

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION  
HALL OF FAME

THE SECRET POWERS OF  
NEURODIVERGENT TEAMS

PUSHING FOR GENDER  
PAY EQUITY

# INCLUSION

*Creating Globally  
Inclusive &  
Culturally  
Competent  
Workplaces*

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GOOGLE'S

# MELONIE PARKER

Leading the Charge on Implementing  
Inclusive and Equitable Practices





# Melonie Parker

**Vice President  
& Chief Diversity  
Officer, Google**

**M**elonie Parker is committed to innovative, relevant, and contemporary human resources leadership. She is an advocate for change and a passionate thought leader. Parker is responsible for advancing Google's employee engagement strategy across diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, she serves as a Minority in Energy Initiative Champion for the Department of Energy.

Prior to this role, she served as the vice president of human resources and communications at Sandia National Laboratories, with responsibility for the leadership and labs-wide management

of human resources, health, benefits, and employee services. She was also responsible for Sandia's communication efforts, which include planning, strategy, executive communications, media relations, external branding, community affairs, and internal communications.

Prior to joining Sandia as the VP of HR and communications, Parker had extensive expertise from a career spanning over 17 years in a variety of Lockheed Martin business areas, locations, and progressive leadership roles. During her time at Lockheed Martin, she had responsibility for employee relations, staffing, EEO/Affirmative Action, diversity programs, compensation, benefits, and K-12 outreach initiatives.



Parker received a BA in mass communications from Hampton University and an MA in human resources from Villanova University. She was named the 2016 HR Professional of the Year by the New Mexico Society of Human Resource Management and received a Special Recognition Award at the 2014 Women of Color STEM Awards. In 2012, she graduated from Lockheed Martin's Executive Assessment and Development Program.

**Inclusion:** What brought you to do this work? Is there a story from your past that inspired you in this direction?

**Melonie Parker:** I really believe it's small steps that contribute to an inclusive culture and sense of belonging. Early in my career, I went to a meeting and I was late. The person who was with me also happened to be a Black woman. We ended up sitting against a wall at the back of the room, and everyone at the table was white. It felt a little awkward, but it wasn't intentional. We were the ones who were late. Then one person at the table said, "Hey, we can make room at the table for everyone." That one small act of courage gave us equal opportunity at that table. Those are very small things that mean so much. Creating an inclusive culture is ensuring that kind of equity. Today, in my role of chief diversity officer, I focus

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on making sure our employees feel seen and that they have a voice and seat at the table.

**IN:** How do you use data and metrics to measure DEI success?

**MP:** At Google, we use data to inform everything we do, from the way we develop products and services to the way we design our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. We were one of the first companies to publish a Diversity Annual Report, and today we continue to measure and publicly report our efforts on hiring, progression, and retention every year. We are also taking steps to collect race and ethnicity data globally through our voluntary Self-ID campaign. Today, 60 percent of all Googlers globally have opted into our Self-ID program, where they identify as LGBTQ, nonbinary genders, having a disability, or their military/veteran status. This translates to the majority of Googlers in every department and every region around the world and further helps us inform our work.

**IN:** Has Google made a renewed commitment to sharing DEI data and what has been the impact of that?

**MP:** Our diversity report insights help us determine where we need to focus our efforts to increase representation for underrepresented communities. For example, in 2018, we saw that Black and Latinx Googlers were leaving at faster rates than the average, so we took a number of actions, including hiring retention case managers to connect employees with the right resources, ensure they find satisfaction in their roles, and have opportunities to develop and grow. Since then, we've seen some of the largest year-over-year improvements in attrition.

We also understand that while the racial equity commitments made in 2020 by many companies in the tech sector and beyond were groundbreaking, it is not a closed book. We must constantly reevaluate our goals and the ways we can meet them. Data is a huge part of that process. Google will continue to expand the ways we collect and share DEI data so that we can be transparent externally and transformative internally. For example, for the first time ever at Google, or any tech company for that





Melonie Parker at Google's State of Black Women event in Sunnyvale, California in 2019.

matter, we are this year including global race data in our diversity report. Our data is also open download, so outside researchers can use and analyze it for their work. This effort is not just so Google improves its representation and practices. It's about changing how business is done around the world so every company can help raise up marginalized and underrepresented communities. Google's international presence allows us to be a leader here and really make a widespread impact.

We don't just want to share what's working well—we want to share the challenges we face too. We know that other companies are facing similar challenges, and the only way we can create meaningful change is if we're transparent about where we are today.

**IN: What are some of the recent thought leader topics and trends in the world of DEI that organizations are learning about and implementing?**

**MP:** Last May, the world watched in horror as a policeman knelt on George Floyd's neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds. For many in the Black community, the pain was all too familiar. Since then, that pain has driven change. People worldwide are recognizing how deep racial injustice runs and are working to dismantle it. I believe

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We also provided new types of leave for parents and caregivers, expanded our well-being resources, and provided Googlers with a \$1,000 work-from-home allowance to spend on their workstations. Our approach continues to evolve as we navigate the effects of COVID-19 on our workplace. We recently started experimenting with "no meetings weeks," which create space for Googlers to either focus on independent work or make it easier to switch off entirely and take a vacation, and we're encouraging Googlers to take vacations by adding a "bonus" well-being day. So when Googlers take four vacation days, they'll get an extra one. **IN**

that for the first time in history, companies are being called on in a different way, to create real change and action.

At Google, we announced commitments to build sustainable equity for Google's Black community and beyond, and make our products and programs more helpful to Black users. Since then, we've been working to translate our commitments into lasting meaningful change. Over the past year, we've committed more than \$320 million to organizations working to address racial inequities. This includes grants to racial and social justice organizations, and support for job-skilling initiatives, small business, and start-ups. We're also investing in growing Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and DC—locations that we've heard from our Black+ Googlers contribute to a high quality of life. In 2021 so far, we've grown our sites in Atlanta, Chicago, New York, and DC by more than 650 employees. We're on track to meet our goals of 1,000 in 2021 and 10,000 by the end of 2025.

The things we do now are planting the seeds for a better company and world tomorrow.

**IN: How has COVID-19 changed your perspective and your work?**

**MP:** COVID-19 has changed so many aspects of our lives, and it certainly impacts how we approach diversity, equity, and inclusion. Now more than ever, building a culture of belonging is critical. With much of our workforce working remotely, we're focused on helping our employees connect and find new ways to prioritize inclusion, and making sure that they have the care and support they need. For example, our Black Googler Network hosts recurring virtual yoga sessions, and our Women@Google chapters across the globe have been hosting virtual sessions for connection and career development.