

CASE STUDY IN LEADERSHIP

A Multi-Year Culture Journey

*From Talent Practices to Manager Effectiveness
Turning Data and Information into Measurable Improvements*



Client Context

A global technology company recognized that sustaining growth requires more than innovation — it requires a workforce and culture where all talent can thrive.

The organization already had a strong foundation of internal talent strategies in place. What it sought was an independent, external lens: a partner to provide unbiased analysis, cross-industry perspective, and data-driven, actionable insights that would pinpoint where to focus, validate progress, and connect strategy to measurable outcomes.

Ellore Talent Strategies partnered with the company over three years as an extension of its Talent team — not to replace internal work, but to complement it with diagnostic precision and industry benchmarking.

The Challenge

As the company continued its global growth, leaders began asking critical questions about fairness, effectiveness, and sustainability in their talent systems:

- ◆ Are our systems fair and effective across the full talent lifecycle?
- ◆ Where might hidden barriers limit advancement, especially for women and underrepresented groups?
- ◆ How do we ensure progress is not episodic but embedded into culture and leadership practices?

A Multi-Year Partnership

Over the course of three years, Ellore and the organization worked side by side to strengthen talent systems and embed fairness into everyday practices.

The partnership began with a comprehensive Ellore Talent Diagnostic, where Ellore provides leaders with in-depth insights of hiring, promotion, and attrition patterns. This diagnostic established a clear baseline, highlighting both areas of progress and opportunities for improvement.

Equipped with these insights, the company began recalibrating its performance management processes to safeguard fairness and strengthen retention of top talent.

Building on this foundation, the second year of collaboration focused on recruiting. The goal was to better understand how a growing applicant pool translated into actual hires. Analysis revealed opportunities to improve data accuracy and representation within candidate pipelines. With a clearer view of the process and its gaps, leaders were able to make targeted adjustments—from increasing recruiter capacity to refining systems that supported equitable outcomes.

By the third year, focus shifted toward organizational health and talent advancement. With recruiting improvements underway, leaders turned their attention to manager effectiveness and the overall employee experience, particularly the factors influencing retention.

Data showed that while performance ratings had become more consistent and fairer, retention of top talent required renewed emphasis on career growth and manager quality. This analysis underscored a pivotal insight: leadership behavior had become the defining factor in whether employees felt engaged, supported, and motivated to stay.

Through this multi-year journey, the organization demonstrated the value of pairing strong internal strategies with independent, data-driven insights—moving beyond addressing disparities to embedding fairness into its systems and positioning leadership and culture as central drivers of sustained progress.

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When talent practices are susceptible to bias, they will be broken for all and often impact underrepresented talent most acutely. At Elloree, our role is to provide leaders with the clarity they need to improve their talent practices so all will thrive, and do so with confidence backed by data.”

VALERIE IRICK RAINFORD

FOUNDER & CEO – ELLOREE TALENT STRATEGIES

Insights and “Aha” Moments

As the partnership progressed, several pivotal insights reshaped how leaders viewed their role in building a strong and equitable culture.

One of the first realizations was that hiring is only the beginning. Bringing in new talent without creating clear advancement pathways limits long-term growth. Similarly, leaders recognized that recruiting success alone does not guarantee retention; sustained engagement depends far more on the quality of leadership, the consistency of culture, and the opportunities employees have to grow.

The work also revealed that fairness is not a one-time achievement but something that must be embedded into daily practices. Improvements in performance calibration proved that impartiality can be built into systems when leaders commit to consistency and accountability.

Leaders also learned that support and sponsorship matter as much as evaluation. For some employees, the challenge was not how they were being assessed but whether they had the encouragement, visibility, and backing needed to thrive.

Perhaps the most significant insight was the central role of managers. Analysis showed that leadership behavior directly shaped retention, belonging, and engagement. In short, culture ultimately reflects the effectiveness of those leading teams. The organization began focusing on manager development as the key lever for sustaining organizational health.

Actions

In response to these insights, the organization integrated several changes into its broader talent strategy.

Performance calibration sessions were strengthened to ensure consistency and fairness across managers, giving leaders greater confidence in the reliability of ratings. Recruiting processes were refined with clearer job requirements, expanded recruiter capacity, and improved applicant tracking systems, helping translate candidate interest into more representative and fair hiring outcomes.

Leadership engagement also deepened. Senior leaders initiated focused dialogue on advancement and sponsorship, ensuring that talent conversations moved beyond hiring to address the quality of career experiences. At the same time, the company sharpened its focus on manager effectiveness, equipping leaders to play a more intentional role in driving engagement, growth, and retention.

Together, these actions represented a shift from isolated interventions to systemic improvements. Rather than addressing opportunity concerns episodically, the organization worked to embed fairness into everyday practices, positioning leadership and culture as enduring levers of organizational health.

“This journey has deepened our belief that culture is a living system. By grounding our decisions in data and being willing to adapt, we’ve built practices that support fairness and help all of our people thrive.”

HEAD OF DIVERSITY & EQUITY

GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

Outcomes & Impact

Elloree’s client has made steady progress in strengthening its talent practices, with measurable improvements in recruiting, performance calibration, and advancement processes.

- ◆ Areas of weakness in recruiting and performance data were corrected, improving the accuracy of decision-making.
- ◆ Leaders now have a clearer line of sight connecting strategy → practice → measurable outcomes.
- ◆ The organization has shifted from addressing equity concerns reactively to embedding fairness into everyday leadership practices.
- ◆ Focus has evolved from representation metrics to leadership-driven culture as the next frontier.



Lessons *for Leaders*

This journey highlights several lessons relevant to leaders across industries.

The experience reinforced that progress requires both strong internal commitment and an independent lens to validate success and uncover areas of weakness. It also showed that sustaining equal opportunity is not about one-time fixes but about embedding practices into how leaders and managers operate daily.

Key takeaways include:

- ◆ *Independent perspective matters. External insights can validate progress while revealing opportunities for improvement.*
- ◆ *Progress must be embedded. Making improvements is only the beginning; fair practices must be institutionalized to endure.*
- ◆ *Leaders shape culture. Retention, engagement, and belonging depend on the consistency and effectiveness of manager behavior.*

“Our partnership with Ellore reinforced that creating equal opportunity is not an initiative but a leadership responsibility. Embedding fairness into the way we manage talent strengthens both our people and our business for the long term.”

CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

GLOBAL TECHNOLOGY COMPANY



Ellore Talent Strategies partners with organizations to provide independent insights, cross-industry perspective, and actionable strategies that connect talent systems to measurable results.