



Toilets Toiletas  
Salles de formation Training rooms  
Salle de visioconférence Videoconference room

# ABB in India

## Leveraging Diversity and Inclusion



## About ABB

- Global leader in power and automation technology
- Headquartered in Switzerland
- Operates in more than 100 countries and employs over 130,000 people
- The 700 employees in the Zurich headquarters are from more than 60 countries, showcasing the company's cultural diversity



# ABB in India

12 manufacturing facilities with more than 10,000 employees at various offices and plants

25 marketing offices

8 service centers

3 logistics warehouses

2 Power and Automation Engineering Centers

A network of over 550 channel partners



# About India

- 29 states and seven union territories
- Hindi is the official language, but there are 21 different dialects spoken
- English is also widely accepted due to its colonial past.
- Each state differs from others in terms of food habits, culture, attire, rituals, ceremonies, and practices



# Indian Culture

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- **Hierarchy:** Seniority, authority, and positions are highly respected at work and in family life
- **Attitudes towards Equality:** There is a lack of gender equality with fewer female executives in the workplace, and a general insensitivity towards people who are disadvantaged



# Indian Culture: Duality of Individualism and Collectivism

## Individualistic Values

- Ambitious and achievement- and career-oriented, like to make independent decisions and prefers privacy

## Collectivist Values

- Prioritize family and friendship, conformity towards rules and a concern for their social circles and immediate community



## The Diversity and Inclusion (DI) Program

- Muthukumaran headed the DI initiative for ABB in India, the Middle East, and Africa
- Asked to hire 500 female employees every year for three years at different levels of the company to reach the target of 15% of female workers in ABB India

# The Diversity and Inclusion (DI) Program

Females represented less than 5% of all employees in ABB India

2010

2014

The female workforce represented 11% in ABB India due to the improvement of DI initiatives



# Initial Roadblocks

- Most business division heads and managers resisted adding female employees due:
  - Unsafe project sites
  - Lack of basic facilities (e.g., washrooms) for women
  - Rough attitudes of male employee groups
  - The need to handle heavy instruments and bulky materials
  - Risks from occupational hazards
- These were overcome through multiple sensitization workshops, initiatives, and forced mandates, but discrimination on the ground remained



# Company Support and Initiatives for DI

- Three full-fledged childcare facilities
- Separate rooms for female employees
- Extended maternity leaves from three months to one year
- Extensive training programs covering sexual harassment and prevention policies
- Committees were formed to address workplace prejudice and unfair conduct



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# DI Implementation

- Policies were linked to different aspects of human resources such as recruitment, performance appraisal, peer review, and succession planning
- Campus recruitment for engineers was conducted at several women's colleges (led to hiring a record of 35% female engineers at ABB India)
- An special management development program was made to develop female managers for senior management positions in 3 to 5 years
- A half-day DI training was provided in all new employee training





# Reflections and Experiences

Support increased over time

2 to 3% annual average increase in the female workforce

40 expatriates engaged in various departments

Foreign nationals worked in ABB India's support operations

Physically challenged employees headed departments and were included in the DI Working Group

