

Represent! Getting Ahead as a Woman of Color in Tech Leadership



ABSTRACT

Tells us what your proposal is about.
*Must match what is in your submission

Leadership in tech requires a blend of technical, people and project management skills. Being a woman of color in this industry adds layers of complexity that can be challenging at best, prohibitive at worst. Hear leaders in various roles share experiences on thriving when you are the only woman and person of color at the table and how others can advocate for the unicorns in their organizations.

ourselves and our possibilities. Leadership is a common career path, yet the tech industry maintains low representation of women of color at the principal, management and executive level. This panel will share diverse experiences and perspectives on motivations, tools for growth and development, and strategies for dealing with the unique challenges that come from being a unicorn, the only woman of color in the room.

Perspectives will vary on priorities, methods and approaches, but the goal of all the participants is the empower and equip the attendees to pursue their goals as leaders in whatever roles they choose.

AUDIENCE

Tell reviewers who will benefit most from this submission

Early to mid-career woman of color and advocates. Women who are early in their career will appreciate seeing and hearing from a diverse representation of women leaders along varying possible career paths. Attendees who are thinking about shifting to management or even shifting roles will appreciate the first hand accounts of experiences and perspectives that can leverage the wisdom of the panel. Additionally, people who are invested in building diverse organizations and enabling them to thrive.

CORE POINT OF CONTENTION

The moderator and panelists all have different approaches to how we manage and move up in our career. Some panelists have very deliberately advanced in their careers, with clear and early defined goals, while other panelists have shifted, changed roles and even left engineering entirely only to return and fall into leadership by accident. As such, the views and experiences on how to advance and tackle the challenges that come with being an underrepresented race and gender, are diverse and varied.

INTRODUCTION

Representation matters, not only in the media but in the workforce. Diverse stories can influence how we see

The panelists will address underlying themes of expressing authenticity and prioritization. For example, a

common point of contention among professionals of color is code switching (the process of shifting from one communication style to another, depending on the social context or conversational setting). Panelists will share experiences from their careers where code switching was a necessity versus when it was a hindrance and what other approaches were adopted. Panelists will also share stories about adaptation versus bringing one's authentic self to the team and encouraging their team to as well in order to create a sense of belonging, teamwork, and well-being to their company.

PLAN OF ACTION

- Intended questions include:
 - Reports say that women continue to leave tech and women of color are still vastly underrepresented, especially at the executive levels. What inspires you to continue working in tech?
 - Do you feel the need to code-switch in your role? Has there been a time that code-switching helped or hindered your career?
 - Was there ever a time that a mentor, ally or advocate significantly impacted your career?
 - Leadership is not limited to managing others. What does it mean to you to be a leader? What skills did you purposely build to be a better leader and how did you do so?
 - We sometimes hear there can be competitiveness instead of camaraderie when another woman / woman of color joins the team. Do you think this is a real thing and how did you deal with it?
 - What tools and strategies do you use for ensuring your voice is heard? How do you bring your authentic self while still making a place at the table?
- The panelists have diverse experiences, backgrounds and perspectives including: working for companies in a range of stages from well established large enterprise to transitioning mid stage companies to startups; living/lived abroad; switching disciplines; leaving and returning to engineering; managing work/life balance between being single or having families

and children. One panelist even has a background in improv and has actively used this skill in her career. Because of these differences they have different points of view, especially among prioritization and expression of authentic self.

Good submissions allow reviewers to clearly visualize how this session will go

- The planned time frame for this panel is for one hour. There will be a brief introduction of the participants followed by a moderated Q&A with prepared questions and then a Q&A with the audience. Ideally, we would use two methods of gathering questions: (1) an online poll to gather questions that can also be upvoted and (2) a mic in the room.
- For a 1 hour session
 - 10 minutes - intros (2 minutes each)
 - 30 minutes - moderated Q&A
 - 18 minutes - audience Q&A
 - 2 minutes - closing remarks and contact information

OUTCOMES/CONCLUSION

Takeaways include:

- Strategies for moving into and moving up in leadership positions
- A toolbox of methods for dealing with the unique challenges to come from being a woman of color in tech
- Ways advocates can help support the women of color in their teams and orgs
- Ways unique experiences can contribute to your career success

PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

All panelists and the moderator have made a commitment to attend GHC 2019 and to participate in this panel session if it is accepted

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Moderator and panelists are both seasoned conference speakers with Panelist 2 having presented at GHC previously. Here are some links of previous conference talks by Panelist 2.

This section is required and should not be solely based on personal experience.

Author's name. (Date of publication). *Title of work*.
Retrieved month day, year, from full URL

Author's last name, first initial. (Publication date). Book
title. Additional information. City of publication:
Publishing company.

BIO

Only speakers can be listed here. Adding authors who are not presenting or exceeds the max limit may disqualify your submission for review.



Moderator Name, Title, Company
Moderator Bio

Let us know if the
moderator had any
prior experience
moderating a panel



Panelist 2 Name, Title, Company
Panelist 2 Bio



Panelist 3 Name, Title, Company
Panelist 3 Bio



Panelist 1 Name, Title, Company
Panelist 1 Bio



Panelist 4 Name, Title, Company
Panelist 4 Bio