

Nevertheless, She Persisted: True Stories of Women Leaders in Tech

Pratima Rao Gluckman

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By telling the stories of courageous, successful women who work in high tech, Pratima Rao Gluckman validates the essential role of the woman in Silicon Valley in a memorable and very relevant way.

Pratima Rao Gluckman's *Nevertheless, She Persisted* is a timely volume featuring compelling interviews with women in business.

This book's title, borrowed from a politician who scolded a U.S. senator for speaking her mind on the senate floor, sets the tone for a work that is both illuminating and heartening. Gluckman, herself a Silicon Valley software engineer who became a manager, aims to shed light on the challenges of women in the technology field. She does so by interviewing nineteen women who hold senior positions in the high-tech world of Silicon Valley.

Each interview follows a parallel structure: after a "biosketch," photo, and quote from the subject, Gluckman weaves an engaging narrative, enhanced with salient excerpts from the interview. At the end of each story, the author appends bulleted "Takeaways" that summarize key points.

The format enables audiences to get very personal perspectives on these women. While each of them faces unique challenges, compelling common themes run throughout. Gluckman adeptly points out and comments on these themes. For example, after relating one woman's frustration over being offered lower-level jobs despite her credentials, the author writes, "I have seen that happen time and again to women in technology careers: they are offered roles that either take them a step backward in their career path or that move them into support functions."

Every story is enlightening, whether it concerns mentors, perceptions of women in the workplace, or balancing work and family life. Some stories dramatize eye-opening international differences; for instance, one senior vice president who was raised in China notes that "there wasn't a lot of stereotyping around engineering in China. It was all merit-based and exam-based, and girls often did better than boys." Rare insights like these add richness to the text.

Interspersed amid the women's stories are short essays on topics like meritocracy, personal branding, and emotion in the workplace. Thoughtful observations encapsulate many of the key points raised in the stories, and beautifully draw attention to relevant, contemporary issues.

In writing about impostor syndrome, for example, the author states, "many super-confident women leaders are simultaneously filled with feelings of doubt as they lead." She advises women to "embrace that feeling of being a fraud, because when you do, that means greatness is just around the corner." Her view of the glass ceiling is just as pertinent; Gluckman writes that "many high-potential women leaders ... will encounter a substantial but invisible organizational barrier in their way, blocking their advancement. To get past such a barrier requires more than navigation; it requires breaking through."

Nevertheless, She Persisted is highly readable, extremely insightful, and rewarding. By telling the stories of courageous, successful women who work in high tech, Gluckman validates the essential role of the woman in Silicon

Valley in a memorable and very relevant way.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May 2, 2018)

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