

# Were Our Values a Lie?

## Leading Teams Through Diversity's Collapse

**Elvira Khamsin,**  
Engineering Manager



# Netflix, McCormick Uphold DEI to Investors After Trump Directive

01-15-2025 | WORK LIFE

## Big Tech companies are cutting DEI programs—but watch exactly how they do it

NEWS | DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

### HR memo | Meta eliminates DEI programs as Zuckerberg says workplaces need more 'masculine energy'



## BUSINESS INSIDER



DOW JONES ▼ -0.29% NASDAQ ▼ -0.01% S&P 500 ▼ -0.07% AAPL ▲ +0.01% NVDA ▼ -0.23% MSFT ▼ -0.05% AMZN ▲ +0.06% META ▼ -0.14% TSLA ▲ +C

TECH

### Mark Zuckerberg says he wants more 'masculine energy' at Meta. So why don't more men use Facebook?

By  **Katie Notopoulos** | Senior Correspondent covering technology and culture

# Exclusive: Meta kills DEI programs



Mike Allen, Sara Fischer



## BUSINESS

### Google axes diversity hiring targets in latest DEI retreat by major firm

**Did we really believe in these values?**

# Truth & Myth

# **Correlation & Causation**

# Example:

- **One side argues that mature DEI processes correlate with better financial outcomes.**
- **The other side claims that wealthier companies can afford DEI programmes - but their success is not a result of DEI.**

**At least three areas where the evidence consistently supports real business value**

# Proven DEI Mechanisms in Tech

## 1. Inclusive Leadership → Psychological Safety → Innovation

- Inclusive behaviours (asking for input, framing failure constructively) causally increase psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999, Administrative Science Quarterly).
- Google's Project Aristotle (2016, [re:work.withgoogle.com](https://rework.withgoogle.com)) found psychological safety to be the strongest predictor of team success in engineering teams.

# Proven DEI Mechanisms in Tech

## 2. Structured Hiring → Better Talent

- Randomised experiments (Bohnet et al., 2016, *Harvard Kennedy School Working Paper*) show that structured interviews reduce bias and improve candidate selection.
- In noisy environments like tech hiring, structure leads to better hires with fewer false negatives.

# Proven DEI Mechanisms in Tech

## 3. Early-Career Inclusion → Future Talent Pipeline

- Longitudinal studies (Kapor Center, 2017; NCWIT, 2021) link early inclusion efforts (internships, associate programs) to stronger retention and progression of under-represented engineers.

**A balanced engineering team  
simply performs better**

# What Tech Leaders Should Actually Do

Refactor DEI, don't cancel it.

- **Train inclusive leadership as a core managerial skill.**
- **Standardise hiring across teams.** Make rubrics and panel evaluations the norm.
- **Protect early-career inclusion programs.** They're your pipeline.

**Be transparent with your team.**

**Trust is everything**

**DEI is critical infrastructure for  
high-performance tech teams**

That's not political. **That's operational.**

**Our values weren't a lie.**

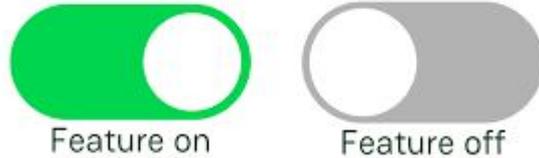
# Thank you!



**Elvira Khamsin**  
Engineering Manager at  
Microsoft, Minecraft



# Were our values ever real?



**Is it something we can toggle on or off as it suits us?**

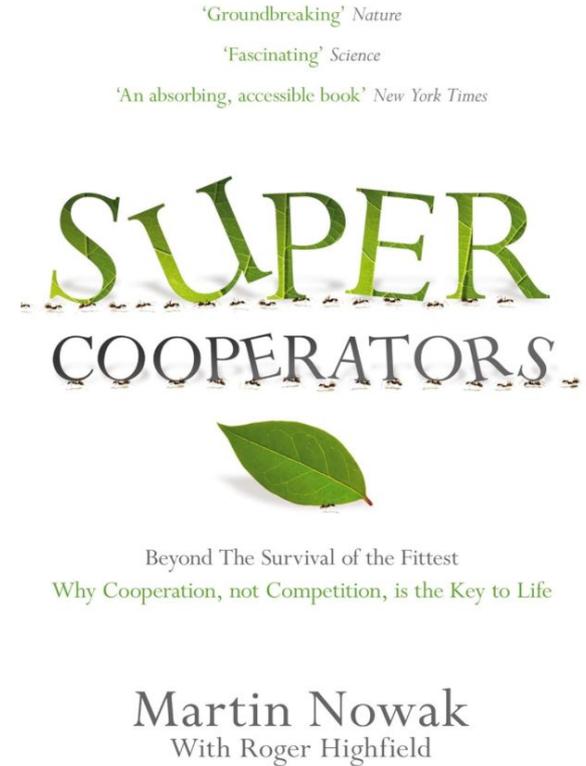
# Morality vs Darwin

- **Darwin**

Evolution through adaptation

- **Morality**

Species-level survivorship



# DEI as Engineering Infrastructure

## **Cutting diversity efforts will cause following issues:**

- Mentorship → We lose ramp-up and tacit knowledge transfer.
- Structured hiring → We reintroduce bias and reduce candidate signal.
- Psychological safety efforts → We increase silent failure and reduce initiative.