



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION. RHETORIC OR REALITY?

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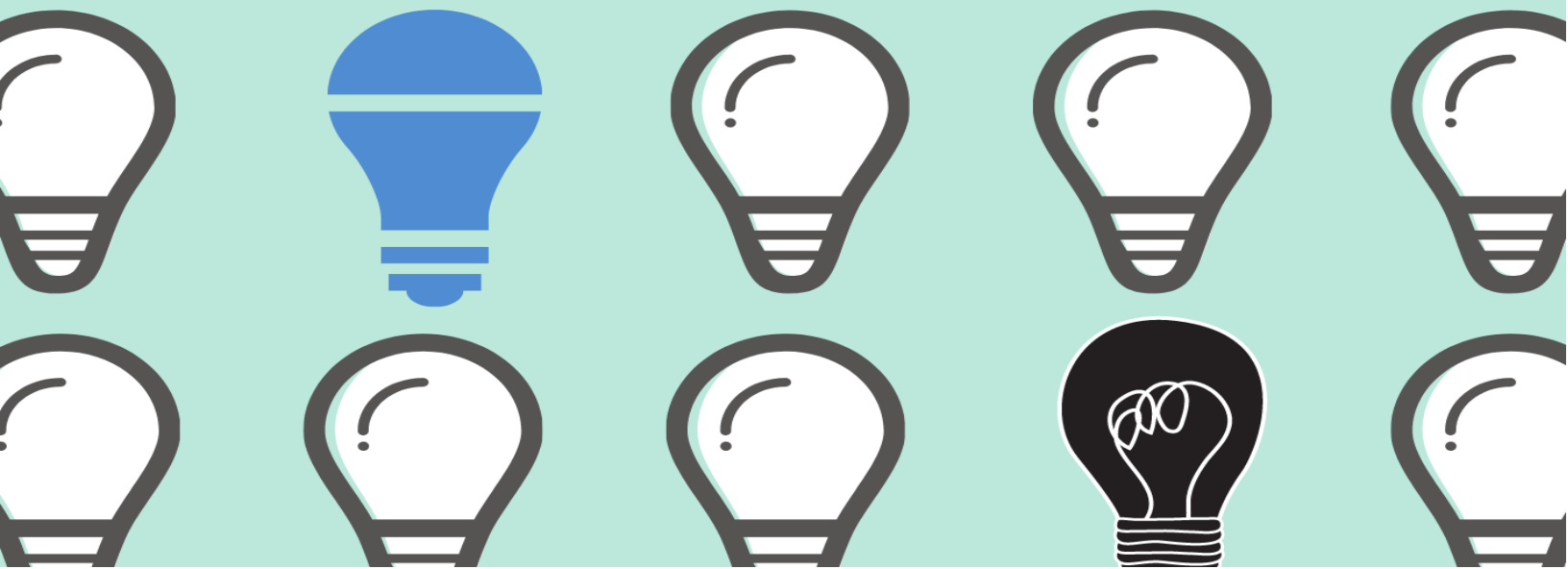


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Introduction

In a small suburban community, a giraffe had a new home built to his family's specifications. It was a wonderful house for giraffes, with soaring ceilings and tall doorways. High windows ensured maximum light and good views while protecting the family's privacy.

Narrow hallways saved valuable space without compromising convenience. So well done was the house that it won the National Giraffe Home of the Year Award. The homeowners were very proud.

One day the giraffe, working in his state-of-the-art woodshop in the basement, happened to look out of the window. Coming down the street was an elephant. "I know him," he thought. "We worked together on a PTA committee. He's an excellent woodworker, too.

I think I'll invite him in to see my new shop. Maybe we can even work on some projects." So the giraffe poked his head out the window and invited the elephant in.

The elephant was delighted; he had liked working with the giraffe and looked forward to knowing him better. Besides, he knew about the woodshop and wanted to see it. So he walked up to the basement door and waited for it to open.

"Come in; come in," the giraffe said. But immediately they encountered a problem. While the elephant could get his head in the door, he could go no farther.

