

HOW **BOOMERS** ARE
RECLAIMING THEIR CAREERS

PRACTICING
INCLUSIVE ETIQUETTE

THE QUEST FOR
TRANSGENDER INCLUSION

INCLUSION

*Creating Globally Inclusive &
Culturally Competent Workplaces*

WINTER 2017 + ISSUE 2



BARCLAYS'S

MARK MCLANE

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Contents

Creating Globally
Inclusive & Culturally
Competent Workplaces

Issue #2 + Winter 2017



17



20



25



29



32



37



40



45

INCLUSION
sat down with
some of the
country's most
innovative
D&I thought
leaders and
asked them
what was on
their mind.

Spotlight Q&As

- 17 Mark McLane**, Managing Director, Diversity and Inclusion, Barclays PLC
- 20 Shari Slate**, VP, Chief Inclusion and Collaboration Officer, Cisco Systems Inc.
- 25 Dr. Christie Smith**, Regional Managing Principal, Deloitte Consulting LLP and Managing Partner, Deloitte University Leadership Center for Inclusion
- 29 Susan Stith**, Vice President, Diversity, Inclusion, and Corporate Giving, Express Scripts
- 32 Anise Wiley-Little**, Chief Human Capital and Diversity Officer, Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University
- 37 Ryan Parker**, Division Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, KentuckyOne Health
- 40 Candi Castleberry Singleton**, Founder, Power of &
- 45 Mary-Frances Winters**, Founder, President & CEO, The Winters Group, Inc.



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9 “Many mature workers successfully make the leap to a new career—whether moving from a full-time job to consulting, or changing industries—especially when they can apply skills from their previous career.”

Best Practices



9 Strategies for Older Workers



13 Transgender Inclusion

INCLUSION

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Frontlines

- 5** D&I Etiquette
- 6** Millennial Job Satisfaction
- 7** Political Matters
- 7** National Ice Cream Month...Who Knew?

Opinion



8 Howard Ross



16 Ruchika Tulshyan



48 The Last Word

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D&I Etiquette

Make sure that your assumptions and interactions are culturally appropriate

BY RUCHIKA TULSHYAN

As global workplaces become more diverse in every way, saying the right thing can be tricky. Concerned about what is and isn't appropriate? Studies show that even the most inclusion-focused employees can have unconscious biases. This is an instance where operating by "trial and error" isn't always the best case. It's worth familiarizing yourself with accepted terms and practices early. Even if some of these may be second nature to you, a reminder never hurts.

Latinx is a new term that is used to describe people of Latin American descent whose gender identities could include

agender, nonbinary, gender nonconforming, gender-queer, and/or genderfluid.

Complimenting someone by calling the person's name exotic or unusual can be perceived as a way to otherize an individual. If you are curious about the origins of a coworker's name, wait until you get to know the person better to ask. Or there's always Google!

If a colleague in a same-sex relationship reveals that they have children, don't ask whether they adopted, had a surrogate, or went through IVF, or otherwise inquire how they conceived, in the same way you wouldn't inquire about that information from a heterosexual peer.

Asking someone about his or her religious background

is almost always a bad idea. If the person offers that information to you, be gracious. Rather than question the teachings of the particular religion, steer the conversation toward occasions like holidays that the person likes to celebrate.

When in doubt about which pronoun a colleague prefers, actively listen to how other people refer to that person. According to GLAAD, a leading LGBT rights organization, if you must ask, start with identifying yourself. For example, "Hi, my name is Dena and I prefer the pronouns she and her. What about you?" If you mistakenly use the wrong pronoun, apologize sincerely and move on quickly. Don't make assumptions about how someone would like to be identified.

If you're about to have a long conversation with someone in a wheelchair, it's a good idea to sit down. Making eye contact is key.

Do not touch an African American woman's hair, even

if it has been completely restyled. Complimenting her is always more welcome in a one-on-one setting than calling her out in a meeting.

If someone is new to your country, don't automatically assume that the individual doesn't speak your language or that he or she needs to be spoken to more slowly. Also, don't change your accent or inflections when addressing the person.

Avoid asking Asian colleagues if they excelled in mathematics or African American coworkers if they played basketball. Even if these stereotypes appear positive to you, they could be seen as highlighting the differences between them and the rest of the cohort.

Try not to talk on behalf of someone with hearing challenges, unless the person specifically asks for your help in communicating an idea. There is also no need to speak more loudly or deliberately change your speaking style unless the person asks you to do so. **IN**

THE NEXT GENERATION

Global Millennial Job Satisfaction

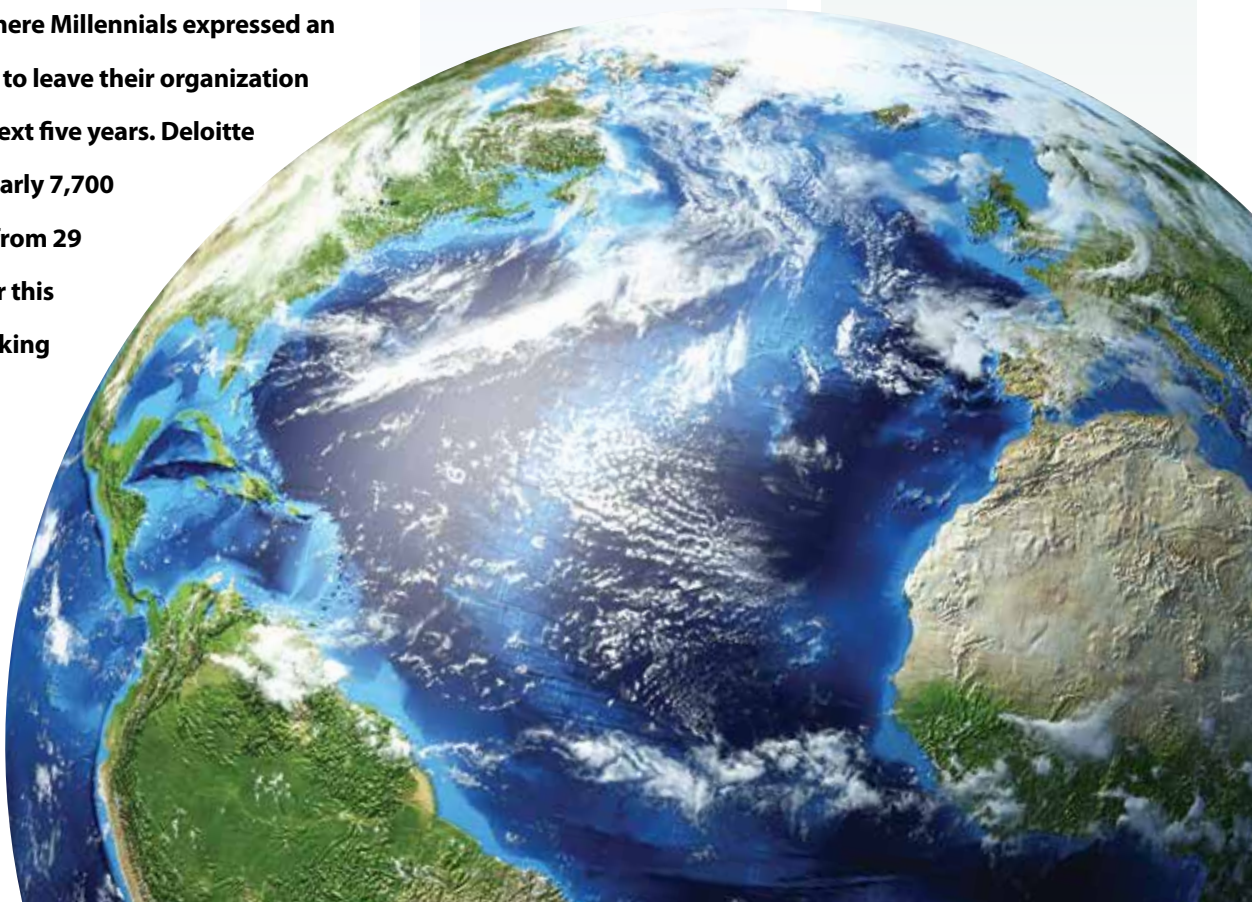
Deloitte released its 2016 annual report analyzing job satisfaction and ambition among Millennials—the generation born in the 1980s through 2000, soon to make up the largest demographic across global workforces. Businesses must work toward nurturing loyalty among Millennials or risk losing a large percentage of their workforce. Here's a look at the top and bottom eight countries where Millennials expressed an expectation to leave their organization within the next five years. Deloitte surveyed nearly 7,700 Millennials from 29 countries for this groundbreaking survey.

Countries With the **MOST** Job-Loyal Millennials

- ▶ Belgium
- ▶ Spain
- ▶ Japan
- ▶ Russia
- ▶ Canada
- ▶ Indonesia
- ▶ United States
- ▶ Philippines

Countries With the **FEWEST** Job-Loyal Millennials

- ▶ Peru
- ▶ South Africa
- ▶ India & Colombia
- ▶ South Korea
- ▶ Chile
- ▶ United Kingdom
- ▶ Argentina
- ▶ China





Political Matters

Q My colleague loves to talk politics at work. It makes me uncomfortable. Is discussing politics with coworkers acceptable? Who should I discuss my discomfort with—the colleague, my manager, or HR?

A very timely question given the current political climate. While employees have the right to engage in political discussions because the National Labor Relations Board classifies them as a “protected concerted activity,” it can be a very sensitive and explosive topic. Individual employees can absolutely tell a coworker that they don’t want to talk about the subject. One way to redirect the conversation is to say, “I feel uncomfortable with all this election coverage, so let’s talk about something else. Are you planning anything special for the

holiday?” Or more directly: “I am more comfortable keeping my political views outside of work.”

Typically, that will be sufficient to minimize the chatter in one’s presence, but if not, by all means discuss the matter with the employee’s manager or HR. Your political affiliations are a personal matter, not a professional one. Political discussions do little to build team relationships or maximize performance but, rather, risk opening the doors of unconscious biases.

—Gracie Johnson-Lopez,
President and Principal Consultant,
Diversity & HR Solutions



Clip and Save

JANUARY ▶ National Mentoring Month

FEBRUARY ▶ Black History Month

MARCH ▶ Women’s History Month

APRIL ▶ Autism Acceptance Month

MAY ▶ Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

JUNE ▶ Caribbean American Heritage Month

JULY ▶ National Ice Cream Month (!)

AUGUST ▶ Women’s Equality Day (August 26)—
commemorating the granting of voting
rights to women in 1920

SEPTEMBER ▶ National Hispanic Heritage Month

OCTOBER ▶ LGBT History Month

NOVEMBER ▶ Native American Heritage Month

DECEMBER ▶ International Human Rights Day (December 10)

FRESH TAKE

Managing Fear

By HOWARD ROSS

Lately it may feel as if the world is coming apart at the seams. The list of victims of police violence seems almost endless. Add to that the 50 people murdered at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando; terrorist incidents; the rise of neofascist nationalist movements throughout northern Europe; the Brexit vote; our historically contentious presidential election, with anti-Muslim and anti-Mexican themes abounding; the passing of HB2 in North Carolina, and on and on. These incidents bring anger, stress, grief, and tension, all being generated in an overall climate of fear.

Every day, people in our organizations come to work bathed in the atmosphere of fear that we are living

Create an environment of allyship.

in. How is that fear impacting us? How do we deal with the tension that it creates both internally and interpersonally?

We each live by our own internal book of rules that teaches us how to survive. These rules create a framework through which we process information. But the rules are different for each of us, and often for groups of us, and these incidents can impact us both personally and collectively. The challenge is to understand that



impact and do something about it.

Let's take the case of the Black Lives Matter movement, for example. People

hear different things in the name, suggested by "invisible" additional words provided by our own filters. For some, the added word may be Only Black Lives Matter!; for others, it may be Black Lives Matter Too! We assume shared meaning when, in fact, we are hearing different things entirely.

Every human being sees the world through his or her own context, and that context defines that person's experience. So what can we do in our organizations to make sure that our commitment to inclusion isn't derailed by this fear environment?

Acknowledge the reality that people are dealing with. That doesn't mean you can necessarily "make it better." It simply means giving people a chance to openly express what they are feeling so that they can connect with others and be fully present.

Watch how the fear is impacting you, and be willing to share it with your coworkers so that they understand your behavior.

Practice observing yourself and telling the truth about your own biases. Bias is as universal to human beings as breathing. Yet we have to be more conscious of our biases if we are to prevent them from becoming behavioral and harmful.

Practice what I call "constructive uncertainty." In other words, slow down when possible. Taking a pause can allow more mindful and thoughtful decision-making.

Create an environment of allyship. You can do that by connecting with people, all kinds of people, and checking in with them so that they know you are willing to listen and understand how they feel.

Create communities of support in which people can help each other process what's going on with them and know that they are not alone.

When we are faced with the constant barrage of pain, suffering, and fear, it is hard not to feel resigned and hopeless. But what we often miss is that periods like this can sometimes force us to be conscious of issues that we have been avoiding, or just not seeing, and in doing so give us a greater chance than ever to learn new ways to create a true sense of diversity and inclusion.

That opportunity is upon us now. Now is not a time to give up. Now is a time to stand up! **IN**

Howard Ross is the Founder and Chief Learning Officer of Cook Ross Inc., one of the nation's leading Diversity and Inclusion consultancies. He is the author of Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives.



Mature Workers: The Best Is Yet to Come

Thinking creatively and honoring your passions can lead you to your dream career

Madeleine Robins had spent a career in publishing—in magazines and trade books, as an editor and in other roles—when her position was eliminated and she found herself out on the job hunt. “I am not a spring chicken,” she says. “I had confidence issues about presenting myself in the world.”

