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India & Global Edition



WONDER WOMEN

(INFLUENTIAL IT LEADERS)

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BB Professionals is HP Amplify Power Services Partner-certified as a specialist in Workstations, Managed

Product Review

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Together with HP, BB Professionals extends end-to-end solutions to exceed your business needs and outcomes. To know more about BB Professionals and HP Showcase products & services, visit <https://bbp.in/hp-showcase.php>!



 **A Complete
ICT Solutions
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Wonder Women:

Transforming the Tech Landscape

The Digitaltech Media Women Edition is always a special one (And no prizes for guessing). It is close to our heart because the e-magazine was inceptioned in July 2020 by a team comprising mostly women (of course, with due credit to the owner Mr. Keshav Joshi).

Having said that, we would like to draw your attention to the fact, that every year we bring out a special edition dedicated to women in technology who have not only made a difference in our lives (through the apt implementation of IT) but have also shown us how to lead by example.

The March 2022 e-magazine titled 'Wonder Women' is one of our prominent editions that highlight the work, career, and personal experiences of some of the top females in the industry, who indeed are 'Wonder Women' in their own capacity. Each one of them has gone through their share of ups & downs to leave an indelible impression on their subordinates, peers, co-workers, industry leaders and others in general.

We call them 'Wonder Women' because despite hailing from different segments, viz. IT, ITes, Telecom, BFSI, Healthcare, Security, Global, etc., they have created a mark for themselves, overcoming the usual biases of a male-dominated industry and pressure to perform, simply because they represented the opposite sex.

It sure wasn't a cakewalk for them. However, they have dared to break the norms, speak up for themselves, follow their passion, and bring innovativeness to the table, all through their careers and even now as they forge ahead with similar grit, enthusiasm, and determination.

Needless to mention, these powerful women have transformed the tech industry with adequate support from their families and mentors. They accomplished their respective feats while maintaining confidence, discipline, empathy, and work-life balance, and, as they move forward, each of these women continues to remain on a relentless pursuit of excellence.

Challenges are Hidden Opportunities for Growth

Dr. Harpreet A De Singh

President IWPA
(Indian Women Pilots Association
and International Women
Professionals of Aviation
and Aerospace)

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Women need to build their IQ and PSQ and work with a smile, empathy, and cooperation to achieve success.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

I think it is all in the head. You need to prove yourself with a good product or solution, and then there would be no bias.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

I wouldn't say that. I was a driven professional and the only woman surrounded by men, because of which I always felt concerned about my performance. I would have probably worked in the same manner had I been a man.

4 *Best Career Advice Received*

I think from my father who said- Be a learner all your life. You will grow in your life if you are a seeker of true knowledge.

5 *Valued leadership Skill?*

I don't expect people to follow me blindly. I involve people in decision-making and take their feedback seriously.

With more than three decades of experience behind her, Harpreet A. De Singh- Executive Director - Air India Ltd. has worked at multiple levels in the aviation sector, including the former CEO at Alliance Air. The first woman CEO in the aviation industry, Wonder Woman Harpreet dons several hats. She is a reiki healer, President of the IWPA (Indian Women Pilots Association), and International Women Professionals in Aviation and Aerospace. Harpreet also engages in numerous social activities and firmly believes in the true power of the Almighty—the guiding force in her life.

Contribution to the IT sector

In all my portfolios, I was an instructor of pilots, and being a pilot myself, we used digital technology to the extreme. I may not have been the actual person in charge of IT systems, but I have been an IT enabler in many ways. I have encouraged IT systems in the offices of our airlines to make them digitally advanced.

Biggest Achievements

One of my biggest achievements was being the first lady CEO in the aviation sector in our country. I am also the first Indian to receive the IATA inspirational role model award, held in Boston in 2021.

Challenges on the Path to Success

I have never viewed the challenges in my life as a challenge. I think of any challenge as an opportunity to learn. I am in an industry where there are hardly any women in the technical line. But I feel that it is your merit that has to shine. For me, the IQ, EQ, and PSQ (Purity of Soul Quotient) are my mantras to success.

Biggest Support System

My parents, especially my father, have been my biggest support. Apart from this, my greatest support system is my belief in the almighty. When you get a little shaken, you must remember it is God's will and treat it as a gift.

The Career Turning Point

It was when I lost my flying license due to medical reasons.

I restarted my entire aviation career and later climbed up the success ladder. I had faith in the almighty and the world drama, so I decided to never give up and fought my way up in the industry.

5 Years from Now You will be...

These days I am helping others and carrying out a host of social activities. I have always believed in motivating, mentoring, and guiding others. I tell every woman on my team that if you motivate fifty other women like you to be even better than you, then much of your job is done.

Favourite Pastime

I am writing my own book presently. It is about my spiritual experiences, journey, visions, and guidance from various angels. I do past life regressions and future life regressions to help people understand their innate nature without charging them anything. I believe that being a reiki healer, I must help people connect to the almighty.



Balancing Leadership, Confidence, and Empathy in Style

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Same attributes that make a successful man leader – vision, integrity, empathy, drive.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

The most important action to take is to bring diversity in hiring decisions, accept that we all have unconscious biases – acknowledge it, and plan to address them.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

While the situation is changing, it is still not equal for all women in the industry. Conscious actions to bring diversity will correct this.

4 *Best Career Advice Ever Received*

As you grow in your career, you will achieve through your teams. It's all about people. So treat others the way you want to be treated.

5 *What is your most valued leadership skill?*

Balance of being confident, strong, and empathetic.

With a deep-rooted passion for supporting women in technology, Rucha Nanavati is unlike any other female who firmly believes in speaking up against discriminatory behaviour coming from both men and women. Rucha stepped into the IT sector when she first discovered her penchant for coding. Since then, this Wonder Woman has been a proud member of the 'Girls Who Code' organization while relentlessly working to deliver business value.

Rucha Nanavati
CIO,
Mahindra Group



Inspiration to join the IT industry

During the final year of my electronic and communications engineering, I took a computer coding class and fell in love with coding. I have had an amazing journey ever since. You must have heard of the organization known as "Girls Who Code"- I am one of those. I later completed my Master's in computer science with a specialization in software engineering to grow further.

I have had the fortune of working in various industries - viz., manufacturing, retail, grocery, hi-tech. My profession allowed me to gather unique experiences while working with global teams.

Biggest Achievements

My biggest achievements have been my ability to mentor others and help them achieve their career goals. Motivating cross-functional, cross geography teams and fostering a productive team culture to deliver business value is what I count as an achievement as well.

Challenges Encountered on the Path to Success

The challenge mostly has been that people make assumptions- I may not want to travel, I may not want to put extra effort, may not want a role because there will be intense work.

Also, I have come across behaviour or language that was not acceptable. I have learned to speak up and share that it is not ok. Most people are not aware that they are being discriminatory, and when told, they learn and correct.

Biggest Support System

Family is always the biggest support system. Also, the friends I made over the years have become like family and stood by me through thick and thin.

Career Turning Point

I have experienced two turning points in life so far. First was gaining awareness of my strength - for instance, during the initial phase of my career, I realized that I was good at understanding business and how technology could solve problems -

and add value. That helped me become a trusted partner for my business counterparts as I was naturally able to bring people together to achieve a common goal.

The second turning point was when someone else saw my strengths when I was at a point of low confidence and directed me to use those effectively.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

I will leave the titles aside and would want to be in a place where the impact is larger not only in terms of contribution to technology deliveries and business outcomes but also in the form of helping the next generation of leaders grow. I also hope to have made a difference in promoting women in technology.

Favourite Hobby

I am an amateur artist - I paint with oil colours, sometimes with acrylics too. I am also an outdoor lover and enjoy hiking.



Rewriting the Rules of Success While Combatting Biases

Anindita Guha

Senior Director -
New Products and Growth,
Gupshup Technologies

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Along with IQ, the EQ and empathy that a woman leader brings to the table. It is important to understand customers, peers, colleagues, leaders, and competition.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

By being objective. Excellence sees no bias.

3 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

Focus on excellence. Other things will get sorted automatically. No glass ceiling can hold you back. Have the courage to accept your fears and speak up for what is right. Be the child who dared to say, 'The emperor has no clothes.' That brings humility and the ability to see the obvious, which I feel is often missed.

4 *Most valued leadership skill?*

Ability to speak reality.

With over 13 years in the IT industry, Anindita has come a long way from having no education in technology to translating tech to English and taking it to people. Today, she successfully handles end customers across 56 countries while maintaining sharp focus, and extending customer satisfaction. Read on to find out what Anindita, one of the prominent faces on our list of Wonder Women has to share about her life & career experiences and how she looks forward to ensuring that girls get free access to technology in the days to come.

Inspiration to Join the IT Bandwagon

I am not a techie by education. I identify more with abstract layers of the art form. But I happened to meet Beerud Sheth, Co-founder & CEO of Gupshup, who made me realize that I could synthesize complex technology in an easy-to-understand model. I realized that my greatest strength is the ability to think nonlinearly. What intrigued me when I joined the IT industry was the lack of simple common sense and the ability to connect with base reality. User experience (UX) wasn't a familiar concept then, and tech was perceived as backend coding, or call centers. That inspired me- I felt I was uniquely positioned to see the missing link and bridge this gap. I could assimilate and take tech - in simple English - and familiarize the -

power of technology to the larger ecosystem. And I haven't looked back ever since.