# ABB

## Reflections and Experiences

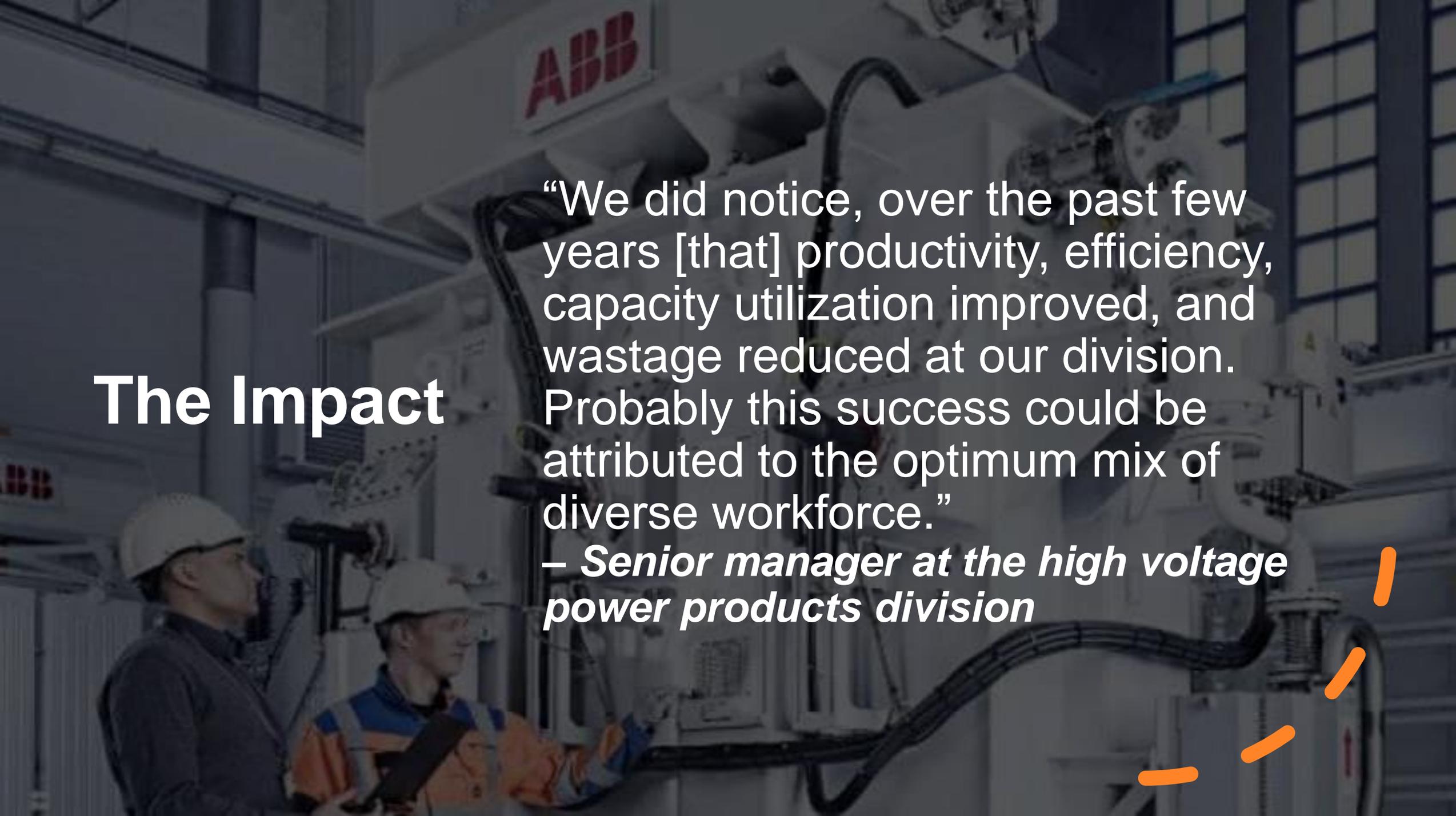
“Even if someone was technically sound with a proven performance record, [that individual] could not be selected for leading responsible global positions if [that person] scored badly on the intercultural sensitivity competency.”

