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# INCLUSION

*Creating Globally Inclusive &  
Culturally Competent  
Workplaces*

WINTER 2022  
+ ISSUE 7

AMAZON STUDIOS'S

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## INCLUSION

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THE  
DEEP  
DIVE

## The Future of DEI

*Diversity, equity, and inclusion professionals faced historic challenges in 2020–21. Here's how companies are responding.*

BY TAMARA HOLMES

**T**he year 2020 was like no other for the nation's workplaces, as companies grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic and a reckoning against systemic racism.

For diversity and inclusion professionals, 2020 brought new challenges and, in some cases, caused companies to reevaluate their goals.

As the world continues to recover from the pandemic and the United States grapples with the best way to keep the momentum going for greater racial justice, companies are

"That was an awakening for so many people and we started to talk about diversity and inclusion with equity for the first time at 3M," says Ann Anaya, chief diversity officer for 3M.

"Once you start talking about equity, you move away from this idea that everybody gets the same shot. It's an acknowledgment that not everybody comes to the table with the same opportunities."

Anaya likens the push toward equity to a group of people of different heights trying to look over a fence. Some are tall enough to see over the fence, while others who are shorter

many companies that DEI goals are more important than ever. For XPO Logistics, a Greenwich, Connecticut-based company that provides transportation services, 2020 seemed the perfect time to establish a diversity, equity, and inclusion office. "Our DEI office was created to take a more structured approach to moving our ambitious goals forward in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion," says LaQuenta Jacobs, chief diversity officer. In-

organizations such as Fairygodboss, a career community for women, and Girls With Impact, a nonprofit that promotes entrepreneurship among girls.

Other companies have added new components to their diversity programs in a move to get more people within the organization involved. Global profes-

revamping their diversity programs to meet this unique moment.

### Embracing a new focus on equity

While many companies had clear goals set for diversity and inclusion, some organizations in 2020 started to put a greater focus on equity. St. Paul, Minnesota-based manufacturing company 3M was one of them.

In 3M's case, the impetus for the change was the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in nearby Minneapolis on May 25, 2020.

cannot. "Equity is bringing those people up so everybody can look over the fence."

That means giving opportunities to those who have not had opportunities in the past. One way 3M is doing this is by investing \$50 million over five years in initiatives that address racial disparities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

### Adding structure to DEI goals

With a heightened focus on race relations in the United States, it became clear to

creasing the rate of women and underrepresented racial and ethnic groups promoted into managerial positions and increasing the pipeline of diverse talent into those managerial roles are among those goals.

One way the DEI office has addressed this objective is by building new partnerships.

XPO increased the number of HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) it has partnerships with from 9 to 27.

The company has developed relationships with women's leadership

sional services company PricewaterhouseCoopers's existing D&I Partner Advisory Council examines the company's diversity efforts from a leadership perspective. "After the murder of George Floyd, we said there are things we have to do over and above what our strategy was," says Shannon Schuyler, chief purpose and inclusion officer for the company. One was the creation of the D&I Staff Advisory Council, which consists of employees from all levels of the organization. That empowered employees of all backgrounds to provide input into the best ways

to move the organization forward.

### Creating new training and development opportunities

In the months following the murder of George Floyd, companies have become more explicit in their conversations about race and racism, says Kellie Wagner, founder and CEO of Collective, a New York-based DEI consulting firm.

"Many of the companies we've worked with over the past several months have moved from requesting un-

could support the fight against systemic racism. "In March of 2021, we took it a step further and launched our Everyday Leader course," Jacobs says. That focuses on inclusive leadership, "and it's taking that conversation of being an ally and now driving inclusive behaviors within your organization."

XPO also initiated Grow

demonstrate that you have the knowledge."

### Providing new support for women

While everyone had struggles caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, women have been particularly hard-hit. With some women leaving the workforce or downsizing their corporate roles to care for children

this is an opportune time to explore nontraditional work arrangements that can ultimately increase employee productivity. "We've doubled down on our leave policies, we've added sabbaticals, we have enhanced our flexible work arrangements," she says. "We've added more days off for caregiving, looking at how do we individually allow people to be their best but also take care of their personal needs."

### Increasing transparency and accountability

As companies embrace these new goals, another need has emerged: accountability. In 2020, PricewaterhouseCoopers released its first transparency report, which outlined the company's diversity plan and the progress toward its goals. The company plans to provide that information annually moving forward, Schuyler says, because true change requires everyone to be engaged.

True change also requires time.

"This work isn't about a series of actions that you take and things are instantly better," says Wagner. "It's about being curious and then responsive to how bias is impacting your employees' experiences, finding ways to address and heal past workplace traumas, and envisioning new ways to help all employees thrive in the workplace. This has to and will look different for every company, so looking inward, rather than just seeking out 'best practices,' is the only way companies will begin to see true transformation." **IN**

conscious bias trainings to trainings and work focused specifically on addressing racism, both interpersonally and systemically in their organizations," Wagner says. "We've seen many employee-led DEI committees pop up in an effort to drive more organized DEI efforts, and companies engage in more in-depth audits of their systems, processes, and norms to root out inequitable practices."

XPO University, XPO Logistics' training and development platform, launched a series of new courses to support employees in 2020, including Stepping Forward Together: Becoming an Effective Ally, which provided insight into how white employees

at XPO, a program that gives frontline employees training and development to equip them with the skills needed for more senior roles within the company. "We've had more than 14,000 employees raise their hand and say, 'I'm ready for development,' and the representation of diversity within that particular program is more than 50 percent," says Jacobs.

PricewaterhouseCoopers sought to underscore the importance of DEI by awarding badges to employees who master skills that translate into a more inclusive environment.

"The whole notion of acquiring and mastering skills around inclusive leadership isn't just nice to have," says Schuyler. "This is something that we get badged on because in order to be successful here, you have to

learning at home, women held 5.3 million fewer jobs in February of 2021 than they did in February of 2020, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research.

Seeking to help women and all employees impacted by the pandemic, 3M provided safe spaces for employees to talk about their experiences and hold candid conversations about coping with anxiety and stress. A special interest group called Inspire offered meditation for employees.

Like many companies, 3M is also reexamining its flexible work policies—a move that could benefit women who are juggling professional and family responsibilities. "I think everybody would acknowledge that over the last year we've proven that some of the stereotypes about working from home and not being productive were myths," Anaya says. "So let's bust those myths and be more flexible to allow people to really thrive."

PricewaterhouseCoopers's Schuyler agrees that





## DATA ENTRY

# Creating an Atmosphere of Belonging

BY TAMARA HOLMES

**W**hile cultivating a sense of belonging has always been important to forward-thinking companies, the pandemic and the racial reckoning of 2020 have created new challenges for organizations working to build an inclusive environment.

Social distancing and remote working policies have kept colleagues apart, creating fewer bonding opportunities. Likewise, racial tensions have sparked difficult conversations among employees while shining a spotlight on the lack of belonging many people of color feel in the workplace.

To come up with strategies to build a more inclusive environment, BetterUp, a leadership development platform, conducted a

multiphase study that surveyed 1,789 full-time employees across various industries and conducted experiments with more than 3,000 US workers to see how they responded to different scenarios.

While a lack of belonging can be costly, there are remedies to lessen its impact.

## The business case for belonging

Employees who experience a sense of belonging in the workplace feel accepted and valued for who they are. Not only do such employees perform better, but they are more likely to become advocates for your organization.

According to the study, employees who have a strong sense of belonging

- ▶ are 50 percent less likely to leave the company than

those who don't;

- ▶ show a 56 percent increase in performance compared with those who don't;
- ▶ take 75 percent fewer sick days than those who don't; and
- ▶ are 167 percent more likely to recommend their company to others and call it "a great place to work."

Companies will even see a tangible financial benefit. Study researchers estimate that if all workers at a 10,000-employee firm experienced a high level of belonging, the increase in productivity would be worth more than \$52 million.

When an employee who is part of a team feels a low sense of belonging, the entire team pays a penalty because a team member who feels excluded is less productive

and less willing to work for the welfare of the team, the study found.

## Antidotes for exclusion exist

Because a lack of belonging in the workplace can be harmful to the individual and ultimately to the company, the study identified solutions that can help minimize its effects.

### Invite the excluded to be part of the solution.

If someone admits to feeling excluded, ask what she thinks would create an environment in which everyone feels a sense of belonging. Not only are you eliciting valuable feedback, but you are including her in the important process of remedying the problem.

### Facilitate an environment where peers share coping strategies.

Study researchers found that there is value in sharing experiences of exclusion. When employees learned how others coped with or overcame feelings of exclusion, their own feelings of exclusion were minimized.

**Be an ally.** Researchers defined being an ally as "including all participants equally within a brief social interaction." Just one person who practices inclusive behavior can offset the pain of an experience of social exclusion, the study found.

**Reward inclusive behavior.** Find ways to highlight the actions of allies such as by complimenting them or calling out their good deeds. Every person who practices inclusive behaviors can help create a workforce that experiences more belonging. **IN**

## INCLUSIVE CULTURE

# Black vs. African American

## Using language to match identity

BY TAMARA HOLMES

Language is the tool we use to describe our identity, and as we evolve, we sometimes change the words we use to define us. While African American has been for some time the term most widely used to describe those of African descent born in the United States, many organizations are now shifting to favoring Black.

The reasoning: Not every person who is Black identifies as African American. For example, an employee might consider herself to be Caribbean American or perhaps Somalian. The term Black encompasses people of different nationalities and cultural identities.

"As we prepare to return to postpandemic workplaces, we have a rare opportunity to establish new norms of inclusion, which include the way we communicate with one another, the words we use, and how we refer to one

another," says Laura Kriska, a cross-cultural consultant and author of *The Business of We*.

Not only are organizations embracing Black, but many are using a capital B when spelling it out. John Daniszewski, vice president of standards for the Associated Press, explained the organization's decision to capitalize Black in its stylebook, saying that when the word "black" is lowercase, it describes a color. However, when capitalized, Black describes "an essential and shared sense of history, identity, and community among people who identify as Black, including those in the African diaspora and within Africa."

So how should you implement the change from using African American to Black in your organization?

### Keep it to policy.

Companies should only decide the terms they will use in their corporate communications, says Randi Bryant, global chief diversity & inclusion officer at Freshworks. They should not tell employees how to refer to each other one-on-one.

### Allow for a learning curve.

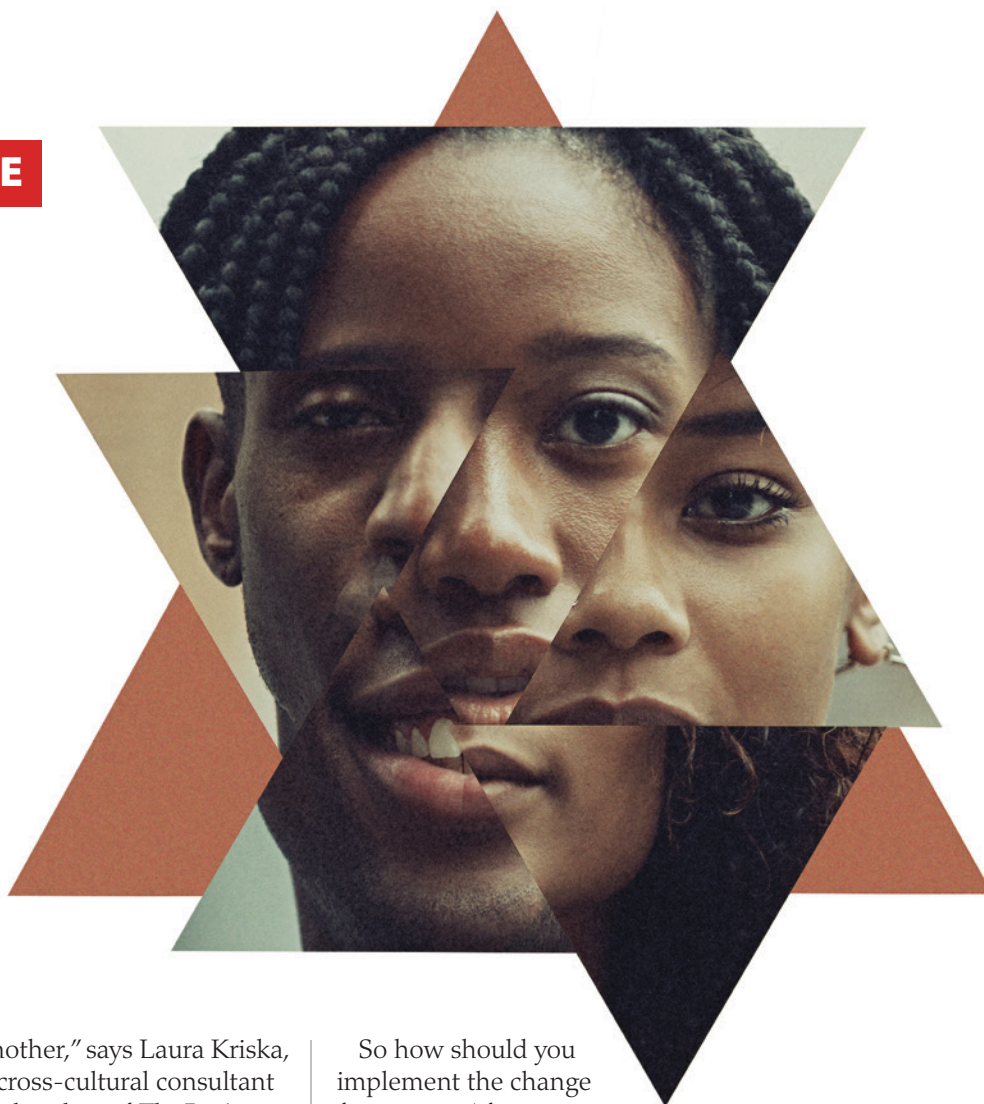
If a manager uses the wrong term in a memo or official communication, issue a gentle reminder about the change and explain the reasons for it.

### Understand that employees have their individual preferences.

"While some people prefer Black, there are many people who prefer to be called something different," says Bryant. When it comes to one-on-one interactions, Bryant recommends asking how people prefer to be addressed—"just as we now ask people about their preferred pronouns."

### Remember that language evolves.

Just as the preferred term has changed, it may change again. "Make an effort to stay aware of new phrases," says Kriska. **IN**





# Self-Identity in the Workplace: The Terms That

By REBECCA AGUILAR

**"A**lways be learning and always see the world through the lens from which others see it," says Sherry Darden, a human resource consultant in Dallas. In recent years, she has seen how corporate leaders have opened their eyes to social justice issues and their impact on their employees. The death of George Floyd, the LGBTQ and #Metoo movements, and Black Lives Matter have created an awakening among employees, including leaders.

As a result of this surge in interest in creating organizations that foster inclusion and belonging, language across the board is being examined. Corporations, nonprofits, and government agencies are focusing on communication to employees and the public in their goal not only to represent but in some cases be at the forefront of the movement to increase diversity, inclusion, and equity. Human resource managers are often the folks on the frontlines of creating change, which frequently starts with understanding how employees want to self-identify and the tone leadership intends to take.

As is common in the constant reinvention of language, terms that include acronyms used to self-identify constantly evolve. Human resource managers know that adopting the most precise terms helps achieve the trust and respect of a diverse workforce.

Yet, we can get bogged down in trying to pin down one correct term to identify a group. Darden, who consults for Fortune 500 companies, says, "Don't get confused by all the words and acronyms." She adds that what is important is knowing them, understanding them, and learning why they are meaningful to the employees who want to be identified by them.

In recent years, terms that are being debated include BIPOC, Latinx, AAPI, cisgender, non-binary, and the

# We Need to Know

preferred pronouns used by employees to fit their gender identity.

Let's look at some of the nomenclature being debated and adopted.

## THE MEANING OF BIPOC, LATINX, AND AAPI

- ▶ **BIPOC** is an acronym for Black, Indigenous, People of Color. Pronounced "Bye-Pock," it has replaced POC (people of color), which describes people who are not white. It is a term more inclusive of various individuals, their backgrounds, and identities. Founders of the BIPOC Project use the acronym to "highlight the unique relationship to Whiteness that Indigenous and Black people have, which shapes the experience of and relationship to white supremacy for all people of color within a US context."
- ▶ Another appellation is **Latinx**. While some still prefer Latino/Latina, there is a movement to use Latinx instead—but so far the uptake of the term has been limited in the general population. "Latinx is a sign of respect and inclusion," says Dulce Sherman, a human resources consultant in Omaha, Nebraska. According to a 2020 Pew Research Center study, Latinx is

a gender-neutral term that emerged a decade ago as an alternative to describe the nation's Hispanic population. Pew researchers also discovered that only one in four US Hispanics have ever heard of Latinx, and just 3 percent use the term.

In 2018, *Merriam-Webster* dictionary added Latinx as usage of the term began to grow. "I see the young generation that wants to be more inclusive wants to use Latinx because it is gender neutral," says Sherman who is also Latina.

- ▶ **AAPI** stands for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. The Asian Pacific Institute for Gender-Based Violence defines AAPI as "all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins to the countries, states, jurisdictions, and/or the diasporic communities of these geographic regions." In recent years, the term has become more widely known, in part, sadly, due to the current spate of hate crimes directed at people of Asian and Pacific Island descent.

## GENDER-IDENTITY AWARENESS: PRONOUNS, CISGENDER, BINARY, and NON-BINARY

Respecting how a person self-identifies also must

include sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Human Resource Campaign compiled a glossary of terms the LGBTQ community uses to identify themselves, including cisgender, binary, and non-binary.

- ▶ **Cisgender** is used to describe a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned to them at birth.
- ▶ **Binary** is a gender identity that aligns with the sex assigned at birth, and gender expressions and roles that fit traditional expectations.
- ▶ **Non-binary** describes a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as both men and women, or somewhere in between, or may fall completely outside these categories.

"It's about making employees feel comfortable and feel respect. That should be the goal," says Sherman, who consults with small businesses and nonprofits.

## AGREE TO DISAGREE, BUT START THE CONVERSATION

While consensus is nice, it is not realistic, especially when it comes to something as personal as identity.

Sandra Martinez, a human resource manager in Houston, finds that the terms create a division among employees. She does not enforce them at the educational organization where she works. "I do not implement

terms like POC, AAPI, Latinx into our messaging. We refer to our employees as a whole, regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender," says Martinez.

On the other hand, Darden doesn't feel that self-identify labels create division among a workforce but rather more understanding. "You don't have to agree with the method; you have to understand it."

If management wants to best respect the wishes of their employees, Dulce Sherman advises companies to conduct engagement surveys to get insight into the employees' thoughts and attitudes about their job and the company environment. "If employers truly are being inclusive, they should be talking to their employees and finding out 'what do you prefer us calling you?'"

All the human resource managers interviewed did agree on one thing: listen to your employees.

Martinez is part of an HR team that oversees 7,000 employees. They may not use labels and acronyms to address employees, but they conduct "listening forums" between managers and workers. She believes in keeping the lines of communication open and resolving issues when employees feel they are not being respected or treated fairly. "True inclusion to me means everyone working together, respectfully expressing their perspective, and all working toward solutions."