Biggest Achievements

My ability to foresee the entire customer journey while helping Gupshup scale quickly with multiple products across varied geographies.

Challenges encountered

Common biases since I am a woman and from an arts background. Unconventional, right?

Biggest Support System

My mentor- Beerud. He gave me difficult challenges with absolute confidence. He chiselled me in such a way that today I deal with end customers in 56 countries - in different timezones and languages - with the same principles: humility, agility, and razor-sharp focus on customer delight.

The turning point in Career

Meeting Beerud, after which I was inspired to join the IT industry.

Career Growth Plan

I want to build platforms to help girls to access good and free technology. I hope to encourage girls to embrace technology and apply it to newer fields and avenues. I aim to reduce this inherent fear of tech (or at least the perception around it), especially in girls. I think women bring something very different to the table and that talent can change the way people use tech.

Favourite Pastime

I am a full-time working mother with a kid giving his boards. But I like to pray - thank the force above for giving me this opportunity to unravel this amazing web of solutions - those that help better mankind with each passing day.

Leading the Way in the Tech Space

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

One who is poised to make their mark as a leader – confident, empathetic, business savvy, and not worry about gender as either leverage or a constraint.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

By staying aware and educated on the latest technology, security trends, and happenings in the industry so as to be able to engage and participate with peers as equals – in capability and positioning.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

No. I didn't ever feel I need to work extra hard to prove my worth just because I'm a woman – I rather worked extra hard so that I can put up learned, confident views and solutions that are respected and thereby accepted by all; I'd have done the same had I been a male, it's one of the traits I believe for a successful leader

4 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

To have a well-charted career plan for the next 2–5–10 years, with steps chalked out to reach the milestones and progress as per plan, to never let chance or biases take the focus away from the plan.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

Creative problem solving customized for the business situation and stakeholder expectations.

Mayurakshi Ray has made numerous contributions to the IT industry. Not only has this Wonder Woman led and implemented multiple enterprise-level security and governance programs across multiple sites (over 50), but has also ensured that these programs are successfully completed within the defined timelines.

Mayurakshi Ray
Founder & CEO,
Weave Story



Furthermore, she hopes to make her mark within the sphere of emerging technologies, such as Cloud, Blockchain, and AI.

Here, she discusses her life experiences and career goals, as well as overcoming industry biases.

Inspiration to Join the IT Bandwagon

I joined the Information Security practice with a Big4 when the very term and concept of security was nascent. My innate curiosity to learn and work in a field related to technology, computers, and technology risk management made me jump at the opportunity.

I had worked on information security designing enterprise security programs, security assessments, data security and protection, third party risk management, and large, multi-location security implementations before the concept changed to cyber security, where I led the solution design and -

security programs around Security GRC tools, Identity & Access Management, application security, SIEM, and cloud.

I also got the opportunity to work extensively on GRC (Governance, Risk & Compliance), implementing large SOX, risk management, security compliance, and data privacy programs for large IT & ITes clients, both as a consultant and CXO. I've led and achieved leading security certification programs such as HITRUST, PCI DSS, HIPAA, SAS70/SSAE 16 / SSAE 18 / SOC 2, and ISO 27001.

Biggest Achievements

I have worked with clients in India, SEA, Europe, and the USA, and could blend in the cultural fit with the solution strategy to meet client requirements. As a CXO, I have led my organizations through some of the major disasters, with zero or negligible downtime and business -

loss. I've been recognized as one of India's Top 100 CISOs three years in a row.

Biggest Support System

My husband. I can rely on him for anything from emotional support to technical education. On the career side, I'd been fortunate to have mentors and guides from time to time, who've given me excellent professional guidance and support.

The Way Forward

I want to pursue what I feel most excited about - being a trusted business advisor and strategic consultant to my clients. I want to make my mark in some of the emerging technologies such as Cloud, Blockchain, and AI as those will shape how we'll live and work in the future.

Favourite Pastime

I love to read & travel and I love seeing new places and exploring the world.



Walking the Talk and Leading from the Front

Srabasti Bhattacharjee

EVP Technology Projects
in Vodafone Idea Ltd.



Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Resilience and create coping mechanisms

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

I think the work speaks - so one should ignore and focus on their work. Slowly yet steadily, biases are diluting, and as seniors we need to support other females. If you still face issues - speak up.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

Yes, we have to, I did. People have pre-conceived notions around mobility, time at work, maternity breaks for females. Every ambitious female has to work twice to prove that she means business.

4 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

It was from my mother- "Spend at least 10% of your income on your house help, chauffeur, etc." and do not try to please everyone.

5 *What is your most valued leadership skill?*

I walk the talk and lead from the front.

Breaking stereotypical thoughts has been Srabasti Bhattacharjee's biggest achievement as she continues to strive and break the norms as well as lift other women in the field of IT. Below, find out how Srabasti, a truly enigmatic Wonder Woman has overcome prejudices to set examples for other leaders.

Inspiration to Join the Industry

My journey began in the telecom industry in 2001 when the emphasis was on expanding radio networks. However, I was able to add value after I became responsible for the Core networks and CTO, which was mostly on OSS/BSS. Digital transformation, Virtualisation, and Business Intelligence came into life around 2013-14, and there has been no looking back since then. I liked the algorithmic play and how every activity could be logically coded and derived.

Biggest Achievements

My biggest achievement was to break a few stereotypical thoughts of what a girl is capable of achieving. I joined the army after completing my Bachelor of Engineering and was a part of the first 100 ladies recruited into the Indian Army. I still remember how my father had put on a tie for the first time for my commissioning ceremony.

I ran Operations and became CTO in Telecom Circle, and I was the only female CTO in my organization. During my tenure, I increased the female percentage in technology while grooming them to my satisfaction, which I feel was a major achievement.

I cherish my tenure in Ghana the most since I was declared the Best CTO of Ghana in 2019 by the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana.

Challenges Encountered

I encountered many challenges due to prejudices and pre-conceived notions, while the rest were self-created. I always believed in earning respect and not demanding it. This was tough as many people were not used to female leaders.

Biggest Support System

My biggest support system has been my family. My mother stayed with me for four years when I was blessed

with a baby as I was posted in the western sector and had to go for operations.

My husband and son have also been supportive and accepted my career and the priority I gave to my job.

The Turning Point in Career

The turning point in my career was when I came across an advertisement in a daily newspaper that mentioned the recruitment of Women Officers into the Indian Army. My seniors then ensured that I took the plunge and joined the academy.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

I dream of an Industry with 20% females in middle and senior management. I want to work for girls in STEM - coach them - mentor them. I would want to become a transformational leader and contribute to society.

Favourite Hobby

I am fond of gardening, sketching, and painting. I also like to idle around with a book and travel the world.



Working her way up the Corporate Ladder With Confidence

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Self-belief, Never Give Up attitude, and effective communication

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Battling workplace biases require a deliberate strategy that includes hiring more women and nurturing them for the next level.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

Yes, we have to. People try to pull women down when they are on their way up to become a leader.

4 *Best career advice ever received*

Plan your career path effectively and develop the skills required to walk on that path.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

Integrity and Empathy.

Having donned multiple hats in the field of IT & Telecom, Saloni Vijay is our special wonder woman who has always focused on implementing technology to make people's life easier and better. She grabbed several awards and accolades on her way up the career ladder and has emerged as a successful leader willing to go the extra mile to deliver outcomes that matter.

Saloni Vijay

Head -
Risk and Security Assurance,
Vodafone Idea Limited



Inspiration to Join the Industry

I have played multiple roles in technology, and some of my contributions include:

- Creating an in-house platform for the charging/subscription of Value Added Services.
- Deployment of a packet core platform to carry internet traffic generated from mobile to the internet gateway for the western region of Vodafone India.
- Managing the IT operations and service deliveries for the entire east and west part of the organization.
- Assuring the security and risk management for the IT and Telecom network of Vodafone Idea.

I enjoy programming & coding and have always been interested in exploring technology that brings better efficiency and capability through automation. I wanted to join an industry where innovations and services made lives easier, and that is how I ended up in the Telecom sector.

Biggest Achievements

won the Editor's Choice "Change Agent" award at the "Women in

Itech" Forum, organized by the Economic Times and Femina, in the "Technology Disruption" category in Feb 2021. I was also the top 11 Amazing Women in Vodafone Idea Ltd. in 2021. Additionally, I was also featured amongst the "5 Leading Tech Ladies of India" in the Women Entrepreneur magazine in Sep 2020.

Challenges Encountered on the Path to Success

One of the challenges was work-life balance, i.e., to give my best and 100% at both places was a huge challenge, especially during the early motherhood phases. Another challenge was getting an equal seat at the table. Technology is a male-dominated sector, and as women, we have to go the extra mile to prove our competency.

Biggest Support System

My family has been my biggest support system.

My husband babysat on several occasions when I was traveling during night hours due to work. He always motivates me to take challenges and choose the roles that excited me.

My mother-in-law has always supported me to raise my child with good values that helped me focus on my career.

