

How to foster workforce equity with ethical AI

Sydney Coleman, Senior Product Inclusion & Equity Program Manager at Google; Nithya Vaduganathan, Managing Partner & Director at BCG; and Yoni Friedman, VP of Solutions Consulting at Gloat discuss how AI can help democratize opportunities to all members of an organization

Noelle Bloomfield (00:00):

I am Noelle Bloomfield, your host and directors of product marketing at Gloat, and we're really excited to have you here for this exciting session on how to foster workforce equity with ethical ai. Now, I'm really excited to be joined here with some incredible panelists. We have Sydney Coleman from Google, Nithya Vahan from BBC G, and our own Yoi Friedman from Gloat. Before we get started today this is one of Gloat's Gloat Learn sessions. All of our past webinars and sessions are available at gloat.com/resources. And the recording of today's session will be available afterward, so you'll find tons of customer stories and other amazing panelists like the ones we have today. But without further ado, super excited to kick off today's session and I'll turn it over to you three for introductions. Sydney, let's start with you.

Sydney Coleman (01:53):

Hi everyone. Thank you for being here. Excited for our conversation. I'm Sydney Coleman. I work on product inclusion and equity at Google consulting across all of our products and technologies to ensure that we are mitigating any potential harms to users across their identities. Thinking about things like algorithmic bias and a lot of things that hopefully we we're gonna talk about today. I'm based in San Francisco and really excited to be here, so thanks for having me.

Noelle Bloomfield (02:25):

Thank you Sydney. So excited to have you with us and you have an incredibly impressive background. Glad to have you with us today. Nithya, why don't you go next.

Nithya Vaduganathan (02:36):

Hi everyone, really nice to see you. Nithya Vahan, I'm a managing director and partner with the Boston Consulting Group. I've been with BCG about 17 years and I'm out of our Boston office where I'm looking at a field of snow right now. <Laugh> and I am a leader in our people and organization practice. And I, I've most recently, over the past couple years, spent a lot of time in the, in the space of talent and skills lead that topic for BBC G. So everything from helping organizations figure out how to better recruit and retain talent but also including sort of finding hidden pools of talent a topic which I recently gave a TED top on as well.

Noelle Bloomfield (03:22):

Amazing. Thank you Nithya. You've been with us for some past sessions and we're really excited to have you back here today to talk everything ethical AI now Yoni. Let's round us out.

Yoni Friedman (03:34):

Hi everyone. Yoni Friedman. I'm the Vice President of Solution Consulting here at Gloat. I'm located in Tel Aviv, where it's a lovely evening. I'm not gonna say how long it's for those of us in Boston. I'm very honored to be part of this panel with Sydney. And yeah, obviously I've been working at Gloat for the past three years and have been kind of working on machine learning and AI-based solutions for the past 10 years or so. Really passionate about how people experience their workplace. And so the use of ethical AI is a very important topic for me one that I've been speaking about since joining Globe. So really excited about today and the questions coming up.

Noelle Bloomfield (04:19):

Awesome, thanks, Yoni. I know from personal experience, you have a lot of great expertise to share, so excited to have you in the discussion as well. I'll kick things off by turning it actually back to you, Yoni. Why don't you kick us off by sharing a little bit about your personal experience with AI.

Yoni Friedman (04:42):

Yeah, so it's just, it's a funny story, right? It's not a very complicated one, but I was actually fired by an AI a few years ago. I, you know, it was the 16th of the month. I checked my, my balance in my bank. Salary didn't come in, so I went ahead and I tried to see in my like, you know employee portal payments, what's going on, and I realized that I can't connect after some investigation and also taking a couple of days off because if I'm not employed, then I'm, you know, gonna take advantage of it. I realized that a form of immigration that I had filed was incomplete. The notice wasn't shared on time, and the AI probably a month and a half before I was fired, triggered the process of eliminating my employment. So you know, it's not necessarily the most complicated story or elaborates one, but I think it just gives you an a, a, a, a good feeling around how putting decisions and actions at the hand of a machine can lead to some very adverse effects in how we need to manage that wisely. And it's something that is impacting everything I do in bloat in the last few years.

Noelle Bloomfield (06:09):

Well, thanks, Yoni. Setting the tone on why today's topic is so important, why we need to keep ethical decisions and focus. And everybody, make sure you're checking your bank accounts regularly so that your salary's coming through. Watch out. Anyways, thanks for setting the tone today. We'll give the meat of the discussion and folks who are joining us, please drop your questions in the chat. We will be taking them at the end and wanna cover everything that you're here joining us to learn today. So speaking of AI and ethical AI ethics and AI sometimes don't always go hand in hand. You know, there's, there's some obvious tension between those two things. Glo we try and keep this very central. We recently joined the World Economic Forum Global Innovators Community, which is an invitation-only group of promising startups and scale-ups working for ethical technology. So this is near and dear to our hearts. We are

helping shape the future of artificial intelligence and machine learning and trying to identify solutions that make AI more equitable, fair, and inclusive. So I wanna start by just giving each of our panelists a chance to describe how they think of ethical AI in 15 words or less. So, Sydney, let's start with you.