IN





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## INCLUSIVE CORNER

# Undoing Diversity Failure

## How inclusive leaders can avoid missing the point

BY ALBERT SMITH

**O**ppportunity doesn't knock very often when you're nonwhite and gay. In fact, most of us "others" bend and twist to get into opportunity's way. As a result, gay, Black, Indigenous, and people of color employees are often challenged by companies who don't understand that their value in part comes from their authenticity.



**"The real, new currencies that pay for employee loyalty are transparency and change."**

Last year, in the middle of our collective COVID-19 fight, the State of the LGBTQ Community 2020 study showed that 77 percent of LGBTQ individuals have had their psychological well-being impacted by

workplace discrimination. In addition, data showed that 50 percent of us have made employment decisions to avoid discrimination and that our authentic identity impacts our ability to be hired.

And, for those who've successfully navigated the gauntlet, the struggles continue beyond the offer letter. Once "inside," we are met with diversity statements and programs that lack teeth.

So, from a queer leader who's been nervous and even fearful of violence at the office party, and who helms leadership groups determined to see

change, here are the difference-making moves every inclusive organization must make.

### 1. Get real and get personal

The national data around LGBTQ experiences aren't enough to help craft support for any organization.

Leaders who are serious need to know what's happening in offices and on Zooms with all employees. From surveys to individual listening sessions, inclusion is built by real connection and relationship. To foster it, you have to know what's happening at home.

### 2. Enable more than you empower

After 70 years of diversity "talk," data show that employees need more than conversation. The tired "empowerment" narrative hasn't produced real change—mainly because it comes from safely guarded seats.

To shift the paradigm, executives need to enable—meaning they surrender the authority to determine the size and shape of change.

### 3. Resource the revolution

Every priority's significance can be measured by the quantity of time, money, and person power it receives. While this seems like a no-brainer, it is often forgotten when addressing D&I.

The inspiration behind PRIDE months and diversity hires often fizzles out in a few years for most organizations. In fact, the average diversity officer tenure is about two years. When we truly "get it right," we will see these commitments matched with measurable goals, robust teams, and long-term resources to fuel the revolution.

### 4. Start with transparency

The new, real currencies that pay for employee loyalty are transparency and change.

During my tenure at Chemonics, we were acknowledged as a Best Place to Work by organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and Disability:IN. While I'm excited about the awards, I'm more excited about the work at every employee level that started with one brave leadership moment.

When I told our CEO Jamey Butcher we needed an assessment that would publicly give us a failing grade, I didn't expect to hear "Let's do it and share it." This "stop and pause" moment for me was the start of real change—change you could feel in the room.

Jamey's willingness to be transparent was one of the first planks on our bridge to moving from failing to becoming a "best place."

Diversity and inclusion challenges require solutions bigger than a month of events or social media shares. To be effective, our statements and banners must be followed with a shift toward structural change, employee enablement, and transformational decisions that demonstrate a serious commitment to diversity and inclusion. **IN**

*Albert E. Smith Jr. is founder and principal consultant at en masse Consulting, specializing in inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility, and social justice. He has worked with organizations in the arts and entertainment, aerospace and defense, education, financial services, hospitality, health care, industrial, insurance, retail, and technology industries. He was formerly corporate director of diversity and inclusion at Chemonics International.*





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# THINKING DIFFERENTLY

**Companies are recognizing and accommodating the unique abilities and needs of the neurodiverse in the workplace**

**BY JACKIE KRENTZMAN**

**W**hen Marcelle Ciampi's son was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome a decade ago, she began researching "autism spectrum conditions" and advocating for her son at school.

Out of curiosity, Ciampi herself got tested and also was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, a condition with some of the same characteristics as autism. Her diagnosis, along with her advocacy for her son, opened up her awareness to the world of "invisible or hidden disabilities"—autism spectrum conditions, ADHD, and mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and dyslexia. These conditions are often stigmatized and ignored, understudied, or misdiagnosed and left untreated by the medical community, educators, and businesses.

"I began processing my journey with that late-age diagnosis and soon

discovered the many misperceptions about the neurodivergent—that we can't be married, don't have empathy and emotions, can't fit into a school or workplace setting," she says.

Ciampi, who lives in the Seattle area, quickly learned how few resources and accommodations existed in schools and workplaces for children and adults with these challenges. This spurred Ciampi, at the time a schoolteacher, to shift her energy and focus to fighting for the rights of those who self-identify as neurodivergent.

She started by launching a blog, mainly to process her feelings around what she was learning. That turned into *Everyday Aspergers*, the first of several books she has written or edited.

Ciampi realized that the research and resources largely focused on males. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates

there are four times more males than females on the autism spectrum. So she created a self-diagnostic checklist for women, which was picked up by clinicians and organizations and translated into several languages.

Today, Ciampi (who also uses the nom de plume Samantha Craft) is the senior manager of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the international ambassador for Ultronauts, a software and engineering start-up founded in 2013 explicitly to recruit and set up an inclusive and welcoming workplace for the neurodivergent. Approximately three-quarters of its employees are on the autism spectrum.

Ciampi created a universal design workplace inclusivity system for Ultronauts—a discipline begun initially to address the accessibility challenges of the physically disabled in public and private spaces. Since then, the application of universal design has



expanded to include environments adaptable for as many people as possible, no matter their age, ability, disability, or size.

**The term neurodiversity** was coined by Australian sociologist Judy Singer in the late 1990s. It was originally used for those on the autism spectrum, but over the years it has become an umbrella referring to all forms of neurocognitive functioning in humans.

As the movement to understand neurodivergency is still in its infancy, a key goal is to “normalize” in society the neurodiverse—that the neurodivergent mind, like all others, is different but equal, not broken or inferior.

The focus over the last several decades has been on children on the autism spectrum and their needs in school. A 2016 CDC study found that 1 in 54 children was diagnosed on the autism spectrum. By contrast, attention to the needs of the neurodivergent employee—and job applicant—has lagged significantly. In many cases, it takes grassroots efforts by employees to convince management not only to provide the accommodations required by their neurodivergent employees but also to embrace their different perspectives and talents and see their value to the bottom line.

The need is urgent, say advocates, as the neurodiverse population is growing due to a combination of factors: more and better diagnoses; the gradual decrease of the stigma attached to neurodivergent minds, spurring people to “come out”; and the growing realization that diagnosing conditions such as autism and ADHD can be especially challenging for women because most of the parameters used for measuring ADHD are tailored for males. [See sidebar, “The challenges for neurodivergent women of color.”]

At the same time, however, the number and proportions of neurodivergent employees in the workforce remain



low. Data are spotty, but figures ranging from 60 to 80 percent of the neurodivergent population of working age is unemployed. A Yale School of Public Health study released in 2013 revealed that young people (teens to age 30) diagnosed with ADHD are about 10 to 14 percentage points less likely to be employed. If they do have a job, they earn about 33 percent less.

These astoundingly low rates are due, in part, to flaws in the traditional hiring process, says Julia Bascom, executive director of ASAN (Autistic Self-Advocacy Network). ASAN, a national advocacy and policy group, consults with workplaces and advocates for alternative methods of judging a potential employee’s work fit, instead of the traditional screening and interview process.

“One of the big problems for the neurodivergent job candidate is simply getting through the door, as we often have, for example, atypical work histories—so we get screened out early,” she says. “Or if we do make it to the interview stage, that is challenging because unfortunately the hiring decisions are based on the vibe between the interviewer and interviewee. But if you can’t make eye contact or respond spontaneously to

questions, you are not likely to get that job.”

Instead, Bascom recommends that companies find other ways to measure a candidate’s skills and fit, such as more heavily weighing work samples.

The tech industry is a leader in framing a hiring and inclusion system that takes into account the needs of the neurodiverse employee. Tech was one of the first industries not only to accommodate, but also in some cases to recruit, the neurodiverse. This is in part because of the industry’s embrace of the concept of “thinking differently.” Early leaders include Microsoft, Hewlett Packard, and Salesforce. Trailblazers in other industries include SAP, JP Morgan, and Deloitte.

“Silicon Valley has this spirit of hacking and innovating,” says Margaux Joffe, until recently the corporate social responsibility manager, accessibility, at Verizon Media. “People who have a brain that is wired differently and approaches problems from a different point of view are treasured in tech because they help companies innovate. Tech is all about disrupting the status quo or old way things have been done to create a better way to do things.”

Many of tech's early founders and icons, Joffe says, were thought to be neurodivergent. "For many years, we praised the disrupters in tech for thinking differently, but we have yet to acknowledge that many of these trailblazers were neurodiverse or dealing with a mental health condition."

One such company that recently began to address the needs of its neurodivergent employees is the San Francisco-based point of sale and digital payment company Square. The development of an employee resource group (ERG) and other initiatives was launched in 2018 by a few employees who had autistic children or were themselves diagnosed as being on the spectrum.

"Neurotypical folks have been talking about the Meyer-Briggs assessment for years, so they already have a way to talk about the fact we all perceive or receive the world in different ways, process information in different ways, and communicate in different ways," says Chris Ereneta, cofounder of Square's Neurodiversity "Community" (employee resource group) and a production lead in Square's Marketing Creative organization.

When a small group of Square employees first started an ERG, some feared that by going public they would reveal their invisible disabilities, and the company or their coworkers might stigmatize them or treat them differently. But the opposite happened. New employees saw that the company had an ERG for neurodivergent workers, which signaled they could feel safe revealing their neurodiversities.

"They showed up and starting sharing their differences their first week on the job," says Ereneta. "They would say things like, 'Hi, I'm autistic' or 'Hi, I am on these medications and suffer from anxiety.' Our community became a safe place for not only these new

## Resource Box

- ▶ Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- ▶ Neurodiversity at Work Guide
- ▶ Autism at Work Playbook

### DISCLOSING ADHD AT WORK

- ▶ [kaleidoscopesociety.com/disclosing-adhd-at-work/](https://kaleidoscopesociety.com/disclosing-adhd-at-work/)
- ▶ "Own Your Own Voice at Work: A Primer For Women with ADHD" [kaleidoscopesociety.com/own-your-voice-at-work/](https://kaleidoscopesociety.com/own-your-voice-at-work/)
- ▶ Creating an Employee Resource Group for Mental Health Toolkit by Mind Share Partners
- ▶ ERG/BRG Toolkit by Disability:IN
- ▶ Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network

employees but others at the company who felt comfortable to join as well."

**Not everyone who** identifies as neurodivergent is on the autism spectrum. For example, Claudia Ng, a production designer and founding member of the Square employee resource group, considers herself neurodivergent with ADHD tendencies and also sometimes struggles with executive function. When Ng self-diagnosed her divergent tendencies, with Ereneta's help, she felt empowered.

When Joffe, the founder of the Kaleidoscope Society, an online community for women with ADHD, got a freelance job at Yahoo, she didn't disclose her condition. Even when she was offered a full-time position as head of production in the marketing department, she still did not feel comfortable sharing her diagnosis because of the stereotypes and biases around ADHD.

"After a year or so, I was feeling like I was living a double life," she says.

"On weekends I would volunteer to do advocacy around mental health in the community, but it was not something I talked about in the workplace. I had seen people who did disclose a mental challenge being discriminated against or even fired."

In 2017, Joffe began working with others to form a neurodiversity employee resource group at Yahoo, later expanded to all of Verizon Media, which had acquired Yahoo.

"Having this committee within the workplace was transformative," she says. "It was a space where people could take off their mask and put their burden down and feel accepted."

At Square, a similar dynamic took place. By forming the group, Ng says, she found compatriots who understood her challenges. Like most who are neurodivergent, Ng is high functioning and good at her job, so her challenges went largely unnoticed—until she took the bold step to join the group and thus go public.

"It was such a relief to tell people and then find out it was no big deal," says Ng. "At other companies, I think I would have been judged and punished."

**Among companies across** the country, there is a growing focus on the recruitment, inclusion, and acceptance of the neurodiverse. In part, we have COVID-19 to thank for that.

At Square, as at many companies, appreciation of the abilities of neurodivergent employees took a quantum leap when the pandemic sent all employees to their homes to continue working.

Neurodivergent employees discovered they could often be more productive working from home, as they had more control over their workspace and working style. Some worked more effectively when communication was asynchronous—such as through a Slack channel—than in an in-person



## The challenges for neurodivergent women of color



**G**rowing up in the Midwest, Morénike Giwa-Onaiwu, who is of African descent, knew she was different from other kids. But the adults in her life attributed her differences to race, not neurodivergency.

"It was clear there was something different about me, but I was not perceived as autistic," she says. "My difference was always attributed to race. People would say, 'It must be her culture—West Africans don't make eye contact!' I was also seen as emotional and high-strung. I was in gifted classes where all the kids were kind of quirky, so no one suggested I get diagnosed for autism."

After her two children were diagnosed with autism, Giwa-Onaiwu got tested—and was also diagnosed with

autism as well as depression, anxiety, and adult ADHD.

Today, Giwa-Onaiwu is a writer, advocate, and public speaker based in Houston, and a visiting scholar in humanities at Rice University. She has written and edited several books on neurodiversity, including *All the Weight of Our Dreams: On Living Racialized Autism* and *Sincerely, Your Autistic Child: What People on the Autism Spectrum Wish Their Parents Knew About Growing Up, Acceptance, and Identity*.

*Sincerely, Your Autistic Child* grew out of Giwa-Onaiwu's struggles to find resources and support for her children.

"The first time I went to a parents' support group, I was so excited," she says. "I will be with my people! We will share! Unfortunately, I felt even more othered. The parents were talking about the day their child was diagnosed like it was the

day the Twin Towers were attacked! All they saw was the negative. I don't despise my children for who they are, and I don't want to make them 'normal.' I want them to make a good life in their own skin."

Giwa-Onaiwu says that neurodivergent women of color in the workplace carry multiple burdens, as people tend to think of autism as a "white male thing" (men are four times as likely as women to be diagnosed with autism in the United States) and don't recognize that the obstacles and challenges all women, especially women of color, experience are amplified by their neurodiversity conditions.

"For example, due to my autism, I am very honest and genuine—which can come across as too abrupt or rude," she says. "That will tend to get attributed to my race, not my neurodiversity."

While the burden is especially heavy for women of color, all women in the workplace suffer from the misconception that only men are on the spectrum.

"It is more socially acceptable for men to be quirky, disruptive, prone to interrupting, have strong opinions. They are seen as visionary, while women with those same behaviors are seen as unstable, too emotional, or a bitch," says Margaux Joffe, founder of the Kaleidoscope Society, an online community for women with ADHD. "Then you add

the challenges for neurodivergent women of color—it can be very alienating."

Neurodivergent people of color in the workplace have to navigate the same microaggressions and even outright prejudice that other people of color do, and be on the alert to make sure their neurodiversity does not get misinterpreted. This forces them to constantly question themselves and code switch. "You are always second-guessing yourself," says Giwa-Onaiwu. "It's draining, and you can't be as productive at your job."

Furthermore, as autism or ADHD or mental health conditions are often considered "invisible disabilities," people don't know that their neurodivergent colleagues in the workplace are always struggling to stay focused.

"At work, you are in the midst of a hostile environment," Giwa-Onaiwu says. "For example, others automatically adjust to the ticking of a clock and don't notice it. But you can't block it out. Or the fluorescent lights give you headaches, but you still have to be in the office eight hours a day. Things that are small for others are not small for us."

"There is a saying in the Black community that you have to work twice as hard to get half as far. For women, that dictum applies more. If you are a neurodivergent woman of color, it applies even more so."

meeting. Others performed better in video meetings when they turned off their camera. Those who dreaded the unspoken mandatory after-hours socializing were relieved of that pressure, which made their work less stressful—and more productive.

The pandemic also made a huge impact on acceptance of mental health challenges. “The pandemic got pretty much everyone in the workplace talking about mental health and accepting that many people have mental health issues that need to be accommodated—not dismissed or judged,” says Ng.

In addition, COVID-19 made people feel more comfortable revealing their neurodivergencies to their supervisor and teams. Prior, just a handful of Square employees actively participated in the company’s #neurodiversity Slack channel. A few months in, participation had mushroomed to nearly 500 people.

**In recent years**, some companies realized that hiring neurodivergent employees could be a competitive advantage.

Studies have shown that employees who bring divergent thinking and ways of being to a company are advantageous to the bottom line. Autistic people often have a tremendous capacity for mastery of detail, can synthesize complex systems, and can take in a great amount of information. A turning point for this recognition came in 2017 when *Harvard Business Review* published a feature story, “Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage.”

However, advocates warn against a common pitfall—typecasting the neurodivergent as data-crunching worker drones weak in leadership skills.

For example, a widespread belief holds that people on the spectrum can be excellent coders because they can take in enormous amounts of

## Studies have shown that employees who bring divergent thinking and ways of being to a company are advantageous to the bottom line.

information and concentrate for long periods of time. While this can be true, and companies are beginning to recruit the neurodiverse for such specific skill sets, these workers are put in a box that doesn’t leave room for them to demonstrate and grow their other talents, such as leadership.

Bascom applauds companies that have set up hiring practices specifically for the neurodivergent applicants. However, she worries about reinforcing stereotypes. “If I want to work at your company, does that mean I have to come in this special hiring door only?” she asks. “How can I come in the same door as everyone else? A company can end up with a segregated program and workforce.”

**As for any** group not considered the traditional norm in a company, change for the neurodiverse can only happen when upper management buys in. Square is fortunate in that respect, say Ng and Ereneta, in that management is supportive of the neurodiverse community and willing to accommodate needs.

Some companies have institutionalized accommodations so everyone can find a door in to the way they can work best. This can include asynchronous communication (such as Slack) and video meetings with closed captioning for workers who prefer to absorb information in text. Some companies distribute meeting agendas well in advance so people who are uncomfortable speaking up can contribute in writing beforehand.

“Basically, the goal is for companies to treat and consider the needs for

neurodiverse ERGs the same way they do for other ERGs, such as those for African Americans or LGBTQ,” says Joffe.

Ereneta acknowledges that there is still a long way to go to reach full integration and acceptance. These are early days in understanding the breadth and needs of those with invisible disabilities as well as discussing how to accommodate and understand the neurodiverse and to provide an environment where the neurodiverse—and by extension all employees—can thrive.

Advocates agree that true acceptance can only happen when society normalizes the fact that all brains are the same and can manifest in many different ways—that there is no such thing as “deficient” brain chemistry and “normal” brain chemistry. Some compare their fight to that of the LGBTQ community and where its acceptance stood 20 or so years ago.

Ereneta says that he personally believes that success would be when there is full diversity, inclusion, and belonging. Diversity would be achieved when companies have hiring equity for the neurodiverse. Inclusion would be when those individuals have the opportunity to have their voice heard. Belonging would be when they feel they own the room as much as anyone else.

“We are hoping that by expanding the definition of what is normal, all kinds of ways of being will become normalized,” says Ereneta. “Our work can shine a light on all differences—race, gender identity, belief system—you name it. Everyone benefits.” **IN**



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# A Woman's Worth

## *Closing the gap on pay inequity*

BY KIMBERLY OLSON

**W**hile working at a leadership development organization, Alli Myatt was chief operating officer, so she saw everyone's salaries. "I found out that I was paid much less than every other member of the leadership team, which was nutty to me, because they knew I was going to see the numbers," she says.

Myatt managed to address all pay inequities across the system—including her own salary—but the experience was a gut punch. "Not only was I not being paid fairly when I got my paycheck, but it meant I got less for performance bonuses because that's a percentage of pay," she says. "I got less retirement money, because that's a percentage of pay. I got less retirement matching. It really made me angry."