She isn’t alone in feeling that way, and in the postrecession job market, mature workers do face

**BY
KIMBERLY
OLSON**

some challenges. While older workers suffered less unemployment than younger workers, those who did lose their jobs had a tougher time finding a new one. Unemployed 50-somethings, for example, were about one-fifth less likely to find work than job hunters between 25 and 34. And those age 50 to 61, when they did find work, saw their median monthly earnings drop by 23 percent, compared to 11 percent for workers age 25 to 34. The Center on Aging and Work at Boston College, in a study it published in 2010, called older workers the “new unemployables.”

Meanwhile, age discrimination complaints have been on the rise. More than 20,000 such complaints

were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2015, up 21 percent from 2000.

Although mature workers may face some hurdles, advisers like Nancy Karas say that opportunities await those who don’t buy into the doom and gloom.

“People will say, ‘I went to a networking event, and everyone was younger than me,’ and people start to panic,” says Karas, an executive and master career coach and senior vice president, business development, at The Five O’Clock Club, which offers a research-driven approach to career development. “And women tend to go into a downward spiral. But they have so much talent and expertise. I teach women to take back their power.”

“Each person is an individual, and it’s important not to fall prey to the myths and stereotypes about older workers,” says Renée Lee Rosenberg, a speaker, trainer, transition expert, and career coach who presents workshops for mature workers nationally and internationally. “If you believe the

myths about older workers, then you start to act them out. Know who you are and what you offer.”

Many companies recognize the unique value that mature workers bring. “I had a client who’s 65, and she did design, display, and social media for a large, well-known non-profit,” says Rosenberg. “They laid her off almost a year ago, and then they called her back in. She’s got the skills that they need.”

Know Thyself and Follow Your Joy

Experts say that mature workers, whether unemployed or seeking a career change, should keep an open mind. “Find out what you’re passionate about,” advises Rosenberg, author of *Achieving the Good Life After 50: Tools and Resources for Making It Happen*.

One of Rosenberg’s clients, another 65-year-old woman, managed to avoid being laid off by her company—as long as she was willing to take a more labor-intensive position for the same salary. “She used this time to discover what she really wanted to do,” Rosenberg says. “She used to dabble in appraising, so she went back to school and got a certificate in furniture appraisal. And now she’s a furniture appraiser and is as happy as can be.”

When Madeleine Robins was looking for a new job, Karas helped her define her core interests. “At The Five O’Clock Club, we try to teach people to look at all their expertise, and how it correlates to what they want to do,” Karas says. “They create a spreadsheet and check off every option that’s of interest to them. The second a client says to me, ‘I don’t want to do it again,’ we cross it off the list.”

Everything counts. Robins, for example, was the leader of a cookie-selling troop. Keeping track of 2,400 boxes of Girl Scout cookies is an accomplishment. Taking care of kids

builds people-management skills.

“Nancy was remarkable at seeing ways in which I could step sideways or reconfigure my career,” Robins says. “I had forgotten that I’m happier in a noncompetitive, collegial environment. I would not thrive in the startup culture. A lot of my skills are odd. I was trained as a stage manager. I tend to gravitate toward publishing, but even in publishing—trafficking and getting projects out the door—the curtain is going to go up.”

Experts also urge mature job seekers to network, network, network—and to be creative about it. “Go to events that you really enjoy,” Karas suggests. “If you collect wine, why not attend

If you believe the myths about older workers, then you start to act them out. Know who you are what you have to offer.

wine events and get a job for a winery or a company that distributes wine and spirits? You’ll be more motivated and more able to connect with others, because it’s real and authentic.”

Robins took that advice, even when it wasn’t easy. “You’re allowed to be frustrated,” she says. “The easiest thing to do is say, ‘Why even bother? Nobody loves me. I’m not by nature a networker.’ But the thing is to always be nice to everybody, because you never know who you’re talking to. A friend could tell somebody about you, which is what happened to me.”

That exchange led Robins to a position as operations manager at the American Bookbinders Museum in San Francisco, a position well suited to her skills and passion. “We celebrate the culture of bookbinding, which has been going on for a thousand years,

and the very fascinating people who were bookbinders,” says Robins, who’s loves the history and appreciates the variety of tasks at her museum job. “If I’m working on one project and someone runs in, I can hop back and forth and it’s a better working style for me. The fit ended up being very good.”

Take a Leap

Jeanne Heston, a 59-year-old marketing director who was job hunting, caught the attention of several companies. She was a finalist candidate three times, but she simply couldn’t close the deal.

“I was a finalist for a great company based here in Rhode Island, and I was so excited about it, but they chose someone who was half my age,” she says. “That was an eye-opener for me. What I’ve encountered is not so much conscious bias but more an unconscious bias. I’m attracted to tech companies, and they’re entrepreneurial. They’re looking at culture fit, and if they have a tradition of hiking and rafting trips and zip lining, sometimes they can’t picture you fitting into their culture. I love doing those things. I haven’t been zip lining, but I’d love to try it. That’s what I’ve bumped into.”

Heston, who began her career at Lotus Development when tech was in its infancy, has worked in tech support, field-based sales and engineering, and tech product marketing. But she’s noticed that some companies favor job candidates who were raised on recent technology. “You’ll see in job descriptions, ‘This is a perfect position for someone who has grown up digital,’” she says. “There’s this assumption that if you were not born digital that you don’t understand technology as well. I found myself, in many interviews and situations, having to prove my knowledge.”

Frustrated, she decided to retool her career and take a fresh approach,

Get a Job

Are you a woman of a certain age who's on the job hunt? Follow these expert tips to step up your game.

► BOOST YOUR SKILLS

Brush up. If you're behind in software or other skills, take a class or get a certification. And be sure to hone your social media chops. "This whole attitude of 'I don't want to be on Facebook?' ... get over it," says Nancy Karas, a master career coach at The Five O'Clock Club. "You have to be relevant and current."

Become an industry expert. Research your industry so you're up-to-date on news, data, and trends. Think like a consultant to outshine your competition.

► MAKE NETWORKING YOUR ART

Get on LinkedIn. Create a profile, including a nice photo and a functional résumé (rather than a chronological one) to best highlight your skills and talents. Then target companies you're interested in, rather than simply looking at current job listings

Get out there. Attend industry events, conferences, and Meetups for professionals. Volunteer, whether for a company that you'd like to work for or a nonprofit you love.

► ACE THE INTERVIEW

Present a fresh image. If you think you look old, that can affect your mind-set. "Maybe you need to cut your hair," says Renée Lee Rosenberg, a transition expert and career coach. "Sometimes clients come to see me and they're wearing a suit that they bought 20 years ago. It's not modern."

Make a winning impression—on the receptionist too. Everyone you meet at your target company is important. "If you show any disrespect or have a bad attitude, you may be doing yourself a disservice," says Lynn Berger, an award-winning career counselor and coach, and author of *The Savvy Part Time Professional: How To Land, Create, or Negotiate the Part-Time Job of Your Dreams*.

Be vibrant. Some companies may worry that older workers will have less energy. Make sure to convey that you have a lot of stamina, and share a story that demonstrates that.

Show that you can play well with others. If you are hired, your direct supervisor may be younger than you. "When asked if you can work for a younger boss, a possible answer is, 'I appreciate [younger people] for their ideas and energy,'" Berger says. Show that you're open to learning from everyone.

heeding guidance from Karas. "Older women have a wealth of experience," Karas says. "Why don't they see themselves as a mentor and teacher, and put themselves back into the workforce as a consultant or contractor? We're entering the gig economy. It's good to have these other options. You can definitely work. You just have to be more creative."

After Heston made it through the interview process the third time, only to see someone else get the job, she decided to strike out on her own as a freelancer, doing market research and writing marketing copy. "I hopped online and bought some URLs," she says. "Because there is the concern that an older worker doesn't have the tech skills and energy and enthusiasm, trying out a company with a consulting gig—and having them try you out—is often the way to overcome that."

Women who hang their shingle have found that the strong connections they naturally make with other women can

be a great benefit. "There are a ton of women who have big businesses, and they hire other women," Karas says.

Many mature workers successfully make the leap to a new career—whether moving from a full-time job to consulting, or changing industries—especially when they can apply skills from their previous career. A survey from the American Institute for Economic Research found that 82 percent of respondents made a successful career transition after age 45.

Beyond the skills and experience you bring to the table, keep in mind that, in nearly every industry, your age may actually be a valuable asset—something many companies recognize. "The baby boomer generation is going to be the largest population and they'll be the longest-living population," Karas says. "They actually have college courses to teach professionals how to focus on that market." Mature workers—who are also consumers—obviously have keen insights to share

that can help organizations connect with this important market segment. As you navigate your job search and career, playing up that "insider knowledge" is a smart move.

Older workers are finding that this is an exciting time to reinvent themselves, and more and more companies are finding that they benefit from mature workers' experience, wisdom, strong work ethic, and insight.

And mature workers—like those of any age—find the best career fit when they follow their bliss. Robins is glad that she took the time to think about what gets her engine revving. Her museum job is ideal because it ties into so many of her interests. It's worth being true to yourself because, as she says, "It's your life."

"Older women are a treasure chest of experience and information," says Karas, who says those who are open-minded and confidently showcase their talents win the day. "You're elevating yourself and taking back your power." **IN**



Inclusion

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The Quest for Transgender Inclusion

Companies are quickly learning how to be inclusive of their transgender employees

The goal of a company that values diversity is to ensure that all employees feel a sense of inclusion. But when it comes to transgender employees, that goal is not always met. According to the 2016 Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) study *Out in the World: Securing LGBT Rights in the Global Marketplace*, 53 percent of transgender respondents say they

have experienced workplace discrimination in the past five years. Sixty-nine percent keep their transgender identity a secret. Of those who have come out about their transgender status, the majority say they cover or downplay their identity at work.

"The workplace is not consistently the refuge that it should or could be," says Melinda Marshall, executive vice president and director of publications at CTI. Not only does that hurt the productivity of transgender employees who feel isolated among their colleagues, but it can prevent companies from attracting and retaining top talent, and appealing to transgender customers.

But the nation's largest companies are making great strides when it comes to transgender inclusion.

**BY
TAMARA E.
HOLMES**

"We've seen a lot of growth," says Deena Fidas, director of the Workplace Equality Program for the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation. When the HRC started rating companies on LGBT equality in the workplace with its Corporate Equality Index in 2002, just 3 percent of Fortune 500 companies had listed gender identity as a protected characteristic in their nondiscrimination policies. Today, 75 percent have those protections, Fidas says.

While that's a great start, most diversity experts acknowledge that there's still a good way to go. Here's how the nation's workplaces are rising to the challenge.



Crafting a pro-active plan

The HRC encourages employers to adopt gender transition guidelines. Approximately 300 major businesses now offer these guidelines, says Fidas, which provide practical advice for myriad situations surrounding the transition process, such as how to have respectful conversations about an employee's transition and steps for changing a person's email and badge at work.

Bloomfield, Connecticut-based health insurance company Cigna, which has achieved a perfect score on the HRC's Corporate Equality Index for the last four years, assigns a team of individuals throughout the company to take on specific roles whenever an employee is transitioning. "Typically there is an HR manager who quarterbackes the process," explains Rosanna Durruthy, Cigna's chief diversity officer. A timeline is set up for

conducting training and education programs about what it means to be transgender for the transitioning employee's colleagues and company stakeholders that he or she engages with. If the transitioning employee interacts with clients, a communication process is put in place so the client is made aware of the situation and is not surprised when the transitioning employee introduces himself or herself in a manner consistent with his or her identity.

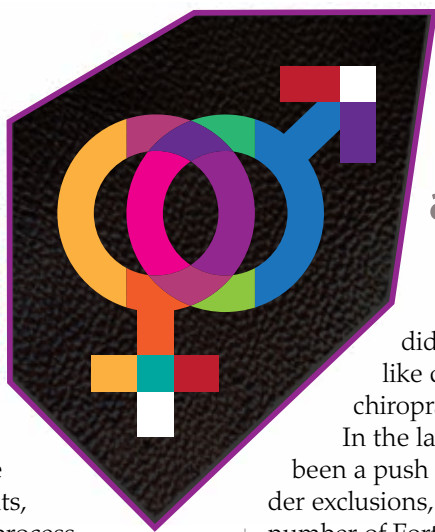
"We want to try to remove the awkwardness," Durruthy says. "There may be people who have questions. We want to try to create a space where those questions can be answered."

Another company, Warren, New Jersey-based insurance company Chubb, created a Transition Toolkit in 2015 that provides best practices on a broad range of matters, including changing a transitioning employee's name and gender pronouns, creating a plan with the employee to inform colleagues and clients of the transition, and ensuring access to gender-specific facilities like restrooms.

Aiming for inclusive health care

Another area that has seen much significant progress in recent years is the availability of transgender-inclusive health-care benefits.

A decade ago, virtually no company offered transgender-inclusive health-care coverage, Fidas says. In fact, most commercially available insurance plans had exclusions for transition-related care and services just as they



We want to remove the awkwardness.

did for elective services like cosmetic surgery and chiropractic care.

In the last decade, there has been a push to eliminate transgender exclusions, and in that time, the number of Fortune 500 companies with transgender-inclusive health-care coverage has jumped from zero to about 40 percent, Fidas says.

Across the nation's workplaces, cultural changes are also taking place. LGBT employee resource groups are offering more robust programming that is transgender specific. "You're seeing more employee network groups bringing in transgender speakers or holding up narratives of their own employees," Fidas says.

The other aspect companies must tackle: Once people transition, how comfortable is their workplace? Are coworkers able to interact with one another in a respectful way? Do people have an appropriate place to go if they have questions or if they make mistakes?

One thing companies can do is provide managers with guidelines and have a designated person for employees to go to with questions. There should also be a team that proactively checks in on the individual who transitioned every couple of months. "That opens the door for managers to be on the lookout for unconscious bias," Fidas says.

Sometimes people will make a mistake and default to a transgender colleague's former name or pronoun. In other cases, people may refer to

a transgender person by the wrong pronoun as an attempt to disrespect the employee. By having a person or group check in on the employee frequently, those issues can be spotted and addressed.