The Career Turning Point

During a mentorship program, my mentor asked about my career graph, plans, and readiness to reach the position I was aiming for. That was when I realized that I had not planned anything and was going with the flow. It was a turning point for me as it prompted me to create both short-term and long-term plans for my career.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

I have transitioned my career from IT to security and currently heading the risk management & security assurance function for Vi. There is so much to learn in cyber security, such as IoT security, cloud security, telecom security, incident management, cyber forensic, etc. I plan to acquire certifications like CISM & CISSP and aim to be a CISO in 3-5 years.

Favourite Hobby

I love to spend time with family & friends, do my Yoga and travel as well as explore new places.



The Innovative, Impactful and Inspiring Leader

Anita Kukreja

Head –
Marketing and Channel Sales,
Icewarp



Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Perseverance, Grit, Tenacity, and Adaptability.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Bridge the wage gap. The visibility of female role models across a business is vital.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

Yes, as a woman, you are judged and looked upon for the balance you can create between work and home duties.

4 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

Be confident yet humble and a lifelong learner.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

Integrity, Dependability, and Relationship Building.

Having spearheaded the first Managed Services model in India, Ankita Kukreja is undoubtedly one of those Wonder Women who has held on to discipline and focus to carve her niche in the industry. She enjoys working with new brands and steering them to new heights, experimenting with innovative ideas all the way through.

Contributions to the IT sector

My journey in the industry was by chance and not a planned one. Today, I feel I was made for this industry. There is so much to look forward to every day. You get to experiment and are never bored with the on-goings.

I look at my contributions of being able to create brands from scratch. I have been associated with new brands mostly or departments that are new in the company. With my experience, I have been able to create visibility for the brands as well as functions.

Biggest Achievements

I am passionate about brands. Hence seeing the brand getting recognition in the industry & within the community gives me the high. Working with brands in their nascent stage and taking them to their peak is something I enjoy. I am honoured to have been recognized by various platforms as an Innovative, Impactful, and Inspirational Leader.

Challenges on the Path to Success

The road to success has not been easy, but I am grateful to my mentors for guiding me. I had the fortune of -

working with the best brains in the industry.

I firmly believe that your success is driven by your mindset. With discipline and focus, you can ensure that the obstacles never hold you back.

Biggest Support System

I am fortunate to have a supportive family that understands that work is an integral part of my identity. My husband Kamal and 9-year-old son Manit have been very supportive during the tough times. I love the way my son and husband support me and give me special treatment whenever I get back from work. In turn, I reciprocate by spending quality time with them.

The Career Turning Point

The turning point in my career would be working with SecureSynergy. I am glad I was a part of the first Managed

Services model in the country. It was a wonderful team to work with, and the best of the mentors shaped me as a professional. I owe my success, name, and fame to this organization.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

My vision is to be an honest, empathetic, and impactful leader in my domain. I also want to see more and more women leaders coming up. My mission is to create and lead a dream team where everyone is performing to their strengths.

Favourite Hobby

I love reading and also exploring new places & cultures with my family. I remember having spent some good time with one of our family friends and getting to know the village life in the Himachal. It was a beautiful experience for all of us.

Creating Value in the Cyber Security Space

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Trust in themselves.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Be the change you want to see!

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

Yes, sometimes.

4 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

Never compete with anyone but yourself.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

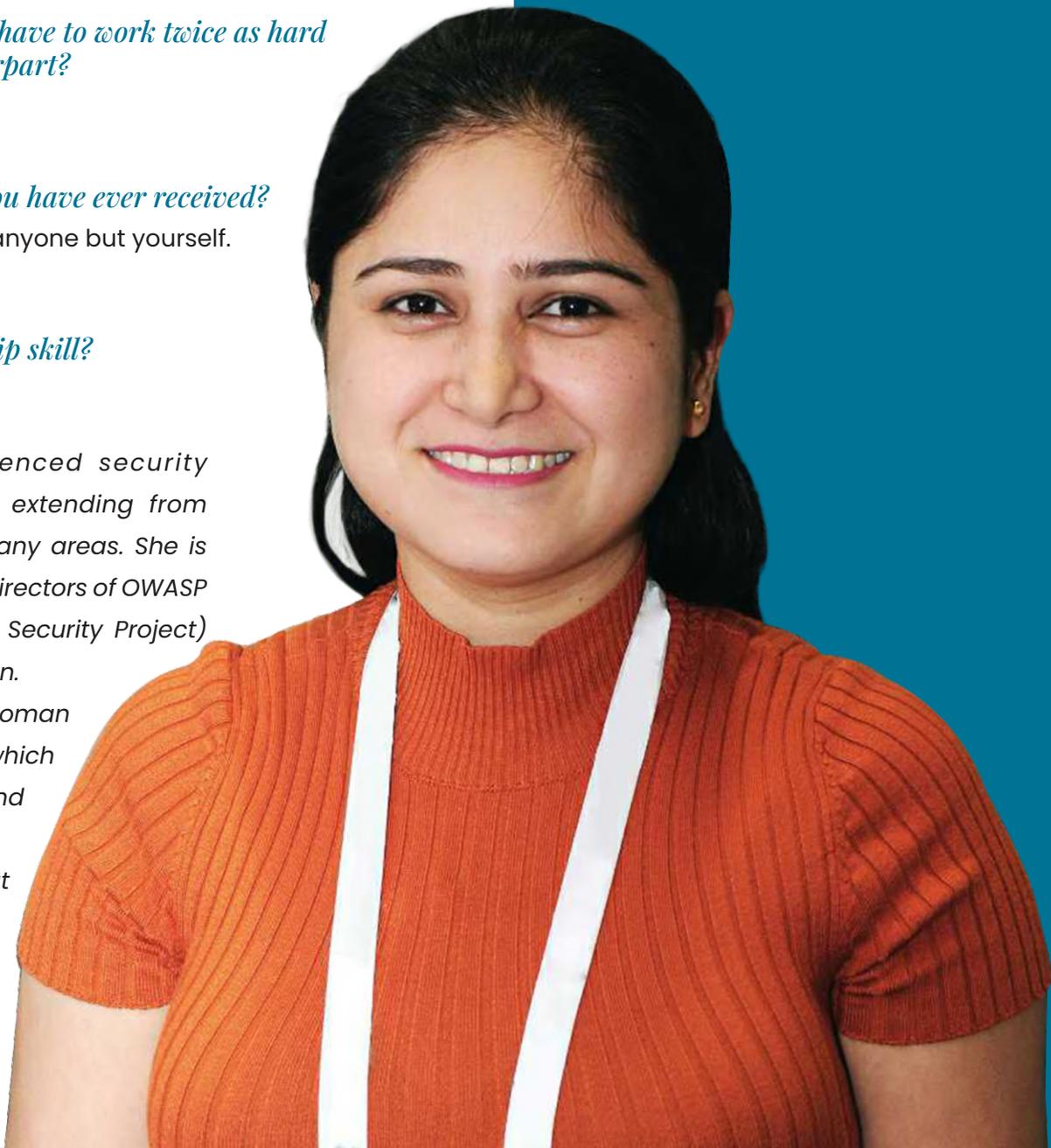
Empathy

Vandana is an experienced security specialist with expertise extending from application security to many areas. She is currently on the Board of Directors of OWASP (OWASP Web Application Security Project) and holds the Chair position.

She is the first Indian and woman to be the Chair of OWASP, which is a huge community around the globe. She is also a Security Relations Leader at Snyk.

Vandana Verma

Security Relations Leader,
Snyk



She is also a recipient of the Global cybersecurity influencer among IFSEC Global's "Top Influencers in Security and Fire" award in 2019. She has been the recipient of the Indian Achiever's Award 2021.

Vandana is also the founder of InfosecKids, a community for kids and parents for teaching their kids how to be safe and secure online.

Here, take a sneak-peak at this inspirational wonder woman's life and career to understand how she forged equal growth opportunities for all.

Contributions to the IT industry

My experience as a keynote speaker includes Global OWASP AppSec, BlackHat, and BSides conferences. I am constantly collaborating with leaders of different niches and -

spreading the message that knowledge should be shared.

Recently, I held a series of 'Leaderspeak' events where I spoke to titans of their fields. Furthermore, I founded InfosecGirls and InfosecDiversity, groups aiming to empower women, students, and parents not only to join the workforce armed with expertise but also to speak out and actively contribute to the application security community.

Biggest Achievements

People have benefited from the content that I share and my contribution to the community.

Challenges encountered on your path to success

My own biases have been the main challenges that I encountered in life.

Biggest Support System

My family and mentors.

The Career Turning Point

Joining the cyber security communities marked a turning point in my career.

Way forward

I want to be a technical leader and always believe in short-term goals; five years is a very long time. However, I do want to contribute back to the community and make sure people benefit from it.