Sydney Coleman (07:33):

Yeah, I don't actually know if this is 15 words or less, but I'm gonna take a stab at being concise. I think that ethical AI, I would define as AI systems that have respect and recognize the importance of human rights. So that spans from things like anti-discrimination to privacy and confidentiality, but really thinking about the accessibility and importance of having a human-centered focus with the development of AI technology.

Noelle Bloomfield (08:07):

Awesome, thank you. Nithya?

Nithya Vaduganathan (08:12):

I think I would say that ethical AI is about tool our tools and systems and processes that can help increase, and improve diversity and inclusion by reducing unintentional biases.

Noelle Bloomfield (08:30):

Awesome. Yoni?

Yoni Friedman (08:33):

Yeah, I feel like with the last two answers, I'm a little more narrow in my thought to gloat specifically, but I think it's about driving action based only on what's relevant to the recommendation or decision that needs to be made. And in all of that, it needs to be, it needs to be objective, it needs to be non-discriminatory, and it needs to be explained and explained is intentional, right? Not transparent, because it's not enough to have the explanation available, it needs to be explained. I think of it as if we leave the end user with selecting,

opting in, or out of getting an explanation, we're risking them not understanding why things are happening. So that's a key part for me.

Noelle Bloomfield (09:23):

Great. Yeah, we heard valuable insight from all of you on clarity, diversity, and anti-biased privacy. All of these things are really key as we consider the role of technology and AI moving forward. Now, this topic is top of mind, given there's new legislation with local law 1894 in New York set to go into effect in April. Very hot topic. It's intended to help regulate the use of automated employment decision tools and hiring and promotion decisions. So this topic is really key in the HR space right now. And yo I'd love to turn it over to you to share a bit more about Gloat's AI approach as we look toward that.

Yoni Friedman (10:12):

Yeah. So obviously, if you've seen me talk about this, I can speak for an hour, but I think a few kinds of critical points when we think about it. Ethics is not just in how the AI works. There's a complete user experience that needs to be ethical. So while we are, we do want the models to, you know, be fair and equitable. And, and, and, and there's another point around this. If a user sees a recommendation or a list of recommendations, they need to not be scored. They need to not be ranked. We need to avoid creating any selection bias, and we need to create an experience where people feel like they have an equal opportunity and not just feel, but actually get an equal opportunity to anyone else. Right? Globe was founded on the concept of creating a level playing field for everyone.

Another approach, another kind of key important part is the idea that whenever you provide suggestions, they need to be very diverse in their sense. That's why if for example, you know, we're recommending an action for a person, you need to recommend two or three or four or maybe more different actions, and they need to be different. In essence, some of them might be trivial, things that I would've selected myself, but others need to be thought-provoking, not the beaten path. By doing that, we are not just augmenting or automating the existing human processes, but really trying to elevate them. And I guess that the last part is really about the world of work. So it's very tempting to try to take the world of work and put it into structures, hierarchies, clusters, and things of that sort. We have made a decision early on to avoid using rigid structures because we believe that these structures are, are subjective. If we try to say

that a certain skill is nested under another skill or a certain role is nested under a job, family, or something of that sort, we're only including some of the organizations or some of the people that we're working with. So we've made it harder for us. We're more abstract in how we look at the world of work. But that's critical because once you conform to rigid structures, you are excluding people, organizations, and practices from how you are capturing the capabilities or their business needs.

Noelle Bloomfield (12:38):

Awesome. Thanks, Yani for that perspective. It's spot on. You know, we don't wanna exclude people, we wanna make sure that this is truly an inclusive and fair approach. Nithya, given your background in thinking about this legislation, how do you think this will further workforce equity?

Nithya Vaduganathan (12:56):

Yeah, you know, and I think there are aspects that are related to both sort of the recruiting and sort of the development retention side, right? Or more of the internal use cases. And so maybe I'll piggyback on sort of what you Yoni just described on the the second piece of what I just discussed. And then we can go back to the herding side and how I see equity. But I would say, you know, in terms of sort of internal mobility, I would say, you know, as a workforce, we have a lot of room to go. So in our like latest research, basically what we found is that only 10% of new roles are filled by internal lateral hires, which is just shocking cuz one of the main reasons that people leave, right? 60% of people leave because they don't find sort of career opportunities within.

