

HOW TO CREATE A
WINNING COMPANY CULTURE

HEROES FOR HIRE:
VETERANS IN THE WORKPLACE

GET READY—
GEN Z IS COMING!

INCLUSION

WINTER 2020 + ISSUE 5

*Creating Globally
Inclusive &
Culturally
Competent
Workplaces*

Leading the
Charge on
Implementing
Inclusive
Practices

CIGNA'S

SUSAN
STITH





Susan Stith, Vice President, Diversity, Inclusion, Foundation, and Civic Affairs, Cigna

As vice president of diversity, inclusion, foundation, and civic affairs at Cigna, Susan Stith is responsible for shaping and steering the company’s enterprise-wide diversity and inclusion, philanthropy, and community outreach strategy and initiatives. In her role, she leads the efforts to create innovative D&I programs in the areas of employee recruitment, retention, and talent development, and ensures senior leadership commitment.

Stith has a long-standing career in diversity, cultural competence, and inclusion, spanning several industries, and specializes in bringing innovative, creative, comprehensive, and sustainable business strategies to life with a lens on people, programs, and processes. She is a visionary with experience in matrixed environments and provides leadership by promoting values-driven initiatives.

Stith has won numerous diversity and inclusion recognitions such as *Diversity Plus* magazine’s Top 25 Women Impacting Diversity, *Diversity Woman’s* Top 50 Diversity Champions, Urban League’s Salute to Women in Leadership, and *Black Enterprise’s* Top Executives in Corporate Diversity. She also serves on several boards in the nonprofit sector.

Stith earned her bachelor degree at University of Missouri–Columbia and her master’s from University of Phoenix, where she was named Graduate Student of the Year.

Inclusion: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in

2020 for a corporate diversity and inclusion leader like yourself?

Susan Stith: Diversity without inclusion is exclusion, and without inclusion, diversity efforts are destined to fail. Simply put, businesses will not succeed without having an employee population that reflects the population of those they serve.

A company is no different than a community: we need a neighborhood where everyone feels valued and respected for their unique perspectives, thoughts, and backgrounds. When you think about where you live, you want to feel energized by those around you. Work is no different.

Whether in the health service arena where I work or another industry entirely, our biggest opportunity—and our biggest challenge—lies with our people. And for us, it's going to take all 74,000 of our diverse employees worldwide to make our dream to build a sustainable model for health care a reality.

Together, Cigna and Express Scripts (who merged in 2018) are on a mission to transform health care by delivering a full range of services to make our entire health ecosystem more connected, personalized, and affordable. As a global health service company, we have an extraordinary responsibility—and an unparalleled opportunity—to empower people to live healthier, happier, more productive lives.

We are much more successful when we recruit, retain, and reward a diverse group of colleagues who know they are valued, and understand how the work they do every day delivers on the needs of those we serve. That's how we earn trust as employers. It's why people choose to come work for us, and why they choose to stay.

IN: What brought you to do this work? Is there a personal motivation that inspired you in this direction?

SS: This work absolutely found me. I like to say I work at the intersection of passion and profession. What led me here is a combination of who I am, what I believe, and my desire to make an impact.

One of my favorite quotes by Martin Luther King Jr. is, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"

That's why I am so proud of the Healthier Kids for Our Future initiative, which we launched as a newly combined company in December. It is a five-year, \$25 million commitment that addresses three global challenges facing children: poverty, hunger, and health and



well-being. We know it is a big challenge, but we are also persistent and urgent in doing important work for others. Above all, these are challenges we—as a combined company—are uniquely suited to tackle.

We have already teamed up with nonprofit organizations, school districts, community leaders, partners, and, of course, our employees to take action to reduce childhood hunger. For example, earlier this year, employees at nine US sites and two international cities packed 16,500 backpacks with enough food to feed a child for a weekend. We worked with Blessings in a Backpack and schools to distribute them, knowing it might be the only food that child had to eat until Monday.

This was just the first step. All of our employees are doing something, every day, to continue to help. Even if we have different backgrounds, our ability to come together and rally around a common cause leads to uncommon improvements in health and well-being.

Left, top to bottom: Celebrating with Pride, Express Scripts; International Women's Day 2019, Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation. Right: Inspiring tomorrow's leaders, Express Scripts.

IN: A concept that is increasingly being addressed now is cultural transformation of the workplace. What does this mean to you and how is your company working to transform its culture?

SS: Cultural transformation is a top priority for us, and it goes beyond what you might expect. This past June, Cigna and Express Scripts flew the rainbow pride flag in several locations across the country. We continue to celebrate what makes us unique, and we do so in a visible, meaningful way, thanks to our shared values. At the end of the day, our values set the tone for how we engage with each other, both internally and externally. Employees, and our community, understand what we're about when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

That's just one outward sign of how we are moving ahead together as a combined company. Every day, we have cultural champions across our company who demonstrate and live the values that represent us. Words on a wall can only do so much, but when those words inspire action, engagement, and compassion, that's when our values come alive.

IN: In the last year, gender inequality in the workplace—including sexual harassment—has become large in the public eye. We all know that these challenges are not new. How does this new public awareness help close the gender gap?

SS: Diversity and inclusion form a foundation that lets us better understand and relate to each other. And the business case for diversity, including gender diversity, is clear. Research shows the value of a diverse workforce, and, in particular, having more women in leadership positions drives better business performance.

And yet, while we are making progress, overall there are too few women in senior leadership positions, in C-suite roles, and on corporate boards. Because of this reality, it's important for employers to bolster, empower, and inspire current and future female leaders.

I'm proud to work for a company that views diversity as a driver of innovation, creativity, and business results. This is something we put into practice every day—through concentrated efforts on recruiting, retaining, and promoting diverse employees. At Cigna, I am proud to say



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70 percent of our workforce comprises women, and nearly half of senior management roles are held by women.

And our women's employee resource group is also leading the way with approximately 5,000 members, as well as other initiatives like our Lean In Circles. This internal group is making powerful connections among female leaders, providing them with opportunities to grow their leadership skills.

IN: As more and more millennials join the job force and as baby boomers are slowly aging, has this phenomenon provided challenges for Cigna? And what are your suggestions for addressing them?

SS: At this moment, there are five generations in the workplace—and at Cigna, that is no different. Our multigenerational resource group implements reciprocal mentorship programs that allow the generations to support each other on their respective career paths.

Additionally, our internship and rotational development programs for early career employees and our encore program that allows retired employees to return to work on a part-time basis allow cross-functional work and a continuous knowledge transfer across generations.

When we open our minds and hearts to learn from everyone around us, ageism fades away and is replaced by receptivity to new ideas, a rejection of stereotypes, and a recommitment to the ideals of diversity and inclusion. **IN**