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2021
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FOREWORD

FOREWORD

Building a Balanced and Diverse Workforce

Today, many business leaders acknowledge the general importance of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I). Relatively few, however, truly understand why it is so important – let alone how to move from intent to action. Fewer still are improving an organization's racial literacy before building and bettering their respective DE&I capability.

At Hanold Associates we have long believed that embracing DE&I is right from a moral perspective, good for business outcomes and great for cultural depth and richer learning environments. More and more organizations are experiencing this reality, and over the last 10 years we have seen firsthand the positive impact of taking DE&I seriously.

Timely Wake-Up Calls

When COVID-19 rocked businesses seemingly overnight, we saw many Chief HR Officers step up and stand shoulder to shoulder with their CEOs in a way we had never witnessed before. We also saw CEOs who quickly realized their HR leaders were totally unprepared for that level of a strategic, crisis-fueled performance.

Soon after that crisis hit, the world witnessed the shocking death of George Floyd, among other similar atrocities. This civil unrest quickly led to an enhanced wave of intense efforts to diversify organizations, especially at the leadership levels. Specifically, most organizations' responses were to diversify the leadership team ethnically or bring in new positions of leadership like Chief Diversity Officers (CDO), Chief Inclusion Officers or Chief DE&I Officers.

Much like the pandemic tested the caliber of the CHRO, recent civil unrest has tested the capability of the CDO. Further, many organizations were hit with the reality that they were not properly invested in DE&I leadership, efforts and results.

How to Move Forward

How can organizations at varying levels of readiness take the next steps needed to create diverse, equitable and inclusive environments?

That is the subject of this entire report. But allow us to offer an overarching guiding principle: DE&I is not just about representation or getting diverse hires in the door, it's about building upon an organization's racial literacy.

While many search firms stand ready and willing to identify and facilitate those key diverse hires that will likely be a revolving door unless the organization embraces DE&I on a deeper level.

Organizations will not experience the full benefits of DE&I unless they have an incredibly healthy culture which has improved racial literacy, as well as organizational role models who are diverse. Such organizations strive for not only diverse representation but genuine attitudes, thoughtful policies and pervasive processes that support inclusion and belonging.

Simply stated, when diversity, equity and inclusion is properly woven into the organization's culture, representation will naturally take care of itself. If DE&I is a "nice" but separate program with little accountability or shared responsibility across the organization, leaders will continue leave the tremendous value and business impact of DE&I unrealized.

– *Jason Hanold, CEO & Managing Partner*
Keri Gavin, Partner & Practice Leader of Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Hanold Associates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Building a Balanced and Diverse Workforce

DE&I is well on its way to becoming the biggest and most impactful systemic change ever to come to the American workplace. In short order, global companies, too, that have only given scant attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion will see the concept emerge as a key differentiator in how they attract, recruit, and keep top talent. DE&I will, in time, give leading organizations their competitive advantage, like no other.

The pandemic and the shift to remote working collided in 2020 and have now handed us an accelerated transition – finally – to a more modern work environment. With DE&I, a monumental discussion about culture is looming. Culture – it is the vibe and the electrical current that underpins every company, no matter the size. Often neglected or misunderstood, DE&I and culture are joining hands. Once enabled, organizations will embark on a contemporary way to view themselves. More importantly, an entire professional workforce will discover a new way to view the organization. And then they will decide whether to join, stay, or leave.

DE&I is now taking center stage in the workplace – where it will become permanently etched on every brand and in every leader. What an exciting time, therefore, to be an executive recruiter in hot pursuit of managers, C-suite leaders, and board members who will enjoy a new world of work. 2020 was a difficult year for all of us – but look at what it has unleashed.

Let's go inside the report!

After so many years of struggle to get diversity, equity, and inclusion to the forefront at companies around The U.S. and the world, noteworthy progress was finally starting to come. No, senior leadership roles were not being filled with women and minorities in impressive numbers – or, truth be told, even adequate numbers – and everyone agreed that a lot of work remained to be done.

But DE&I had increasingly become top of mind, in businesses and the public consciousness. Search firms were finding that clients were giving a greater priority to diversity in their search assignments. Candidates were saying that diversity was a matter that could make or break their decision about working for a given company. Training on unconscious bias and inclusive recruitment practices was catching on. California had passed laws that publicly held companies in the state must have women and minority representation on their boards of directors. And a degree of progress in executive hiring was being made, largely in the lower and middle ranks, which failed to resolve the bigger challenge but gave those fighting for diversity hope for the future.

A New Top Proirity

Then came the coronavirus pandemic, and those hopes in many cases turned to trepidation that the momentum DE&I efforts were finally riding would become stalled or engulfed by the crisis of our lifetimes. Indeed, the pandemic would take a disproportionate toll on women, especially women of color, and minorities. Some, in fact, have been calling the economic crisis a "she-cession," as women closed out 2020 with 5.4 million fewer jobs than they had when the pandemic started in February, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Men during this period lost 4.4 million jobs. In the Labor Department's December report, Blacks and Hispanics continued to suffer above-average unemployment rates, of 9.9 percent and 9.3 percent, respectively.

Adding to the mix last spring was the firestorm of protests that erupted around the country with the death of George Floyd during an arrest in Minneapolis. The outrage was widespread and set off a wave of reforms and promises of change across society, from reevaluating the role of the police to the removal of statues with ties to slavery to companies standing in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Sweeping Changes

Looking to put action behind their rhetoric, businesses donated millions of dollars to social justice groups. Further, many promised to improve the diversity of their own workplaces. Organizations like Starbucks, Wells Fargo, and Uber, for example, would implement initiatives to link diversity hiring to executive compensation. PepsiCo, too, announced sweeping changes, including expanding its black manager ranks by 30 percent by 2025 and vowing to recruit more heavily from historically black colleges and universities. Apple, for its part, launched a $100 million racial equity and justice initiative, and among its efforts created a new developer entrepreneurial camp for black developers. The technology giant also promised to boost spending on black-owned supply chain and professional service partners and increase representation across companies it does business with. Many companies also committed to implementing unconscious-bias training for their employees.

As the pandemic roils on, businesses in large part say they are sticking by and even growing their efforts to diversify their workforces. Late last year, **McKinsey & Company** asked executives to what degree their CEO prioritized DEI both before and during the pandemic, and nine out of 10 said that DEI remains a moderate, very important or top priority. "Indeed, 29 percent said it was a top priority, and 40 percent said it was a very

important priority," said the management consulting firm. "And when forced to rank against other business priorities during the pandemic, such as cost cutting or protecting growth, about one in three executives continued to say that DEI was a top five business priority."

"Keeping DEI high on the CEO's agenda is critical because it means companies are significantly more likely to drive impact through action," said McKinsey & Company. "Of businesses whose CEOs reportedly prioritize DEI, 97 percent have at least some DEI measures in place and only three percent lacked any DEI initiatives. However, of companies that don't consider DEI a priority, 22 percent didn't have DEI initiatives."

Among those firms counting diversity among its top priorities is **Korn Ferry**. Despite the hefty challenges that the firm has faced from the pandemic, CEO Gary Burnison said last year that diversity and inclusion was not only the right thing from a societal perspective but that it has been good for business, even in these tough times. "Amid calls for change, we've amplified our voice on not only diversity, but as importantly, equity and inclusion — both within Korn Ferry and among our clients," he said. "Our focus on D&I has led to a robust amount of new client engagements, helping them become more consciously inclusive. In fact, our July consulting new business was the fourth highest month in our history driven by the strong voice we've taken publicly around the pandemic and D&I."

INSIGHT

Inclusion Drives Results

KORN FERRY

Before, CDOs would build D&I programs to address bias, recruit diverse talent, and develop those high potentials identified within their workforce. But those programs often failed to institute lasting, sustainable change within an organization because CDOs wouldn't see the advancement or financial commitment they needed from their leaders.

Given today's landscape, this issue has risen to the top. CEOs and their boards are no longer sitting on the periphery of the D&I conversation. Instead, they have become active participants, asking what their organizations are doing about advancement—and taking the steps necessary to fill those gaps. Some companies, for example, are now putting their boards and whole executive committee through inclusion training in order to achieve their objectives. Others are offering D&I unconscious bias workshops to staff across the entire organization, from line workers all the way to the board level, creating mechanisms for advocacy and allyship. And then there are firms making very public and entirely unprecedented investments into their communities, committing millions of dollars towards anti-racism initiatives.

Another critical move: creating direct lines between the CDO and the CEO. Organizations are reforming their reporting structures so that the chief diversity role is no longer just a function of the human resources department but positioned alongside it. When organizations have their chief diversity officers report directly to the top, that elevates their commitment to diversity and inclusion, making it a true value driver of the organization.

After all, in order to set the groundwork, CDOs would have to start pulling in high-potential, underrepresented talent early in their careers, both to establish a baseline and to progress them through to top leadership. But building this legacy can only happen if organizations put real, substantial weight behind their D&I strategy, from where their CDO sits to how much they invest.

Ultimately, inclusion is about advancement. To be a truly inclusive organization, leaders have to socialize their D&I vision throughout the company and embed it in how the company is run. They need to make sure there is a common awareness, align around their objectives, build the commitment, and then sustain it.

Because, in the end, inclusion translates to success. It leads to be better decision-making, better customer centricity, and more consistent execution of the company's purpose. People become more committed to the organization, more productive, and more engaged in their work. The truth is, recent studies have shown that diverse organizations are 70 percent more likely to capture new markets, and those companies with ethnically diverse teams are 33 percent more likely to see better profitability than their less diverse competitors.

Or put more succinctly: inclusion drives results.

Source: Korn Ferry

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In December, **Glassdoor Economic Research** reported that diversity and inclusion related job openings were continuing to surge. At the end of November, the jobs site had 1,492 diversity and inclusion related job openings available on Glassdoor, just shy of their all-time high set in October. "D&I job openings now are 54 percent higher than pre-crisis levels and a full 245 percent higher than their intra-crisis low on June 8," said Glassdoor. "By contrast, HR job openings are still 32 percent below pre-crisis levels and overall job openings are still down 10 percent. Growth in job openings has slowed as the overall recovery has slowed, but the sustained demand for D&I workers suggests that corporate investment is continuing."

Early on in the pandemic diversity jobs plummeted by 60 percent by June 2020, falling twice the rate of overall job openings for the whole economy over the same time period, said Glassdoor. But then openings surged 50 percent in June. "This growth in job openings comes against a backdrop of a historic nationwide focus on issues of racial inequality and the need for greater diversity and equal opportunity across society," said Glassdoor. "However, the magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis still looms large as, notwithstanding this recent surge in D&I job openings, the number of such openings is significantly depressed (-38 percent) compared to pre-crisis levels.

"Another encouraging sign is that job openings for D&I executive and leadership roles such as 'chief diversity officer,' 'head of diversity and inclusion,' and 'vice president of diversity and inclusion' have more than doubled since June 8, increasing 2.6 times," said Glassdoor. "This signals that companies increasingly are making diversity and inclusion a priority at the highest levels."

Still, the obstacles to overcoming the lack of diversity run deep. Women only won the right to vote in

Russell Reynolds Associates

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America a century ago. And for ethnic minorities and people of color, the pain of the past remains palpable today. Eral Burks, president and CEO of **Minority Executive Search** in Cleveland puts it bluntly: "The industry is still looking for the solution to this problem that goes way back to slavery when families were sold as cattle," he says. "We together have a very serious problem to fix."

Amplifying Inequalities

Longtime challenges have only been complicated by the ongoing pandemic. "Unfortunately, we have seen the COVID-19 crisis hit diverse employees extra hard; women in particular have been disproportionately affected," says Monica Bua, managing director of executive search firm **Morgan Samuels Company**. "They are trying to balance challenges in an evolving workplace with the responsibilities of a home life that requires even more of their attention, from caring for children and elderly parents to schooling their kids in a remote environment. In many ways, the pandemic has amplified social and economic inequities and challenges. With increasing pressure and responsibilities from work and the household, many women are considering stalling their careers, taking a step back, or leaving the workforce all together."

The remote work environment has also put a strain on minority groups, who are struggling with those same personal and professional responsibilities but also may be experiencing a loss of connectivity and sense of belonging with their colleagues, social isolation, and limited access to allies or support resources at work. "All of these challenges can negatively impact inclusivity initiatives," says Ms. Bua. "But it's in times like these that companies could really benefit from diverse leadership; after all, resilience is practically in their DNA. However, in order to continue hiring diverse talent, companies need to be aware of the current climate and embrace

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the fact that work in the future will look different. Especially since these challenges will likely linger long after the economy has recovered."

Lisa DeConto, a partner in asset, wealth and alternative investments and the leadership advisory practices with **Odgers Berndtson**, is co-head of the firm's diversity, equity and inclusion committee. Ms. DeConto says she worries about how COVID-19's unequal effect on women and under-represented communities will affect the pipeline of qualified, diverse executive candidates going forward. "Something like one out of every four employed women is considering downsizing their career or leaving the workforce entirely as a result of this pandemic," she says. "And history tells us that when women leave the workforce, they often have a hard time coming back—and those that do often have a tough time getting back on track for senior positions. I worry that a lot of very talented people at the mid and lower levels of companies—i.e. the next generation of executives—are experiencing career setbacks that may be difficult for them to recover from."

Conrad Woody, a partner and head of Odgers' U.S. corporate and government affairs practice, and co-head of the DEI committee with Ms. DeConto, has similar fears. "I'd like to think things will improve, but change isn't always linear," he says. "Despite making real gains at lower and middle levels, the fact remains that there are fewer black CEOs in the Fortune 500 than there were eight years ago. And COVID has caused a serious career regression at the middle and lower levels of a number of organizations. People often talk about the learning curve that COVID has forced upon corporate America—but from what I can see, those learning experiences are unequally distributed across organizations. Today's executives and leadership teams are having the crisis management experience of their lifetimes while people lower down in the corporate structures are seeing formative career progressions delayed or put on hold."

INSIGHT

The One on Board Club

EgonZehnder

Overall, 23.3 percent of board positions are now held by women globally, up from 20.4 percent in 2018. The news is positive, but still far from parity. When it comes to other types of diversity, it is difficult to even find numbers to create a base case, although that is beginning to change. Egon Zehnder believes passionately that increasing diversity in both the boardroom and the C-suite is good for business—and good for the world.

One important measure of progress towards gender diversity is the percentage of major companies that have at least one woman on their board, a number that has risen to 89 percent this year globally, from 85 percent in 2018. And yet, one in ten large global companies still does not have even one female director.

Much depends on the location. In 2020, the number of countries in the "One on Board Club" was the same as in 2018, with 19 of the 44 countries we studied having at least one female director. However, three countries—the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom—joined the club this year, while former members India, Poland, and Turkey departed. Nine of the 19 countries have instituted a quota, requiring that companies reach a certain percentage of women on board by a certain time. Yet of the remaining countries sampled, 25 of them, including China, Brazil, Germany, and the United States—some of the world's largest economies—are still home to large companies with no women on their boards at all.

In some countries, the perceived lack of sufficiently experienced female and other underrepresented minority candidates leads to many of the same people being approached for several boards. Yet pursuing "overboarded" directors misses an obvious possible solution: opening up the consideration set of board-ready candidates and actively building relationships with them. Says Monica Lozano, a director sitting on the boards of Target Corp. and Bank of America Corp.: "As the chair of the governance and nominating committee of various boards that I've been on, I have really pushed us away from titles to competencies. You're looking for people that have been able to navigate change, that understand the culture of a boardroom, that have been able to demonstrate problem-solving, good decision-making skills." Using markers of executive potential — a combination of traits including insight, determination, curiosity, and engagement—is, we believe, the best way to evaluate an executive's ability to take on dramatically different leadership roles, including joining a first board.

Source: Egon Zehnder, Global 2020 Board Diversity Tracker

Q&A

Recruiting A Diverse Leadership Team



*Leadership diversity is more important than ever on college campuses—institutions need leadership teams that reflect the student body and broader community. It is the president who must play the lead role in bringing a diverse team to their institution. In the following interview conducted with **WittKieffer**'s Robin Mamlet, senior partner and managing director of the firm's education practice, she sheds light on recruiting diverse leadership teams, citing initiatives by a few of the most dynamic leaders in higher education.*

Ithaca College president Shirley M. Collado recently wrote, in the Chronicle of Higher Education, about the success her institution has had recruiting a diverse leadership team. What has Ithaca done that is unique?

President Collado has been very intentional about building a diverse team and getting consensus and enthusiasm around the idea, especially among trustees. From the start it was one of her stated values. She then took a proactive, hands-on approach to identifying and recruiting women, people of color and leaders whose skills and strengths were complementary to those around them and reflected the diversity of the student body. When searches for key positions started, candidates sensed the commitment that she and the entire campus had to creating diverse representation in key positions.

To what degree was President Collado's willingness to take different approaches – based on the specific professional community for that search – a part of Ithaca College's success?

It was essential. Having the flexibility to structure your search so that it is well received within a given field can mean the difference between having a robust, diverse pool of strong candidates, and not. For instance, an academic dean search in which the faculty play a central role is vastly different from one for a VP of advancement. In addition, President Collado sometimes reached out directly to candidates herself where she felt it would make a difference. Some searches were open and provided great opportunities for shared governance and building trust on campus, while others were more confidential. Being flexible with the approach makes it easier for strong candidates to engage.

Can institutions achieve this level of diversity while using a number of search firms?

Certainly, but I believe it helps to have one go-to partner. This enables your lead consultant at that firm to form a partnership with you that goes well beyond any one search, with multiple benefits. The consultant can help you build a recruitment strategy that emphasizes the team over the individual hire. They can also help you communicate out to your stakeholders – and, importantly, to candidates – about your hiring strategy in a way that advances a coherent set of messages that are sent consistently. A single firm facilitates a big-picture approach to leadership hiring.

What else matters in attracting a diverse pool of strong candidates to your client institutions?

Sending every signal that inclusion is critical to you as an institution. Michelle Marks, new chancellor at the University of Colorado Denver, provides an example of setting a tone for diversity and inclusivity. At the start of her tenure, she held a "100 Days of Listening" campaign with stakeholders, the first 10 days of which were focused on equity and racial justice. That was a pretty bold step, and she makes it a point to reiterate her vision often. "We must reject hatred and use our levers of education, open dialogue, and resolve to create a more equitable and belonging climate at CU Denver," she said recently. Tuajuanda Jordan, president of St. Mary's College of Maryland, provides another example. Since taking office in 2014, Dr. Jordan has not missed an opportunity to promote her vision of diversity, equity and inclusion, and to build a diverse leadership team. As she said in her recent state of the college address, "EQUITY must be at the center of EVERYTHING we do. Everything." Those are just two examples of leaders who continually promote their vision. When it comes to hiring, candidates take notice of such commitment and want to be part of that environment.

Finally, how have recent events – specifically the pandemic and protests around racial equity – influenced institutions in their pursuit of diverse leadership?

The protests around racial justice have prompted all of our clients to be more committed than ever to bringing diverse leadership to their institutions. This is a moment in which representational diversity really matters. It's an opportunity for institutions to make different choices than they have in the past in terms of whom they value as candidates and whom they hire.

Some, too, have doubts about how effective many of the efforts to implement change will be, or if in the end the powers that be will have the willpower to deliver real change. Prior to the pandemic, Andrés Tapia, a global diversity and inclusion strategist and thought leader at Korn Ferry, said bias tends to be entrenched. "Organizations need to address the structural issues that are keeping bias alive, including pay parity, role expectations and high-potential talent criteria that favor one group over another," he said.

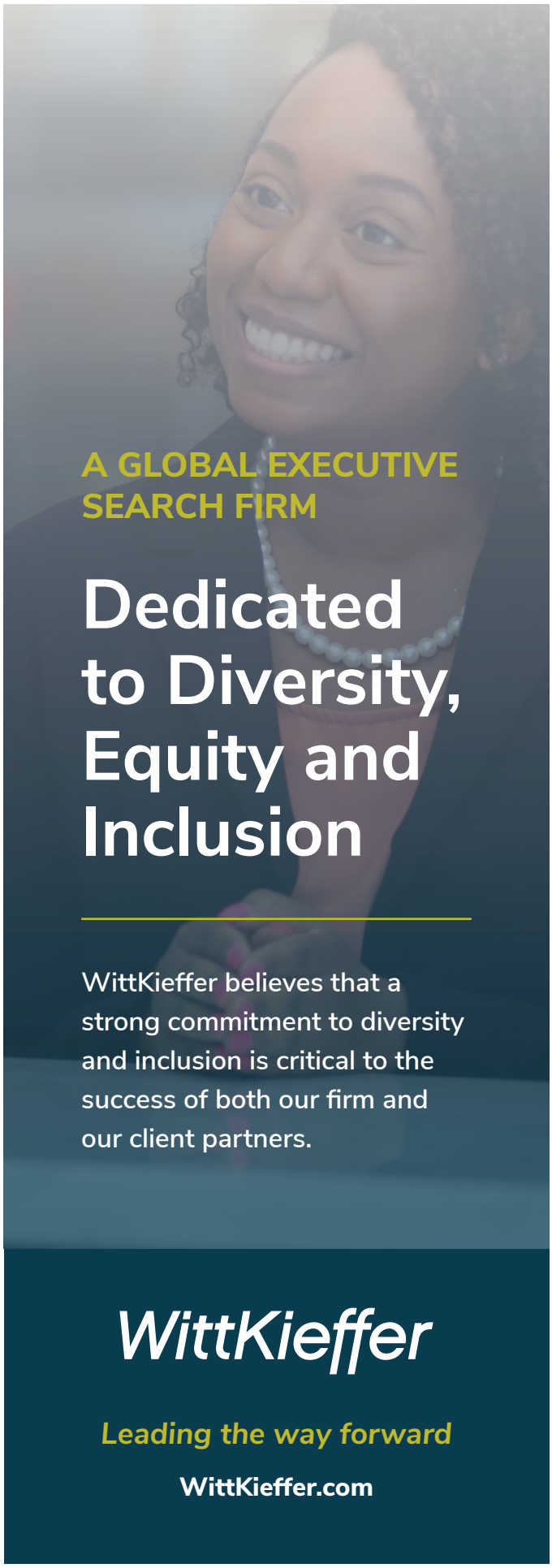
Cynthia Soledad, co-leader of **Egon Zehnder**'s Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council, notes that significant progress has been made, particularly in the past year. "We have already seen the national

reckoning on racial injustice have an impact on corporate DEI efforts," she says. "Companies are making bolder, more public commitments to increasing the diversity of representation, are taking steps to create more inclusive cultures, and are creating or elevating the role of DEI leaders within their organizations. We have seen a dramatic increase in commitment to diversifying boards, including notable announcements from Nasdaq and Goldman Sachs to only list companies/take companies public if there is diverse representation on the board."

