

# Building diverse and inclusive tech teams with Eleni Pavlović

## The GoodWork Podcast | Season 1, Episode 6

**Felicity Halstead:** [00:00:00] Hello, and welcome back to The GoodWork Podcast. I'm Felicity Halstead, your host, and the founder of GoodWork on today's episode. I'm talking to Eleni Pavlović. Eleni is a recruiter at Monzo, but you may also know her from her TikTok account, which went viral during the pandemic as she shared insights from the recruitment world.

I'm thrilled to have Eleni join me today where our conversation covers recruiting for tech, startups, and scale up building progressive DE&I focused people strategies and why she stepped away from social media.

Eleni, welcome to The GoodWork podcast.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Thank you so much for having me. I'm very excited to be here.

**Felicity Halstead:** So could we start by having you just tell us a little bit about who you are and what you do?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, sure. I work in the hiring team at Monzo. Originally in terms of like background for me, I was born in Greece, but raised in Serbia.

So moved to the UK when I [00:01:00] was eight and then went to uni, studied European politics. I was the first person in my family to go to university, which might give some background context on why I'm so passionate about socioeconomic diversity. Yeah, I entered recruitment. Once I, once I graduated initially worked at a recruitment outsourcing company and then kind of InsureTech and now FinTech.

So dabbled quite a lot in like tech scale up hiring.

**Felicity Halstead:** One of the things that is the reason why we became connected was from you sharing a little bit of on LinkedIn, about your past experience on TikTok. So, and if anyone Googles you, one of the first things that come up is some of your viral TikToks although you no longer have an account.

So I'm really keen to hear a bit more about what you did on TikTok, why you started doing it and how it's relevant to what we are here to talk about, which is all things, careers.

**Eleni Pavlović:** So TikTok was a really wild journey for me. I guess the reason I started it initially was during the pandemic I was hiring the entire time.

Like I did [00:02:00] not stop hiring at all through that time. And I was interviewing people every single day who had either lost their jobs because of COVID or they'd recently graduated. They couldn't find a job cuz nobody was hiring. And I felt like I was just speaking to people and reviewing CVs every day and I was just like, there's so much.

Knowledge that I hold, you know, when I'm talking to somebody and I'm interviewing them and, and things like that. And I'm like, I just wanted to share it and do something. And TikTok was really just getting started at the time. I had no idea really how many people would listen to it if anybody was even gonna care about it.

But I was thinking, you know, even if it helps one person and it helps them to get a job out of it, I've done. I kind of intended to do, and then obviously it kind of grew from there. So it was quite a wild ride. I think I did it for just over a year, set up a coaching business on the side from it. And yeah, I think I slowed down doing it kind of October of last year.

And then I haven't really picked it up that much since then. Although I do miss it occasionally.

**Felicity Halstead:** And I mean, at the kind of height of, of what you were doing, how many [00:03:00] views and followers did you have?

**Eleni Pavlović:** So I think in total, I reached just nearly under 80,000. I think my most, the videos that were watched the most were just under a million views.

**Felicity Halstead:** Wow.

**Eleni Pavlović:** So one of them was around like LinkedIn and like how to find roles on, on LinkedIn and how to set up basically the back end of a LinkedIn recruiter license and kind of how we filter throughout certain candidates. And then the other one was around asking questions in interviews and how more junior candidates versus more senior candidates approach asking questions.

I think those were the two most popular.

**Felicity Halstead:** And having set up and kind of successfully curated a really quite substantial following. It must have been quite a big and possibly quite challenging decision to take a step back from it. Can you talk a bit about why you did that?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, it was, it was a few reasons, honestly, it was a really difficult decision to decide to step back from it.

And as I said, I do miss it sometimes I think. Initially, it kind of got to the point where I was getting like deals from [00:04:00] companies, you know, like job search companies and things like that. And I was doing some of them, but some of them were offering like six month contracts and things like that, which would require me to take holiday from my full-time job.

