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Industry Report

Navigating Gender & Ethnic Diversity in the E-Gaming Industry

Introduction

The E-Gaming industry, a rapidly growing and evolving sector, is undergoing a transformation in its workforce composition and user demographics. While the gender diversity among industry employees aligns with national averages, issues persist, particularly at senior levels.

Furthermore, the representation of women and individuals from underrepresented ethnic groups (UEGs) in the industry does not reflect the diversity seen among gamers. This report explores the current state of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the E-Gaming industry, focusing on gender and ethnicity among industry employees, gamers, and characters in games.

# Embracing Progress: A Snapshot of Gender Diversity

Workforce Dynamics

As of today, the gender ratio at Activision-Blizzard-King (ABK) – a group of organized workers from video game company Activision Blizzard – mirrors the broader gaming industry, with **women constituting 48% of the workforce, while men hold the majority at 52%**. Granted, this is an increase from 2017 when a mere 21% of workers were female.

The gaming's workforce is 48 percent female, but representation drops off at more senior level job classifications.

STEM-Related Careers: A Barrier for Women

A significant barrier to gender diversity in gaming companies comes from the prevalence of STEM-related roles. Historically, women have faced discouragement from pursuing careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Addressing this issue is crucial for fostering a more inclusive work environment.

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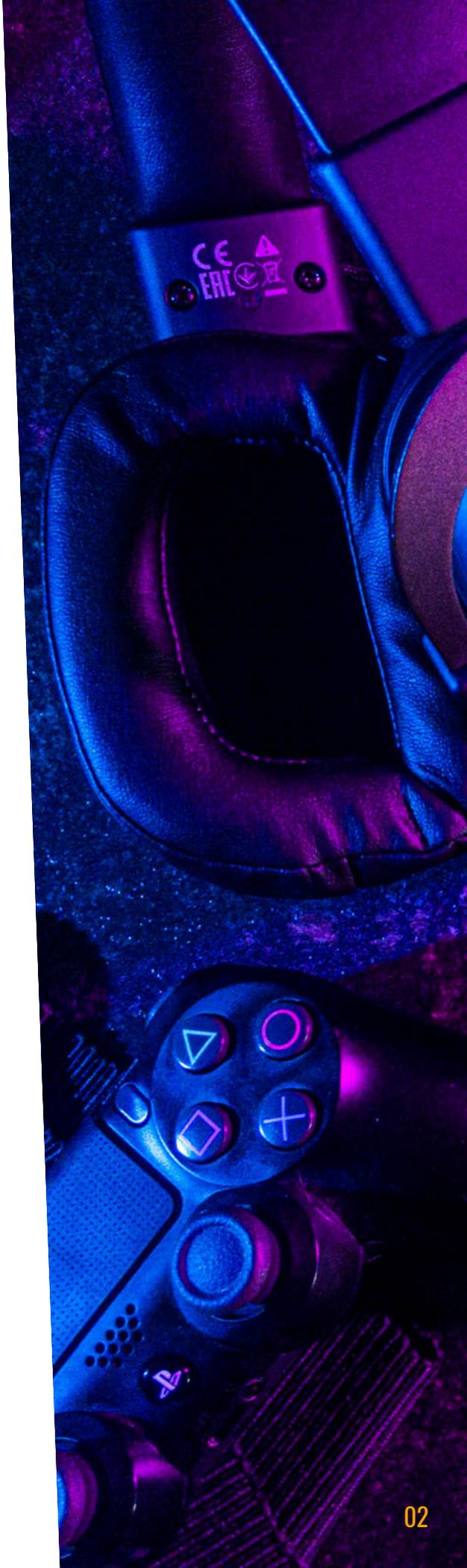
Embracing Progress: Continued

Gamer Demographics: A Closer Look

Contrary to the industry workforce, gamers present a more balanced demographic, with **45% being women**. This aligns closely with the U.S. statistic that indicates **51% of the population identifies as female**.

Protagonists in Games: The Discrepancy

However, the representation of women in games remains skewed. A staggering **79.2% of main protagonists are male**, showcasing a substantial gap in character representation. Diamond Lobby's data emphasizes this, revealing that 79% of all game main characters are male. Additionally, **only 8.3% of main characters in games are females of non-white ethnicities**, highlighting the need for a more diverse and inclusive character landscape.

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Shifting the Landscape: Ethnic Diversity in the E-Gaming Realm

Workforce Composition

The E-Gaming industry has made strides in ethnic diversity, with **40% of employees identified as Underrepresented Ethnic Groups (UEGs) or BIPOC**. This is a marked improvement from 2017 when 68% identified as white/Caucasian/European.

Gamer Demographics: A Tale of Access

Despite these positive strides, challenges persist in gamer demographics. Axios reports that only **23% of gamers are BIPOC**, indicating potential barriers such as gatekeeping, representation, and economic divides limiting access to gaming.

Gen Z and the Shifting Majority

As we look to the future, it's essential to recognize that **48% of the growing Gen Z population identifies as BIPOC**. The gaming industry must adapt to this evolving demographic to remain relevant and inclusive.

Shifting the Landscape: Continued

Characters in Games: A Reflection of Diversity?

While the industry has diversified its workforce, the same cannot be said for in-game characters. **Over 54.2% of main characters are white (Caucasian)**, emphasizing the need for more inclusive character designs. A closer examination reveals that **61.2% of all characters in games are white**, leaving significant room for improvement.