"It's a good thing we made this door expandable to accommodate my woodshop equipment," the giraffe said. "Give me a minute while I take care of our problem." He removed some bolts and panels to let the elephant in.

The two acquaintances were happily exchanging woodworking stories when the giraffe's wife leaned her head down the basement stairs and called her husband: "Telephone, dear; it's your boss."

"I'd better take that upstairs in the den," the giraffe told the elephant. "Please make yourself at home; this may take a while."

The elephant looked around, saw a half-finished piece of work on the lathe table in the far corner, and decided to explore it further. As he moved through the doorway that led

to the shop, he heard an ominous scrunch. He backed out, scratching his head. "Maybe I'll join the giraffe upstairs," he thought. But as he started up the stairs, he heard the stairs begin to crack. He jumped off and fell back against the wall. It too began to crumble. As he sat there disheveled and dismayed, the giraffe came down the stairs.

"What on earth is happening here?" the giraffe asked in amazement. "I was trying to make myself at home," the elephant said.

The giraffe looked around. "Okay, I see the problem. The doorway is too narrow. We'll have to make you smaller. There's an aerobics studio near here. If you'd take some classes there, we could get you down to size."

"Maybe," the elephant said, not looking very convinced.

"And the stairs are too weak to carry your weight," the giraffe continued. "If you took a ballet class at night, I'm sure we could get you light on your feet. I really hope you'll do it. I like having you here."

"Perhaps," the elephant said. "But to tell you the truth, I'm not sure a house designed for a giraffe will ever really work for an elephant, not unless there are some major changes."

(This fable was taken from R. Roosevelt Thomas, (1999) *Building a House for Diversity*.)

The moral of this story points out the challenge for the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion within modern society. It presents the question: How can a company, government, organization or society create and maintain an environment where all diverse persons are respected, accepted, and made to feel their views matter and the results produce benefits for the stakeholders involved?

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a topic of much interest and is on the cutting edge of shaping every aspect of not only American society but globally. At the time of writing this eBook, it is one of the crucial pivotal points that will determine the peace and prosperity of people on a global scale. It is just that important.

The giraffe and elephant story depicts the way diversity, equity, and inclusion is often approached within organizations. They are built for a particular group or culture of people who think, act, and make decisions alike to the exclusion of others who aren't from the same background, culture and experiences. These are the giraffes.

They are usually white male dominated groups, with similar education, culture upbringing, have had the same or similar experiences, and usually see things from the same overall standpoint.

Like the giraffe, they recognize others who are different from them and may want to work with them and include them in what they do because they like them or know that it would be good to include them for business purposes. The others are the elephants.

They look different, have different cultural background, difference points of views, but are valuable and can contribute. However, too often when they are invited into the organization, they often don't fit because the door of opportunity is too small, they are made to feel they must not rock the boat if they want to fit in, and stumble trying to fit.

The giraffes (white male dominated group usually) of the organization can see they are having difficulty and the approach is to advise the elephants (diverse persons) to change without any clue that the house or organization they've built needs to undergo changes in order for the diverse person to fit in. Without this recognition the organization or company's diversity, equity, and inclusion program will be doomed to fail.

Significant change must come from within as well as sincere efforts from the diverse person to fit in and contribute before the mission of DEI will be accomplished.

The thoughts, concepts, and opinions voiced in this book is my small contribution to help sort out where we are, what we should do, and how we can make the world a better place to live in togetherness. The dream I have is that the world comes to a place where equality and inclusion among people become as common and driven like the wind.

I hope in some small measure the contents of this book will help to bring this dream to reality. The time for Rhetoric has passed. Reality must come forth and take its place

Historical Overview of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The concept of diversity, equity, and inclusion, while not referred to by the same name at the time, has its genesis in America as early as [1940 when President, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law](#) an order making discrimination illegal in defense contracting.

After the 1940 legislation, in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that "separate but equal" facilities based on race are unconstitutionally discriminatory.