And. I did debate doing it. And I, it kind of reached a point where I was like, do I quit my normal job? And now take this, you know, really give it my all and then take it full time. And especially because I was doing the coaching at the time as well, but having reflected on it for a very long time, I decided, you know what?

I love my job, like my day to day. Yeah. You hear loads of people on TikTok, talk about, create your own business and everything. And I think that's so amazing, but I was also like, you know what? I actually just love my corporate job. Like I love hiring people. I really enjoy it. Yeah. And. The other aspect of it that I think, well, that really played into it was I just had lots of personal stuff going on.

I changed jobs twice in one year, and then I moved in with my partner and then also my dad was diagnosed with, with terminal cancer. So it was just a lot of like personal things happening all at the same time. And I just ended up needing to take a step back from it. Really? Yeah. Who knows if it's a permanent change, maybe one day I'll [00:05:00] pick it back up.

**Felicity Halstead:** Yeah and I'm so sorry, so sorry to hear about your dad. And I think, it is really interesting what you say about some of the messaging on, on TikTok and on other social media platforms, which is everyone's gotta have a side hustle. Everyone's got to, you know, quit their corporate job and start their own thing.

And I am the worst person for that because I have talked so many of my friends into putting their jobs since I did, but I'm dangerous. But that being said, it's really worked for me. because it was the right time in my life. And I knew exactly what wanted to do with it. And you're completely right. It's it's not right to evangelize that for everybody.

And you are still really young, right? like it's, as you say, there's lots of time.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah. I think you, I, I think it's amazing when people do that. Like it's great. I think it was just for me when I was weighing up the different options and things, I was like, I have so much time to eventually maybe do something, but there was also still so much that I wanted to learn within the hiring world.

And as I said, I'm just one of those people that actually just like, loves their job. [00:06:00]

**Felicity Halstead:** I mean, incredible. So, as you say, some of your own experience, being the first person in your family to go to university, as well as the experience that you've had

as a recruiter, you know, those are the reasons why you are particularly interested in things like diversity, equity and inclusion in recruiting, social mobility, being the thing that, that I do.

And that GoodWork is all about. There's a lot of really interesting conversations about diversity in the startup and scale up world. What have you learned from your experience on the recruiter side of it? Where I can only imagine that it's a really important priority for you, but it is still an area in which it may be fair to say that industry gets quite a lot of flack and criticism for not being as diverse and inclusive as it possibly could.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, the tech startup and scale up world is really interesting. I think when it comes to, to diversity and actually one of the things that I would put it down to is that tech startups and scale ups tend to hire [00:07:00] very reactively. Like when you are just setting up your company or you are at seed funding or series a, you just need to get the people through the door to get the product bill and get it out there and grow it.

And. A lot of the time, they don't have scoped out hiring plans. They don't really know what they're gonna need next week, let alone like in a year. So that tends to mean that when a recruiter then gets given a role, it's very much, when do you need this person? Oh, we need them yesterday. Like we need them immediately.

And that doesn't really allow you to. Actually focus on diverse hiring because you need to be engaging with these communities of people to try and get them through the door. And when you are hiring so reactively, you are not really able to do that because you just need to find the person that can do the job.

And diversity can't be the number one focus because you just don't have the time for it. That's really like. One of the key things that I've found, um, within tech startups. I think the other thing is, I mean, this can happen in any company, but just naturally biases that seep into, into [00:08:00] the hiring process and like networks as well.

When you are initially like setting up, it's easiest to fire people who, you know, or through networks. And usually that's not the most helpful approach when you're trying to focus on like social mobility and, and different areas like that. So, I'd say that's really the key things that stand out in, in terms of tech scale up and, and startups when they're hiring.

**Felicity Halstead:** And as someone who has a lot of insight into that world, what advice would you give to other recruiters or founders? For example, of those sorts of businesses who are really keen to do the best they can in the circumstances that they've been given to increase diversity in their hiring at those earliest stages.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Well, the first thing I would say is like, try and be as proactive as you can with your hiring. You know, there are gonna be roles that really are reactive and like, you

do need them ASAP, but really evaluate. These are the next five roles that we're gonna need to hire for try and prioritize, which are the most urgent.