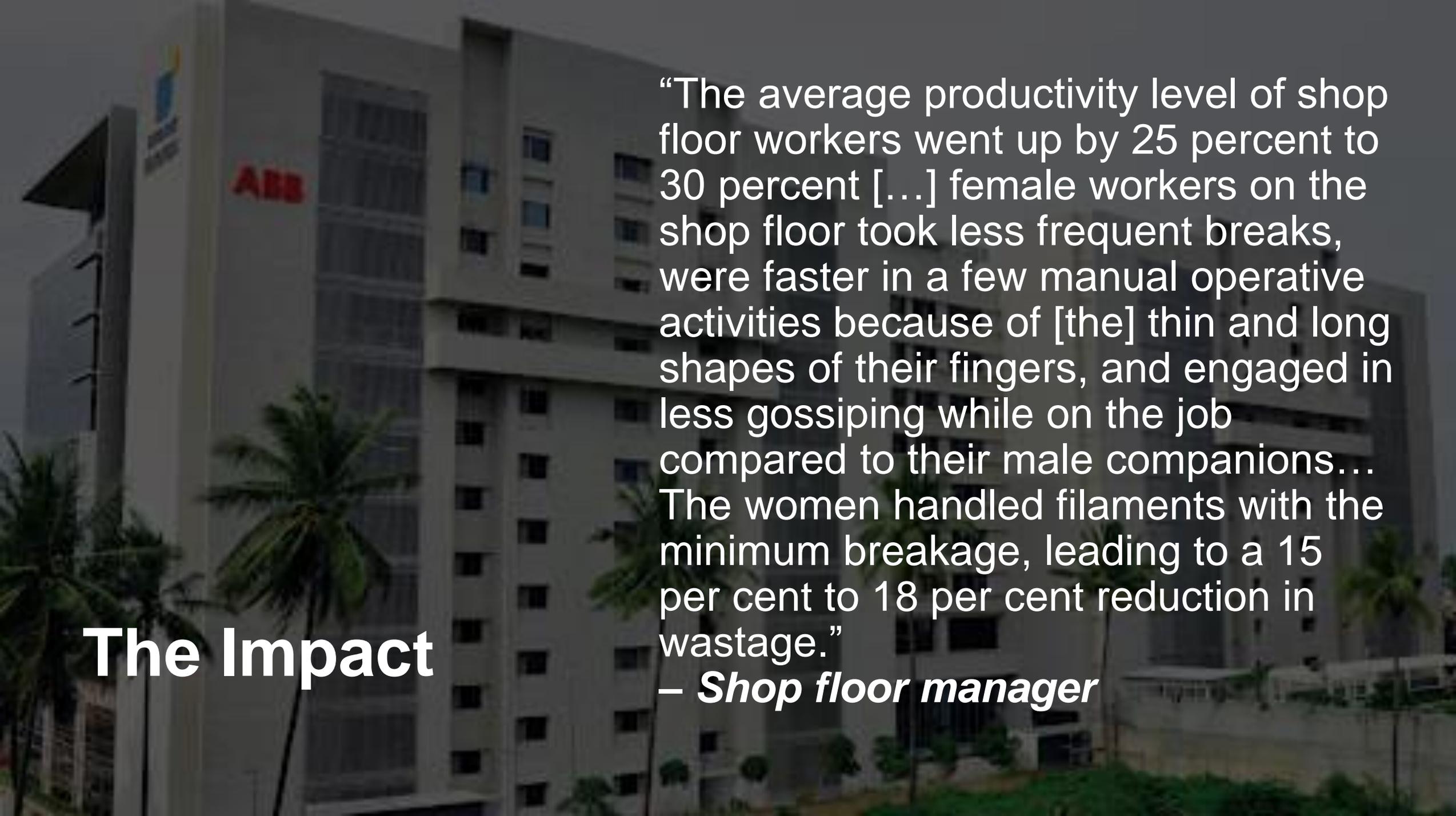
- *HR head at ABB India*

# The Impact

“We did notice, over the past few years [that] productivity, efficiency, capacity utilization improved, and wastage reduced at our division. Probably this success could be attributed to the optimum mix of diverse workforce.”

– *Senior manager at the high voltage power products division*



A multi-story industrial building with a prominent 'ABB' logo in red on its facade. The building has a modern, multi-level design with many windows. In the foreground, there are several palm trees and some greenery. The overall scene is slightly dimmed, suggesting an overcast day or a dark filter applied to the image.

“The average productivity level of shop floor workers went up by 25 percent to 30 percent [...] female workers on the shop floor took less frequent breaks, were faster in a few manual operative activities because of [the] thin and long shapes of their fingers, and engaged in less gossiping while on the job compared to their male companions... The women handled filaments with the minimum breakage, leading to a 15 per cent to 18 per cent reduction in wastage.”

– *Shop floor manager*

## The Impact



## Future DI Goals Include...

Have more female candidates in marketing and sales roles

Recruit candidates with physical disabilities

Focus on age diversity

Focus on geographic diversity

Focus on diversity of individual employees' previous experiences

# The Debate

The DI Strategy should be rolled  
**AS IS**  
on a global scale

1. Head of DI Division

2. Managing Director of ABB  
India

3. Female Workers at ABB  
India

The DI Strategy should include  
**OTHER FORMS OF DIVERSITY**  
before scaling to other locations