Still, inequities can only be jettisoned through a deep commitment to systemic change. "The slow growth of diverse representation in the C-suite is most often due to the compounded impact of different biases in leadership selection that end up filtering people from under-represented identity groups out of consideration," says Ms. Soledad. "It requires actively building inclusive hiring and development systems to interrupt common biases like network bias or similar-to-me bias to increase the diversity of identity, thought, approach, etc. on a leadership team."

Hard to Gauge

Charlene Aguilar, a consultant in Oak Brook, IL-based **WittKeiffer**'s education practice, says that the current climate makes progress hard to gauge. "Prior to COVID-19 it was clear, for example, that women in particular were making progress in leadership ranks and on boards of trustees," she says. "There was progress with other demographic groups as well. However, studies have shown that COVID has placed an inordinate burden on professionals who are women, black, indigenous and other people of color, and so the jury is still out as to how leaders in differing demographics will fare long term. Organizations have a renewed commitment to matters of diversity, inclusion and racial equity, yet it remains an open



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question whether this will structurally elevate and impact executive hiring and retention."

Donna Padilla, managing partner and healthcare practice leader for WittKieffer, says that many leaders and the organizations they represent now take diversity, equity and inclusion more seriously than ever before. "The messages coming from the Black Lives Matter movement in particular have resonated and organizations have been inspired to act towards social change," says Ms. Padilla. "Meanwhile, the pandemic has highlighted a glaring need to address the great discrepancies in the health and well-being of communities. We see a greater commitment in our search work, as clients are prioritizing diversity more than ever as they look for new executives. Many institutions are also, for the first time, recruiting or elevating chief diversity officers and other diversity-focused leaders. These are positive trends that I hope will continue well after the pandemic passes."

Tough challenges remain. Among them, says Ms. Padilla, good diverse prospective candidates can often get derailed before being able to prove their full potential, if at all. "Historically, organizations have not done a great job of recruiting, identifying and developing diverse talent within their organizations," says Ms. Padilla. "Additional challenges include lack of mentoring and continued development opportunities, the way that executive roles are defined and structured within organizations, implicit bias in organizations' hiring and retention processes, and lack of proper onboarding and organizational support for diverse executives to succeed when placed in senior roles. These are things that can inhibit leaders who have already been very successful in their careers from reaching to top echelon of their organizations."

Kim Villanueve, chief executive officer with Arlington, VA-based **Centerstone Executive Search**, says that businesses must go further than simply filling roles

with diverse employees. "One of the biggest obstacles is making sure that DE&I initiatives aren't being done simply to check a box," she says. "It's imperative that organizations recognize it's not just about having the diversity; it's about striving for inclusion and belonging. A diverse team without genuine inclusion that leads to a sense of belonging won't be a better team. It takes a fostering of open-mindedness and

INSIGHT

New Ways to Move the Needle on Diversity Hiring


Mercedes Chatfield-Taylor


Gina Barge

As executive search professionals, Mercedes Chatfield-Taylor and Gina Barge of **Caldwell** have taken note of a lack of diversity at large technology companies. A new report they have co-authored examines why there are limited opportunities on senior leadership teams for people of color and women, and what can be done to change the trajectory. Ms. Chatfield Taylor and Ms. Barge recently sat down with Hunt Scanlon to take a look at diversity in this sector and a way forward.

Data Doesn't Lie

The technology industry is driven by data and a desire to follow the data to get to scale and success. It should follow that organizations ought to search high and low to find diverse hires since the impact on performance is real. Yet, according to a recent study based on the EEO-1 reports of 117 Silicon Valley companies, this has not been the case. The percentage of executives was heavily weighted towards white men (59 percent). White women held just 15 percent of executive positions. Among people of color, Asian men made up 16 percent while Asian women made up 4.5 percent. For Latinos, men are two percent and women just 0.8 percent. The most underrepresented are black men and women with one percent and 0.4 percent respectively.

Does it Take a Village or the Court System?

"It's my job to find the best talent for my clients – people who will help propel their growth – so I'm a huge proponent of diversity and inclusion, given the advantages cited earlier," said Ms. Chatfield-Taylor. "A recent article in TechCrunch, 'Top VCs Discuss the Future of New York Start-Ups,' really sharpened my focus on the need for a change in the public mindset. The author had interviewed nine top VCs about their opinion on the market – nine male, mostly white VCs. It seemed astonishing to me that he couldn't find one woman to talk to, so I sent him a message suggesting a few women he ought to interview. To his credit, he revised the story to include these important voices. Do I think he was malicious in the first place? No. Lazy? Perhaps. Did he just do what everyone else would have done? Surely," she said. "And therein lies the problem."

"If we continue to do what we've always done, what everyone else has always done, there will be no meaningful change unless, of course, the courts step in," said Ms. Barge. "In 2017, California passed SB 826 to mandate female participation on corporate boards for companies headquartered in the state."

The Way Forward

Ms. Chatfield-Taylor said that diversity and inclusion have been growing in the public consciousness, but there is work organizations can do to help shorten the arc of the moral universe. Apps like Blendoor, which aggregate diverse talent and anonymize recruits can help – mainly by making hiring managers and leadership teams aware of their blind spots. As founder and CEO, Stephanie Lampkin said: "People believe they are more fair than they really are. Our biggest 'aha' moments come in the pre-screening phase when companies are evaluating candidates, not knowing their race or gender, and then later realize that they probably would not have considered this person or assumed they were female."

"It's this awareness, driven by data and transparency tracked in the app, that will lead to change," said Ms. Barge. "But even Stephanie is skeptical of the power of just apps to make change."

There is no historical evidence to suggest technology companies will solve this problem on their own, said Ms. Lampkin. "I do not believe that tech executives and middle management are incentivized to solve this problem," she said. "It will require pressure from employees demanding more change, BODs to require more transparency, it will require the press to hold the companies accountable and the government to require companies to report on their progress just like they do on their financial metrics."

"They say in business that you can't manage what you don't measure, so let's start measuring our progress in D&I," said Ms. Chatfield-Taylor. "Investors, start-ups and scaleup tech companies can lead the way by making a pledge to prioritize their D&I policy in 2020 and beyond. By tracking and reporting their progress voluntarily. By charging their recruiters with bringing diverse ethnicities, cultures and genders to the table on each and every search. By looking for their future leaders in schools other than the Ivies, and from other industries. By building a bench that includes women and people of color in entry and mid-level positions and then creating mentorship and paths to the top," she said.

Being inclusive in language and creating specific policies respectful of cultural and lifestyle differences can also be helpful, Ms. Barge said. As can "incentivizing the behavior we want and adjusting compensation to reflect not only revenue and profits but the racial and gender makeup of the team," she said. "It is by actively and intentionally prioritizing, investing in and incentivizing diverse hiring and promotion that we will make change happen. If we take concrete steps towards doing just that, we might find we change the world in the process."

perspective sharing to get the true value out of diverse teams. Diverse employees and their voices need to not only be recognized and heard – but they need to feel included and valued for their differences."

"For example, it could be that the cultural values are not allowing for an inclusive culture, and they may want to 'round out' their culture/team to bring balance," says Dr. Villanueve. "One area of particular focus for us, is helping our clients both attract diverse talent, and provide structured onboarding for overall success. It's striking that 40 percent of leaders fail within the first 18 months, so onboarding cannot be underestimated. It's challenging work, for sure, and can make people uncomfortable – but it's meaningful because it makes such an impact."

Companies that go into hiring diverse candidates to simply boost their number of diverse employees fail to understand the deeper cultural changes that are needed. The best candidates, in fact, want nothing to do with such offers. "Several companies feel that simply infusing their company with select candidates will be the solution to their cultural makeup," says Gina Barge, a consultant in **Caldwell**'s private equity and venture capital practice. "However, hiring diverse candidates – just for the sake of it – is a temporary solution to a bigger problem. Most diverse candidates want to be sought after and valued for their contributions and realize when they're being hired specifically for their abilities to satisfy a company's diversity requirements. However, until companies truly see the benefits of a heterogeneous employee base and begin to view diversity as a way to address and solve business problems that will positively impact their bottom line (rather than as an annoying requirement to fill a quota), they're not going to attract the best multicultural candidates."

Roger Nutter, president of **Nutter Group**, an executive search firm that serves healthcare, higher education,

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INSIGHT

Facilitating the Difficult Conversation



*John Doyle brings more than 20 years of executive search experience, specializing primarily in the human resources function at **Slayton Search Partners**. Addressing COVID-19 may have been the top priority for businesses during 2020, says Mr. Doyle, but the year was also defined by a significant focus on diversity. During an already challenging time, this increased emphasis on inequality translated to social unrest in America and within workforces. Studies prove how critical this has become: 76 percent of professionals say having a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating job offers, and 32 percent say they would not apply for a job at an organization that lacks diversity. Here, Mr. Doyle reflects on the role of the CHRO.*

Since there is no easy fix to diversity, the only way to find a solution is through discussion and open dialogue. Active and unbiased listening like this has rarely happened before, but it's what will lead to understanding. Even diverse HR leaders and other senior executives can't completely empathize with all their employees. It's a nuanced situation that requires the CHRO to facilitate open conversation in a safe and trusting environment. They're the crucial link, the conduit, between employees and the CEO and board of directors who are ultimately the ones leading the company forward and making the decisions that spur real change. Conversations are also important because only 19 percent of employees trust senior leaders when it comes to diversity, while 66 percent trust other employees. A company's lack of diversity and inclusion can no longer be avoided and addressing it directly with employees not only uncovers what's really happening and leads to progress, but it also builds trust in a company.

These efforts come at a time when the collective voice of employees is stronger than ever before. For example, Glassdoor recently unveiled a new tool that empowers professionals to rate their satisfaction with their current or former employers' diversity and inclusion policies on a scale from zero to five. This and other social media platforms are only accelerating access to this type of information for job seekers, as well as current employees. It's up to HR departments to be that outlet and seek to understand frustrations related to diversity or inclusion through conversation before disenfranchised employees feel the need to vent publicly. Commitment to reaching a solution requires dedication to a long-term strategy. As markets rebound from the pandemic and life returns to a new "post-2020" normal, the efforts to address employee inequality or lack of corporate diversity cannot waver. Relaxing on this front once economic recovery is in full swing undermines the goal and will ring hollow to employees, candidates, and customers.

Every business will have to respond in its own unique way based on its workforce. As CHROs seek to better understand who employees are and how to best support them, a number of questions will be asked: What are employees experiencing? Are they proud to be part of their organization? What changes do they want to see out of their employer? As the eyes and ears of the company, HR is well-positioned to facilitate that conversation and show that these are no longer taboo subjects to talk about. Discovering what employees want through real discussions will help leadership translate that information into measurable, positive change that makes a tangible and sustainable difference in employees' lives. Achieving these goals not only improves the employee experience and helps them truly thrive, but it helps a business succeed as well. Change doesn't happen overnight, but CHROs are tasked with starting the process that will lead to a better, more inclusive corporate culture.

Source: Slayton Search Partners

K12 private schools and mission-driven organizations. says that too often C-suite and boards have authorized and implemented DEI programs without full understanding of 'the why' and potential impact of the organization's culture. "We are considering only accepting search/DEI initiatives where the client board is educated, understands and committed to DEI that is consistent with the organization's mission and values before requiring the CEO and team to institute a DEI program," he says. "The board is ultimately responsible to hold the CEO accountable for implementing and maintaining a DEI program."

Ben DeBerry II, executive vice president of **Slayton Search Partners** in Chicago, points out that it is the organizational culture of companies (values, beliefs and practices) that have produced a lack of diversity and absence of equity. "Those organizational cultures need to change, not the individuals they have excluded from their ranks. The same culture will produce the same results. Organizations need to ask, "What is it about our culture that reinforces racial inequity?" and not "Does this executive fit in our biased culture?" Diversity isn't just about increasing the numbers of diverse people in the workforce; it's a completely new way of interacting,

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hiring and providing a healthy environment that spurs an inclusive culture for everyone."

Leathwaite partner Tom Pemberton, who leads the firm's D&I program, explains that diverse employees bring their own individual contributions to any given team. To deny that, in the end, is counter productive. "It is important to recognize that the concept of 'culture fit,' unless interpreted to apply to an aspirational culture, can be at odds with the fundamental precepts of diversity," he says. "Far better, perhaps, to think of 'culture add,' to ensure that the diverse perspectives and experiences that a candidate may bring to an organization are not whittled away by a need to conform to an existing culture. Looking at alignment of values is a far better lens than that of culture fit."

The new reality has accelerated a values-shift, says Julie Choi, founder of strategic talent advisory firm **CBK Partners** and founder and CEO of **Pointr**, a web application and SaaS platform that helps companies cultivate a high performance culture. Among its users, Wall Street firms and high growth companies have turned to the firm for recruiting, team building, relationship enhancement, and diversity. "Companies are now forced to rethink what their culture really is, what they want it to be, and how they'd go about actualizing it," says Ms. Choi. "New cohorts were onboarded virtually, making it even more difficult and exhausting for them to be part of the culture. Work tech solutions are trying to solve the mechanics of communication and collaboration, but how do you automate what happens between people? The truth is that getting to know our colleagues is less about how we're connecting, and more about what we share. By giving colleagues the appropriate space and tools to share what makes them different and distinctly individual, leaders can effectively place value on the

DNA of their people, particularly underrepresented groups who might feel invisible."

Tina Shah Paikeday, leader global diversity, equity and inclusion advisory services for **Russell Reynolds Associates**, says there is a clear difference between culture, which connotes the way in which a particular organization does things, and values, the fundamental beliefs that are important to an organization. "At Russell Reynolds Associates our values are the following: client focused, forwarding thinking, passionate and inclusive," she says.

"Whether screening for our own internal hires or those of clients, we are focused on assessing for fit with such values. While ours and every other organization has cultural norms of behavior, at the core of being inclusive is embracing all of the different ways in which each person approaches their work. This is not easy to do, and until we reach higher levels of organizational inclusion, those of under-represented backgrounds are more likely to succeed if they have the ability to recognize cultural patterns and adapt their style to meet the organization. Inclusion is definitely a journey."

INSIGHT

Understanding the MCCA/RRA Inclusion Index

Perhaps the most valuable lesson to be drawn from this year is the power of community. To master this new style of leadership, organizations will want to listen more closely than ever to employees and consider partnering with clients, nonprofits and others to fight systemic problems with enduring solutions.

MCCA member survey responses inform 8 factors, which are then grouped into 3 broader categories: climate, leadership and structure.

Working Across Differences A measurement of how and organization facilitates respectful, collaborative, and productive, interactions and understanding between employees of all backgrounds	**Leveraging of Different Perspectives** The extent to which different viewpoints and backgrounds are welcomed and strategically leveraged within the organization to gain a competitive advantage	**Workplace Respect** The extent to which employees from all backgrounds experience a respectful workplace free of implicit and explicit offenses
Leadership Commitment The extent to which leadership within the organization supports and advances the efforts of diversity and inclusion	Russell Reynolds ASSOCIATES Inclusion Index	**Voice & Influence** The extent to which employees of all backgrounds are given a voice, as well as influential representation in leadership
Organizational Fairness The extent to which organizational systems such as performance appraisal, promotions, and employee policies are applied fairly across all employees	**Accommodating Differences** The extent to which accommodations are made for employees when needed and without retribution	**Employee Recruitment, Development & Retention** A measure of an organization's efforts to recruit, retain and develop employees from all backgrounds

Climate Leadership Structure

Source: Russell Reynolds Associates

Nowhere is progress — or in this case the lack thereof — more evident than in the C-suite. "I do not believe it is any secret that there is certainly a lack of diversity in the executive ranks," says Darren DeGioia, president of executive search firm **JDG Associates** in Rockville, MD. "There have been lots of studies about this topic, and in this current environment, I believe organizations are taking a hard look at increasing diversity in not only the C-suite, but also in their senior management positions. While companies around the world routinely discuss their commitment to increase diversity, the issue of diversity, equity and inclusion has become even more critically important to their success. While business stems from products and services, business is, and will always be, about people. It is essential for companies to build a culture built around diversity, equity, and inclusion in order to recruit and retain diverse employees. Moreover, it is critical that an organization strategically builds an inclusive culture to drive success. Companies must be committed to employee education and training where opportunities for advancement are promoted. Companies need to show that they are invested in innovation, not only of products and services, but of employee ideas."

In a Word: Bias

Ryan Whitacre, a partner in the Chicago office of New York City-based with **Bridge Partners**, which was founded as a diversity-inclusion search firm, was asked the reason behind the lack of diversity in the C-suite. His answer was succinct: "In a word: bias. Because we use mental shortcuts to help navigate a complex world, we end up preferring those with whom we share similarities because it's a quick way to find commonality and familiarity in strangers," he says. "One way it plays out in the workplace is in choosing whom to promote, who gets the fellowship, whom to send on special assignment — we overwhelmingly



select those from our alma mater, those who are in our tennis league, who go to our church. To break that cycle first requires acceptance there is a closed-loop system; this isn't something everyone will agree with. Intentionality is the next step: Change necessitates commitment to affirmatively seek out and develop new talent, those who aren't drawn from the same old wells. In the end, acknowledgement that there's an issue coupled with intentionality are key to beginning to redress the imbalance."

Craig Lapham, managing partner and chief executive officer of **The Lapham Group**, which recruits senior talent for the global insurance industry and diversified financial services, says the need to greater balance the lack of diverse talent at the top levels of organizations is undeniable. "As the need for and benefits of diversity have increasingly gained in prominence in recent years, organizations have paid ever greater attention to ensuring diversity at all ranks of the organization," he says. "However, historically the C-suite and board of directors has been populated by the longest tenured and most entrenched talent from a career perspective, thus with an inverse proportion of diversity. From a senior executive search perspective, this is being addressed by mandating fully diverse candidate slates across all executive search engagements to include a commitment by the hiring organization to actually placing a diverse candidate into the specific role."

AMN Healthcare Services, which provides healthcare workforce solutions and staffing services to healthcare facilities around the country, agrees that proactive diversity recruiting programs have a way to go in healthcare. The 2019 AMN Healthcare Leadership Diversity survey, in fact, saw only 43 percent of organizations claiming to make diversity a primary recruiting focus, "a disappointing number," says the firm. "The data shows that diversity in

SPOTLIGHT

A Quest to Bridge the Diversity Gap

Riviera PARTNERS

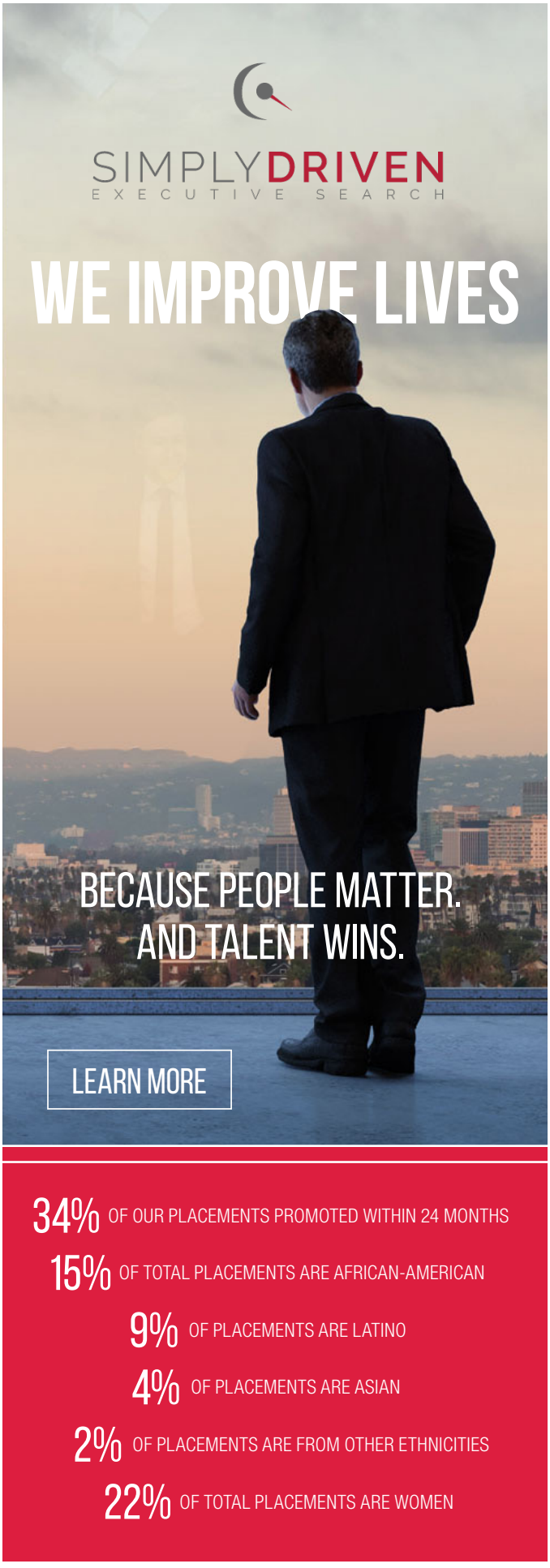
As a tech recruiting firm in the heart of Silicon Valley, **Riviera Partners** has a front row view of how skewed the supply and demand are in tech recruiting. Qualified candidates in software engineering or data science can walk away with multiple offers within a few weeks with a compensation package that makes you wonder, "How can the companies ever make progress at this level of talent shortage and cost?" Yet, Riviera also knows that this hot talent market is remarkably skewed with gender, racial and socio-economic background. Only twenty-six percent of the software engineering workforce were women in 2018, only 2.2 percent of first generation graduates major in computer science, and only 3.41 percent of software engineering degrees are awarded to Hispanics, only 1.3 percent degrees are awarded to people who identify as black or African American. There are slightly more Asian graduates at 8.7 percent. The data makes you wonder whether there could be a better talent supply if the STEM field could be more inclusive. In the big picture, this talent shortage signifies a warning signal that the effort in innovation and shifting to AI-powered digitization will be limited by a growing shortage of qualified talent.