"The only successful way to integrate transgender employees is to foster acceptance," says Dr. Lisa Long, a clinical psychologist in Charlotte, North Carolina, who specializes in issues of multiculturalism and diversity. "Leadership should be encouraged to have education to explain issues of sensitivity for transgender individuals, similar to refresher courses in sexual harassment. It will be important that all employees are provided with feedback regarding the appropriateness of referring to these individuals and the norms."

Employers can also pay attention to watercooler conversations. With high-profile transgender celebrities such as Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner gracing magazine covers, they become fodder for everyday workplace discussions. "The key here is not to police conversations but to take note," Fidas says. If people express negative views about transgender celebrities, it can be an opportunity for a manager to share the company's more inclusive view.

Inclusion amid troubled waters

Despite the efforts companies are making to be inclusive, some potholes still block the road to transgender equality.

In the past year, about 200 anti-LGBT bills have been introduced at the state level, Fidas says. Some of the most prominent were in Tennessee, Mississippi, and North Carolina. Indeed, North Carolina's House Bill 2 (HB2), which calls for people to use public bathroom facilities that coincide with the gender listed on

“We’ve gotten a great response from candidates saying, ‘Wow, I checked out your FAQ about gender-neutral pronouns and that just makes me feel interested in you as a company.’”

their birth certificates, has touched off a storm of controversy within the business community.

Inclusive companies have very clear guidance about safe and respectful restroom and facility use, Fidas says. “In other words, a person’s gender identity is what determines which restroom an individual uses, and nothing else.” Some companies have even elevated their voices to speak very specifically about transgender equality, recognizing that such laws hinder their ability to recruit, retain, and relocate talent. For example, this summer 68 companies, including Apple, Morgan Stanley, Marriott International, and General Electric, signed the HRC’s amicus brief to block HB2. “The businesses elevate the conversation to new heights when it comes to championing equality specifically for the transgender community,” Fidas says.

More work needs to be done in other areas. Very high rates of unemployment and underemployment exist across the transgender community. The media-monitoring organization GLAAD estimates that transgender unemployment is twice the rate of the general population.

Some transgender job applicants may find themselves struggling to explain that their references refer to their prior gender or their prior name. Recognizing that, Jellyvision, a Chicago-based interactive software company, writes on its website in an FAQ about its recruitment process: “We understand that checking references from pre-transition employers

might mean that we’ll hear different gender pronouns—that won’t faze us. As long as they have great things to say about the work you did for them, we don’t care what pronouns they use and will make sure their pronouns don’t influence ours.”

By addressing the issue at the beginning of the hiring process, Jellyvision shows the world its inclusive stance. “We’ve gotten great response from candidates saying, ‘Wow, I checked out your FAQ about gender-neutral pronouns and that just makes me feel interested in you as a company,’” says Mary Beth Wynn, Jellyvision’s SVP of People.

Employers shouldn’t wait to adopt a nondiscrimination policy that explicitly mentions transgender employees until they have a transgender employee on staff. “You should have a policy before you need one because in reality you may need one and not know it,” says Gregory R. Nevins, counsel and Employment Fairness Program strategist for Lambda Legal, a New York-based organization that works to ensure civil rights for the LGBT community.

Addressing the needs of transgender employees can also help companies to avoid costly litigation. Thanks to the landmark 2012 case *Macy v. Department of Justice*, transgender employees have protections under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In that case, Mia Macy, a transgender woman and police detective in Phoenix, relocated to San Francisco before transitioning from male to female. She was led to

believe that a job opening would be made available to her at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. However, after she informed the agency that she was in the process of transitioning, she was told the job was no longer available. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) ultimately ruled in that case that intentional discrimination against a transgender individual is by definition discrimination based upon sex. In 2015, the EEOC received 1,412 charges of allegations of sex discrimination, 271 of which were related to gender identity/transgender status.

Other things employers should do to avoid running afoul of the law include giving employees access to bathrooms that coincide with their gender identity and offering health insurance that includes coverage for transition-related health care, Lambda Legal advises.

For companies that do take the time and effort to create an inclusive environment, the rewards are much greater than simply avoiding lawsuits. Having a transgender-inclusive workplace can also enhance the company’s reputation and help with employee retention even beyond the transgender community.

A recent hire at Jellyvision received a company email that explained why some employees preferred the use of gender-neutral pronouns. “The person wrote to me and said, ‘I have a transgender stepparent, and just seeing that makes me think I’ve joined the right company,’” Wynn says. “It’s not just that you’ll attract transgender talent—you’ll attract a lot of people who care deeply about social justice issues.” **IN**

Tamara E. Holmes is a Washington, DC-based journalist who writes about diversity and careers.

INCLUSION INSIDER

Dignity and Respect for All

BY RUCHIKA TULSHYAN

Innovation is everyone's business today. And it's been incredible to see inclusion become a key component in driving innovation. More organizations than ever are connecting the



Inclusion cannot be limited to one "category."

dots between D&I and transformation. But in the great work done by forward-thinking organizations, one type of inclusion often gets omitted from the conversation—disability rights, in particular those on the autism spectrum.

Too often, differently abled individuals don't have access to corporate jobs or advancement opportunities within existing organizations. Further, many employers fail to realize that not all disabilities are the same. In doing so, they miss out on unique opportunities to harness the talent of all individuals to power the modern workforce, including—in some cases especially—those on the spectrum.

One of the first companies to focus on hiring employees on the autism spectrum is the global technology company SAP. As of 2015, it employed 100 people across the spectrum, in

eight countries. The groundbreaking Autism at Work program debuted in 2013 and has grown steadily since. It employs people who do not have cognitive impairment (about half of all people on the autism spectrum fall into this category). The jobs leverage the skill set of autistic individuals, which often includes pattern recognition, the ability to concentrate over long periods of time, and a high degree of diligence.

SAP's early success with the program led the company to proclaim an ambitious goal: the commitment to have 1 percent of its global workforce made up of employees with autism by 2020.

When I interviewed Anka Wittenberg, SAP's chief diversity and inclusion officer, on advancing women at work, she emphasized how her team's focus on inclusion beyond the typical focus on race and gender was central to the company's D&I successes. Inclusion cannot be limited to one "category." For example, a leader cannot be a true champion for inclusion if the focus is solely on getting more women in the workforce—the strategy must strive toward boosting all historically marginalized populations. In essence, Wittenberg told me that strategizing to empower employees with autism drove the company's success in advancing more women and ethnic minorities too. Inclusion became a cornerstone of company policy, she said, driven from the executive ranks of management.

Here's why you should care: there's no business today that isn't powered by technology. SAP's program largely recruited individuals with autism who now work in technology—as software developers, data analysts, IT technical

support staff, and graphic designers, among other specializations. These employees are not treated like they have special needs. They work side by side with employees who do not have autism, according to *Forbes*.

There's a really good reason for organizations like SAP to do this. While employing differently abled individuals has social benefits, the real benefit is to the company itself. Technology jobs are getting harder to fill. The White House announced that more than 500,000 IT jobs currently remain unfulfilled. I constantly hear from employers about the challenges of recruiting qualified individuals in technology. The problem has creative solutions, and as SAP, along with a handful of other companies such as Microsoft and HP are learning, approaching it with a D&I lens has multifold advantages.

It is more critical than ever for leaders to use their influence to include seats for all at the table, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, and ability. In doing so, everybody wins. **IN**

Ruchika Tulshyan is the author of The Diversity Advantage: Fixing Gender Inequality in the Workplace. She is a journalist, speaker, and consultant on diversity and inclusion. As an international journalist, she has reported from six cities across four countries for Bloomberg, Forbes, Time, and other media.



Mark Q. McLane

Managing Director, Diversity and Inclusion,
Barclays PLC

MARK McLANE IS THE HEAD OF GLOBAL diversity and inclusion for international financial services provider Barclays PLC. He is responsible for leading a global D&I strategy that will strengthen the organization and its goals, be responsive in the ever-changing global business climate, and enable Barclays to leverage this strategy to bring innovation to its customers. The firm has garnered numerous recognitions for its forward-thinking diversity initiatives.

Barclays's pioneering diversity initiatives are fresh, bold, and effective.

Prior to working at Barclays, McLane was the director of diversity and inclusion for Booz Allen Hamilton, a leading professional services firm. He also served as the chief diversity officer for Whirlpool Corporation, where McLane implemented the corporation's first global D&I strategy.

McLane is a member of the board of directors for Business Disability International and serves on the Radius advisory board, Women in Recruitment executive committee, Out Leadership leadership committee, and Gay Star Business advisory board. In 2014 and 2015, he was recognized on *The Guardian's* global LGBT power list and *The Financial Times'* list of 100 LGBT business leaders in London and was named to the top 50 global diversity executives by *The Economist*.

McLane holds a BS in business management from the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania.

INCLUSION: What are some special initiatives that your company is engaged in now to maximize inclusion with your team?

Mark McLane: Barclays launched its global D&I strategy five years ago, and I'm proud of what we've achieved. I believe our brave, no-compromising approach has fueled our success. We were the first bank to have a female branch manager, and the first to roll out "talking" ATMs at scale in the UK. Over 80 percent of

We mounted our first social media campaign to encourage men and boys to join Barclays colleagues in becoming HeForShe supporters. We invited [them] to become visible feminists.

this year, we took the campaign external, in partnership with the Lord Mayor of London. By launching the “This is Me in the City” version, we are influencing other organizations in the City of London to talk about mental health in the workplace. After all, as research from Mind [a leading UK mental health charity] shows, one in four people in any given year experiences a mental health issue. We aim to reduce the stigma around mental health in the workplace and to raise awareness of staff well-being. Today, more than 60 companies are involved in launching their own internal campaign with their colleagues.

Barclays is one of 10 corporate organizations, and the only financial services institution, to be invited by the UN to be a HeForShe IMPACT 10x10x10 Champion. HeForShe is a solidarity campaign for gender equality. Its goal is to engage men and boys as agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women’s rights, by encouraging them to take action against negative inequalities faced by women and girls. We have 5,000-plus colleagues who have signed up as HeForShe supporters. Jes Staley, Barclays Group CEO, and John McFarlane, our chairman, are both HeForShe Champions.

IN: How has Barclays focused on D&I for the LGBT community in recent years?

MM: The Barclays Spectrum network focuses on supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender colleagues within Barclays. Membership is open to all employees who are interested in supporting the LGBT community. Our internal Spectrum Allies campaign has raised global awareness of the crucial role of allies [non-LGBT employees] in challenging homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, and educating others on the importance of equality. The number of allies has risen from 500 to 6,500-plus in the last year alone with the issuance of our Spectrum Allies lanyards during International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia. The lanyards are ways to make allies visible and show that Barclays is a welcoming, inclusive workplace.

IN: How has your approach to D&I changed in the last 10 years? How have the field and thinking and best practices changed around D&I?

our ATMs have this functionality. We were pioneers in issuing high-visibility debit cards in the UK to ensure greater accessibility. Barclays’ innovative spirit and “first to market” desire are part of a long legacy of recognizing the vital role that diversity and inclusion play in our business.

An example of this approach is Barclays’ “This is Me” campaign focused on mental health and wellness, which is in its third consecutive year. We have seen improved awareness and resources having a positive impact on the retention of colleagues returning to work after a mental health-related absence. Earlier

MM: My approach to D&I has been fundamentally consistent. I have always focused on being the bridge between human resources and the business.

I believe it is imperative for the success of a D&I strategy to be able to actively provide our colleagues and customers with the brand experience that they expect. This commerciality of our strategy is exemplified through the work Barclays is doing on accessibility and innovation. We have an ethos that a solution for one is an opportunity for many. This ethos plays out in our commitment to building accessibility competency across all aspects of the Barclays business. For example, we launched online British sign language interpretation services in our retail bank branches in the UK and then made this same service available to our recruiting teams to be used on campuses during graduate recruiting periods.

IN: How does Barclays use technology and social media to enhance D&I initiatives?

MM: A social media approach is key for Barclays to advancing our D&I strategy. We live in a global world, and colleagues and customers around the globe are interested in what we are doing as it relates to D&I. Social media gives us the platform by which we can inform and include those colleagues and customers. Examples of this would include the use of our ATM network to promote our support and sponsorship of the HeForShe campaign with the United Nations, our headline sponsorship of London Pride, and our support of the Age of No Retirement campaign.

During International Women’s Day this year, we mounted our first social media campaign to encourage men and boys around the world to join Barclays colleagues in becoming HeForShe supporters. In essence we invited men and boys to become visible feminists. This campaign garnered over 896,000 impressions on Barclays.com, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. It was also our opportunity to share the Barclays leadership HeForShe video on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7l9mu96Zq8).

With Pride in London, of which Barclays is the headline sponsor, we leveraged our social media channels to launch the #nofilter

campaign asking our retail bank customers to share their stories of what living life with no filter meant to them. The winners were then invited to a conference to engage in an open conversation about living life with #nofilter and participate in a panel discussion with out rugby star Gareth Thomas.

IN: How is your company addressing work-life balance?

MM: In June 2015, we launched our Dynamic Working campaign globally. This colleague-led campaign asks “How do you work your life?” This tagline is meant to expand the idea of work-life balance to be more than just flexible, working toward understanding all the assets that are available to colleagues and encouraging them to take the greatest advantage of these assets across all aspects of their career and life stages.

Dynamic Working enables colleagues to have an open dialogue with their line managers about what will make them more productive and engaged. It also provides managers with the tools not only to have the conversation but to effectively address the diverse needs of their teams.

Colleagues around the world are sharing their stories of what Dynamic Working means to them, including how to successfully take a career break, how they integrate citizenship/volunteering opportunities into their careers, the importance of health and wellness in their lives, and being a first-time parent or caregiver. This in turn enables peer-to-peer conversations around successfully navigating life and career events and enabling colleagues to design their bespoke solutions on how they work their lives.

IN: How will your role change in the next five years? Will more be expected of chief diversity officers, or will the chief diversity officer role go away?