During the presidency of John F. Kennedy, through his 1961 Executive Order (E.O.) 10925, "affirmative action", the forerunner of the concept of diversity and inclusion, was ushered into existence. Executive Order 10925 required all federal contractors to take "affirmative action" to ensure that applicants for jobs and business opportunities are treated equally without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.

In 1963, Civil Rights legislation was introduced during the Kennedy administration through Congresses HR 5271. This ultimately became the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and broadened the reach of Executive Order 10925.

On June 4, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson, at a Howard University graduation class, spoke about the underlying basis for affirmative action. In that speech, he made it clear that civil rights laws alone are not enough to battle invidious discrimination. Portions of his speech stated:

"You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: 'now, you are free to go where you want, do as you desire, and choose the leaders you please.' You do not take a man who for years has been hobbled by chains, liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, saying, 'you are free to compete with all the others,' and still justly believe you have been completely fair . . . This is the next and more profound stage of the battle for civil rights. We seek not just freedom but opportunity—not just legal equity but human ability—not just equality as a right and a theory, but equality as a fact and as a result."

The substance of this speech is just as relevant now as it was then.

In 1967, President Johnson amended the previous Executive Order 11246 and created the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC). This introduced affirmative action for women. It required federal contractors to make good-faith efforts to make sure that ethnic minorities and women were provided equal opportunity for employment with any contractors that were awarded federal contracts.

Under this law, federal contractors were required to keep records to show the progress they made in hiring minorities and women on any work funded by federal government money.

Continuing with the concept of affirmative action, President Richard Nixon, through Executive Order 11458, created the federal Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE). The purpose of this government agency was to create and oversee efforts of equal opportunity in federal contracting with ethnic minorities.

This agency became part of the Department of Commerce and ultimately was responsible, in part, for creating a process that identified and certified companies that claimed to be owned, controlled, and operated by minorities, women, disabled, and veteran-owned business enterprises.

On June 28, 1978, in the landmark Supreme Court case of [*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*](#), the Supreme Court imposed limitations on affirmative action. Bakke claimed he was discriminated against by the University because there were two different admission pools used by the University to admit medical students. One for standard applicants like himself and another for minority and economically disadvantaged students.

The University regularly reserved 16 out of 100 placements for admission only to minority and economically disadvantaged students. Bakke had been rejected twice even though there were minority applicants admitted with lower scores than his. Bakke claimed this was discrimination based on race (his white race) and therefore a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

The Supreme Court ruled that race was a legitimate factor to consider in the schools' admission policies, but the application of the policy created inflexible quotas, which were inappropriate as applied and therefore discriminatory against Bakke.

The court ruled in a 5-4 split decision in favor of Bakke but limited it to only certain circumstances such as the one before them. This essentially kept affirmative action intact.

July 2, 1980, the Supreme Court ruled in the case of [Fullilove v. Klutznick](#) that while Bakke struck down strict quotas, it nevertheless ruled that some quotas were justified based upon historical data and were not unconstitutional.

The Court, in that case, made a ruling requiring 15% of funds allocated for public works must be set aside for qualified minority contractors.

During the period from 1980 to a more recent time, affirmative action has continually been attacked in the courts. Every instance is not appropriate for the notation in this article and therefore not included.

However, the most recent cases that refer to affirmative action and diversity, the forerunner of supplier diversity, still uphold that a form of affirmative action may be necessary and appropriate to ensure that fairness and equality are provided to persons from a diverse background.

In 2013 in the case of [Fisher v. University of Texas](#), the federal; court ruled that universities could continue considering race as a factor in admissions to achieve diversity.

On June 23, 2016, the Supreme Court, in a 4-3 decision upheld the prior lower federal court ruling in **Fisher** that affirmative action is legal, although with some limitations.

Diversity and inclusion will continue to be an issue, socially and legally. Unfortunately, more litigation may be necessary to eradicate the effects of historical disparities between those in power and privilege and those still seeking to close the gap for equality in employment and contracting opportunities.

