

PANEL 2: BUSINESS

Gursimrat Bawa

Hi Guys. I'll invite the panellists straight up to the stage and I'll let them talk about themselves for a couple of minutes before we go straight into the panel. So can I please start with Angat Sandhu from, partner from Oliver Wyman. Rashpal Bhatti VP of Marketing Freight from BHP. Guneet Singh, please Group Finance Director from AAP. Sarv Girm or uncle Sarv, CITO from MLC insurance. And finally, Darren Deep Singh, partner from McKinsey and Co. So starting with you on Angat potentially. Do you wanna introduce yourself maybe one or two minutes about what you do and who you are?

Angat Sandhu

So. Thank you.

Gursimrat Bawa

Oh, sorry.

Angat Sandhu

Thank you. So, hi everyone. My name is Angat Sandhu or Angat Sandhu if you're born here. It took me two years to sort of figure out how to pronounce my own name post my family migrating to Australia. So I can understand the challenges. Yeah my family moved to Australia twenty one years ago. We were from Punjab lived all over Punjab. And dad one day said we're going to Australia and I was extremely excited about that. I did in my high school and university here and then started sort of working within the financial services sector. A few things which may not come out from a CV I think, which some of you may relate with. When I was fifteen I was selected to play a third grade cricket for a local district and had sort of ambitions of becoming one of the first Punjabi's is to play senior cricket for Australia. At sixteen I got selected into James Ruse high school and my sporting ambitions and careers sort of finished there. When I was eighteen my parents wanted, really wanted me to become a doctor as most Punjabi parents do. I decided to go down a path of studying actuarial studies which they thought was around working in an aquarium which it wasn't. So I disappointed them then. And then once I sort of completed my university I, at that point in time investment banking was quite the in vogue thing and I was privileged to get an offer from Macquarie, which was known as the millionaires' factory. And I decided that I didn't want to work that hard. So again, I thought I let my parents down and decided to join a consulting yeah. Can sort of talk a lot through the panel around the career I've had. But I've been very, very privileged to sort of work in many countries in the world including in India. And I'm really, really looking forward to working and listening from the panellists as well as yourselves because that was having some of the organizers that I am unfortunately not very networked within the Sikh community. So for me, this is a fantastic opportunity to learn from all of you and meet all of you. So thank you.

Gursimrat Bawa

If we try to keep going down the panel.

Rashpal Bhatti

[Speaking Punjabi] It's an absolute pleasure to be here today. My name is Rashpal Bhati that has many different connotations in Australia and in United England but I won't go through them [00:03:57 inaudible]. I live in Singapore I worked for BHP and had been with them for the last eighteen years. My parents emigrated from Kenya in 1967 to London. I was born in London. I was educated there, did my university and first years there as a graduate I worked for Citibank, some (? years) there and then moved to Singapore in 2002 and just was telling him [00:04:24 inaudible] just now that I have the pleasure of being in Singapore for the third time across an eighteen year period. I have been blessed with three children twin daughters [00:04:35 inaudible] and Veer Singh who is seven we're all in Singapore, including my parents [00:04:42 inaudible] is my mother, my wife [00:04:46 inaudible] we live together in Singapore and I have the pleasure of being part of the non-direct community around the world. And I've been shaped by the learnings of Sikhism through that channel. And have allowed me to or enabled me to excel I think with God's grace through the corporate ladder. And it's an absolute pleasure to be here today and a big thanks YSPN for allowing me to see today. So thank you very much and over to Guneet.

Guneet Singh

Hi everyone first of all it's nice to see so many faces in the audience both new and familiar. So I just to sort of, I guess on a similar note I'd like to say, and I'm really humbled to be here today and thank you to the organizing committee for giving me this wonderful opportunity. So most of you would have read my profile and would know that my name is Guneet and I'm the group finance director and member of the executive team at Australian Associated Press or AAP for short. Most of you probably aren't familiar with AAP and what we do, but we are Australia's national news agency. So we specialize in providing wholesale news content media analysis services, custom publishing solutions, and a variety of other sort of media solutions for a variety of clients, both locally and internationally. So in my current role, I am responsible for overseeing the groups finance operations. I am also responsible for executing strategic initiatives and also providing commercial and strategic support to the rest of the business.