Favourite pastime

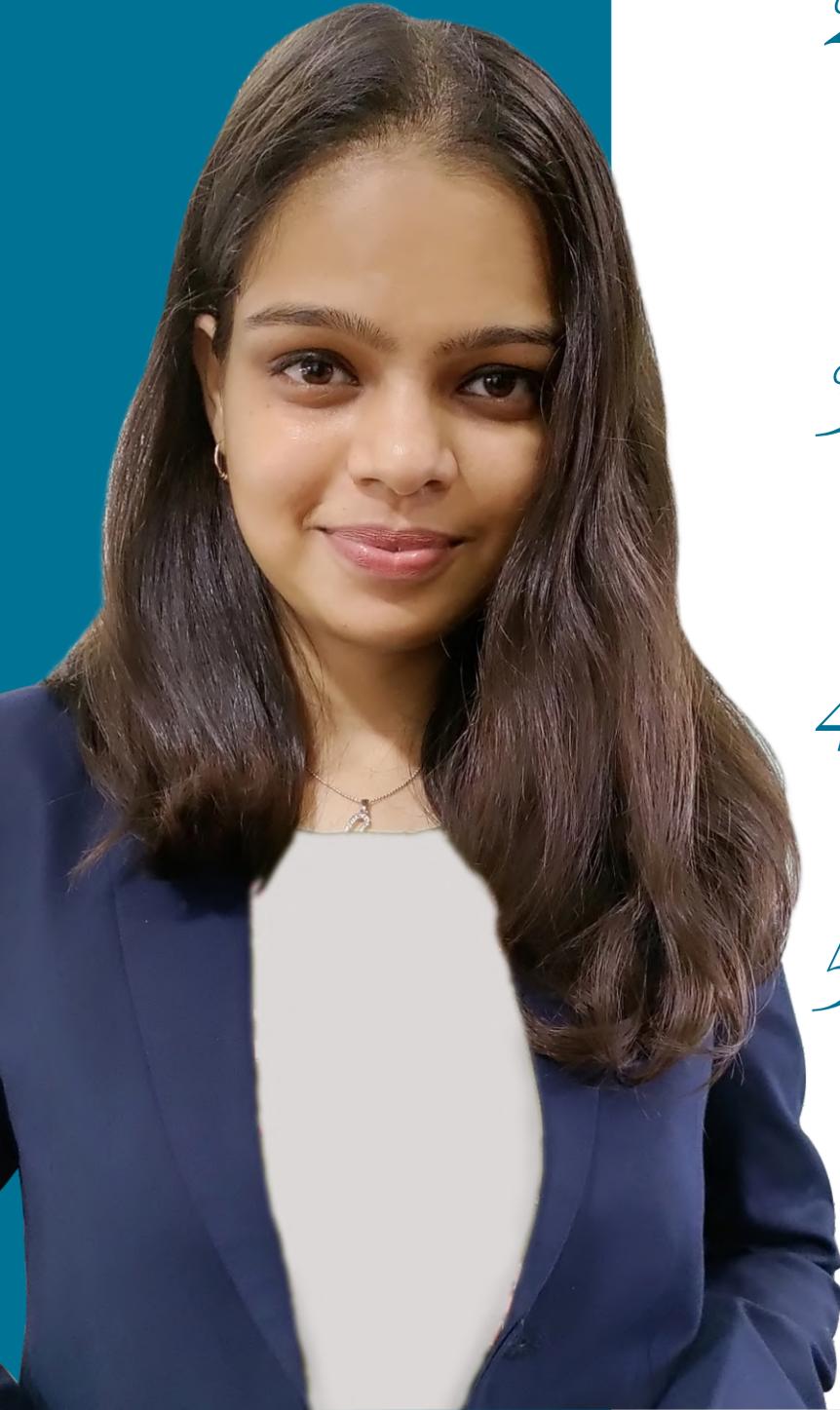
I love creating content on YouTube and my website for the people in security and outside security.



Cybersecurity Has Been the Driving Force in My Career

Mohinee Singh

Assistant Vice President,
Cyberfrat



Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

A successful woman leader is independent, confident, and demonstrates empathy.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Organizations can assist female employees in retaining their jobs by implementing methods that address their specific issues and cultivating an environment of equality, open communication, and respect that encourages top performance for all employees.

3 *Do you feel that you must work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

I believe talent has no gender. Besides, my manager has always motivated me to give my best and has never pressured me based on gender.

4 *What was the best career advice you have ever received?*

Nobody is perfect. Nobody comes with all the required skills and knowledge. "Bas andar aag honi chahiye sikhne ki aur aage badhne ki."

5 *What is your most valued leadership skill?*

Make firm decisions regardless of criticism and peer pressure.

Inspiration to Join the Industry

Cyber Security has been a major driving force for Mohinee Singh that further led her to pursue a career in the field. She reveals that after falling victim to online fraud, she gained an interest in Cyber Security, as well as a sense of social responsibility. With Mohinee's expertise and wealth of knowledge, she knew exactly what had to be done. Read more about this Wonder Woman to discover her challenges and achievements in the IT industry.

Inspiration to Join the IT Bandwagon

Cyber Security was one of the major driving forces behind my joining the industry. It is an integral part of IT as it helps to safeguard the privacy of every individual. My inquisitiveness about this field increased more after falling prey to online fraud by myself. When I received the opportunity to work in this sector, I felt socially responsible for spreading awareness about online frauds.

Biggest Achievements

Every significant contribution from my side that helped the overall growth of the company was my - greatest achievement. Being the first employee, I have witnessed the entire process from budding to blooming of this company.

Challenges encountered

Initially, it was difficult to step out of my comfort zone and execute the tasks assigned. But once I stepped out, I have always pushed myself to take up challenges and use them as opportunities to evolve and grow.

Overcoming criticism and discouraging comments like- "you do not deserve this", "you look childish", and comments that make you feel incapable, is a task.

Biggest Support System

My family and Mr. Gaurav Batra, the CEO at CyberFrat.

My family has always had my back and only encouraged me to keep believing in myself, while Mr. Batra provided me with opportunities that helped me to grow as an individual.

Every time he sees me lose my mental shape, he calls me up to remind me, "Mera Sher hai tu" (You are my lion). His encouraging words like - "You are the Energy" empower me as energy can neither be created nor destroyed but only converted from one form to another.

The Turning Point in Career

My promotion to AVP was a major turning point in my career. After that, my life changed significantly. There were new levels of stress and expectations that everyone had of me. I am grateful for the opportunity and enjoy leading.

The Way Forward

I see myself becoming a strong and successful leader with a great passion for my work and enthusiasm that will further help me to inspire others

Favourite pastimes

I enjoy spending my free time sketching and creating art. Other than that, I enjoy playing foosball. I like spending time alone and reflecting on the events of my life.



From Engineering to Tech Entrepreneur—A Journey Worth Taken

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Passion and Perseverance in whatever you do.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Don't focus on the biases – think of how you can contribute, communicate, speak up, and make a difference.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

Yes, but this is to ensure that we are present to meet the challenges our roles offer – with full commitment, drive, knowledge, and effort.

4 *Best Career Advice Ever Received*

A senior mentor once shared his life mantra – to focus on new things that can disrupt rather than incremental improvement projects. I have followed that principle in life.

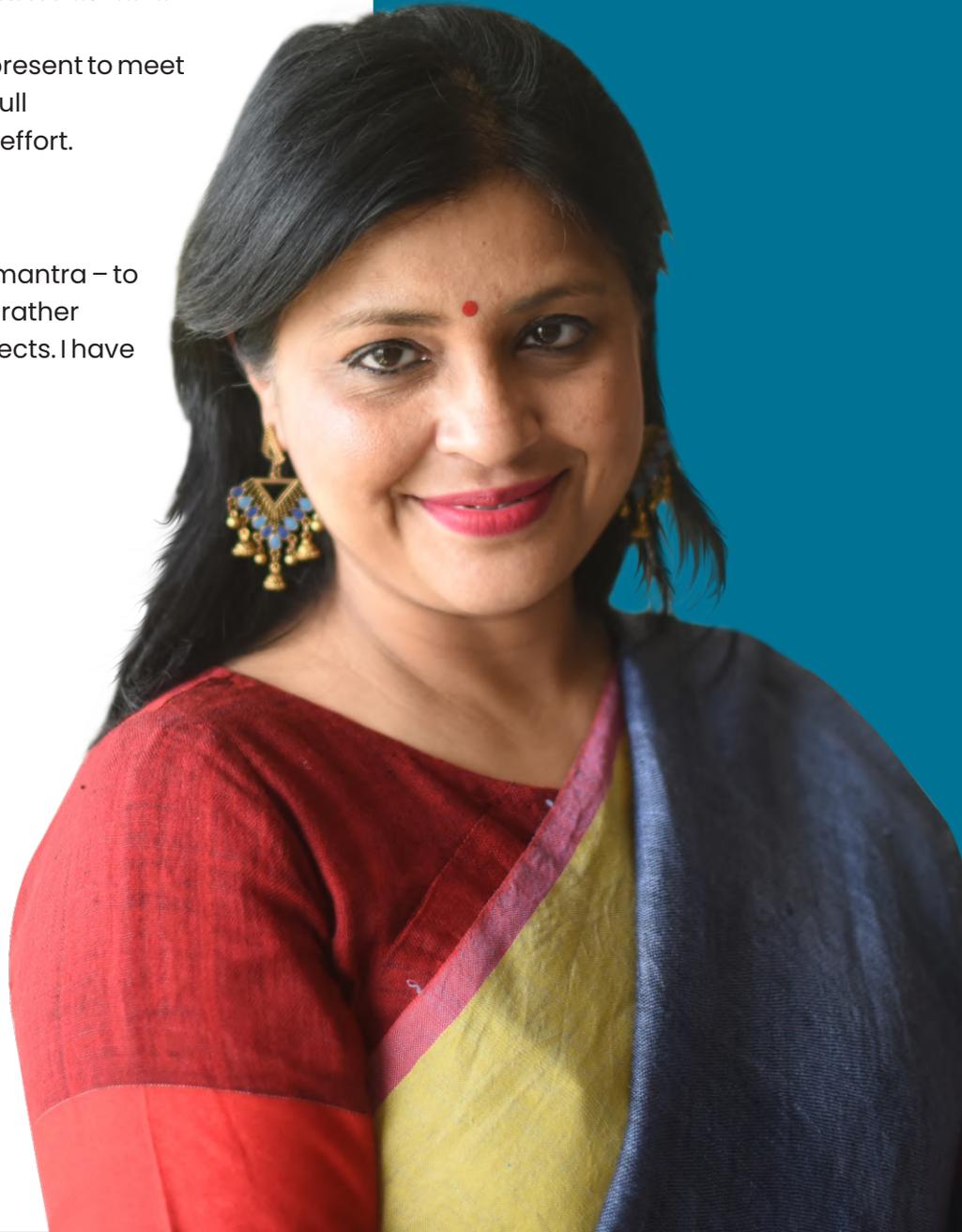
5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