So I, I mean in that sense, right, what you only described around the power of internal marketplaces to create transparency of opportunity to be proactively suggesting things that people may not, might not have otherwise considered right? Are, is really, is really incredibly powerful. But I would also say to maximize right, the value of ethical technology investments, I would say there's also a bunch of workflow changes that, you know, and I'm sure, you know, we all can point to different examples here, but one that I frequently see is, you know, natural human tendency is to sort of hoard really strong talent, right? So how do you actually create change in that incentive structure so that managers are encouraged to, if someone sees an

opportunity and wants to go after it and feels like they might have a subset of the skills required, right?

They're actually encouraged versus sort of told all the reasons why it might not be the right reason, right? And so how do you actually change those managers, the incentives of leaders and managers, and actually find ways to reward the managers who actually promote the mobility of their talent, knowing there's probably gonna be a boomerang effect back to them with others coming into, into their teams over time as well. I think that's hard and that requires sort of strong leadership mindset, but also sort of changes to day-to-day ways of working. You know, I also see aspects of this playing out on the recruiting side, which Noel I'm happy to go into now or, or later.

Noelle Bloomfield (15:23):

I mean, you know, have at it. I think what you touched on from hiring is spot on. It's fun, it's counterintuitive, but you want your best resources, but by empowering them, you're actually probably gonna get, you know, a wealth of talent who wants to work for you. So I, I appreciate that mention. Turning to, you know, the recruiting side, how do you think workforce equity is gonna come into play here?

Nithya Vaduganathan (15:48):

Yeah, and I, you know, I think we've already seen it, right? So I think something like 50% of companies, or maybe even a little bit more of companies out there use aspects of sort of AI technology to help them sort of on the recruiting end. So what that means is to be able to screen a more expansive set of candidates too, and ultimately to be able to hire candidates more, more quickly, which in this you know, talent environment, there's a real sort of value on both sides, right? To that. You know, I think ethical AI can help reduce some of the unfair, some of the biases that can go into this granting process. But ultimately, as you know, we know with any sort of technology, the quality of the outputs is, is sort of a direct I would say correlation, right?

To the inputs that go in, I would say the weight of more inclusive hiring is not just resting on the shoulders of AI. And what I mean by that is that, you know, as employers get smarter

about knowing what are the actual sorts of skills and experiences and education levels that candidates really need to be successful in a job and use that to update their screening requirements, right? That's when we're gonna get sort of the real unlock of, you know, coupled with AI, right? To get to a more broader and inclusive sort of set of candidates. You know, one of the market examples of IBM m reducing degree requirements from 50% of their US job listings. And that has really helped them win their top pool.

Noelle Bloomfield (17:34):

Awesome. Yeah, I, I think technology is a piece of this, but we can't rely on technology alone to mitigate bias. Sydney you are also an expert in workforce equity. How are you thinking about this, this concept, and what would you add to Nithya's comments?

Sydney Coleman (17:50):

Yeah, agree with everything. Great. commentary? I think the one thing that I would add is the responsibility of humans to check anything that we're using. I think there has been obviously like a big expansion into using AI technology specifically around inclusive language. It's been quite interesting. So inclusive language and job descriptions and flagging certain terms which can be biased or sort of coded language which lead to discriminating against candidates. So I think having a human sort of element to QAing that is really important, but also leveraging technology to flag things like when we say there's often like elitist language around where people have gone to college or haven't gone to college in general. Also, ageism in different terms. We often see high-energy, bright candidates which actually can be coded language, which biases the process in terms of who gets through. And so I think there's a combination. We can't solely rely on the technology to sort of filter these things, although it's exciting to see us sort of trending in that direction.

Noelle Bloomfield (19:04):

Awesome. Yeah. I think spot on there, in terms of external hiring, you know, what does external hiring equity look like? And, you know, what kind of practices can you put in place to drive more equity in that approach?

Nithya Vaduganathan (19:31):

I mean, I'm happy to get started. Like, I think it's a little bit of what I, what I just described right around sort of the benefits in terms of being able to get to a more expanded set of candidates, get, get compressed that time to hire. But doing that sort of at, at scale, right? If it's tech-enabled, so let's just sort of play out the, like we have more inclusive language, we can get better at knowing what requirements we need, what skills we need, right? The piece that Sydney described. But, you know, if you're, if you're, if without sort of the tech-based solutions, right? Like I would say it's, you're, you're Lea really leaving that to you know, individual teams to implement, you're gonna get different qualities, right? Of implementation. And you also have to sort of overcome sort of inherent change biases, right?

