

At Bell, diversity makes everyone better

Alicia Jarvis joined **Bell Canada** in August 2021 as senior product manager, accessibility portfolio. It was her second stint with the company, having originally been hired as an intern after earning a bachelor's degree from York University in criminology.

"I have an interest in technology and a passion for human rights," she says. "Working for Bell gives me the opportunities to learn constantly while working to improve the customer's experience with our products."

By employing people who reflect the diversity of the communities we operate in, we can better serve our customers and bring in new ideas that will improve how we operate long term.

— **Farshad Kajouii**
Vice President,
Pricing, Operations &
Out-of-Home Advertising

Alicia explains that advances in technology and people's understanding around accessibility have grown significantly in the past 10 years.

"Not only are we working with cutting-edge technology, we're placing a big priority on making it accessible so everyone has an



▲ **Bell Canada's** Farshad Kajouii working from home.

opportunity to use new, unique products."

With its new Accessibility Program, Bell is committed to building a barrier-free environment for team members and customers, and Jarvis is playing a key role. As part of her job, she is working with product teams to help them understand accessibility requirements, standards and best practices and make adjustments where necessary.

A Canadian communications leader since its founding in 1880, Bell's focus on meeting the unique needs of its customers has led to an innovative, accessible and inclusive approach.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion

has been at the forefront of our discussions for supporting our team members and our customers," says Farshad Kajouii, vice president of pricing, operations and out-of-home advertising, who joined Bell almost 25 years ago. "By employing people who reflect the diversity of the communities we operate in, we can better serve our customers and bring in new ideas that will improve how we operate long term."

Born in Iran, Kajouii came to Canada at the age of nine. He has seen the evolution of Bell's approach to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and has personally experienced its diversity of opportunities. When he joined the

company he worked nights while completing his studies in business during the day. Since then, Kajouii has held 15 different positions, including eight as a director, in six different groups within the company, ranging from network to technology to media.

Accessibility is just one aspect of Bell's commitment to DEI. Led by its Diversity Leadership Council and employee resource groups, the company has made DEI a part of everything it does, from hiring practices and employee engagement to business strategy.

Its employee resource groups, which include Black Professionals at Bell, Pride at Bell and Women at Bell, continue to see their mem-



Accessibility Program to support team members and make products and services more accessible



Mandatory unconscious bias training



Bell Let's Talk Diversity Fund supports the mental health and well-being of Canada's BIPOC communities



Bell supports the HireBIPOC web portal, which is accelerating recruiting of Canadian media professionals

berships grow. They offer a variety of virtual events and learning opportunities to all team members. Bell has been building relationships with inclusion-focused organizations for years and recently forged partnerships with Ascend Canada, Black Professionals in Tech Network, Catalyst, Indigenous

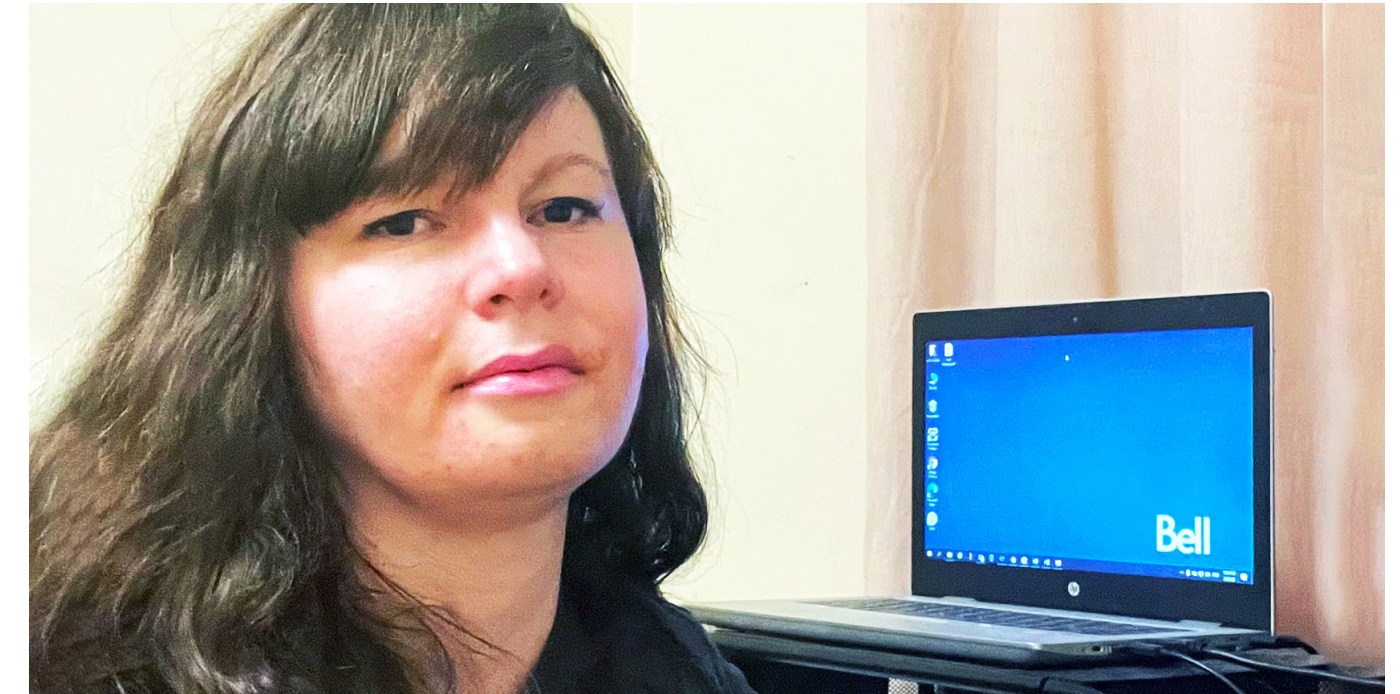
Works, Lime Connect and The Women in Tech Network.

"People drive ideas, expertise and perspective, which lead to momentum, opportunities and value," says Kajouii. "Having diversity of experience leads to better results. It's a win-win for the customer and the company."

Bell has taken meaningful action to address the impact of systemic racism on Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC). For example, it set targets for BIPOC representation in senior management of at least 25 per cent by 2025 and has already reached its goal to make at least 40 per cent

of its student and graduate hires from the BIPOC community.

"It's easy to talk about, but actions, not words, drive outcome and Bell is committed to taking the right steps," says Kajouii. "That's something I love about this company, it always recognizes that there's more to be done." ■



▲ Alicia Jarvis, senior product manager, accessibility portfolio at **Bell Canada**.



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