As a recruiting firm with a strong data science and technology focus, Riviera Partners really wanted to help. Partnering with the University of Virginia Economics department, supported by the Convergence Accelerator awards from the National Science Foundation, Riviera is starting the journey of building an AI-powered application that can help people successfully navigate STEM careers with a focus on developing a long term success in tech. This application brings insights backed by Riviera Partners' success in tech recruiting with thousands of successful placements, across the U.S. over two decades. They've captured 18 years of recruiting process data and can identify and illustrate the typical career paths for engineers, tech product managers and designers. The app considers industry trends and reveals a candidate's likelihood of achieving overall career goals. When released the Riviera app will be free and available to the public.

Riviera Partners believes that anyone can achieve anything if the path and direction are clear. There are large populations in the US that don't know where and how to start a technology career. There are communities, even in the hotbed of the Bay Area, that don't have access to the information and network that Silicon Valley employees benefit from naturally. Riviera will work with nonprofit organizations to reach out to these communities to make sure their tool is easy to use and gives them perspectives that are practical, feasible, and that can transform their career trajectory.

Riviera believes that data science and technology can serve people and make life better for everyone. They believe the tech field can be diverse and bring opportunities to everyone. This is their journey to help.

Source: Riviera Partners



healthcare leadership is sorely lacking," says AMN. "While 32 percent of patients are minorities, just 11 percent of executive hospital leadership are minorities and just 14 percent of hospital board members are minorities."

"Even in the midst of the pandemic, we have continued to work with our partners to ensure that DEI initiatives continue to stay a priority, and we're encouraged by the progress that many are making," says AMN Healthcare Services. "While some constraints on budgets and management attention are inevitable, two factors should be considered. First, building sustainable DEI success is a long-term endeavor that can be seriously set back by interrupted investment. Second, the current moment presents a significant – even unique – opportunity to achieve major progress."

"Responding to the magnitude of the issue demands a range of solutions. A fundamental requirement is to make DEI a strategic imperative, not just a 'project.' This truism has not always gained adherence in healthcare."

Balancing Goals

Kent Burns, president of **Simply Driven Executive Search** in Indianapolis, IN, says companies are making important strides toward diversity at the C-suite level. "It's getting lots of visibility and companies are absolutely addressing it," he says. "A company's highest responsibility to their owners, their employees and their customers is to perform at the highest levels possible in a lawful and ethical manner. I am a firm believer that talent and performance should determine who is in the C-suite. I agree with Warren Buffett that staffing the C-suite is not the same as loading Noah's Ark. We must balance the goal of diversity with the fiduciary responsibility of exceptional leadership and good stewardship. Having said that, we can recruit exceptional, diverse, C-suite talent

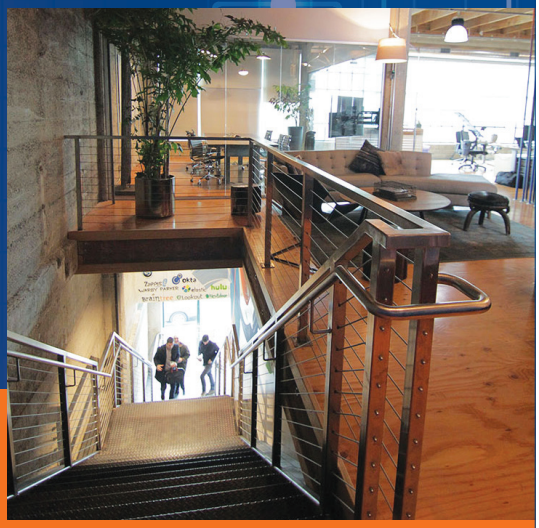
to organizations. I also think there's lots that can be done to spot diverse talent in organizations, develop that talent and put that talent on a career path where they can compete head-to-head for jobs in the C-suite. Diverse talent wants to compete and win just as badly as anyone else. They want to know they are in the C-suite because they are the best; not because they checked a box for somebody."

Mr. Burns believes that in many ways societal culture is doing a disservice to the term diversity, that the culture has narrowed and restricted its definition. "To me, diversity is a very...diverse term," he says. "The current culture has restricted the definition to identity, based on ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Those are diverse things and are part of diversity. They are not all of diversity. The logic is that those criteria, if focused on, will address all elements of diversity. We have to be careful with that. Diversity exists within groups as well. I think the ultimate diversity is diversity of thought and experience. If the goal is to make sure we're capturing as much of the human experience in our culture as possible, we need to ask better questions that will allow us to uncover diversity in new places."

Equity and inclusion, he says, are also terms that are being misused: "Equity means treating everyone fairly. That doesn't mean treating everyone the same. Ironically, equity means we must treat everyone differently. Each of us is a unique creation with our own set of gifts, talents, blind spots and deficiencies. Each of use responds differently to coaching, praise and criticism. At Simply Driven, we practice equality and inclusion by treating everyone differently vs. treating them all the same. That doesn't mean we don't have processes, procedures, expectations and standards. The magic is being able to run a successful business model while embracing the individual dynamics of everyone on your team.

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Those individual personalities and dynamics create a diverse culture."

Dave Melville, CEO and founder of **The Bowdoin Group** in Waltham, MA, says that most companies today understand the need for diversity at the C-level and the importance of acting in a global way. Simply put, if businesses fail to mirror society with regard to diversity and inclusion, they risk becoming obsolete. "The reason why more progress hasn't been made is because roles are filled so tactically," says Mr. Melville. "All too often and despite best intentions, when hiring managers have a role open up and think immediately of people with the most relevant experience, rather than thinking more broadly about the skill-set of other potential candidates for the organization. It's historically been the easiest and quickest path to filling a role. Despite best intentions, we can all wind up repeating the same cycle. The only way to avoid that is a conscious, all-encompassing strategy where diversity is talked about continuously and a pipeline is built and available for all your hiring needs. Instead of thinking about the singular task or a role, our clients are talking more and more about the team as a whole and how the team works together, rather than saying 'I need someone who checks these three boxes for this one role.'"

One key reason that diversity, equity and inclusion had finally begun to gain traction in recent years is that in addition to the basic question of morality—which many feel should have been cause enough—businesses started to see that diversity was good for the bottom line. Much of this, no doubt, was driven by oft-referenced studies by the Harvard Business Review and McKinsey & Company.

In 2013, the Harvard Business Review reported that companies with a combination of "inherent diversity" (by dint of one's gender or ethnicity) and "acquired diversity" (developed through life experiences) out-innovate and out-perform their competition. "Employees at these companies are 45 percent likelier to report that their firm's market share grew over the previous year and 70 percent likelier to report that the firm captured a new market," said the publication.

McKinsey & Company, meanwhile, drew attention with its 2015 report, "Why Diversity Matters," which the management consultancy subsequently expanded upon. "In the original research, using 2014 diversity data, we found that companies in the top

SPOTLIGHT

Integrating Diversity Initiatives

on. elevate the experience.

As a values-driven executive search firm, **ON Partners** believes a better experience starts with a more diverse experience. As executive recruiters, the firm's consultants understand that their role in placing senior executives and board members is an important driver of organizational change. The firm has therefore committed to further integrating diversity initiatives into the fabric of its daily operations and client deliverables to take an active approach to DE&I.

Recently, influencers in the ON community were asked, "Outside of your organization, who do you look up to and admire on their diversity, equity & inclusion initiatives?"

Organizations and people cited more than once include Netflix, Proctor & Gamble, and SAP. Others mentioned as leaders in their diversity efforts companies like Amazon, Bank of America, IBM, Microsoft, Starbucks, and TIAA. According to ON partner Lynda Robey, "For any type of transition or cultural transformation, it's critical that the CEO and C-suite lead the way with their behavior and activity. It has a tremendous impact on the end result, more than anything else. If the CEO is out in front, participating in listening tours, actively engaging during diversity training, driving core programs to increase belonging and rewarding leaders in the organization that make tangible progress; it is very powerful."

She noted that she and her colleagues see diversity and belonging programs lose traction when a CEO hires a diversity leader to the team, but does not make it a key objective of every executive team member to engage and deliver on shared goals. "The CEO has to be involved in leading the way to identify where organizational barriers exist and modeling new behaviors. It's no different than when companies began their digital evolution – if the CEO walked around still using paper and pencil, it didn't work."

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quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were 15 percent more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile," said McKinsey in a 2018 report, "Delivering Through Diversity." "In our expanded 2017 data set this number rose to 21 percent and continued to be statistically significant. For ethnic and cultural diversity, the 2014 finding was a 35 percent likelihood of outperformance, comparable to the 2017 finding of a 33 percent likelihood of outperformance on EBIT margin; both were also statistically significant."

Stronger Business Outcomes

"For organizations to thrive in today's rapidly changing economy having diversity in thought, skill-set, expertise and background is critical for organizations to maintain their competitive advantage," says Tywauna Wilson, vice president of strategic initiatives for Nutter Group. "Doing things the way you have always done them with the same thought leaders you have always had will stunt their growth over time. This has been proven with companies who once had a large footprint in their industry and are now out of business. Hiring diverse candidates allows for innovation, creativity and fresh insight lending to out of the boxing strategies. From a team perspective, it further enhances the leadership and communication competencies of the team allowing for personal and professional growth. When you understand differences, you respect them. It's hard to relate to a new concept, a different culture and generational differences if you are not immersed in them."

Diversity within a team brings stronger business outcomes, problem solving capabilities, and connections to target consumer audiences, says Avigail Rosenzweig, chief operating officer with boutique executive search firm **Ksquared Search** in New York City. "Diverse organizations have yielded better financial results versus competitors with less

INSIGHT

Making Diversity Count

When it comes to fully experiencing the power of diverse thinking, Egon Zehnder believes that it takes three underrepresented voices in a boardroom to truly change internal dynamics. Here, the firm sees significant progress in 2020, as 18 countries, up from 13, average three or more women on the boards of their largest companies.

The countries that have instituted quotas average a much larger number of women on their boards—unsurprising, given that it's a legal requirement. Eight of the 18 countries averaging three or more women have quotas or regulations in place requiring the hiring of women. Switzerland is the most recent country to add one.

Three Is the Baseline

It is clear that a large number of diverse voices changes the boardroom dynamic. How, then, to get there? Quotas are one clear path. But there are also other actions that have spurred positive change. In Canada, public companies must now provide annual proxy disclosures about their diversity policies and practices at both board and executive leadership levels. Public pressure by institutional investors has impact, as does employee pressure.

Yet what is most important in enabling change is, in some cases the simplest. Nominating committee members and others in leadership roles must commit personally to making diversity an absolute requirement. If they don't have access to robust pipelines of women or other underrepresented groups, they must hire people who do. "There is sometimes a view that 'we just don't know any women,' or 'we just don't know any BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) candidates.' And that's often true," explains Royal Bank of Canada Board Chair Kathleen Taylor. "We've seen from the research that like hires like, and like attracts like, and so we shouldn't at all be surprised that we need to come outside the bounds of what we might normally think of as our regular search process."

Source: Egon Zehnder, Global 2020 Board Diversity Tracker

diverse teams, likely because of advanced problem solving capabilities and better mapping to the consumer audience," says Ms. Rosenzweig. "A well-managed diverse team brings new ideas to the table and inspires others on the team to think creatively while reflecting the opinions and viewpoints of a diverse consumer audience. As the population shifts, so does a customer base. It is important to build diverse teams that reflect a company's consumer base in order to bolster brand perception and trust."

The management of a diverse team is important because diverse teams are much more cohesive with the right leader, Ms. Rosenzweig adds. "The leadership of a diverse team must embrace differences, encourage opinions, create an atmosphere of inclusion, and foster a sense of comfort in expressing new ideas," she says. "This environment yields creativity and collaboration, which bring better customer outcomes. A diverse team also can anticipate future needs or problems based on representing different facets of the client population. Having a team that reflects the customer base or future state customer base allows for the company to bring pertinent perspectives to the forefront when solving for consumer challenges. In conclusion, hiring diverse candidates improves the team through bringing a collection of ideas to problem solving, taking into account diversity in the marketplace, and fostering innovation in solving for new challenges."

Sasha Jensen, founder and CEO of **Jensen Partners**, which serves the alternative investment management industry, said the positive aspects of hiring diverse candidates are endless. "Multiple research studies have shown that companies with more diverse workforces or executive teams tend to outperform companies with lower levels of diversity," she says. "The same is often true of the investment management industry, where data shows how female investment professionals and BIPOC (black, indigenous and people of color) investment professionals are just as successful their male and Caucasian counterparts."

"Intuitively, this makes a ton of sense," says Ms. Jensen. "Even the most experienced or well-educated workers are susceptible to groupthink. By embracing diversity and bringing more diverse voices to the

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table, a business will be better positioned to take advantage of opportunities and manage risks."

Society at large also gains. "Many business leaders, investors and public officials are now treating inequality as a systemic risk, with severe ramifications for the future of social cohesion and prosperity if inequalities continue to worsen," she adds. "Hiring more diverse candidates won't solve inequality on its own, but it does represent an important step in the right direction."

Deidre Diamond, founder and CEO of **CyberSN**, a boutique search firm serving talent needs in cybersecurity, says that diversity can help open the door to a healthier, more productive company. "Diversity means diversity of thought and this creates psychological safety, which many studies have concluded is the key to innovation and participation," says Ms. Diamond. "Hiring diversity means hiring people of all genders, all races, all ages and all socio-economic backgrounds. A key reason to do this is pure math. More than half the population in the U.S. falls under the above described 'diversity candidate.' So, if an organization plans to grow in any way and they aren't thinking about a strategy for more than half the population they will fail as an organization over time."

"Additionally, organizations that proactively create recruiting plans for diverse professionals, will have access to 100 percent of the available talent and will hire diverse humans," she says. "Once this happens the organization is set up for long-term success and can start to reap the rewards from 'diversity of thought.' With a diversity of thought, organizations will create better products and services because those that are creating them will think differently than others on the team. When diverse thought happens innovation and creation thrives at volume."

Larry Shoemaker, president of global recruiter **Cornerstone International Group**, said that

SPOTLIGHT

A Challenge For Leaders



*David Windley, president of **IQTalent Partners**, now part of Caldwell, is an experienced leader in the talent acquisition and human resources fields with more than three decades of tactical success in leading corporate talent divisions and companies. Mr. Windley recently shared his views on how we can move forward from the racial tension in 2020 with a more focused plan.*

The events throughout 2020 that highlighted racial inequities made us realize that the policies and systems which were previously put in place to create increased diversity and racial equity have failed to bring the systemic change that was sought. The challenge that leaders of organizations are faced with today is how to move forward with real action that will improve diversity and inclusion, ultimately leading to equity across all groups of people. In other words, we must create authentic and tangible workplace diversity and racial equity.

I recommend that leaders create a 3-tiered plan which includes awareness, process, and investment. First, we must admit that a problem exists and ensure our team is aware of it. Next, we need to evaluate current processes across hiring, recruiting, and promotion. Seek out existing unconscious biases and create new processes to eliminate these biases from your firm's hiring systems. Finally, we must invest. To create real results and ensure our workforces are authentically diverse, we must invest in time, focus, and resources by creating training programs and finding leaders who can advance our diversity and inclusion efforts.

Source: Caldwell/IQTalent Partners

the multiple outlooks that diversity provides only enhances one's business. "The future is all about change, and innovation is a must," he says. "A tremendous opportunity is lost when a recruiting process is begun by saying 'I only want candidates who have...' A much better approach is to identify the areas of experience that are important, then to recruit candidates who not only have that, but also have the capacity to think differently, to engage with others effectively and to openly share their point of view. Bringing other perspectives into the decision-making process has a great deal to do with an organization's success, and that's what diverse candidates offer. Whether it is developing strategy, establishing plans, leading implementation or building teams, diverse thinking adds strength to the organization."

Some organizations and industries have had diversity on their agenda for a long time and have made commendable inroads. Egon Zehnder's Cynthia Soledad says that diversity, equity and inclusion remains an evolving practice for all companies. There is no silver bullet, she says, and none have "arrived" as of yet. "That said, we believe that there are some consumer-focused companies who came to this work earliest because in their consumer centricity, they recognized the diversity of the consumers they were serving, and sought to deeply understand their needs," says Ms. Soledad. "This required building a diverse workforce to design the products and services that would meet the needs of a diverse consumer base. The B2B businesses that served those diverse, consumer-centric businesses evolved next because their clients demanded diversity and inclusion from their partners and vendors."

Many of those companies that are making progress have not gone unnoticed. DiversityInc, a publication which focuses on the business benefits of diversity, in fact, publishes an annual list of the top 50 companies for diversity. The top 10 businesses for 2020 were: Marriott International, Hilton, Eli Lilly and Company, ADP, Accenture, Mastercard, Comcast NBCUniversal, Abbott, TIAA and Toyota Motor North America. DiversityInc's rankings are based on performance in six key areas of diversity and inclusion management: human capital diversity metrics, leadership accountability, talent programs, workplace practices, supplier diversity and philanthropy to non-profit organizations focused on people from underrepresented groups, employee volunteerism and matching programs and practices.

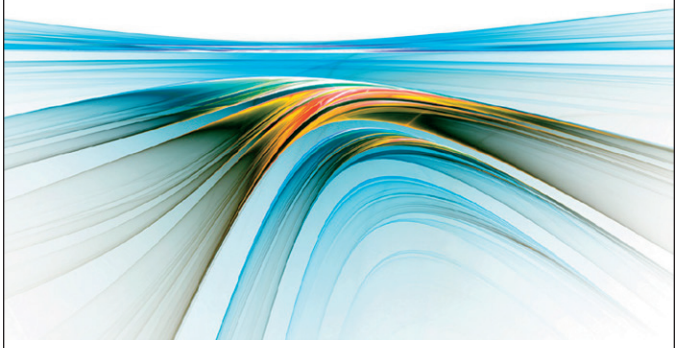
Caldwell managing partner John Blank, who leads the life sciences and healthcare practice from the firm's Nashville, TN office, points out that the healthcare industry has historically leaned heavily towards diversity, and that data shows it's still leading the way. "There's a real understanding that to treat patients effectively and empathetically, it's important that the healthcare workforce reflect the diversity of the patient population," says Mr. Blank. "The last 10 years have also seen an influx of talent coming into the U.S. on the provider, research and life sciences side to mitigate shortages of doctors, nurses and researchers."

And Russell Reynolds Associates' Tina Shah Paikeday says that the longtime efforts of non-profits and companies should be recognized as well. "I work across sectors from technology to industrials as well as private, public and not-for-profit organizations," she says. "Not-for-profit organizations have been working at diversity, equity and inclusion for a very long time as a social justice issue. The term 'equity' has recently found its way into corporate vernacular from the realization last summer that systemic bias is inherent in talent management systems. However, it is a term that has long been embedded into the work of social justice advocates in this space."

Others, meanwhile, are working at the roots to help industries come up to speed in terms of DEI. One search firm that has joined the effort to enlist young professionals to the tourism sector, for example, is St. Paul, MN-based **SearchWide Global**, which focuses on the travel, tourism, hospitality, convention, trade association, venue management and experiential marketing industries. "To have an impact on ethnic diversity in the tourism and events industry long term, we must first engage with young professionals in a meaningful way," says the firm's global team. As such, the recruitment firm is partnering with



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Destinations International (DI) and the International Association of Venue Managers (IAVM) to foster a 600-hour apprenticeship program to provide talented apprentices with hands-on professional work experience, with the participating destination marketing organization and the selected destination partners.

"The goal of the program is to expand the hospitality and tourism workforce by attracting underrepresented and ethnically diverse college graduates and students to career opportunities they may not have considered," says SearchWide Global. "We recognize the importance of cultivating a tourism industry that represents a wide variety of individuals and celebrate the broad range of human di¬fferences among us while embracing the commonalities we share. For this apprenticeship program to truly succeed, there must be career planning, ongoing mentorship, support from our industry partners, and job placement at the end, and we hope to add value in all those areas."

Wholesale Change

Likewise, executive recruitment firms have seen significant change as well, both in the makeup of their own teams and in how they are serving their clients when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion. Debbie Tang, a partner based in Bridge Partners' Washington, D.C. office, says it has been exciting to see the transformation beginning to take root. "Firms are starting to understand that having diverse gatekeepers matters," says Ms. Tang. "Executive search has always been a reflection of corporate America, and as more corporations are thinking about what inclusion looks like in their executive suites and on their boards, the executive search firms they hire should also have inclusive teams."

