

# Leadership Advice for Managing Teams Amidst the Global Pandemic

#WomenInTech Series

We kick-start our blog series with **Karen Lee, MD – SEA & Oceania of BIPO**. In this candid interview, she shares her thoughts about women in leadership, tech trends across the region, and advice about managing teams amidst the current pandemic.



## What are some of the trends you've noticed since the start of the pandemic?

Even before the onset of COVID-19, we have seen a shift from businesses towards technology and cloud-based solutions. What the pandemic has brought about, especially in markets like Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, is an up-tick in cloud-based platforms that are complemented by mobile apps – platforms that offer a full 360o user experience. And yes, the term we're hearing a lot is "Made for Mobility". Increasingly with COVID-19, businesses have also been pivoting more towards BI tools and data as employers realise the need to forecast and better allocate manpower resources, to keep costs manageable. The pandemic has pushed businesses to look towards data for the answer – real-time insights, predictive analysis to support business decisions.

## What are the challenges businesses face in adopting digital tools?

There are many reasons – the perceived high cost, resistance to change, lack of knowledge and sometimes just not knowing where to start. Close to 40% of SMEs in Singapore have cited cost as a deterrent. However, businesses sometimes fail to see how the ROI can be easily measured if KPIs are in place to measure teams' performance before/after they start using the digital platforms and tools. Most of the time, the cost is almost negligible if you compare this with improvements in productivity and gains from better employee engagement. Another consideration – in mature markets where there are many vendors with sophisticated offerings, it can be intimidating for smaller companies who are embarking on this journey for the first time. Even companies that have been working with legacy systems for a long time may find making that switch daunting. Leadership needs to drive the change – not just HR, Finance, IT or teams working in silos.

**Talking about leadership, what are some useful pointers for leaders when managing teams during these challenging times?**

It is important to recognize everyone for their strengths and to tap onto the potential that each person brings to the table. Everyone wants to do well in their professional and personal lives. Our role as leaders is to help teams recognize their strengths and provide a platform where they can use these strengths to succeed. That doesn't mean that I won't bring them back to reality when the need arises. I believe that when a leader shows respect by recognizing the individual strengths of team members, that's when the magic starts to happen.

**And finally, what are your thoughts about the increasing prominence of women in leadership in the tech scene?**

It's great to see so much diversity in today's business world – whether in the tech space or otherwise. For businesses to succeed, diversity is key. Diversity is not just about gender but ensuring that different perspectives are represented, different voices are heard, which is why respect is so important.

At BIPO, over 60% of our regional business units are led by women – each so unique, with different strengths yet so supportive in helping one another and our teams achieve our goals. I am a firm believer of creating positive environments where our teams can excel and find fulfilment. My philosophy is simple: an employee's success is tantamount to the company's success!

**Like what you've read?**

Connect with Karen at: [karen.lee@biposervice.com](mailto:karen.lee@biposervice.com) or

Drop us a line at: [hello@biposervice.com](mailto:hello@biposervice.com)