

AI: CHALLENGE  
OR OPPORTUNITY?

SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER  
EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE

KEEPING DEI  
FRONT AND CENTER

# INCLUSION

*Creating Globally  
Inclusive &  
Culturally  
Competent  
Workplaces*

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+ ISSUE 9

Michael  
C. Hyter

James  
G. Kaiser

Gale  
V. King

## The Executive Leadership Council

**Leading the Charge on Implementing  
Inclusive and Equitable Practices**





# The Executive Leadership Council (ELC)



### The Executive Leadership Council (ELC)

is the preeminent global membership organization for Black CEOs, C-suite and senior executives, board members, top-tier entrepreneurs, and global thought leaders. The ELC and its members work to build an inclusive business leadership pipeline that empowers global Black leaders to make impactful contributions to the marketplace and the global communities they serve.

Here, we feature the thought leadership of board chair Gale V. King, president and CEO Michael C. Hyter, and cofounder James G. Kaiser.



## Gale V. King

**Corporate director, chair of The Executive Leadership Council, retired executive vice president and chief administrative officer at Nationwide Insurance, and community leader**

Gale V. King is the elected chair of The Executive Leadership Council. During her time as executive vice president and chief administrative officer for Nationwide, she led the enterprise's human resources, corporate real estate, corporate security, and aviation departments. King has made meaningful impact throughout her career by evolving human resources strategies, policies, and benefits that created a more engaged and inclusive culture. She brings this wealth of expertise and a compassionate leadership approach to The ELC.

King also serves on the boards of several major corporations, including AutoZone and Unum Group. She currently serves on the board of directors for the University of Florida Foundation. She holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Florida.



## Michael C. Hyter

**President and CEO of The Executive Leadership Council**

Michael C. Hyter is an accomplished senior executive, leadership consultant, author, and thought leader. He is widely known for his success in developing enterprise leaders and their next-generation successors. For more than 25 years, Hyter has served as a trusted advisor to senior leaders in a variety of industries. He brings a wealth of leadership experience to The ELC in the areas of CEO succession, chief executive and executive leadership development, and strategic diversity and inclusion consulting.

Prior to leading The ELC, Hyter was chief diversity officer of global organizational consulting firm Korn Ferry. He also led the firm's Washington, DC, office. Hyter's work is guided by the belief that one of the most effective ways to positively impact an organization's bottom line is by growing and developing the organization's talent.

Hyter serves on the board of directors of Dine Brands Global Inc., sitting on the Nominating and Governance Committee, and is a member of the Economic Club of Washington, DC. In 2018, *Savoy* magazine named him as one of the most influential Black people in Corporate America.



## James G. Kaiser

### Cofounder

James G. Kaiser is a retired executive with 55 years of business experience with Fortune 300 companies, including serving on boards, in operational management, and in entrepreneurial roles. This includes 30 years of experience with Corning Inc., spanning a portfolio of nine businesses with 70 product lines in specialty glass manufacturing (consumer and industrial) and environmental services internationally (Europe, Latin America, Asia). He also served as CEO of Quanterra Inc., the largest environmental testing company in the United States. He transitioned to work as an investor and entrepreneur, including 15 years as chairman and CEO of Avenir Partners Inc. dba Lexus of Memphis.

Kaiser also served as a member of the board of directors for four Fortune 300 companies (Dow Corning Ltd., Stanley Works, Sunoco Inc., and MeadWestvaco Corporation), three joint ventures, in numerous industries, and in community, academic, professional, and entrepreneurial organizations.

He is a founding member of The Executive Leadership Council and is a co-architect of the original strategy that launched The ELC (with Mannie Jackson of Honeywell Inc., who was the third president and a founding member of The ELC).

**“We believe that leaders, like those in our partner companies and many others, understand the value of talent being color and gender inclusive.”**

— Gale V. King

**“If we want to bring about equal representation in Corporate America, our work must begin in communities.”**

— James G. Kaiser

## Q&A

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

**James G. Kaiser:** Equity is what our country is all about! Our Declaration of Independence states that all men (and women) are created equal. Practically, we must reject the biases that try to take away this founding principle. When we formed The ELC, our first goal was to guarantee a pipeline of executives that would someday replace us, and our second goal was to provide access to the wealth that corporations create to make our communities more successful, stronger, and more equitable.