MM: The role of the CDO will continue to address the societal issues we face as individuals and as a business. As societies evolve, these challenges evolve as well, requiring CDOs not only to work on the existing issues but also to help the organization to transition well into the future. I compare the CDO role to that of the CMO [chief marketing officer] in that a CMO

With Pride in London, we leveraged our social media channels to launch the #nofilter campaign, asking our retail bank customers to share their stories of what living life with no filter meant to them.

understands and assists the organization in addressing the ever-changing demands of our customers, and the CDO should be in step with the CMO in delivering that same brand promise to our colleagues, driving insights about our customers and providing the business with opportunities to innovatively reach the changing demographics in the markets in which we conduct business.

IN: How do you cultivate a diverse talent pipeline?

MM: Cultivating a diverse talent pipeline is achieved by embedding diversity into the talent management process. It is achieved by recognizing that talent

management is the tool by which we will enhance the diversity of our leadership cadre and become more effective and inclusive talent leaders. Additionally we must analyze and track our hiring, promotion, and attrition practices to ensure that talent management is data driven to achieve the diversity of leadership that we desire.

At Barclays we’re trying to achieve this in multiple ways. The first is that we put all managing directors and directors, globally, through a half-day leadership development program in which they underwent unconscious bias training to help leaders understand their own unconscious bias and manage the same, to be more inclusive talent leaders.

Barclays has also issued a target of women at our board level of 33 percent by 2020 and in senior leadership of 26 percent by 2018. We define senior leadership as an aggregate of managing director and director levels, thus clearly aligning to talent pipeline management. We have instituted a predictive analytics model that defines how our hiring, promotion, and attrition management must be changed to meet our goals. Utilizing predictive analytics has changed our view of diversity to forward looking versus the traditional approach of waiting until we report diversity statistics at the end of the quarter or year, and as such is having a positive impact on our talent management process.

IN: For a number of years, practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in?

MM: I think the time for making the business case has well passed. By this I mean that the data supporting the business case is comprehensive and plentiful and has been validated by many experts across the industry. The organizations that recognize this data and have internalized its value are the organizations that are taking advantage of being market leaders in their industries. They are much more in tune with their customers, are driving innovation through a diverse and engaged employee base, and are ultimately building brand advocacy that will last across a diverse customer base that recognizes their commitment. **IN**



Shari Slate, VP, Chief Inclusion & Collaboration Officer, Cisco Systems, Inc.

Harnessing technology to ensure pay equity and break down barriers.

Shari Slate is responsible for building a strategy that enhances Cisco's vision to be a world-class company for inclusion and collaboration. She is promoting thought leadership across Cisco's people strategy, enabling employee engagement and inclusion outcomes to fuel innovation.

"Diversity is fundamental to Cisco's business," says CEO Chuck Robbins. "With the increasing pace and complexity of today's market, it's critical that we understand our customers, deliver results, bring diverse perspectives and experiences, and build world-class, highly-motivated teams. This is what will differentiate us as an innovative organization that delivers the best results for our customers."

In Slate's previous role, she served as Chief Inclusion & Collaboration Strategist for Cisco's Sales Organization. Prior

to joining Cisco, she was Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Global Community Affairs at Sun Microsystems.

Slate has been widely recognized for her visionary leadership and her transformational views on inclusion. The YWCA named her a 2014 "Tribute to Women in Industry" honoree. In 2013, she was named one of *Diversity Woman* magazine's "Stars Who Mean Business." She was also honored by the California Diversity Council as one of the "Most Influential in California" and a "Woman Worth Watching" by *Diversity Journal* magazine. She received the National Coalition of 100 Black Women's 2010 Corporate Leader Award and *The Network Journal's* "40 Under Forty" Achievement Award. Slate holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in political, legal, and economic analysis from Mills College.

INCLUSION: What has been the biggest success factor in driving inclusion at Cisco?

Shari Slate: If I had to point to just one, it would be the passion, commitment, and extraordinary leadership—starting at the very top. Our CEO, Chuck Robbins, has put in place one of the most diverse leadership teams in technology. Cisco's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is more diverse in gender, generation, ethnicity, culture, experience, expertise, ability, nationality, and tenure at Cisco than ever before.

Our diverse ELT gives us new perspectives and demonstrates that diversity is fundamental to our business. But diverse representation—even at the top—is just one part of a much larger vision. To fulfill that vision we need leaders who are inspired—and driven—to



Chuck Robbins,
CEO, Cisco

be extraordinarily inclusive. Not just in hiring, developing, and promoting the full spectrum of diverse talent, but also in the way we engage our people to collaborate, participate, and add value.

We have Inclusion Leadership Teams (ILTs) within every region and function. We collaborate closely with our ILTs—they are instrumental in helping us make the initiatives within our Office of Inclusion & Collaboration (OIC) relevant across the business and aligning actions to goals. We hold regular ILT Innovation Forums to come together, connect, and generate ideas, next practices, and new solutions.

Our leaders are also showing up in the most incredible ways to create breakthroughs—starting with understanding diverse perspectives at a whole new level. We experienced this recently in North Carolina, where we held a town hall to better understand the perspectives of our over 7,000

employees in the state given the current legislative and social justice climate. Our Connected Black Professionals hosted a forum to create a supportive environment to discuss the impacts of recent events of immense historic significance in the fight for fair and equal treatment under the law within the United States. Our Executive Leadership Team joined the forum at 6 a.m. the week of Cisco Live!—our biggest annual customer event. After the conversation, the ELT sent our employees a communication acknowledging the impact on individuals and inviting a deeper conversation about inequality, how we will support each other, and the role that Cisco will play as the borders between our company and community are blurred in the realm of social justice issues.

IN: What are some ongoing or special initiatives Cisco is engaging in now to address inclusion?

SS: For the Office of Inclusion & Collaboration, this year has been about going bold. We're now delivering on innovative solutions to some of our most business-critical challenges and opportunities—like pay parity, attracting a highly competitive share of diverse talent, and advocating for fairness and inclusion throughout our communities where it is at risk.

Our innovations are built by us—for us. There really aren't any manuals or models that would tell us how to design a pay parity framework for a global company of over 70,000 employees with complex pay-for-performance strategies.

So we've rolled up our sleeves and done both the big thinking and the heavy lifting. Cisco has always been committed to fair pay. In taking on pay parity, we've expanded our capabilities—creating new insights through a framework of powerful analytics and targeted strategies to identify the factors that influence fairness and equity. While many cross-industry are focusing on gender parity, we look holistically across gender—male and female—globally, plus race and ethnicity in the US, as defined by the US government. To date, we've completed our US analysis, which revealed a healthy compensation system and only minor disparities found within approximately 2 percent of our entire US employee population.

We've given pay adjustments to fully close those minor gaps. The funds required to do that represented a very small fraction—approximately 0.1 percent—of the US base payroll. Now we're scaling globally. We'll be testing for parity regularly, and where we see gaps, we'll fix them.

We're taking a national leadership role as a founding signer of the White House Equal Pay Pledge—one of just 28 companies. We've joined forces with the other 27 companies to form the Employers for Pay Equity Consortium, to help



Cisco Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

make the promise of fair pay a reality for *all* employees.

We're also building new muscle around driving higher levels of what we call "full-spectrum diversity" across our global company. When we dive deep into the data, we see exactly where we need to focus. It's primarily in certain technical roles and functions. It's an issue that's common in our industry—we're committed to creating uncommon solutions to address it.

To start, we're moving beyond a generic industry approach to identifying potential internal and external talent. Our objective is to have the mix of talent across our company to mirror the markets where we do business—for all jobs and regions. We're building an innovative new framework of powerful analytics and creating data-driven insights to re-set our aspirations, respond faster to market transitions, and drive accountability in the way we attract, develop, and retain talent. We think our innovations have the power not only to change the Cisco talent equation—but to be an industry game changer as well, through open dialogue, next practice sharing, and collaboration.

IN: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in 2017 for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders like yourself?

SS: Next year will be an extremely important year for what I like to call "making the shift." In the past two years since I became Cisco's chief inclusion and collaboration officer, my team has focused on strengthening the foundation of diversity, inclusion, and collaboration across our organization. We are now in a position to take on our biggest challenges and opportunities presented by digital transformation. Digital transformation is creating new opportunities using advances in mobile, cloud, and analytics technologies and smart devices. Digital

Digital transformation is already "breaking HR." We're accelerating new practices.

transformation is radically changing companies across the globe—of every size and in every industry. It's changing the customer and workforce experience.

Digital transformation is already "breaking HR." We're accelerating new practices that leverage technology and real-time data in supporting our people

leaders and creating environments in which everyone can thrive. That means the systems, processes, and practices that D&I integrated within no longer exist as we have known them. The best practices that we have been leveraging to move the needle are no longer relevant.

For example, transformation-minded HR leaders are now breaking performance review practices as we know them—moving away from reviews and ratings. For many years, we've leveraged the performance review and ratings practice as a way to detect bias within the promotion process. Now we need to take a seat at the table to help co-create the next practices for HR, exploring new ways for driving and embedding diversity, inclusion, and collaboration.

The challenge for me and for other CDOs is to be fully plugged into this dynamic. We'll need to begin to work across all functions and geographies to shape the new people management systems, policies, and practices for the digital era.

At Cisco, our vision was, and continues to be, building an inclusive environment that drives fairness and equity now—and for the future. A future that's being shaped by digital transformation. A future that's going to drive us to fully leverage our tools and technologies and advanced analytics to create what we're calling "the future of fairness." It will take us beyond policies and practices, beyond programs, to the heart of where fairness is

created—within real-time decision-making. We're asking different questions to better understand the complexities within our global company of over 70,000 employees. Our questions will ensure the opportunity to create equity and fairness. We won't have all the answers right away—at this point, our questions are the most powerful and valuable lever we can pull.

Across industries, we CDOs can come together to help each other dive deep, create the right questions to ask, help break HR, and leverage each other's ideas, experience, and insight. The year 2017 is going to be one of building new leadership muscle—to see new possibilities within these complex and uncharted landscapes.

IN: Recent events have focused attention on social justice and the rights of transgender people. How is Cisco responding?

SS: We've been ahead of the curve for transgender fairness. I'm so proud of our workforce—since 2007, each time a member of the Cisco family informed HR of intent to transition, we have provided coaching and guidance to the individual, his or her management, and his or her teams and partners. In every instance, the teams have welcomed their transitioning colleague, managed expertly through change, and done so with full management support.

Still, while Cisco has been at the forefront of transgender inclusion, there are new threats and new opportunities for us to take into consideration. When the rights of some of our people are threatened or compromised—all of our rights are compromised.

When laws like North Carolina's HB2 place our employees and customers at risk, we take it seriously. We're listening carefully—and speaking out. We're building respectful dialogue with our employees and inviting diversity of thought, differing opinions, and proposed solutions. We've signed the Human Rights Campaign's amicus brief decrying discrimination. We're taking to social media at all levels, including our CEO. And we're collaborating with communities, advocating for long-term solutions that build fairness into policies, practices, and laws that break down barriers.

IN: How has your approach to D&I changed in the last 10 years? How has the thinking in the field changed?

SS: My approach has changed dramatically—because digital transformation is changing the D&I landscape. The shift is creating huge opportunities for companies to create exponential value through their people.



Employees at the Executive Leadership Council 29th Annual Recognition Gala (2015).

Before I joined Cisco, I was intensely aware that in the midst of rising to meet the challenges of contemporary realities—globalization, shifting economies, changing demographics, and rapidly advancing technologies—many D&I leaders were also seeking new and better ways to create tangible value and drive sustainable growth.

For many years I've been focused on thought leadership and developing new models for driving diversity, inclusion, and collaboration—leveraging technology. At Cisco, I've been able to fully engage in exploring the role that inclusion plays in enabling true collaboration and in fueling innovation. I've been able to focus on developing new models and strategies that will make it possible to fully realize the potential of the diverse mindsets, skill sets, experiences, and perspectives that naturally exist within our organizations.

From my perspective, we're now experiencing a transition point in the evolution of inclusion and diversity—moving from a focus on counting people and making them feel included toward ensuring they are participating in the business outcomes that drive value for the company.

The complexities of the landscape coupled with digital transformation fundamentally change how we build transformational practices for diversity, inclusion, and collaboration. These changes will allow us to be in action on a whole new level, taking on big, business-critical challenges—like pay parity and attracting more than our fair share of diverse talent, instrumenting mindset, skill set, and tool set for human to human, human to machine, and machine to machine interaction across teams.

Our time is now. As chief diversity officers and chief inclusion and collaboration officers, we will deliver on the promise of diversity and bridge the gap between where our companies are operating and where we want to be. There's never been a better time to be doing this work. Cisco is all-in. **IN**

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Dr. Christie Smith

**Regional Managing Principal,
Deloitte Consulting LLP, and
Managing Partner,
Deloitte University Leadership
Center for Inclusion**

CHRISTIE SMITH HAS A TRACK RECORD OF BREAKING boundaries—including in her former career as a professional golfer. She has been a leader in fostering a culture of equality both at Deloitte and with her clients and communities. She is one of Deloitte's most senior diverse leaders and is active in promoting equal rights for all in the workplace.

As the managing principal for consulting in the west region of the United States, her responsibilities include markets, clients, talent, and community for more than 2,400 consulting practitioners and more than 250 principals and managing directors. She is also a lead consulting partner and advisory partner on several of Deloitte's largest clients.

With more than 30 years of experience, Smith has a passion for serving clients and bringing innovative and effective solutions to their most important business, market, and talent issues. She focuses her work with clients on aligning business strategy with the requirements of organizational structure, talent, leadership development, and global inclusion.

Smith leads Deloitte's Leadership Centers for Inclusion and Community Impact. Both roles provide a platform for developing solutions with people, clients, academics, and nonprofits about how the business world can fundamentally redefine approaches to issues like inclusion, transitioning veterans, and education.