Sarv Girn

So yes, the brochure says Sarv, but Sarv stands for Sarvjeet and in case people didn't know. But and ironically it wasn't any English community or Australian community that shortened the name. It was actually [00:06:39 inaudible] these couldn't say Sarvjeet in England when I was growing up. And so Sarvjeet became Sarv and in the end everyone, and even the NTO knows me as Sarv now, so which gets confusing. So, but I've just sort of linkage back to the previous panel. As the previous panel was going on. I've migrated four times now so far who knows if there's another one. But, so when I born in India, when I was one, my parents went from Punjab to London at the age of eightish they decided that was enough of London. They didn't like it. So we migrated back to India. So I lived in Delhi for four or five years there. Then they decided, well, you know what? India has changed and it isn't exactly what we thought it was when we left. So let's migrate back to the UK. So at around thirteen, fourteen I migrated back to London and then did my studies and everything there. And then has most people grow up. And as some of you no doubt will have when you get to a certain age, you get married and think, you know what, why don't I go and live somewhere else now? And so wife and I, we came to Australia twenty years ago, so that was the fourth migration. There was one in between back to UK, but that was sort of a small one. So that's sort of the migration journey that most of us, have had. Professionally, look, you can read the read the buyer there. But in a nutshell, what I like to do and what I do professionally is change companies through technology. And so the roles I take on or I have done, I take on for four or

five years or six sometimes or longer to drive change in a company. And that sort of is, has become not by design, just out of it's just evolved. And those are the things that I guess that I enjoy and I thrive on. And some way the morning's discussion was actually about change as well. Yes. We're not talking about technology, but we're talking about people. And so that was really interesting listening to that.

Tarandeep Singh Ahuja

[00:08:57 inaudible] I'm currently Perugia. I'm a partner with McKinsey and company a management consulting firm based in Melbourne. So my story is I was born in a small town called Kananga, India. My parents just before partition migrated from the other side of the border and just stop like 30 kilometers after the border in Kananga which is on the border of Pakistan and Punjab. So that's where I was born, grew up. And then as I was saying Indian parents at that time in India when you were growing up, if you're reasonably smart, you either became a doctor or an engineer. And my parents wanted me to become a doctor and I didn't like the idea of cutting frogs and experimenting on them, which is what you had to do. So I ended up doing engineering wasn't very studied in Delhi for a few years and then joined Hindustan Unilever, which is a consumer goods company in India. Did that for a few years, wasn't quite sure what I wanted to do in life. So I thought maybe I go and MBA. Did an MBA and after that wasn't still sure what I wanted to do. So I thought I'll do management consulting, which is basically doing whatever you want. So ended up with McKinsey worked in Delhi for a couple of years. And then I was married and you know to fulfill my parents' aspiration of having a doctor, [00:10:19 inaudible] had a doctor, so my wife [00:10:20 inaudible] is a doctor. And we said maybe we go live somewhere outside for a few years. And Australia at that time was actually one of the few countries where doctors from India could practice. So we said, why don't we go see if Australia works (? when) a couple of years and come back. And we came here long Story Short eleven years later we are still here based in Melbourne. From a job perspective, what I do is serve a bit like I was saying help our clients improve their operations. So I do everything from strategy to MNA to helping them transform their businesses across different industries over the years. But in the last four, five years I've been spending more and more time in energy and heavy industry organizations. Yeah. For those of you read the papers, the energy sector is probably the second most common on the front page of the newspaper after financial services these days. So an interesting sector that I work in. And firstly trying to figure out a bit what my identity is you know Indian living in Australia for a long period of time, what can I do for the community? Over the last couple of years had the good fortune of actually working with the Department of Foreign Affairs when they were looking at developing India economic strategy for Australia. It was a great pleasure last year working with Peter Varghese. I don't know if you guys have read the report, it came out a couple of months ago. If you haven't read it would be a good one to read. The one big thing in that is if you look at Australia's relationship with different countries, the one where we should have a natural relationship and we don't have enough is India. You spend a lot of time focusing on the US, UK, China but if you look forward the next twenty, thirty years, the one most important relationship we need to have is with India. So is in a place you're looking at that and seeing we have in the, being an Indian in Australia actually, it is probably the right time to be here now. So that's kind of my story so far living in Melbourne with my wife and my four year old daughter, Bonnie, and very excited to be here. So big thank you to YSPN to have us here today. Thank you.

Reshpaul Chahal

Awesome. Thanks guys. So I think after the first panel we all kind of realize how we got here in which way we came in. And the question that I have the first one to start off with is, what has the experience

of being a Sikh in a western workforce been like? And what are the unique challenges or opportunities that's like pose to you and how have you manage those so Guneet potentially I could start with you.