We have been very successful in growing The ELC from 20 to nearly 900 Black executives today. There is a tremendous sense of pride in the progress we have generated, but we are also dismayed by the lack of progress in helping our communities become more equitable in reaching the American dream. We clearly have much work to do, and that includes exploring new strategies to improve the future of our communities and to eliminate racism.

From a business standpoint, the cost of racism is overwhelming when you consider its impact on our fundamental systems—health care, education, judicial and welfare systems, etcetera. These are the systems Americans fund through our taxes each year. If we could reduce the cost of these systems by just 50 percent and invest in our communities, we could dramatically impact our communities and go beyond equity to something closer to parity.

**Michael C. Hyter:** Companies can best ensure equity by adopting a skills-first approach to talent acquisition [versus evaluating candidates solely on college credentials], diversify talent pipelines through work-based experiences, invest resources in cross-training and upskilling, and have impactful mentor and sponsorship programs.

**IN:** What are some examples of what The ELC is doing to advance gender equity for Black women?

**Gale V. King:** The ELC continues to consult with members and partner companies to understand the issues facing their organizations, including evaluating existing policies and programs. One of our most-used best practices tools is around pay equity—helping member-affiliated corporations understand the necessity of pay equity and working with them to have greater transparency in compensation targets. The ELC’s Women’s Leadership Forum (WLF), Power of Women at Work (POWW), and others are excellent programs that showcase the brilliance of our Black women members and the support the organization provides to them, and how they uplift and amplify each other.

**IN:** What do you think companies should be prioritizing in 2024 that has not been given enough attention in recent years?

**MCH:** Companies should be prioritizing the effective development of Black talent, and positioning talent early to develop skills that provide the foundation for managing businesses [P&L]. There is often too much focus on recruitment and not enough of an effort on developing talent to a standard happening right now. Companies should also leverage employee engagement data to better understand where opportunities exist for company culture and talent management, including in the areas of equity, company culture, and upskilling.

**IN:** In the last few years, with so much happening in the world and country that impacted all of us, how have you helped your organization and team deal with the fatigue and sense of being overwhelmed by the scope and speed of the work required to increase equity in organizations?

**GVK:** The staff and the membership of The ELC are purpose driven around the mission of the organization and recognize the moment that we are in as a country. While we are collectively disappointed by some actors’ efforts to take the country backward around the necessity of diversity, equity, and inclusion, our staff and

**“Companies should be prioritizing the effective development of Black talent, and positioning talent early to develop skills that provide the foundation for managing P&L.”**

— Michael C. Hyter

membership remain fueled by and steadfast to The ELC’s efforts to engage Corporate America and beyond toward greater parity in the C-suite. We have been fortunate to see the impact of corporations that are making positive change. And we believe that leaders, like those in our partner companies and many others, understand the value of talent being color and gender inclusive. These inclusive practices yield dividends for shareholders and stakeholders alike. The ELC is proud to continue this work in partnership with our corporate partners through this time of challenge.

**IN:** What is the key for bringing about equity in organizations—and meeting business goals?

**JGK:** Over the last 20 years, we have seen white Americans become the “majority minority” in America and across the workforce. Given the composition of American demographics, our workforce is more diverse, which is a distinct American benefit that good leaders can leverage for a competitive advantage for our companies. Some of these advantages include diversity of thought, lived experience and skills, language, appreciation of cultural nuances, etcetera. After all, how you think about an opportunity/problem is informed by your perspective or approach. Diversity allows you to have multiple entry points to problem solving that will produce better bottom-line business results. When used properly in Corporate America, this gives the United States a strong, distinct advantage over more monolithic countries. Everyone wins when we make diversity a competitive advantage. The cost of racism to America is too high, [and] the country would be financially better off and could be better leveraged for the benefit of all. Everyone wins!

**IN:** Tell us about The ELC’s greatest success story.

**MCH:** The ELC’s greatest success story is having built a membership organization of 840 high-ranking Black executives/board members who have the collective ability to influence the development of the pipeline of Black talent through our Leadership Institute programs and the advocacy and reinforcement of increasing Black C-suite, CEO, and board members in public companies. **IN**