

**S2: USER RESEARCH**

Takahiro Ishii (Taka)

**HUE****PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Underrepresented minorities (especially engineers) are struggling to work in big companies, because of the work culture and workplace condition not being diverse enough. In fact, a lot of underrepresented minorities are leaving big companies which result in horrible retention rates within big companies who are known to boast about their diversity. With that in mind, we decided to focus on our project on improving retention rates within companies by focusing pain points such as workplace culture and workplace environment that detract from diversity and inclusion within large companies. With this project, we will provide solutions that are unique to each company by implementing ideas which make the workplace more diverse by targeting and analyzing issues that underrepresented minorities face within their respective companies. Ultimately, the goal of this project is to increase diversity and inclusion within these companies so that retention rates of underrepresented minorities rise.

**COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS**

There are only few corporations and organizations working on corporate-well-being. The best example is Limeade, “a corporate wellness company that drives real employee engagement” (Limeade). Limeade is conducting health assessment research to understand the needs of employees, and based on the research, creates personalized plans to encourage employees to have healthier lives by using rewards. Rewards vary but can include discounts on health plans or a luncheon celebrating employee success (YouTube). In other words, Limeade is offering incentives to employees and companies to join physical activities and have healthier daily habit. To achieve its objectives, they are providing software and apps to users. Then, recently, more and more corporations and public organizations are using the systems and apps from Limeade. Limeade and its users think the products will be able to increase employee engagement, because even though they are providing personalized apps for employees, each corporation is trying to achieve corporate well-being with all the employees.

Although, Limeade is geared towards fixing workplace environment by focusing on employee well-being through various activities they still lack the capabilities of solving workplace issues for underrepresented minorities. For example, Limeade does not focus on the social issues that could contribute to workplace hostility for minorities. Limeade does not train employees to deal with race and cultural relation differences. This huge underlying problem because more and more companies are becoming diverse by hiring people from different types of backgrounds (Reference Fig. 1 & 2.). And yet retention rates amongst those minority groups are the highest.

With that said the scope of the users will change overtime and Limeade is not accounting for that. Thus, we find this to be an opportunistic moment for our project because we will target underrepresented minorities and go above and beyond the focus of Limeade by incorporating solutions for social issues that could lead to a decrease in retention.

Ethnic diversity, overall workforce

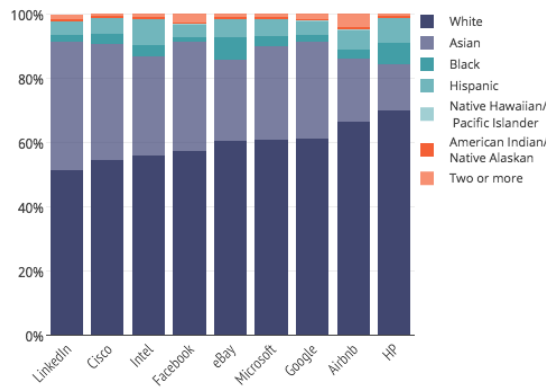


Figure. 1

Percentage of non-white employees, 2013 to 2014

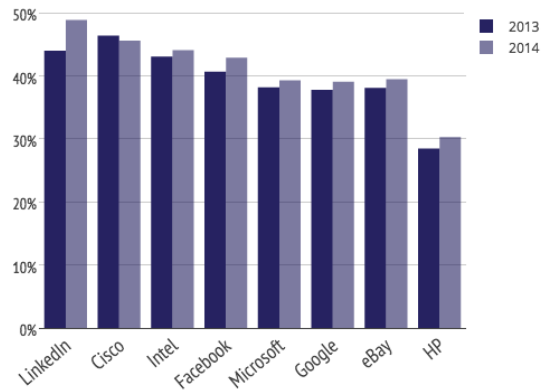


Figure. 2



The apps from Limeade

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Before interview, we describe about our project briefly:

“Thank you for volunteering to take part in this interview. Our group is creating a class project that focuses on corporate wellbeing for minorities working in tech industries. We are interviewing you in order to gain some insight on your experiences as a minority in <company name> and identify key problems in order to create design solutions for our project. If you feel the need to leave anytime during the interview, please feel free to do so. “

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.
2. What is your cultural background?
3. How long have you worked at this company?
4. What role(s) have you served in this company?
5. Is this your first time working at a larger sized company?
6. Can you describe the workplace culture of your company?
7. What are some of your career goals? Has <company name> contributed to those goals?
8. Could you please describe your relationship with your fellow colleagues/team?
9. Could you please describe the demographics of your team and company? (To your knowledge)
10. Could you describe your experiences with these demographics and how you interacted with them?
11. Could you describe instances where people have left the company (to the best of your knowledge)?
12. According to you, are you getting a good work-life balance working in this company?
13. If you can change anything about this company, would you? Please elaborate on your perspective.

## RESPONSES

About the interview: I conducted this interview at Starbucks in U-Village between 9:00 – 9:45 at April 15, 2017. My friend introduced him to me recently. I listed his answers below, and each numbers are linked with the number of the interview questions.

1. I am a 36-year old software engineer at Microsoft. I graduated from UW more than 10 years ago. I majored in computer science, and minored in tech Japanese communication.
2. I am fourth generation Japanese American, and I had grown up rather in American culture both at home and in schools. However, his home city was diverse, and also I had diverse friends. Also, I went to Japanese American church with my mother, and I have a lot of Asian American friends.
3. 12 years. I started working there immediately after I graduated.
4. Software Engineer, more accurately software tester.

5. Yes. However, I also have worked at Microsoft Japan for two years several years ago.
6. The workplace culture seems like family-oriented. Usually teams, where all the members are software engineers, consists of 5-6 members, and we can get close to each other easily. Also Microsoft is trying to hire more people from colleges recently, and the culture is young. Moreover, at least my team is diverse in terms of ethnicity and nationality, and I feel the culture is inclusive. Since a lot of workers there are from outside of Washington, or even outside of the U.S, they are trying to get close to each other. For example, they are having a camping event every year.
7. I like doing different things, and so I want to try new things for my future. Also, I like helping others to grow up, and so I want to be involved in education not in schools, but in companies and my communities. Moreover, I like making things work efficiently with technology. And I think Microsoft has contributed to them, because I could have an experience as a mentor and a manager so far.
8. As I described in the question 6, we are close to each other. However, since I was born and raised in Washington, I already had so many friends and also my family. Consequently, I usually spend weekends with my family and my original friends, and so I sometime feel there is a little gap between people from Washington and people from outside of Washington. Even though they keep asking me to hang out, I cannot make it, because I usually have other plans. At the same time, I also have a group of my friends who I also have lunch together. My group is diverse, even though a lot of people are having lunch with the people of the same ethnicity. I always enjoyed talking to them.
9. There are approximately 85 people in my software engineer group, and they are divided into teams, each has one manager. All the managers are now male, and approximately only 25% of all the software engineers are female. But, it is diverse ethnically.
10. To be honest, I do not pay much attention to the demographics. I am paying more attention on their skills.  
(But when I was working in Japan, I strongly felt I was excluded, because I was not Japanese and I could not speak Japanese well. That was tough experience to be honest.)
11. I have never heard of the case personally, but I know some people are leaving because of gender issues, or ethnical problems. For me, gender issues might be bigger than ethnical issues in tech industry.
12. For me, work life balance is always important, and the balance at Microsoft is good enough compared to other companies. At my workplace, how much to work is flexible as long as we can complete our projects. This is good for me.
13. To be honest, the working condition is not too bad. But if I could change something, it would be inclusivity. Some teams including my team are inclusive enough, but some are not, and so I would change it. Moreover, Microsoft cares only if we finish the project, but not how we finish. I think how to finish the project should be more emphasized, and Microsoft should provide education about it.

## REFERENCES

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