Integrity & Imagination

Wonder Women Amrita Chowdhury's journey from engineering to business personnel, and now a tech entrepreneur, has been a fascinating one. She has transitioned from executive leadership to board-level roles while embarking on her entrepreneurial venture Gaia with ease and perfection. Take a sneak-peak into her life and career lessons to discover what makes her one of the leading ladies in the tech industry today.

Amrita Chowdhury

*Co-Founder and CEO,
Gaia Smart Cities*



Journey in the Tech Industry

Over the last decade, we have seen multiple segments disrupted to become technology-led and data-driven. It is a fantastic time to be in the tech domain. My journey has allowed me to evolve from an engineer to a business person to a tech entrepreneur.

Biggest Achievements

As an entrepreneur, my company Gaia is building solutions that blend digital applications and platforms, along with the internet of things, artificial intelligence and machine learning, data analytics, communications and cloud infrastructure, and rapid visualization.

As an Independent Director on the Boards of several listed companies, I bring the technology lens to boardroom discussions. I can see how technology is critical to unlocking growth and managing enterprise risks.

Challenges Encountered on the Path to Success

As a tech entrepreneur, I am always looking to measure and monitor the business impact of technology solutions we build.

This has multiple elements. The solution design needs to consider many factors such as environmental and operational challenges, process automation requirements to meet current and future needs, and user-centric design.

The solution implementation must ensure repeatability, reliability, and data security. The data generated from our systems must create decision support systems for our clients and help them monitor and improve their operations.

The critical challenge lies in imagining new solutions and the rigor as well as detailing needed to ensure solutions are successfully implemented and adopted. This is an ongoing process in our journey – which is both a challenge and an opportunity.

Biggest Support System

My biggest support system has been my co-founders and our team. Entrepreneurship is like a continuous marathon, and we need to draw motivation and strength from inside ourselves and from each other. Hence, the dynamics and trust level are critical.

The Career Turning Point

The first part of my journey has been fairly traditional, starting as an engineer and then moving from product innovation to strategy consulting to executive management. The recent turning points have coincided – where I have transitioned from executive leadership to Board level roles while at the same time starting my entrepreneurial journey. It allows me to look at business and technology at both the operations level and the governance level.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

We are at the tipping point of an explosion in technology inclusion and enablement in wide-area operations, workforce, and workflow management for enterprises, infrastructure, and cities. Over the next five years, I am looking forward to taking Gaia along in its journey of newer solutions, newer clients, and newer markets.

Favourite Hobby

I have always been into literature and creative arts and crafts as hobbies. While I have published books of fiction in the past, during the pandemic, I collaborated with Crosshairs Communications and Women Inspiring Network to create an online video platform called WinningMinds.

Making Failure Her Biggest Teacher on the Road to Success

Pooja Chatrath
CIO, Cryoviva India

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Leading by example—A successful woman also tends to lead by example. They set the tone for the workplace and learn from the people they looked up to as they moved up the ladder.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Women are still underpaid compared to their male colleagues, and many constantly worry about being forgotten once they opt for maternity leave. Tackling unconscious bias to hire more diverse employees and making changes towards inclusion is an excellent way of encouraging more women into technology.

3 *Do you feel that you must work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

Although scenarios have changed a lot in the past 20 years, expectations from women continue to remain higher. Women have to prove more, whether in the board room or even when it comes to their salary structure.

4 *Best Career Advice Received*

To be an active listener and focus and work on self-improvement.

5 *Most Valued Leadership Skill?*

I believe leadership itself is the most valued skill that I possess. A good leader can bring out the best in his/her team and motivate everyone to work together to achieve a shared goal.

Pooja Chatrath is a Wonder Woman of different sorts. With extensive experience in directing cross-functioned teams in the design & integration of leading-edge technology solutions, she is currently handling the IT setup of RJC Corp Healthcare Companies in India, Singapore, and Thailand. During her career, she has worked with leading organizations such as Dr. Lal Path Labs, Team Computers, and Silicon Graphics, among others. An active member of the CIO Forum across India, she opines that failure is the best teacher. Read on to find out how she has emerged as one of the top women leaders in the industry today.

Inspiration to join this industry

Being a science student, I had options for engineering and medical. However, Computer Science had emerged as a new stream by then. I took to BSC Computer Science and embarked on my journey in the IT sector. I have never looked back since.

Biggest Achievements

My biggest achievement is yet to come. For me, failure is the best teacher. It helps people pivot in ways one probably wouldn't have otherwise.

Challenges Encountered on the Path to Success

I feel that maintaining a work-life balance is one of the biggest challenges. As you climb the career ladder, creating your position in the board room also becomes a tough task. There are different standards for women and men, especially if women are assertive. Men can demonstrate 30 to 40 percent success, and that is enough. Women have to demonstrate 100 percent success to get the same outcome as men.

Biggest Support System

My biggest support has been myself, my family, and my teams. I have always been a person who learns from mistakes and introspects a lot. My family has always been there, especially my husband and son. They understand my priorities towards work and career.

I have been blessed with teams that have been supportive and performing to the best of their abilities. Spiritual Guru Shridi Sai Baba has also been one of the guiding forces in my life.

The Career Turning Point

The biggest turning point was when I joined Qlikview (BI Tool) as Team Leader at Team computers. That decision was a game-changer for my career, as it helped me transition from a backend developer to a Business Intelligence analyst way back in 2005.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

I see myself investing more in soft skills development to attain success. As a CIO, I can always hire and train people with deep technology expertise but to be an effective part of the board, I should be able to explain the benefits of technology strategies in a common business language.

Favourite Hobby

My favorite pastime has been reading books, cooking, photography, driving, and spending time with my kids.



Less Cribbing and More Sincere Efforts- the Key to Achieve Goals

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Women are born leaders. I feel perseverance, confidence & compassion are some of the qualities that define a successful woman.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

The IT industry is driven by skill & knowledge irrespective of gender, caste, and creed. If one has the drive and skills, then there is no limit.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

When I started my career, people had the mindset that women cannot survive the pressure and demands of the industry. However, things have changed, and the industry is more welcoming now.

