



# "Pluralism and diversity make us more innovative and are good for business"

*By: Dafna Bramly Golan*

**What leads to successful diversity programs, and what causes them to fail? • Several experts gathered to discuss this issue as part of the series of online meetings "Work Plan", held in collaboration with Tnuva.**

"The meaning of a diverse company is a company which mirrors Israeli society, and that is what we strive for in our organization," said Tnuva's VP of Human Resources and Administration, Gabi Weizmann, in an online event conducted by Globes in collaboration with Tnuva, on the issue of diversity and inclusion in companies. "We believe pluralism and openness make us more innovative and creative people, which inevitably also leads to business success."

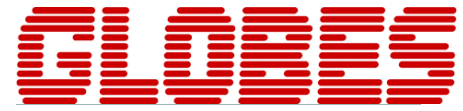
Regarding the profit line, Weizmann says that Tnuva has identified an increase in consumption in Arab society, also due to the fact that Tnuva has hired more employees from Arab society. But beyond the business benefit, he sees diversity as a national benefit. "It improves productivity, equips more employees and gives people adequate and respectful employment. A very big contribution to our success together with Co-Impact, was due to the fact that the President of the State extended his sponsorship of the initiative. It is proof and an example that when everyone joins forces, we can succeed."

According to Weizmann, in order to diversify a company a cultural and intellectual revolution must be led. "In the first stage, you must be careful to not scatter your efforts. You have to do everything gradually, share the process with the whole organization and get help from experts."

The event, which was moderated by Shiri Dover, was also attended by Nawa Jahshan Batshon, CEO of Co-Impact and an organizational consultant; Dr. Galit Desheh, occupational diversity expert and Professional Director of Power in Diversity; Liat Shachar, Chief People Officer at the start-up MinuteMedia; and Fadi Alobra, Co-Director of Talenteam, which specializes in placing candidates from Arab society in employment.



Gaby Weitzmann, Galit Desheh, Liat Shachar, Fadi Alobra, Nawa Jahshan Batshon / Photo by:  
Yonatan Bloom, PR



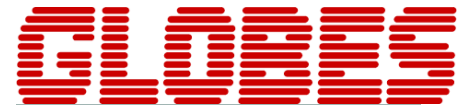
## **The key to success: Mid-level managers**

Batshon spoke about the Co-Impact initiative. "The idea was to connect with the largest companies in the economy and change everything related to diversity and inclusion of employees from Arab society. We started with a study that mapped out needs and models we should implement, and the companies we should target. The strategy was to enter leading and large companies."

"Our research has shown that placement work is excellent, but not enough. This involves changing the recruitment and selection processes, employer branding, and accompanying managers in absorbing employees. All of these increase the percentage of retention and promotion of employees within the company and apply to other diverse populations."

"When you recruit someone who is different from you, there are unconscious biases. We know that 50% of Arab academics do not apply to large companies. Only 5% of Arab citizens are employed in large companies and 0.3% in management positions. We work with Arab society to change the perceptions, mostly with academics and students. One of the things that makes it difficult is that there are no success stories that a graduate can look at for inspiration."

"It is common to think that diversity is a matter of employers and not of candidates," Alobra added. "The candidate's experience is very important. Banal things like delay while giving an answer are perceived differently by a candidate from a diversity group. The feeling is that my national identity is an issue, they don't really want me."



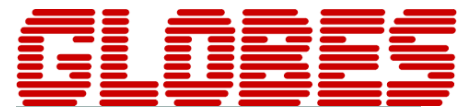
## **Is the diversification process suitable for any organization?**

According to Desheh, "There are very different readiness levels in organizations. Some can go through deep and thorough processes and some just need to touch on the subject so it doesn't shake the thresholds. Inclusion and diversity make a lot of organizational noise and you must know how to deal with it."

Diversity is not everything, she reminds. "There's no reason in the world to hire unsuitable people. In the end they will fail, and the damage to the organization and the group they come from will be terrible, because we tend to project one employee's experience on an entire society. But if there is potential, yes, I would stop and think 'maybe it is worth it for me to take this person, advance him, and that will bring more people from his group to the organization.'"

## **When does diversity fail?**

According to Desheh, "Research already shows that diversity programs fail when they do not involve mid-level executives. Management sometimes land their worldview on the entire team, and do not think about the noise and resistance it might produce, especially among people who were not part of the thinking process and were pushed aside."



## **The role of start-up companies**

Liat Shahr from the start-up Minutemedia said that her company, which has been invested in diversification processes for the past two years, has been greatly influenced by Black Lives Matter. "People want to be part of a better society. When you work with companies in the United States, one of the questions you are asked is what you do about diversity and inclusion. We need to be serious, work on it and present results."

Alobra points to the role of start-ups, which are perceived as a closed Tel Aviv community, in promoting diversity. "In recent years, there has been a heart-warming phenomenon - organizations are recruiting Arab employees from the start, not necessarily in entry-level positions. This is because venture capital funds have begun to make the right moves in regard to diversifying their staffs.

When diversity is successful, it affects small companies more than large ones, because in a small organization, Arab employees have more significance, and this refutes the biases and leads to openness and dedication. It makes the companies embrace diversity as a value."

**The article was translated from Hebrew. For the original please press [here](#).**