Smith's accomplishments and commitment to inclusion have earned her many accolades. *Diversity Journal* named her a 2013 Woman to Watch. *The San Francisco Business Times* recognized her in 2012, 2013, and 2014 as one of San Francisco's Most Influential Women and in 2015 as one of San Francisco's Forever Influential Women.

She is a frequent lecturer and author on topics such as corporate values, leadership, culture, inclusion, and talent. Her work has been featured in *Fortune*, *Harvard Business*



Dr. Christie Smith is working to ensure that employees can be their authentic selves at work.

Review, *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Fast Company*, and CNN. She has also delivered a TedX talk. Smith is a board member of Gay Men's Health Crisis, a former board member of Out & Equal, and a member of the advisory board for New America's Caregivers & Breadwinners.

Smith has an MSW from Rutgers University and a PhD in social work/industrial and organizational psychology from New York University.



Inclusion: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in 2017 for a corporate diversity and inclusion leader like yourself?

Christie Smith: Leaders today should step up and recognize that diversity and inclusion aren't simply a programmatic solution or setting the tone at the top, but actually living the experience every day. Instead, we're still seeing the demand by some leaders and the cultures they create to have employees cover a significant aspect of who they are in order to hyper-conform to a too often straight, white, male ideal of leadership or success. In essence, many have spent decades asking people to check their identities and true selves at the thresholds of our organizations and institutions and created a workforce of "Stepford Employees/Executives." Leaders should be more than change agents but activists at the forefront of transforming workplace culture.

My challenge as a diversity and inclusion leader is to help leaders make the transition from an intellectual understanding of inclusion—or, let's say unconscious bias—to a visceral connection to the incredible impact and feeling of both inclusion and bias. Only then can we move away from our Stepford selves to genuine connection across difference.

IN: How has Deloitte worked to become more inclusive of transgender people? What are some of the challenges you have seen?

CS: One of the biggest challenges has actually been the traditional framework of diversity and inclusion programs. Often, this approach has had the effect of categorizing and putting people in silos, forcing them to check boxes and choose one identity. While programs like employee or business resource groups have provided necessary safe spaces for many to share their unique challenges and perspectives, through the inherent parameters that they draw, they also rigidly define and reinforce traditional notions of identity. Under this framework, gender is communicated and perceived as binary, forcing transgender people to make an artificial decision between groups instead of embracing and accepting each individual as holistic and multidimensional. Deloitte is moving beyond placing our people in boxes, from simply bonding capital to also bridging capital, encouraging our people to connect across differences and find common ground.

Deloitte University is a place where colleagues can connect and collaborate.

IN: How has your approach to D&I changed in the last 10 years? How have the field and thinking and best practices changed?

CS: With the influx of Millennials into the workforce, we have seen a complete overhaul in expectations and even the definition of what diversity and inclusion are. While many Millennials value the ideals of diversity and inclusion just like their generational counterparts, many fundamentally define the constructs differently.

How Millennials define inclusion is a good example of how they see inclusion as integral to their environment, not a separate program. Our research through the Deloitte University Leadership Center for Inclusion found that Millennials are 71 percent more likely than previous generations to focus on teamwork and 28 percent more likely to focus on business impact than other generations. Millennials view inclusion not as fairness and equality but as a tool and strategy to build teams and create impacts. For many Millennials, inclusion isn't just about getting people of different creeds in a room. It's about connecting these individuals, forming teams on which everyone has a say, and capitalizing on a variety of perspectives in order to make a stronger business impact.

More so than other generations, Millennials are comfortable connecting across people and platforms to develop new relationships, gain access to resources, and acquire necessary knowledge in service of their goals. This approach is natural for Millennials, who are the generational by-products of the digital, social, and mobile age. They're the teaming generation interested in using collaboration and integration of cognitive diversity as a tool.

IN: How do you measure success in terms of diversity and inclusion?

CS: We are now more clearly than ever before correlating inclusion to strategic business performance indicators. We need to continue to be steadfast about measuring representation, but we can now add more complex measures of inclusion—like empowerment, emotional safety, inclusive leadership behaviors, culture, and more—to the equation and actually see corresponding impacts on the business bottom line. This is part of how we're shifting our leaders' thinking about diversity and inclusion because they can see

the impact of their behavior on the business bottom line.

IN: How has the accelerated globalization in recent years affected your D&I strategies?

CS: With accelerated globalization has come an increased demand for global mobility. Organizations are often deploying their high-potential talent abroad, but this new model also comes with challenges. To effectively deploy talent, organizations need to provide resources for all people to access and take on these opportunities. Currently, straight, white males are overrepresented in global deployments. Creating a supportive structure where all people can feel confident in accepting and succeeding in these assignments is critical.

IN: As more and more Millennials join the job force, and as baby boomers slowly age, has this phenomenon provided challenges for you?

CS: It's not a challenge, but an opportunity! Millennials are now the majority of the workforce and are fundamentally redefining and redesigning the way work gets done. Through my recent research, we've discovered that many Millennials are choosing organizations based on purpose and want to experience that throughout their organizations, their work, and their daily impact. Once they are at an organization, they often expect to have the technology to innovate, collaborate, and fit work within their lives to drive the purposeful impact that they desire. Raised as digital natives, many Millennials often look to technology to transform how work gets done, yet are not finding what they need in their organizations. To fully inspire and empower

We have spent decades asking people to check their identities at the thresholds of our organizations.

this generation, it's imperative for organizations to consider democratizing access to technology and invest in collaborative technological infrastructure.

IN: How will your role change in the next five years? Will more be expected of CDOs—and how so?

CS: First, more than ever, chief marketing officers, chief information officers, and CEOs are looking to solve diversity and inclusion challenges. Diversity can impact their brand, their products, their innovation, and their connection to their consumers. I anticipate the CDO role to be drastically more active in market-facing solutions, redesigning operations, and infusing human-centered design and innovation capabilities into research and development.

Secondly, many leaders are shifting toward transparency, but we need to take a step further. Authenticity is a journey not predicated solely on an outward self created in a moment, but rather the life experiences that inform how you show up in the world, as a leader, as a student, or as a worker among workers. It's not an on or off switch with sharing a story, but a series of experiences that is reflected in what has truly formed a leader. If we only focus on the outward, we lose the context of what is naturally inherent in ourselves. It should be a balance of inward and outward exploration, and creating that balance takes time. Leaders will likely have to make this shift and challenge themselves to really be authentic and truly champion cultural overhaul.

IN: For a number of years, practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in?

CS: In the US, organizations have been making a generic business case for inclusion for 30 years, and if we look at representation at the top of these companies, it's often still not sinking in. Now, we are finally being honest about the role that our gut instincts, our emotions, and our stories play in the equation. Couple that with our renewed analytical abilities to make an airtight business case specific to an organization by demonstrating the link between inclusion and sales, for example, and we now have something to compel leaders to behave differently.

Moreover, as Millennials are becoming the majority of the workforce, organizations are recognizing that diversity and inclusion are a necessity for today's talent landscape. Our research has indicated that 85 percent of Millennials are actively engaged when they believe their organization fosters an inclusive culture. They are demanding inclusion and view it as a fundamental way to frequently do business. This generation is even more willing to up and leave should that expectation not be met. Diversity and inclusion have moved beyond a business case or programmatic solutions to a true cultural transformation to unleash human potential. **IN**





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Susan Stith Vice President, Diversity, Inclusion, and Corporate Giving, Express Scripts

Leading inclusion at a company that brings pharmacy care to millions, Susan Stith says diversity is more than skin deep.

AS VICE PRESIDENT, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND corporate giving, Susan Stith is responsible for shaping and steering the company's enterprise-wide diversity and inclusion strategy and guiding the organization's philanthropic and community outreach strategy and initiatives. In this role, she designs creative and innovative programs, processes, and procedures for recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce while leading the organization's Diversity Advisory Board, employee resource groups, and the Express Scripts Foundation.

A five-year veteran of Express Scripts, Stith has been recognized for her work in diversity, inclusion, and corporate giving by the St. Louis chapter of the NAACP, the YWCA, and the Gateway Center for Giving and is a recipient of the *St. Louis Business Journal's* Diversity Leader Award, *DiversityPlus's* Top 25 Women Impacting Diversity, *Diversity Woman's* Top 50 Diversity Champions, and *Black Enterprise's* Top Executives in Corporate Diversity.

Actively involved in the community, Stith serves on the boards of the United Way of Greater St. Louis, the Starkloff

Disability Institute, LifelongVision Foundation, Family Resource Center, HOME WORKS!, and Arts and Education Council.

Married to her husband Drexel for thirty years, Stith is the proud mother of two college students, Alexandria and Clark. She obtained a BS from the University of Missouri-Columbia and an MA from the University of Phoenix.

INCLUSION: What are some ongoing or special initiatives your company is engaging in now to maximize inclusion on your team?

Susan Stith: At Express Scripts, diversity is not just an initiative—it is a business priority and an important enabler of our inclusive company culture. We recognize that diversity goes beyond the human characteristics that you see on the surface. We like to say that diversity is the mix of people, and inclusion is making that mix work.

Employee resource groups [ERGs] are just one piece of our diversity strategy, which includes



Susan Stith with President & CEO Tim Wentworth and Senior Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer Sara Wade.

outreach and recruiting, branding, training, ongoing internal communications, and an annual diversity awareness campaign.

Over the past few years, ERGs have taken on greater importance in organizations in advancing diversity and inclusion and corporate citizenship, and in supporting the overall business strategy.

This last point—alignment to the business—is especially important as ERG members look for ways to contribute to the success of the organization and as the organization looks for ways to leverage ERG members. This can include anything from product development, to providing cultural insight, to increasing corporate brand awareness.

Launched in 2014, our six ERGs focus on women (70 percent of our workforce), veterans, disability, LGBTQ education and awareness, generational diversity, and our multicultural workforce (about 40 percent of our workforce). As of today, more than 10 percent of our workforce is actively engaged in an employee resource group. Our colleagues at Express Scripts are finding ways to support one another and, in the process, build a more diverse, inclusive, and engaged organization.

We also launched an online employee mosaic called I Am Diverse. We were determined to create more than the typical diversity campaign with ads that feature a few people with different skin tones. We wanted to

get to the heart of employees and used National Diversity Month as the launching pad to bring diversity and inclusion to life through this mosaic.

This campaign had two primary goals—to be engaging, interactive, and impactful and to demonstrate our commitment to diversity and inclusion. In the three years since it launched, the mosaic is one of the most viewed areas of our corporate intranet.

IN: How has your approach to D&I changed in the last 10 years? How have thinking and best practices in the field changed?

SS: Of course, there is more focus on the programs, but at the end of the day, diversity and inclusion are and will always be about the people. The goal is to focus on ways that allow all employees the opportunity to bring their whole self to work.

We recognize that our company and employees play an important role in enhancing the quality of life in the communities in which we live and work. It is that belief that guides much of diversity, inclusion, and charitable giving philosophy and initiatives. It is also that belief that aligns us to our mission of helping individuals—inside and outside the organization—to live healthier, more productive lives.

In some ways, you might hate to say it, but it's true: if you want to see change in corporations, you need to attach that change to a return on investment. As diversity and inclusion have advanced, so have the amount of research and best practices. We can now quantify the growth prospects of a company by the number of women or minorities it has on its board of directors. We can show, definitively, the value of a diverse workforce and how it drives better business performance through a better culture.

I can assure you that the discussions today with senior leaders and boards are far easier and far more robust because of the evidence that has been gathered and shared over the past decade.

If I think ahead 10 years from now, I firmly believe that diversity and inclusion will be less of a separate focus, and more of a core competency that further separates good and great companies.

The best way to think about it is that diversity and inclusion are no longer about theory. They are the reality of the world we live in and the workplaces we work in.

Presumably, when you hire, you want to be sure the potential candidates are a good fit for the company and its mission. How do you cultivate a diverse talent pipeline? What factors do you take into consideration and what questions do you ask when hiring?

At Express Scripts, we are responsible for the pharmacy care of more than 80 million people. They are from all walks of life, all socioeconomic backgrounds, and all ethnicities and genders. We absolutely have to have a workforce that reflects the reality of the people we serve.

When you understand the specific needs of an African American man with diabetes and hypertension or an Asian American woman with breast cancer, you not only are creating a diverse and inclusive culture, but are delivering in a fundamentally better way for the people we serve.

IN: How do you measure success in terms of diversity and inclusion?

SS: I look for “magic moments”—those moments when we see people modeling behavior that shows how we are achieving our goals as a diverse and inclusive employer. And of course, I measure all the other things that people in my role measure, from recruiting and outreach initiatives to candidate pools to promotions and hires, training, retention, ERG participation, development programs, survey results—the list is pretty extensive.

In addition, I measure success with the support that I receive from our senior team including Tim Wentworth, CEO, and Sara Wade, CHRO.

IN: How does your company use technology and social media to enhance your D&I initiatives?

SS: We encourage our employees to leverage their social networks and tell their friends, family, and colleagues about the great work we do every day to put medicine within reach of people who need it.

Before you get it right externally, you need to get it right internally. Two years ago, we started the I Am Diverse mosaic on our intranet. We invited employees to send selfies and brief three-line descriptions about who they are.

We were blown away at the response, then and now. Thousands of employees sent photos and descriptions, and that allowed us to make a mosaic of images that truly depicted what our company looks like. It brought us together in a way that we hadn’t thought of before and demonstrated just how much we actually have in common.

IN: As more and more Millennials join the job force, and as baby boomers slowly age, has this phenomenon presented challenges for you?

I look for “magic moments”—those moments when we see people modeling behavior that shows how we are achieving our goals as a diverse and inclusive employer.

SS: At Express Scripts, our workforce is pretty evenly divided into baby boomers, Gen Xers, and Millennials. You can make your engagement strategy as complex or as simple as you want. Simple works for us.

We find ways through our ERGs to bring together the different age groups for common causes. For example, our UpNext ERG is geared toward our younger employees who are just starting out in their careers and are looking for that next step up.