"The executive search industry has experienced a wholesale change as it relates to DEI," says Chris Pantelidis, managing partner of global recruitment firm **EMA Partners**. "There are a number of

companies that have been extremely proactive in developing strategies that promote the hiring of diverse teams; others are aware of the need to make diversity a priority as it relates to the their talent acquisition strategy, but they are lacking in developing a comprehensive DEI strategy, and or, in the implementation and execution of their DEI strategy. If your goal as an organization is to hire diverse teams of professionals, then you need to be deliberate regarding your plans and your approach. That means as an organization, you allocate the necessary funds and human capital to make DEI a strategic priority."

Q&A

Moving Beyond Good Intentions: Accountability and Authenticity Shaping DE&I Efforts



*Jason Hanold is CEO and co-managing partner at **Hanold Associates** where he serves an impressive client roster from a vast range of industries. In the following interview he discusses how DEI efforts were impacted by a turbulent 2020 and what his expectations are for this year and beyond.*

How have diversity and inclusion efforts been impacted by the turbulent year that 2020 was? Were DE+I efforts expedited or hindered by the pandemic and social unrest in the United States?

DE&I leaders and capabilities were impacted in every possible way following the murder of George Floyd. Three clear themes emerged from our conversations with DE&I leaders: 1) Many long-standing leaders expressed exhaustion and frustration in dealing with cyclical stupidity that often stems from trying to elevate racial literacy. They were looking for opportunities outside of the DE&I function, whether that be a transition into broader Corporate Social Responsibility or HR leadership roles; 2) Some organizations with established DE&I capabilities and leaders realized they had underinvested in the leader, and they needed to upgrade to a leader more capable in leading a dialogue internally and externally as it pertains to civil unrest and racial literacy; 3) Laggards and less contemporary organizations realized that they had better build a DE&I capability. These organizations had varied levels of readiness, with some building the capability purely for optics, while others were well meaning.

DE&I efforts were certainly expedited in terms of senior leadership teams suddenly realizing they needed a public perspective on the subject. To move beyond good intentions, however, requires action thoughtful hiring and development strategies and performance philosophies that create opportunities for growth and mentorship. It requires hiring and dedicating leaders who can help drive accountability across the business. Perhaps most importantly, it requires a certain level of authenticity and vulnerability at all levels of the organization. Overall, there is still much to be expedited if business leaders truly want to realize DE&I's true impact on their employees and bottom line.

Explain the lack of diversity at the board and C-suite level and how executive search firms are attempting to solve this problem.

Our firm is attempting to address this at every opportunity and in every discussion. All search firms need to be the prescriptive advisor nominating/governance committees possess varied degrees of enlightenment. Just as we should suggest functional diversity, rather than relying on the "usual suspects" of a financial expert and active CEO, we should shape diverse slates of candidates for consideration, emphasizing the importance of dimensional perspectives and leadership role models for all others in the organization.

An organization's DE&I efforts will make very little progress if its senior leadership are not held accountable for following the practices they preach. Search firms can certainly play a part in driving that accountability by not only presenting diverse slates but also speaking up and providing guidance in situations where Boards and leadership teams lack an intentional effort to attract, retain and develop a truly diverse workforce.

As an HR specialist, what efforts are you noticing other firms make to improve diversity on their leadership teams? Is the necessary effort being made or can more be done?

As a matter of disciplined practice, since we launched our firm more than 10 years ago, we always present a diverse slate of candidates whether a client requests this or not Unfortunately, our successful candidate is often the only, or one of a very few, diverse leaders on an executive team or Board of Directors. We continue to see more Boards hold their respective leadership teams accountable for the diversity on teams, whether directly linking diversity goals to compensation, or indirectly having the discussions as part of the performance evaluations.

The diversity of leadership teams doesn't end with representation, and diversity of thought doesn't begin without representation either.

What are your expectations for DE+I in 2021? How do you expect things to change in the next few years and beyond?

DE&I capabilities, dialogue and thinking is definitely moving in the right direction. More leaders are aware, more leaders sincerely care, and more leaders in both the public and private sectors are taking steps to eliminate barriers to more inclusive work environments for everyone, not just those who are ethnically diverse. We expect that more organizations will first seek to enhance the racial literacy of their employees. With improved racial literacy, more meaningful and enduring DE&I initiatives and strategies will exist, and more organizations will transcend in achieving a sense of belonging for all.

"As a firm we have always been proactive as it relates to diversity, and we have made a conscious effort to support the development of a robust DEI strategy for our own organization," says Mr. Pantelidis. "We have a very diverse group of consultants across the globe, and that diversity adds a great deal of value to our company, and our clients. Diversity to us means recognizing the fact that each individual is unique, and valuable, in a variety of ways."

Last summer, Hanold Associates in Chicago launched a global diversity, equity and inclusion practice and named Keri Gavin as practice leader. Although known for top HR search work, a significant body of successful DE&I search expertise had developed and accelerated at the firm resulting in the changing of its name to **Hanold Associates HR & Diversity Executive Search**. "Hanold Associates has always been committed to advocating for and promoting organizational racial literacy, as a pathway towards ensuring better diversity success within their client companies," says CEO Jason Hanold. "We will not take on a diversity and inclusion search if the role is more about optics vs. meaningful organizational impact, with true accountability and sufficient resources. We are experiencing a trend where the role of the CHRO is blended with the chief diversity officer."

Fostering diversity, equity and inclusion within organizations is more than just the right ethical decision, "it is one of the best business decisions a company can make," says Ms. Gavin. "Our global diversity, equity and inclusion practice will continue to help organizations prioritize DE&I as a business imperative that drives greater competitiveness, innovation and business results."

Candace Nortey, executive director of diversity, equity and inclusion at **Slone Partners**, which focuses on the life sciences and biotechnology, says last year's widespread protests were a response to decades,



of millennials employed by companies with inclusive cultures are found to be actively engaged in their work.[1]

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indeed centuries, of systemic racism in America. "It has served as a wake-up call for many companies that have wanted to be good citizens but haven't taken the necessary actionable steps to effect change," says Ms. Nortey. "At Slone Partners, we are now being extremely purposeful and intentional in our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, both in-house and in collaboration with our client partners. We know that DEI is both good for society and good for business. With a bright spotlight now shining on DEI, other companies are incentivized to follow suit in pragmatic and substantive ways. And that is a very good thing."

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have become core values at Slone Partners, which was only underscored last summer by the hiring of Ms. Nortey after a standout career in education and the addition of her position to the executive leadership team. "We have committed ourselves to changing the paradigm because history has taught us and research has proven the benefits and value of diverse organizations," says Ms. Nortey. "However, we also recognize that building a diverse workforce is just the beginning. We need equity to ensure equal opportunity for all. And we need to achieve inclusion throughout the organization to ensure that all voices are heard, respected, and supported. When all of that happens, DEI success is possible."

Rod McDavis, managing principal with Washington, D.C.-based **AGB Search**, which serves institutions of higher education, says diversity, equity and inclusion efforts have had a positive impact on the executive search industry. "Since our founding, AGB Search has prioritized diversity, not just in our executive searches, but even within our firm," says Dr. McDavis. At AGB Search, five of the firm's six principals are women, and of its search consultants, 41 percent are women and 28 percent are people of color. More than half of

AGB's staff team is composed of women, and almost one-third are people of color.

"On a broad level, I do believe that executive search firms recognize the value in leadership teams that come from diverse backgrounds and experiences," says Dr. McDavis. "Homogeneity stifles creativity and innovation; whereas, diversity allows for a broad range of perspectives, ideas and problem-solving. As higher education evolves, it is even more critical to incorporate varied viewpoints into decision-making processes to ensure the needs of all constituencies are being met."

Fresh Interest

"This year has served as a wake-up call on a number of fronts – a pandemic we were not ready for, political division and the reality of the lived experiences of people of color," he says. "Organizations are recognizing the ways in which their decisions or actions (or lack thereof) may contribute to the systemic barriers that have historically kept under-represented minorities from achieving leadership positions. AGB Search is well-positioned to help institutions achieve more diversity throughout their ranks. Indeed, we are deeply committed to doing so."

Ted Pryor, managing director with **Greenwich Harbor Partners** in Greenwich, Conn., which is women-owned and led, has been advising clients to consider diverse candidates for decades. "We advise clients to favor diverse backgrounds to be able to bring in fresh ideas and fresh perspectives, which will lead to better business outcomes," he says.

Since the start of the George Floyd protests in May 2020, says Mr. Pryor, diversity, equity and inclusion issues have received heightened attention across for-profit and non-profit organizations. "There has been significant fresh interest in hiring diverse candidates for C-suite roles and board of directors," he says. "There

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has also been an increase in effort to create more welcoming environments for diverse employees such as creating mentorship programs. I would say one-third have been very committed to diversity for a long time, one-third have been interested in have worked on it but are increasing their level of activity now. And maybe one-third are still somewhat passive and just beginning to think about what more they can do."

Putting diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at the forefront of an organization's agenda is one of the best ways to build a dynamic and successful team, says **Direct Recruiters**' Kasey Fahey Kaiser, partner, healthcare technology and life sciences, and director of payer/health plan software within the healthcare IT practice. "As an executive search firm, we are seeing companies' diversity, equity and inclusion best practices take precedence in their hiring strategies, and as a result, they are building better workplace environments overall," she says. "Subsequently, recruiters are extremely aware and supportive of their clients' DEI initiatives and bring inclusive recruiting strategies to connect with and hire diverse teams."

"Hiring candidates with different characteristics and backgrounds first and foremost brings a diversification of thought and perspectives to your company which increases problem solving, innovation and creativity," says Ms. Fahey Kaiser. "In addition, there is evidence that diversity in the workforce creates higher employee engagement, and lower turnover for the simple fact that those who feel accepted in their workplace are more likely to feel engaged at work and stay at the organization."

Brenda Malloy, president of New York City-based **Herbert Mines Associates**, which focuses exclusively on consumer-driven businesses, says that from a gender perspective her firm is 75 percent diverse. "We have some work to do in terms of ethnic diversity which is a priority for us in 2021," says Ms. Malloy. "Equity centers more on the discreet promotion rates of specific ethnic backgrounds. What I can say is that we promoted Caitlin Kenefick to managing director this year and Sarah Robertson to senior associate. We are very proud of these two executives. In terms of inclusion, we believe this centers around 'all opinions are valued,' and we operate in a flat and agile manner in terms of the way we put teams together."

BY THE NUMBERS

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are prominent in the news today and that's something that **Boardwalk Consulting** has been committed to since its inception. Boardwalk's work since 2017 reflects their focus on placing diverse candidates.

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...**49%** of placements are people of color

... **53%** of placements are women

Boardwalk's respect for the power of diversity is deep and their team is focused in their efforts to ensure inclusivity in their team, in their approach and in the results for their clients.

Ms. Malloy says that delivering diverse slate of candidates has always been a top priority for her firm. Herbert Mines strives to have a diverse candidate on 100 percent of the candidate slates it delivers, a goal it is not far from achieving. "We are currently tracking at 96 percent," she says. "In terms of our placement rate, 47 percent of our executive placements are diverse and 54 percent of our board placements are diverse. What we are seeing is more specificity in the definition of diversity with a priority being placed on ethnically diverse candidates, particularly black and LatinX executives. We have several clients that have indicated they will only meet with ethnically diverse candidates and we are seeing this at the board and executive level. We applaud this focus and have responded accordingly."

BoardWalk CONSULTING

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Diversity & inclusion have been central to BoardWalk's work since our founding in 2002, and we are proud that so many of our placements embody equity through their own leadership and lived experience.



For women and people of color, however, the challenges do not end when they land an executive-level position. Truth be told, the wage gap remains a persistent problem, though progress is being made. For example, several states, such as Colorado starting on Jan.1, 2021 require that any job posting specify the salary range, and others prohibit the inclusion of photographs on resumes, notes Sam Pettway, founding director of **BoardWalk Consulting** in Atlanta, which serves the non-profit sector. And those efforts are likely to continue.

"From our perspective, the more insidious wage gap is not race- or gender-based; it's about the sector itself," says Mr. Pettway. "Articles appear from time to time about the egregious compensation paid certain individuals. The real issue is not with the handful who attract attention for being overpaid but with the vast majority who will never be paid what they're truly worth."

"'Sacrificial compensation' is not as big a problem as it once was, but missionary zeal can go only so far in ensuring a thriving, sustainable organization," says Mr. Pettway. "At the leadership level, an executive search can be an eye-opener for the board of directors, especially when the search is for the successor to a founder or founder-like leader. We never want compensation to be the reason a candidate is interested in a role, but we try hard to make sure compensation is not the reason a qualified, appealing contender simply cannot consider the possibility."

"And yet, the gender gap is real," Mr. Pettway adds. "GuideStar's most recent annual compensation survey, released in September 2020, reports a gender wage gap at the CEO level of from five percent in smaller organizations to 20 percent across similar organizations with budgets over $50 million. Where appropriate, we use such data to explore questions such as "Why is their CEO (or their CEO role) worth

20 percent more to them than yours is to you? What might that say about strategy, aspirations or impact?"

"A combination of state laws, enlightened boards and public pressure will likely narrow the gender-based wage gap at an increasing rate in the coming years, but the funding gap may prove a tougher challenge."

"For a few non-profits, fundraising is tangential to their success (think Goodwill); for most, however, it is central to their very existence. In our headquarters city of Atlanta, one issue getting increasing attention is the difficulty black-led non-profits encounter competing for funds against their white-led counterparts. Atlanta is an enlightened community, a cradle of the civil rights movement and a mecca for black leadership, and even so black-led non-profits find themselves behind the curve. A group of funders and CEOs has come together to tackle the issue head-on, but where there is a funding gap, you can be sure there is a wage gap too."

Judith M. von Seldeneck, founder and chair of the **Diversified Search Group** in Philadelphia, says that the effort being made depends on the search firm. "In some cases you are seeing a more concerted effort to diversify the ranks, and at others it doesn't seem to be a priority," she says. "At the end of the day it's a matter of intentionality: How important is this to you? Obviously, it's very important to us. We are the largest woman-founded executive search firm in the world.

SPOTLIGHT

What Diversity Really Means



*Carla Logan is a vice president and senior associate in the Atlanta office of the **Diversified Search Group**. Ms. Logan has more than 15 years of experience in executive search in the industries of consumer-packaged goods, retail, transportation, financial services, and more. The following is an excerpt from a recent article authored by Ms. Logan on the true meaning of diversity.*

Different experiences, cultures, and perspectives shape us into the people we are. They make us unique, and they make us interesting. We bring all of that into our professional lives. Embracing our differences is the pivotal link to understanding and defining diversity.

Individuals who are unique in how they live in and view the world foster a diverse personal and professional community. They possess their own needs, goals, rights, and responsibilities and bring all of those to a team. The data proves it: Together, different individuals with different skill sets and talents, working together, make for successful, high-performing teams.

Values define who we are. They are the things that are important in the way we live and work. We garner our values from our families, communities, and faiths, then seek to live and work with people who share those same values. Many times, we're faced with understanding, if not always accepting, different value systems in our professional lives. But if we lean in, and decide not to disengage because of these differences, we can enhance the value of diversity both personally and professionally.

Excelling in how we interact with different individuals is critical. Taking the time to learn and understand an individual's thoughts, dreams, goals, talents, and motivations on a consistent basis can mean everything in building a proficient, inclusive culture.

Relationships with individuals of different cultures and experiences helps broaden your horizons. They teach us how to connect with one another and give us the opportunity to see the world through different lenses. You can't understand the perspective of any group that is markedly different than your own if you never meaningfully interact with someone who belongs to that group.

Sharing thoughts, talents, and different experiences across the global community is the essence of diversity.

Ideas come from individuals with different dreams and perspectives. When we embrace different ideas, we create a culture of innovation, which improves the quality of lives of our family, our friends, and our colleagues.

Talents are our skills, style, and techniques on how we get things done, how we perform. These are critical in a diverse society. How we appreciate those different skill sets can determine how great the impact we can have establishing a diverse, inclusive culture.

Yielding is an interesting word to associate with diversity. But I see it this way: we have to be willing to give way to different experiences, ideas, and values in order for diversity to really work. Sometimes yielding to another individual, or group of individuals' ways, thoughts, and values, serves the greater good.

Source: Diversified Search Group

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Our founder and chair is a woman, our president is a woman, and the three firms we acquired in 2019—Koya Partners, Grant Cooper and Storbeck Search—were all originally founded by women. So we are clearly intentional about the importance of female leadership. I think the country is, too: We have more women in Congress than ever, and incoming the first woman vice president in the history of the nation. I think it's important, as the people who find leadership for the country, that our leadership in executive search reflect our commitment to diversity."

When it comes specifically to the age gap, Ms. von Seldeneck says, some headway is being made. "Five years ago, women earned 74 cents for every dollar a man earned; today the uncontrolled gender pay gap is 81 cents for every dollar," she says. "When you control for identical education and backgrounds, it goes to 98 cents for every dollar, which seems terrific—except it still doesn't explain why women with identical experience and qualifications still make two percent less than men do. It gets a little trickier when you get into the issue of people of color, but the fact remains that black and Hispanic executives still lag far behind their Caucasian counterparts. Again, the solution here is that companies have to be more intentional, We're seeing a lot of clients who are undertaking a compensation audit and comprehensive job analysis, or abandoning salary history as a metric, something that is also being actively legislated. Anti-bias training, increased use of flexible or remote working arrangements—there are a lot of tools that can be activated to address this. You're starting to see them used more robustly."

Bob Clarke, co-founder and CEO of Rockford, IL-based **Furst Group**, which finds leaders for the healthcare industry, says the disparity of compensation is very real and impacts diverse leaders in all levels of an organization. "We have

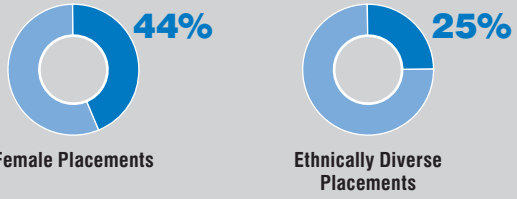
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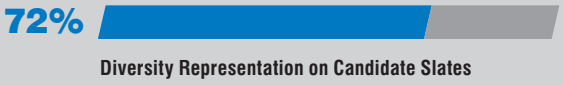
A Commitment to DE&I

Furst Group
Healthcare Executive Search

Partnering with healthcare organizations to embed diversity and inclusion practices into their talent strategies is one of the most important and impactful things **Furst Group** can do as an executive search firm. Through education, advocacy, and continued involvement with key minority-focused healthcare associations, we are addressing the disparity that ethnic minorities represent less than two percent of senior management positions in the healthcare industry.

Furst Group has a proven track record of successfully recruiting such diverse leaders:

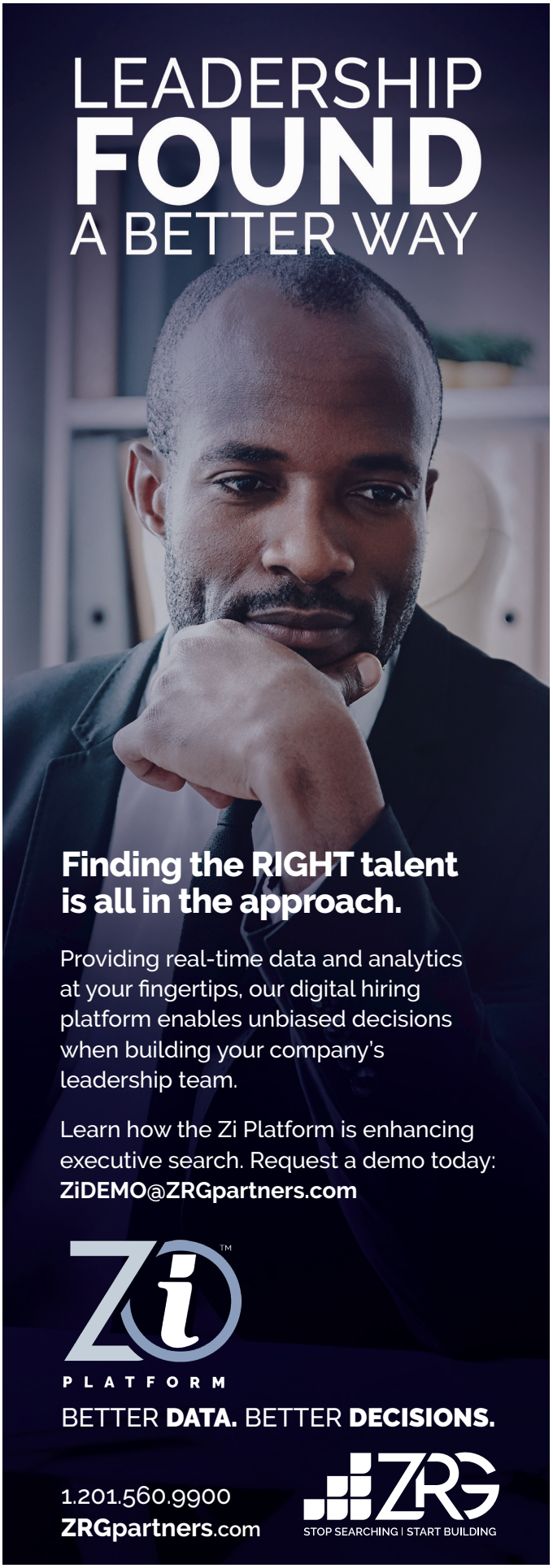




Source: Furst Group

difficult conversations with our clients around this challenge quite often," says Mr. Clarke. "It is common, for example, to presume a candidate's competency based on historical compensation which is not at all accurate. When offers are crafted the disparity continues as they are typically based on one's individual past compensation rather than an amount based on the position. Many states have enacted wage and salary laws that attempted to address this, but they are few and not consistent."