Guneet Singh

So I think for me, my experience of being a Sikh in the western workforce has kind of ranged from being either neutral, so having no real discernible impact to being positive, which is maybe what some of you would not expect to hear. And I think that's underpinned by a few different reasons. I think firstly my entry into the workforce coincided with a large scale number of second generation migrants also entering the workforce. And I emphasize a second generation, I suppose because I think that for those of us that were either born or raised and educated here, I think having that mix of both western and I guess Indian values definitely would've made it a lot easier to integrate into the workforce than it would have been for previous generations, for example. I think secondly is also a reflection of a shift in mainstream Australian values, particularly in the large Metros like Sydney that have experienced widespread migration. And finally for me, I always made a deliberate sort of decision to always work in organizations that had values that were closely aligned to mine. So I think those are kind of the reasons why I've always been on the more positive side of the spectrum in terms of my experience. Um, more specifically, I guess on the positive side, my name always tends to be a constant source of curiosity and intrigue for a lot of people. So when people get over the initial sort of fumbling around and wrestling with how to pronounce it, they invariably become very curious about where the name comes from, what it means and so I tend to leverage that opportunity and you either use it as a great conversation starter to build rapport and get to know other people. Or and in an often cases it's, I use it as an opportunity to educate other people about the Sikh community who we are, our origins, our values and what we stand for.

Reshpaul Chahal

Yeah, that's really interesting actually to notice how we might have physical differences in appearances and how we dressed and stuff like that, but also on paper, what that difference is. Uncle's Sarv, could you potentially elaborate on that as well?

Sarv Girn

Yeah. I similarly have had the view the business environment in Australia is a fair environment. And we've got the opportunity to do things in line with our ability. But I think there's also an element that we don't know about that you have to be conscious of as well. An identity plays a key part of that and it's not unique to Australia. You know, even if you look different in India you get treated differently regardless of you're in your own country if you're from India. So I think Australia is fair, but there's an unconscious side of it as well that people don't realize and there's an inquisitive side of it. And you, I've over the last twenty years or so here, have had to learn to deal with both the genuinely naive question. Are you Muslim? Why'd you wear black and not red turban? That's all of the questions that you inevitably get on your looks. So you've got to work out if someone is really genuinely doesn't know or if they just trying it on. And whilst we, it's about learning, Sikh is about learning. I think nowadays in the modern workforce, it's has to be also about teaching, right? And so I've learned myself to have that thirty seconds, sixty seconds, whatever message it is to teach. When people asked me. Question for this week that I got was surely there has to be some logic to the color of turban you wear. And that was a ten minute conversation, which included saying it's not like a a karate black belt and I'm not there so, that's a serious question, which can come to not if you just, if you wear a turban or you're male or

female, it will come because I've also been in the situation where I've been standing next to another Sikh who doesn't wear a turban. And the question is not to me, it's actually to the other person saying, why aren't you? And so those individuals who don't wear turbans have to have that answer in the most respectful manner. So I think for me, the workplace has to be, and the business place has to be around learning as Sikh is, but it's got to be around teaching as well.

Reshpaul Chahal

I agree completely. I think that's very important for everyone in this room and the wider community as well. Just with the panel structure, if you have anything to add, please respond [00:17:48 inaudible] Angat?

Angat Sandhu

Yeah I think I may decide to, I think building upon what Sarv has said with a slightly different Lens, I think we moved here in 1997 and at that point there weren't that many Sikhs in Australia. And I think even awareness of what India was not very favorable in the Australian community. And so, and maybe because of appearance and because of naiveness I wasn't characterized as a Sikh. I used to get Lebanese and you can list them and it was never really in a positive way I think. And for me it was really about trying to sort of educate Australians in the workforce around, no, no. India is very diverse for a huge part of the population there and actually draw analogies from other countries, particularly the UK and Canada were a lot more prominent. So, I initially found it quite frustrating that there was such a lack of awareness here around our community. I think, but over time that's improved and ironically was actually cricket for me because I was so into cricket that helped improve and when [00:18:57 inaudible] came into the scene I was like, that's who we are.

Rashpal Bhatti

So Sikhism for me has been a wholly positive experience in the corporate world and I echo some of the comments that Guneet made earlier. So aside from the identity, which in itself is an excellent conversation starter and provides a lot of insight to both ourselves and to the people we're talking to the values and the convictions we hold as Sikhs provide me with an advantage I feel to my compatriots and my colleagues at work. And I'll try to explain what I mean by that. Humility is a pillar of Sikhs. I think nobody will disagree with that. Now, one of the things that the corporate world has been through is a very long and arduous cycle of arrogance and overconfidence in many industries and markets today where servant leadership is one that is a deep requirement in many industries. And having that conversation with your colleagues to say that this is not a new concept to us. One can be humble and remain confident. One can remain a learner and remain confident. And the crux of this for me as a Sikh in our society has been that to be able to learn. The first value of being able to learn is to be humble. Because if you're not humble, i.e. the shutters are down already. How can learn? So that is a conversation and as a concept has been very important in getting BHP, and I've had the pleasure of working with BHP for the last 18 years from being the largest mining company in the world, and saying that very openly to today saying that we get a lot of things wrong and having a sense of vulnerability, but yet being very strong to our convictions.