61.2%
White

38.8%
All other Ethnicities

5.3%
of Games

Do not have a playable white character

9.5%
of Games

Only have a playable white character.
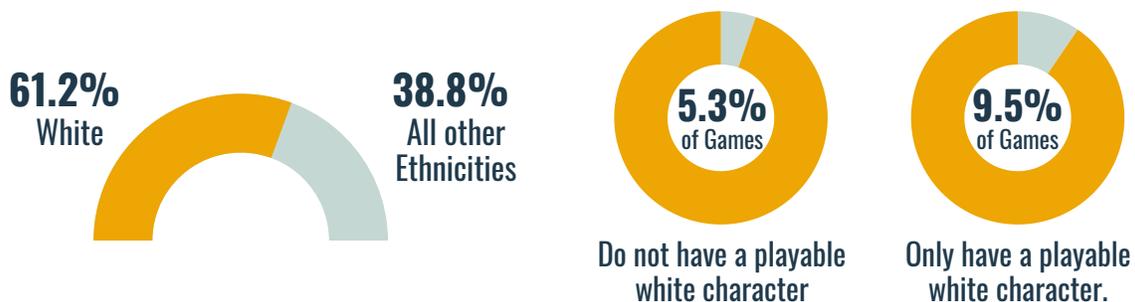
Future Pathways: Recommendations for Inclusivity

The E-Gaming industry stands at a crossroads, recognizing the progress made while acknowledging the considerable gaps that persist. To chart a course towards a more inclusive future, industry leaders, developers, and stakeholders should consider implementing recommendations such as those that follow.

Gender Diversity Recommendations:

Encourage STEM Inclusivity:
- Develop programs and initiatives to encourage women to pursue STEM careers within the gaming industry.
- Provide mentorship opportunities to support the career growth of women in STEM-related roles.

Inclusive Character Design:
- Actively promote the creation of diverse and well-rounded female characters in games.
- Collaborate with women in gaming to ensure authentic and empowering representations.
- Actively promote the creation of diverse and well-rounded UEG / BIPOC characters.

Accessible Gaming:
- Implement initiatives to reduce barriers to gaming, addressing issues such as affordability and representation.
- Collaborate with organizations focused on inclusivity to ensure diverse voices are heard in the gaming community.

Gender Diversity Recommendations:

Inclusive Storytelling:

- Develop narratives that showcase the richness of different ethnic backgrounds and cultures.
- Invest in diverse storytelling talent to bring authentic experiences to game narratives.

Representation Matters:

- Encourage the creation of characters that reflect the diverse ethnicities and backgrounds of gamers.
- Support initiatives that aim to increase representation of BIPOC characters in games.
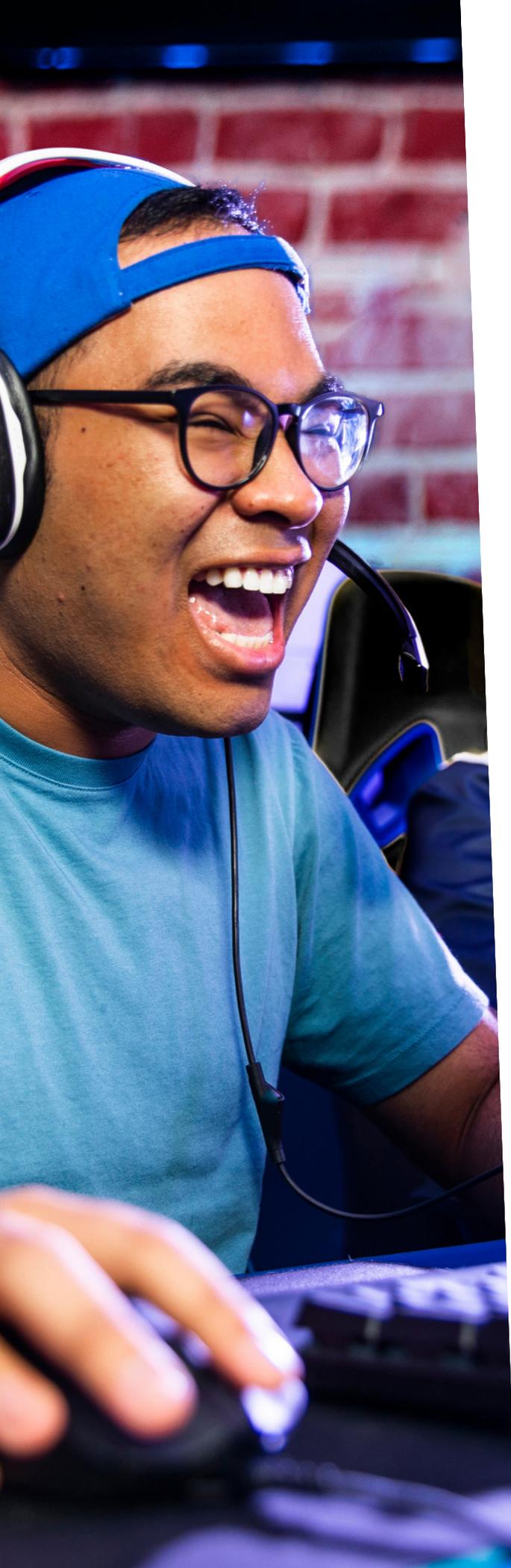
Conclusion

The E-Gaming industry has made commendable strides in diversity, yet there is much work to be done. By addressing these gender and ethnic disparities and implementing targeted strategies, the industry can forge a path toward a more inclusive and representative future.

This journey towards diversity and inclusivity not only aligns with ethical imperatives but also positions the industry for sustained growth and innovation in an ever-evolving landscape.

Your DEI Partner

Elevated Diversity helps organizations embed the key tenets of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging into their culture, in a way that's actionable, sustainable, and financially impactful.

If you would like to learn more about how you can lead the e-gaming industry in DEI efforts, we can help.

Contact Us

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