The Modern-Day Definitions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity is the state of being different in some manner that sets a person or group apart from another. From a societal standpoint, it covers cultures and populations that

have historically been underrepresented in workplaces and institutions and marginalized in broader society. Its emphasis concentrates on the differences between race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, age, or religion.

Equity in its simplest terms is the state of having an equal starting point in any circumstance. It gives a person or group an equal opportunity in the promotion of justice. It is impartial and fair in the making and implementation of policies and procedures within workplaces, government, the promotion of justice, and distribution of resources by institutions. Equity also challenges any system of unfairness.

Inclusion is the bottom-line test of whether diversity and equity are real in any environment. Inclusion is the mechanism to ensure those from diverse groups are made to feel welcome and respected and that they matter. This is accomplished by making sure diverse individuals fully participate in decision making that has outcome consequences for a company, organization, institution, or government body.

Systemic Discrimination

Vice Presidential candidate, Kamala Harris recently made an analogy between the pandemic of COVID-19 and the viral scourge of racism and violence in America. Her observation of the two devastating and deadly viruses brought her to the conclusion that COVID-19 will ultimately have a vaccine to help the country and the world population.

However, there is no vaccine for racism. Nevertheless, work must be put in to find a way to stop the insidious scorching of the earth events that are taking place every day in our country with no end in sight for a cure.

Until we come to some basic understanding of racism and its genesis there will be no cure or even a sedation effect on its ravages and the condition will continue to get worse. In my view, it could even lead to another civil war. Certainly, that is something that we must do everything possible to avoid

Confronting and resolving problems have some fundamental basics that apply to any circumstance. Addressing the issue of racism as a problem that should be viewed through the lenses of those fundamentals.

Those fundamentals are:

1. Recognize there is a problem

2. What caused or is causing the problem?
3. What can be done to solve the problem?
4. How should the resolutions be implemented?
5. Measuring results and modeling and multiplying what works

America Must First Recognize It Has a Race Problem

While there is an understanding by a large portion of America that racism exists and is institutionalized, still [the majority of White people and the institutions that they control and enjoy are in denial that racism exists](#). This is a huge part of the problem.

Denying that racism exists is in effect supporting it. The 800-pound gorilla of racist realism in the room that White America refuses or doesn't want to see, or is unconsciously blind to is the fact that racism is a system of advantage based on race.

According to a [Stanford University article](#), based on a psychological study,

“Racism is a system of advantage based on race. It is a hierarchy. It is a pandemic. Racism is so deeply embedded within U.S. minds and U.S. society that it is virtually impossible to escape.”

It is not seen on the surface as being a huge problem. Indeed, the instances of police brutality and killing of Black citizens, particularly, male are generalized with the rationale that they are instances of “bad cops” or police.

That is an oversimplification and fails to reveal the real systemic problem and institutionalize choices that are made based upon advantages provided to White people for centuries.

[Ben and Jerry's, of Ice Cream fame](#), as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility

efforts, published an article based on empirical evidence, that validates the fact that

America's race problem is grounded and rooted in its systems and that institutional systems are what perpetuates racism and the racial divide within the U.S.

The article shows that the systems within the U.S. create and maintain horrific statistics that undeniably make clear that there is a problem of race in America that cannot continue to be ignored or glazed over.

The recognition of the problem is shouted out through the following statistics for anyone who truly wants to know if there is a racial problem in the country:

- African-Americans are 2x as likely to be unemployed
- Black students are 3x more likely to be suspended as white students for the same infractions
- Blacks make up 13% of the general population but 40% of the prison population
- Blacks are shown 18% fewer homes and 4% fewer rental units than Whites
- Black drivers are 30% more likely to be pulled over
- 76% of doctors have biases against African-American patients

America has a race problem. The issue is will it be taken seriously and whether people who can do something about it will get busy to eradicate it.

What Caused or Is Causing the Problem of Racism?

The answer to this question is not rocket science. Racism was sewed into the fabric of America from its inception. Whites were given preference over Blacks and any other color at the beginning.

This preference that started the flames of racism began in 1776 when there was a Declaration of Independence and thereafter in 1787 when Black people were regarded as only three-fifths of a person within the U.S. Constitution and not recognized as human beings.