And then the ones that you [00:09:00] have scope to spend a little bit more time and effort mm-hmm, use those roles to raise the bar in terms of like your diversity focus, you may not be able to. Do it for all of them, but do it for as many as you can. And the more proactive you are with your hiring plans, the more you'll be able to allocate, okay, this is when we need this person.

So we can count backwards from there and, and work backwards on spending that time on, on diversity and engaging with the relevant communities. The other thing that I would just say is it can be very easy when you're considering like. Internships or work experiences that you've got a friend of a friend who needs a two week work experience.

And now I'm not saying that, you know, I know that it's gonna happen. And I think it would be like nearly impossible to, to remove it completely. But I think when you have those types of opportunities, Try and open it up and try and, you know, make it a public listing and try and get people through the door who maybe wouldn't have had that opportunity otherwise, or maybe would not have had those networks to get that work experience or that internship in the first place.

And obviously the other critical one is to actually pay your intern.[00:10:00]

**Felicity Halstead:** In terms of fostering the long term trajectory and improving your diversity, equity and inclusion as an organization is about candidate experience, but also employee experience. You know, when people get through the door, having worked for a range of, as you say, a few different organizations in a fairly short space of time, are there any key culture factors or activities that you've been exposed to that you think actually, this organization.

Is doing something really right here, or this is a really good idea. That's fairly easy to adopt for, for other people.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Actually I'll use Monzo as an example, because I think Monzo does this quite well. It's about engaging with the communities, right? I think sometimes when you are hiring and you're like, okay, we want.

To create a more diverse workforce and it might be easy to just think, okay, I'm just gonna post on like a diversity job board. Yeah. And I find that that's more of like putting a plaster over a much bigger issue. And actually like, you need to give [00:11:00] something to these communities of people that you are trying to, to engage with.

And so I think it's about building those relationships, building those networks. Mm-hmm so that they see you as an employer of choice and that they can join because it's not just

about. Hiring people from diverse backgrounds, but it's also about retaining them, right? Because if they join and they have a terrible experience, as you said, mm-hmm experience is so important, they will just leave and also they will talk to people in their community and they will say, that's not a good employer.

Like don't go there. And so it's also about focusing on the type of experience that you're providing for your employees. Monzo, for example, everything is on slack and everything is really open, but we have a black Monzo channel. It's a private channel where only black Monzos can join. And that's a completely safe community for them to discuss with each other, whatever issues that they might have.

And it just provides that safe space for them. So I think it's. You know, different, you can do that in whatever ways you see fit or whatever works for your organization. But I think it's important to, to [00:12:00] consider those topics as well. And I suppose it, it also becomes easier. As you say, with scale, when you get to the point where you have a thousand employees or 2000 employees, you are going to have that scale.

That means that, individuals don't feel as, as exposed by nobody. I can imagine enjoys the experience of being the only a person of color in a company, but in a company of five people, it's not impossible that that would happen. Unfortunately it happens in, in bigger companies too. Yeah. I'm really interested to understand.

**Felicity Halstead:** So Monzo's become like a household name, right? Mm-hmm, I mean, the brand is pervasive, which is incredible and has had that a success in a way that very few other UK. In the last few years can, can claim to. How does that impact on your ability do you think to hire and engage a more diverse community of people and to foster a more positive culture?

Do you think it makes it like a more difficult challenge or do you think it's something that actually, because you have that [00:13:00] level of recognition is perhaps easier

**Eleni Pavlović:** To be honest, it can, it can kind of vary. Overall say that it's probably slightly easier now that Monzo has grown to the level that it has in that, you know, we have very built out hiring plans, so we can be very proactive in terms of our hiring approach and not so much the reactive type that I was I was talking about earlier.

I think we also have the resources to then invest more time with our employees. For example, we have a diversity director who is purely focused on. Engaging with, with various communities and making a psychologically safe space for employees and lots of work that, that she does. So in those kinds of aspects, I would say it's slightly easier.