"Compensation is a very personal thing for people," says Mr. Clarke. "It is difficult to discuss for many reasons including the fact that it is often a gauge of one's worth. As an organization we have adopted a firm-wide policy patterned after the newly enacted laws so that we focus on expectations and market



Q&A

Recruiting in Unprecedented Times



*Joseph Blass, CEO of **Ezekia**, has founded and managed many businesses over his career including the turnaround of a WiMax business as well as the founding of Toucan Telecom in 2003 which he managed prior to the firm's sale. In 2015, Mr. Blass Launched Not Actively Looking which evolved into Ezekia. In this interview, Mr. Blass shares his expertise on how software can assist in diversity and inclusion efforts.*

How can software companies help address the wage gap and other forms of discrimination?

The wage gap is a problem that has no excuse or justification. It reflects two people of equal abilities and equal experience, getting different wages because of their gender or skin tone. There are many ways to tackle the pay gap and thankfully some of these methods can be helped by using the right software. For example, on Ezekia, mandatory fields include aspirational/ requested renumerations, but the current remuneration is optional. By not demanding to populate current wages and instead only making the desired wages a must have Ezekia creates a level playing field when being considered for their next role.

How can search firms use software and other tools that are at their disposal in order to promote diverse candidates?

Features such as client reports, or the client portal can help shape the clients opinion of who to hire. A person put on the top of the list or a person with a better profile picture are more likely to be noticed by the client. Ezekia users can control what the client sees to form their first impression, so that names such as Mary or Paul are initialized to M and P and the profile picture is hidden. As a result the best candidates would be hired without the risk of invoking bias.

Do you expect executive search software to add a diversity component given the increased demand for diverse candidates? If you expect this to be integrated into the software how?

Tracing gender or diversity is mandatory is some countries, or for certain roles, yet prohibited in other countries. Therefore adding a component of diversity can be great in some places and very problematic in other place. At Ezekia, we solved this problem by offering the search firms Custom Fields. If they want or need to track diversity than they can do so easily, but if they do not want to track this, or are forbidden to do so, then then they would never even see the choice.

How can software companies like Ezekia work to eliminate unconscious bias?

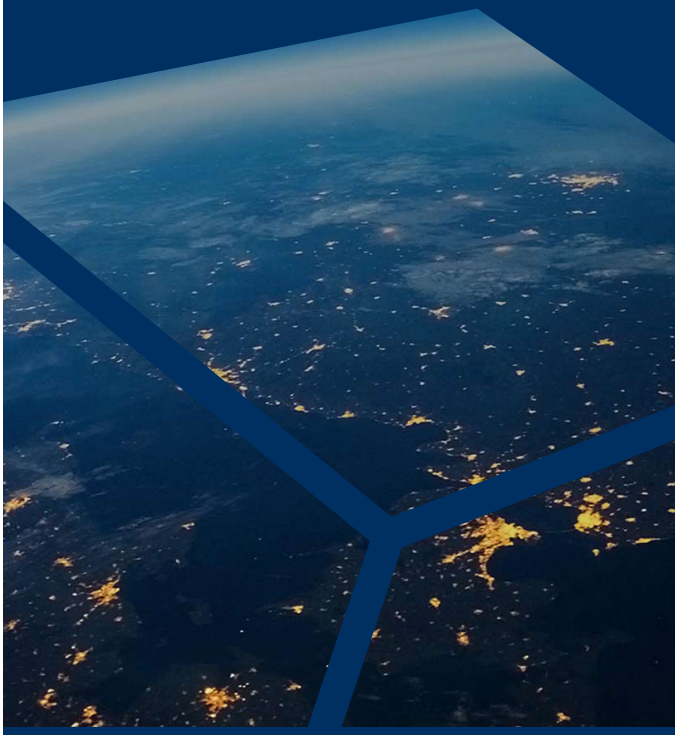
Ezekia helps the search firms find the best people for their clients based on objective criteria. The search firm can then highlight the best people and eliminate elements of Bias such as name, age, photo or nationality, so that the client can form an initial impression based solely on facts and the search firm's professional assessment.

competitive compensation and not on an individual's compensation history. This helps to close the gap and directly addresses the issue."

Robin Toft, CEO of the Toft Group division of **ZRG**, says that the best companies have already made efforts to reduce the historical wage gap. "Additionally, they are making bold statements to attract women and people of color, for instance, referencing diversity in their mission statement," she says. "'Top down' communications are important. Also, they need to conduct annual unconscious bias training. With respect to hiring, they are requiring diverse interviewing teams. What's more, they should always insist upon a diverse slate. In fact, many companies have instructed head of talent NOT to start interviewing until they have a diverse slate. These companies are routinely hiring search firms with diversity focus. There's a lot more work to be done from a recruiting standpoint, but all indications are that great progress is being made."

Executive search firms have been making a concerted effort for some time to promote women into senior leadership roles within their clients' businesses, says Guy Barnes, managing partner for executive search firm **Acertitude**. "It could be argued that this was initially driven by governmental influence and increased scrutiny from certain clients, but I believe that it is now sincere, concerted and driven for the right commercial and societal reasons," he says. "That's not to say that it is wholly consistent, nor

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that progress has been sufficient, but it has moved beyond token marketing efforts towards – in the better quality firms – a systemic approach involving process, training, data and ultimately quality and accountability. Of course, client expectation – across all industries – has also evolved in parallel to the point that senior leadership searches have a specific commitment to providing a diverse slate as a matter of course."

Big strides have been taken, says Mr. Barnes, and women in particular are winning more top-level positions than they used to. "Of course, there is plenty more progress to be made, particularly as the definition of diversity moves beyond gender to include other under-represented groups in business," says Mr. Barnes. "Ironically, the latter provides a degree more complexity as employment legislation in various markets hasn't evolved in entirely helpful ways in supporting search firms as they help their clients specifically build more ethnically diverse businesses."

More Needs to Be Done

"In principle, it is extremely unusual to find firms in the primary economic markets who wouldn't consider women for the same roles as men," says Mr. Barnes. "If there are, and it is overt, one would hope that the search partner would hold them to account and, ultimately, consider their involvement. In practice, however, it remains imperfect, primarily because there are still talent shortages in certain industries and geographies. Where there are restricted pools, this can result in a sometimes unseemly scrabble for the limited number of qualified candidates, often with a negative effect. Senior, qualified leaders who have expended significant effort and talent in developing their careers do not necessarily respond to roles and approaches where they feel their gender, rather than their capability, is the primary driver. However, thoughtful search partners can play an important role in working with

their clients to develop broader candidate slates from aligned sectors, functions and, indeed, career levels. They can then also help support those candidates to transition, onboard and ultimately thrive."

Companies and organizations are making a greater effort to find and promote female leaders to a much greater extent than just a few years ago, say Tom Young, director of operations and sustainability manager, and Marshall Reffett, managing director, of **Reffett Associates** in Bellevue, WA. "First, we are seeing more and more of an acknowledgement that more needs to be done not just to find female leaders, but also to create opportunities for females to grow into leadership roles or advance in their leadership careers," say Mssrs. Young and Reffett. "When done well this acknowledgment of the need for more female leadership is coupled with an active intentionality, meaning that organizations set out guidelines, plans and programs to find and retain female talent. Strong organizations do not just acknowledge the need for female leadership they take steps to either develop or find female leaders."

Additional progress on this front will take time. "We are seeing more women being considered for top level opportunities, and more women being promoted to the top position within our client firms," say Mssrs. Young and Reffett. "It is very encouraging to see how many more of the finalists we present for searches we are conducting have diverse backgrounds. This is due both to new efforts on our part and to new interest on the part of employers in seeing greater diversity of applicants. It was not uncommon for a group of finalists to have little or no diversity, as recently as a few years ago. Now, not only do we not present a candidate book unless there are diversity applicants included, but we see half the finalists for a position being diverse. This is because of both demand from our clients to see diversity candidates and systemic

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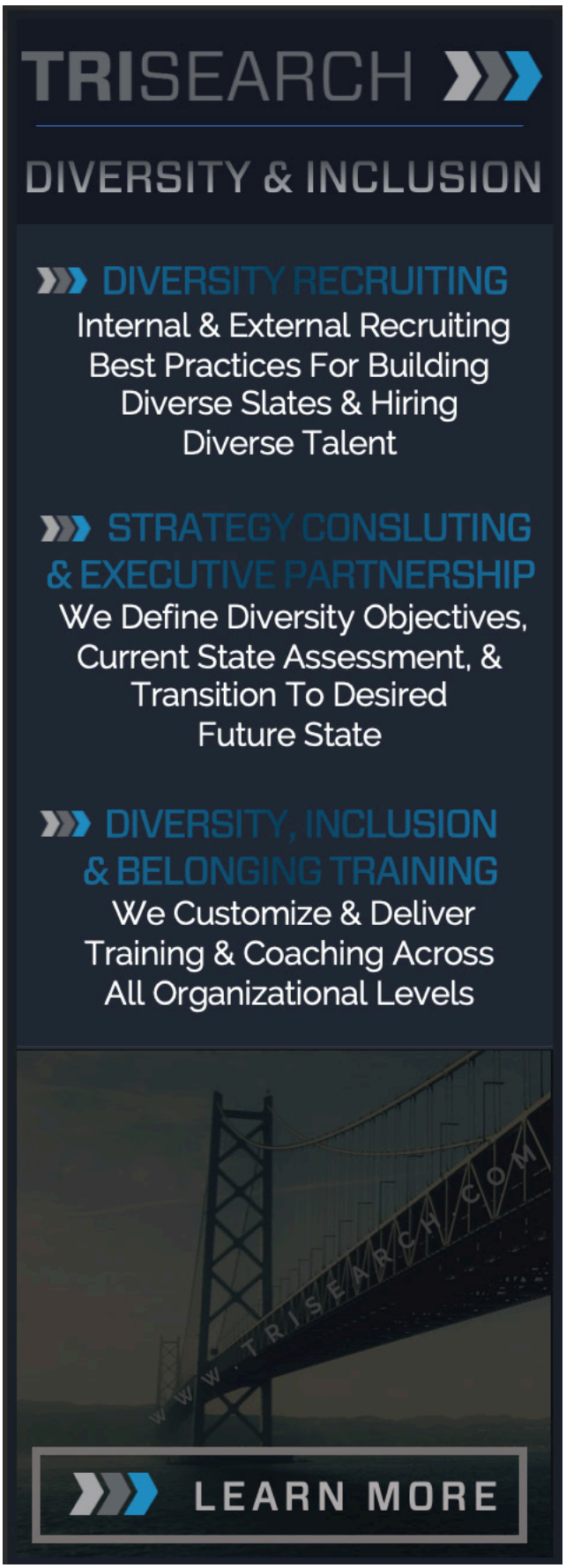
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SPOTLIGHT

Building A Foundation for Diversity

FurstGroup
Healthcare Executive Search

Losing momentum on diversity is not an option. Representing and reflecting our increasingly diverse population throughout all levels of our organizations must be a strategic priority.

Building a strong foundation for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging means more than having a threshold or requirements for hiring diverse talent. It means creating a strategy for systemic change, developing pathways for access and exposure, and establishing processes, tools and metrics that encourage authentic, transformational leadership.

Many organizations have the desire and drive to integrate more diversity into their organizations but are unsure of where to begin or where to go next. Transparent, open conversations are the ideal way to assess where you are and where you need to be. Ask the tough questions. Have vulnerable conversations. Explore the hard truths and know that being outside of your comfort zone is the only way to effect change.

Reviewing your current diversity and inclusion practices provides the basis for creating a plan that is tied into your talent and business strategies. You can then measure the effectiveness of your efforts and hold leaders accountable for progress. This framework ensures leaders are setting the right example and creating solid expectations, which allows your organization to achieve positive strides and embrace the needs of your workforce and your community.

Diversity isn't something that needs to be solved. It's a mindset that needs to be deeply intertwined and embedded in your organizational culture. True transformation in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging means a refocus on human basics. Challenge everyone in your organization to have tough conversations and lead with courage.

Source: Furst Group

changes we have made in our recruitment process to cast a broader net, develop stronger relationships within industry that can help us source diverse talent and changes like the bias prevention practices that we have built into our recruiting process. While this has created a more labor-intensive search process for us, it has paid dividends in the quality of diversity candidates that we source."

When it comes to the world of academia, search firms have often led the way in understanding the importance of equity and inclusion in recruitment,

says L. Jay Lemons, president and senior consultant of **Academic Search** in Washington, D.C. The number of women selected as college and university presidents has increased year over year, he says, but there is still work to be done. "Beyond the presidency, the higher education sector has a way to go in promoting women leaders at all levels of campus administration," says Dr. Lemons. "The summer of 2020 highlighted the need to refocus our inclusion and outreach efforts not just on women, but African American women and more generally women of color. We are proud that nearly 60 percent of our appointments are women and/or persons of color."

"We see it as part of our fundamental role to bring to the search committee as diverse a candidate pool as possible, but it is not enough just to recruit a diverse pool," says Dr. Lemons. "We work with our search committees and campus communities as well to see the potential in all of the applicants and ensure fair treatment from the committee and campus community. At Academic Search, we also fund fellowships for leadership development programs for persons from underrepresented groups. Our parent organization, AALI, funds about $45,000 in diversity fellowships each year. Our senior consultants donate their time and efforts to programs like Higher Education Resource Services (HERS), a leadership development and research organization that is dedicated to creating and sustaining a diverse network of women leaders in higher education. This effort is absolutely intentional and aims to support women in leadership."

Jennifer Muller, managing partner and senior consultant of **Academic Career Executive Search** (ACES) in West Hartford, CT, says that her colleagues in higher education executive search have done an admirable job in promoting women. "We've developed strong networks and talent likes

Academic Search

At Academic Search, diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to our mission and at the core of who we are. This shows across our work and in our results.

APPROXIMATELY*

6 IN 10

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*In the past five years, 59% of our searches have resulted in the appointment of a woman and/or person of color.

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Q&A

Accelerating the DE&I Journey



As a 19-year-old, Kaye Foster came to the United States with $50 in her pocket. Today, after a career that has included senior HR positions at Onyx Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer, she is a sought-after advisor and executive coach for The Boston Consulting Group. In September 2020, Ms. Foster met virtually with Spencer Stuart's biopharma team for a conversation about her unique career path, corporate diversity and inclusion efforts. Below is the interview, edited for clarity and length.

It's been said that increasing diversity is hard. What do you say to that?

I don't accept that language. It's critical for leaders to understand that words matter, because language creates your reality. If you say something is difficult, you will approach it like it's a challenge. Recruiting diverse talent is not difficult; recruiting diverse talent is different. It requires innovation, and an effort to cultivate genuine relationships. I've heard people say that their minority coworkers are "unicorns," but this is not true. Diverse talent is exceptional, but they are not the exception. Creating these barriers in your language regarding diversity is too frequently used to let leaders off the hook.

Is there a priority among diversity, equity and inclusion? For organizations that want to increase DEI, what comes first?

It's not diversity, equity, and then inclusion — the hard part is addressing them all at the same time. And equity is more important than equality. Equality assumes that we are all starting from the same place, which we know is not the case. Equity considers the systems in place and recognizes that everyone is not approaching a situation or role with the same context. People come from different backgrounds and need access to different tools and resources. For a more tangible example, I say that equality is like spreading peanut butter around to everyone. Someone might have enough bread to make two sandwiches with the peanut butter, but I may not have any bread!

How can organizations accelerate their DEI journey?

Some of the biggest leverage we have right now is in the board room. When I was a senior officer at one of my previous companies, our board was not actively engaged in discussions on diversity. We were a firm that had a long history of diversity, with a diversity officer and a fair amount of investment. What became clear, though, following a 10-year review of our talent, was that we had created a revolving door of diversity because we hadn't worked on inclusion or considered what the environment was like for diverse employees. Diverse candidates were leaving because they weren't advancing. We reflected and asked ourselves what commitments we needed to make. We hadn't invested adequately in helping our middle management and supervisors learn how to coach across race, gender, sexual orientation and other diversity dimensions. Supervisors felt ill equipped to give feedback to minority employees because they were afraid to make a mistake, so they just didn't provide any. The organization wasn't helping Black colleagues progress and develop, so the employees got stuck. It was only when we started to understand the pathology that we were able to make progress. This is why the assessment and diagnosis of the current state of diversity within the company is so critical.

Which organizations do this work well?

There are parts of the work that companies are doing well, but there's not one company that I believe has nailed it. Part of the challenge is that we are in a dynamic environment, considering the COVID-19 pandemic and societal unrest. Last year, I'd have answered a company like Google, which invests employee benefits and creates a product that brings community together. You could say that they're deploying their platform in a way that's making progress. However, if you looked at their workforce demographic, you'd say it's not enough. I take the holistic lens of diversity across employees and suppliers, etc. While some companies excel in some of these dimensions, I can't think of a particular one that's delivering on all of them.

Source: Spencer Stuart

to promote talent," she says. "We rely on these existing networks as well as the new connections we make every day. In addition there are great women's leadership programs such as the American Council on Education's (ACE) women's leadership program and HERS, to name a few. I've volunteered at closing events where ACE brings in search firm leaders to meet with the attendees to work with them on their CVs and cover letters as they look to advance in their careers. Our firm also works hard to eliminate implicit bias when we present candidates. We help candidates strengthen their materials to best showcase their experience and talent."

"Speaking for Academic Career & Executive Search, women represent 50 percent of placements in our searches," says Ms. Muller. "We recognize this is due in part to our methodologies. In general, I think the trend is heading in the right direction, but we have a

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long way to go. Look at just presidential positions, the data from the 2017 American College President Study shows only 30 percent of presidents are women. Dig further and there are deeper disparities in the types of institutions women are running with higher percentages in community college vs. doctoral granting institutions."

"As a whole, I believe my higher education executive search colleagues do good work in promoting women for the same roles as men – absolutely. I think more women are being presented in candidate pools. The question is what happens after that? That is where our role as executive search leaders comes in. We need to level the playing field and help our candidates to best showcase their experience, strength and skillsets. If we can provide the evidence to committees on why a candidate could potentially be their next great leader – it becomes more difficult for bias to enter the equation. I'm not saying it doesn't happen. People inherently fall back into their comfort zones. We need to keep pushing. I also think diversity among search committees helps with this."

If organizations of all stripes and the search firms that serve them do keep pushing, the future for diversity, equity and inclusion looks hopeful. When asked to prognosticate for 10 years down the road, most search firms were optimistic that change will come. Julian Bell, managing director with global leadership advisory and executive search firm **Sheffield Haworth**, which serves clients in the financial services, business and professional services and technology industries, says he expects to see a more diversity in the boardroom, for example, because of regulation, pressure and people understanding it's simply the right thing to do. "We are still a long way off and there is much work to be done, but organizations are setting themselves goals and aspirations to achieve greater diversity within their firms," he says.

By way of an example, Mr. Bell points to the non-profit education and advocacy campaign Women on Boards 2020 (WOB2020), which is driving the movement toward accelerating gender balance on corporate boards of directors. "Last year 2020WOB announced that the national number of board seats held by women on the Russell 3000 corporations passed the 20 percent goal a year ahead of expectations," notes Mr. Bell. "Their goal now is to advance toward gender balance on boards by 2050. Incidentally, according to their research, it would seem that countries within the European Union are slightly ahead in terms of achieving more gender balanced boards, with an average across the E.U. at around 29.3 percent according to the 2019 Report on Equality between men and women in the E.U. Some countries, such as France and Italy, have achieved over 40 percent women on boards. In contrast, U.S. companies exceeded 20 female representation on boards in 2019."

A Brighter Future

"It is our responsibility as search professionals to continue to challenge our clients and present them with diverse slates of candidates," says Mr. Bell. "It is no longer acceptable to present the same candidates. As an industry we have to be better at challenging the status quo, advocating for diverse talent and being held accountable for helping organizations realize their objectives and goals around diversity."

Ms. von Seldeneck, of Diversified Search, says the future is finally looking brighter. "This is one of the success stories that has been underreported, I think," she says. "Just look at boards, which are really the drivers of corporate leadership. In the past five years, boards have recognized that the old legacy rules for candidacy for a public board—prior board experience, and a role as a CEO—were eliminating 99 percent of women. Not only that, but there were antiquated ideas about who could contribute to

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a board effectively—they didn't account for the nimble ingenuity of, let's say, the people leading wildly successful Silicon Valley start-ups. As boards become more diverse, so do C-suites, because as a result companies begin to inculcate diversity across the ranks. I think within the next five years we could see women become the majority on public boards. The wave is building. The next big lift is to continue to more aggressively advance more people of color onto public boards and into the C-suite. But there is a lot of energy behind this right now, which is amazing to see.

Ms. Toft, of ZRG Partners, says that she too is hopeful that leadership will have a significantly different makeup in a decade's time. "California's 2019 board legislation mandating women on public boards, and 2020 legislation for equality for under-represented classes did not just affect California, but has had a nationwide effect," she says. "In my experience leading a board and CEO practice, today women and people of color in fact have an advantage in joining not only public boards, but also private companies seeking board diversification. I expect the U.S. companies will accelerate toward diversity in the next 10 years, and hope we achieve equality with respect to gender by that time."

Centerstone Executive Search & Consulting's Dr. Villeneuve also sees the pieces of diversity beginning to fall into place. The goal now is to do the hard work of bringing it all to fruition. "We applaud new laws that mandate the increase of women on boards, for example in California – and we just witnessed the election of the first woman of color as Vice President of the United States which is great progress," she says. "We are very optimistic, but it starts with creating spaces that focus on shared values rather than selecting based on identities. It's important to ask questions in the interview process that speak to a candidate's willingness to enter a

diverse team and this idea of open-mindedness and constructive conflict can encourage the hiring process to challenge candidates to have interpersonal skills that create community. We also see chief diversity officers and their teams driving change, along with using data to identify themes and help inform decisions. We also think that coaches and mentors will play a greater role in helping develop diverse candidates for leadership roles and create a more expansive pipeline of talent."