They were regarded as property. Indeed, they would not have even been mentioned in the U.S. Constitution but for the fact that Southern states insisted on them being counted as property to gain more political clout for voting purposes based upon votes being tied to taxation on property.

Had Blacks not been included as property for taxation purposes, Southern states would have been placed in a disadvantaged position for voting power.

The Thirteenth Amendment of 1865, in law and concept, freed the Black slaves but the system of racism and being regarded and treated as property and less than human had taken root in the conscience of the country and was steeped in practice and already handed down to the next generation after almost a century (89 years) of the birth of the nation.

Racism was now a system that had become part of its DNA and it would continue to give birth to one system after another system of racism and discord based upon privilege for White people and exclusion and oppression of Blacks and other people of color, but primarily Black people.

Immediately after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, so-called [Black Laws and Black Codes](#) were passed by Southern states to perpetuate systemic racism. This further infused the DNA of race and division into the bone structure of America.

With the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment (1868) giving equal protection under the law to Blacks the same as Whites, it appeared that things might be changing for the better. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

Then came the era of [“Jim Crow”](#). Jim Crow was a derisive slang term for a black man. It came to mean any state law passed in the South that established different rules for blacks and whites.

Jim Crow laws were based on the theory of white supremacy and were a reaction to Reconstruction after the Civil War. In the depression-racked 1890s, racism appealed to whites who feared losing their jobs to blacks.

Politicians abused Blacks to win the votes of poor white people. Newspapers fed the bias of white readers by playing up (sometimes even making up) black crimes. If this sounds familiar with the stories and news reports that you see and hear today, now you know the system that got it all started and why it exists currently.

The ultimate blow and further entrenchment of systemic racism occurred in 1896 with the infamous U.S. Supreme Court case of *Plessy v Ferguson* where the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation laws for public facilities as long as the segregated facilities were equal in quality. This doctrine became known as “separate but equal”.

The decision legitimized the many state laws re-establishing racial segregation that had been passed in the American South after the end of the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877)

Once the DNA of systemic oppression and racism took place it became an incident of heredity. It has been inherited, fostered, and encouraged in every generation since, and its progeny is still being born and grown every day through government legislation, law enforcement, political rhetoric, corporate practices, healthcare delivery, social services, and through every vital organ of the country.

So when the question is asked what caused or is causing the problem of racism, look to the country’s history. It tells the truth. Many White Americans fail to understand and many refuse to accept the fact that the answer is [“White America, if you want to know who’s responsible for racism, look in the mirror.”](#)

This not to say that all of White America is racist. Far from it. However, its silence is part of the problem. Black people cannot solve or get rid of racism by themselves.

The Closest Thing to a Vaccine for Racism: A Resolution

Once a problem has been identified and the most likely thing that caused it is known the next step is to develop a response and a solution to solve the problem.

In this case, what is the closest thing to a vaccine that can be provided to inject into America’s systems to remove the cancer of racism?

The answer is a huge dose of [“Anti-Racism.”](#) Anti-racism is the process that challenges one to look introspectively as well out outwardly and call into question the things that don’t look right about how persons who are different based on their color are treated.

It also calls for one to [take action that is against anything racist](#) and do the best thing to stop it. Emphasis should be placed not only on how someone becomes a racist but influences can be used to create an environment where people are motivated to become anti-racist.

As sociologist and author of the book [Racism without a racist](#), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva has said “The main problem nowadays is not the folks with the hoods, but the folks dressed in suits.”

The Family Is The First Place To Start



Make no mistake about it the family is the first place to start to vaccinate America against the virus of racism. Aristotle, one of the world’s greatest and renowned philosophers, opined that the [family is the basic unit of society](#), and all government and social values are immensely affected and built upon the family unit. It is the association for the supply of mankind’s everyday wants.