And not for the first time. A previous employer told her that the organization didn't negotiate salaries—and then she learned that wasn't the case. She also discovered that a colleague—promoted into the same position as Myatt, at the same time—had a significantly higher salary.

"I am not naive enough to believe that it was happening at just those two places," Myatt says. The data bear out her hunch. Women and people of color continue to be paid less than white men for the same work, with the earnings gap compounding over time. A woman launching her career today can expect to face a \$406,280 wage gap over a 40-year career, according to the National Women's Law Center. For Black and Native American women, the typical lifetime loss totals nearly \$1 million, and for Latinas, over \$1.1 million.

"Pay equity is critically important, because there's no better way to feel

included than to be paid equitably," says Kellie A. McElhaney, PhD, founding director of the Center for Equity, Gender, and Leadership at the Haas School of Business at UC Berkeley. "[Pay inequity] creates a fundamental lack of trust in your leadership in your company."

### **The pandemic setback**

As COVID-19 shook Corporate America, women stood to lose even more financial ground. Working women—especially women of color—were more likely to be laid off or furloughed, which threatened to stall their careers and undermine their financial stability, according to Lean In's Women in the Workplace Report 2020.

Meanwhile, increasing challenges like caregiving and schooling pressure led one in four working women to consider either downshifting their career or leaving it. Among working mothers, it was one in three, with



Black and Latina working moms—who tend to shoulder heavier burdens at home—especially affected.

Pandemic-related struggles reached into the upper echelons, with senior-level women being 1.5 times as likely as senior-level men to consider downshifting their career or exiting the workforce.

These trends translate to significant losses for women—in lost income during the pandemic, future wage growth, and retirement income. If a woman earned \$62,140 before the pandemic—the median wage for a college-educated woman—and she returns to full-time work by 2022, she'll lose more than \$346,000 in income over her lifetime, according to the Center for American Progress. If she doesn't return to work until 2024—a likely scenario for many women, McKinsey forecasts—her lifetime loss could be nearly \$600,000. These pandemic-related losses only intensify the urgency of closing the salary gap.

### Crucial step: data review

Amid the grim reports about salary gaps and pandemic-related career stalls, there's good news. Equal pay is in the spotlight. In 2019, when the US women's soccer team won their fourth World Cup, the crowd erupted with chants of "Equal pay!" in support of the team's fight for fair compensation. Meanwhile, more companies are working to close their pay gaps, and some—like Salesforce, Starbucks, and American Express—have succeeded.

"Increasingly, if you're not doing it, you're falling behind," says Margrét Bjarnadóttir, PhD, associate professor of management science and statistics at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business, who researches demographic pay gaps. She says that companies want to close their pay gaps because it's the right thing to do, and also because it helps with recruiting and retention and boosts employee morale.

## Equal Payday

If women want to earn the annual salary that their white male counterparts do, they need to continue working well into the next year. Here's how far into 2021 women needed to work to catch up to the average white, non-Hispanic man's 2020 salary.

March 9	Asian and Pacific Islander women
March 24	Women on average
April 9	White women
August 3	Black women
September 8	Native American women
October 21	Latinas



But in order to close pay gaps, you need to know where you stand. "It's critical to look at your data," Dr. Bjarnadóttir says. "Without it, you're either guessing that everything is fine or pretending that everything is fine."

She recalls, for example, a utility company that was "all in" on equity. Yet its data showed that high-performing females were being underpaid compared to high-performing males, taking HR by surprise. "Data can reveal our blind spots," Dr. Bjarnadóttir says.

Sometimes, the bias is spread unequally across an organization. "We have different departments, locations, and managers," Dr. Bjarnadóttir says. "We might see in the data that some employees seem to be facing more bias in their compensation than others."

Viewing pay data from various angles is key. "Those who are pushing forward on their pay equity journey are incorporating pay equity into all of their salary decisions, whether that's hiring or promotions or thinking about opportunity gaps," Dr. Bjarnadóttir says. "It's becoming part of their DNA."

### Salaries: out of the shadows

Conducting salary audits is important, and so is being transparent. When salaries are under wraps, women don't even know they're being underpaid. Today, women earn \$0.80 for every \$1 a man earns. But women who say that compensation is transparent at their organization earn \$1 to \$1.01 for every \$1 earned by a man, according to research by PayScale.

Transparency challenges a decades-old tradition of keeping salaries hush-hush. "I was a banker, and we were told in our onboarding that it was illegal to discuss your salary with anybody in the company," says Dr. McElhaney. "I'm 55, and I went through most of my life believing that."

Pay secrecy allows pay inequities to persist, but old ways of thinking are starting to fall away. "Pay secrecy fosters discrimination, and we should not tolerate it," said President Obama, upon signing an executive order in 2014 requiring federal contractors to let employees discuss their salaries. Nineteen states also now have laws protecting employees' right to share salaries.

Many organizations now embrace salary transparency in some form—with a handful busting the old paradigm to bits, like Buffer, a San Francisco-based company that develops social media tools. "We're very, very transparent," says Hailley Griffis, head of public relations. "Our salaries are all on our website. You can see how much I make, how much my CEO makes."

Buffer, which has made transparency a core value generally, shed light on its salaries back in 2013. The company had only a dozen people at the time—who were fully onboard—which Griffis admits made it easier.

While the bold move shocked some, others loved it. "We had a huge spike in job applicants," Griffis says. "And over the years, we've heard, 'I want to work here because you really live up to your commitment of transparency.'"

Younger employees, in particular, aren't shy about money talk, with a recent Zippia survey showing that 58 percent of workers aged 25 to 34 are willing to share their salary. "This generation views [salary transparency] as a barometer of trust," Dr. McElhaney says. "There's this sense of, 'I have the right to that data if I'm going to choose to work for you.'"

"Working at Buffer, I don't have everyday stress about being paid fairly, because I know that I am," Griffis says. "First, I can see what everyone else is being paid. Second, I understand our salary formula—and I agree with it." According to PayScale, workers who rate their employers poorly on pay transparency are 80 percent more likely to quit in the next six months than those who rate their company higher.

Buffer has no adjusted pay gap (the earnings gap between people who perform similar roles). Griffis is especially proud that the company shares its unadjusted pay gap (the earnings gap between all women and all men, regardless of role), which it has whittled from 15 to 5 percent since 2019. "The unadjusted pay gap is a much higher standard to hold yourself to, and it's not something that is shared as much in the industry," Griffis says.

### Moving beyond gender

As companies turn their attention to the gender pay gap, some have yet to focus on racial pay equity. There may be practical reasons, as gender data are somewhat easier to collect, but that isn't the whole story. "As a country, we have refused to look at racial injustice," Dr. McElhaney says. "This has absolutely been viewed through a white lens and still is." That's a key reason why the pay gap is greater for non-white women (see sidebar).

As companies start looking at pay data by gender, Dr. Bjarnadóttir says they tend to start asking about race and other dimensions too. "Many

companies, when faced with the data—the racial disparities that we see—often experience a wake-up call," she says. "A lot of organizations, thankfully, are putting into place processes and programs to address this."

Alli Myatt—the woman who twice discovered she was being underpaid—says it's essential for companies to understand that inequities are deeply rooted in history. "Undervaluing Black women's labor, particularly, is connected to slavery," she says. "After slavery ended, they had Black codes in a lot of the South that actually limited how much you could pay Black people. And often unions would fight to make sure that the white union members would get paid more than the Black workers would be paid. They also had laws that would say things like, Black women, you have to work for us doing this job, earning this amount of money."

Eager to help raise awareness, Myatt participated in the OpEd Project, with the goal of writing about the Black women's pay gap. She then ramped up her efforts, partnering with Courtney Tungate to launch The Equity Practice, which helps organizations address inequities and transform their culture.

"So much of racism is like the air we breathe, and we've all been conditioned not to see it," Myatt says. "We help people to see and eliminate those patterns of oppression that show up in our management practices—pull them apart and deconstruct them. Then we encourage them to work with their team to cocreate something new."

As with issues around equity generally, pay equity can impact various dimensions of diversity. Edge Certified, launched at the World Economic forum 10 years ago, assesses organizations for intersectional equity, including pay

equity. In August 2021, L'Oréal USA became the first company to receive the new EDGEplus certification, which involved evaluating their pay equity efforts through race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, and nationality.

### Map a plan, forge ahead

For a company, employee pay is usually one of its biggest expenses—and most worthy investments. Healthy salaries help an organization attract top talent, make employees more present at work, incentivize productivity, and drive financial performance.

As companies review their pay data, they may discover some unpleasant surprises, and experts encourage leaders to own it. "Tell the truth, tell it fast, and prioritize a focus on the fix," Dr. McElhaney advises.

But don't just fix it once and call it a day. "We know that a significant amount of pay gap is linked to bias, and you can't do a one-time fix for bias," she adds. "So it's got to be annually or quarterly that companies review and report on numbers, at least internally."

Pay gaps may be expensive to fix, but that's simply because companies' budgets have been built on such gaps. Moreover, paying everyone fairly ultimately improves a company's bottom line. "If you believe that people should be paid for their labor in an equitable way, and you acknowledge that you have not been doing that, the consequence is now you're going to pay people properly," Myatt says. "If you don't have the budget, you might need to phase it in over a few years, because it changes people's life outcomes—whether they can afford to get a house, how much retirement they have, what kind of care they get at the end of life. You have to make it right." **IN**

# 63%

Men are offered higher salaries than women for the same position at the same company 63 percent of the time.



# Welcome to the HALL OF FAME

***Inclusion magazine celebrates 12 extraordinary DEI executives who have made an indelible mark on their respective industries and beyond.***

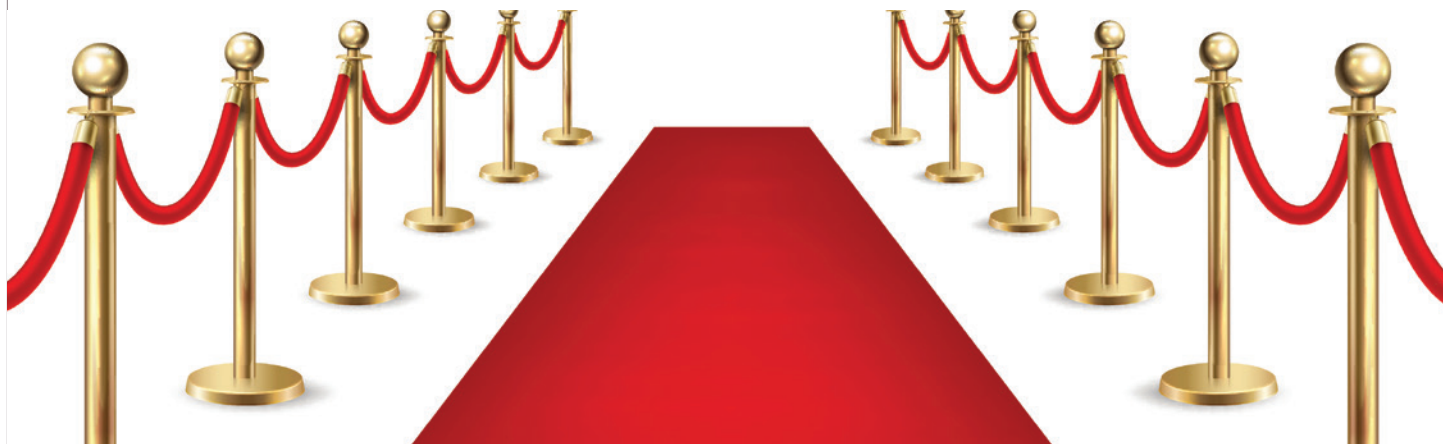
**by TANISHA A. SYKES**

**T**he mark of a great leader is one who is committed to the people, dedicated to the craft, and determined to create equity for all in the workplace. In this issue, *Inclusion* honors our 2021 Hall of Fame, a group of powerful women leaders who are paving the way in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

While many have hung up their corporate hats, they are leveraging an average of 30-plus years of expertise across various roles in Fortune 500 companies and in new endeavors as entrepreneurs, nonprofit leaders, university executives, and board members.

The latest analysis from McKinsey & Co. shows that the business case for inclusion and diversity is stronger than ever. Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25 percent more likely to have above-average profitability, according to the report. It also shows that more progress is needed, citing that within the United States the average female representation on executive teams is 21 percent, and these teams will need 29 years to reach gender parity.

That's why the women listed here are more critical than ever. As global leaders, they are continuing to break barriers by making the organizations where they currently serve more diverse, inclusive, and equitable.





**Dr. Rohini Anand** is the founder and CEO of Rohini Anand LLC, a DEI advisory to public and private-sector clients. The former SVP corporate responsibility and global CDO for Sodexo is an expert in DEI, corporate responsibility, human capital, and executive leadership. At Sodexo, Anand reported to the global CEO and was a member of the North America Executive Committee.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Completing her forthcoming book, *Leading Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: A Guide for Systemic Change in Multinational Organizations*, which offers strategies to help multinational companies advance DEI. “During my career, I missed having a practical resource on how to ignite global inclusion transformation,” says Anand. “This book is a view from someone who has had to pioneer a way forward without a real map.”

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Advancing social justice on a global scale. Anand serves on several nonprofit boards, including the Galt Foundation, an organization providing jobs to people with disabilities; WomenLift Health, a group working to advance women in health care; and the Tent Partnership for Refugees, an organization mobilizing the global business community to provide career opportunities for refugees.



**Dr. Deborah P. Ashton** is a DEI consultant with more than 30 years of cross-industry experience. She has led diversity offices at Fortune 500 companies such as Medtronic, Harley-Davidson, and Darden Restaurants. Ashton created the 360 Inclusion Leadership Profile, a tool that assesses individual skills for leading a multicultural workforce, and the Inclusive Culture Profile, which measures the extent to which employees believe the company promotes inclusion. Her strategic model, Six Pillars of Diversity and Inclusion, at Novant Health, was recognized by the Institute for Diversity and Health Equity of the American Hospital Association. Today, she is founder of Equity Rising and the president of Planet Perspective, a firm specializing in inclusion, social justice, and a bias-free workplace.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Strategizing around diversity and equal pay. “I designed DEI training and spearheaded annual pay equity analysis at Argonne National Laboratory, Medtronic, Darden Restaurants, and Harley-Davidson,” says Ashton, a licensed psychologist who was a postdoctoral clinical fellow at Harvard Medical School.

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Working tirelessly for DEI. Ashton is an advisory board committee member for Mill Road Progressive Governance Fund, which invests in corporations to increase effectiveness and board diversity. Ashton is also penning a book on inclusive talent acquisition and management.



**Yolanda Lee Conyers** was instrumental in transforming Lenovo, a Fortune Global 500 company, into a culturally integrated global brand. As the former president of the Lenovo Foundation and the CDO and HR business partner for the technology company, Conyers was responsible for governing HR strategies in support of eight organizations across the company. Known for her expertise in cultural and change management, Conyers led the integration of Eastern and Western cultures for Lenovo when the Beijing-based company acquired IBM’s Personal Computing Division in the United States. She described the experience in a coauthored book, *The Lenovo Way*. Previously, Conyers was a business leader at Dell and worked in data-driven analytics at Texas Instruments.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Helping a global transformation. “I led the integration of [the company culture] for Lenovo while successfully living and working in China with my family for three years,” says Conyers. “The company grew from \$3 billion to \$60 billion in revenue today.”

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Sharing her DEI expertise. After retiring from Lenovo in January 2021, Conyers plans to “continue to share the knowledge I’ve gained as a mentor and advise on nonprofit and nonexecutive corporate boards,” she says.





**Dr. Shirley Davis** is a global thought leader in HR and DEI practices, a senior executive, and a certified leadership coach. As president and CEO of SDS Global Enterprises Inc., a firm specializing in HR strategy development, talent management, and DEI, she delivers the strategic outcomes that allow leaders to build cultures in which all talent can thrive. A former chief D&I officer at several Fortune 100 companies and at the Society for Human Resource Management, the world's largest HR membership association, Davis has built a reputation as a master of reinvention.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Building a personal board of advisors. "I have utilized them throughout my career," says Davis, author of the recently released book *Living Beyond "What If?"* "Relationships are the new currency, and having the right people around me has led to my career, business, and financial success."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Partnering with companies to build inclusive, equitable, high-performing workplace cultures. The author, international speaker, and LinkedIn Learning instructor presents to leaders at all levels globally. In addition, she is a board member for organizations including the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America.



**Jackie Glenn** has long been recognized as an outstanding HR executive. Her focus: strategic plans, talent development, and DEI. As the former global vice president of diversity and inclusion at Dell EMC, Glenn led the company's worldwide D&I strategy, leading to groundbreaking efforts such as the design and implementation of an innovative D&I curriculum and the institutionalization of the company's transgender reassignment program. Today, Glenn is the founder and CEO of Glenn Diversity Inclusion & HR Solutions, a consulting practice offering the development and execution of best practices needed to create inclusive corporate cultures.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Launching a transgender reassignment program at her former company. "EMC is a huge organization that has been around for a long time, so launching something of this magnitude was a big deal," she says. "It spoke to the value EMC placed on diversity and inclusion as an organization."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Preparing future leaders. "I aspire to train the next generation of DEI leaders so that when I step out, they can step in," says Glenn, who is also a board member of the Museum of African American History in Boston and a trustee on the board of Beth Israel Lahey Health.



**Pat Harris** began her 41-year stint at McDonald's Corporation while taking courses and eventually graduating from Roosevelt University in Chicago. The former global chief diversity officer and vice president of community engagement was responsible for the evolution of the company's diversity and inclusion strategies impacting McDonald's restaurants around the world. Thanks to Harris's leadership, McDonald's has been widely recognized for its commitment to diversity, including winning the coveted Catalyst Award for its global women's initiative. Having retired from McDonald's in 2017, Harris is now founder and CEO of the TBS Learning & Tennis Center.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Helping and empowering others. She watched her mother do the same. "I wanted to emulate her," says Harris. "Having her mindset made it easier for me as a diversity practitioner to position McDonald's as a leader in D&I."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Educating and inspiring young people. At TBS Learning & Tennis Center, located in her hometown of McBee, South Carolina, "we help enhance life skills of children in the fifth through eighth grades, offering STEM workshops, team-building activities, and educational field trips," says Harris. She also serves as chair of the board of trustees for Roosevelt University and is cochair of the Push EXCEL board.



**Gwen Houston** is the global diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant/coach for GM Houston Consulting LLC. She consults with companies looking to elevate their efforts to become world-class leaders in DEI. While she is now retired from corporate work, the former chief diversity and inclusion officer at Microsoft Corporation, Campbell Soup Company, Aetna, and Nike is a well-known global business leader and strategist with more than 25 years of experience. For her efforts, Houston has received a multitude of honors from her former companies and publications alike, including Campbell Soup's President's Award, Microsoft's Distinguished Leadership Award, *Savoy's* Top Influential Women in Corporate America, and one of *Diversity Woman's* 50 Diversity Champions.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** A dedication to DEI. "I have brought the fullness of my intellect, identity, and abilities as an innovator of positive change across a variety of corporate entities," says Houston. "My commitment has been steadfast and unwavering!"