There's always gonna be, like, I've, I've worked with tons of organizations, there's always a subset of leaders that are like, well, you know, you show them a bunch of data and it's still like, well, but like, I know like, this is <laugh>, you know, how I've always done it. And I think the forcing mechanism of saying, no, no, no, let's actually look at your team and the most successful people. What most successful people, and what is the profile of those? Okay, now let's work backward. Let's make those the requirements. This technology now can help us, like, help us screen a lot more candidates than you have the capacity to adjust with your recruiters, right? And so I think that like on the external recruiting, there's a lot of, lot of benefits, but again, to maximize the ROI, I would say you have to couple it with workflow changes.

Sydney Coleman (21:14):

Yeah, I would add that I think underrepresented talent is often passive talent. And so to build a representative pipeline, there are ways we can leverage technology to think about how long a job is posted, obviously where a job is posted, really like pipeline management. And then things also along the lines of like, what's an optimal word count? Like after a certain point, we know you know, there's bias in terms of who, of who's going to respond to different terminology, but also the length. And often there's a long list of requirements as you've alluded to, which I think can be really deterring for certain candidates and certain backgrounds. And so thinking about how to optimize that using AI can be really powerful.

Nithya Vaduganathan (22:00):

Yeah. But I think, I mean, Sydney, maybe you kind of mentioned this earlier, right? I think it's so important to constantly check, right? And have that mindset of continuous improvement that sometimes, like even with the tech solutions, right? You might inadvertently have gotten something wrong. And it's that how quick can you sort of, first are you looking at that data feedback, right? And how can quickly can you make that change? You know, the example of how are you, and originally, you know, I think when they rolled out some of the AI technology and interviewing, right? It showed that a subset of their candidates, like minority candidates, tended to have shorter responses, and that was inadvertently right, screening out sort of candidates that might actually have done a terrific job in their recruiting process. And so but the ability to actually kind of once seeing the data, right? How quickly can you actually react and sort of change your algorithm? This is, I think that's sort of one of the key pieces here. There's a sort of front-end compliance required for this regulation, right? But, but it's also, it's not just, it shouldn't be thought of as a one and done mm-hmm. <Affirmative>

Yoni Friedman (23:07):

Constant evaluation. And maybe adding to that you made a point around right, determining how good looks like, right? What is the profile that is successful in a certain role and applying that into how we outreach? I think one of the things where we've, we've observed is that when you hire internally, there's just a higher tolerance for risk. You're willing to not go for that typical profile and explore, you know, other candidates that might have unique capabilities or compositions of capabilities. That might seem interesting. And I think, think one of the really interesting challenges is how do we apply that into external hiring, right? How do we find ways to dynamically understand what good looks like, not just in terms of what the 80% is, right? Let's look at the unique ones try to characterize that and then reach out. And I think that also goes to your comments about the passive candidates, right? Because I, I might be in an adjacent role and I might be really interested, but I don't think I'm gonna make it. So I think there, there's a really interesting challenge around that. And by doing that, we're I think also organizations that will know how to adopt that will create a more fair more inclusive culture in, not just their internally, but also in how they acquire talent.

Nithya Vaduganathan (24:40):

And I wonder if absolutely do things like micro internships, right? And try before you hire, like ways to kind of ease those on-ramps, but also give what, give a two-way trial, right? Because it's not just the employer testing, it's, it's almost as equally the candidate, right? And so micro internships could just be as long as a couple of days and give, give a good on-ramp or internal gig,

Noelle Bloomfield (25:05):

Absolutely. Internal gigs, mentorships, there are a lot of ways to connect and, and kind of trial that relationship for internal hires. I know we started on external recruiting, Yoni, Nithya, anything you would add here as we think about internal recruiting, I think that stats share that only 10% of hires are internal is kind of crazy given there's a wealth of talent who knows an organization and is kind of ready to go. Anything as we think about, you know, driving equity for internal hires that you would add from a procedural standpoint.

Yoni Friedman (25:42):

I, I mean, I have a cheat sheet on that I guess, but start with just two points that we've also already discussed. I think that the first one is really around passive candidates or different personas that aren't, you know energetic or high profile or, or, or outgoing that are still going to potentially be really great candidates. So I think one of the important things is when we think about internal hiring, it's actually not just a pull approach, but actually a push. How do we tell people, you are very likely to be successful here? You are very likely to get hired into a role without also, you know, not selling a pie dream. And then also I think one of the advantages that internal hiring has is that you have a much better understanding of the cultural fit.