4 *Best Career Advice Ever Received*

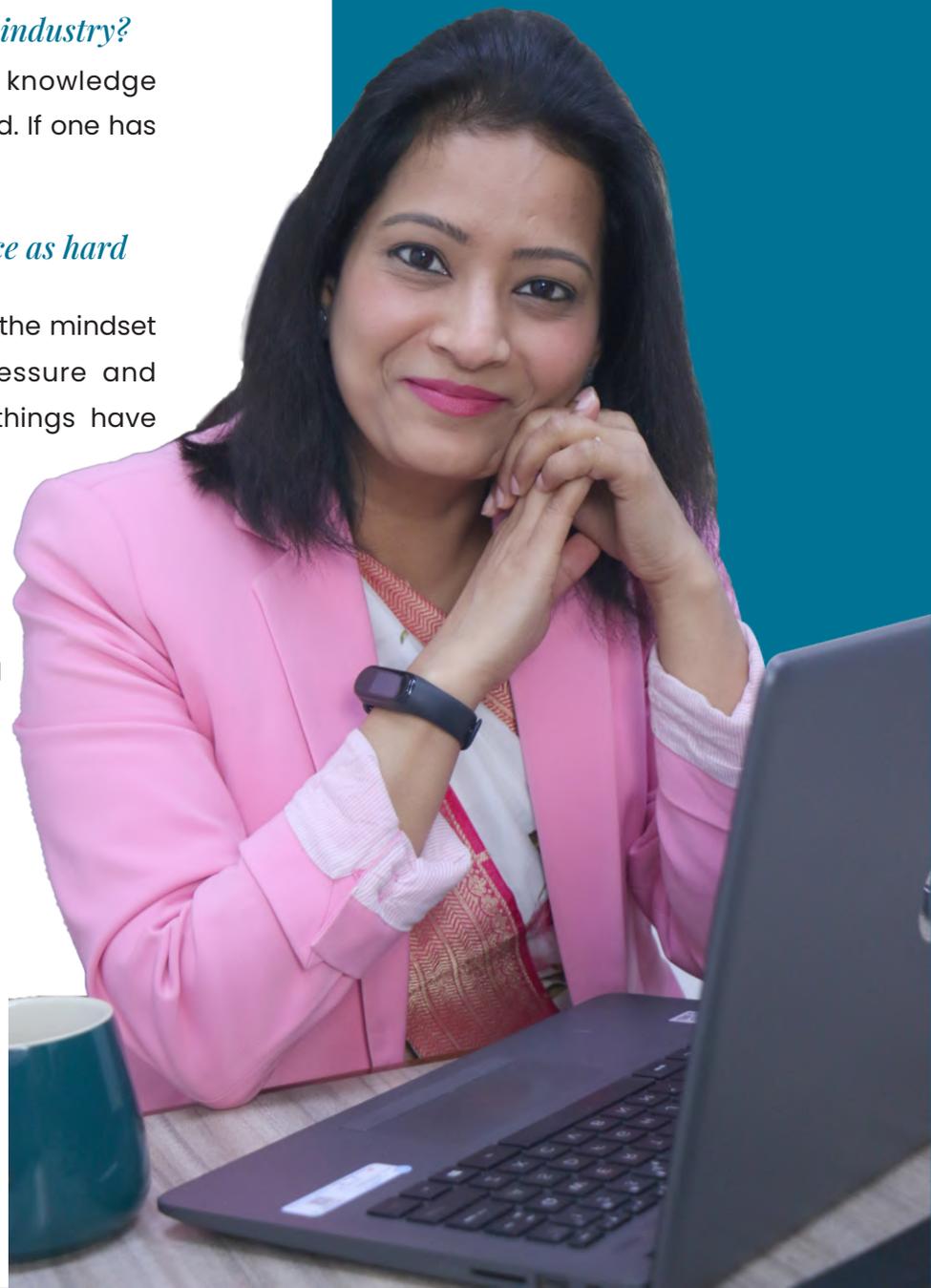
This came unexpectedly from a senior - I instead of cribbing about the absence of something, make sincere efforts to achieve it.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

I am an avid learner & people Manager. I have an insatiable hunger to learn new things.

Shweta Shrivastava

CTO,
Paul Merchants Finance Pvt. Ltd.



Passionate about computers and coding, Wonder Woman Shweta Shrivastava has been up, close, and personal with different facets of IT. She overcame gender biases with constant support & advice from family & friends. Shweta shares more about her journey and dreams to grab growth opportunities in the financial sector, which now stands transformed by digitization and digitalization.

Inspiration to join the IT industry

I first learned about computers in class 6 and found it fascinating. I acquired the necessary skills and knowledge of computer application programming during my academic journey and explored the end-to-end journey of a Software application from conception till deployment. After successfully working in the Application domain for about eight years, I decided to widen my horizon and discover other facets of IT, including Infrastructure, Network, Cloud computing, Data Analytics, Mobility, AI/ML, etc.

Today I have around 20+ years of experience in strategic & technology

execution and continue to enable organizations in their digital transformation journey.

Biggest Achievements

Every small step I have taken towards my career progression has brought me to this juncture. I have spearheaded the automation of PPI business for the company that involved setting up automation systems and applications, Server & Network infrastructure, processes mandated by RBI for governance, monitoring, and risk management. I have been actively collaborating with government authorities like RBI, NPCI, etc., and banks to support the operations. We have launched Pre-paid cards in Physical and Virtual form and continue to add more features to the program.

Challenges on the Path to Success

When I started my journey in IT, there were only a few females in IT. I also experienced some pushbacks initially, but with continuous efforts and deliveries, I managed to change this perception of my peers.

Today, the mindset towards women has changed. Diversity in leadership

provides greater insight, experience, and perspective to the organization.

Biggest Support System

My family & friends. Nearly all my decisions have been influenced by their bits of advice and constant support. Whenever in doubt, I reach out to them for suggestions.

The Career Turning Point

Until 2008, I worked on application projects for a hospital where we integrated laboratory equipment with the software application to pull test results. Later, I worked on IP Cameras and other automation systems like Pneumatic tube systems, NVR, etc., and started developing device controller applications. From there, I started exploring a lot on Infrastructure Management, Cloud Computing, Mobile Application development, etc.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

There are endless opportunities in the financial sector, transformed by digitalization and digitization. It will be exciting to ride on this wave and experience the paradigm shift.

Favourite Pastime

Cooking, Travelling & Acquiring new skills





GLOBAL WONDER WOMEN

Breaking the Glass Ceiling to Reach the Top

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*
Confidence, tenacity, and compassion.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*
I think one should always build their support team. At the same time, you should look out for people who need your support and extend help to them to step over those biases.

3 *Do you feel that you must work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*
In the earlier days, yes. Today, the industry has come a long way in terms of policy, organizational approaches, studies, and research that we are doing. But there is still a long way to go.

4 *Best Career Advice Received*
I was working for long hours and managing many things at my end. That is when my mentor told me to prioritize.

5 *Most Valued Leadership Skill?*
As a leader, if your team knows that you have got their backs and support them, then they can fly high.

Nicki Dewhurst

Senior Marketing Director,
Asia Pacific, and Japan-Sophos



For over 25 years now, Nicki Dewhurst has been on the marketing side of IT. The opportunity to grow & develop teams while creating dynamic and cutting edge marketing programs has always been a huge driver. She recently celebrated her eight years at Sophos and has thoroughly enjoyed her journey so far. Going forward, the highly driven Wonder Woman aspires to establish her own business and offer marketing consulting to IT companies.

Inspiration to join the IT industry

I didn't target the IT industry as I wasn't sure which industry to be in. It is the energy, fast-paced opportunity, growth, fun, and interesting people from all over the world is that I was always fascinated with, and that is the reason I enjoy being in IT.

Biggest achievements

I feel my biggest achievement has been the ability to develop and build out sales development teams.

I have helped build cohesion between sales & marketing teams by bringing true value to the sales organization.

When I started with Sophos 8 years ago, we had about 4 individuals on the marketing team, but today we are 24 people working across the Asia-pacific region.

Challenges on the Path to Success

For me, early in the pace, being young and a female, people would pass judgments about my intelligence level and ability to juggle projects. Those pre-conceived ideas can sometimes hold you back and force you to work harder.

Later on, the challenge has been how to have it all. To have a fulfilling career & family and make the two work.

Biggest support system

It is my family. During my younger days, I drew inspiration from my father, who has been an electrical engineer. He was always great support and gave ideas and advice.

My husband also has been phenomenal support and flexible with his style of work, which is why I was able to travel and work long hours.

Biggest turning point

The turning point for me was when I joined CISCO. The company gave me an excellent opportunity to launch a great marketing program outside Australia. That gave me a taste of Asia as I worked across different markets in the Asian-pacific region.

5 Years from Now You Will be...

I may end up working for myself in time. I enjoy consulting a lot because that gives you the flexibility to work with different clients. If you had asked me two years ago, I would have said that I would consider moving to America, which has many technology headquarters. But I feel that the pandemic has allowed me to reassess, and consulting in marketing is where I want to be now.

Favourite Hobby

Running and hiking in the bush. I can be in trails around my home and run for hours and hours.



Making 'Unlearning, Learning and Relearning' Her Success Mantra

Sushma Chopra

Head of IT Applications
at Easa Saleh,
Al Gurg Group LLC



Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

Any leader is successful if they are passionate about what they do and have a clear vision.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

We need to accept that biases exist, and as leaders, we need to work towards them with appropriate dialogues and communication around diversity, inclusion, and personal biases.

3 *Do you feel that you must work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

As long as you are committed and passionate about what you do, you will create a distinction that eventually gets recognized.

4 *Best Career Advice Received*

As long as you know the risk associated with a decision, and you can manage it, just go on and act. Rest will follow.

5 *Most Valued Leadership Skill?*

Collaboration and empathy play a vital role and are the most valued skills.

Hailing from a traditional Marwari family and a small town, Wonder Woman Sushma Chopra has successfully created a mark for herself and inspired others in the family to explore and chase their aspirations. Here, she outlines her achievements and contribution to the IT sector while asserting that her best is yet to come.

Contribution to the IT industry

There can be two facets that I can contemplate my contributions in the sector. One, bringing digital transformations using cutting edge technologies like Analytics, Artificial Intelligence tools, Robotics process Automations, and Customer engagement platforms for the organizations I've been working with has been immensely satisfying. Apart from this, ensuring that the teams are excited and ready to walk/run an extra mile is an integral aspect. Fortunately, I have been able to build such teams.

Biggest Achievements

A few years ago, I, along with my team, could ideate and build a futuristic industry-first application by introducing AI, including predictive scoring for one of our existing businesses. This yielded our sustainable growth in highly competitive markets.

Additionally, starting from the ground up and coming from a traditional Marwari family, a small town with a humble background, -

I feel I have created a mark that inspired many in my family.