I would say the trickier thing with Monzo is that because it's a household name, anything that potentially would go wrong is much more in the public's sphere. Yeah. That would potentially, if it was like a much smaller company that, that isn't well,

**Felicity Halstead:** I'd love to talk as well about entry level talent. So I know that at Monzo, you don't currently really take on entry [00:14:00] level candidates, particularly, and that is often the case in a lot of organizations that are smaller and growing very quickly.

It's definitely a challenge that we found at GoodWork is finding organizations who are often in the position where they're saying actually we're, we're thinking of taking on like our first ever entry level role, but the organization's got 500 people already. . Um, and, and so for us, that can be a real challenge.

What would you say about the value of bringing in people? Either straight from school or straight to university and how we can work with organizations to support that? Because there is a real. Really good way of improving diversity of improving your inclusion overall is by bringing in that next generation.

But again, as they say, like, it can be really challenging to get organizations, to be willing, to invest in putting in the time and the training that those candidates will need.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, you've hit the nail on the head with the training, right? I think with the scale up and [00:15:00] startup environment, so much of the time, you just need to bring experienced people in who can hit the ground running because you just need to get this thing done or you just need to get something out.

And so they can't afford to spend that time training up somebody mm-hmm . I think the thing is that entry level talent though, can bring so many fresh and interesting. Ideas to the table. When I first started in recruitment, I had zero experience of recruitment and I was fortunate enough that my company spent the first month or so like training me up, spending that time with me.

And then I ended up progressing quite quickly. I got promoted twice in my first year and it was just through getting stuck in bringing lots of ideas. I was like very hungry to learn and progress. And I think you do get that a lot with entry level talent. So it's just building that case for, if you just spend that first bit of time with them, like they will be so willing to invest lots of time and effort into your business and also bring so many interesting ideas and projects and things to, to the table.

**Felicity Halstead:** Yeah. And touching again on something that you said earlier in, in our conversation, you, you talked about [00:16:00] your own experience coming to the UK at the age of eight being the first. In your family to go to university, would you consider yourself to kind of be a product of any type of social mobility? And, and if so, how do you think that has impacted your own experience at work?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, that's super interesting actually, I think, yeah, in a way, definitely. I think I am an Eastern European immigrant. I come from a working class background when

I went to university. I had no. Really help around how to write a personal statement, like how to actually pick what uni I want to go to or what course I want to do.

You know, my per like giving the example of my personal statement, I was working in an eyebrow salon at the time, and it just so happened that one of my customers used to be a UCL admissions officer. And she used to read personal statements all the time. And I was telling her about that. I was applying to union things and she was like, oh, send me your personal statement and I'll help you confirm it.

And, and, you know, create a final draft. So I sent her like my first version and that's [00:17:00] really how I ended up getting help for a personal statement, because I wasn't able to really get the help anywhere else. I didn't have those kind of connections with people who had gone to uni and they could help me or, or anything like that.

I now hope to be that person for my younger sisters, cuz they can kind of rely on me to help them in that aspect. Mm-hmm but that was one element of it. You know, when I was at uni, a lot of people on my course, I would say over 50% had gone to private school. They were able to get help with internships, help with work experiences.

they could afford to do unpaid once because they were funded in different ways. Whereas for me, it was a case of like survival and it was like, I can't afford to do a job where I'm not being paid because I'm paying my own rent and my bills. So I think in, in those aspects, it can, it can set you back a bit in terms of like your career opportunities and things, because then when it comes to graduating, you don't have all these internships and work experiences on your CV to fall back on because you've not had those, those same opportunities.

So it's. You do have to work harder, I think in terms of how you go about getting a job and how you almost have to like present [00:18:00] what you are, what you're really capable of. I think in terms of the actual, like, since I've started working, I don't think I've faced as much of that, but I think it definitely like getting your foot on the ladder initially.

Definitely. You do have to, to work that bit harder for sure.