Reshpaul Chahal

I think I mean you played right into the next question, which is how do Sikh values and how have they played a role in your corporate life and your corporate success, all of you being very successful. So maybe we can continue that discussion. Tarandeep?

Tarandeep Singh Ahuja

I think that's a really good question Raj. That's a question I've been reflecting on for a while. To me, a bit like Angat was saying, being a Sikh actually gives you a lot of things at the core of it that are quite important and critical in corporate life. One of which is probably a sense of direction and purpose. And attached on of what is what really matters and when it comes to decisions in your work on a, whether it is small decision on a day to day basis or really big decisions, knowing what is right. And I think one of the core things Sikh is doing the right thing. So, that is one thing which I think gives me the strength to make the right and often tough decisions in my work. Second probably is having the faith to be resilient when things go wrong and things inevitably go wrong more often than you would like them to be. But having the faith that it will be okay and [00:22:44 inaudible] will take care of you and you just keep doing what is the right thing and then leave it to him. I think that's, that's probably the second one. And related to it, if you have faith in [00:22:59 inaudible] then it gives you the ability to take risks. And whether, you know, for us moving to Australia was a risk. We were well settle, enjoying, having a good time in India. We thought we want to try something different stepping out there and having the faith that it'll all work out. So I think those probably are a few things in terms of on a day to day basis how I operate is lessons from Sikhism are quite useful. And then the other part I think is the whole notion of saver which was discussed earlier in the morning. And as Rashpal saying being a servant leader that is really the core of what makes people successful in the long term. And being humble right. We might be successful sitting on the stage, but what have you really done? It's all been with God's grace that we've, we are all where we are. So, just having that in the back of the mind I think keeps you grounded.

Reshpaul Chahal

And can I ask off the back of that actually. How would you, how do you practice ever in your corporate life and your personal life? This is the question I'll probably ask everyone here. But how do you approach that? Especially because I feel that in the modern, in modern day, the traditional notion I say, we are still there, but I feel like we have the opportunities to return more to the community. Could you give us some examples of some things that you've seen that our community can do or you personally have done?

Tarandeep Singh Ahuja

I think it depends on how you define saver right? I don't think this word saver has a narrow definition of how you're going and physically participating in community event and giving back to the community. That is absolutely a critical part of what you need to do. But saver can pervade pretty much everything we do, right? So I'm actually fortunate at McKinsey our job is to serve our clients. We had a professional services firm that literally is what we do. And a big part of it is how you serve the clients to make sure you are focused on their best interest in helping them be successful. And luckily that reflects back on us an is the right thing to do. But also doing the same thing with our colleagues. Taking the time to have that 10 minute conversation to coach someone. And if someone is feeling low, just sitting down taking your schedule and saying, okay, let's go have a coffee and let me tell me what's going on. Are you okay? That is a great form of saver because you are then nurturing the talent for the next generation but also helping colleagues who need it at that point of time. And then also looking for opportunities to give

back to the community, which you can do both personally, but also in corporate life most companies these days have their own CSR activities that are going on. At McKinsey we do a lot of work with not-for-profits. In fact over the last year or so have been setting up this organization called Generation with the objective of helping unemployed youth, get employed. And finding ways you can contribute to the society in that manner. And ultimately it comes down to whatever you are passionate about, right? If you're trying to fake it, it will not work. So do the things that you believe in, but do it with the mindset of trying to help others and being selfless. And the good thing is it comes back and pays back.

Reshpaul Chahal

Might work my way down the panel.