The Bible, which contains the Word of God, speaks directly to the importance of the family unit and how society is ultimately shaped by the environment in which children are reared. In God's Word it is stated:

*“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6. This is the vaccine for racism. This is the anti-racist environment that must be created to over some time eradicate racism.*

Children are not born with racist attitudes. They are not born with the immediate thought that just because there is a difference between the color of one's skin or a different culture then a distinction should be made as to how they should be treated.

Such thoughts and the ultimate actions they produce are taught. When children are taught that all people matter and they should be treated the same, given the same measure of respect, dignity and opportunity, and equal access to the pursuit of happiness, children will grow up with that training within their cultural DNA and when they are old they will not depart from it.

It may take some generations for it to happen but God's Word as it relates to training and rearing children is the antidote and vaccine for racism.

How the Resolution of Racism Be Implemented?

As identified, the process must start at home. Systemic racism has centuries of a head start. It will not be overtaken with sprints of giving money to underprivileged communities and making a few changes every time there is a crisis due to the police killing Black people.

It will not retreat because of marching and protests in the many streets of America when injustices occur. It will not be buried by a change of political parties that cater to money and people in power rather than the masses who cry out for and yearn for relief from racism's heavy burden.

All of the above efforts that are put into place are steps towards addressing racism and they are needed as part of the process to get rid of it. However, to win the race, it must be understood that it is not a sprint we are in but a marathon.

It will be long, hard, and painful, but getting to the finish line is assured if America starts now to train its children in ways that reject racism, implements effective policies and procedures that give the power to break down systems that perpetuate racism, and becomes diligent to snuff it out.

Then we will see real change and America will indeed live up to its creed of being the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Positive Results That Remove Racism Must Be Measured and Multiplied

Problem-solving requires measuring results and then repeating those that solve the problem and remove the pain.

Some of the positive results that are helping to combat racism and should be replicated are measured through [Corporate Social Responsibility](#).

Opening up opportunities for minorities and women through [supplier diversity](#) initiatives from the corporate level is another model that should be multiplied by more corporations.

Corporations have a huge opportunity to change America through an initiative designed to remove racism. A change in corporate culture concerning race, equality, diversity, and inclusion is one measuring stick that is starting to make a difference.

The challenge is will it continue at a pace that will make a difference. An initiative like [Gallup's Compliance is a Culture](#) is a concept that should be adopted and made part of Corporate America's social responsibility policy.

Every person who desires to make a difference can also create models that can be measured and replicated. A mindset and a checklist for ways and actions that can move the needle toward removing racism and its ugliness is provided in a [CNN article](#) where there is a list of 18 different ways that racism can be challenged and removed by simply making small changes in the way we think and how we act and react when faced with the subject of racism.

Bottom line a mindset of eliminating racism and confronting it the right way will go a long way to alleviate it.

Unification has a common theme, a binding thread that stitches togetherness and inclusion into a finished blanket. That common theme is equality. America's race problem will never be solved until equality becomes a reality.

Here's what you can do to help make a difference



Start a conversation. Get to the truth about what racism is. The truth is hard to keep a secret once you know what it is. Don't be afraid to challenge racism when you see it. Without you and others like you, it will continue to persist.

Tell a friend, share it with a relative, educate people that you know that racism is real and we all need to fight against it to bring it to an end.

You can make a difference. Develop the mindset to do something every day to change the direction from injustice to justice. From enrage to empathy. From hate to love and from division and divide to togetherness. This is what makes a nation great.

Unconscious Bias



I will never forget the red flushed face of my client, Mike, a white male that I was representing in a wrongful employment termination lawsuit. We had just finished driving from Santa Ana, California to Los Angeles for his deposition to be taken by the law firm defending the company that fired him.

On our way to the deposition, we got on the subject of race relations in America. I shared with him some of the racial experiences I had encountered during my life from growing up as a very poor Black boy in South Texas and even after I had become an attorney and living in California.

Some of the experiences involved the fact that I often was assumed to be White when speaking on the telephone and when I met the persons later I could visibly see the shock and surprise on their faces.

