

Frances West

Former Chief Accessibility Officer of IBM, Founder of FrancesWestCo, & Author

Frances West delivers thought-provoking personalized speaking engagements that influence leaders, impact businesses and inspire organizational transformation.

Recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities on digital inclusion, Frances is considered a trail-blazing woman-in-tech pioneer in elevating the business case for human first design in digital innovation. Her strategic approach brings the transformational initiatives required for the next normal into real-life actions, resulting in an intersectional workplace that truly reflects parity for all people.

Unique among her peers, Frances is the rare business leader with both the hands-on enterprise management experience and digital inclusion perspective to help organizations achieve impactful, transformational change and innovation. As a non-English speaking Asian immigrant, she has dealt with racial, gender barriers throughout her career to achieve extraordinary success at aligning business principle, purpose and profit. Her inspirational talks center around managing the challenges of adversity and the disruption of the unknown by following one's true North.

In June 2016, Frances West concluded her stellar, three decades-long careers as IBM first Chief Accessibility Officer to found her global advisory company FrancesWestCo, working with public, private and non-profit organizations, including start-ups, to drive disruptive innovation and operationalize inclusion as a business imperative. A global information technology executive with in-depth market-making expertise, Frances' wealth of experience has helped industries accelerate growth, drive expansion and inspire innovation.

Frances began as a systems engineer at IBM and rose to become Chief Accessibility Officer in 2014. Among her many achievements, she held numerous high-level global executive positions in Strategy, Sales, Marketing, Channel Management, Business Development and Research. She holds several US patents for inclusive technologies.

Throughout her career, Frances has received numerous awards in recognition of her work, notably the Leadership award from the Global Initiative for Inclusive ICT's (G3ICT), a finalist for the Mobile World Congress Shanghai Women4Tech Award and the first John D Kemp Individual Leadership Award from the US Business Leadership Network (aka Disability: IN). She also holds an honorary doctorate of science degree from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, as well as an appointment as instructor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Her advanced executive education includes study at both Wharton and Harvard Business Schools.

The noted author of "Authentic Inclusion Drives Disruptive Innovation", her timely, actionable book on digital inclusion, was recognized in 2019 at both the CES and SXSW conferences and is on Amazon's Digital Inclusion Best Seller List. An influential business thought-leader and inspirational speaker, she has been invited to speak and discuss digital transformation at Fortune 500 companies like Google, Daimler and ING, among others. She also created and spoke at the Inclusive Financial Services Forum in New York, Paris and Beijing with clients such as Met Life, Société Générale, and Bank of China.

Other prestigious speaking engagements include Frances serving as the sole IT industry spokesperson to testify before the US Senate on the passing of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities treaty. She has also delivered keynotes at policy forums for the World Bank and International Labor Organization at the United Nations.

Frances is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts chapter of the International Women's Forum; the World Institute on Disability; and chair of Strategy and Development at G3ict, a UN Affiliated organization promoting digital inclusion. Frances is active in mentorship, volunteering and community service.

Born in Taiwan, Frances attended the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Washington & Lee University in Virginia, and was graduated with a marketing degree from the University of Kentucky.

Frances is married with two adult sons and resides currently in Newton, Massachusetts.