**Felicity Halstead:** And do you think recruiters more broadly are becoming more attuned to that fact, particularly when it comes to more junior people, for example, that actually a CV that has, as you say, working in an eyebrows salon or working in a pub in your uni summer holidays, or perhaps having not been to uni at all is actually potentially a reflection of socioeconomic circumstances rather than your ability to get unpaid internship at the.

Yeah.



**Eleni Pavlović:** yeah. Yeah. I think I, I would hope that we're making steps in the right direction. You know, when I first started recruiting, I remember doing client calls and you would do a brief on like what they're looking for. And they would say to you, I only want Oxbridge candidates. Like I only want people who have been to Oxford, Oxford, Cambridge, and that was just kind of accepted that.

Like they [00:19:00] need to have that kind of barrier. I think now if somebody said that it would be. Hang on a second, like, you know, you need to be a bit more open minded here. Mm-hmm and there was a little bit of level of challenge, like a few years ago, but I think even more so now people would be like, no, we're, we're gonna open that up.

And so I would hope that we're taking steps in, in the right direction. I wouldn't say it's perfect yet, but mm-hmm I would, I would hope that it's. Getting better.

**Felicity Halstead:** Yeah. And I'm really interested in your take as well, because one of the core principles that, that I try to work by is that actually particularly at more junior levels, skills are more important than knowledge, right?

I think actually you and I did fairly similar degrees. Did you do a politic. Degree am I right in that?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, I did a European politics degree

**Felicity Halstead:** I also did like a European politics degree, but I don't know about you. I don't wanna speak for anybody else, but my knowledge of European politics does not do me any good at work, but again, like it can be seen somehow still as like a gold star or like something you gotta take next to your name [00:20:00] when you apply for a job that has zero.

It's something that I'm really pushing for, but do you see much of that slow shift towards actually appreciating the degrees are not necessarily the only marker of talent within the recruitment industry?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, I completely agree with you. I think from once I finished uni, like I haven't needed to use the knowledge that I had from uni at all.

I think companies are becoming more attuned to it. And again, I wouldn't say it's in a place where it's perfect, but I think more and more companies are learning actually. Taking out of the job description that you need a bachelor's degree to be able to apply, you know, just removing that as a requirement completely because sometimes, and I found this actually, when I was doing my toss and things, and I was doing the coaching, people would look at job descriptions and they would send it to me and be like, I've got all these skills, but I don't have a degree.

And I would just have to be like, look, you've got everything else. Like you just should go for it and apply. Because a lot of the time, the person that's writing the job description, hasn't been trained on how to write job descriptions and they kind of just sat there, [00:21:00] like, oh, what would I like them to have?

And they'll just add in a bachelor's degree, even though actually you don't need a degree at all to be able to do the job. And so I'd encourage people, like just apply anyway. It's worth taking the shot, but I think companies are progressively starting to realize actually, let's just take that out of the job description entirely because it's really not relevant.

So I think it's just even tweaking things like that, where you are helping to remove barriers for people who. Who may not know that like they may not know, actually, when it's listed a, a degree, you might think, oh, I definitely can't apply. Cause I don't have one. And you need that person to tell you, actually you can.

**Felicity Halstead:** And I'm always so interested. So CVs are in my view are really imperfect tool for recruitment, and yet they still kind of feel like the easiest tool to use and that they are everywhere. I guess, two parts to my next question. The first one is knowing that CVs are everywhere. What would be your. Two or three bits of advice to anyone for somebody who sees CVs

I imagine all day, every day mm-hmm what would you say that [00:22:00] people need to, to do on their CV or take out of their CV? And secondly, what is your take on CVs? Do you think there's a, a future without them or that we have to keep moving? Or do you think that I'm totally wrong? Cuz you're, you're allowed to say that too.

**Eleni Pavlović:** No both very good questions. I think the first one on like my top tip for a CV would. It's very tempting with a CV. Um, a, what I see a lot is to just list out. Everything you've ever done in a job, any type of responsibility you've ever had, but really, I would say the CVs that stand out are the CVs that focus on impact.