It turns out that we have just as many baby boomers

and Gen Xers who want to improve their career too and build a broader network. Under the umbrella of UpNext, they come together and find ways to support each other on their career path.

IN: For a number of years, practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in?

SS: This is actually one of the easiest questions to answer because the business case for diversity and inclusion has never been easier to describe. To put it simply, the workforce is becoming much more diverse, and companies have to embrace these changes in order to continue to thrive. The message has sunk in. Diversity and inclusion have made the transition from corporate buzzwords to corporate standards.

You cannot compete in today’s marketplace without having a diverse employee base that reflects the clients and customers you serve. Even more, having a diverse and inclusive senior management team and board enhances your stature. When talented people are deciding where to build their careers, and what companies to recommend to their friends, I can tell you firsthand that they lean heavily toward employers with strong diversity and inclusion programs that are reflected in the leadership.

Sometimes in a revolution, there is a spark and everything changes. In the journey we’ve been on the past several years in diversity and inclusion, I’d compare it more to a wave that picks up momentum the closer it gets to the beach. From far away, it may seem small and inconsequential, but when the water washes over you, the power is evident. **IN**

Anise Wiley-Little

Chief Human Capital and Diversity Officer, Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University

ANISE WILEY-LITTLE, CHIEF HUMAN capital and diversity officer for Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, has more than 25 years of experience in developing and executing human resources and diversity and inclusion strategies. She has provided strategic counsel to both Fortune 100 organizations and nonprofits. Recent leadership positions have included serving as corporate vice president of human resources and the first chief diversity officer for Allstate Insurance Company.

In addition, Wiley-Little is the author of *Profitable Diversity: How Economic Inclusion Can Lead to Success*, serves as chair of the Stars Who Mean Business Peer Awards for *Diversity Woman*, and was named by the Society for Human Resource Management as one of the top 100 global diversity and inclusion thought leaders.

At the Kellogg School of Management, Wiley-Little serves as a lecturer on leadership in the Kellogg Architectures of Collaboration Initiative. This type of leadership is a first for a business school, as Kellogg seeks to develop brave leaders who inspire growth in people, organizations, and markets.

Wiley-Little holds an MPA from the University of Illinois and a BA from Illinois State University.



Anise Wiley-Little makes it a priority to address cultural bias in the workplace.

Inclusion: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in 2017 for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders?

Anise Wiley-Little: When we don't have a foundation of balanced race and gender progress toward the ultimate goal of diverse and unbiased decision-making, it prevents us from moving closer to diversity of thought. It's vital that we create environments that allow authentic contributions of all people, because by 2025 our workforce will be even more ethnically diverse.

When you look at who is sitting in the C-suite or is part of the tenured faculty of our business schools, neither is diverse and inclusive enough. Ninety-one percent of Fortune 500 companies are run by white men who have the direct ability to influence corporate culture. These stats suggest that a big win for the sustainability of diversity is enhanced collaboration and partnerships. Without it, success is

ephemeral. The need to fully embrace diversity and inclusion as a core business strategy is critical.

IN: What are some of the recent thought leader topics in the world of inclusion that you are teaching and organizations are learning about and implementing?

AL: A full-cycle, profitable diversity strategy requires business planning, process development, and execution, while taking into consideration the level of leadership commitment. You must include internal environment and external reputation, defined goals, and metrics with clear accountability when making diversity and inclusion a core business strategy. Custom communication is also a crucial element for the entire team, as these strategies must align with the goals of the organization.

Far too many organizations approach diversity and inclusion through a very narrow lens. Leaders must proactively integrate diversity and inclusion into people practices to meet challenges and take advantage of the immense opportunities provided by the growth of multicultural markets. This is why it's so crucial to build a strong diversity brand now that grows organically out of a company's existing brand.

IN: How have the field and thinking and best practices changed around D&I in the last 10 years?

AL: Over the past 10 years, the D&I work has stagnated as leaders try to find the right strategies to infuse diversity into their business practices. Diversity has to be addressed not only in various phases of employment, but in varying levels of business execution.

It is also a business imperative to have diversity officers present in the C-suite, but unfortunately only a small percentage of corporations allow the CDO to report directly to the CEO. The absence of the CDO in the C-suite marginalizes the work. Diversity is more than human resources or bringing talent into the organization.

Diversity is about the business—understanding the economic and social impact and how it touches the community.

Diversity is bigger than race, gender, and LGBTQ, for instance. There are many different facets to it. Understanding the impact of those differences and their effect on the organization is very important. Success comes when we dive deeply into all things impacting an organization's workforce and how they are included in core business strategies. All are just as vital as financial returns or other strategic business practices that allow us to excel.

IN: How has the accelerated globalization in recent years affected your D&I strategies?

AL: Great talent comes from all over the world as well as from our own backyard. Globalization has influenced our

Only a small percentage of corporations allow the CDO to report directly to the CEO. This marginalizes the work.

workforce in profound ways, transforming society in the areas of politics, immigration, and economics, with an emphasis on multicultural markets. When we talk about globalization, it isn't about where your company is located but, more importantly, is about understanding everybody who makes up the team.

At the Kellogg School of Management, we know that our diverse group of students will lead global companies. As we teach, we think about how they will lead

to ensure that they understand diversity and inclusion as a business strategy designed to achieve success. A company's diversity plan for human capital must align with the organization's business objectives so that it is better prepared to compete. The demographics of the workforce have to be as diverse and inclusive as the customers they serve. They cannot be mutually exclusive.

IN: As more and more Millennials join the job force, and as baby boomers are slowly aging, has this phenomenon presented challenges for D&I leaders?

AL: Five generations of American workers are now in the workforce, and each group comes with different characteristics, ideas, attitudes, and life experiences. This is what diversity is all about—embracing every voice for a more inclusive work environment to enhance business goals and objectives. Therefore, companies must tailor their talent management practices to fit the needs of Millennials, baby boomers, and all generations alike. Companies must understand that people learn, engage, and work differently, while allowing them to find common ground for the sake of the business.

Companies must focus on expanding a communications strategy with common language that makes diversity a core business plan of action that everyone understands. Senior executives must also provide coaching and sponsorship to accelerate the career growth of talented employees from diverse backgrounds to build effective teams poised to corner new markets. There has been no better time for organizations to embrace a diverse workforce and seize business opportunities than now.

IN: How important is board diversity? Would a diverse board make your path to reaching your desired outcomes smoother?

AL: I believe that a diverse board can make the path to reaching desired outcomes smoother. A diverse board that

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Senior leaders who make hiring decisions should get away from what some call “fit” or hiring within one’s own image. Fit is often used to exclude people.

reflects the world in which we live offers a level of sensitivity to diversity and inclusion that we need. However, you will need enough diversity on the board so that everyone feels comfortable speaking up and holding the organization accountable.

The board has the ability to influence business and impact the success of the organization and the diversity that it wants. The best leaders are those who lead by example. This is why paying attention to things such as the diversity of your senior leadership and board of directors is so crucial.

The surest way to create a strong diversity brand at your company is to create a strong, inclusive diversity reality for customers, suppliers, and employees. Your diversity brand reflects your core values, and there is no substitute for authenticity.

IN: How do you measure success in terms of diversity and inclusion? Retention? Organizational alignment? Participation in inclusion activities? What else?

AL: When a company sets specific goals with a strategy to meet those goals, an obvious measure of success is generally defined by economics and increased innovation, efficiency, and collaboration. However, at some point, the company must not only focus on the numbers, but also address cultural bias within the workplace. These things are subtle, but really important. It’s not a zero sum game. It’s not just about profit or head counts, but is about improving equity, access, and opportunity for everyone.

It’s also vitally important for company executives to sponsor employees from a class that is generally overlooked for advancement, but nonetheless is talented and deserving of opportunity. In this way, these efforts are key performance indicators that lead to measured success all-around.

IN: Will more be expected of CDOs, or will the CDO role go away?

AL: For progressive organizations, the CDO will continue to act as a guide and strategist to change the culture of an organization and facilitate and improve business goals. It is all a part of the process to bring diversity and inclusion into alignment to achieve greater success for the company. The CDO’s effectiveness can have a tremendous impact

on a company’s growth for many years to come. The CDO must be there to navigate tough situations and hard conversations, and to provide solutions as business objectives continue to evolve.

It’s also important that the CDO and human resources professionals work together, even if they move in different directions, to positively impact the success of the company and the diversity it wants.

IN: How can senior leaders best cultivate a diverse talent pipeline?

AL: Senior leaders must make attracting a diverse talent pool at all levels of business, particularly management, a priority. They must use their position of privilege to open doors for others who have been blocked or limited because of institutional bias. It’s important not only to hire more people of color, women, people with different abilities, and others, but to nurture their talent and mentor and sponsor them. It takes more than the CEO alone.

Senior leaders who make hiring decisions should also get away from what some call “fit” or hiring within one’s own image, especially if fit can’t be clearly defined. Fit is often used to exclude a certain group of people. It’s important to cast a wide net by seeking qualified talent that is not always in our own image.

Companies that succeed in building a strong diversity brand will also succeed in attracting the best talent and reach the most markets. Change requires dogged pursuit. It has to be something that is done without hesitation so that no one is excluded.

IN: For a number of years practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in?

AL: The CDO is still required to make the business case for diversity despite data that is readily available to support it. Those who head companies and organizations understand the numbers. They know that diversity and inclusion at all levels of business increase profits, performance, creativity, innovation, and problem-solving ability. Diversity and inclusion challenge us to be better, to bring the best out of each other. If you have to ask about the business case for diversity and inclusion, I already know where you stand on the issue.

There is still disconnect and resistance to fully committing to making diversity and inclusion the foundation of business strategy. There is a gap between good intentions and making diversity and inclusion a priority with resources put in place to support it. The success of diversity comes with measured progress and sustainability. **IN**

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Ryan Parker

Division Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, KentuckyOne Health

Ryan Parker uses diversity and inclusion work to help improve the health of all populations.

KENTUCKYONE HEALTH IS THE largest health-care system in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Ryan Parker is responsible for building a strategy that enhances KentuckyOne Health's vision to be a nationally distinguished health system and a benchmark health-care system for diversity, inclusion, and health equity.

Parker has led national award-winning diversity and inclusion programs for organizations in both the health-care and the academic sectors. His credible reputation has led him to distinctive roles at Children's Hospital of

Philadelphia, the University of Pittsburgh Schools of the Health Sciences, and the Robert Wood Johnson Health System in central New Jersey—the 2015 winner of the American Hospital Association's Equity of Care Award. These experiences were preceded by time as a public school teacher where his passion for advocating for diversity and inclusion and serving the vulnerable began.

Parker's leadership has been recognized by several national publications and organizations. In 2015, he was named on *Diversity MBA Magazine's* list of Top 100 Executives Under 50. In 2014, he was recognized by *Becker's Hospital Review* as one of the nation's Top 25 Healthcare Leaders Under 40. And, in 2013, *The Network Journal* named him among the nation's top 40 Under-Forty minority executives. He serves on numerous boards—including the Louisville Urban League and Volunteers of America—and is an active member of the Rotary Club of Louisville and the National Association of Health Services Executives. Parker graduated from Jacksonville State University in 1999 with a BS in psychology.

Study after study has proven that more inclusive organizations have higher employee engagement. In health care, this leads to better quality of care.

INCLUSION: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in 2017 for a corporate diversity and inclusion leader like yourself?

Ryan Parker: One of the greatest challenges for diversity and inclusion leaders is not a new one—it is the continued journey of moving our organizations beyond diversity to inclusion. And as many organizations are still grappling with diversity, inclusion is the real opportunity and remains the most difficult to achieve—and yet, the most rewarding to an organization's people and bottom line.

Presumably, when you hire, you want to be sure the potential candidates are a good fit for the company and its mission. How do you hire? What factors do you take into consideration and what questions do you ask?

"Fit" is a term for discussion. I've often said "the right fit" is the enemy of diversity, because it tends to lead toward more homogeneity—more of the same—and not diversity. So, in a recent discussion with our sourcing team about diverse talent sourcing, we discussed the term "fit" and how "the right fit" approach might be a blind spot on our journey toward achieving diversity when it is not functioning absent of bias—and that can be tricky. So, while we are looking for "fit," we are also looking for something different a potential employee brings to the table. Diversity is giving us a lens to look more closely for those unique characteristics that diversify, even, the "right fit" for our organization.

IN: What are some ongoing or special initiatives your company is engaging in now to maximize inclusion with your team?

RP: By far, it is the engagement with our board of directors. We have a highly committed and diverse board of directors. In fact, we've increased board diversity by 21 percent during 2016—exceeding national averages in the healthcare industry. We know their engagement is paramount to build meaningful and sustainable diversity and inclusion efforts, so we are thrilled.

IN: How do you measure success in terms of diversity and inclusion? Retention? Organizational alignment? Participation in inclusion activities?

RP: All of the above. We have evolving outcomes-driven dashboards in place—ranging from workforce measures to patient care measures. In health care, it's important for us also to know the impact of our diversity and inclusion journey on our patients—how they are perceiving their experiences in our facilities—as well as our monitoring our performance in closing barriers in care and health outcomes for diverse and underserved populations.

But, we think the best measure of success is the engagement of our workforce. Inclusion and engagement are two sides of the same coin. Study after study has proven that more inclusive organizations have higher employee engagement. In health care, this leads to better quality of care, which is the ultimate goal of our diversity and inclusion efforts.

IN: In terms of diversity and inclusion, what are the biggest challenges your company faces and how do you plan on approaching them?

RP: KentuckyOne Health is the largest health-care system in our state, so we cover a broad geography. The diversity of where we are located—from urban Louisville to very rural parts of the state—creates a challenge to actively engage our entire workforce in one discussion that is meaningful and responsive to their specific market and local communities. Early on, we learned that being intentional to define diversity, locally, would be very important to ensure active engagement of our workforce on the journey. Keep in mind that even within homogeneity there is still a great deal of diversity—diversity of thought, perspective, and ideas, working styles, generations, etcetera—and these areas of diversity can lead to some of the greatest challenges in the workplace. So inclusion still remains the greatest opportunity and the real work to help manage those differences. This challenge has created the perfect platform for us to place more intentionality around defining diversity broadly and engaging early on in discussions about inclusion.