And I know that's kind of like a risky term when we talk about ethics, but the cultural fit is certain candidates and how they can contribute to a composition of a team that you're building. And I think that that is potentially something that when team leads look at internal hiring, they should think of it as a really big advantage. They're not just, you know, it's not just the time, the speed to value, or the speed to hire that you get, it's also the ability to really

contribute to the overall structure of a team that you're building. Because you know those candidates or you can get good kind of indications around who they are in their contribution in a team environment. I hope that makes sense.

Nithya Vaduganathan (27:29):

I might add that, you know, it's not just about how we find these people and bring them over. I mean, improving that 10% staff, I think it will be a great goal, right? But it's also sort of, it's not just identifying them, importing them over, right? It's also how you actually set them up for success. And Yoni, you started getting them on some of these, right? But it's, it's the really thoughtful sort of onboarding, right? That's not just the day where you're getting your laptop and the IB IP screens, and then you're good to go, right? It's, it's actually like, how do you, what is that onboarding process to bring in folks that might not have thrown up right within a group? But it can actually be really valuable contributors. How do you maximize on having slightly more divergent experiences and perspectives, right?

Because there's value in that. What are some of the l and d solutions, right, that you might actually have to bring on to help people get to that from that 80, 70, 80% to the hundred percent, right? Seagate's doing some of this. And also what is mentorship, right? So people don't just feel like they're, they've been thrown into another area where, you know, everyone, many of the others may know how the context and how to navigate and they sort of feel isolated, right? So it's really being thoughtful of that senior sponsorship and, and mentorship. You know, and I think if an organization is just doing this for one to two people, it might feel like a really big lift. But if you start to say, this is our way of working, like we're going to this is a priority for, for us to not only unlock hidden talent but actually drive it, it's part of the employee value proposition, right? It's actually helping people find more robust for your pathways. Then you can start to kind of invest in some of these enablers that I'm describing, right? L&D mentorship onboarding in a scaled way.

Noelle Bloomfield (29:19):

Awesome. Thank you both a lot to consider as we think about internal mobility. Turning to an adjacent topic here. Ethical AI isn't just about AI recommendation. There's a, there's kind of a cultural element to this too, and how the user ultimately acts with the data they have or the

output of the ai. And so thinking about the ethical use of technology and data within your organizations, what kind of practices or advice do you have for our audience today? And how can organizations get started and drive that kind of cultural change?

Yoni Friedman (30:08):

So I, I can start with kind of a few points that I always think about. So I think the first thing is AI is a very broad term. I used it earlier in my story to describe something that is more of an automation or an augmentation of an existing manual process. And I think that's great. And there are a lot of tools to do it very well. I, when I try to think about AI and using AI to really drive a change or get a competitive edge or really do something that is unique within the company I work for or, or represents I'm thinking about finding solutions that don't just augment or automate, but rather enhance the process, right? Try to bring in additional creativity or, or just an ability, you know, a superior computation computational ability into the process.

Something that will move the needle, not just in terms of speed, but also in terms of complexity or, or the cognitive kind of breadth that AI can provide. Another point that I think is really important is as you adopt these things we always have a certain fear of AI why things are happening. Why am I getting these recommendations? And, and kind of going back to what I said earlier, AI needs to be explained, but once it is explained, there's something about truly adopting it and not just saying, I'm gonna adopt the parts that I understand but rather really trying to, to implement all the aspects that come with it and accept that some of these things might drive significant improvements and others might drive adverse effects. So continuously learning about how that use of AI is impacting my workforce or whatever process I'm managing is really critical. But if I just try to use it to automate what I'm doing today to be faster, that's gonna become obsolete or outdated very quickly, and it's probably not even worth the change.

Sydney Coleman (32:27):

Yeah. Plus one, I think what I would add to that is just not yeah, a hundred percent not using generative AI just to completely automate existing workflows, but also being cognizant of the confidence with which generative AI is presenting solutions. So not all solutions obviously, are

created equal. And I think where I get nervous today is when we're using things to generate different texts and potentially harming users without having a real thoughtful QA process of what's being generated and understanding that as we use these technologies, we need to know that they're not all created equal and they don't all have the same confidence in terms of what the output is.

Noelle Bloomfield (33:23):

Awesome. Thank you both. Let's talk about bias. So technology and bias don't always go hand in hand, and tech can get kind of a bad rep when it comes to thinking about bias. And so how, how do you all think technology can either mitigate bias or highlight where discrimination might be taking place, and how should a manager or a leader or a people leader in some way ensure that whatever technology they select will help drive inclusivity, diversity, and ultimately a more equitable workforce?

