

The Power of Individuality

An Interview with Jaleh Bradea,
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Vivendi SA

EDITORS' NOTE Jaleh Bradea has served as a TV producer on major French TV channels with a focus on women-related content and as director of the audiovisual department at a successful telecommunication startup. In 2014, she started working on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives at Canal+ Group. Bradea also works with the French media regulator to promote a fair representation of ethnicity, gender, and minority communities in the French media.



Jaleh Bradea

COMPANY BRIEF Vivendi (vivendi.com/en) operates as a content media and communication company in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. It operates through Universal Music Group, Canal+ Group, Havas, Editis, Gameloft, Vivendi Village, and New Initiatives segments. Universal Music Group owns and operates a broad array of businesses engaged in recorded music, music publishing and merchandising. Canal+ Group publishes and distributes premium and thematic pay-TV and free-to-air channels, and produces, sells, and distributes movies, TV series and TV shows. Havas Group is one of the largest advertising and communications groups in the world. Its business includes communications disciplines, such as creativity, media expertise and healthcare/wellness. Editis is one of France's largest publishers. Gameloft engages in the creation and publishing of downloadable video games for mobile phones, tablets, triple-play boxes and smart TVs. Vivendi Village provides ticketing services, and owns and manages intellectual property rights, live performances, festival productions and venues. New Initiatives operates Dailymotion, a video content aggregation and distribution platform and Group Vivendi Africa (GVA) is dedicated to the large-scale development of ultra-high-speed Internet access in Africa. The company was founded in 1853 and is headquartered in Paris.

How is diversity and inclusion viewed at Vivendi and is it a part of business strategy?

Because of the McKinsey study and others, there is now data that proves that diversity, inclusion and belonging result in better performance at every business. This has led to a conviction today that D&I is business-driven, and it confirms that we are right to lead it that way

in our group. We can now see that, in order to be creative, innovative and able to adapt to the changing expectations of our clients, we have to be diverse.

You mentioned diversity, inclusion, and belonging. How do these three areas relate to each other?

If you take a picture of the world, it represents diversity. But what are you going to do with that diversity? This becomes inclusion. Belonging is the last step.

I also like to explain it this way: Diversity is seeing that they are there, inclusion is giving them a voice, and belonging is when that voice counts. This is an obvious evolution which is important.

For example, networks naturally develop in companies – LGBTQ networks, women networks, disability networks – and they are important because when people feel they are a minority, they want to join with other people in that minority to come together to gain a sense of empowerment. However, that shouldn't be the end of the story. The end of the story is the day when all of these people together are going to create a huge network that is actually our world. I know that it may sound idealistic but in this world every individual should count and that is important.

A few years ago, many thought that the social network was signaling the end of the human, but it was actually just the beginning. There is now an expectation of existing, of being me, who I am, with all my differences and specificities. All of us have different stories and this represents our diversity.

I like to say that the future of diversity is individuality. In this very huge global world, each of us needs to exist as an individual. When you feel good about yourself and are aligned with what you are, you are more productive. You are happy to go to work because you are heard, and this represents belonging.

Are metrics important in this type of work?

I think metrics are crucial because if you don't measure things, they do not really exist. It may be a challenge for the moment to figure out the right and most relevant metrics because inclusion and belonging are new subjects, but we will find them. There is a way to measure it.

With so many companies under the Vivendi umbrella, is it important to have a consistent, seamless D&I program or is it customized based on the different brand cultures and businesses?

I think it's both. All these companies exist without Vivendi itself. They have their own successful businesses. They have their own HR and, sometimes, even their own CSR. However, we have common initiatives led by Vivendi such as a CSR Committee. More recently, we created a Diversity Committee where we share the best practices in D&I from all the companies and decide on common goals when relevant.

Having a clear vision of where we all want to go together is important. This is especially true when the brands are located in different countries and running different businesses. It is important to give them a common objective to share and to build together.

Even with all the focus on gender parity, it seems that the C-Suite and boards are still male dominated. What can be done to bridge this gap?

In France, in big companies, supervisory or executive boards are required to have 40 percent women, which is a good thing. Up until a few years ago, I was not in favor of quotas because I thought that since women are as talented as men, why should we have to have quotas? However, quotas are good for pushing things in the right direction until they become natural. For the moment, I don't think we can say it's natural so being pushy is important. I wish it wasn't, but it is.

Are you able to enjoy the process and take moments to celebrate the wins or are you always thinking about what's next?

When you are 50, as will be my case in a few months, you have to pause because you suddenly realize that you have already lived more than half of your life. Perhaps there is a wisdom that comes with age that tells you not to only think about the future, but to also be conscious that your life is happening right now.

This also points to the importance of having more experienced people working in our companies. They can bring that sort of wisdom to the younger people who have the energy and the conviction that everything is possible. We need the balance of both of them to face all the new challenges of this changing world. This is also part of the power of diversity and individuality. ●