IN: As more and more Millennials join the job force, and as baby boomers slowly age, has this phenomenon provided challenges for you?

RP: Yes—particularly when addressing retention of nurses. In the nursing profession,

there is an increase in employment of nurses under the age of 30, as well as an increase of that demographic in nursing schools. One study suggested that 91 percent of Millennials intend to change jobs within their first three years in the workforce. This is no different in health care. In fact, it seems exacerbated a bit in the nursing profession. This is not promising in health care, as high turnover of nurses can have implications on patient safety and the quality of care. More and more, focused strategies on retention of nurses are increasingly becoming important to our business and mission as a health-care provider. We are aggressively addressing this challenge and making progress. Inclusion, engagement, expanded growth and development opportunities, clearer career pathways, and becoming the employer of choice are our strategic approaches for addressing this challenge and, hopefully, shifting this paradigm.

IN: Would you say that your company exhibits a culture of inclusion? If you think it can improve, what are some of the challenges and how are you working to overcome them?

RP: Aspirationally, absolutely—inclusion is at the core of who we are. It is the foundation of our core values of reverence, integrity, compassion, and excellence—but, like all places, we have opportunities. One of our greatest opportunities is being more inclusive and engaging with staff across all shifts. Health care is a 24-hour business, and, sometimes, engaging our evening, overnight, and weekend employees the way we engage our Monday through Friday daytime employees is a challenge. One way we are working to overcome this challenge is to be more innovative and engaging in our internal communications platforms—and engaging with our workforce in ways that work best regardless of their shift. We have employee feedback councils who help us create more engaging platforms, and we're very excited about that.

IN: How will your role change in the next five years? Will more be expected of CDOs?

RP: As many organizations are in the midst of financial turnarounds—particularly in health care—CDOs will be required to do

Building diversity and inclusion into the way the organization performs and talks about performance will elevate it from being a program to being a priority.

more, oftentimes with less, to ensure that our organizations see diversity and inclusion as foundational and a fully integrated business driver for operational excellence, or diversity and inclusion programs might be at risk. We will be expected to articulate the value and return on investment beyond the morality, ethics, and social responsibility case. All CDOs should be on an intentional journey of integrating diversity and inclusion as an operational business division beyond a human resources “people” strategy. If we fail to do this, we are not tapping into the true value of diversity, and the importance of the work becomes at risk of being diminished.

IN: For a number of years, practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in? Does your company's leadership view a culture of diversity and inclusion as a competitive advantage?

RP: The answer to this question is rooted in our response as diversity and inclusion practitioners, and if it's not sinking in, we have to shift our approach. At KentuckyOne, yes, the message is sinking in. The turning point was when we made the shift of positioning diversity and inclusion as a people-only strategy to a patient safety, quality of care, provision of service, employee engagement, and business growth strategy. So, today, we are very intentional to articulate our diversity and inclusion work as a key driver to our mission of improving the health of all populations and being an employer of choice—and our diversity and inclusion goals are explicitly built into our organization's operational goals and strategic priorities with metrics that articulate the return on investment. Building diversity and inclusion into the way the organization performs and talks about performance will elevate it from being a program to being a priority.

KentuckyOne Health's mission, “to deliver wellness, healing and hope to all—including the underserved,” is not just a mantra—it is who we are. Today, diversity and inclusion are the way we operationalize that mission into our day-to-day operations—top, down, and bottom, up. We're excited about the journey. **IN**



Candi Castleberry Singleton

Founder, Power of &

CANDI CASTLEBERRY SINGLETON IS THE FOUNDER of the Power of &, a social enterprise organization which offers the Dignity & Respect Campaign and other innovative programs for employee and community engagement. She has worked with senior executives, business process owners, and community leaders to build sustainable practices and inspires people and communities to work better together. She has implemented successful initiatives as chief inclusion and diversity officer at UPMC, at Motorola (where she was vice president of global inclusion and diversity), and at Sun Microsystems (where she led the Global Inclusion Center of Expertise). She has led teams in operations and talent development, and at Xerox Corporation, she acquired experience in sales management, product marketing, and training.

An experienced strategist, Castleberry Singleton created the “Bolted-on to Built-in Model,” an integrated inclusion model that helps companies transition from compliance-driven processes led by human resources to integrated activities that shift the responsibility for achieving an inclusive culture to every employee. The

Candi Castleberry Singleton's Healthcare diversity program has grown into a national campaign that helps organizations guide respectful interactions.

model is featured in the chapter she contributed to *Crossing the Divide: Intergroup Leadership in a World of Difference* (Harvard Business School Press, August 2009).

Castleberry Singleton is an international speaker, teacher, and mentor. She has delivered inspiring keynotes and lectures around the globe, from Beijing to Budapest to Boston, and serves as an adjunct professor at Carnegie Mellon University. She received an MBA from Pepperdine University and a bachelor's degree in legal studies from UC Berkeley and completed the Stanford University Executive Human Resources program.

INCLUSION: What will be some of the biggest challenges in 2017 for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders?

Candi Castleberry Singleton: From the earliest days in our careers, nearly all of us were told there were two topics never to discuss in the workplace—religion and politics. But the walls of our workplaces are porous. Religion and politics seep through these walls in the form of the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of our coworkers. As D&I leaders, we have a responsibility to help organizations navigate these topics. As current events outside our workplaces affect employees without regard for time and place, we are in the unique position to steer the discussions in the right direction to benefit the fabric of our workplaces.

The 2016 presidential election, coupled with built-up tensions and many unaddressed issues on race and economics in our nation, has pushed us all into new territory in the workplace. Although they were probably always there just under the surface, tensions are now visibly in the hearts and minds of our employees, on their social media pages, in conversations in the halls, and in our conference rooms.

The issues we currently face that are being fanned by a not-always-so-civilized rhetoric and the impact of the 2016 election will surely carry over into 2017. Our traditional roles have often focused on D&I in the workforce, workplace, and marketplace. While they have continued to expand, our written job descriptions have rarely included social justice and politics—but they do now. The good news is we are resilient and resourceful. Over the years we have learned to evolve with the changing needs of employees, customers, and organizations. Just as we have prepared in the past, we will be equipped for 2017.

IN: Tell us about your greatest success story.

CCS: In 2008, we launched the Dignity & Respect Initiative at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center [UPMC] to create a more inclusive workplace culture. As communities and organizations outside UPMC learned about the initiative, Dignity & Respect grew from an internal initiative to a separate entity and national campaign that teaches organizations how to have respectful interactions.

But Dignity & Respect is more than just a campaign. For example, its 30 Tips initiative was created by using direct input from focus groups

Our written job descriptions have rarely included social justice and politics—but they do now.

where employees were asked to describe behaviors that foster an environment where people are treated with dignity and respect. By practicing the 30 Tips, an organization can become a better employer and provider of services. The 7 Pillars training helps to create shared accountability for a workplace that values and respects differences. By integrating the Dignity & Respect concepts into workplace policies and processes—including organizational values, learning and development tools and training, annual performance evaluations, and business strategies—the

campaign has helped organizations improve the interactions of employees with each other and with the communities they serve.

IN: Have your clients asked for help in being more inclusive of transgender people? What do you recommend?

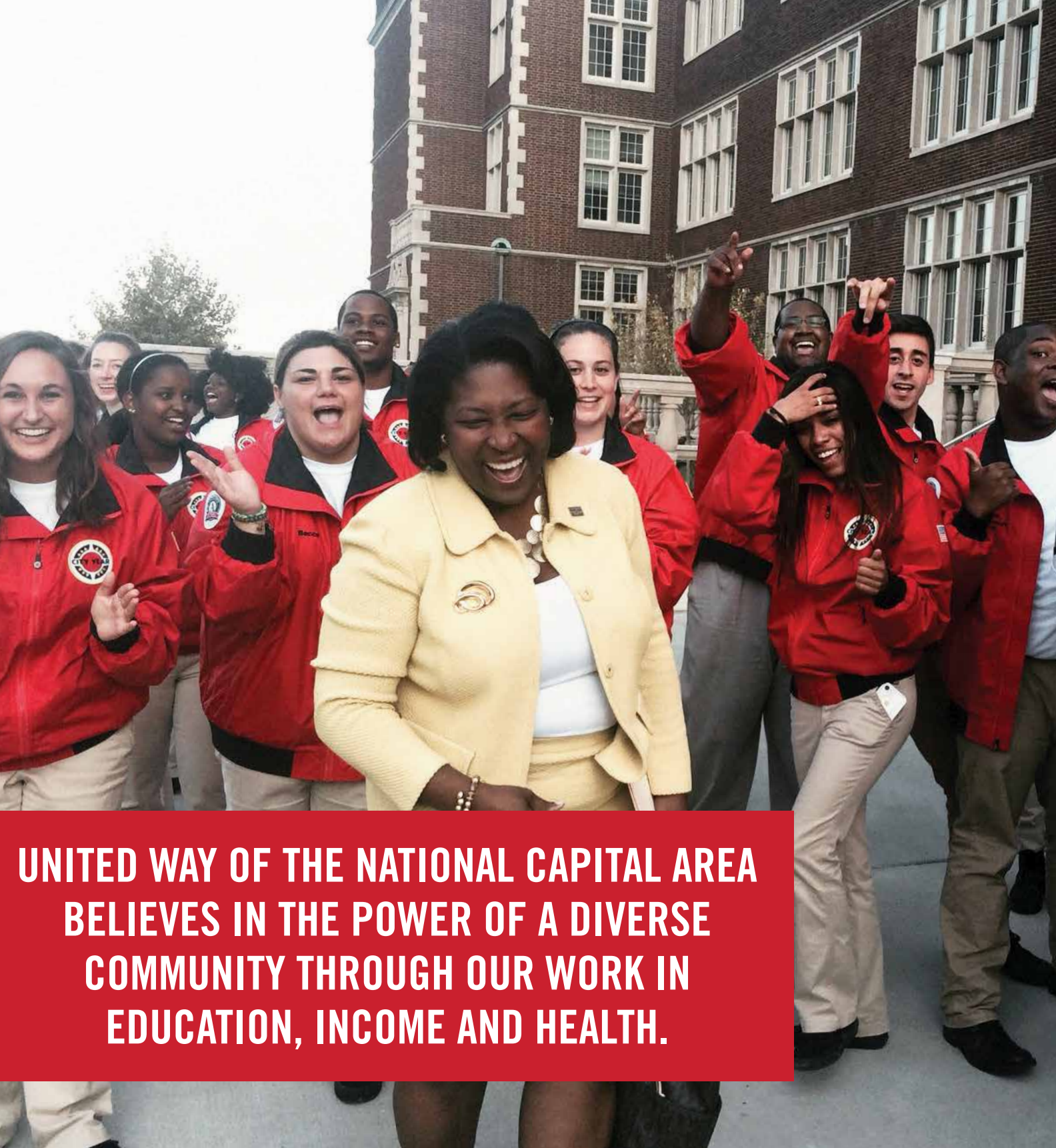
CCS: I'm a big believer in leverage. I've always tried to solve new diversity issues with solutions that benefit more than the one demographic group that may have brought initial attention to a problem. The best way to do this is by creating new or additional allies through finding common ground. After many recent conversations with elected officials, corporate executives, and community leaders on the topic of bathrooms, I was reminded of a story I heard when I was a D&I leader in a large health-care system. An older gentleman requested a map of the family or unisex restrooms. When asked how the map would help him, he explained that his wife had Alzheimer's. When she needed to go to the restroom, he couldn't take her with him into the men's room, nor could he send her into a women's restroom alone because she would panic if he were not around. How many of us have thought of how family restrooms could serve caregivers or others?

This sparked a thought about conversations on restrooms to serve the transgender community. What if organizations and public facilities built or modified existing restrooms to create more family restrooms? A shift in focus to family restrooms could serve and create allies among fathers with daughters, mothers with sons, and caregivers, in addition to serving the transgender community. We can all work to find common ground. By seeking solutions that benefit multiple groups, we can chip away at all sorts of barriers to inclusion.

IN: How will the CDO role change in the next five years? Will more be expected of CDOs?

CCS: In forward-thinking organizations, the role has evolved from affirmative action and hiring practices to include multiple aspects of talent management and employee engagement, cultural awareness and related training, marketing and communications, community outreach and government relations, and even in-depth knowledge of the products and services offered by the organization. In other words, Chief Diversity Officers have collectively become "Chief Everything Officers" needing to consult across all aspects of the business, sometimes without expanding resources.

Over the next five years, organizations will need to consider new strategies, new ways of tracking data, and new types of employee groups to





engage a generation of employees and customers who may choose to self-identify differently than ever before. The boxes on our standard forms may no longer apply. And a new generation of workers may choose not to participate in traditional demographic-based initiatives.

As an adjunct professor teaching D&I classes, I am continuously informed anew by my students. I have experienced firsthand our need to engage a new generation in the workplace who feel less and less connected to traditional approaches and topics of D&I and more connected to personal values of respect, social responsibility, and intersectionality. They have a new way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power and may choose not to participate in what they consider old-school initiatives. As D&I leaders, we will need to help our organizations prepare for these inevitable changes and learn to work effectively across our diverse social identities. Finding common ground AND embracing the “Power of &” is a pathway to this vitally needed collaboration. At the end of the day, it is about inspiring others to work and live better together. We need to leverage the power of “and,” both in the U.S. and around the world.

IN: How does a company best cultivate a diverse talent pipeline?