Sarv Girn

Just on the Sikh in corporate life or business life. It's interesting because, we don't realize it plays a role until we think about it. And this morning just having breakfast was I being quizzed by a panel at home. Which does the Sikh really play a role? And at the surface you might say, well not really right unless you look in the mirror or you. But it does and it's interesting cause I've had the opportunity to meet some that very sort of CEOs of some of the IT companies in the US and stuff and one saying which resonates and links to back to Sikh and he's an Indian in charge of Microsoft. He said that there are individuals or companies or communities that are, have an attitude know-it-all. Right? They're arrogant, they think they know the corporate world again. And they don't want to grow and they think they have a, they're it. They will die and they will become extinct and many of those companies have. Then there is another set of individuals, companies or communities that want to learn-it-all. So know-it-all and learn-it-all. And the learn-it-all's are the ones that will survive many generations and get stronger and they will grow. And I think our, the Sikh values are actually around learn-it-all. Right and give back and think of the community, the individuals who are not being treated fair. So when you sort of try and draw the line in those, in that language, I think the values and the deep system inside our religion is very relevant, but it just hasn't been drawn out in a language that's business talk. I guess if we sort of look at this setting. The other thing is, and for those of you who are in Australia, there's something that's just finished called the royal commission. Now what's gone wrong in financial sector? They've lost their values. And yes I'm in the financial sector, so I'm part of the system. So they've lost the values and the ethics and how to treat people and it's become more greed. Now you've just got to look at some of the principals in Sikh. Are you, are we really going to go around preaching as a religion in our corporate world, but probably not. But if we just look at some of the, the teachings and from our past, I think they're very relevant in today's corporate world, especially in Australia, in being out pluck a few things and try and practice that because it will just make us stand out a lot more. When your average exec in certainly in financial services is struggling to define themselves at the moment.

Reshpaul Chahal

I mean going on with that intrinsic value of Sikh I suppose good. How have you seen one of the intrinsic values being Sikh, how have you seen that in your line, in your life? Or how do you practice that?

Guneet Singh

Yeah, I think I'm a lot of the points that have been mentioned as previously are really sort of pertinent and really to myself as well. But I think what's clear is that the definition of Sikh takes on a broader context then what has previously been associated with the notion of CFR, it's no longer just confined to

servicing at the Gurdwara it really does sort of pervade every aspect of life and even in corporate life. And I think it's also, I mean, it raises some really interesting questions. I think Sikh or not I think that fundamental Sikh values are just a wonderful kind of ideal for all humans to live by, right? Regardless of whether you outwardly practice the faith or not. I think the fundamentals underpinning Sikhism sincerity in what you do hard work showing equality and respect towards all others. I think they're just fundamental pillars with which everyone should really just be leading their lives. So for me, I mean tend to reflect a lot on the kind of person that I want to be and what I want to embody and what I, what I want to represent and all of those sort of values really sort of come into play when I have that sort of moment of reflection. When it comes, I guess in a specific corporate context, I think it's a day to day sort of mentality. It's not necessarily grand structured gestures. It doesn't necessarily need to be specific sort of a volunteering initiative. I think it's a day to day gestures that you can kind of execute towards your fellow human whether it's extending a helping hand or whether it's offering, a supportive ear, whatever the case may be. I mean specifically, again, just talking about my role, I tend to try and think of going above and beyond what specifically in my job description. I consider that a form of I guess saver as well. Also I feel a sense of responsibility to the next generation and developing them and making sure that they're realizing their potential. And also, I think, I guess looking at it from a slightly different angle, I think saver is also really sort of looking within ourselves. I think she mentioned before that Sikh begins with (? ike) looking within your yourself. And so I think we've also got an obligation to be the best that we can be for the benefit of others. And I think that's a really kind of, I think that, that's something that I sort of try and keep in mind in the way that I sort of carry myself and conduct myself, not just at work but also outside of work. And so I guess from all of that you could kind of say that Sikh values really does sort of underpin, just my day to day life.

Reshpaul Chahal

It's interesting actually. So you mentioned (? ike) and [00:32:31 inaudible], oneness and completeness that kind of runs through the whole Sikh and it does resonate quite heavily with me. Sat Sahib is another thing and Rashpal you imagine being sick and a teacher, can you touch further on that and how you've seen that in corporate life and in your personal life as well?

Rashpal Bhatti

Certainly Rashpal thank you just link two or three concepts together if I may. So the first thing is we talked survey I think as a community in the corporate and social world and [00:33:01 inaudible] talked about, we don't have the concept of pastoral care as much as we should have and I completely agree with you. So just bringing that into play a little bit. So I think the first thing about surveys we need to draw upon Sri Guru Granth Sahib to answer a number of our questions and we probably don't do that enough in the corporate world is the way I feel about it. Where I think that there are number of answers in in Gurbani that we just don't think relate. So a couple of examples, the first thing about surveys [Speaking Punjabi] it's not what we think is the right surveys, what would you think? So that's the first point. The second point is that growing up in the UK and in the eighties and nineties, so as I said I'm part of the [00:33:47 inaudible] community and I've been really blessed [00:33:50 inaudible] who was, who shaped my life as it is today and was very clear that humility is the base of your life. Gurbani is very clear on that. And secondly that you've got to make smart choices in life. You know, he was very clear about smart choices. And this goes back to Sikh in terms of we listen to the sakhis which are preeminent in our lives. And it's very interesting that I group sakhis into two parts. One is [Speaking Punjabi] the miracle that happened. So that's great and that gives us a lot of inspiration. But there's the