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Living a balanced life. Aside from running her own consulting practice, Houston "leads an active lifestyle," she says. That takes on many forms, including "philanthropy, mentoring/coaching, and pure gratitude for the many blessings."



**Rosalind Hudnell** is a passionate D&I advocate. As Intel Corporation's first chief diversity officer, she delivered the leading strategy that launched the \$1 billion Diversity in Technology Initiative. An expert in workforce development, Hudnell directed the 10K Engineer's Initiative for President Obama's US Council on Jobs. She also served on the World Economic Forum "Internet for All" Steering Committee and led decade-long research focused on equity and inclusion, coauthoring a findings report in *Harvard Business Review*. Now retired, Hudnell received a lifetime achievement award for her impact on D&I from Intel. She currently serves as the chair of the Stanford Medicine Commission on Justice and Equity.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Making it! "This young Black girl from Pasenda, California, rose to become a global executive who helped change the face of technology through a deeper commitment to diversity and inclusion," says Hudnell. "As leaders, it is about what we did to open doors, advocate, promote, and protect."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Reclaiming her roots in the performance arts. The former professional ice skater is especially inspired by Alvin Ailey's legacy. Hoping to "continue to advocate for diverse storytelling," she sits on the board of trustees for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and the board of directors of the Black Filmmakers Foundation, noting that dance, art, and music have always been a catalyst for inclusion and learning.



**Donna Alligood Johnson** retired as Mastercard's chief diversity officer in 2017. She then launched Johnson Alligood White LLC, specializing in career coaching and corporate diversity solutions. At Mastercard, Johnson developed an award-winning global diversity strategy. She was also cochair of the Mastercard Business Resource Groups (BRG) for employees of African descent, creating the first multicultural global diversity summit. In addition, Johnson designed diversity programs that fostered inclusion, talent engagement, and innovation. Mastercard was lauded by the Human Rights Campaign, *Working Mother*, and Diversity-Inc for its transformational programs.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS:** A global relaunch of D&I. "At Mastercard, my team built a program that represented the importance of diversity while emphasizing inclusion," says Johnson. "We also developed an online learning platform, paving the way for more discussions about diversity on a global scale."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Focusing on community service. "I am president of the Fairfield County Chapter of the Links Inc., in Connecticut, one of the nation's oldest volunteer service organizations enriching African Americans' culture and economic survival," says Johnson. "Over the past two years, we have concentrated on health-care education, voter registration, and equity justice issues."





**Wendy Lewis** has pioneered high-impact global DEI initiatives. As the former global chief diversity officer and vice president of community engagement at McDonald's, Lewis launched and led the first-ever Global Gender Balance and Diversity Strategy. Her "Diversity IS Inclusion" mantra became an educational framework for developing culturally intelligent leaders, colleagues, and partners. Prior to joining McDonald's, Lewis was senior vice president of diversity, inclusion, and strategic alliances for Major League Baseball, where she centralized strategic planning processes for D&I for MLB's 30 franchises, the central office, MLB Network, and MLB Advanced Media. Lewis was known for her multifaceted approach to gaining empathy, diplomacy, and trust among key stakeholders.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Her MLB experience. "Almost 30 years of my DEI career was with Major League Baseball," says Lewis. "Pioneering MLB's analytics, talent pipeline, development strategy, supplier diversity, and unprecedented industry DEI standards and best practices at the club/franchise level and within the Commissioner's Office was literally game changing."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** The advancement of "life, liberty, and equity." Through her firm, Wendy Lewis Enterprises, LLC, she has created ALLY SHIFT, a platform that will offer classes, workshops, and presentations related to DEI with the goal of "shifting life-changing moments to movements," says Lewis.



**Emily Pitts** was recruited out of retirement to join Lindenwood University in Saint Charles, Missouri, as the chief diversity officer and director for the Center of Diversity and Inclusion in July 2021. Pitts broke barriers as the first Black female general partner at Edward Jones after building her Atlanta-based financial advisory business to 1,300 clients with \$70 million in assets under management. In 2004, she oversaw marketing the firm's credit card and mortgage services to its financial advisors, and in 2007 became the first general partner responsible for DEI. Pitts also established the firm's first Courageous Conversation Program around race and DEI issues, helping to elevate women in the firm while creating a national dialogue.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Being the first. "I am proud of becoming the first African American woman general partner at Edward Jones, a Fortune 500 company," says Pitts. "That role ultimately led to the opportunity to oversee the firm's inclusion and diversity efforts."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** Creating a DEI curriculum for colleges. Since retiring, Pitts has been working with colleges to create a DEI training curriculum. In her new role at Lindenwood University, she looks forward to "ensuring DEI is integrated into everything we do," says Pitts. "I hope my legacy will include that I helped people move to a greater commitment of seeing, hearing, and caring for each other regardless of race, gender, physical capabilities, or orientation."



**Anise Wiley-Little** is a managing partner and member of the board for MEGA-K Enterprises LLC, which advises suppliers, businesses, and executives on HR strategies and diversity. With more than 25 years of success in sectors ranging from financial services to human resources to management firm industries, Wiley-Little provides executive coaching for high-level executives. Previously, as the first chief diversity officer for Allstate Insurance Company, she played a key role in orchestrating the company's diversity business strategies. She is the author of *Profitable Diversity: How Economic Inclusion Can Lead to Success*. Thanks to her leadership, business with diverse suppliers at Allstate increased by \$32 million within six months, to a total of \$1 billion.

**PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT:** Impacting so many people. "I am most proud of having had the platforms to convene CDOs and other like-minded executives to learn, share, and grow their knowledge of diversity and inclusion," says Wiley-Little. "This was accomplished through establishing Allstate's Supplier Summit and its branding of inclusive diversity, which remains today."

**CONTINUING LEGACY:** A champion for inclusion. "I advise businesses, diverse suppliers, and executives on HR strategy, diversity strategy, and supplier strategy through a family-held business," she says. **IN**

*Tanisha A. Sykes is an award-winning careers, personal finance, and small-business writer in New York City. Follow her on Twitter @tanishastips.*

## FRESH TAKE

# The Power of an Age-Diverse Workplace

## Seasoned workers give companies an edge

BY JANET HEIT

**F**our months short of my 60-something birthday, it became clear that my employer wanted to replace me with a younger version of myself. I was called into HR and told, “Today will be your last day.” Thankfully, I was allowed back



**“Older workers bring with them institutional memory and networks that can be leveraged for business opportunities.”**

into my office to pack my personal belongings: photos, knickknacks, books, and a spare pair of shoes. I hugged a few colleagues farewell and headed home.

Imagine my surprise when, a few days later, a small package from my former employer arrived at my apartment door. Inside was a single item: a magnifying glass. I’d left it, along with

my other office-issued supplies, like paper clips, highlighters, and sticky notes. Then it hit me: my former employer thought the magnifier was my personal property—because I was, you know, “older.” I burst out laughing because, really, what else was there to do? Employment lawyers will tell you that age-bias cases are often brought and rarely won.

Business is, at long last, seeing the return on investment of diversity (ker-ching!). An increasing number of businesses are expressing interest in recruiting and retaining diverse talent, with the intention of making workplaces BIPOC friendly, parent-friendly, and gay-friendly, and advancing more women and BIPOC into senior management. All well and good for new grads, new parents, millennials, and younger gen Xers. But older persons? Fuhgeddaboutit.

The bias against older employees remains palpable. In a 2015 PricewaterhouseCoopers survey of over 1,300 CEOs, 64 percent had strategies in place to increase DEI. However, fewer than 10 percent of those plans incorporated age diversity. According to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, more than half of employees over age 45 either witnessed or experienced age discrimination on the job. In a separate survey, more than three-quarters of respondents said that age bias made their job search particularly difficult.

With that said, the age-diverse workplace belongs in every business’s DEI plan. Here’s why: age diversity gives companies a competitive edge. Older workers bring with them institutional memory and networks that can be leveraged for business opportunities.

They’re also a solid onboarding investment. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 25 to 34 year olds spend, on average, only 2.8 years on the job before moving on. As noted in *Harvard Business Review*, “There is a generation of older workers with

wisdom and experience, specialized knowledge, and unparalleled experience to teach, coach, and counsel who could pair with these ambitious millennials to create businesses that are built to endure.”

The term “culture fit,” once hailed as the gold standard for workplace diversity, is rightfully being criticized for impeding its original intent. In its place is a new nomenclature: “culture add.” By shifting the focus away from workplace harmony-by-homogeneity, culture add brings new perspectives, skills, and energy by hiring not for values alignment through sameness, but for values alignment through true diversity. Culture add will move business beyond tokenism and toward true power sharing from senior management on down.

As workplaces in the United States gear up for the new, postpandemic normal, businesses have an unparalleled opportunity to implement substantial DEI policies and practices in order to hire and retain top talent, spur productivity, and drive growth. Race, ethnicity, gender, age: The age-diverse workplace belongs among DEI’s core values. **IN**

*Janet Heit is a writer, fundraising executive for nonprofits, and founder and director of Another Nice Mask, a COVID mask-up initiative rooted in comedy rather than shaming.*



*The SDS Global Enterprises, Inc. Team  
is proud of our President & CEO!*

# **CONGRATULATIONS DR. SHIRLEY DAVIS**

*for your induction into  
Inclusion Magazine's*

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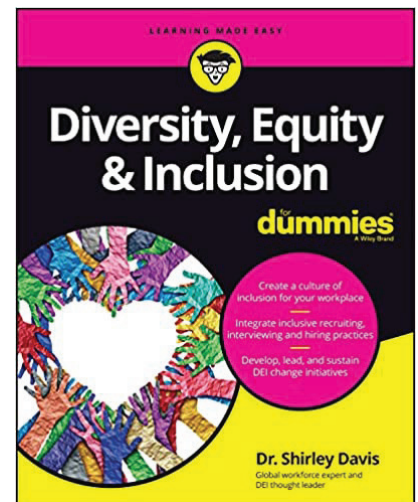
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*Introducing the first-ever  
DEI for Dummies book,  
written by Dr. Shirley Davis  
(published by John Wiley & Sons)*

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# Leslie Coleman

**Vice President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, Nutrien**

A mom, industry leader, and staunch football fan, Leslie Coleman, Nutrien's first ever vice president, equity, diversity, and inclusion, has been charged with creating the \$45 billion organization's ED&I Center of Excellence.

Leslie joined Nutrien in March 2021 with a mammoth charge of creating and leading world-class DEI strategies at the agriculture products company, which helps growers increase food production in a sustainable way.

She brings to Nutrien extensive experience in driving a diverse and inclusive workforce for global organizations in a variety of sectors. Most recently, Leslie was the global director of diversity and inclusion at International Paper in Memphis, Tennessee. Prior to joining IP, she served as the global HR leader at Cargill.

Leslie is a national board member for the National Black MBA Association and former president of the Memphis chapter. She is also a board member for the Memphis Orpheum, Stillman College, TAG, and YWCA, amongst other prestigious organizations.



She earned a bachelor's degree in human resources with a minor in psychology at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Leslie also graduated with honors from the University of Memphis, from which she earned a masters in psychology and research, publishing an article titled "Self Theories." She also holds executive certifications from both Harvard and Emory.

Leslie has two sons. Luke plays football for the US Naval Academy, and Lane resides with Leslie in Memphis, Tennessee. Her motto, "Forward to the possibilities," has served her well and continues to be the ground swell for her success.

**Inclusion:** Equity is now taking center stage, over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization like Nutrien best ensure equity?

**Leslie Coleman:** Equity is about ensuring people have what they need to be successful. We've spent a lot of time having conversations about how each person is unique and how we need to work together to be our best. The next logical step is identifying what each person needs to be their best and be on the same field as everyone else.

At Nutrien, we are working on understanding not only what different groups may need, but also understanding the environment they are in, as psychological safety is a number one priority. The needs of people in Fort Saskatchewan are going to be different than those in Trinidad, Australia, or even the US. We rely on our employee resource groups (ERGs) to communicate with us on what the unique needs are and help us deliver tools to those areas. We also encourage allies to be a part of the network to understand the concerns brought forward by the group. Together we can identify the barriers and work on a solution.

In addition to working with our ERGs, we have a number of ways that people can connect with us to provide input. From employee engagement surveys, to townhalls where people can ask anonymous questions, to an integrity hotline, employees are encouraged to let us know where we can improve. We take each suggestion seriously and work with leaders and HR to make the appropriate changes.

**IN:** What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for a corporate diversity and inclusion leader like yourself?



**LC:** Without question, every organization will have to adjust to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, as it has created a different environment across our personal and professional lives. There are also the societal concerns of 2020 that have created the need for a deeper emphasis and prioritization around equity, diversity, and inclusion. The good news is corporations made unprecedented commitments to this space which created opportunities for chief diversity officers and other diversity professionals, where people of color took prominent seating.

Other important topics to keep in mind are changing demographics. Are we reflective of our communities, our employee needs, our suppliers, and our customers? The shift to a focus on environment is driving a great deal of effort for organizations. As stakeholders continue to ask questions related to EDI, we must make the connection to ESG (environmental, social, and governance). The "S" in ESG examines how companies manage relationships with employees, suppliers, customers, and the communities where we operate. Here at Nutrien, we've created pillars around

social governance and will continue to measure our actions to ensure priority alignment within EDI.

**IN: What do you see as the challenges and opportunities posed by gen Z?**

**LC:** I love the perspective that gen Z brings to our workplace. They are no longer interested in working the kind of schedules their parents did—or are doing—to pay down a mortgage or maintain a certain lifestyle. What I hear from gen Z is that they watched their parents miss games, miss out on fun with friends, etcetera, and that is not something they are interested in pursuing. They want a job that fits into their lifestyle, not a life that fits around their job. I admire that. It allows them the flexibility to find a company that values work-life balance. In the long run that promotes stronger mental health for employees. The challenge is for businesses that rely on a strict in-office or at-a-site workforce to make changes. Organizations need to figure out what can be done remotely and allow employees the flexibility to work from wherever they need to. We also need to look at modifying the 5-day, 40-hour work week. Can we adapt to a work environment where we focus on the tasks and not on the hours spent doing the tasks?

Gen Z are digital natives. They have no idea of what the world was like without smartphones. If we want to keep up with, employ, and retain gen Z, we need to learn to be more digitally adept ourselves. Now is a time to ensure we are using multiple platforms to reach out and connect with members of this generation. Additionally, it is a great opportunity to upgrade the digital technology in our operations.

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

**LC:** Like others, we track gender across job categories such as senior management and board of directors. We also set targets in what we want to achieve by 2030. By tracking our progress, we are holding ourselves accountable and ensuring we are doing everything we can to remove barriers to access. We take it a

**The most difficult step in the journey has been to help people understand that equity is not about someone getting something better than them. It's about providing a different route.**

step further and publish this metric in our proxy documents. This allows shareholders and other stakeholders to see what we are doing and call us on it if we are not meeting our goals.

Internally we also measure data related to turnover and new hires. Are we finding higher turnover with one segment? If so, we can then also look at exit interview data, historical trends, and engagement survey results to find if there is a DEI-related trend we can address, or if there is something else we should be investigating.

**IN: Is Nutrien making a shift from a focus on diversity and inclusion, to diversity, equity, and inclusion? If so, how are you shifting thinking, resources, desired outcomes?**

**LC:** In fact, we are shifting the focus to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We have purposefully arranged the wording this way to ensure that everything we do starts with equity. It may seem like a small shift, but when you start the conversation with diversity, we focus on our differences. By starting the conversation with equity, we focus on what is needed to ensure everyone has the access they need to be successful.

The most difficult step in the journey has been to help people understand that equity is not about someone getting something better than them. It's about providing a different route. I often use the example of a ramp. You may be able to use the stairs, but access to the building is limited to only those who can use them. By building a ramp, you are now providing access to individuals who are unable to use the stairs. You can use the ramp now if you choose, or if at some point in the future you need it, it's there. It's not better or worse, just a different way to access the building with the same end goal of getting everyone inside.

I believe the shift to focus on equity also inspires a shift to focus on innovation and collaboration. We are no longer thinking about how I personally can get ahead, but on how we can all win as one. By thinking of equity now, it also supports our business in the future. We are ready to make changes and adapt, rather than being averse to change and rehearsing "this is how we've always done it." We are one Nutrien. We all win as one, Nutrien. **IN**





# Iesha Berry

**Chief Inclusion,  
Diversity, and  
Equity Officer, Slalom**

**A**rmmed with more than 20 years of global experience in DEI across various industries, Iesha Berry is the first chief inclusion, diversity, and equity officer (CIDEO) and a member of the firm's global People Leadership Team at Slalom, a business, technology, and strategy consulting firm.

An empathetic leader driven by a passion for advancing diversity and inclusion, Berry is charged with leading Slalom's DEI efforts as a business imperative and fostering a culture in which employees feel valued, safe, and successful. She provides oversight and thought leadership for company initiatives such as inclusion councils, local market ambassadors, inclusive recruitment, and employee resource groups. Berry is also responsible for stewarding the firm's environmental,

social impact, and sustainability efforts.

Prior to joining Slalom in late 2020, Berry was senior vice president of market and site HR at Bank of America and previously served as an HR executive and head of diversity and inclusion for the wealth management division there. She has also served in leadership roles at Microsoft, Prudential Financial, and Pfizer.

Berry received an MA in human resources and industrial relations from the University of Minnesota and a BA in psychology from Tougaloo College in Tougaloo, Mississippi. She serves on the board of the Racial Justice Institute.

**Inclusion:** Equity is now taking center stage over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization best ensure equity?

**Ilesha Berry:** As equity takes center stage in our professional discourse and the public eye, I like to remind myself that equity is not new to this field. For over 30 years, inclusion, diversity, and equity leaders have worked in enterprise organizations to pursue equity in our practices and our ways of working.

What's new and exciting is our ability as DEI leaders to have open and transformative conversations with equity at the center, and to be clear about where previous efforts have stopped short of achieving true equity. Slalom officially added equity to our Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (ID&E) mission and vision in 2021. We talk about our equity approach as a journey and acknowledge that, like all meaningful change, the journey is a marathon and not a sprint.

We're in a moment of widespread growth and maturity of DEI as a profession and a strategic business priority. Other leaders may see the renewed focus on equity and incorrectly assume that DEI practitioners have shifted the goal, but that's not true. Work that we've practiced for years to understand how all employees experience the workplace, to notice gaps and differences, to give every employee what they need to be successful—those are the foundations of an equity program.

If your organization wants to do the hard work of pursuing equity, remind yourself and the organizational leaders around you that equity is your North Star. Push yourself to go further, be more transparent, and ask yourself, "What does true equity look like? How do we cultivate and embed equity in every corner of our organization?" This is our purpose, and while we make steps toward progress, Slalom recognizes that the work of equity requires long-term, continuous commitment to action.

Success will look different for everyone. Slalom's equity priorities are focused in four key areas: education, impactful conversations, end-to-end employee experience, and partnerships. Each of these focus areas has unique actions that my team and I—our ID&E Center of Excellence—will drive forward as part of our three-year road

**"Do not be hardened by the tough conversations—just be more ready. For every conversation that feels risky and difficult, there is an equal opportunity for reward."**

map. For example, within our education focus, we have selected a vendor to create a racial equity learning for all levels of Slalom leadership and all team members.

