

Fueling Progress and Innovation

An Interview with Isabel Cruz,
Global Inclusion Leader, General Electric

EDITORS' NOTE Isabel Cruz assumed her current post in 2017. Most recently, she was the Senior HR Manager for Business Development and Finance. Earlier, she held a variety of leadership roles across GE from Power to Capital to NBCU. Cruz also has experience in talent and pipeline development, served as GE Capital's Diversity and Community Relations leader and was the national co-leader for the Hispanic Forum.



Isabel Cruz

COMPANY BRIEF GE (*ge.com*) is a global digital industrial company, transforming industry with software-defined machines and solutions that are connected, responsive and predictive. GE is organized around a global exchange of knowledge, the "GE Store," through which each business shares and accesses the same technology, markets, structure and intellect. Each invention further fuels innovation and application across its industrial sectors. With people, services, technology and scale, GE delivers better outcomes for customers by speaking the language of industry.

How do you define your role as Global Inclusion Leader and how do you focus your efforts at GE?

My role is focused on defining GE-wide priorities and strategies that can scale across our businesses. We expect our businesses to operationalize the company's commitment with this context in mind.

Would you provide an overview of GE's diversity and inclusion strategy?

GE is a diverse company – in its portfolio, global footprint and, most importantly, people. Diversity and inclusion fuels our company's innovation and is essential to our productivity, meritocracy and lasting competitive advantage. We have three key priorities: creating a culture of inclusion; accelerating the diversity pipeline; and driving signature programs for outcomes.

These priorities are underpinned by company-wide efforts, including inclusion dialogues, an immersive experience we launched entitled, "Leading Inclusively," which explores the leadership decisions managers make that either support or run counter to inclusion. With their peers, leaders explore their filters and perspectives shared through group dialogue. We also have signature programs, such as "Balance the

Equation," an objective to increase the number of women in STEM roles at GE.

How ingrained is diversity and inclusion in GE's culture and values?

GE is comprised of employees who work in approximately 180 different countries, representing numerous backgrounds and where every person is unique and different from the other – with their own perspectives. We believe that diversity of thought helps fuel progress and innovation, giving us a competitive advantage in our continuous

journey to create an inclusive work environment where authenticity is encouraged and our talent can thrive.

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However, while we take pride in our current efforts for diversity and inclusion, we know that there is always room to learn, grow and evolve. Change, continuous learning and innovation are all part of our DNA at GE, so we always look forward to strengthening our efforts and uncovering new ways to accelerate progress.

How do you engage your employees in GE's diversity efforts?

For a quarter century, GE's affinity networks have helped our company attract and develop diverse talent so that we can tackle the world's toughest challenges. These teams are self-managed and propelled by the goodwill of employees, bringing tremendous value to GE and to the many communities around the world where we live and operate. Our affinity networks include: African American Forum; Asian Pacific American

Forum; Gay Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance; Hispanic Forum; People with Disabilities Network; Veterans Network; and Women's Network. In addition to these seven affinity networks, there is also a global network of volunteers that brings together employees from various backgrounds, functions and businesses for community engagement. This is just a few of the ways that employees actively engage in our diversity efforts.

Is it critical to have metrics in place to track the impact of GE's diversity and inclusion efforts?

We are focused on gathering actionable insights that drive systems-based changes in performance and accountability. For example, we use our Leadership Training Campuses around the world to pulse employees' thoughts on diversity and inclusion to understand what is working and where we need to improve. The qualitative and quantitative data that we gather provides an invaluable input for our strategy.

How broadly do you define diversity and inclusion at GE?

Diversity and inclusion go hand-in-hand at GE. Diversity captures all of the ways we differ. However, inclusion puts diversity into action through developing an environment where all employees can reach their full potential.

How valuable has it been to have the commitment of GE's board and senior management in GE's diversity and inclusion efforts?

Leaders must be visible and engage in the company's goal to strengthen diversity and inclusion. For example, members of the leadership team have engaged in inclusion dialogues that I've helped to facilitate – not just as participants, but as role models sharing their personal experiences with inclusion inside and outside of GE. Caring about a culture of inclusion and valuing diversity is intrinsic to being a leader at GE.

What are your key priorities as you look to GE's continued efforts in regard to diversity and inclusion?

We will continue to focus on building and strengthening our culture of inclusion to further business performance, feeding our diversity pipeline and accelerating progress through signature efforts. As I mentioned earlier, a final priority includes our work to balance the equation of our good faith efforts to have more women in technical roles. ●