Nithya Vaduganathan (34:09):

I'm, I'm happy to start. You know, I think there's a little bit of a perception that there's a black box associated with any type of sort of automation, right? Or AI, I used to work in the sort of ed tech space, and we would often talk about sort of a lot of the same issues we're talking about here. However, right? I would say in many ways as it, especially as it pertains to this sort of recruiting, right? The human mind is arguably more of a black box and could be more of a black box, right? Where there could be tons of sort of unconscious biases that then vary from person to person. Right? Now, of course, the issue with sort of AI-based algorithms is if there's something that even unintentionally is wrong, it automatically scales to everyone versus sort of being contained to sort of the one or two use cases.

So when I look at sort of the guidelines here, right? And the regulation to kind of make inputs, algorithms sort of more transparent to users and employers, like, I, I think that's actually good, right? But for people leaders, right, which I think Noelle is your question. Like, I think it's really, you know, making sure they understand and they're aware, right? Or how the algorithm, what the inputs are that they can have the opportunity to sort of test it in their context and that they're not shy to point out if something is not quite right, right? And that this is, it's not a fit. We're not dealing with sort of fixed tools. We're dealing with, you know,

think this is sort of a new, this is a new space, right? Five years ago we weren't taught five, seven years ago.

When we're talking about all these, the existence, this is sort of a new area that is, there are a lot of benefits, right? We have seen sort of more movement internally, and we've seen faster hiring processes, but obviously, there have to be the right tracks. And I think that, again, I go back to that mindset of pushing the envelope on continuous improvement. It's for the technology providers, employers, and also users, right? A lot of this to the quality of the inputs if skills, for example, are not captured quite right, right? That it's sort of also on, on the onus of employees and users to sort of fix and get that modified skills, experiences, backgrounds, whatever, right?

Sydney Coleman (36:32):

I can answer this for tech more generally outside of HR tech in terms of how we mitigate bias or how we can approach the identified biases that exist in products. The way that we've approached this is to center our most marginalized users based on their identities and their intersections. And so really thinking about how a user experiences a certain product or technology or feature when they're from coming from a vulnerable place, either based on their identity or based on their user journey. So someone in crisis, for instance, who's using Google search to look for healthcare information or someone who's experienced a hate crime, going to YouTube, things of that nature. So how do you prioritize based on someone's current psychological state, which can be a crisis or the identities and ways in which they show up in the world and those intersections, and really thinking about the most vulnerable user. And if you optimize for the most vulnerable user, the historically most marginalized user when it comes to tech products, then you're going to create all these solutions that empower and enable the masses, right? So you're, you're sort of designing for the margins to improve your product and feature for everyone.

Yoni Friedman (37:57):

I really love that. Go ahead.

Sydney Coleman (37:59):

Sorry, I thought of something else last second, which is also testing. So we in Silicon Valley, like we don't represent the world today, are not even close. And so testing with those actual populations to get that feedback loop is really important too, rather than making assumptions. Sorry, I didn't wanna leave that out.

Yoni Friedman (38:18):

So kind of building on that, I first, and, and I think testing is really important. I think it actually emphasizes if look at the New York state law that is coming the concept of just monitoring how a model behaves is kind of at the center of that law. And I think that's, that's not enough. And I think Sydney, what you're, you're, or at least what I got out of it is, is looking at the entire experience, the different people, different users get from whatever service we're putting in place and what happens when they use it in different ways. And I think that's really critical. So the New York state law might not be comprehensive enough, but you know, at least for us as providers of services, we're obligated to make sure that the entire experience is one that is inclusive, that is fair.

That doesn't discriminate or create any I don't know how to call it, adverse effects on, on how a user is experiencing the service. Yeah. And, and, and, and, and that is a far more complicated task than just, you know, feeding some dummy data into a model and saying, oh, it's, you know, it works well. So hopefully the regulations that are coming are going to evolve the way that we need this as suppliers to evolve as well. Because we really want to create that, that experience. It needs to go just be beyond just the ai. And there's actually a chat comment and, and the chat that says AI is a tool, it's not a right, it's not, the solution is a, a way to create a solution. So what we need is to create ethical solutions, not just ethical

Noelle Bloomfield (40:09):

Love that ending point. You know, it's not just about AI, it's a holistic solution of processes, cultural change, mindset, and technology. Building on that, I'm gonna turn to some of the questions from our participants. There are a lot of really thoughtful comments in here. And we'll start with one from Jared on addressing historical beliefs. So obviously there's often a

historical sense of what good performance looks like. Here's what the achiever looks like in a certain role, here's what that person's experience looks like for the roles they've held in the past. So Jared asked, how do you think about addressing those historical beliefs? If we build selection algorithms based on what's been successful in the past, we might run the risk of systematizing historical biases given you may not even know what success looks like. You know, outside of that, how do you approach sort of that challenge in your organizations?