**IN:** In the last year, with so much happening in the world and country that impacted all of us, how do you help your organization and team deal with the fatigue and the scope and speed of the work required to increase equity at Slalom?

**IB:** Know that there will be tough conversations. When I started in DEI over 20 years ago, I carried an idealistic sense that, surely, everyone would recognize the value that diversity and uniqueness bring to an organization, and we would all strive to create fairness and equity in our work. Well, I quickly realized that we don't all have the same paths and perspectives.

We must confront the systems and processes that hold us back from true equity. In the past, we have focused on representation, head count, and fostering inclusive environments. These are vital to achieving equity and cannot be overlooked. However, we must go further. We must look critically at the systems and processes of our organizations, understand where the gaps and risks are,

and take swift action to address those opportunities.

Do not be hardened by the tough conversations—just be more ready. For every conversation that feels risky and difficult, there is an equal opportunity for reward. And remember the African proverb that says, "When you pray, move your feet." Even if the steps you take are small, the best way to inspire a change is through action.

**IN:** Tell us about your role and mission as Slalom's first chief inclusion, diversity, and equity officer. Is your focus on Slalom—or its clients?

**IB:** I joined Slalom as its first chief inclusion, diversity, and equity officer in late 2020, in the middle of three global pandemics: health, economic, and racial injustice. Our vision is to create a thriving culture of inclusion, diversity, and equity that is reflected and experienced across all our local and global teams.

I see my primary client as Slalom—every person who gives talent, time, and passion to our organization. I wake up every morning thinking about the individual experience and what it means for Slalom to be an inclusive, diverse, and equitable organization. As a growing organization with over 10,000 employees and 40 markets across the globe, we need to ensure that we are walking the walk—not just talking the talk—in every part of our organization.

When you build DEI priorities, people rightly will ask, "What does this mean for me? How am I part of my organization's journey around DEI?"





Making DEI feel real and impactful for every Slalom team member remains top of my mind and close to my heart.

My team focuses on three areas as part our three-year DEI road map: act, accelerate, and agitate. Action starts within the walls of Slalom through initiatives like increasing representation at all leader levels, increasing diversity in our recruiting pipeline, and ensuring pay equity. To accelerate, we use our collective power and amplify impact, like establishing go-to-market offerings around DEI to bring to Slalom's clients and partners. Agitate reflects our commitment to challenge the social, economic, and educational systems that contribute to disparity.

As Slalom's CIDEO, my mission is to accelerate the progress that we've made on our DEI journey and to get where we're going, together.

**IN: What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders like yourself?**

**IB:** The most pressing challenge for today and in the years to come will be time, infusing our work with the right sense of urgency. We need to be driving measurable impact that enables

systemic and process changes in our core HR processes and recognizing the new ways of working that resulted from the pandemic. The time is now.

There is a hunger and a demand to see change, quickly. While I understand and share the same sense of urgency, I am committed to do the work, both short term and long term. It is deep and challenging work to create real change. It requires you to confront the systems and processes in place at your organization, challenge where there is disproportionate impact on some communities over others, and work swiftly to address those gaps.

As I shared, this is a journey—a marathon, not a sprint. Employees may not see and feel the impact of those changes as rapidly as they hope for. Part of our challenge as DEI leaders is to communicate with our clients—employees—and help them understand where we are focused and how we are working on their behalf. Ask yourself, “How can I

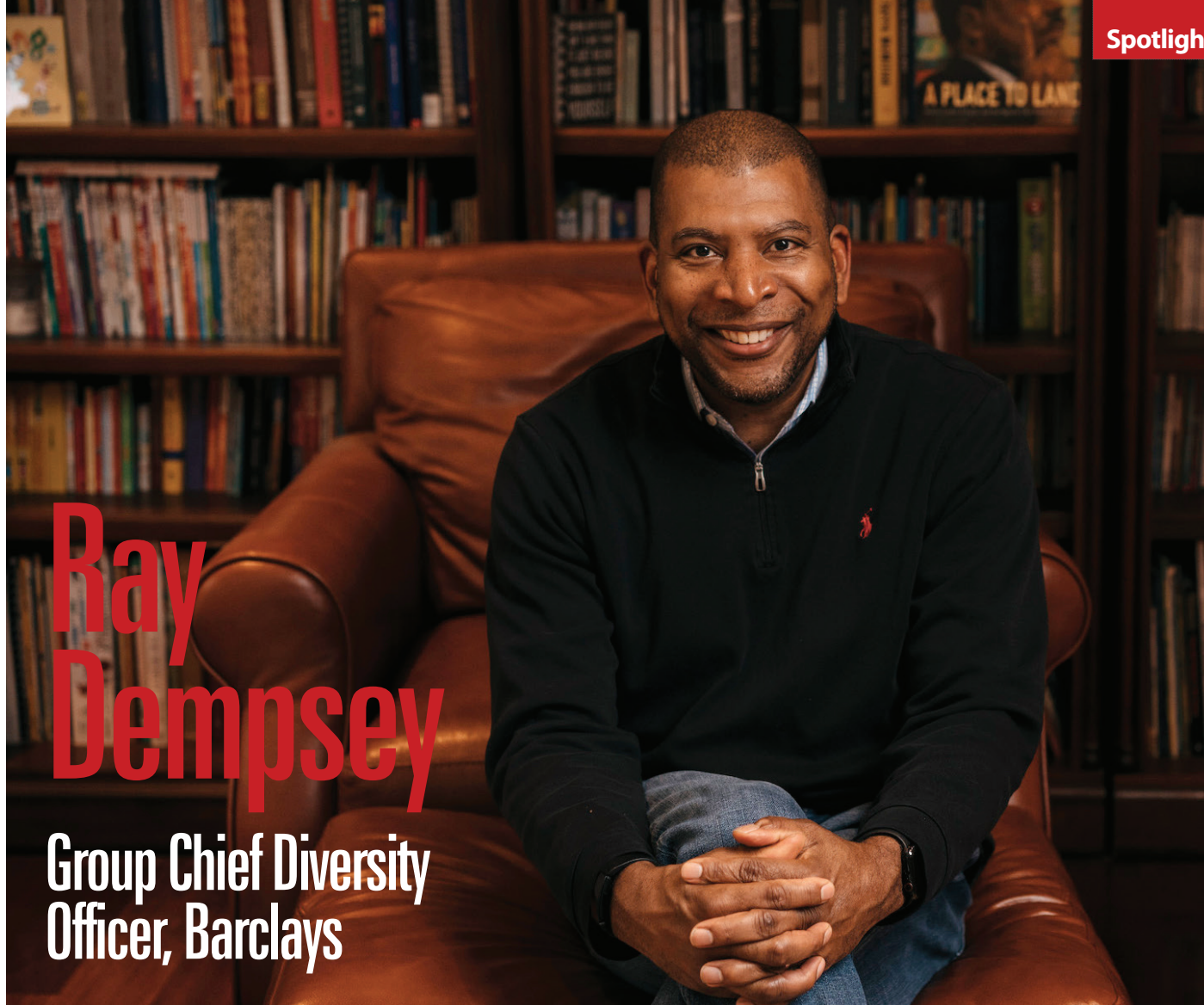
focus myself and my team to drive the most impact back to our organization? How do I work in a way that drives the most impact for every one of my clients?”

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

**IB:** I see a growing trend of connecting DEI with social impact and sustainability. We must think beyond the virtual borders of our organizations. Organizations are deeply embedded into the broader global community and, therefore, have a responsibility to be clear about what they stand for.

Slalom has been inspired by the vision of a world where people love their work and life. As a growing global organization, we have extended that vision of a world where people love their work and life beyond the employee experience and invested in our clients, our partners, and the world around us. That is why, recently, Slalom connected our ID&E Center of Excellence and our Sustainability & Impact team, with both teams now reporting to me. These teams play a critical role in how Slalom shows up with our employees, with our communities, and in our commitments to the environment.

Social impact has become a strategic business propriety, for its ability both to create change and to engage your employees. Employees sense that meaningful change can only happen if we invest in a more equitable future. Increasingly, employees expect their organization to serve the broader community, especially in locations where you operate and there exists unmet social, economic, health, and educational needs. I believe your social impact strategy must demonstrate what your organization stands for, speak to the heart of your mission or vision, and empower employees to give back. **IN**



**“Following the murder of George Floyd, many organizations implemented ‘listening sessions’ and conversations for people to learn from each other. These can be so much more powerful than a theoretical training program.”**

**I**n March 2021, Ray Dempsey Jr. became group chief diversity officer at Barclays, where he is charged with developing and implementing a strategic approach to driving real progress in diversity and inclusion globally. An engineer by training, he believes that rigorous data are essential to diversity and inclusion work.

Prior to joining the multinational bank, Dempsey was chief diversity officer for BP America and president of the BP Foundation, where he led a broad portfolio, including national strategic relationships and initiatives, supplier diversity, workforce diversity, and philanthropy. During his years at BP, Dempsey held various management and operational roles in engineering, strategy, finance, and external affairs, both in the United States and abroad.

Dempsey is chairman emeritus of the board of directors for the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering. He also sits on the board of the Kansas State University Foundation and is on the board of trustees for Ford’s Theatre in Washington, DC. He is a member of the Executive Leadership Council, the preeminent membership

organization for the development of global Black leaders. Dempsey was named by *Savoy* magazine as one of the Most Influential Black Executives in Corporate America in 2016, 2018, and 2020.

He holds a BS in industrial engineering from Kansas State University and an MBA from Northwestern University’s Kellogg Graduate School of Management in Evanston, Illinois. Dempsey and his wife, Alysia, have four daughters and they reside in Northern Virginia.

**Inclusion: Equity is now taking center stage over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization best ensure equity?**

**Ray Dempsey Jr.:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are inextricably linked. It is really tough, and perhaps even wrong, to prioritize one over the



other. As is often noted, diversity without inclusion is not sustainable. However, a commitment to inclusion that isn't underpinned by diversity will fail. The absence of different perspectives and experiences will inevitably reveal blind spots that can't be overcome by good intentions. Equity is increasingly being recognized as critical to making real progress, though it is often not a focus in company plans.

The essence of equity is recognizing that what everyone needs is not the same. Equality, while well intended, sometimes suggests that we should do exactly the same thing for everyone. Equity recognizes that you might have to do different things for different groups depending on their circumstances. Organizations must adopt new approaches to planning that fully embrace equity in order to make measurable progress.

**IN: What brought you to do this work?**

**RD:** I have always been an advocate for people, progress, and equity. With a background in engineering, I started my career in a field where women and minorities were underrepresented. I was exposed to the data and have become a practitioner for driving real progress—it has become my purpose and mission even 30 years into my career.

The connection point I seemed to overlook after many years doing DEI work involved my late mother. She was an equal employment opportunity officer for the state of Kansas for many years. At the time, I really didn't understand her role and the importance of driving this work as clearly as I do now. DEI has truly become a "family business," as my sister is also leading DEI efforts as an attorney at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas.

**IN: Tell us about your greatest success story at Barclays—and the greatest challenge you are currently facing.**

**RD:** When I arrived at Barclays, what I heard from colleagues across the bank is that we have really good intentions—particularly about our Race at Work Action Plan, which was launched in 2020 to improve opportunities for, and representation of, our Black colleagues, and reinforce our stance of zero tolerance on racism. This work led us to



the July 2021 launch of the Race at Work Ambitions, which include measurable goals across different levels of the firm. We are intentional about using the term ambitions, because there is no finite destination in sight. We are setting the direction of travel, and as we work to achieve these initial ambitions by the end of 2025, we will refresh and stretch them reflective of even more change in the demographics of the communities around us and in our own workforce. We will be intentional about holding business and function leaders across the bank accountable for driving progress against these ambitions.

The greatest challenge I am currently facing, which is not unique to Barclays, is engaging all 85,000 colleagues to fully embrace the holistic value proposition of our DEI efforts and act with the requisite urgency. I feel overwhelming support from leadership at the bank—there is no question that they understand the value and reasons why we need to make progress on our DEI efforts at rapid pace. Further down the organization, however, many colleagues may require deeper engagement in order to shift their baseline thinking and approach, and realize that they are empowered to redefine "business as usual" priorities, and that they are just as critical in making a difference. This was our biggest priority during the launch of our ambitions—to make sure colleagues at all levels of the organization understood and knew how to take action.

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

**RD:** The challenge we have in getting everyone engaged to drive progress is that too often they do not understand exactly where we are and where there are gaps. With that clarity, people are often then moved to action, and that is why transparency is so important in this work. For Barclays, transparency includes sharing data both internally and externally. We aim to engage our workforce, our stakeholders, and our customers in making progress. Our commitment to transparency will

also be evident in our annual diversity, equity, and inclusion report, which will highlight where we are within the organization across many dimensions of difference.

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

**RD:** For the last several years, there has been quite a focus on “unconscious bias” training across many organizations. However, research and literature suggest that such training is not always a solution, and some argue that unconscious bias training can make things worse.

Following the murder of George Floyd, many organizations implemented “listening sessions” and conversations for people to learn from each other. These can be so much more powerful than a theoretical training program. There is much work now aimed at creating intimate conversations where people can learn from lived experiences. We are doing this in Barclays with an ongoing series called Courageous Conversations.

Measuring progress in the realm of DEI has been a hotly debated topic for a long time, especially as it relates to measuring progress in defined, numerical terms. This can drive “checkbox behaviors” where people take actions to fulfill DEI goals even when they are not the best actions to support sustainable change. That said, I strongly believe that “what gets measured, gets done.” It is so important to establish thoughtful, meaningful metrics and to hold leaders accountable for driving progress.

**IN: Barclays is a global operation. How does one align DEI across the board with so many different cultural norms to take into account?**

**RD:** One of my earliest priorities upon arriving at Barclays was to ensure that we apply a regional lens to the way we drive this work. Just like the saying “think globally, act locally,” it matters that we are clear about the way we apply global priorities in a fit-for-purpose way through a regional lens. We rely on the guidance and input from our regional leaders to develop metrics and approaches to fit or add cultural context in places where we have a business presence.

**IN: Is your organization making a shift from a focus on diversity and inclusion to diversity, equity, and inclusion? If so, how do you shift thinking, resources, and desired outcomes?**

**RD:** We are being intentional about the theme of equity as central to our work. Attracting, developing, advancing, and retaining diverse talent across the bank are critical levers to measurable progress. Too often there are situations where others do not have access to the same opportunities for advancement to guide and influence their careers. Our commitment to equity means that we will aim to meet them where they are and provide the kind of support, development, and engagement that allows them to be their very best.

A great example of this in practice is our commitment to driving the representation of women at the most senior levels in the bank. To shift our thinking, we developed a talent program that met women with tailored opportunities based on their desired outcomes. First, we developed a deeper understanding of how they can be supported through conversations about challenges they faced in advancing their careers. We then increased access to programs, mentors, and sponsors, which allowed for in-depth exposure across the bank for them to apply their skills and experiences in a broader way to lead to greater opportunities for progression.

We will be taking a similar approach for underrepresented minorities alongside the launch of our Race at Work Ambitions.

**IN: In the last year, with so much happening in the world and country that impacted all of us, how do you help your organization and team deal with the fatigue and the scope and speed of the work required to increase equity at Barclays?**

**RD:** The events of 2020 have impacted us all, and they have been challenging, sobering, and at times agonizing. Terrible things are still happening in real time, and the silver lining is that people are paying attention to these issues in a different way. It does feel like we have reached an inflection point, and many of us are mobilized now to be catalysts in our communities for action and collaboration.

Barclays hosted its inaugural Inclusion Summit in June 2021 with more than 500 leaders. We addressed why this work matters and presented the business case and value proposition for driving progress. At the beginning of the summit, we conducted a survey and found that 57 percent of the leaders had not been deeply engaged in DEI work and considered themselves to be a “spectator” regarding this space. At the end of the summit, 99 percent said that they were very likely to act as a DEI leader within their business or function. That’s real progress.

Driving DEI is not an individual task, and the fatigue sets in when we feel like we are pushing this big, heavy rock up the hill all by ourselves. Our summit increased engagement and created ownership and accountability across the enterprise so we can all share the responsibility of moving forward together. It’s still a big, heavy rock, but the hill is not so steep and there are more people helping to push. We’re working every day to maintain that momentum. **IN**





# Latasha Gillespie

Executive Head of Global Diversity,  
Equity & Inclusion, Amazon Studios,  
Prime Video, and IMDB

**L**atasha Gillespie is helping to reshape an industry as she builds mechanisms to improve diverse representation of talent at Amazon Studios, both in front of and behind the camera. She is helping to dismantle longstanding barriers to success in the entertainment industry and tell stories that represent different communities around the world and are accessible and marketed to a globally diverse audience.

Prior to taking her current role, Gillespie led the Global Diversity and Inclusion Organization across Amazon Corporate, working with Jeff Bezos and the board of directors on Amazon's DEI strategies and progress.

Before joining Amazon, she spent 20 years living and working all over the world in finance and human resources positions with Caterpillar Inc. Gillespie was featured in *Forbes* in 2020; was named one of the 2019 Most Powerful Women in Corporate Diversity by *Black Enterprise* magazine; and was a 2018 *Ebony* magazine Power 100 honoree.

She regularly speaks before groups in the United States and around the world, such as Stanford University, the Hollywood Commission, the Recording Academy, the Television Academy, the NFL, and the American Black Film Festival.

**Inclusion:** Equity is now taking center stage over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization best ensure equity?

**Latasha Gillespie:** When we talk about diversity, we are primarily talking about numbers and representation, which is important.



(Left to right) Latasha Gillespie as *Ebony* magazine's Power 100 honoree, with Olympic gymnast Simone Biles, and at the Emmy Awards.

When companies and organizations go a step further and start to adopt the intentionality around equity, they are forced to change systems and structures in a way that acknowledges that unequal efforts are needed to get to intersectional representation. It is appropriate to match the size of the solution to the size of the opportunity. And not all opportunities require the same solution. Organizations should look thoughtfully at the needs and partner with the community before building what they think are equitable solutions.

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

**LG:** Some of the conversations I have been having with my team are around the inertia in really moving the needle around DEI and making measurable progress. When you think about Newton's law of motion—"an object in motion remains in motion, or an object at rest remains at rest unless acted upon by an unbalanced force"—a lot of historical and systemic inequitable structures will stay in motion unless we are thinking big enough to counterbalance them.

After the murder of George Floyd, we assessed the opportunity we had to drive systemic change. We knew that mentoring programs, charitable donations, and listening circles—while all necessary—were not going to be an unbalanced force to meet this moment. We needed to think bigger. I'm really proud of the Inclusion Policy and Playbook my team launched. It takes a holistic approach to the hiring, development, and production processes. It goes beyond good intentions; it declares what good progress looks like and provides resources to help teams get there.

**IN:** What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders like yourself?

**LG:** DEI as a function of HR is yesterday's thinking.

**"I do ... see challenges with us—those of older generations—if we don't listen to gen Z or are unwilling to modify our approach to meet their needs as customers and as colleagues. It's on us to adopt their healthy impatience and join gen Z in their big thinking."**

While it's important you've created an inclusive environment for a diverse workforce, situating DEI in HR is limiting and misrepresents its true impact. When organizations don't prioritize DEI as a core business function as they would finance HR or IT, they are missing an opportunity to have long-term customer impact.

