going to be looking from that pool of onsite committed individuals for their future leaders and managers within those organizations and that they had given that this would be the new norm by 2027, is that you were going to be compensated less if you work remote, you'll be compensated more for onsite and the leaders of the organizations are going to come from those workers that are there on site.

Have you heard anything of that sort?

**Kim Jones**

I've not heard this specific one, but I've heard versions of this, so for example there's some companies that are setting up regional pay structures, so if you decide your company's based in LA and you've moved to Idaho and you're working remotely from Idaho that they're actually adjusting your compensation levels to reflect the cost of living in the place where you now live, so that's one thing I've heard.

Also there are all kinds of different ways that companies are thinking about how they're going to handle this new kind of normal. We find ourselves in a place where employees have more options to work remotely. I think the one that you mentioned is not surprising to me at all, to hear that that's how companies are looking at it.

I think what companies are trying to figure out are the ways they can incentivize people back into the workplace, which is really fascinating, because overwhelmingly workers want the flexibility to be able to work from home and come to the office when it makes sense for them to come to the office.

But you have a lot of companies that are used to working in a certain environment, a lot of leaders who come from generations where they've only worked in the office.

How we bridge that gap is a really interesting question, because we know that because so many people want those flexible work schedules, companies that are able to accommodate that will likely have their top choice of candidates, they will be able to skim the cream of the crop.

It'll be interesting to see how companies start to think about this also as a competitive advantage for those who can do it well, and there's some really interesting data coming out of Gallup too about this whole idea of culture and how it impacts in a remote environment and Gallup did find actually in their latest study that hybrid work is the most effective.

It's more effective than 100% of the office and more effective than 100% remote so the order is: hybrid is most effective, remote is after that in-person full-time is least effective of all the models.

But what they have noted is that they're starting to see what's really important for engagement. When you don't have that inter-office communications all of the time, having one meaningful conversation with your employee once a week can be a differentiator in terms of being engaged in a loyal workforce.

So there are little things like that, techniques that we're starting to learn coming post covid, of what works in these remote environments, that I think companies can start to adopt to replace some of the cultural impacts of not always being in person and then allow them to compete for the top talent that really wants that flexibility.

**Nicole McMackin**

Wow, that's good stuff that is really interesting, and I'm curious about what happens in these next few years. We're seeing a real mix of our clients going back full-time, I think the remote companies may have a great opportunity to get some top tier talent for them and we never know, this Covid has changed things up so dramatically and put everything topsy-turvy.

Where we go from here is a new territory.

Kim, I want to thank you for today, this is so enlightening and I hope our listeners got quite a bit out of it.

I know I certainly did and love speaking to you constantly on any topic and you are a phenomenal speaker. I compliment you all the time, not because you're a woman but because I think you're really great.

**Kim Jones**

Oh my gosh thank you!

**Nicole McMackin**

How can our listeners find you?

**Kim Jones**

I can be found at KimJonesesAlliance.com, that is my website and my handle on LinkedIn is Kim Jones, so you can find me on LinkedIn and connect with me there as well.

**Nicole McMackin**

I hope they do, Kim is a phenomenal coach, phenomenal business leader and changing women's lives across the US.

**Kim Jones**

Thank you for all you do, thank you, Nicole! I can't thank you enough for all of the collaboration that we've had over the last couple of years, it really meant so much and thanks for having me on today!

**Nicole McMackin**

Thank you