Yoni Friedman (41:12):

So, I'm happy to answer the globe version. I think there's always a trade-off with, or an exploit, right? Using what we, you know, seeing how success looks like and, and replicating it, versus trying to experiment and finding other ways. So that's critical to always try to experiment, but in order to experiment, we need to also find a way to capture in the context of at least of HR capture capabilities, skills, experiences, and roles that people have in a way that is detached from any historical context. So it doesn't really matter if you've acquired your degree in one school or another school. It's more around what hands-on experience you might have had, or trying to find ways to at least strip that bias or that historical fingerprint from these capabilities and try to really look only at what matters. It's a, it's a challenging task, but it's when we, I think we're constantly trying to find ways to do it.

Nithya Vaduganathan (42:26):

Yeah, I mean I agree with all of that. I think there's also the nature of skills, right? In many areas is also changing. And so that's, I think another sort of forcing mechanism to not only rely on like, what did we used to need, right? But sort of what do we need and instead of some of the new skills, capabilities that we need in organizations, right, isn't gonna look exactly the same as it did in the past. So I think that sort of in that talent management, right, sort of that planning, and it's not just the onus isn't just on HR, right? That's HR and business leaders working at the hip to kind of really kind of think through what is it relative to our strategic goals, right? What do we need from our talent to be able to set ourselves up for success? And what parts of that do we already have today versus what is net new? So that would be another piece that I would, I would hold it.

Sydney Coleman (43:26):

Yeah, I'll add that I've worked with one VC and the way that they describe it in identifying founders is adversity muscle. And so looking, they pretty much exclusively invest in immigrant founders but being able to quantify like what's not said on a resume and what people have potentially overcome. And I think that that's something that we don't have necessarily the AI technology there yet. So it's being able to read between the lines. You can filter and see, okay, this person attended an Ivy League school, but you can't necessarily filter and see what adversity someone may have overcome to get there versus where their people are starting on third base. And so just being really sort of critical in how we use this tooling and also understanding like the bigger picture and, and a candidate profile.

Noelle Bloomfield (44:23):

Yeah, I think that last piece is really critical and actually touches on the question from Julia here in the chat, talking about experience versus education when comparing candidates' qualifications, you know, someone may not have had the opportunity for certain levels of higher education, or they might have had more adversity. So how do you all advise organizations to balance or think about education versus experience as you're, you know, thinking about recruiting and internal hiring and even, you know, the kind of algorithms you, you use to evaluate candidates.

Nithya Vaduganathan (45:02):

I think increasingly the focus is sort of on, on sort of what are the skills that people have, right? And whether they got that through a four-year degree or a boot camp or some combination or micro-credential, right? As someone who's spent a lot of time in education, right? It's sort of increasingly, I mean, it, it, it's that what, what is the output outcome of whatever educational model or set of experiences, right? That's sort of in part of it, part of it, I would say the other piece on the experiences, right? I think that's the stuff that's a bit harder to purely screen on just using a resume, right? And so that's I think where the human component, the interactivity, right? Like that, that's where I think that really does it, it is still relevant, right? For many roles and perhaps not all roles, but for many roles it is relevant. There's been growth in different kinds of assessments that can help get at aspects of that. But

I think we're still in a world where, you know, I would say it's being figured out. I don't think we've got sort of the full, full answer.

Yoni Friedman (46:15):

Yeah. And kind of going back to, I mean, what Nithya had just said, and, and also Sydney's point around experience adversity, right? So there are hard skills where it might, we might have gone a little closer to figuring out how do we compare between, you know, formal education and hands-on experience and understanding how professional a person might be in a certain skill or capability based on that. But, but then how do you, you know, when you try to take it into behaviors or softer skills that really becomes a big challenge. Which is why I think in many ways AI, at least in the process of hiring should still be just a process that leads to a conversation or there's a lot of amazing value in the old ways of interviewing, hiring, and qualifying that we still need to rely on. So at least until we figure out a way to, to, you know, to use AI to, to make, to understand these software elements.

Nithya Vaduganathan (50:40):

And I would say on the, I think the retrospectives are very important, having that at a regular cadence, having a cross-functional team looking at the data, I think is important. And not just as we evolve, you know, the AI is one piece of it, right? But also saying, is there anything, what are we changing on our workflows, and have we gone far enough? Are there other things, you know, everything from the, what are the requirements on the screening side to things like the onboarding and affiliation and the supports to help people actually be successful, whether they're external or internal?