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

**LG:** COVID-19 has left a lasting impact globally. Looking ahead, especially living through the pandemic, we will see a rise in people with disabilities in a way that might look different than it does today. Think about the long haulers, those who have lost their sense of smell and taste forever, and what challenges COVID-19 will continue to present in the workplace. We will need to think differently about workplace accommodations, safety protocols, and aesthetics that signal we see and support all of our employees.

**IN:** What do you see as the challenges and opportunities posed by gen Z?

**LG:** Actually, I only see opportunities with gen Z—I do not see the challenges. I am fortunate in that I get to work closely with a group of undergraduate and law school students from Howard University, and I am so exhilarated by them. They are brilliant, insight-

ful, limitless, and consistently insisting on the highest standards for themselves and others. I do, however, see challenges with us—those of older generations—if we don't listen to gen Z or are unwilling to modify our approach to meet their needs as customers and as colleagues. It's on us to adopt their healthy impatience and join gen Z in their big thinking. **IN**





# Dr. Andrea Hendricks

## Senior Executive Director—Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer, Cerner

**A**s senior executive director and chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer, Dr. Andrea Hendricks leads Cerner's global diversity and inclusion efforts in over 26 countries and the United States. In addition, she is a member of the company's human resources leadership team. Since 2018, Hendricks has been making an impact on Cerner's culture by driving strategy and engagement initiatives that foster organizational learning and an enhanced corporate diversity and inclusion vision for Cerner associates, leadership, and community collaborative partners.

Hendricks graduated from Kansas State University with a bachelor of science in human development psychology and mass communications and a master of science in student counseling psychology and personnel services. She earned a doctorate in

educational psychology and policy analysis from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Hendricks earned a certificate in diversity leadership from SHRM and Yale University.

She is a member of the National Women Business Collaborative, Greater Kansas City Executive Women's Leadership Council, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Black Achievers, and the Greater Kansas City (Missouri) Links Inc. Hendricks has received numerous noteworthy recognitions over the years. In 2021, she was recognized as one of the 10 Most Empowering Women in Business by *Insights* magazine, was inducted into Women Who Mean Business in Kansas City, and was included in the Top 50 National MultiCultural Leaders by Diversity Leadership Inc. She received the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce ACE Diversity Award in 2020, and received both the Black Health Care Equity Award and Black Achiever's Society Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019.

Hendricks was a recipient of the NAACP of Kansas City community leader award in 2013. In 2012, the Women's Foundation honored her for her commitment to women's issues, and in 2011 she received a Peak Performance award for her continued commitment to leadership excellence and stellar work in the area of corporate diversity and inclusion from the National Eagle Leadership Institute.

**Inclusion:** How has Cerner built and engaged its workforce around DEI initiatives?

**Andrea Hendricks:** Since late 2018, Cerner has focused its efforts on continuing to have meaningful

impact integrating and streamlining our diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy enterprise-wide. Cerner has made demonstrated progress in all areas connected to our four lenses: workforce, workplace, marketplace, and community. More broadly, we made a wide array of investments internally and externally to strengthen our inclusion and equity practices. The conversation to include fresh perspectives related to gender and racial equity was expanded, advanced, and broadened to include more programs, partnerships, and practices. The executive leadership team is dedicated and committed to inclusion and equity initiatives through expanding diversity development programs, increasing associate engagement efforts, leveraging effective internal and external communication, and partnering more strategically with communities of color. We passionately believe that inclusive and equitable cultures foster engaged and high-performing teams and produce innovative outcomes.

**IN: Much of the conversation around DEI in the workplace centers around CDOs and their work. But CHROs are just as important in building greater inclusion and equity into an organization. How do you collaborate with the CHRO division at Cerner to drive change?**

**AH:** The Cerner Human Resources strategy, under the leadership of Tracy Platt, CHRO, laid the foundation to design and deploy organizational, talent, and culture capabilities to attract, engage, and retain a global workforce. Our CHRO has the inroads, insights, and capabilities to enhance and advance all human capital investments. It is crucial that DEI efforts are strategically aligned with those investments for success. Our DEI strategy is seamlessly connected to our human resources' strategy to cultivate sustainable change. Cerner's human resources' vision is to create an associate experience that enables all to thrive and where DEI enhances overall engagement with internal and external groups and organizations. This is further highlighted through coordinated, strategic interaction and progress sharing to enable Cerner to achieve greater diversity, equity, and inclusion results. This embodies a proactive approach and strengthens the strategic alignment with our executive committee and human capital center of excellence to bring visibility to areas where there

**We aren't what we say; we are what we do. Diversity of thought breeds innovation and strong engagement with our diverse communities.**

are opportunities for growth as we support new investments and resources for our global workforce. In addition, the HR strategy is driving strategy and engagement initiatives that foster organizational learning for Cerner associates, leadership, and community collaborative partners.

**IN: Tell us about your greatest success story in partnering with Cerner's C-suite to impact change.**

**AH:** Since joining Cerner, there are several noteworthy stories to share related to Cerner's DEI journey. I could share my greatest success story since joining Cerner, which occurred in 2019, when Tracy Platt and I joined Cerner's executives in signing the CEO Action Pledge for Diversity and Inclusion, uniting leaders from various companies in a shared commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This action was to underscore Cerner's focus on creating a work environment where associates of all cultures, backgrounds, and viewpoints are able to bring their best selves to work and unleash their full potential. This was another formal commitment to our associates, clients, and key stakeholders that Cerner is prepared

to take action to cultivate an environment [in which] diverse experiences and perspectives are valued. Organizations have to take action. This was a great opportunity where Cerner led the way.

**IN: Equity is now taking center stage over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization best ensure equity?**

**AH:** Following the 2020 social and civil unrest in the United States, I have been consumed with a range of emotions. These events have sparked many of the demonstrations we're seeing across the globe and have brought the dynamics of racial inequality to the forefront of our attention. It's important for organizations to evaluate how they can be more equitable. At Cerner, we're considering what we can and should be doing to erase the systemic inequalities. These inequalities play out in both large and small ways in our daily lives, and they intersect in the areas of race, gender, sexual orientation, access to education and health care, and other socioeconomic factors.

Equity is a choice. Acknowledging institutional bias, condemning bigotry in all its forms, and voicing unequivocal support for all would be great starts. We must have deliberate action. After all, we aren't what we say; we are what we do. Diversity of thought breeds innovation and strong engagement with our diverse communities. No



organization is immune to the challenges connected to equity in the workplace. Organizations have to stay committed to making incremental changes toward progress. Cerner is advancing our equitable efforts in benefits and pay programs, talent pipeline programs, learning and development offerings, social determinants of health opportunities, and more.

**IN: What brought you to do this work? Is there a personal motivation, a story from your childhood or past that inspired you in this direction?**

**AH:** I attribute much of my inspiration to my mother, who was a civil rights and community leader, educator, and minister. She took us everywhere in the community. Matter of fact, I have over 25 pastors, ministers, and faith leaders in my family. They continuously instilled that it is important to always do the right thing, no matter what the circumstance. I remember during the summer months as a little girl in Texas, I loved to watch *Batman*. After each show, I would create a script for my siblings and neighborhood friends. I wanted to help eradicate injustice. We did not have all the fancy toys that children have today: we used whatever we could to have fun. Instead of scripting neighborhood playtime, I am now heading up teams and proactive efforts to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workplace has positive superpower effects and efforts. In addition, by living among different cultures and communities, I was inspired to lead in a way that focuses on finding common ground with each other rather than concentrating on the differences.

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

**AH:** Emerging trends include the importance of racial equity, religious diversity, expanding LGBTQIA in the workplace, new global diversity workforce, intersectionality, and innovation. Until recently, diversity and inclusion were thought to be US concepts. More companies and governments outside the US have named chief diversity officers and are focusing on D&I in very intentional and strategic ways. Rapid and massive demographic shifts are a reality across

the globe. The global workforce is becoming increasingly female, younger and older, and nonwhite. The increase of global, multicultural, and virtual teams is fueling strategies that foster inclusion, collaboration, and innovation. Technology is helping to build collaboration across genders, generations, and cultures like never before. The power of diversity can only be unleashed and its benefits reaped when we recognize each other's differences and learn to respect and value each individual irrelevant of their background.

**DW: Pay equity in particular has been very unbalanced. What is your organization doing to rectify this and what are some hopeful signs and trends you are seeing?**

**AH:** Organizations are embedding equity into their DEI strategy. Since George Floyd's death, organizations are taking notice of system-level policies and institutional dynamics. Promotion pipelines and compensation fairness remain opportunities for all organizations, now more than ever. For example, Black women are at a larger disadvantage—even those with master's degrees earn \$0.64 for every \$1 earned by their white male counterparts. In addition, a 2017 survey of HR, business, and IT leaders revealed their top priority for diversity and inclusion was to improve compensation equity and succession planning. Cerner will continue to systematically review culture and talent processes across the associate life cycle from recruitment to exit. This year, we will launch unconscious bias education for all associates, commit to furthering efforts in pay parity and benefits approaches, and continue to tie leader engagement to continued improvement on the inclusion index of our annual associate survey. In addition, we deployed a redesigned performance management process aligned to market practices with DEI insight.

**DW: Is Cerner making a shift from a focus on diversity and inclusion to diversity, equity, and inclusion?**

**AH:** Our organizational practices are centered around “one office, three practices”—a diversity practice, an inclusion practice, and an equity practice. This focus is facilitating a maturation of our human capital strategy to ensure a holistic approach, inclusive of our policies, rewards, culture, and development programs. Building diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in the organization leads to an uplifting atmosphere.

Inclusion involves actively engaging associates so that everyone's thoughts, perspectives, and concepts are considered and celebrated. For example, the conversation to include fresh perspectives related to health care, gender, and racial equity was expanded, advanced, and broadened to include more programs, partnerships, and practices, and we launched eight associate business resource groups. Cerner also has invested in new talent management tools and structures to increase attraction, recruitment, and retention efforts. In addition, we expanded self-identification campaign efforts for LGBTQ+ and persons with disabilities or military experience to advance workforce inclusion practices. We passionately believe that inclusive cultures foster engaged and high-performing teams that produce innovative outcomes and lead to a more equitable environment. **IN**



# McDonald's

## Skye Anderson

US Senior Vice President and West Zone President

**I**n 2018, McDonald's flipped its iconic Golden Arches upside down to honor the accomplishments of women everywhere. That gesture marked a renewed commitment to create a workplace environment in which women—including the three superstars highlighted here—can thrive and advance.

## Tiffanie Boyd

US Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer

Tiffanie Boyd joined McDonald's in January 2021 as US senior vice president and chief people officer. In this role, Tiffanie leads the People function for McDonald's US, overseeing business strategy; alignment; talent and performance management; leadership development; and diversity, equity, and

inclusion (DEI) practice. Prior to joining McDonald's, Tiffanie spent time at Hewitt Associates, Blue Cross Blue Shield, General Motors Acceptance, and, most recently, General Mills. Over a 20-year period at General Mills, she ascended from associate HR manager to vice president of human resources

## Myra Doria

US Senior Vice President and East Zone President

for North American retail, leading talent, culture, and employee engagement initiatives for 11,000 employees across GM's largest business segment.

Tiffanie earned her BBA and MBA from the Michigan Ross Business School and currently serves on the BBA Program Advisory Board. Her passion for service extends to



numerous board and consulting projects that she has managed in hopes of closing the achievement gap for children of color.

Since January 2020, Skye Anderson has served as the brand's west zone president for more than 5,700 restaurants across the western United States. She is also an executive sponsor of the Global Women's Leadership Network, a group that strives to serve as a catalyst for seating, supporting, and mentoring women in roles across all levels of McDonald's.

Skye's McDonald's journey began in her home of Australia, where, as a newly qualified chartered accountant, she began her successful 20-plus year career in finance, which led to her appointment as chief financial officer for McDonald's Australia in May 2014. Prior to joining McDonald's, Skye had stints at Greenwood Challoner and Deloitte Australia.

Skye's strong skills for strategy, driving business performance, and developing talent provided her the opportunity to join the McDonald's USA business in 2017 as general manager, and later as a field vice president leading the business across several states, including California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam.

Skye is passionate about supporting the advancement of women and developing emerging talent in the McDonald's system.

Myra Doria's rise from crew room to corporate boardroom—including the current east zone president role she's held since April 2021—is nothing short of impressive. Getting her start in a local restaurant in the Philippines in the 1980s, Myra has held positions at every level in McDonald's operations organization. In 2013, she became an officer and was named west division vice president and general manager for McOpCo, McDonald's company-owned restaurants. In 2016, Myra was chosen to be the vice president for McDonald's Indianapolis Region, and in that same year became field vice president for the Denver Field Office before moving across the country to lead the Atlanta Field Office in 2019.

A results-focused leader, Myra's collaboration with McDonald's employees and franchisees to boost sales and best serve customers has won her top corporate honors, including

the prestigious McDonald's Presidents' Award, the Pat Harris Diversity Award, and the Global Leadership Committed to Lead Award—all from this cum laude marketing and finance grad from the University of the Philippines.

### **Inclusion: How can an organization best ensure equity?**

**Tiffanie Boyd:** Equity is about delivering fair outcomes. It is not enough to simply have diverse presentation and inclusive practices. To reach equal outcomes, at times it takes various levels of support or resources to provide everyone with access to an opportunity to succeed. At McDonald's, it means deliberately removing barriers that may keep some groups or individuals from achieving individual, team, or organization goals. These barriers have the potential to exist in the form of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages. We hold ourselves accountable for making changes in these areas so that all individuals—regardless of circumstances—have access to an opportunity to succeed.

To ensure equity, it is important to first acknowledge that everyone comes to the workplace with some level of unconscious bias. Taking the organization on a journey that starts with acknowledging the reality of the current state, raising awareness of the desired end state, educating the organization on how to recognize and disrupt potential unconscious bias, and ensuring leadership accountability are key tenets to driving a more equitable culture.

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

**TB:** There is a shift in the focus of DEI. It started years ago with a focus on diversity, which was largely about representation and bringing together people who have different backgrounds. Then there was a shift to inclusion, which focused on ensuring that everyone felt welcome. Now, there is a focus on creating a true sense of belonging where everyone feels accepted for who they are. This is such a powerful way to think about our DEI efforts because it's very inclusive. When you create an opportunity for marginalized groups to have a sense of belonging, it elevates the acceptance of everyone for whatever unique qualities or experiences they bring to the organization.

I am also seeing a shift in leadership accountability for creating strong positive cultures. As a country, we learned a lot from the pandemic and the continued racial injustice highlighted by the murder of George Floyd. It caused businesses and organizations to commit to taking care of people in new ways. Leaders are now expected to create space for important social topics and play an active role in creating a culture where everyone feels valued. It is no longer acceptable to be silent on certain social issues. Leaders are expected to be advocates, not only in the workplace but in our society at large.

At McDonald's, we have tied our executive incentive compensation to progress against our DEI objectives. This includes progress in representation of underrepresented groups as well as advancements in our culture of belonging.



**IN: What brought you to do this work?**

**Skye Anderson:** I come from a family of strong-minded women, all of whom have been wonderful role models for me. They believed in me, but also expected a lot! My grandmother was a single parent raising her two children—my father and auntie—which at the time was very uncommon. My father saw firsthand as a child the struggle of his own mother through those years, and always instilled in me the importance of hard work and financial independence.

Over my career, I have too often been the “only woman” in the room. It was always disappointing to me that women were forced to choose between either a family or a career. I firmly believe that both should be accessible and achievable. We all need to create the environment for women to thrive and lead fulfilling lives, both personally and professionally.

**IN: What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders like yourself?**

**SA:** As an executive sponsor of our Global Women’s Leadership Network, I have seen firsthand the real and ongoing challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has created for women, particularly women of color. Partnering with McKinsey & Co to participate in “Women in the Workplace,” the largest comprehensive study of the state of women in Corporate America, is helping us learn and create meaningful recommendations and actions to address the challenges that women face.

There is a growing expectation of leaders to create a culture of inclusion and embrace differences in everything that we do, so that everyone feels welcome. This starts from how we assess and recruit talent, to how we provide pay and benefits, to genuine flexibility. Most importantly, women need mentors and sponsors at the most senior levels. I am proud of the mentoring circles we established here at McDonald’s, which comprise small groups of women sponsored by a senior woman executive. In these mentoring circles, we discuss topics such as career advancement, negotiations, women empowering women, mentorship, and building your brand. They have been successful and go a long way toward building an inclusive culture.

**IN: What is your greatest success story—and the greatest challenge you face?**

**Myra Doria:** My success story began in 1988 when I arrived in the US from my home in the Philippines. I came to follow a dream and further my career at McDonald’s. At the time, the path was an unpaved road without guarantees, but I had a vision for my life and was committed to

being successful under the Arches. For years, I focused tirelessly on enhancing my skills, working every position in the restaurant until I earned the opportunity to grow on the corporate side of the business. It was a welcome challenge, and with hard work and the support of mentors and sponsors, I rose through the operations ranks in

geographies across the US until I was appointed to officer and vice president in 2007. That was a humbling, incredible achievement, but I knew I had more to accomplish. I continued to seek out opportunities to lead different markets and diverse teams, and in March 2021, I became the first senior VP of Asian descent on the McDonald’s US business side, which is truly one of the greatest honors of my professional and personal life.

I hope my story serves as inspiration to all that no matter where you are from or where you start in the company, you must have persistence, set unbending goals for yourself, build a village of true supporters along the way, and never, ever give up. As leaders, we have to work like never before to dismantle legacy barriers, invest in meaningful ways to retain and advocate for our talent, and truly be the change we want to see in the corporate world.

**IN: McDonald’s is a global operation. How does one align DEI across the board with so many different cultural norms to take into account?**

**MD:** One of the fascinating appeals about DEI is that there are shared principles that transcend cultural norms. At McDonald’s, you can find those shared principles embedded in our five values of integrity, inclusion, serve, family, and community.

Our global DEI aspiration says that no matter where you are in the world, when you interact with McDonald’s, inclusivity and equity are as evident and familiar as the Arches. To bring this to life, we must always embrace our diversity, strive for equity in our representation, and ensure we maintain a spirit of inclusion that is visible to our employees, our franchisees, our suppliers, and our customers around the globe. As long as we lead with our values and maintain that our differences are our strength, our McFamily will be better together. **IN**





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# Dani Monroe

## Trusted Advisor, Innovator, and Strategist

**D**ani Monroe is one of the premier voices on diversity, equity, and inclusion to CEOs, chief diversity officers, and other senior executives. She has traveled the globe working toward justice and equity for all. Monroe began her career several decades ago and has held chief diversity officer roles and managed a successful global consulting business.

From 2016 to 2021, Monroe served as the inaugural senior vice president and chief diversity and inclusion officer for Mass General Brigham, Massachusetts's largest health-care organization and largest private employer with 82,000 employees. She led the organization through a systemwide approach with the goal of increasing diversity at all levels and fostering inclusion and engagement for all employees while implementing a United Against Racism strategic plan.

Mass General Brigham's CEO, Dr. Anne Klibanski, said that "perhaps Dani's most important and lasting contribution to Mass General Brigham is her central role in the development of our United Against Racism strategy—a strategy that sets our path forward in creating and maintaining an antiracist institution."