other part of sakhis, which is, it's not a [00:34:27 inaudible] it's just Guru Ji being smart and telling us the way. So great example of that is when Guru Nanak Dev Ji went to [00:34:35 inaudible] which is now in Pakistan and said he went to [00:34:38 inaudible] and in this [00:34:44 inaudible] they were saints and shaheeds and very spiritual people. And when they saw Guru Nanak Dev Ji coming to the village. They came out to greet him. He thought, but what they were doing was they were saying we're full here. We don't need anybody else. We don't need any more spiritual people here. You can stay here. So what they did by, in symbolism is they brought out a bowl of milk and filled it up to the top and put that in front of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Nanak Dev Ji being who he was of course, understood that immediately and what Guru Nanak Dev Ji did in return he didn't speak anything. He plucked a lotus flower and put it in the bowl of milk symbolizing that you may be full to the brim but what I bring to the table is very different to what you do. And that wasn't the [00:35:35 inaudible] that wasn't a miracle. That was Guru Ji being smart. And I often think about that in the corporate world where we don't have to align with corporate politics per se because as a Sikh, I don't think this is a personal view. It may not be shared broadly. I don't think we need to align with personal politics with corporate politics and think about who the next person is that we need to stab in the back to get to where we need to get to. I think we need to make smarter choices. And just to close the loop there, in terms of the saver part. This smarter choice concept at work and I think all of us will relate to this, is that mental health issues unfortunately pervade our society today. And I take the most amount of pleasure in identifying those colleagues and those people in my team, hundreds of people around the world who are suffering from either social or postural issues or have mental health issues and require some kind of support and help. And when you can bring that to the surface. And my aim is that we can talk about mental health issues. Like we talk about having a runny nose one day. I took a Panadol because I had a bit of fever. Hopefully one day we can talk about the fact that I really feel anxious today. I feel depressed today and I went to the doctor and I got some medicine. I really hope we can do that, but we can't do today because there's a level of anxiety that's associated with that. But being able to help society, being able to be selfless and bring those issues to the surface and then being able to support those people I think is a mechanism or is one part of saver that I support

Reshpaul Chahal

And I maybe going to continue that, but how do you see saver?

Angat Sandhu

So I think, I agree with the views around humility, respect and doing things that are selfless and generally selfless and not just good for your CV. I think that those characteristics I completely agree with. I think one thing that's quite personal to me and I think it is a core characteristics of Sikhism is actually not giving up when things are against you, being the underdog and fighting the battles. And again not to draw attention to the traditional parts of our religion, but if you do for a second, we've always been outnumbered outmaneuvered and yet never given I believe. And that for me is quite personal. I work for a company which is not the largest, it's the fourth largest. I was employee number three, was very small. And I try to join them because I'm like, well, you know what, I want to build something on it, fight it out. And you know, when suddenly times are tough in the corporate world I draw a lot of personal motivation from one, staying grounded, and two just staying focused and determined. And I do think those are true attributes of Sikh.

Reshpaul Chahal

It's quite interesting actually from what everyone said here today, it'll always seem like the corporate world has to catch up to Sikh not the other way around. Look, can I please get a round of applause? I'm going to open up the floor for questions. So that right at the front.

Male 1

I have a question for all of you in the panel. We've talked a lot about saver and how you, how you integrate what that means to you into how you work on a day to day basis. But well, if you are now quite high up in your respective companies. How do you see or how do you go about implementing this concept of saver into your broader corporate culture?