However, I believe my biggest achievement is yet to come.

Challenges encountered on the Path to Success

One of the challenges that anyone faces is change management, whether within or outside the circle of influence. A common syndrome is, "This is how it has been and is working for us". Just to overcome this thought process is a daunting task. I dealt with such mindsets while handling multiple projects. I focused on working with a clear plan, verbalization, and quantification of business value realization.

Biggest Support System

For me, my family is the biggest support system I have. They have been with me through my ups & downs.

Career Turning Point

Moving from financial services operations to IT has been one of the defining moments in my career.

Since I was good at business understanding, collaborating with teams, and articulating multiple facets, my husband suggested that I move out. I spoke to my mentor and industry people and took a call. Since then, there has been no looking back. Unlearning, learning, and relearning were vital attributes in this entire journey.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

Innovating, endeavouring, and learning. I look forward to embracing multiple far-fetching roles. Another goal is to give back as I gain more.

Favourite Pastime

Spending time with my kids is a blessing and a complete stress buster for me. I also enjoy listening to music, starting with Ghazals to whatever I am in the mood to listen to. Additionally, I also love cooking and experimenting with new recipes.



Overcoming Biases to Emerge as the Top Leader

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

The ability to connect with people and overcome barriers to help your team succeed is the ultimate way to build happiness in work and life.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

I build a diverse team to get unique views that further help to minimize biases over time.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

No, I am surrounded by some very committed and hard-working men. But I think women need to have the strength to bring different perspectives to the table and not be intimidated.

4 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

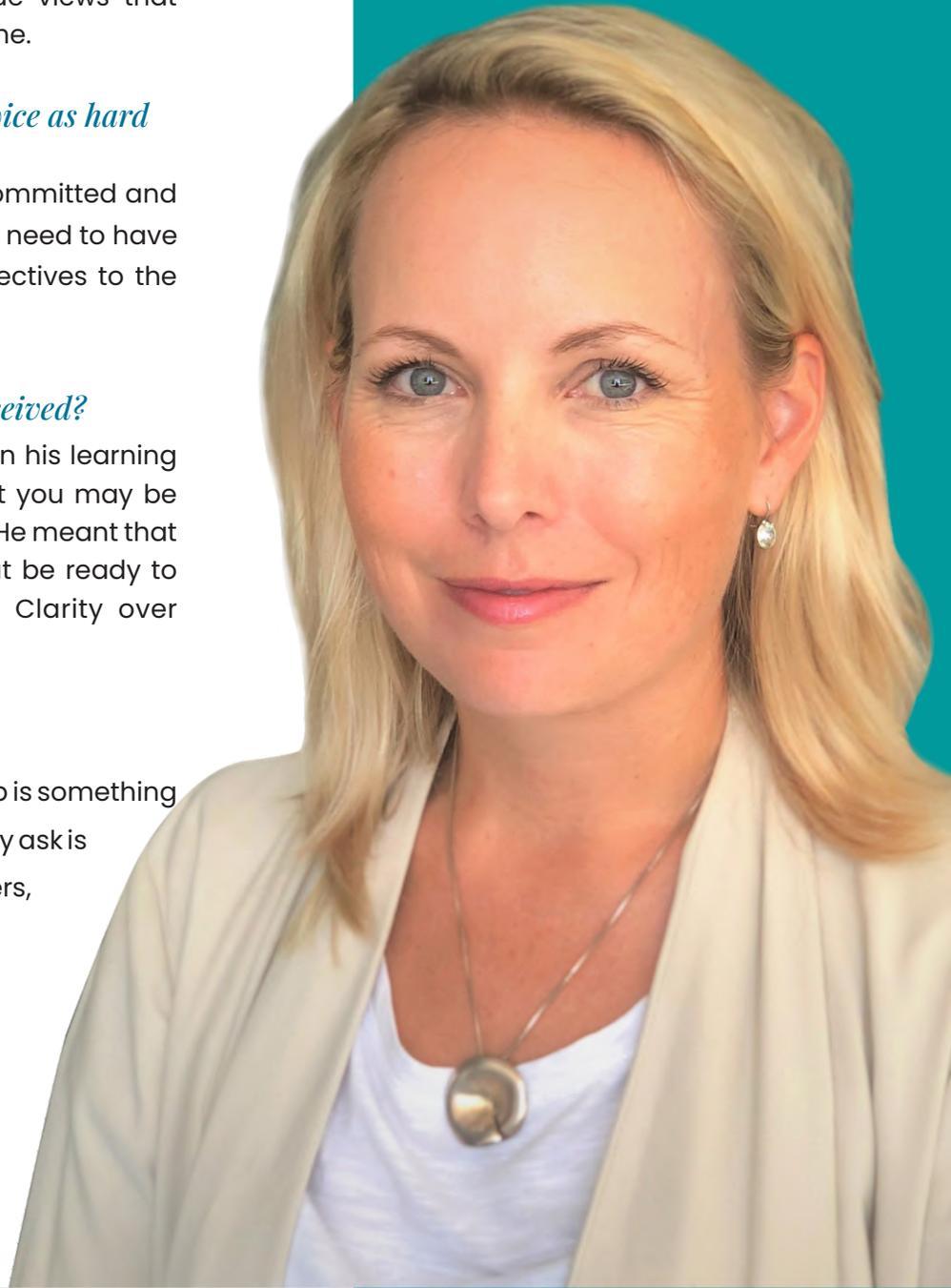
One of my previous bosses passed on his learning from his mentors. He mentioned that you may be wrong but should never be confused. He meant that decision is better than indecision, but be ready to pivot if you made the wrong one. Clarity over ambiguity is much more powerful.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

To help my team to succeed in their job is something I am committed to, so long as what they ask is the right thing for our company, partners, and customers.

Jacquie Young

Senior Director,
Commercial Sales,
Tenable APAC



Jacque drew the inspiration to join the IT industry from her father, following which she stepped into the sector in 1996. Her father's trailblazing approach to business and solid work ethic gave her a keen eye for identifying and following the hot tech trends. Read on the edited excerpts from her interview to understand why she has made it to our list of Wonder Women and learn more about her journey so far.

Inspiration to Join the IT Bandwagon

The inspiration to join the tech sector came from my father—a serial entrepreneur. He had a video rental business that included Commodore 64 rentals before entering the mobile phone industry. This was when mobile phones were available for AUD 5k each. His approach towards work taught me that hard work is the key to success in life. It has been more than 26 years now, and I haven't looked back since.

Biggest Achievement

I left school at the age of 15 to work for my parents. Since then, I have embarked on a career within mostly large technology organizations. During this period, I felt it was important to acquire formal qualifications for the senior roles I pursued or was already leading.

In the absence of a high school certificate, I obtained a solid reference from my boss to join the Masters of Business and Technology at the University of New South Wales in Australia (UNSW).

It was a big learning curve for me as I had to achieve higher grades than all the other students in the first year to retain my place in the program. These challenges made graduating with a Master's degree all the more meaningful.

Biggest Support System

My husband. Over the past 13 years, he has never failed to celebrate my successes. I am also very fortunate to have some wonderful bosses who remain incredible mentors and motivators in my life.

The Career Turning Point

Pivoting into consulting for five years was a huge risk but empowered me to build a network and knowledge of channels that would have otherwise taken a lifetime.

The Way Forward

It has served me well to follow the hot technologies, and since Covid-19 forced me to stop traveling for the last two years, I want to make sure my career continues to support more balance of time with the family and career success.

Favourite pastime

I enjoy fishing with my husband and my five-year-old son.



Moving Up the Ranks While Empowering Others

Anna Becker

Senior Marketing Manager
EMEA Channel/MSP/CSP and
Field BeNeLux at Sophos,
Germany



Rapid Fire

1 What makes a successful woman leader?

Empathy, agility, and ability to empower others.

2 How do you combat biases in the tech industry?

I prove with my example that everything is possible every day.

3 Do you feel that you must work twice as hard as your male counterpart?

I believe in delivering the highest quality of work and requires hard work.

4 Best Career Advice Received

Just go for it! Be bold, believe in yourself, and go for it.

5 Most Valued Leadership Skill?

Being able to inspire and empower others.

Taking over the MSP marketing initiative for the entire EMEA region was one of the biggest career transforming decisions for Anna Becker. She believes it was a game-changer for her as it helped her acquire a fresh perspective on the IT business. For this highly committed and passionate Wonder Woman, overcoming thoughts of self-doubt was a huge step forward. With her ability to empower others, she has moved up the ranks and continues to inspire everyone.

Inspiration to Join the IT Sector

IT & Tech are both very dynamic industries, and this is what I enjoy and embrace: constant development, speed, and agility.

Biggest Achievement

I am a Ukrainian living in Germany and working for a UK-based IT organization. One of the biggest achievements for me has been the fact that I managed to find my place in the international IT world. In my six years at Sophos, I have worked my way up, from a marketing specialist to a senior leader, handling the entire EMEA region. I spearhead some of the amazing projects that make a difference to the business and the industry.

Challenges on the path to success

The biggest challenges were the barriers I had in my head and thinking that I could not achieve my targets. There were times when I felt that there was no way I could take on a project or a mission because I lacked the experience or knowledge.