Prior to joining Mass General Brigham, Monroe was president and founder of Center Focus International Inc., one of the top global diversity practices in the United States, where she led C-suite executives of Fortune 100 companies in global diversity, inclusion, and organizational effectiveness, favorably impacting their bottom lines, reputations, and business potential.

Monroe also served as senior director of global diversity and inclusion at Pfizer. In this highly visible global role, she designed and facilitated strategies that integrated all components for diversity and inclusion—from metrics and accountability for senior leaders to leadership curriculum and inclusive work processes.

Her book, *Untapped Talent: Unleashing the Power of the Hidden Workforce* (Palgrave Macmillan, April 2013), has received glowing national and international reviews. Monroe is the recipient of numerous recognitions, including the prestigious Pinnacle Award from the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, the YWCA Academy of Women Achievers Award, and the *Boston Business Journal* Lifetime Achievement Award in diversity. In 2021, she was named one of the 50 Most Influential Black Women in Massachusetts. From 2012 through 2019, Governors Deval Patrick and Charlie Barker





appointed Monroe to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, and Massachusetts Economic Development Council.

She holds a master's degree in organizational development from Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Business and is a well-received speaker at key diversity conferences.

**Inclusion:** How do you recommend organizations implement equity measures?

**Dani Monroe:** To address equity, organizations must first acknowledge there are inequities in their system. This is quite different from equality, where you essentially treat everyone the same. Equity is an understanding that not everyone starts from the same point of advantage and that there are different circumstances for everyone. Therefore, different allocations, resources, opportunities, and processes are required to achieve an equal outcome.

A good way to begin is by conducting an audit of an organization's policies, procedures, and practices. In some systems, those steps would include examining equity in pay and benefits and establishing hiring practices that eliminate as much bias as possible. Or it could be creating talent management systems that identify all talent, with a focus on how diverse talent is progressing. Another method would be creating systems where all employees receive up-to-date information even if they don't use a computer as part of their jobs.

**IN:** What brought you to this work?

**DM:** I like to say DE&I work found me—I did not go looking for it. I grew up in a multicultural family and lived in a remarkably diverse community

**“Bringing one’s whole self to work has a different definition than two years ago. Employees demand that their personal lives and the social context in which they live be discussed and addressed at work.”**

on California's Monterey Peninsula. Not only did we go to schools that had Black, Mexican, Asian, Portuguese, and white students, but in a small town, you knew everyone. I was immersed in a diverse society before I even understood the power of diversity. This is not to say we did not have challenges across ethnic lines: we socialized in and out of school, but boundaries were created around dating. Our rules of engagement included an unspoken understanding that race and family membership defined your tribe.

It was not until completing graduate school that I began to consciously understand race and its implication for my success and that of other people of color. With a master's in organization development, I dreamed of leading large system changes: reorganizations, plant turnarounds, performance efficiency improvement projects. However, every place where I applied turned me down. I even had a mentor, Bob Tanenbaum, PhD, a founder

of organization development, intervene on my behalf at a tech company. The feedback was that I “didn't have the right communication skills.”

Rejected but not discouraged, I hung out my private practice shingle in the middle of a recession. That was true optimism on my part. It was slow going until one day when I read a *Black Enterprise* article on how some corporations were developing Black and Latino leaders. Dr. Price Cobbs, a psychiatrist in San Francisco and author of the best-seller *Black Rage*, was leading cross-race work in corporations, designing processes and practices for Black and Brown employees and their managers.

Excited, I called Price, because you could make a cold call in those days. We explored the intersection of organization development and the professional development of Black and Brown people. Three months later, I was working for him. As I traveled across the US—working for Digital Equipment, 7-Eleven, AT&T, and others—I began to witness the phenomenon I wrote about 30 years later in *Untapped Talent: Unleashing the Power of the Hidden Workforce*.

The brilliant Black and Brown leaders I was working with in five-day leadership trainings could not get promoted. They were settling for lesser assignments and being invisible to their white manager. My mind or spirit could not let go of the injustice I was observing and the frustration I felt for these supremely talented individuals who lingered in the lower to middle levels of corporations because their talents weren't packaged like “white America.” While we have made significant progress, this pattern still exists today.

Over my 40 years in DE&I, I have never wavered in my focus of promoting Black and Brown people to success. Even when it wasn't popular, it has been my passion and the guiding beacon of my career.



Inaugural chief diversity and inclusion officers across Mass General Brigham.

Left to right: Tim Ewing, PhD, Brigham and Women's Hospital; Erin Miller, MS, Newton Wellesley Hospital; Dani Monroe, MSOD; Nawal Nour, MD, Brigham Women's Physician; Joe Betancourt, MD, Mass General Hospital; Kimberly Troung, PhD, MGH Institute of Health Professionals.

**IN: Tell us about your greatest success story.**

**DM:** My last assignment is the crown jewel of my body of work. In 2014 I was invited to consult to the largest private employer in Massachusetts, Mass General Brigham.

Charged with moving the corporate office's work forward, we created a strategic plan and vision, and launched the first diversity council and educated the top 175 leaders at the corporate level. Embedded as a must in the DE&I strategic plan was hiring a chief diversity officer. To my surprise, I was offered the role. I began by leading 4,700 corporate employees before expanding the work throughout the 82,000-employee system.

Mass General Brigham has evolved from an organization that had a difficult time incorporating the word *diversity* into its lexicon to now talking about racism and antiracism. This seven-year journey started with a couple of dozen employees attending events organized by the office of DE&I. Today, thousands of employees support and regularly attend DE&I-related events throughout the year.

One in particular, the Annual Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summit, is now a revered event going on its fifth year. The summit brings together a diverse array of employees from across the system for open and honest learning experiences. In May, we had an all-star cast of speakers sharing their views on "Understanding and Dismantling Systemic Racism: A Path Forward." Over 4,200 people attended.

Last year, Mass General Brigham developed its United Against Racism strategy, which included hiring goals for the first time in company history; education for all 82,000 employees; an incident-reporting platform where anyone can report mistreatment of any kind; and increased diversity on 26 boards across 16 institutions. United Against Racism is becoming embedded in all that MGB does, from clinical practices to community health efforts.

**IN: What is your definition of the role of chief diversity officer?**

**DM:** A chief diversity officer's role today is complex and multidimensional, requiring various skills. It is more expansive than diverse hiring. For example,

at Mass General Brigham, I helped design inclusive primary care facilities around the state, focusing on issues from gender-neutral bathrooms and access for people with disabilities to finding the most welcoming color palettes for often-anxious MGB patients.

Here is another example: One of the first gender identity-gender expression policies in Massachusetts came about because an employee who transitioned in her personal life walked into my office and said she still felt challenged with being her "real self" at work. Together, we found a path forward for her and distinguished Mass General Brigham as a leader in the LGBTQ community in Boston.

**IN: What are some thought leader trends in DEI?**

**DM:** We live in a complex world in which our personal and work lives are fully integrated and impact each other. Bringing our whole selves to work means seeing every person for all each represents, not just a worker performing a role. Social justice issues, including Black Lives Matter, immigration, health disparities illuminated by COVID, and remote working, are some of the trends surfacing in the DE&I world. Bringing one's whole self to work has a different definition than it did two years ago. Employees demand that their personal lives and the social context in which they live be discussed and addressed at work. No longer can employers say work and personal lives are separate. We live in a world where 24/7 news and social media require 24/7 corporate responsibility. We cannot ignore the events of the day and act like they don't impact our employees.

There is no playbook for a CDO on how to navigate these new waters. We must define appropriate action, words, and climate during times of crisis. When George Floyd was murdered, we snapped into a rapid-response mode, creating town halls to help navigate unprecedented times. We designed tool kits on how to have effective cross-race communications while conducting moments of silence at all 16 institutions to honor the time. Today's challenges focus on discussing where we go from here. How do we seize the momentum? And how do we identify and prepare for the challenge that has yet to emerge? **IN**





# 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

**"In 2018, we saw that Black and Latinx Googlers were leaving at faster rates than average, so we took a number of actions. ... Since then, we've seen some of the largest year-over-year improvements in attrition."**

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

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.

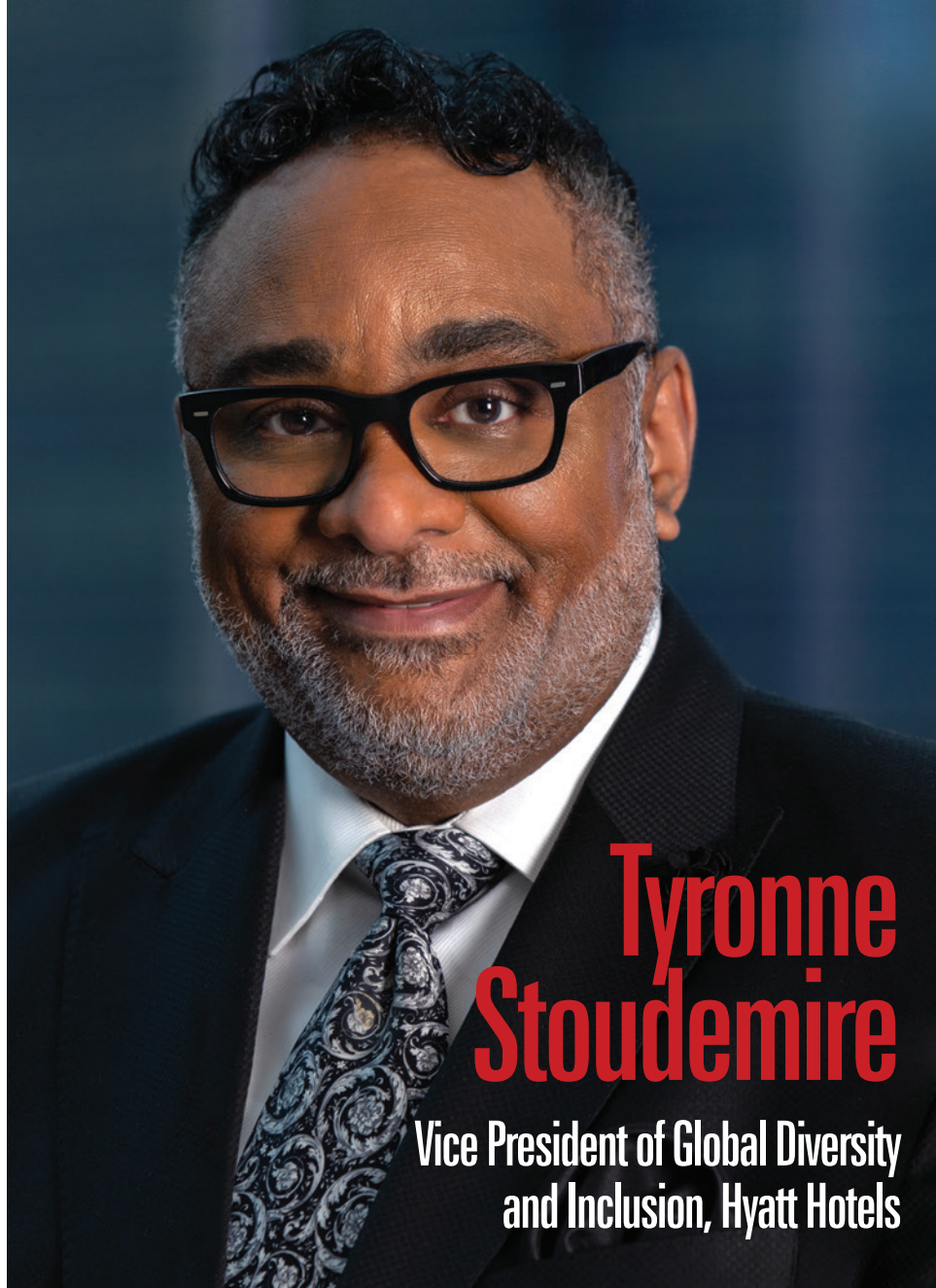
The things we do now are planting the seeds for a better company and world tomorrow.

**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.

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**

**"We're 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."**



# Tyronne Stoudemire

Vice President of Global Diversity and Inclusion, Hyatt Hotels

**“The practice of empathy is critically important as colleagues learn about others’ experiences. While these dialogues may be challenging, we must push ourselves out of our comfort zones for real change to happen.”**

**A** visionary leader and savvy strategist, Tyronne Stoudemire brings deep knowledge and more than two decades of professional experience to his position as vice president of global diversity and inclusion for Hyatt Hotels Corporation.

Collaborating with the senior leadership team, Stoudemire brings to life culture, talent, and marketplace strategies at the company. Joining forces with the senior leadership team, he leads diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies globally across the hospitality company’s wide brand portfolio. His team implements various initiatives, including resource groups, mentoring programs for high-potential women of color, and an enhanced brand marketing effort to further focus on multicultural and LGBTQ audiences.

Stoudemire previously served as a principal in Mercer’s diversity and inclusion practice, where he consulted with clients on diversity strategy and served as an advisor to the firm’s diversity council. Prior to joining Mercer, he served as global head of diversity at Aon Hewitt, partnering with the CEO and vice president of human resources to advance the firm’s diversity strategy in 90 countries.

A thought leader in the diversity and inclusion space, Stoudemire has an underlying goal: to enable a transformational mind-set. He is a sought-after speaker and routinely consults with Fortune 100 clients, helping them to understand and leverage the opportunities presented by the expanding multicultural mosaic of worldviews within today’s workforce. He has had significant success advancing corporate social responsibility initiatives by fostering strategic relationships to catalyze international grassroots movements. Stoudemire is a certified administrator for the Intercultural Development Inventory and a certified facilitator in Cultural Transformation Tools.

**Inclusion: Equity is now taking center stage over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization best ensure equity?**

**Tyronne Stoudemire:** As a global company that welcomes colleagues and guests from all over the world, we must be deeply involved in actions that contribute to a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable society. At Hyatt, we see this as a ripple effect—colleagues must be able to bring their true and authentic selves to work each day so they can care for our guests and provide welcoming environments.

It’s crucial to first build a diverse and inclusive environment where unique viewpoints are not only





Andaz London Liverpool Street

brought in, but celebrated, and individuals feel comfortable speaking up and sharing their thoughts. The practice of empathy is also critically important as colleagues learn about others' experiences. While these dialogues may be challenging, we must push ourselves out of our comfort zones for real change to happen. It is with open dialogue that we can understand, empathize, and lead with inclusivity. We all have a responsibility to be agents of change in order to increase equity.

At a higher level, it's critical for companies to not only make DEI part of their business strategy but also focus efforts on areas where they can truly make a difference. In June 2020, Hyatt introduced its Change Starts Here commitments to accelerate DEI efforts throughout the organization—focused on who the company employs, supports, buys from, and works with. While these are not new areas of focus for Hyatt, we are prioritizing these areas to drive meaningful change for our workforce, industry, and communities, and further support our vision for a world of understanding and care.

While making commitments is an important step, it's just the beginning of a larger journey that must include concrete goals and ongoing action and communication. For example, as part of Change Starts Here, we've committed to hiring, promoting, and retaining diverse talent. As part of this commitment, we've set goals to double representation globally for women and for people of color at the VP-plus level within the US by 2025, which includes doubling the representation of Black leaders. We also have set the goal to double representation globally of women and for people of color at the general manager level in the US by 2025.

**IN: In the last year, with so much happening in the world and country that impacted all of us, how do you help your organization and team deal with the fatigue and the scope and speed of the work required to increase equity at Hyatt?**

**TS:** Each Change Starts Here commitment—who we employ, develop, and advance; who we support; and who we buy from and work with—includes actionable 2025 goals that are designed to accelerate our DEI efforts. These priority areas help our team to focus their efforts on areas where we can have the most impact.

Alongside specific DEI initiatives, well-being is a significant area of focus for Hyatt across the board—especially given COVID-19 and the social in-

justices that impact all traditionally marginalized communities. When our colleagues are well and feeling their best, they can better care for each other and for our guests and customers. This is accomplished through several well-being initiatives, including a partnership with Headspace, a dedicated Global Week of Well-being, and Hyatt Well-Check tool designed by Weill Cornell Department of Medicine, which helps colleagues measure their well-being and provides individualized results and recommendations.

Additionally, Hyatt has a Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council, led by our CEO, to shape and drive our diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. We also sponsor seven colleague-led Diversity Business Resource Groups, with chapters around the globe, to support workforce diversity and foster inclusive environments. Through these resource groups, we're creating a space for colleagues to share their feelings and be vulnerable, enabling them to further care for their mental well-being.

**IN: Has Hyatt renewed its commitment to sharing DEI data and what has been the impact of that?**

**TS:** Since first opening our doors more than 60 years ago, we have worked to foster environments where all individuals feel welcome in our hotels and that they belong. DEI is embedded in all that we do every day. At the core of our purpose—to care for people so they can be their best—is a fundamental promise to care for all.

Still, we know there is more to be done. As a company that stands with all people who suffer from discrimination and prejudice, we continue to uphold our vision of a world of understanding

and care through our words and actions—but even more importantly, we call upon ourselves to do better and be better.

To do this, we knew we had to make a change. While we have internally tracked our DEI journey and data for some time, we know the importance of communication and accountability in driving this change. Because of this, Hyatt recently shared for the first time its detailed workforce diversity data with a commitment to do so annually moving forward. This data was released alongside the launch of Hyatt's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) platform World of Care.

We believe that the only way we can effect change is by acknowledging these numbers publicly. We cannot fix what we are unwilling to face. It is critical that we all accept and address the current state we are in so that we can all work together to bring about change of real significance.

Sharing our DEI Report and workforce data is an important step in our long history of DEI—but it is just one step, and we know there is more work to be done. This report and our commitment to share this data annually will serve as an important benchmark as we continue to advance progress.

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

**TS:** At Hyatt, we know the importance of communication and accountability in driving change, specifically as related to DEI, thereby making increased communication and accountability all the more important. This is a trend we're seeing in the hospitality industry and beyond.

In addition to sharing our workforce data, goals, and progress to date this year, we have recently built on our existing practice of tying annual incentives to DEI progress and announced in 2020 that we are linking executive stock compensation via our Performance Share Unit (PSU) Plan to achievement of our goals. Hyatt's PSU Plan is a key component of the executive team and group president's compensation. Additionally, all incentive-eligible colleagues have been asked to develop measurable individual goals focused on DEI.

These approaches ensure that DEI is prioritized across all levels of the organization and under-

**“Colleagues must be able to bring their true and authentic selves to work each day so they can care for our guests and provide welcoming environments.”**

scores that each individual has an important role to play. They also reinforce that these are not just short-term goals, but goals that will extend to the longer term as well.

Additionally, we know that our actions can cause a ripple effect—colleagues must be able to bring their true and authentic selves to work each day so they can care for our guests and provide welcoming environments. If we apply this concept of a ripple effect, we can drive widespread change together.

While DEI is a business imperative to Hyatt, it is also something that should extend beyond an organization's four walls and encourage us to collaborate—another trend we're seeing as organizations band together to effect change. Beyond tying compensation and goals to DEI progress, we've found great success in connecting with other organizations to share our initiatives and discuss best practices. This will-

ingness to be open and honest in our learnings makes our DEI program stronger, and we hope other organizations feel inspired to do the same so we can collectively make progress.