CCS: D&I leaders can lead diverse talent pipeline efforts, but true success requires leaders and managers to do their part [toward furthering the company’s goals]. Many roles are filled by recommendation from our personal networks. So the questions I often ask of leaders and managers include, “When asked to recommend others for opportunities, how many candidates can you or have you recommended that are not at all like you [age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, economic, or education]? How many have you hired or mentored? How many would mutually list you in their network?”

We can all expand our personal networks by meeting new people at industry events, mentoring, volunteering, or serving on boards. We can always be talent scouts. A leader or manager doesn’t need a diversity strategy to be intentional about making a wider spectrum of friends. If

we don’t make new friends with people less like ourselves, we will continue to recycle the same names of the same people for opportunities, creating the perception or reinforcing the reality of favoritism. If we don’t make diverse friends, employees not included can feel less connected and engaged. Cultivating a diverse talent pipeline is everyone’s job, not just the D&I leader and her or his team.

IN: For a number of years, practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in?

CCS: Business practices are changing, and at a rapid pace. The US and world demographics continue to change. US cities are transforming, creating geographic shifts in the Millennial and Gen X workforce. Technology requires us to engage generations of employees and customers in new ways around the world. Automation has replaced some of the skill sets of the workforce and has created requirements for new ones—and the list of changes goes on. With all this being said, it is difficult to comprehend why an organization would need to be further convinced by requiring a business case [for D&I]. It seems obvious that a company would benefit from implementing strategies to provide products and services to all customers and employ the very people who use them. Yet there are industries, organizations, and leaders with no diversity or inclusion plans at all—not for products and services offerings, and not for employment.

So as a D&I leader who is dedicated to helping companies help themselves, I put forth questions that determine the motive behind a request for a business case. Is it simply an exercise to keep the D&I team busy to avoid doing the sometimes uncomfortable work that needs to be done, or is it genuinely required to make change happen in the organization? If a business case is genuinely required, I have learned that it is critically important to gain both leadership commitment to take measurable actions and establish an authentic partnership with the leadership and D&I teams to support the strategy resulting from the business case. The best outcomes result from working better together. For me, it’s all about collaboration—the Power of &. **IN**

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Mary-Frances Winters

Founder, President & CEO, The Winters Group, Inc.

Helping organizations keep pace as diversity evolves.

MARY-FRANCES WINTERS launched The Winters Group in 1984. The Winters Group develops diversity and inclusion strategies for Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, and organizations in the educational sector.

Prior to founding The Winters Group, Winters was an affirmative action officer and senior market analyst at Eastman Kodak Company. She was named a diversity pioneer by *Profiles in*

Diversity Journal in August 2007 and received the Winds of Change Award from the Forum on Workplace Inclusion in 2016. She was also featured in the June 2016 issue of *Forbes* magazine, which honored some of the DC Metro area's most powerful women.

A life member of the board of trustees of the University of Rochester, Winters has served on the boards of the Greater Rochester Metro Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Greater Rochester, and the National Board of the Girl Scouts of the USA. She has served as a mentor for the Emerging Leaders Program sponsored by the Centers for Leadership and Public Affairs at Duke University and the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Winters is a frequent contributor to the editorial page of the local newspaper and *USA Today's* Forum column on workplace- and diversity-related issues. She has been published in the International Personnel Management Association newsletter, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, *DiversityInc* magazine, *Executive Excellence* magazine, and Society of Human Resource Management's *Mosaics* newsletter. She is the author of three books: *Only Wet Babies Like Change: Workplace Wisdom for Baby Boomers*, *Inclusion Starts With 'I,'* and *CEOs Who Get It: Diversity Leadership from the Heart and Soul*.

She is a graduate of the University of Rochester, where she also earned an MBA from the William E. Simon Executive Development Program. She received an honorary doctorate from Roberts Wesleyan College in 1997.

INCLUSION: What will be some of the biggest issues and challenges in 2017 for corporate diversity and inclusion leaders?

Mary-Frances Winters: We just released the 2016 edition of our Global D&I Trends Report, where we share some of the most pressing issues impacting how we do this work today and in the future. Four of those are religious diversity, LGBTQIA rights, the global workplace, and race.

For years, religious diversity has been a topic that many organizations have shied away from

in their diversity agendas. As religious minorities become more visible and vocal in the United States, I anticipate religious diversity gaining more significance in the workplace. Inclusion is truly about bring one's "full self," and for many, religion is a big part of their identity.

LGBTQIA rights in the US and abroad have progressed tremendously over the past few years. However, there is still so much to be done. In addition, as our understanding of gender and gender identity expands, organizations will need to be prepared to educate employees and also align their practices as such. Addressing some of the issues and challenges specific to the transgender community will also be important.

It is no secret that the global workforce is changing. There have been and will continue to be rapid demographic shifts. As a result, the global workforce is becoming increasingly female, younger and older, and nonwhite. Companies will need to continue to focus on cultural competence to understand these shifts and challenge their status quo.

Finally, race isn't new to D&I work. This work is rooted in compliance, which has traditionally been focused on race and gender. However, race has and continues to be one of the more challenging areas of diversity for organizations. In some organizations, it's even avoided. A lot of this has to do with fear and hesitation around dialogue, especially given today's social climate across our country. Racial inequities continue to persist within organizations and society—we'll need to begin talking about race if we intend on changing that anytime soon.

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

MW: I think one of the biggest areas of exploration that organizations should begin considering and implementing is around how to respond to trauma in the workplace. Over the last year, in the US and abroad, we experienced a number of tragic events. These events impact employees. And if we are to truly create environments where employees can bring their "whole self," we must begin to identify ways

As religious minorities become more visible and vocal in the United States, I anticipate religious diversity gaining more significance in the workplace.

we can cultivate environments that truly support that. Developing cultural competence and addressing unconscious bias will also remain two critical areas of exploration and practice for leaders.

IN: How has the accelerated globalization in recent years affected D&I strategies?

MW: Now more than ever, culturally competent leadership is critical. It is not enough for leaders to be "sensitive to" differences and other cultures. Rather, they must be competent in navigating and adapting across them. I choose to position "competence" over "sensitivity," because competence suggests a journey and ongoing development. If leaders and organizations expect to be successful, effective, and innovative on a global scale, cultural competence is requisite.

IN: Have your clients asked for your help in becoming more inclusive of transgender people? What do you recommend? What are some of the challenges you have seen?

MW: Transgender inclusion has definitely become an area of greater inquiry. What I have found to be the biggest area of opportunity for our clients and organizations is the need to broaden awareness and encourage dialogue. The reality is, you don't know what you don't know, and often that "unknown" can foster fear. Most of the discourse and dissension on LGBT in the political arena result from a lack of understanding and an inability to see common ground. This same dynamic has the potential to manifest in the workplace. People sometimes get tired of hearing this, but I contend that education is key. And being intentional about expanding your way of thinking. D&I leaders and practitioners should be doing the same.

IN: As more and more Millennials join the job force, and as baby boomers are slowly aging, has this phenomenon presented challenges for your clients?

MW: Managing across generations and creating a culture that is inclusive of these very different—though, in some ways, similar—groups can be a challenge. Some of our clients experience disparities in retention, for example. They may be retaining baby boomers, but have been unable to do the same for Xers and Millennials. This obviously has implications for talent challenges as more and more baby boomers begin to retire. We've encouraged our clients to dig deeper into understanding how employees across generations are experiencing the workplace. Conduct focus groups, utilize data, and analyze across generational segments—it's not enough to make assumptions, and organizations can only begin to address these challenges if they know what's causing them.

IN: How will the chief diversity officer role change in the next five years?

MW: I anticipate the CDO role growing in its influence over the next five years. Particularly as more CEOs continue to grow in their understanding of the implications of a global workforce and marketplace. CDOs will need to balance strong business acumen with the skills and competencies of a D&I practitioner.

CDOs will need to be futurists, anticipating the next trend. They'll need to be systems thinkers with the capability to grasp the interconnectedness of seemingly unrelated issues. They need to be at all tables where strategy and key future business and organizational goals are being discussed. It is a vital role with vast implications for the survival of the planet.

IN: How does a company best cultivate a diverse talent pipeline?

MW: At the surface level, the organization must broaden its scope of outreach—this should include partnering with organizations that serve diverse constituencies and investing in internal development programs. These are your HB-CUs, affinity-based professional organizations, community organizations, and internship programs. However, that's not enough. While expanding outreach and developing programs can build a pipeline, companies must also ensure that there aren't processes and practices in place that act as barriers to building a diverse pipeline. Cultural competence and unconscious bias, both, play a role. If recruiters and hiring managers are not culturally competent enough to decipher and navigate cultural differences that may exist in how individuals interview, communicate, etcetera, then they run the risk of missing out on potentially valuable talent. Likewise, if there are no accountability measures in place to ensure unconscious biases are not impacting screening and selection processes, then efforts in pipeline and outreach activities are in vain.

IN: For a number of years, practitioners of diversity and inclusion have been making the business case for D&I. Do you think this message is sinking in?

MW: I think leaders and clients are understanding the business case. The data are

I have mentored many women who have wanted to rise in leadership or start their own business. It is gratifying when one of them tells me that I contributed to her career in a meaningful way.

her basement."My managers and colleagues thought I was crazy to leave a "good job" with a good future to venture out on my own. I was told that one vice president said, "Let her go. She will come back in six months begging for her job back." Actually that was my motivation, not to have to ever beg for anything. I started the company because I did not think I could reach my full potential in the corporate world. At that time, there were even more barriers. As a woman of color, I felt like I was being evaluated by managers who had deep-seated stereotypes about my capabilities.

Running a business has had its many challenges as well. I have had other people of color say that they could not hire The Winters Group because of the optics. They would need to go with a company headed by someone of another ethnicity. We have also been through at least three recessions and still we stand.

However, I think the greatest part of all of this is that my daughter, Mareisha Reese, is now chief operating officer, doing a stellar job at helping to grow the business. In the early years, I had dreamed of The Winters Group becoming a family business, and now it truly is with Mareisha and Keley Smith, my niece, who serves as operations manager.

Over the years I have mentored many other women who have wanted to rise in leadership or start their own business. It is gratifying when I hear from one of them who tells me that I contributed to her career and life in a meaningful way. Success only comes because others support you, and I have also been mentored and supported by a number of amazing men and women who have taught me many valuable lessons, including the power of networking and collaboration. I know that I stand on the shoulders of the generations of successful women both famous and unsung who paved the way for me to do what I do and be who I am. I am grateful. **IN**

there and make the case plain and clear. The challenging part is the "how." We take the approach of shifting our clients' mindset from viewing D&I as a "one-off" or isolated "initiative," to seeing it as a strategic journey. That said, it is not enough to package a training, get all your leaders in a room for one day, and expect the outcomes that have been associated with inclusion—innovation, creative, engagement, etcetera. Developing inclusive leaders is a competency, and much like any other competency, it requires ongoing development and intentionality. This is the approach we take with our clients.

IN: Tell us about your greatest success story.

MW: Staying in business for 32 years. When I started in 1984, it was so rare [for a woman to launch her own business] that the local newspaper [in Rochester, New York] did an article with the headline, "Woman starts business in

THE LAST WORD

Let's Embrace, Not Fear, Differences

BY DR. SHEILA ROBINSON

Eight years ago, when Barack Obama was elected president, it was a watershed moment for racial equality in the United States.

Or at least I thought so.

Today, I'm not so sure. In the past few years, the country has been rocked by a series of incidents—and back-

lashes—that have caused justifiable outrage. There has been ongoing and heated public discussion over a series of police shootings of innocent African Americans and Latinos. As a result, police officers—the vast majority of whom are committed to serving and protecting all Americans—

have been blamed. Then, a terrorist attack on a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, prompted the demonization of Muslim Americans. A bill passed by the North Carolina General Assembly that discriminated against transgender people ratcheted up the acrimony.

Yes, there have been some moments of celebration, in particular the rapid, growing acceptance of gay and lesbian Americans and the laws enacted that allow them to marry whom they love in 37 states. In this election cycle, two

women were candidates for president, and one, the Democratic Party nominee, may be the most qualified nominee in our 240-year history. And, for the most part, President Obama has been accepted as the first African American leader of the United States.

Lately, however, these moments of victory seem overshadowed. As diversity and inclusion practitioners, we are particularly frustrated to see the divisiveness, as we have devoted our lives to bringing people together and treating them with dignity and respect. It sometimes seems as if history is repeating itself. I never thought I'd see in my lifetime some of the things my mother saw, such as people still being treated in a certain way because of how they look and what they wear, sparking angry, even violent protests in the streets.

But I'm an optimist and I know that you are, too. We wouldn't be in this profession if we didn't believe that the arc bends toward love, inclusion, and plain old common sense. We know from experience that people want to work and live together in harmony—and that diversity and inclusion work and make a company stronger and more successful.

Because of what we have learned on the job, we can play a role in healing these divisions. As D&I leaders, we have some power to create change in our workplace. Imagine if all the D&I practitioners in Fortune 1000 companies vow to redouble their efforts to implement programs and efforts to facilitate people working together. In the process, people will learn that we may all be different in some ways, but in many more ways we are actually the same—human beings who want to live peacefully, excel in life and work, and simply love and be happy.

In short, we need to take what we are learning and doing in the workplace and apply it to our communities. For example, we can spread the message within our organizations that being different is not something to fear but is something to embrace. Differences are valuable, and learning from our different perspectives will foster understanding and, in the process, move our companies—and our neighborhoods and the world—forward and closer together.

I encourage D&I experts to keep doing what you have been doing so well—and to do even a bit more. We have the ability to make a difference and influence the conversations around our dinner tables and in our communities. We have come too far to lose the faith now. Inclusion works. Inclusion matters. Let's help America embrace inclusion.

I can only speak to my own experience—and that experience says that together we can overcome this moment in our history. **IN**

Dr. Sheila Robinson is the founder and CEO of Robinson & Associates Communications, LLC, and the publisher of Diversity Woman and Inclusion magazines. She is the author of Lead by Example. #inclusionmatters



I never thought I'd see in my lifetime some of the things my mother saw. But I'm an optimist.

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