In other words, the pieces are falling into place. For the executive search firms and the clients they serve, the work before them is clear. "There is no shortage of diverse talent out there," says Dr. Villeneuve. "It's a matter of finding them and ensuring the organization culture can help them succeed."

INDUSTRY VIEWPOINTS

VIEWPOINTS

Hunt Scanlon keeps tabs on an ever-expanding executive search and talent management sector that far exceeds where the industry was just a decade ago. Today, Hunt Scanlon tracks some 18,000 executive search consultants at more than 4,100 recruiting firms in North America and another 4,300 overseas, spanning Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and everywhere else in between.

To round out our study this year, we invited executive recruiting and leadership advisory specialists to bring us their market insights. If you're interested in hearing from some of the industry's most trusted and respected recruiting and leadership advisory professionals, we encourage you to take the time to read these outstanding Viewpoints.

APPROACHING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AS A COMPREHENSIVE CULTURAL CHANGE

Keri Gavin, Partner & Practice Leader of Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Hanold Associates, Examines How D&I Impacts Cultural Change



Keri Gavin is a partner with Hanold Associates and leader of the firm's global diversity, equity & inclusion practice. Her signature strength is being a personable, skilled relationship builder who is able to build trust and communicate important information effectively. Prior to joining Hanold Associates, Ms. Gavin was the director of host relations and consulting for Ragan Communications. At Ragan, she fostered relationships with communications leaders at Fortune 500 companies to secure event partnerships. She also helped launch Ragan Consulting Group.

In this Viewpoint, Ms. Gavin explains how Hanold Associates is approaching the call to bring diverse leaders to their clients. She then shares how organizations can transform their culture through the infusion of diversity throughout the organization.

Introduction

While the concept of diversity, equity and inclusion isn't altogether new, a growing number of organizations are beginning to recognize its importance not only from a moral point of view, but from a business impact perspective.

The events of 2020 shed a spotlight on the issue, and underrepresented groups raised their voices, asking governments and businesses alike, "What are you going to do?" This left many business leaders scrambling to respond. Unfortunately, the accompanying commitment to DE&I for some organizations doesn't go much deeper than generic public statements.

Leaders who see DE&I as more than just representation will be the ones who realize the full impact on both their employees and their bottom line.

Our Approach

Many organizations turned to Hanold Associates to help them bring in HR or diversity leaders to build or lead their DE&I efforts. We love these requests and have developed a strong network of DE&I leaders over the years, but our advisory approach to these searches comes with some tough love up front.

The average tenure of a Chief Diversity Officer is approximately three years, and it's the fastest growing C-suite title of 2020, according to LinkedIn. We will often ask our potential clients, "What are you actually doing in your organization to develop and retain diverse talent so that we don't have to have this conversation three years from now?" If there is no authenticity, resources, commitment or accountability behind the desired position, our firm has and will continue to decline the search. We will not be part of a PR response.

This isn't to say businesses have to have all the answers in fact, many of our clients are fairly new to these kinds of efforts. The difference between partnerships we agree to and those we don't is the organization's willingness to hold up a mirror and gauge its sincere desire to improve DE&I, as well as its willingness to invest the time and resources necessary to lead a true cultural transformation.

Assuming that foundation is in place, exactly how can business leaders begin transforming their cultures into environments that are diverse, equitable and inclusive? Our goal is to move DE&I to being part of the greater conversation of culture and engagement.

Holding Leadership Accountable

We live and work in an era of increasing transparency. It's becoming more and more difficult for executives to pay lip service to the importance of following a practice without doing so themselves, and have that behavior go unnoticed by employees across the organization.

An organization's DE&I efforts will make very little progress if its C-suite and senior leadership are not held accountable for following the practices they preach.

This accountability can and should look differently in each organization, but it doesn't have to be anything groundbreaking. It can be as simple as seeing women

are underrepresented in the business and committing to holding leaders accountable for increasing the number of women in the organization.

For example, one Fortune 100 company recently implemented a two percent year-over-year increase target in women hires that directly impacts its leaders' annual bonuses. Some areas of the business further behind were given a three percent target. Results will be reported early next year, and with that basic accountability in place, our client tells us they are ready to turn their focus toward improving other behaviors that impact the culture.

Accountability doesn't stop at the leadership level, however driving meaningful change has to be done companywide.

Sharing Responsibility Across the Organization

Improving diversity, equity and inclusion is not just an HR or diversity officer's job. To be culturally transformative, it must be the shared responsibility of everyone in the organization.

In other words, DE&I cannot be a bolted-on program.

Certainly, resource groups, workshops, training, etc. all play a part in the bigger picture but ultimately, DE&I is a way of seeing, hearing and behaving. It means facilitating a culture of inclusion and belonging where individuals from all walks of life can be themselves and continue to develop and thrive, but we have to create an environment where individuals from different backgrounds can work together effectively.

Inclusivity is what makes a diverse workforce work, but you have to be clear how you are moving from intent to action.

For example, one fast-growing startup recently implemented a diversity-first hiring policy companywide which states for the first 30 days hiring managers must source only diverse candidates for all director-level and above searches. Additionally, it also reworked its employee referral bonus program to provide an additional $1,500 for diverse candidates. Further, it has mapped out a strategy to reach gender parity by a specific year, defined as 48 percent men, 48 percent women, and four percent nonbinary.

These types of practices are not always easy to implement, but they are very much possible for business leaders who know how to drive shared responsibility across the organization.

Conclusion

Very few organizations have developed a deep expertise in shifting DE&I to being part of a greater conversation of culture and engagement. We're on this journey together, and as more business leaders have the courage to open up about their DE&I efforts, no matter where they are on the journey, the more successes we will all see

The need for DE&I is not going away, so those who can make the fundamental shift from DE&I programs to true cultural transformations will be most successful in the long term.

5 WAYS TO BUILD INCLUSION THROUGHOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Judith M. von Seldeneck, Founder & Chair and Dale E. Jones, CEO of Diversified Search Group, Discuss Ways to Build on Your Inclusion Practice



Judith M. von Seldeneck



Dale E. Jones

Judith M. von Seldeneck is the founder and chair of the Diversified Search Group, headquartered in Philadelphia. A pioneer in the search industry, Ms. von Seldeneck has been identifying and placing senior-level executive talent around the country for more than four decades. Dale E. Jones serves as CEO. His responsibilities include oversight and management of the firm and its global CEO advisory services.

In this article, Ms. von Seldeneck and Mr. Jones dig deeper into what inclusion really means and provide suggestions on building inclusive workplace.

As a concept, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) has become trendy and intriguing. Many companies that in the past have only given an afterthought or little attention to the idea that diversity, equity, and inclusion matter in the workplace are now realizing that such a concept might constitute a key tenet of success of their enterprises. Consequently, C-suite executives are clamoring for information and direction around DEI initiatives and policies. DEI is finally bubbling to the surface as a corporate priority, after decades of simmering beneath.

But an interesting thing is happening. When it comes to DEI, a great deal of emphasis seems to be landing squarely on the "D" (diversifying the talent pool, and diversifying leadership and the C-suite), with a growing chorus focused on the "E" (equity, which means promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources). The "I"— Inclusion — is often left behind in these discussions, almost treated as "something we'll worry about later." In our view, this is a flawed strategy. While all three are important, inclusion can often be the key difference between companies that build momentum to maximize their potential for the long haul and those that get left behind.

What is "Inclusion," Really?

What are we really talking about when we talk about "inclusion"? At its core, it's about respect, and it's about trust. Everyone wants their staff —whether they are the people who sit in corner offices, the people who sit in cubicles, or the people who sit remotely — to feel like they can bring their authentic selves to their jobs without worrying about being reprimanded, judged, or dismissed. Fostering an inclusive workplace means building a culture where people feel valued, recognized, and most of all, heard.

Boiled down to its essence, inclusion is about the dignity of work. We are living in a time where the focus on diversity in executive search is at perhaps an all-time high: companies want diverse voices, viewpoints, and backgrounds and experiences to weave a rich tapestry of ideas and experience into their operations, advance their goals, and be better corporate citizens of the world. But recruiting diverse talent is only one part of the overall quest. What about what happens once your new talent walks through the door, takes a seat behind a desk, and begins work? Are they really being sought out, listened to, leaned into for their work and ideas? Or are they window dressing, meant to make management *feel* inclusive without actually having to *be* inclusive?

As the renowned thought leader Verna Myers famously said: "Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance." And dancing epitomizes the comfort and welcoming level that a new recruit feels.

Our friend and client Johnny C. Taylor, the president and chief executive officer of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), once put it this way: "We often forget the 'I' in the D&I conversation. The challenge is in having a culture where all employees feel included. It is a major investment to bring in talent into your organization, so why bring them in if they are not happy when they get here? You've got to get the inclusion part right."

What he is saying is that being truly inclusive requires more than good intentions. It requires work.

Recognizing the Problem

Imagine this scenario: Your firm is hired to search for a new CHRO at a Fortune 1000 company. The leaders of the company stress that they want a diverse slate of candidates, and in fact are looking for a diverse candidate who can come in and lead bold change within the culture of the organization, someone who will be able to bring a fresh perspective and offer new ideas and methods for affecting meaningful change throughout the company.

You perform the search, identify several strong candidates, vet them, and company leadership interviews them. Eventually they settle on what they see as the perfect fit: a candidate who is passionate about the role and is brimming with enthusiasm and ideas. Everyone is happy.

Then the "perfect fit" leaves after a year.

What happened? company executives wonder. The better question is this: What *didn't* happen? After almost 50 years of placing such executives, we can tell you the likely answer, which is after the new CHRO was in place, the company quickly backtracked to the safety of what had been tried and true. Its leaders didn't give their new executive any berth for meaningful input, growth, or decision-making. Maybe the culture itself was the culprit, one where behaviors such as micro-management and "blaming and shaming" were commonplace and unchecked. Or perhaps it was something more subtle and far too common: a tacit belief by leadership that the new CHRO simply *being* there was proof of its commitment to diversity in its C-suite, even if the "perfect fit" was never given any meaningful role in the strategy and implementation of actual operations. Quickly ascertaining that the corporate environment was in no way inclusive and had not been accurately represented, the new CHRO began developing an exit strategy while their business cards were still at the printer. And then the new hire moved on.

This anecdote may feel like an outlier, but all of us who work in executive search know such a story, and that is not as uncommon as we wish. And it is important that we keep this in mind as we build our own firms, and as we inculcate the values we present to our clients as important, ensuring that they are, in fact, our own. Retention of talent is just as important as finding it. It only happens if we truly understand what proactive steps to take to not only promote, but to actually build an inclusive culture.

Here are some keys to doing it.

5 Ways to Build Inclusion

- **START AT THE TOP**. Employees take their cues from the people who run the company. Fostering inclusion cannot be merely a lofty goal, something that looks good on the website homepage. Rather, it has to be intentional, quantifiable, and a publicly stated priority for leadership. There has to be someone in senior leadership whose overt, stated purpose includes developing and fostering DEI, including a strong inclusion strategy for both retaining employees from underrepresented communities and managing diverse work groups. Managers must be given a DEI filter through which to make decisions and be monitored and held accountable for doing so.
- **INSTITUTE CHECKS AND BALANCES**. Who are the stakeholders from all levels of your organization who can affect and institute the kind of inclusion you're seeking? Many companies with strong retention rates and high employee satisfaction have operationalized councils or advisory committees that meet regularly and review the progress of the company on issues around DEI—a sort of internal auditing group to keep everyone informed, engaged, and accountable. Ideally, these groups provide meaningful insight and feedback around hiring, retaining, building, and advancing a diverse and productive workforce. And they should have a direct line to the C-suite.
- **ACT ON WHAT YOU HEAR**. Many employees are given satisfaction surveys and are told that management takes their comments seriously, only to have them vanish into a black hole of bureaucracy, replaced with a sinking feeling that "nothing's going to change." Consider establishing a formal, 24/7 portal or communication tool where employees across the company can freely and safely offer suggestions and flag issues around diversity and belonging. And make sure someone at the senior level is given responsibility for collecting, collating, and analyzing these comments in a monthly report that's reviewed as

an agenda item by leadership. Troubling trend lines and issues become easy to spot, giving management real-time data and a call to action to retain employees.

- **BROADEN WHAT "INCLUSION" ENTAILS**. Inclusion goes beyond making sure that employees from different backgrounds are treated with dignity, fairness, and openness. It also means treating those who work remotely the same as those who work in the office or making sure that scheduling meetings takes into account people who work in a different time zone or are working parents. Even a small gesture—such as sharing meeting materials or reports in advance of a meeting, so that those with different comprehension skills or those who may lack the confidence to speak up are given the tools they need to contribute meaningfully—can make a big difference in fostering an atmosphere of inclusion.
- **DEFINE SUCCESS—AND HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE**. What is the company's definition of an inclusive, productive workplace? What does that look like, in real terms? Put metrics down on paper, evangelize these measures of engagement across the company, and track your success in meeting them quarterly, in the same way you would measure revenue goals, stock price, or growth.

High Stakes

Anyone can hire a diverse executive, and some companies spend millions on the effort and yet still come up short when it comes to retaining such top diverse talent. That's because if people with identities who have been marginalized in the past—such as women, people of color, those who identify as LGBTQ, those with disabilities—do not feel welcome or valued, then the door you're opening for diversity quickly turns into a revolving one. Too many companies pour resources into attracting diverse workers only to make zero effort to change the environment those people are walking into. And that doesn't and can't work.

When executives who come from different backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints from their other colleagues are given both the proper tools and a welcoming, nourishing environment in which to flourish, creativity and innovation skyrocket. The entire company feels more alive and more dynamic, burnishing both the company's reputation and its bottom line. Most important, retention of top talent increases as loyalty is built and people feel engaged with work that they find rewarding and meaningful. Through inclusion, they find purpose. And that's something worth retaining.

DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION & EXECUTIVE SEARCH: BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE

Tory Clarke, Co-Founder & Managing Partner of Bridge Partners, Shares How You Can Make a Difference



Tory Clarke supports senior global search assignments for private sector, public sector and international non-profit/social venture clients, across all functions. She has been in executive search for nearly 20 years and has recruited diverse executives, including CEO/Presidents and their leadership teams, at both head office and regional locations around the globe. Before forming Bridge Partners in 2003, she served as a consultant in Whitehead Mann's U.S. retail and diversity practices, having joined the New York-based team in 2000.

In this Viewpoint, Ms. Clarke and several fellow partners of Bridge Partners share how you can help push DE+I efforts along and how you can be the difference that you want to see. The team then shares their commitment to DE+I and how Bridge Partners is committed to being the change they want to see.

As protests sparked by George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police erupted and continued during the summer of 2020, some of the first reactions came from companies rushing to publish statements in support of Black Lives Matter. Many employees of those companies, however, pointed out the fact that the words coming from their non-diverse leadership teams simply did not reflect reality.

When a second wave of corporate statements were released, including talent development initiatives, and hiring goals for leaders of color, employees doubled down on their push to hold employers to their word. That push yielded results.

Since May, there have been a number of high-profile resignations across multiple sectors that can be attributed to the protest movement, including departures from Adidas and CrossFit; in the publishing world at Bon Appetit, the New York Times and Essence Communications; as well as female founders stepping down from The Wing, Refinery29 and Reformation. In a pro-BLM act, Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian resigned from his company's board, pledging his seat to a Black candidate.

And yet, while these changes are welcome, we shouldn't lose sight of just how far we still have to go. For instance, there are still only four Black CEOs amongst the Fortune 500, which equates to just 0.8 percent, while Blacks make up some 13.4 percent of the country's population. The numbers are no better when moving up to the board level, where the appointment of new Black directors to the boardroom has declined over the past year.

"In 2003, when we founded Bridge Partners as a minority-owned search firm focused on supporting leadership diversity, our plan was to build a solid business for 10 years and then move on because, of course, corporate America would be naturally inclusive by then. There would be no need for 'diversity recruiting'. How naïve we were. Seventeen years later our business has not ceased to be, it has grown. Today we have five offices across the US. In the past 12 months alone we added two Partners (both extraordinary leaders of color) and we're still growing. We are proud of these facts but there's something wrong with the picture - we shouldn't still be in business," said Tory Clarke, co-founder & partner of Bridge Partners.

Why is it that corporate America's leadership has remained homogenous for so long? Why are we still in business? Looking forward, what action can be taken now that executives appear to be open to addressing this challenge? One potential answer to each of these questions: Take a closer look at those who wield the influence when selecting leaders in the first place.

Kingmakers & Gatekeepers

One group, let's call them "Kingmakers," are those within a company who choose to fill a given leadership role from existing internal contenders. For a real-world example, Ford Motor Company recently elevated former operations chief Jim Farley to CEO in what Executive Chairman Bill Ford Jr. called a planned succession. In this case, Bill Ford and his board are Kingmakers.

Another group – "Gatekeepers" – are those who assemble and evaluate external talent, such as executive search firms. Sticking with the auto industry, over the summer General Motors announced that it would look both internally and

externally for a CFO replacement. By the time of publishing, GM is likely to have retained a Gatekeeper search firm to assist in that effort.

Back to the question of why does leadership stay so overwhelmingly white? The short answer is because the designated Kingmakers and Gatekeepers naturally gravitate towards similar and familiar talent pools.

Why is that? Well, years of unconscious bias research shows that humans try to find patterns and take mental shortcuts when attempting to make sense of our complex world. Among other things, this leads to favoring those with whom we're already familiar, while discounting those whom we find different.

In hiring practices, recall the study by National Bureau of Economics Faculty Research Fellows Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan (*Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination*, NBER Working Paper No. 9873) showing those with Black-sounding names were less likely to get a callback than those with white-sounding names. Similar findings emerged in a separate study showing that Black and Asian applicants who "whitened" their resumes had a greater chance of being interviewed. (*Whitened Resumes: Race and Self-Presentation in the Labor Market*, Administrative Science Quarterly September 2016.)

Accordingly, Kingmakers tend to groom and anoint successors cut from similar cloth – a practice that, left unchecked, yields homogeneity. Its effects are amplified when companies turn to Gatekeeper search firms whose senior ranks, like those of their corporate clients, are also overwhelmingly white.

Simply put, the external candidates presented are likely to reflect the consultants conducting the search and evaluating the talent. It is a closed-loop system that, regardless of statements and commitments to diversity, perpetuates a status quo at the highest levels of corporate America.

The Gatekeeper Solution: Be the Change You Want to See

To change this pattern will take a multi-pronged approach, including a long look at internal mentoring and promotion practices. But one immediate solution is to **seek different Gatekeepers who themselves better reflect the talent sought and bring different ideas and perspectives**. It may seem reductive, but recruiters who identify as diverse are more likely to have personal and professional ties into different communities than a recruiter who identifies with the majority.

If your everyday life includes, for example, Jack and Jill board meetings, a pick-up league with your LPhiE brothers or Friday prayers at the mosque, then you probably have connections that run deep and wide into communities not well-represented at the highest levels of corporate America.

To execute a truly inclusive search, it's not enough for a recruiter to reach out to different people. The recruiter – and by extension the ultimate employer – needs to have their invitation accepted. Not only must a headhunter identify the appropriate talent, they need to coax that talent into the candidate pool. Many minority candidates are, rightly, wary of tokenism. They will ask questions of the questioner: Why me? How is this role being supported? How will I be set up to succeed?

This subtle reversal of the interview process – the candidate inquiring of the recruiter – is about authenticity on a couple levels. First, the candidates want to know whether this opportunity is real; do they have a true shot or is it just a numbers game? Second, they want to know if the recruiter is a reliable narrator.

We are all more apt to trust someone who has a track record of being present in our community, meeting people where they are and building career-long relationships. Authenticity matters and it's not something easily gained through initiatives, task forces or committees.

The most effective Gatekeepers have done the spade work in the community to build a trusted network of non-traditional talent. They will know who to call – and who to avoid – for a particular opportunity, and they will have earned the hard-won credibility within those communities to quickly get the word out when a terrific new role is on the market. This is an advantage that simply cannot be replicated by LinkedIn or a job posting.

And having spent those years, if not a lifetime, living and working within underrepresented communities, these recruiters will know not just the leading lights – those

pioneers and trailblazers whom everyone has seen ascend to the c-suite – they will also know the next generation, those on the up, the mentees who have what it takes to lead, but might not be on the radar of a traditional Kingmaker or Gatekeeper.

If the definition of insanity, to quote Einstein, "is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results," perhaps organizations seeking to change the way they identify and promote talent to better reflect their constituents, customers, and clients, should rethink who gets to be a Kingmaker or Gatekeeper.

Bridge Partners: We Are the Change We Want to See

"In 2003, we lifted our diversity-inclusion practice out of one of the major, global search firms and established Bridge Partners. We purposefully set our sights on supporting our clients in their efforts to diversify their leadership teams - not as an add-on practice, but in everything we do and at every point of our inclusive search process," said Larry Griffin and Tory Clarke, the search firm's co-founders.

"From the outset, we have been a minority-owned business and have been very purposeful in ensuring that our own team reflects the world as we experience it. Diversity-equity-inclusion is not an "initiative" for us; it is who we are and what we do. We've grown our search business based on the continued knowledge that a diverse leadership team and inclusive culture is critical, not just to reflect our clients' employee base, customers and constituents/communities served, but also to encourage innovation, progressive decision-making and growth," they noted.