**IN: What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for a corporate diversity and inclusion leader like yourself?**

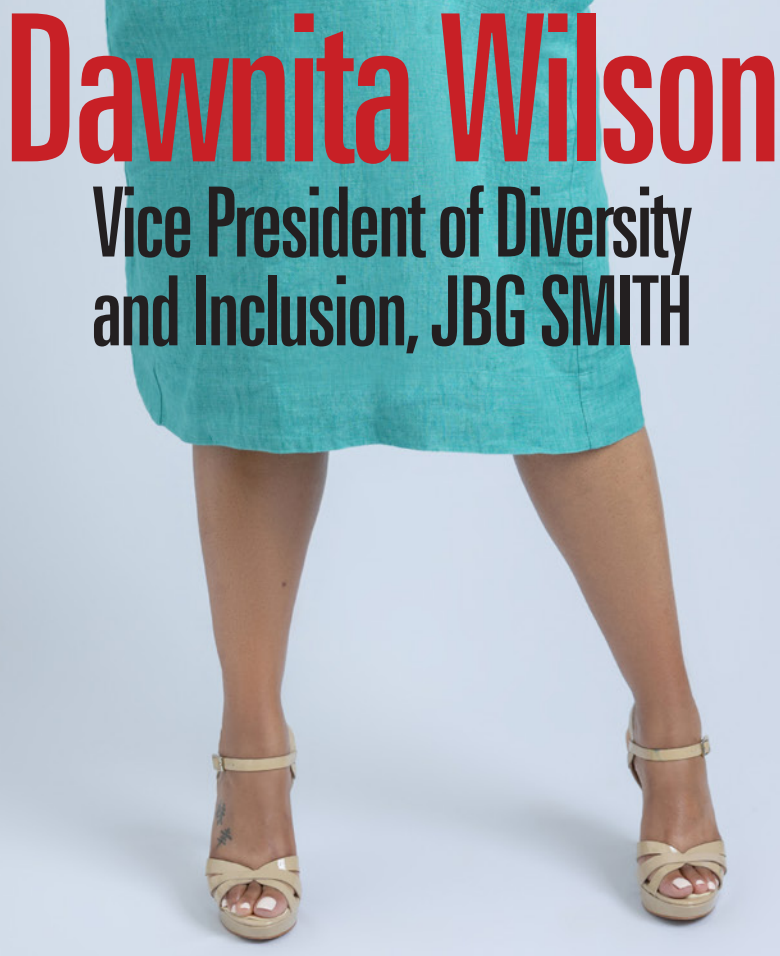
**TS:** The lack of representation of Black leaders in the hospitality industry and, more specifically, the fact that Black individuals suffer some of the highest rates of unemployment are just two of the many reasons why we must be very intentional in supporting Black people and people of color and actively involved in creating widespread change across our workforce, industry, and communities.

In many industries, including hospitality, it can be challenging for people of color to envision a career path if they are not exposed to examples of diverse representation, which may prevent them from exploring these industries. That's among the reasons why it's important to not only ensure people of color see diversity among leaders in hospitality and beyond, but also that they are given these opportunities themselves.

Diverse experiences and perspectives make organizations stronger, underscoring the importance of actively seeking out opportunities to introduce Black people to industries like hospitality. One way that Hyatt is ensuring we do this is through our RiseHY program, which provides career pathways for Opportunity Youth. As part of our Change Starts Here commitments, we're also committing to achieving 45 percent Black RiseHY hires by 2025 in the US.

We will also continue to work with many community-based organizations that help us to demonstrate what the hospitality industry has to offer and to work to deepen our engagement with organizations like She Has a Deal and the National Association of Black Hotel Owners, Operators & Developers to collaborate on key initiatives. **IN**





# Dawnita Wilson

## Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion, JBG SMITH

**D**awnita Wilson is the vice president of diversity and inclusion for JBG SMITH, an S&P 400 company that owns, operates, invests in, and develops a dynamic portfolio of quality mixed-use properties in and around the Washington, DC, metro area.

Wilson joined JBG SMITH in late 2019, bringing 15 years of strategic diversity and inclusion experience. She previously led diversity and inclusion efforts at Sodexo, Highmark, and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

Since joining JBG SMITH, Wilson has successfully developed and executed a comprehensive, multiyear diversity and inclusion strategy focused on sustainable cultural and behavioral change. In just one year under her leadership, diversity and inclusion became one of the top five drivers of overall employee engagement at JBG SMITH, increasing favorable employee perceptions by 18 percent. In less than 18 months, she developed and executed a formal employee mentorship program called the Lion's Guild, formed the JBG SMITH Inclusion Community, and launched a monthly D&I newsletter, the JBG SMITH "Community Connection," to name just a few accomplishments.

She holds a master's degree in human resources management from La Roche University and a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from the University of Pittsburgh. She has maintained her Professional in Human Resources Certification since June of 2006.

Wilson was the individual recipient of the National Association of Real Estate Investment

Trusts (NAREIT) 2020 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Recognition Award, was recently recognized as one of the 2021 Top 100 Diversity Officers by the National Diversity Council, and was featured as one of the 10 Most Influential Black Women in Business to Follow in 2021 by *CIO Views* magazine. She is also a 2021 Washington Business Journal Diversity in Business Award honoree.

**Inclusion:** Equity is now taking center stage over diversity and even inclusion. How can an organization best ensure equity?

**Dawnita Wilson:** Achieving equity requires organizations to prioritize and, in many cases, scrutinize their internal systems and structures. Equity is about fairness and equal access—both of which require intentionality. For organizations to ensure equity, they must be willing to challenge the status quo, advance legitimate change, and drive accountability.

I see equity as an outcome of the work that is required to achieve real, systemic impact. That said, I don't think it's "taking center stage" as much as I think it's becoming something that companies feel the need to explicitly state. I'm also not convinced the addition of or focus on the word *equity* has necessarily changed the way work is being done, just as putting the word *inclusion* in front of diversity doesn't automatically change how people experience organizations. I believe equity is the result of changed behaviors, practices, and thought patterns—all of which require not only intentionality but commitment and consistency.

**IN:** What brought you to do this work? Is there a personal motivation or a story from your childhood or past that inspired you in this direction?

**DW:** As a young Black girl growing up in a predominantly white community, I learned early about the impact and importance of diversity and inclusion and, even more so, belonging. From always being the "only one" to turning a blind eye to what I now know was overt prejudice and racism, I spent a lot of my developmental years focusing on the best way to fit in and conform, an experience that I believe unintentionally led me to the very work that I do today.

I remember one summer night running around my neighborhood with a group of kids, of which I

**"I often reflect on my journey ... and while not carefree or perfectly planned, somehow, I'm exactly where I am supposed to be—leading the passion and purpose-driven work that my very own experiences have inspired me to lead."**

was the only Black person. One of the kids walked over someone's car and a neighbor saw him. About 15 minutes later, the cops showed up at my house questioning my mother about the incident and letting her know I was spotted among the group of teens who were seen that night—not because I was the one who walked over the car, but because I was the only one they "recognized." I remember my mother calling me at my friends' house, telling me not to come home right away until things were sorted out—more than likely because she assumed that I would be blamed. That was one of my many moments of clarity, realizing that how I experienced the world would be far different from that of my neighborhood peers. It also taught me that no matter how much I wanted to fit in, the color of my skin would always make me stand out.

Luckily, I had a built-in best friend in my sister, and together, we eventually found people and places where we felt a stronger sense of belonging and connection. And as time passed, I realized just how important that was.

I often reflect on my journey and what led me here. And while not carefree or perfectly planned, somehow, I'm exactly where I am supposed to be—leading the passion and purpose-driven work that my very own experiences have inspired me to lead. It's something I no longer consider a job, but a responsibility.

**IN:** Tell us about your greatest success story—and the greatest challenge you are currently facing.

**DW:** I feel I've defined success differently at different phases in my life and career. I also believe success means different things to different people.

I started with JBG SMITH in late 2019, and in just one year, diversity and inclusion became one of the top five drivers of overall employee engagement, increasing favorable employee perceptions by 18 percent. This was a reflection of the impact the



work had on our employees in a relatively short period of time and during a pandemic when many of us were working remotely. So, from a career perspective, that's something I would consider a success. However, from a personal perspective, I feel success is more about being content and confident in who you are, what you do, and how you show up in the world. We're all inspired and motivated by different things. For some people, success is simply about surviving, and for others it's about thriving, and everything in between. For me, success is being able to do work that I love and live the life I want to live, while ultimately being healthy and happy doing it.

As for the greatest challenge I'm currently facing, I'd say it's continuing to keep people engaged and committed to changing the status quo. As diversity and inclusion leaders, we often spend less time doing the work and more time convincing people that the work needs to be done. While it's an essential part of the job, it can be taxing, especially as external influences continue to impact our internal workplaces. I feel like the more negative events take place in the world, the harder the work becomes. And the challenge is in the constant desire for people to just do better and be better.

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

**DW:** Two things come to mind when I think about DEI thought leader topics and trends.

One is around mental health and wellness. I think the COVID-19 pandemic and the George Floyd tragedy greatly influenced how companies are thinking about this. The effects of racism, along with the emotional and personal impact that it has on people, is very real. Providing employees with resources and coping mechanisms to support their mental well-being is something I think progressive organizations will need to prioritize.

The second is around gender identity and expression in the workplace. To truly foster an inclusive culture and environment, companies will need to be more intentional in how they support gender differences. Considerations like

**"I feel like the more negative events take place in the world, the harder the work becomes. And the challenge is the constant desire for people to just do better and be better."**

gender-neutral versus gender-specific restrooms, health-care benefits for those who are transitioning, and education around language and pronoun use are just some of the things companies should be learning about and implementing.

**IN: What will be some of the most pressing issues and challenges in the coming years for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders like yourself?**

**DW:** On the heels of the George Floyd tragedy, we saw companies large and small hire diversity and inclusion leaders, in many cases for the first time ever. We also saw a lot of these same companies leveraging the racial justice movement as an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to diversity and inclusion—through either financial contributions or corporate statements. Many fell flat in the months that followed.

That said, I think the most pressing issue and challenge for diversity and inclusion leaders will be driving accountability and influencing real, systemic change. Too often we end up in situations where the intent doesn't match the impact. It's up to us, as leaders, to change that.

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

**DW:** The pandemic forced many of us to reimagine how and where work can get done. It created a situation where we had to pivot and come up with creative ways to collaborate and engage with one another, while also allowing us to realize that productivity doesn't have to diminish just because we're not in a traditional office space. The number of organizations that have transitioned to hybrid or other flexible work models is a clear indication that they are recognizing the importance of creating cultures that work for everyone, which is another element of inclusion.

Personally, I think COVID-19 changed how I think about diversity and inclusion. It required me to think more critically about things that I might not have considered previously—such as pandemic anxiety, access to productive spaces, Zoom fatigue, home schooling, living conditions, technology gaps, etcetera—all of which can greatly impact our mental health and well-being. And all of which are diversity and inclusion implications of the pandemic. **IN**



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# DIVERSITY WOMAN MEDIA'S 2021 GAME CHANGERS IN TECH



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**T**he annual Diversity Woman Game Changer Award honors those who have made a significant impact on advancing and supporting women in technology. This year we honor Dr. Cynthia Overton, Rami Elghandour, and Genentech. These award winners have altered the perception of women in the technology sector by leveraging their talents and platforms to drive greater equity for women in this traditionally male-dominated field.

Rami Elghandour has been a change agent by modeling and leading with allyship throughout his career, and empowering others to support women. Firsthand, he has built companies with a focus on diversity, which has powered their culture and success. Rami's TEDx talk, "Why Bias, Not Behavior or Ability, is Holding Women Back," shows how his research, based on personal findings, has allowed him to focus on education and advocacy as ways to close the gender gap and advance women into positions of leadership.

Cynthia Overton, PhD, creates space for all women to succeed in the workplace and society. Over the course of her career, Cynthia has focused on the intersectional work of creating diverse and inclusive workforces in the tech industry, as well as advancing women from all backgrounds, races, and ethnicities. Her activism on behalf of women identifies gaps and inequities in the technology sector and solutions for achieving parity.

Genentech is changing the game for women in tech by intentionally embracing diversity as a core business strategy. With a data-driven approach to uncover insights and ensure representation, the biotech company has increased representation to 54.5 percent women overall and 43 percent at the leadership level. Genentech also ensures that there is no effective difference in pay between genders through its equitable pay practices.

## WOMAN SUPPORTING WOMEN AWARD

### Cynthia Overton, PhD

Director of Tech Workplaces Initiatives, Kapor Center



*"It's unconscionable that so many tech leaders allow disparities to persist. From pay, to performance reviews, to promotions, women are consistently overlooked and undervalued. Many women of color also face racism, which makes the workplace even more difficult to navigate. This is an uncomfortable reality to face, but ignoring it doesn't make it go away. Through my work at the Kapor Center, I collaborate with members*

*of the Diversity Advocates community to help change systems that unfairly advantage some and disadvantage others. I'm most passionate about amplifying the experiences of women of color in the workplace."*

— Dr. Cynthia Overton

Dr. Overton is senior director of tech workplace initiatives at the Kapor Center, a racial justice organization dedicated to leveling the playing field in tech. In this role, she leads Diversity Advocates, a professional learning community dedicated to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce throughout tech, and Our Collective, a group of tech professionals working to advance inclusion for Black and Latinx talent through employee resource groups. Cynthia is working with colleagues and industry experts to develop a diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging certificate program for tech CDOs. At the Kapor Center, she also serves as coprincipal investigator for a research study funded by the National Science Foundation that seeks to expand the evidence-based understanding of HBCU STEM learning environments in which undergraduate students are most likely to thrive and go on to attain doctoral degrees in science and engineering. Cynthia holds a BA from Hampton University, an MS and PhD in learning technologies from the University of Michigan, and a master's in PR/corporate communications from Georgetown University. She completed the Diversity and Inclusion Certificate program through Cornell University.

## MALE ALLY AWARD

## Rami Elghandour

Chairman and CEO, Arcellx



*"My mother started companies across two continents and made me believe anything is possible. Her example and that belief are the foundation for why I'm an advocate for women and women's rights. Women, and particularly women of color, are held back by systemic biases that limit their personal growth and societal impact. Women make up half of the world's population, and we all benefit if they're able to achieve*

*their full potential. Besides being the right thing to do, pursuing gender equity is a competitive advantage. Companies with women in leadership outperform consistently. Everyone can educate themselves and advocate for greater equity, particularly for more women in leadership. If we each change our part of the world together, we can change the world."*

—Rami Elghandour

Rami Elghandour is an engineer, venture capitalist, and CEO who is making a positive impact through his work and leadership. He built one of the most successful medical technology companies and established a culture recognized for its diversity. Rami earned recognition as an EY Entrepreneur of the Year, as one of the top CEOs in the United States, and as one of the top CEOs for women and diversity. He is a recipient of the Bill Campbell award by Watermark, a leading women's organization, for his influence, impact, and advocacy in promoting women and women's issues. Rami is currently chairman and CEO at Arcellx, a biotechnology company developing treatments for cancer. He serves as a start-up advisor, a guest lecturer, and a judge for the EY Entrepreneur of the Year program.

## COMPANY CHANGING THE GAME FOR WOMEN IN TECH AWARD

## Genentech accepting the award on behalf of Genentech is

### Quita Highsmith

Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer



*"Overall, the tech industry is in a constant state of evolution and adoption. While many companies are early in their inclusion and diversity journeys, Genentech has found ways to integrate DEI at the core of its foundation. Focusing on a sustainable and better future in the workplace for ALL women, the company takes an approach that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable, with a focus on*

*the importance of belonging. By diligently working to break barriers for all underrepresented communities, Genentech is continuously creating best practices, breaking tech industry data metrics, and supporting and advancing women and people of color in technology at all levels of their career."*

— Dr. Sheila Robinson, cofounder and publisher, Diversity Woman Media

## Genentech

Founded more than 40 years ago as the first biotechnology company, Genentech is dedicated to the rigorous pursuit of science and the development and delivery of life-changing medicines for people facing serious diseases. Headquartered in South San Francisco, California and a proud member of the Roche Group, our community is united by a common purpose and sense of urgency to transform the future of healthcare. The company believes in diversity of backgrounds and perspectives—including race/ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ+, veteran, and accessible communities—uniting us behind a common purpose and drawing on the strength of that diversity to drive better science and health outcomes.



## THE LAST WORD

# From Burnout to Action

BY DR. SHEILA A. ROBINSON

**A** year and a half ago, when our nation's most recent racial awakening began, chief diversity officers across the country had reason for hope. Corporate America seemed to be on board in working to increase equity within companies' workforce and operating practices. Some hired their first chief diversity officer ever. Others poured resources into their DEI department and voiced support for their work, and seemed eager to ensure that their organization was diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

Fast-forward to today. Many CDOs are burned out and discouraged. The upswell of support in 2020 has not materialized to the degree hoped for. The resources and buy-in from some top management have disappeared. Some companies may have been diversifying in their hiring, but the retention rates for people of color have been poor. It appears that in some cases the very public offer of support was window dressing, to demonstrate their good intentions, but without follow-through.

These handcuffed CDOs are saying to me, "How can I be a change agent if I have no influence or genuine support?"

It's time for companies to step up and demonstrate their support in tangible ways. We already know that a more diverse and inclusive workforce betters the bottom line.

Take, for example, the article on page 15 ("Thinking Differently"). Neurodiverse employees at a number of companies, particularly in the tech sector, are lobbying their companies to recognize and accommodate neurodiverse workers, who

include those on the autism spectrum or who have ADHD or other mental health challenges. Those companies that have listened and acted discovered that not only are these employees valuable contributors, but they have brought into the company innovative ideas and solutions that have led to a demonstrable return on investment.

How, then, to help these chief diversity officers and their departments to impact change and therefore reduce their stress, burnout, and turnover rates?

As with most initiatives, it starts with budget. An article in *Harvard Business Review* recommends recruiting diverse candidates with a broad range of experience—such as marketing and human resources—and begin by committing at least \$500,000 to launching a DEI department for smaller companies and \$2 million for large ones. Next, ERGs, especially those focused on building equity within a company, must include not only BIPOC but influencers and change agents at all levels, among them upper management. And, of course, company leadership must commit their own time and participation in DEI training.

Then, CDOs have the difficult task of demonstrating that thinking about products through a multicultural lens will pay dividends. Does your company feature people of color in its advertising and marketing campaigns? Do you work with diverse suppliers? Do you translate your consumer-facing materials into Spanish and Mandarin? In short, an empowered,



diverse workforce offers diverse perspectives, a deep understanding of the company's complex customer base, and new and creative thought leadership—all of which translates into product lines that consumers want, especially multicultural consumers, a mushrooming market with \$3.2 trillion in buying power.

CDOs want this agency, but at the same time, expectations must be reasonable—otherwise the department can become a scapegoat for initiatives that fall short of goals.

As we head into a new year, I am cautiously hopeful that companies will recognize that their lukewarm support for DEI is deleterious for their retention rates, company culture, and, yes, bottom line. Partial buy-in by companies not only hurts the company, but hurts us, the consumers who buy their products and also look to the private sector for leadership.

The challenge for chief diversity officers and multicultural employees can be daunting. But we are in this work for a reason—we believe in it. And, I believe in you! *Inclusion* magazine will do all it can to support this important work. Together, we will be the change agents our companies, economy, and nation need right now. **IN**

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*Dr. Sheila A. Robinson is the founder of Diversity Woman Media.*

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