Sarv Girn

I'll kick it off. So I think we've had a few people comment that there's a form of saver in the Gurdwara camps and so on, which most of us do. I think in the corporate world, the earlier point I was touching on is mentoring people, helping them and getting them to grow themselves. That's something I'm quite passionate about is not just in the company I work in, but the companies I've worked in in the past or others is just helping out others. And I sort of see that as, I know there are actually firms out there that charge services for that and dollars for those kinds of things. But I see mentoring, coaching, guiding someone else as a form of saver. But the one I would sort of call out and I don't, I'm sure some people do it, but I would suspect most don't is how can we do saver outside of our own community. So I've tried to now go outside of the comfort zone and get onto a board, something called the Cantu Foundation, which is about health and well-being and raising money for cancer research and prevention. It's run on the northern beaches. And that's Anglo Saxon community. They wear orange tee shirts if you've seen them around Sydney jogging, swimming, marathons. That's my saver to that form is not because I'm a runner or I jog I'm far from it. But I've got a network of people out there in the business world that hopefully can become sponsors for them. And so that's my way of doing it. And implicitly comes back to the earlier point is actually a way of going into that environment and explaining to them. So I think it'd be great at some point which came to me a few weeks ago to try and do a joint sponsorship with the SYA, YSPN and then Cantu. Imagine this community running or jogging orange, across Sydney. That would be something. So I think the point is how we can, in the communities we live in do saver in that as well as our own community. And so being on two not for profit boards, which aren't paid I see that as a form of for the skills that I have. And I don't have all the skills that may be required for other forms of saver.

Tarandeep Singh Ahuja

I think it's a really good question. In McKinsey, there will be three ways we try and fulfill our purpose for the community. You'd call, effectively call that saver. One is encourage individuals to actually do what they're passionate about. So it could be being part of boards, as Sarv was saying, it could be I'm going and participating in NGOs. It could be helping NGOs, on their strategy to think about how they can be more effective. It could be mentoring entrepreneurs, mentoring startups to coach them through that. So that's one thing which we do as individuals. Second is we often do a pro bono not-for-profit projects for organizations, be it from working on indigenous issues like a Cathy Freeman Foundation or working on education or working on mental health. And the third thing we do is every sort of five or so years pick one topic where we invest quite heavily as an organization, often in partnership with other companies or other organizations. Seven, eight years ago, made a heavy investment into diabetes because that's a big killer underappreciated killer in Australia and work with the government, with

NGOs. I think it made a big difference in terms of the numbers a couple of years ago we've set up generation, which is about youth unemployment and making a big effort on that, especially indigenous unemployment, which is a huge challenge these days. But it's going to become an even bigger challenge with in the morning we were talking about digital revolution happening. That'll become an even bigger challenges as people are displaced. So at those three levels, I'd say individual level do projects that make sense and picking a couple of big themes that we are passionate about.

Angat Sandhu

I think there's, tying back to that question with sort of their content to say. I think we can all in the room name countless organizations where we are volunteering, we are helping people do all those things. I think for me one of the key things we should all really ask ourselves is, are we genuinely each a fostering enough genuine saver? And I know the answer for myself is no. Like, yes I sit on a few charities, I do a whole bunch of stuff. I do say I party every now and then. But is that really enough? And so I think that's really sort of the one sort of take with individually we should all have is how can we, everyone's very busy, everyone's got high profile jobs, families and the like, but how can we really push ourselves to do more and help other succeed? And I think that really ties back the principles of humility, respect, going out of the way and doing genuine saver. And I'm sure if you sort of adopt that principle, we ourselves will not only help more people but also help ourselves grow.

Reshpaul Chahal

I think that's a very important point. And that's why this event is called Elevate. It's how do we elevate each other who, most of us are in quite fortunate positions. And how do we elevate the broader community? Yeah. Any other questions?

Female 1

So I'll just ask the question.

Reshpaul Chahal

Sure.

Female 1

So we hear about... Okay so all of you have a lot of experience of working in corporates around the world in different countries. My question really is about racism or perceived racism and it comes around quite a few times now is it an excuse? Because we hear about glass ceiling for women and we hear about the bamboo ceiling. That's what's going around for people of Asian origin. Is there a turban ceiling? Is there a, is there a ceiling that you feel in the corporate world at the entry point and thereafter?

Reshpaul Chahal

Guneet, did you want to maybe start this one?

Guneet Singh

I think, I mean I've been quite fortunate I suppose in the sense that related back to some of the points that I made earlier, that I've deliberately chosen to work in organizations that have similar values to

mine that embrace diversity. And I think I'm kind of, a key example of that the organization that I'm at the moment has three women that sit on the executive team and really I guess values I suppose a different kind of perspective that diversity can bring to the table. So I think that for me, I haven't overtly experienced any, I guess kind of bias in that sense. If anything, I've been privileged enough to have opportunities come my way. But I do think that it necessarily, it wouldn't necessarily be the same for many others. And perhaps some of that's for the fact that I don't have any outward kind of physical sort of difference or any sort of I don't wear a turban that sets me drastically apart from like the mainstream if you'd like to call it that. And that has worked in my favor. So I would say that my experience may or may not be reflective of everyone else's, so yeah.