"And we walk the walk. We reflect that commitment to supporting our clients' DEI goals in our own team, which we have carefully built over 17 years and five strategic locations across the United States, seeking our own leaders who are as committed to DEI as we are, and who bring value to our team in ways that go far beyond their roles in our inclusive search process," they added.

"For the first decade and a half of my career, I eagerly – then grudgingly – served on every panel, committee and task force my employers convened to address the lack of diversity in the workplace. My initial enthusiasm at being selected for such duty stemmed from the recognition that there was an issue and that my involvement might make a difference. But after years of such service in several organizations, I came to the conclusion that whatever my employer chose to call this year's stab at the diversity issue, somehow it was always the same people in the room—colleagues who identified as LGBTQ or POC. And because the composition of players never changed, there could never be any real change. As I'm wont to say, 'our problems with inclusion and equity in the workplace aren't our problem.' Since that reckoning, I have declined to participate in diversity initiatives in the absence of anyone from leadership also participating," said Ryan Whitacre, a partner with the firm.

"So, the chance to join Bridge Partners, which made inclusive search a mission objective long before "D&I" was a thing, was the realization of a career-long effort to actually be the change that's needed. This is a place where we live out our commitment to DEI and where I can lend my experience to others should they, too, wish to ditch the diversity committee for real action," he said.

"If diversity-equity-inclusion for all is the intended result and desire of the executive leadership team of an organization, then I would argue that every group within the organization should reflect and model diversity-equity-inclusion. This includes the recruiting team. When recruiting teams include search professionals and recruiters from different backgrounds, ethnicities, genders, religions, sexual orientations, age groups and experience levels, it sends a silent message to diverse and non-diverse candidates that says, "You are welcome and wanted here." The same is true when an organization hires a search firm that specializes in diversity-equity-inclusion to conduct their search. Again, it sends a silent message to potential candidates that diversity is valued by the organization," said Toya Lawson, a partner with Bridge Partners.

"An additional benefit of a diverse recruitment team is an employer gaining access to diverse and potentially untapped talent pools. Each recruiter brings professional and social networks that extend to other people with common interests, goals, and dreams who normally look like them. As a Black woman, I act as a "bridge" for my clients into the Black community and other diverse communities as well. I know who to call, and for what,

because I am from the community. I am an insider. Throughout my career, I have found myself on the phone with churches, African American fraternities and sororities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and organizations like NABA, INROADS and The Executive Leadership Council (ELC) to make the people in these organizations aware that my clients are looking to hire their members. If I were not on the recruitment team, these are organizations my clients would not know but all these organizations have some of the strongest, most talented people of color associated with them. I serve as a trusted guide, and at times, the gatekeeper to unknown communities and talent pools that my clients cannot easily access or simply they do not know exist. This is why diversity across recruitment teams is needed," she noted.

"I joined Bridge Partners because I was drawn to our mission of diversifying C-suites and Boards. I wanted to be part of an organization that is diverse, believes in diversity, and advocates for diversity in our placements," said partner Debbie Tang.

"My hope is that all executive search firms understand the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the executive ranks, but having diverse gatekeepers matters. As a person of color and executive recruiter, my networks and circles differ from other recruiters. I started my career as an attorney in AmLaw 100 law firms and later as in-house counsel at a Fortune 500 company so that background is similar to other recruiters, but as a first generation American, and the daughter of immigrants, I'm also connected to different groups. I often say of my work, "It's not just business…it's personal," because when corporate America reflects America's population, my children will benefit from a world where their skin color will not limit their opportunities. The organizations where I devote my time outside of the office also reflect the significance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in my life. For me, diversity is not something I only think about during work hours or to check a box," she said.

"99.9 percent of the searches we conduct are publicized on our website. That is 100 percent intentional. Inclusion is one of the goals we are trying to achieve. If your CEO or General Counsel position is only offered to those "in the know" or in your "inner circle" you are limiting the pool of candidates and this often excludes executives of color. Diverse gatekeepers bring their own lived experiences to every search and help guarantee an inclusive search process," she noted.

"Professionally I've been partnering with nonprofit clients who work with underrepresented communities for over 15 years. A common thread among these organizations is a desire to recruit diverse, senior leaders who are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and bring to the work perspectives and experiences that more closely reflect their staff, and the individuals and families they serve," said Janet Albert, a partner with the firm.

"I've found leading an inclusive search process starts with a genuine curiosity about the client, an alignment with their mission and values, and the ability to listen and learn about the culture, challenges and opportunities that face their organization and community. Understanding a client's specific needs around EDI is a critical first step in launching an inclusive search process and ultimately presenting a diverse shortlist," she added.

"Other important factors include but are not limited to: seeking advice and guidance from my own team - colleagues who are diverse in race and ethnicity, gender, age, and experience; maintaining meaningful relationships with former clients, candidates and networks; networking directly with community partners and individuals in the communities being served by a client; consulting with thought partners in the field of EDI, and; networking across sector, function and geography. Leading a successful inclusive search process requires a broad approach and expansive thinking," she said.

"Experiences in my personal life have also influenced my work in executive search and my own commitment to delivering an inclusive search process for every client. Living and working in rural Japan and England, at times exhilarating - also challenged many of my basic assumptions, way of thinking and communicating, and my approach to problem-solving and getting things done. Thirty years later I'm still drawing upon lessons learned about the value of diversity and the importance of leaders who use an EDI lens to create equitable and inclusive cultures and sustainable organizations that deliver on their mission to support and uplift the communities they serve," she added.

CASE STUDY: HOW ONE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IS CHANGING THE DIVERSITY GAME

Jennifer Muller, Managing Partner of Academic & Career Executive Search, Discusses Diversity in Academia with a University President



Jennifer Muller, managing partner of Academic & Career Executive Search (ACES), has extensive research and development experience in higher education and with Fortune 500 companies allowing her to excel in higher education recruitment mandates. Ms. Muller has personally led over 130 higher education searches both domestically and internationally spanning roles including Presidents, Vice Presidents, Associate Chancellors, Deans, Directors, Chairs, and faculty level positions.

Here, Ms. Muller joins Dr. Catherine Koverola, president of the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford, to discuss how she has been able to influence her university to make more diversity-conscious decisions and the impact that has had on her institution, colleagues, and the student body community at large.

As an organization, ACES has always been committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and we continually work to improve. We recognize that awareness, knowledge and action are central to our progress and incorporating them early into our methods results in increased diverse candidate placements. We've always had good diversity statistics in our overall applicant pools, but our practices yield greater variety in our finalist's pools and more crucially, the number of hired diverse candidates. We are proud of our 65 percent diversity placement rate.

Early in my higher education executive search career, I quickly realized that talented candidates slipped through unnoticed because of ineffective showcasing of their strengths and experiences. So, part of our process is helping applicants do things outside academia's cultural norms such as highlighting their accomplishments and self-promoting based on the job characteristics and developing succinct, targeted materials. Now, candidates better document their specific qualifications, and institutions get more applicants, a more precise understanding of each, and increased inclusion.

Using awareness, knowledge, and action we've incorporated several steps into our vetting processes to achieve this. An essential item is our inquiry form, where applicants share details missing from their materials. These responses are an interactive process between the candidate and consultant.

A questionnaire is not new. How we design and use it, is. The main difference is its inclusion in the candidate materials package, giving search committees a tool for candidate comparisons with answers related to critical criteria identified by them.

While we don't have all the answers, our process is effective and successful. Also hidden in it are tools for increasing diversity:

- **Candidate questionnaires are identical for every candidate.** Committee members make comparisons using responses to identical questions.
- **Committee members don't make judgments based on missing information**. Providing more information reduces candidate bias. Committee members shared that when they lack knowledge, they tend to 'fill in the blank' or make candidate comparisons using common denominators that may have no relevance to the job or performance.
- **Questions let candidates correlate their experience, skills, and background with the position's priorities**. It's hard to ignore success when the evidence given committee members ties to the criteria they set as their priorities.

We believe that search committees can increase their hiring of diverse candidates by incorporating more inclusive and equitable practices into the search process.

In the fall of 2019, ACES began a partnership with the then newly appointed president Catherine Koverola, president of the University of Pittsburgh-Bradford. Dr. Koverola has a 30-year career serving underrepresented populations.

Here in this wonderful Q&A session, I would like to share my conversation about diversity, equity, and inclusion with Dr. Koverola. I believe her insights, knowledge, and accomplishments are extremely valuable and something we can all learn from.

President Koverola's career as an educator, scholar, clinician, and advocate spans four continents. She is an internationally recognized scholar in interpersonal victimization in cross-cultural contexts and developed culturally relevant programs serving victims of violence in areas ranging from urban medical centers to remote indigenous communities in Canada and Alaska. She served as the inaugural provost at the African Leadership University in Mauritius and while there, worked to establish a university system designed to deliver academic programs across the entire African continent. She has also provided clinical consultation to practitioners serving Syrian refugee populations in Jordan, victims of the armed conflict in Colombia, and vulnerable children in the Caribbean, East Africa, and Norway and Finland.

Why is this important?

It is a moral imperative. We have massive inequities nationally as well as globally and COVID-19 has only further emphasized these by impacting different sectors of society disproportionately. What we've witnessed this year has highlighted gross injustices and how many marginalized groups we have across the country. Social movements are putting this in our headlines, more than ever. We need to remember; we are all a part of humanity. There is more that unites us than divides us and this has been lost. Everyone deserves justice and to be treated with respect and dignity. Sadly, many continue to be denied basic human rights. By the way, this reaches across borders not just in the U.S. I have always felt passionate about this.

Talk about your personal story.

Seeing biases against any race or group of people, whether LGBTQ, Latino, Black, Indigenous or Asian has always upset and propelled me to action. I have witnessed this bias across the globe. I started out my journey as a clinical child psychologist working with vulnerable populations in Los Angeles County with grieving families and traumatized communities in gang territory. I also worked in both Canada and in Alaska with native people suffering from inter-generational trauma, where I was responding to suicide, victimization, and substance abuse. My career took me overseas where I worked with victims of armed conflicts in Colombia and with health and mental health providers in Jordan working with Syrian refugees, families who literally lost everything. And most recently on the African continent, I witnessed the resiliency of the human spirit when I had the privilege of working with families who were victims of the Rwandan genocide. I am acutely aware of the magnitude of suffering nationally and globally and have always found myself in the middle of it. We can't solve these problems without looking at the global landscape and understanding we are all part of the human race.

You have been doing this important work for over 30 years. What's different now?

Honestly, I am really worried about the lack of civility, particularly in our country. The events over this past summer, the national and global protests that have been happening, combined with the vitriol in the news media. The murder of George Floyd and countless other black and brown people are truly horrifying. None of this is new but because these murders have been captured on video, it means our society can no longer pretend that it is not happening. It also feels different because COVID-19 has further exposed inequities in a frightening way. Right now, nobody is comfortable. We are all living in uncertainty, even folks traditionally in the power seat. All our lives have been disrupted and there is a lot of fear, fear of the unknown and suddenly nothing is certain. Fear produces strong emotions; people are acting out their fear and rage in a public forum.

Talk about Pitt-Bradford. What was going on at the University when you arrived? What were you facing?

Pitt-Bradford like many university campuses has a faculty, staff and administration that does not mirror the demographic of their students. Nearly 40 percent of our students are students of color while our employees are predominantly white. Our community and region are nearly 98 percent white.

Right before my arrival as a new president, there was a student protest. The protest was just like what was, and is, happening at many other campuses across the U.S. The protest however came as a big surprise to the administration, faculty and staff who experience the campus as a really caring community. So, I was facing a group of

students who felt marginalized and hurt as well as many faculty and staff who were truly perplexed and in disbelief about the protest.

What was/is your strategy?

When I began, I did the classic listening tour that new presidents typically do. I started in June and met with the students who remained on campus during the summer. I also met with each of the different units across campus. I asked a lot of questions and spent a lot of time working my way across the entire campus trying to understand. Based on these meetings, to help facilitate deeper conversations, I started by bringing in speakers to address inclusion. We engaged in a series of campus wide efforts in dialogue. I also initiated community conversations mirroring the conversations we were having across campus. We had many forums to enable the community to understand who we were in terms of equity and justice.

Talk about the process and the challenges you faced.

Many on our campus were surprised that students felt there were inequities on campus. From my conversations, it was clear that Pitt-Bradford is a caring campus with a commitment to equity for all students, faculty, and staff yet this was not the experience for all of our students. And there was genuine surprise and a new awareness that this was not the experience of all the students. This awareness was very helpful as we moved towards solutions. Working across campus, we articulated our priorities: To ensure that every student, staff and faculty experiences our community as inclusive, where irrespective of our identities such as: background, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, LGBTQ orientation, gender, age, socioeconomic status, or thought we are respected and valued; To excel at equipping our students for careers in a globally interconnected sustainable world by ensuring outstanding academic programs with experiential learning within industry and ongoing opportunities for students to learn to value and embrace diverse perspectives; To have a focus on whole person development, recognizing the importance of equitably providing opportunities for all students to establish healthy lifestyles attending to the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual dimensions of their lives. Following my campus listening tours, the articulation of priorities, various speaker initiatives and forums, and several key hires I thought we were making progress. However, the students protested again, this time on my watch. It made me realize despite the best of intentions we were still missing the mark and not doing enough. At that point, I brought in a consultant to work further on campus culture issues. We began the work first with the cabinet, examining our own biases. Together we also examined policies and procedures and identified ways to eliminate systemic bias. Then together with the consultant, each cabinet member embarked on the same process within their respective units.

What have you achieved and what's been the impact?

I have been encouraged. We've done a lot of consciousness raising across the campus. All the groups I initially met with have been engaged and working to make meaningful improvements. Each group is looking at, and truly understanding, what diversity, equity and inclusion really means in their space. They're asking the tough questions, like what does "belonging" look like, what actions do we need to take and more importantly, they're taking these actions. A few of the initiatives include:

- We have engaged in a thoughtful assessment of our recruitment and hiring process and developed a more inclusive, equitable approach across campus. Like most newly appointed leaders, upon my arrival, I assessed my cabinet and made a few changes by creating new positions as well as filling open positions from a couple of retirements. The demographics of the cabinet now more fully mirrors our student body.
- We joined with the national "Hate Has No Home Here" movement. This movement identifies places that are free from hateful behavior and says they won't tolerate hate. We're teaching people to interrupt hate; however, it presents itself. This movement extends beyond the campus community and into the community at large where we joined with local organizations, businesses, and groups. The community approached Pitt-Bradford; they want to have conversations around civility and embraced the campaign. We have a caring community, and they want to do this work.

- I personally now meet with freshman classes to talk about our culture and how to interrupt hate conversations. We built this into the freshman seminar class.
- We've developed a lecture seminar series to delve further into issues and opportunities and continue discussions and action.
- We developed an "Inclusion Change Team" that facilitates inclusive change. For example, they have worked with food services staff to understand how they can be culturally sensitive and create a sense of belonging through the variety of foods we serve.
- We are in the process of evaluating our choice of all vendors and have a commitment to increasing partnerships with racially diverse and women owned businesses.
- From top to bottom – we're examining our assumptions and looking at everything through a perspective of inclusion and equity. This spans the classroom, pedagogy, library resources, athletics, and student life. We're looking at what happens in dorms and cafeterias and challenging ourselves. Most importantly, we're doing this intentionally and in a non-punitive way.

What's the lesson? Both on an individual level and at the institutional level?

You must educate and lead by example. There can be a lack of understanding of the history of our country and how this history has gotten us to where we are. I believe we can't leverage change without a deeper collective understanding. For example, we need to understand the connection between poverty and crime. Oftentimes people look at statistics and attribute them to a race rather than the condition of poverty and unemployment. Crime gets attributed to race rather than circumstance. We can't leverage change without a better understanding of history. I also believe good intentions are not enough. It can be hard for one culture to understand the lived experience of another culture. When people begin to understand the magnitude of the inequity and hurt, they want to do the right thing but are scared to say or do the wrong thing, so they do nothing. We need to create safe spaces where people can learn how and what to do. We need to learn the language and actions needed to create true belonging. When people are trying to change, it is not helpful to tell someone they are a racist, homophobic, or misogynistic. They feel shamed and get defensive and this does not lead to change. A punitive approach is not helpful. You have to help people understand and then provide opportunities to engage and behave differently. Another important point is people who have been marginalized are at their limit. They have been fighting this fight for a long time and understandably have little patience for defensiveness and delay. They want to see change, now. That's what the protests are about, a demand for change. A demand for equity now. And as a leader you must have a tremendous amount of humility. Even though this is my life's work and I want to get this right, I make mistakes. One must have the courage to say, I made a mistake, I am sorry. I will do better.

Awareness and knowledge are important but how do we move into action? What can individuals do?

First, individuals can acknowledge and educate themselves. You need to know history. If you don't know that, you'll repeat it. It's difficult for people to understand and comprehend something that is outside of their own cultural lived experience. The work needs to be done by members of the cultural groups who have historically been in the power seat. It's not the work of those who have been historically marginalized.

What can institutions do?

Institutions can affect change capable of producing significant and long-lasting results. It's no different than on an individual basis, it starts with acknowledgement and education. If inequities are tolerated and perpetuated, we'll never achieve change. But policies and practices can be changed, and this will result in behavioral change. Institutions can become equitable for all. We need to have contingencies that ensure equity. The constitution of the U.S. guarantees equity and yet we don't have equity. COVID-19 has highlighted the health and education disparities between races, and they are massive. We need to question our assumptions and examine if policies and practices are perpetuating inequities. Institutions need to figure out how to support and manage change and build in

accountability. We need to set clear expectations and hold people accountable.

As someone who has been personally and professionally committed, what is your takeaway?

For one, despite wanting to do the right thing, we all make mistakes. We have to own our mistakes; say we are sorry and do better. We must change the systems that perpetuate inequity. We must maintain hope even though it's hard. For me, students represent hope. None of this is easy, it's messy and it's uncomfortable but I for one am not going to give up hope. We also need to focus on inclusion more broadly and this is much deeper than race. Race is only one aspect of the inequities. It is also so important to understand the intersectionality of the inequities, and how this amplifies the suffering. This work is critically important to all of society across the globe. Higher education can play a critical role in bringing about these important changes. These changes are vital.

THE NEW BUSINESS IMPERATIVE: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Elisa Leary, Managing Director and Head of DEI Practice and Annette Krassner, CEO of Glocap Search, Discuss Why DEI is a Business Imperative


Annette Krassner


Elisa Leary

Annette Krassner joined Glocap as CEO in 2018. She brings over 25 years of experience within the financial services industry working with both small and large organizations.

Elisa Leary, managing director and head of diversity, equity and inclusion at Glocap, is an accomplished DE&I HR Leader with a proven global track record in creating and executing successful DEI strategies. With over 25 years of experience, she has utilized her human resources expertise to guide organizations through cultural and organizational effectiveness, with sustainable solutions resulting in significant revenue growth.

In this Viewpoint, Ms. Krassner and Ms. Leary review the launch of the DE&I practice at Glocap and discuss why diversity is so important for all organizations. They also share their perspectives on why diverse talent benefits organizations.

Elisa, as the managing director and head of the newly launched DE&I practice at Glocap, you are charged with supporting and assisting clients to establish and strategically achieve their DEI goals and objectives. Why did Glocap decide to start this practice and how is your approach different?

I think the biggest difference is that we are not prescriptive in our approach with our clients and meet our clients where they are. Glocap has been a boutique recruiting firm in the financial services space for over two decades, and we have always aimed to help our clients recruit the top talent. This newly established DEI practice will take that same approach of meeting our clients where they are, working to truly understand their needs, and helping them to attain sustainable change within their organizations--even if those changes are one step at a time. I think most companies try to apply a very structured plan, or a one size fits all plan that is often impractical at the point of implementation or engagement. This can unfortunately result in premature execution and failure due to lack of readiness. Over the past 25 years, I have partnered with leadership and companies spanning different countries and industries. I think many companies of all sizes want an immediate impact; in DEI that is often unattainable. It takes time to achieve sustainable change and advancement. I use the word sustainable often because ultimately, that is our goal at Glocap. We are not looking to help our clients execute a "check the box" program; our goal is to help them attain real change, growth and impact, all to benefit their bottom line performance through diverse perspectives.

Why is it important for companies of all sizes to have a DE&I strategy and realistic, sustainable change in regards to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Research has proven that a diverse team results in better performance, growth and profits - it is good for business. The dilemma for companies is always "how can we do this 'diversity thing' without negatively affecting our performance"? The answer is in the data -- your company will be more successful with a diverse workforce. Both internal and external pressures are currently driving many organizations to action, if not for social reasons, at a minimum economic reasons. Many organizations have committed to the advancement of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion within their respective organizations. There is now an expectation that tangible actions will be taken to move the needle and deliver strategies to improve diversity, specifically pertaining to ethnic representation. The good news is that more companies are beginning to see the benefits of having a diverse workforce as good for business and are officially recognizing it as a business imperative. Diverse people bring different perspectives and experiences, they debate and they discuss, and they optimize investment and business decisions because of this diversity. In a recent Mckinsey report "research shows, not only that the business case remains robust but also that the relationship between diversity on executive teams and the likelihood of financial outperformance has strengthened over time." This McKinsey study substantiates that companies with greater ethnic and gender diversity continue to outperform their industry peers by 30-plus percent because of these diverse perspectives. The

correlation between diverse teams and profitability is not circumstantial. Attracting and retaining top talent who provide diverse ideas and solutions for your firm requires representation within a firm, especially within the firm's leadership. Diversity needs to be a part of the firm's cultural fabric. This can be accomplished through changing how a firm hires to improve diversity. It is just as important to implement positive changes in all HR processes including performance reviews, promotions, mentorship, sponsorship, and leadership opportunities.

Can you share your thoughts and perspective on finding diverse talent?