Noelle Bloomfield (51:17):

Thank you. Sydney, there was an ask to double down on what you mean by optimizing AI for the most vulnerable user.

Sydney Coleman (51:29):

Yeah, this can be applied to AI technology certainly, but also all technology, all hardware, software platforms. When I'm talking about optimizing for the most vulnerable, it's actually designing with that user journey in mind. So thinking about the example I gave of someone who is in crisis, who's experiencing a health crisis, or has experienced a hate crime those are what we consider critical user journeys. And also putting an identity lens on that. So thinking about what it's like to be using facial recognition technology that's going to make decisions about how someone is, is treated across skin tone and race and eye shape and all of these different like phenotype, different indicators. So I think it's just having an identity focus when you're building any technology and making sure that you are testing and getting feedback loops from all different identities and their intersections.

And I think the intersections piece is really critical in where we can sometimes go wrong as an industry because we might have a technology that works really well for black people, for instance, holistically, but when we actually slice and dice the data, it's not working for black women or older black people. And just as an example, think about like how those intersections impact the experience of using technology and not looking at the data always in aggregate but actually looking at those intersections of identity and what are the implications in unintended consequences. Oftentimes we're making technology with the best intentions but we have these unintended harms and we need to mitigate that and anticipate that by really going deep into the data and looking at those identity intersections.

Noelle Bloomfield (53:34):

Super interesting and relevant, and I think there's a lot everyone can learn in that space in thinking critically on how to really be inclusive there. Question from Dave. Do you consider the use of traditional psychometric assessments, like a cognitive ability assessment as AI,

Nithya Vaduganathan (54:03):

I don't know that I personally consider that as AI. I consider that as another input, right? To give more information on a candidate. So interview time and there's, I would say compared to, you know, a few years ago, there's a lot more, there's a more expansive way of getting a

sense of an employee's fit and vice versa. And you know, I would say the assessment is a piece. There's you know, gamified sort of interviewing processes, but again, more information right on the candidate in the context of a broader set of inputs, right? Which is their resume, their LinkedIn profile you even see some organizations doing sort of cohort-based activities, right? Micro internships, which I mentioned before, give you an even sort of better two-way read. So that at least when I think about it, that's how I, you know, I say I, I think there's a multi-input way of getting a fit assessment now, and that's one of many,

Yoni Friedman (55:10):

Yeah. And one, one thought, one thought around this that has been bothering us at least that gloat is I do think it's an input, but, but there, there's also a question around when you're matching between a candidate and a job at the end of that job that requisition, but was written by a person and they don't necessarily, you know, expecting certain outcomes from a cognitive assessment also represents a certain bias and one that is a little less tangible than I need a skill, right? And it goes back into you know, are they of the right d n A, are they the par, you know, do they look like my existing employees and so on? Which is something that really is for us, very challenging and we're trying to find the right ways of incorporating it without incorporating a lot of bias into it.

Nithya Vaduganathan (56:09):

Yeah, I hear you Yoni. I think it's hard. I think it's hard to, and I'm starting to see more organizations start to think about this, but it's not how they've historically dealt. Like how do you actually, it's not just like, I mean in most organizations, HR recruiting, it sits completely differently from when, once an employee's sort of on a team, right, working away. But how do you actually create sort of a feedback loop between right, and actually have, and it's that it's not just HR, but business leaders also engaged in this dialogue and that reflection around you know, who is really successful and then trying to unpack, right, what is it that some of those experiences and capabilities they might have come in with that some they might have, you know, create, gain in, in their actual sort of job, right? So trying to unpack that is you know, I, I think we're on the cusp of more organizations starting to do that, and I think there's a lot of power into it.

Noelle Bloomfield (57:10):

All right, with two minutes remaining I'll go with our last question here and do a round-robin with each of you quickly. Is there a fear of relying on AI how do hiring managers balance, you know, the use of AI to offload their responsibilities versus taking the responsibility and being more active in the hiring process?

Nithya Vaduganathan (57:40):

Yeah, I personally think of it as very complimentary, right? And that it helps sort of enhance capacity and capability that if it were only humans sort of driving and navigating all this, right? So how do you actually get more expansive in the funnel you're bringing in? How do you get more improvement in that time to hire? How do you get more thoughtful in what criteria successful candidates have in screening for that at scale? Right? I think all of sort of, I think of it less as replacing, right? But truly sort of complementary.

Sydney Coleman (58:22):

Yeah, I plus one, I, I think there is certainly a fear for me of AI sort of expediting and exacerbating known inequities when not used with caution and also when not when being used by audiences who've not been necessarily educated around the potential for harm. And have an overreliance on some of the advancements of technology without really understanding the associated risk.