Angat Sandhu

I decided to one comment. I think two parts to it. One is if you look at corporate Australia and you look at sort of the ethnic makeup of boards and CEOs it's pretty clear that 95% is Caucasian and over 80% is male Caucasian. And I think you can, you can read what you want into it. And different people have different views on why that is and one of the reasons is migration is still quite new in Australia. It all takes a few generations for that to change. Certainly if you go by what's up in the UK and the US. I think my personal view is some people sort of look at that and say those ceilings are prominent and it's because of my color or my appearance I'm not getting through. And maybe that that is true in some organizations and in some sectors. But I think certainly the attributes that I've tried to adopt is if we let sort of that get to us, then you become very narrow minded and you become very negative and sort of how you go about things. I think you really have to sort of move away that noise and really have conviction in your own abilities. And I think to the point I made earlier on being the underdog and say, well I am different. I am the underdog and sort of religion teaches us to keep persisting and keep doing the good things that we do and the faith I have as well. If I keep doing that good things will happen over time. There will be ups and downs. And so I certainly believe, yes, I don't have, I don't wear a turban, but I am very different and I'm probably in my organization, the only one who's a non-Caucasian at that level. So I think you kind of have to move away the noise if there is that noise and keep persisting and believing in yourself.

Sarv Girn

I'll just add to that. Nanak's write around self-development in that and actually making sure you're strong enough in that environment. I've always had the attitude, it's fair and there is no biased or ceiling that you can't go past. But a few years back my view changed. Something happened where I didn't get an opportunity for the way I was, the way I am. And it was interesting and I sort of smiled when I found out indirectly what the decision was based on, but I moved on from it. And the way I then change my views is this always happens. Sometimes you don't know about it. Sometimes you do. So how do you deal with it? So, and it will happen in any country no matter what. The Irish have faced it in England, over Scottish or it somewhere else. It's always happened. It's not a case of Sikh or your color, but the way I reconcile it is when you're going for something in a business world, an opportunity, 80% is about your own ability and how good you are in, in your job, your profession, your values and so on. There's a 10% that's about someone's bias that is interviewing you, but it's conscious or unconscious, there's no doubt about it, right. And the percentages can vary. There's another 10% someone else who was just better than you didn't think you actually didn't do the 80% well enough. So which one do you worry about? The 10% that's not in your control, which for 20% study to control because someone was better than you or someone is. The interview has got a kind of like unconscious or conscious bias. So I

sort of then took the view, well, I'm going to focus on the 80 and if I hit another switch I'll be aware that this happens now. I'm not going to live in this rosy world. I'm aware of it, but I'm going to focus on the 80 and I never looked back after that. And that was probably eight years ago in my career. And I won't go into the detail on that stuff, but and I and I never looked back so I just focused on the 80% and that's good enough for me.

Rashpal Bhatti

Thank you for that. That's quite inspiring. Just to add to that there are a couple of things. The first thing is I firmly believe there is no glass ceiling I absolutely not. In fact, I think quite the opposite. I think that we are favored and I'll try and explain that we live in a world where diversity and inclusion are a much in demand and I think that our inclusive traits as seeks provide us with enablement that many others don't have point number one. Point number two, the diversity that we bring to the table is not just inherent. i.e. how we look, It is also acquired and our required levels of diversity. You guys talked earlier about our diaspora and our migration. How many other communities can boast of that level of exposure and diversity? And I think that we bring that to the table very strongly and perhaps who don't do it ourselves enough favors in bringing that to the table. And I think thirdly to the point where I think there is and I've found this over the last twenty, twenty five years in the corporate world where I still find it, it's not a struggle at all because I've overcome it, but the drinking culture, the barbecue culture, the we must meet tonight over a drink. And when you don't, when you're a teetotaler and you don't and you're vegetarian, and therefore you don't want to socialize in those circles. You've got to find your happy medium. But that's not because somebody else wants you to do that. It's because of what's right for you. And what happens through that process is that people on the whole tend to value that and they respect that. It's only when you try to become something that you're not, that you fall into a trap. So I certainly, my feeling is in my own experience is that there is no glass ceiling. And in fact, we are much more favored. And I would say that my encouragement to everybody was, is that our conscious and unconscious bias that VG was talking about are deep rooted, our own conscious and unconscious biases, let alone somebody else's towards us. So let's control what our conscious and unconscious biases look like. So when we recruit, let's do it 100% fairly, the rest will take care of itself.

Reshpaul Chahal

That was a very inspiring panel. And could I get another round of applause please?