Talent is worldwide! It exists everywhere. Networks tend to be homogeneous, and therefore if you are simply looking for talent within your own network, you can't expect to find a lot of diversity. If your recruitment team does not have diversity, it's very likely your diverse talent selection will be limited within that network. Diverse talent exists if you fish in all the ponds – not just the ones with which you are most comfortable or familiar. Intention and forward thinking are essential to be truly committed to finding, attracting, and hiring diverse talent. Many companies set restrictive qualifications, often out of habit or ease, that typically result in teams who look and think alike, travel in similar social circles and have similar life experiences. As human beings, we instinctively lean towards our 'tribe,' and our default is to surround ourselves with people who have relatable life experiences. Some default behaviors include requiring that candidates only attended specific schools, mandating work experience within specific industries, automatically disqualifying many potential candidates who may bring fresh views and perspectives because of a condition for the job that we believe is necessary but is not actually a skill that the job requires. The problem is, relying on dated job descriptions or hiring requirements that have that level of specificity, we continue to propagate the issues of inequity that a diversity initiative is trying to solve. I've heard companies insist "they try to find the talent, it's just hard to find." The reality is, they are often looking for the talent within their own pool or network with a list of criteria that do not translate to the skill required for the job. If you expand your network, you will attract a wider, more diverse pool of candidates. If you really drill down into what the job requires from a skillset point of view, you will open up a world of excellent candidates that will bring a diversity of experience and perspective to your firm. There is also another aspect to the diverse talent pool that is often overlooked - retention of diverse talent. Many companies do not have the data, or fail to track retention data points, to identify reasons that diverse talent leaves their organizations. Taking the time to survey your diverse employees and understand why they exit can make the difference in how to identify and address what change is needed to improve retention. Common reasons that firms lose their diverse hires are a lack of support, a lack of commitment within the organization to grow their diverse employees into leaders, and even the company's performance management process or the way high potential is identified and encouraged. I have been in many rooms where top talent is discussed. Manager upon manager will discuss their top talent and there is often no consistency in how top talent is defined or evaluated -- it is usually a feeling or a set of qualitative observations. This leaves way too much room for interpretation and often becomes subjective, and this subjectivity will allow personal biases to creep into what should be an unbiased decision. This subjectivity almost always adversely impacts executives of color. I've seen it happen time and time again, and if it is left unchecked you will always end up with teams that look like the manager or leader. Firms miss out on the opportunity to build an inclusive team with fresh perspectives and advance innovation when quantitative metrics and consistent structured review processes are not the basis for talent recognition and promotion. Training, mentoring, and having sponsors who advocate for diverse employees when they are in rooms of influence make a huge difference in advancing emerging leaders. Sponsorship is critical to an executive's career - this kind of advocacy happens every day within companies, when considering promotions and deciding who is assigned a special project in preparation for advancing careers. Creating these support systems will help to ensure your company has an inclusive environment and tools to succeed. Lack of diversity has been a much talked about issue, yet so little progress has been made over the years. From my perspective, I attribute it to the overall lack of

commitment and intention on the part of leadership teams, and not a candidate pipeline issue. Many organizations are challenged to undo past practices and change behavior which will impact the culture of the organization. Many firms opt to scratch the surface of DEI initiatives in order to "check the box," but really only take superficial measures to placate a board or investor, such as short- term bias training for optics, but little real and sustainable progress is made.

What do you believe are the key drivers of DE&I? Have many companies implemented DE&I programs and initiatives that have resulted in little to no progress? How can a firm avoid this negative outcome when implementing a DEI strategy?

In order to move the needle on DEI, it is essential that there is an intentional strategy and a realistic timetable with an achievable end date. I think one of the most important pieces of the DEI strategy is that it needs to have an end date, or a date by which certain goals need to be met. To make an impact, whether it's increasing representation or moving toward increased diversity, there must be both a thoughtful, realistic strategy and a timetable. Strategies can include programs and initiatives; however, a good strategy considers a 360 degree view of where you currently are, where you want to be in what timeframe, and provides a sustainable framework to get you there. Many organizations unfortunately, execute programs and initiatives without connecting the outcome to a business driver that will impact diversity. Oftentimes, these programs are implemented and teams are stumped about why the change they expected never happened. An example of a program without a strategy is if a firm conducts Unconscious Bias training but makes no changes to their performance selection or leadership accountability metrics. This will not change your diversity hiring or retention, because even though you will have educated your leadership team, you did not give them a roadmap for utilizing those learned tools to effect change within their existing processes. If the goal was simply education, then you have succeeded. If your goal was to move the needle on representation, the initiative cannot stand alone without application and change in a firm's behaviors or processes. It is not always easy to dismantle what many companies have in place by way of their systems, culture, and their practices. However, as I mentioned earlier, I believe it is all about the commitment. What drives change in DEI is looking holistically at all the reasons you have not made progress, and then embedding the strategy into the mission of the organization and all of the processes that will further the desired outcomes. A few ways that a strategy can evolve start with looking at the alignment of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as part of the company's priorities or strategic plan. Ensuring all leaders are on board with the DEI strategy, they should understand the value proposition of a successful DEI strategy and why it's essential to the firm's success. This is an often overlooked first step. It must come from the top of the organization and the rest of the organization must be held accountable for driving the change by their leadership team. The talent management process must be redefined to ensure bias is removed from the process, starting with how a job description is written, to how resumes are reviewed, and how interviews conducted. Hiring is your first point of opportunity to bring diversity to your firm and recognizing any systemic bias within that process is essential to success. To address issues within retention, how a firm defines and measures success must be reviewed and standardized to ensure a level playing field across all aspects of diversity. Also working on developing diverse leadership across your firm and providing adequate training and mentorship opportunities will help your firm create effective and diverse future leadership as well.

Lastly, it is imperative that progress is measured with quantitative metrics, and those responsible for driving the change are held accountable to these metrics at reasonable intervals. That is the language of business. What gets measured gets done!

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT: MITIGATING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND DRIVING DIVERSITY FOR INNOVATION IN A CHANGED WORLD

Rebecca Kapphahn, Executive Vice President/Managing Principal at Cejka Search, Examines Unconscious Bias



With more than 18 years dedicated to healthcare recruitment, Rebecca Kapphahn, vice president & search consultant at Cejka Search, assists clients regularly in assessing their organization's immediate and future needs. Working directly with clients throughout each engagement, Ms. Kapphahn provides not only a personalized search process but also strategic counsel, creating actionable plans to best position the organization and the role in the marketplace.

Prior to joining Cejka Search in 2006, Ms. Kapphahn had already built a strong track record in healthcare recruitment operations.

In this Viewpoint, Ms. Kapphahn examines the issue of unconscious bias and shares her views on how the challenges that is causes can be mitigated. She then explores how Cejka Search is assisting its clients in hiring diverse and innovative candidates for the healthcare industry.

The issue of unconscious bias in leadership recruitment is certainly not new. Even in a pre-COVID world, understanding and mitigating unconscious bias has been a long-standing expectation in the recruitment process. In the healthcare industry, this impetus has historically stemmed from a natural sensitivity to increasingly diverse patient populations, as well as increasingly known disparities in access and health equity.

As an executive search firm working exclusively in the healthcare industry, we recognize these are unprecedented times. As the demand for innovation is greater than ever to sustain viability and future growth, it is imperative that we understand this: maximizing diversity in recruitment offers additional value even beyond equitable representation. Diversity of background, education, ethnicity, etc. quite naturally engenders an invaluable diversity of thought, the key element of true innovation and innovative leadership teams.

We know that different perspectives are bred from widely varied experiences and backgrounds. In a time when collaboration and cooperation in healthcare leadership is highly valued, as opposed to the siloed approach of the past, it is critical to ensure that healthcare leadership teams include a breadth and depth of experiences and broad-ranging viewpoints to best inform a strategic, organization-wide vision.

The current state of diversity within leadership teams, according to data from a recent industry survey our firm conducted on this very topic, is enlightening. When surveying healthcare leaders across the country, the self-reporting of the perceived level of diversity among current leadership teams remains fairly low, with only 12 percent citing a leadership team that is "very diverse," 46 percent indicated "somewhat diverse," and 38 percent "not very diverse at all." Thus, there is an urgency to take decisive action to increase equitable representation AND diversity of thought, not only to meet the diversity goals of the past, but to also create the innovative leadership teams to prepare for the future.

Why Diversity of Thought Matters in Today's Healthcare Industry

Ensuring diversity is incorporated in healthcare leadership hiring practices is not just about doing the right thing – it is about equipping our client organizations with the tools they need to survive, most certainly, but also thrive in a dramatically changed industry.

Our clients confirm that the top competencies valued in the past in new leadership hires remain important, but as the COVID pandemic has progressed, it's become clear that a number of "new" competencies are taking a front seat to ensure the changing needs of organizations are met moving forward.

In a selective 2020 survey of healthcare leaders conducted by our firm, traditional critical competencies identified included an analytical nature; ability to manage multiple demands; persuasive skills; determination; and ethical behavior. Clearly, all of these qualities are still expected in

leadership candidates, but healthcare organizations are now prioritizing additional competencies such as creativity; innovation; risk tolerance; approachability; managing critical conversations; swift and decisive decision making; and trust-building.

Understanding that the leadership needs of the industry continues to transform, our firm is taking several approaches to help our clients maximize access to highly qualified candidates who also offer diversity of thought and true innovation.

How We Are Helping Our Clients

Defining Their Approach to Diversity in the Recruitment Process

As healthcare executive search experts, we invest a great deal of effort into laying the foundation for diversity and inclusion from the outset of every search process.

- Prior to starting any recruitment, we work with our clients to review their organization's accepted definition of diversity. If one does not already exist, we encourage client organizations to create a formalized diversity definition and statement, not only in the context of patients and providers, but in the context of how diversity is regarded and applies both in the recruitment process as well as in their daily work culture.

  As committed as our clients are to implementing diversity practices as a strategic imperative, we often find that there is not formalized guidance to do so. Per our previously mentioned industry survey on diversity in healthcare leadership teams, we found that only 16 percent of respondents report that their organization has a formal diversity initiative with an executive sponsor, while 44 percent report that diversity is addressed in training and seminars only, and 14 percent reporting no initiatives at all. Additionally, there can be some misunderstanding regarding a true diversity statement versus a standard EEOC policy statement.

- While most clients believe that they have a firm grasp on the culture of their organization, that may not always be the case – and even more so now in the healthcare industry, where seismic shifts in operations and finances have led to disruptions in culture. While these can certainly be positive disruptions in the long run, it is critical that we act as outside counsel to help our client leaders identify the differences they may be seeing in their emerging culture versus their culture of the past, and then apply what we learn to support the building of their job description and, in the long term, effective leadership teams of the future.

- Prior to undertaking a recruitment, we work with our clients to define not only the role itself, but also gaps that might exist in the organizational leadership team as a whole, specifically in terms of innovation and new critical competencies – and create a position profile and recruitment plan to address these issues directly.

- As a standard practice, our firm offers a proprietary value-add Unconscious Bias and Diversity in Recruitment training to our clients prior to any consideration of candidates. Based on our comprehensive industry survey on the topic, we pro-actively help our clients and their teams to understand how unconscious bias has affected recruitment processes and leadership teams in the healthcare industry as a whole. During these trainings and throughout the executive search engagement, our teams provide insight and specific practices to support our clients in minimizing unconscious bias and to encourage diverse and inclusive hiring process.

Educating Our Clients on Pitfalls to Avoid in Evaluating Candidates

While providing our clients with a framework for defining diversity and identifying areas of need in terms of innovation are crucial first steps, we continue to facilitate this effort throughout the full cycle of the recruitment to further support the most equitable search process possible. As the recruitment progresses, we have incorporated checkpoints into our process to ensure that mitigating unconscious bias and encouraging an engagement of diversity of thought in candidates remain top of mind, providing resources and re-focusing our clients on evaluating candidates based on the true needs of the organization.

- **Candidate Presentation Materials**. Supporting documentation such as resumes/CVs, education credentials, letters of intent, and/or recruitment firm/team-generated candidate overview materials are integral to the recruitment process. However, these deliverables can also inadvertently create exposure to both protected characteristics and extraneous information that may trigger unconscious bias. We work closely with our clients to consider measures to minimize exposure, such as withholding candidate names, geographic locations, educational institutions, etc.
- **Candidate Evaluation**. According to our industry survey on unconscious bias and diversity in healthcare leadership, an overwhelming 96 percent of healthcare leaders have seen likeability tip the scale in favor of a candidate. Of course, likeability often translates to "someone like me/us," something we have experienced time and again. Combatting the "group think" tendency and reinforcing the need to avoid the likeability trap is an ongoing conversation. A recent executive search engagement, for example, had produced a leading candidate with a particularly outgoing, engaging personality, and naturally search committee members were drawn to this. Leading a robust discussion as to the depth of the candidate's experience and background as it related to the defined candidate profile, we were able to provide guidance to our client that revealed the bias and encouraged search committee members to not discount another highly accomplished candidate with a quieter leadership style.
- As all hiring team members evaluate candidates through their own lenses, we encourage and facilitate opportunities to challenge each other and consider other's perspectives. The bottom line is that a leadership team that shares one set of characteristics or hires new leaders because they "fit the mold" does not deliver diversity of thought.
- We encourage our clients – even those who have a standard interview format and standard approved interview questions – to reframe their evaluation process keeping newly identified critical competencies in mind. As a firm, we are shifting our own assessment of potential candidates to specifically address the success of their present organization through the COVID crisis, and to examine their individual role in managing the response and outcomes. It has been our experience that in some instances, unexpected leaders emerged during the crisis, and we advise our clients to consider accomplishments during this timeframe carefully.

While diversity, equity and inclusion have long been strategic imperatives for healthcare organizations, there is now a greater need for immediate, decisive action to mitigate unconscious bias and drive diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process, to better serve patient populations as well as to create innovative leadership teams for the future.

As an executive search firm, we, too, continue to evolve our own practices and competencies to remain cutting-edge, innovative, and resource-rich to best serve our clients. In a transformed healthcare industry, our role to serve as a trusted executive search advisor has been elevated. By meeting the new needs of our partners, we ensure the integrity and consistency of best practices, and truly support organizations in cultivating the dynamic, diverse teams they need to advance their mission.

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR NEW LEADERS

Dr. Jay Lemons, President and Dr. Shirley Robinson Pippins, Senior Consultant of Academic Search, Discuss Diversity in Academia



Dr. L. Jay Lemons



Dr. Shirley Pippins

Dr. L. Jay Lemons became president of Academic Search in 2017, after serving for 25 years as a college president in both public and private higher education. A recognized leader in the academy, Dr. Lemons has been particularly devoted to supporting leadership talent by working with new college presidents on the faculty of the new presidents' programs of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and through the professional development programs for aspiring leaders of the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI).

Dr. Shirley Pippins joined Academic Search in 2016 as a senior consultant. Prior to this, Dr. Pippins served as president of two community colleges (Thomas Nelson in Hampton, Virginia and Suffolk County Community College in Long Island, New York), as an SVP of programs and services at the American Council on Education (ACE) and as president of Victory University in Memphis.

In this Viewpoint, Dr. Lemons and Dr. Pippins examine how higher education institutions can create an environment which fosters inclusion for all.

Academic Search was founded to serve the higher education community. Simply put, our mission is to assist institutions during times of transition. All the marginal revenue of our practice is invested in programs to expand the pool of persons ready for leadership and to support current leaders. We have long been a leader in advancing the cause of increasing diversity in leadership ranks through the programmatic efforts of our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute, as well as the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the Council of Independent Colleges, and other national organizations providing leadership development. We are proud to have been an early signer of the Association of Executive Search and Leadership Consultants' (AESC) Diversity Pledge in Summer 2020. There is urgent work to be done, and we remain steadfast in our commitment to examining our own implicit biases and privileges, as well as their impacts. As thought leaders, we are dedicated to making a difference through the vital role we play in serving the cause of higher education.

As an expression of our commitment, and as a complement to the work we do in executive search, we are honored to be engaged currently with the City University of New York System as it facilitates the transition of seven new campus presidents. Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez recognizes the critical work to be done following the appointment of new leadership, and this is all the more significant during the pandemic. A successful search does not end at the identification, selection, and announcement of the appointee; developing and implementing a well-structured transition and onboarding plan is imperative to ensuring a smooth, successful change of leadership. It is particularly important to keep the challenges of leadership in mind when transitioning and onboarding candidates from traditionally underserved populations, particularly those who are serving as pioneers in the institutions they now lead.

Onboarding is a critical time: candidates of diverse identities that an institution has worked hard to recruit and hire will first intersect with the existing culture on campus and in the surrounding community. If there is a disconnect between the new leaders' prior experiences and the realities of institutional culture, policies, and procedures, additional challenges will emerge and complicate those traditionally encountered during leadership transitions. Such challenges are heightened if new leaders feel they are represented neither internally within the college community nor in the broader external community. By giving attention to the earliest phase of new leaders' tenures, institutions can nurture and enhance the productivity of these individuals and ultimately strengthen the foundation of the institution

by creating an inclusive work and living environment. The following suggestions ensure that search committees and hiring authorities keep diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of any transition and onboarding plan.

Clearly Articulate the Institution's Philosophy

Make sure the institution has a distinctly defined understanding of what the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to the various campus constituent groups and how these important terms relate to the overarching mission of the institution. A clearly articulated philosophy and vision for diversity, equity, and inclusion is fundamental to showcasing the institution's commitments. This definition must be lived by the campus community and reflected in all areas of operation. If the campus does not already have a chief diversity officer, a multicultural center, and/or office solely dedicated to efforts focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, consider investing in these areas to foster a comprehensive, institution-wide vision and plan. Such efforts must go far beyond compliance and responding to complaints. Examine the curriculum and co-curricular programming and initiatives, as well as the external work of institutional leaders, and foreground those that demonstrate that the stated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is authentic and lived. In addition, continue to introduce new practices, policies, and events that support a multicultural campus community and the institution's philosophy as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Build a Diverse Transition Committee

As with a search committee, a diverse transition committee has an important role. We all have varying identities, experiences, and perspectives. Bringing together committee members who contribute different viewpoints and lived experiences and skills will steer a new leader through a more balanced and broadly informed onboarding process. Members of a transition committee can also introduce and otherwise serve as ambassadors for the new leader among diverse constituencies, serving as guides during the onboarding process and helping new leadership to adapt more quickly to the campus culture, complexities, personalities, and traditions. Consider inviting other pioneers to speak with committee members to help shed light on the challenges and opportunities a traditionally underrepresented leader will face in the context of that society. Finding the right individuals to serve on a transition committee provides the groundwork for building close relationships professionally and personally.

Involve the Community

It takes a village to raise a child; well, it also takes a village to onboard new leaders. A stable support system is critical for retaining new employees generally, and perhaps especially for new leaders from underserved populations who may have unique challenges. Through informal and formal processes, encourage those already on campus and in the community to create an open dialogue and to host welcoming events for the new appointee. Invite pioneers to share their lived experiences and insights with the new leader. Even in these times when in-person gatherings are challenging, if not impossible, networking events, happy hours, or brown-bag lunches virtually or in a socially distance context can serve as encouraging interactions among historically underrepresented communities and as a starting point for building a support system. Such events can also serve as a space to allow for engagement of unique perspectives and insights on policies that can help individuals from underrepresented groups to advance professionally.

Create a Welcoming Climate

Creating an environment that is truly inclusive means reexamining campus policies and procedures, both internally and externally facing. All marketing materials, including the institution's website, should authentically present diversity on campus, through language, visual components, and recognizable contexts. Take a walk around the campus and note any building décor, signage, statues/monuments, building names that do not reflect the inclusive climate the institution boasts and may, for example, be associated with the oppression of people of color or those with disabilities. Employee benefits must be considered as well, making sure that, for instance, family leave is inclusive of the LGBTQ community. Does the institution's course curriculum align with strides in diversity, equity, and inclusion? Are the foods offered on

campus inclusive of all cultures and health preferences? Is spiritual life inclusive? It is important for new leaders to feel empowered and have a sense of belonging when walking across campus, not feel alienated or excluded from the community they now represent.

Consider an Executive Coach

One of the most crucial resources new leaders can have is an executive coach to walk alongside them in their first year of service. Executive coaching is a professional and strategic partnership to enhance and optimize one's leadership. It is a valuable investment in the vitality and well-being of both the institution and the new leader. Especially in the case of leaders who are pioneers on their campuses, executive coaches can serve as trusted and confidential confidants and companions who help leaders to freely examine their particular concerns and challenges as they accomplish their goals as well as those of the institution. Creating the opportunity for new leaders to have this additional source of support could be vital to their connection to their new institution, their emotional well-being, and ultimately their effectiveness as leaders.

Be Patient, and Persevere

Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion is one step, but establishing a culture consistent with it is more important. Institutions must work not only to recruit diverse pools of candidates and ensure their equitable consideration in the search process, but also to retain appointees with diverse identities through meaningful and effective transition and onboarding processes that set them up for success once they are on campus. Many people are involved in this support: board members, the hiring authority, search committee, faculty, staff, other internal and external community members, and the candidates themselves. Beginning with a strong first impression is a critical reason for being intentional about onboarding and transition work. Although it has become popular in recent years to focus on the first 100 days or some variation, artificial timelines hurt new leaders as often as they help them. No doubt all institutions want their new leaders to "hit the ground running." It is almost always the case that there are external events or an accumulation of issues that await new leaders. However, boards, cabinet members, faculty leaders, and others need to be patient with new leaders. Inevitably, there will be unforeseen ups and downs and challenges, but building a thoughtful plan for welcoming and getting to know a new leader can provide the necessary energy to persevere when the times are tough. This is especially so for leaders who are pioneers and may look, act, and sound different from their predecessors.