But I had great mentors by my side, and my manager always helped me overcome those feelings of self-doubt.

Biggest Support System

My family. People who have always been there for me and believed in me sometimes even more than I believed in myself. I believe that what I do is meaningful, right, and helps others. The fact that I help companies to protect themselves from breaches while helping partners to accelerate their businesses has also been one of the driving forces in my life.

The Career Turning Point

The turning point in my career was when I took over MSP (Managed Service Provider) marketing for the entire EMEA region. Back then, no one knew much about dealing with such challenges.

I had to find my way and ensure my colleagues in the region followed me. It was a game-changer in my career. I learned so much and acquired a whole new perspective on the IT business.

5 years from now you will Be...

I would still like to be a part of Sophos, as the company has so much to offer to your professional and personal development. I would want to be in a marketing role that has a high level of responsibility and the ability to change the world for the better. I also look forward to offering sophisticated cybersecurity solutions and helping our partners to grow their businesses.

Favourite Pastime

I am a passionate gardener. Gardening is a great way to disconnect from work. I also like cycling and hiking. Being connected to nature is very important to me, and I enjoy spending time outside.



The Cybersecurity Specialist Who Believes in Lifelong Learning

For 'Wonder Woman' Deepa Kuppuswamy, the inspiration to join the tech industry came from the work that she felt was constantly evolving and placed new challenges before her. Two decades later, she stands tall and has made a significant contribution towards raising awareness around security. Deepa firmly believes that staying up-to-date and being a lifelong learner are the two keys to success. Read excerpts from her interview below.

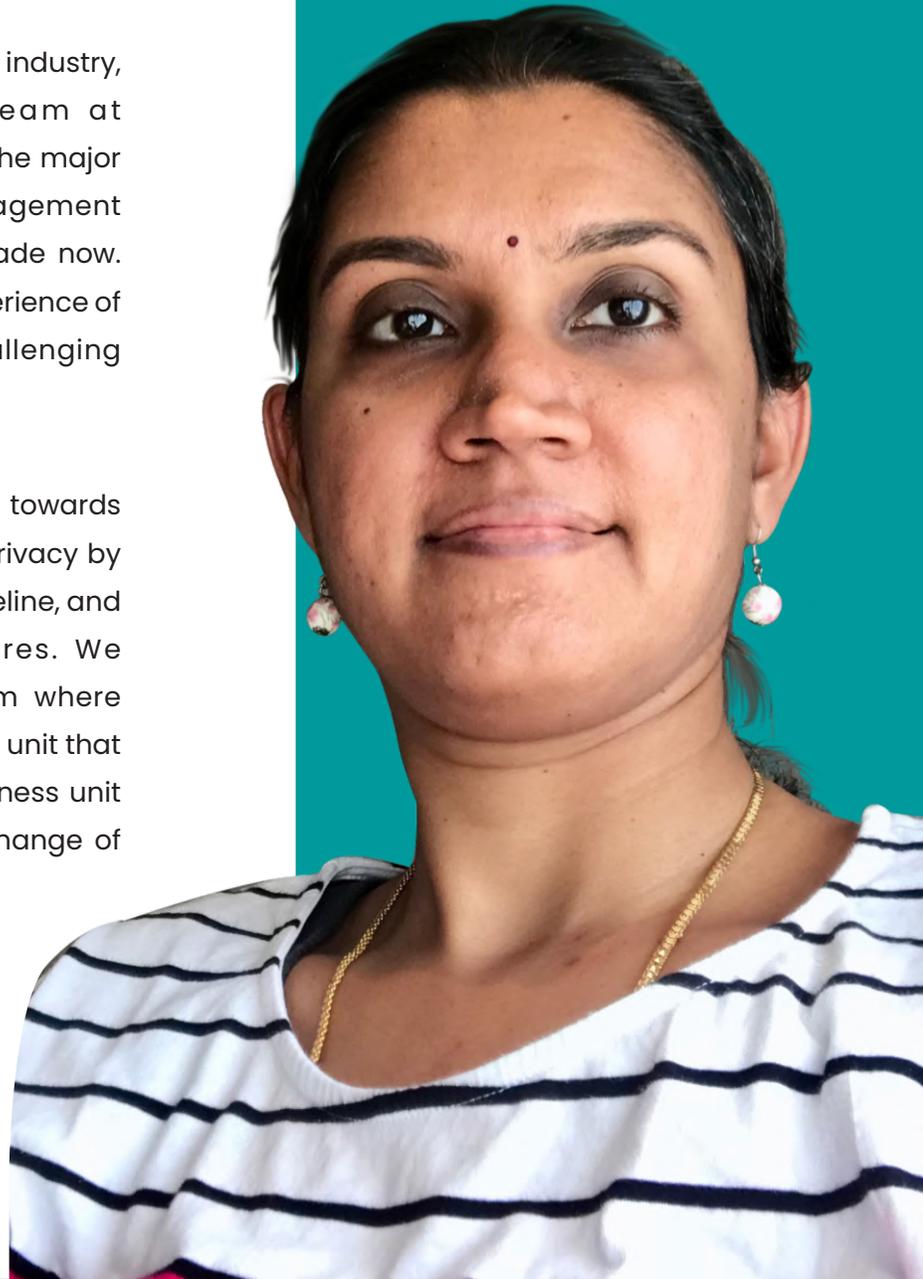
Inspiration to Join the Industry

With over 20 years of experience in the software industry, I currently spearhead the security team at ManageEngine and Zoho. I have led some of the major engineering initiatives for several IT management products across Zoho Corporation for a decade now. What inspired me to join the industry is the experience of working in a constantly evolving and challenging domain.

Biggest achievements

At Zoho, we have made significant progress towards security awareness, promoting security and privacy by design, engineered a secure development pipeline, and established incident response procedures. We introduced a 'Security Champions' program where security experts are groomed in each business unit that advocates security practices within their business unit context. Overall, the organization's mindset change of prioritizing cybersecurity and taking ownership for security is what I would call a significant achievement.

Deepa Kuppuswamy
Information Security Architect
at ManageEngine



Challenges Encountered on the Path to Success

Reflecting on over two decades of my career, I can see substantial growth in the role of women in the IT industry from entry-level to the high ranks. However, it continues to remain a road paved with various challenges.

The unconscious bias morphed as well-intended concerns sometimes make women lose opportunities. Assumptions on whether we will be able to handle traveling for client meetings, be available for late-night incident calls, or, for mothers, balancing the demands of work alongside the rigors of motherhood affect the career trajectory of women in the workforce.

The lack of networking opportunities is another factor that limits the growth of women. Often a lot of knowledge sharing happens offline and in non-official settings. Men learn or share a lot in conversations during breaks and social gatherings.

Biggest support system

I have realized through my journey that there's no such thing as doing - everything yourselves. You have to prioritize your important tasks and get help by delegating what you can. Building a strong support system - family, friends, and colleagues for help- goes a long way. My immediate family and friends are my strong pillars of support. They have helped me when required, provided honest feedback, and pushed me to explore more. The organizational culture has also played an equally important role by giving me the space to identify my strength.

The Career Turning Point

I transitioned from being an Engineering manager to the Information Security domain a decade back. It was a turning point in my career. The job involved understanding and aligning with business objectives, making the teams understand the value of security and privacy, arriving at solutions to be a business enabler, -

and helping the organization grow securely. This change provided ample growth opportunities, and the fast-paced environment makes my career exciting and fulfilling.

5 Years from Now You Will Be...

I will be working in the security domain. No two days are the same, and you are a lifelong learner in this profession. There is always the need to be up-to-date on threat patterns and new technologies and be in touch with the wider community. I hope to continue learning more in the cybersecurity domain and explore innovative ways to help businesses enhance their security strategies and build a secure work environment.

Favourite Hobbies

Reading has been my favourite hobby since my childhood. I have gradually transitioned from fiction to non-fiction reading in the past few years. I also enjoy getting immersed in the magic world of children's stories that I read to my daughter. My other favourite hobby is traveling.



Become the Leader You Wished You Had...

Rapid Fire

1 *What makes a successful woman leader?*

A successful woman leader creates an ecosystem that inspires other women to dream more and achieve more and be more than what their circumstances have confined them to.

2 *How do you combat biases in the tech industry?*

Biases aren't exclusive to the tech industry. The only way to combat them is to do what everyone says a woman can't.

3 *Do you feel that you have to work twice as hard as your male counterpart?*

I have always had to work twice as hard to beat biases and overcome obstacles. It is tiring and often frustrating. But the best part about having to work twice as hard is that no one can contest my success. I have earned it, fair and square.

4 *Best career advice you have ever received?*

Be the leader you wish you had.

5 *Most valued leadership skill?*

Empathy and fairness - they go together.

An Analytics Evangelist at ManageEngine, the IT management unit of Zoho Corporation, Sailakshmi is responsible for spearheading marketing initiatives for ManageEngine's advanced analytics platform, Analytics Plus. From helping her clients acquire intelligent business insights to facilitating unique analytical programs, she has been at the forefront of delivering innovation. Here's what this supremely talented Wonder Woman has to share about her experiences in life and the industry in general.

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