4. Chief HR Manager (Global)

5. ABB Workers with  
Disabilities

6. Factory Floor Managers

# Debate Rounds

Qualify

## Debate A

1. Head of  
DI Division  
vs.  
4. Chief HR Manager  
(Global)

## Debate B

2. Managing Director of  
ABB India  
vs.  
5. ABB Workers with  
Disabilities

## Debate C

3. Female Workers at ABB  
India  
vs.  
6. Factory Floor Managers

Finals

Debate A Winner

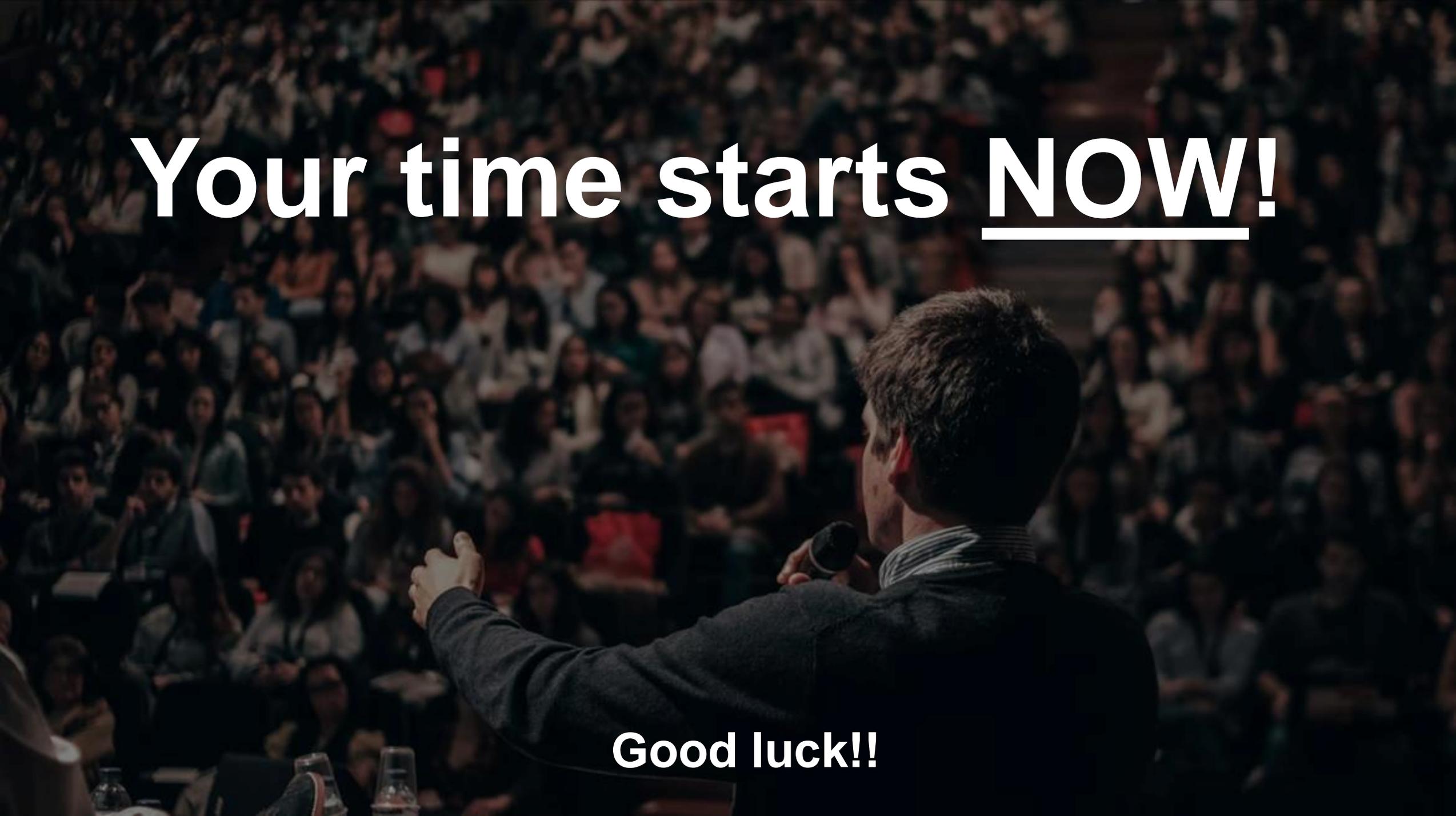
vs.

## 3-Way Debate

Debate B Winner

vs.

Debate C Winner

A man in a dark sweater and light shirt is seen from behind, speaking into a microphone and gesturing towards a large, dense crowd of people seated in an auditorium. The scene is dimly lit, with the speaker and the text overlaid on the image being the primary light sources.

**Your time starts NOW!**

**Good luck!!**