Like what impact did you make in your time there? And what did you do that somebody else in, in that same role may not have done? So I always like when I was doing coaching and things, I would tell people your first bullet point underneath any job should be a key achievement bullet point. Like, did you deliver a project X amount under budget or X amount under time?

Or you got really good feedback on something or, you know, it doesn't have to. Ideally pick something with numbers and that's quantitative, and that sounds quite impressive. But even if it's qualitative and you don't have something with numbers, [00:23:00] like that's fine. Just show off your impact because I think that's something that gets missed a lot on CVs.

The second part to your question, I would say. There are companies moving away from them. I've seen apprenticeship application programs, which are solely based on video. And you talk through your experience and you answer some questions and things. I've also seen unconscious bias platforms that don't use CVS, and they ask like a series of questions and you write out your answers to them.

So I think there is. Pockets of time where we're moving away from using CVS and, and elements like that. But it's definitely not perfect yet. So I think CVS will definitely stick around for a while. I think until we find a perfect alternative solution.

**Felicity Halstead:** I think there's two things that spring to mind there.

First of all, is first of all, this is a question, which is, is it true that big companies use robots to scan people's CVS and S them off completely without a human ever looking at.

**Eleni Pavlović:** I think there are, I haven't worked with one. Okay. So I think it's a lot [00:24:00] less common than you think. I, I dunno whether it might be a us thing to be honest, but I've, I've actually not really heard of companies in the UK doing it.

I've seen comments before where people thought that like Monzo do it and they don't like it's. All recruiters. We've got a recruitment team of like 20 to 25 people and it's all human screening, but I've heard of like Amazon, for example, using an AI. And there was some stuff in the news about it being like biased at some points.

And they had to like Recode it and things like that. So I think it does happen. I personally have, have never worked for a company that, that uses it, but I think it is a thing for some places.

**Felicity Halstead:** And I guess the second part of my question is one of the things that I found a real challenge. So for example, so at GoodWork, we're hiring at the moment for our first role, which is really exciting.

Mm-hmm and we talked about not having CVS, but one of the challenges there was, and it's something that I feel really strongly about having been in the job market and applied for jobs myself is. I don't want to make it take ages for somebody to apply for our role, because you know, at the end of the day, even as a really small social enterprise, we're getting quite a lot of [00:25:00] applications.

And unfortunately we're not gonna be able to hire everybody. And I don't want people to have spent three hours applying for the job. So it's. And CVS because people will generally have a CV that they, they can use for lots of jobs. Obviously we hope that they will tweak them to make them relevant, but ultimately it does make the process a lot quicker and easier.

Are you aware of any other ways of doing it that can have the same effect?

**Eleni Pavlović:** So one platform I used for an old company that I recruited with was called Applied. Yes. And they are like a blind recruitment platform. And that was the one where you didn't have a CV. They could attach a CV if they wanted to.

But at the same time you would normally upload like five to six questions that were job specific. And then you, they would write answers to those questions, obviously that is a time consuming part of applying. So that does create some friction. The one thing I would say though, is the people that took the time to apply you generally.

Better applications because people had like invested the time in, in the questions, but at the same [00:26:00] time, it doesn't remove that friction of, of applying. And it does take time. So I wouldn't say it's like the perfect process. I think you can get also some types of softwares, which. Cover up parts of the CV.

So they allow the candidate to apply the CV. I can't remember what it's, what it's called, but it removes things like names, for example, or universities or schools or, or grades even so that you can make a decision based solely on their experience and removes any other elements of like unconscious bias that could seep in.

**Felicity Halstead:** It's such an interesting one because I spend a lot of time thinking about the difference between blind recruitment. So removing bias from a recruitment process versus contextual recruitment, where actually what you are saying is I want as much information as possible so that I can make an assessment based on the fact that actually, well, this person might have.

Been in the care system or gone to a school in a very deprived area that had never sent a young person to Oxbridge before. And therefore the fact that they might have gone to university at all is actually a really [00:27:00] substantial achievement considering their educational background. It's really difficult.

I wonder if. Contextual recruitment is something that you've come across particularly, and, and what your thoughts are on it?

**Eleni Pavlović:** It's not something I've dabbled in too much myself, to be honest. It's, it's not something that I've covered that much, I think in terms of the actual interview process. And once you dive into somebody's experience and, and actually speak to them, I think that's really where you can.

Suss out different areas of their experience and figure out actually, is that something that I would put more weight on, like that part of their experience because of, yeah, something that they've experienced in their past, but it's not something too much that I've, they've worked with. I have done like training for interviews and things on how to.

Be aware of biases that might come up within interviews and trying to remove biases as much as you can from interview processes as well. So that can also potentially be helpful. Yeah. And

**Felicity Halstead:** then I suppose another question I have is around how a progressive recruitment strategy can build into a more progressive.

Talent strategy [00:28:00] overall. And how much as a recruiter, you need to be feeding in and plugged into how the organization's people strategy is operating on a much broader basis and how the feedback and the experience that you have from all the candidates that you come across can actually support an organization to be doing better, more inclusive and more equitable things at large, and particularly interested, you know, as you say, your experience in working for.

Fairly large and growing, but more established company, but that comes from that kind of startup space. What's your take on that?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Hiring is naturally interlinked so much with people strategy and most companies that you'll come across their hiring strategy will be part of their wider people strategy.

Mm-hmm . and it is really important to, to consider that I think the first place that you can start from when you're hiring is the data. Right. And looking at actually, what do our hiring pipelines look like sometimes when you do like a diversity survey, when you're applying, I think sometimes people are hesitant to fill them out because [00:29:00] they're worried that that data might be used against them.

The majority of the time, that data. Anonymized. And we actually use it to assess what do our pools look like? You know, are we getting enough female applicants? Are we getting enough? Non-white applicants and looking at that data and then being like, okay, we need to do more work here to try and engage more women, for example.

And so it's, first of all, evaluating that and then thinking about what you can. What you can do to engage with the different communities that you are, that you're working with. One thing I would say is people are increasingly holding companies to account for what they're doing. And I love that. Like, I think it's so important and people are, you know, demanding more from companies as they should.

And so it's about actually looking at. Your benefits and what are you providing for your employees? Flexible hours, remote working, go to pay and not just like pizza parties on a Friday, as nice as that might be like, how helpful is that actually for your employees and, and you know, their wider wellbeing that's linked, right.

Hiring. Doesn't get to choose what benefits the [00:30:00] company gives, but it can. Talk to the benefits, the team, the rewards team, whatever you might have. And it can say, actually, this is what we're seeing in the market being offered. This is what most companies are giving out. We need to consider doing this. And so pushing on that wider strategy of, of what companies are doing, because we are, I guess, the eyes and the ears of what's going on externally and what's happening in other companies and people are increasingly demanding more and which.

I just love . Yeah, I love it

**Felicity Halstead:** too. I think that realization that you, as an employee can, can demand more and demand change and demand better from your organization is such a powerful one. I think when I realized that in my first job, well, that was, I, I think it was game over for me really, but, um, it was it was definitely, I mean, game over in terms of me ever having a focus on anything else ever again, one thing, actually just picking up on that.

That I'm really interested in is because I feel like I see. And I mean, there's just so much junk on LinkedIn anyway. And [00:31:00] although sometimes I'm sure I'm contributing to it, but you know, this real like hybrid versus in office versus remote work debate, what would you say is actually the demand from the market that you are working with at least,

**Eleni Pavlović:** You know what it really is a hybrid approach. I think it's really like, let people do what they want. Like yeah. Do whatever is best for them. I've had. Candidates where, for example, like a hundred percent remote, doesn't actually work for them because they're like, I want to see people. And then there's other people who are like, no, I've got children and it helps me to be able to work from home or like whatever their personal situation might be.

And I think ultimately you are never gonna be able to create a policy that everybody is gonna be happy with because there's always gonna be people who are gonna want something slightly different. Yeah. But I think what. Typically see in the market. And what I talk to candidates about is, is a hybrid approach.

Like let them choose and let them decide what's best for them because they will ultimately know what suits their lifestyle and, and [00:32:00] what suits them. That's really what I see. Like I actually don't see as much of the a hundred percent remote working or a hundred percent in office. Most people are actually just balanced and they're kind of in the middle and they're like, yeah, a day or so a week or something like that would be, would be fine.

And it kind of changes for. I

**Felicity Halstead:** think that's kind of what common sense dictates is probably the rest answer for lots of people, but it is really interesting. And, and seeing some organizations

start to dictate that everyone comes back in the office X number of days a week, you do just kind of wince. But then at the same time, I know for me personally, like I don't think I would ever wanna take a role that was a hundred percent remote because you just need it.

I, I. Human interaction, but that's the stage of my life that I'm at as well. And, and as you say, it really depends on people's personal circumstances. You mentioned data a few minutes ago, and I want to just touch on that quickly as well. So. As you know, what I do is very much focused around social mobility, but we've seen that capturing social mobility related data is one [00:33:00] of the later things that organizations do.

And actually looking at social mobility as a factor in the E and I at all often is one of the later things that organizations do on that E and I journey for want of a better word. Have you used social mobility data much in the past to inform your hiring strategies and decisions. And is that something that you are seeing become more of a

norm?

**Eleni Pavlović:** Very sadly. I would agree with you that I think it does tend to take a bit of a lower priority than for example, things like. Gender race and things like that. Not that those things aren't important because of course they are. But I think there is still more room to focus on social mobility. I have used that data in the past in terms of looking at requirements and how do we open things up?

So for example, coaching companies that actually we can take the bachelor's degree off of the requirements because it's not necessarily needed. Also helped a company to start using their apprenticeship levy from, from the government, which wasn't something that they had done before. I, I worked with them and that was a couple of years ago.

So there's some things like that, that I've done, I [00:34:00] suppose, in terms of, in terms of helping. But I think there is, there's definitely still, still more to do for sure.

**Felicity Halstead:** My last question to you is one that I ask everybody, partly because I am a book feed. Do you have any books or if it's your preferred method, a podcast or something similar that you would recommend to listeners to say, this is something that speaks to something to do with your work

or some of the things that we've talked about.

**Eleni Pavlović:** Yeah, I'm gonna go with the podcast because I am a fan of podcasts. I, I do love them. So my favorite one, I'm not sure if I'm allowed to swear on her, but it's called Unf\*ck your brain. It's by Kara Loewentheil, it's not specifically work related. It's actually kind of like life coaching, but it's a lot about mindset and she talks a lot about thought

work and covers some really interesting topics that you can overcome, like in, in the workplace, for example, like.

Imposter syndrome. Self-confidence setting boundaries at work, lots of different, different things like that. She takes a feminist approach and talks about, you know, how the patriarchy can affect the workplace [00:35:00] and just being conscious of it and, and different elements of how you can overcome it through thought work.

And I've found that really helpful. I've followed the podcast since 2018. So yeah, it's, it's really helped me in terms of like shifting mindset sometimes when I've had to overcome challenges at work and kind of how I think about things and how I try. Not be as much the kind of person that's like, no worries.

If not, don't worry. Five exclamation marks. It's all good. and um, yeah, I'm trying not to, to do that as much. hard to relate. I I'm

**Felicity Halstead:** not gonna cuz I, I had said the word finally, so I'm not gonna move as now into whole conversation about how the patriarchy affects the workplace. Cause we'd be here for hours, but that sounds like a great podcast.

I'm definitely gonna look that one. Eleni. Thank you so much for your time today. It's been really fun talking to you and really appreciate having you on

**Eleni Pavlović:** the podcast. Thank you so much for having me. I've really enjoyed it.

**Felicity Halstead:** if you enjoyed today's episode, make sure you share it with friends and [00:36:00] colleagues leave as a review and check your subscribe.

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Thank you for listening. We will see you next time.