This was a revelation to Mike. His response was "I can't believe that kind of stuff is still happening today." Mind you, this occurred in the mid-1990s. As I write this eBook it is now the year 2020. I said to him "Mike, I have spoken with the defense attorneys for your

former employer on several occasions but we've never met. I wouldn't be surprised if when we finally meet them today, they will be surprised that you have a Black lawyer." He laughed and said it wouldn't make any difference and he doubted that ever crossed the defense attorney's minds."

We arrived and zoomed up to the top floor of a very prestigious law firm's office. We approached the receptionist and I greeted her and said "I'm Roy Landers and I am here with my client for his scheduled deposition."

She acknowledged us and had us take a seat in the firm's waiting room and informed the defense attorney that "Mr. Landers and his client are here for the deposition."

Mike and I sat down. Keep in mind, the attorney had never seen me or Mike in person. We were both dressed in business attire, coat, and tie included.

When the defense attorney (a White male) came out to greet us and take us back to the deposition room, he strode casually up to Mike and said "good morning Mr. Landers, nice to finally meet you." Mike's flushed red face I described earlier immediately became visible.

Mike's eyes narrowed in a squint and with a glare on his face he "retorted, I am not Mr. Landers. I am his client." He pointed to me and said, "This is my lawyer Mr. Landers." The defense lawyer immediately apologized and realized what he just did.

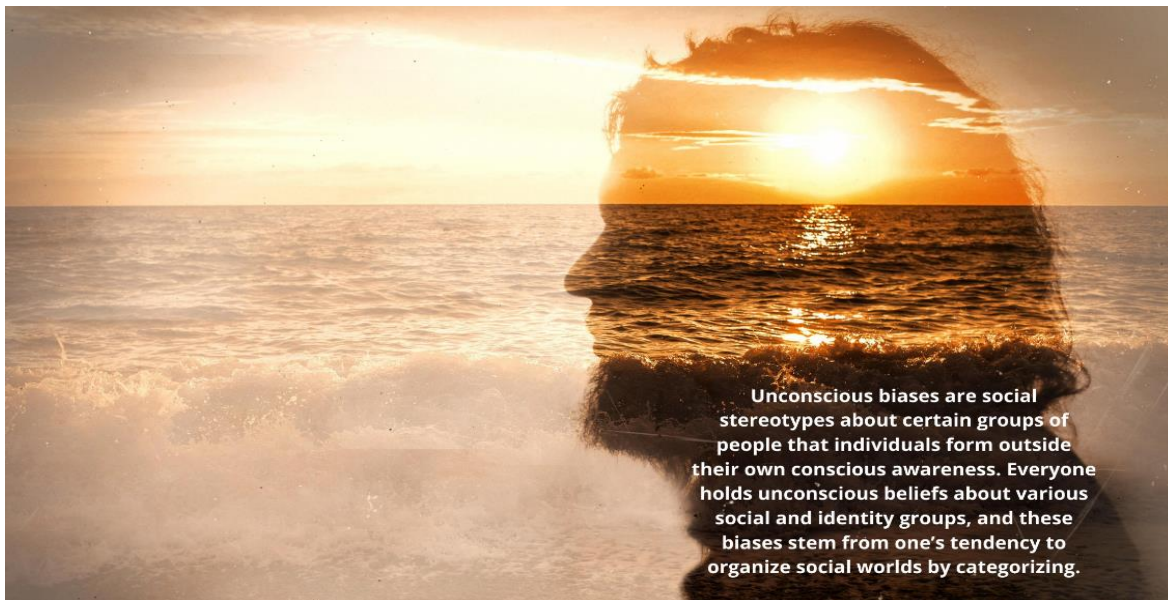
I made light of it and just moved on but Mike was furious. He couldn't believe what had just happened. Rather than asking which of us was Mr. Landers, the lawyer had assumed that Mike, (the "White man") was the lawyer and I was the client.

After the deposition, Mike was still disturbed and I explained to him that this was a classic case of bias based on race. Perhaps it was unconscious bias, as the term is now used.

Unconscious or not, it was an assumption that lies at the heart of what is rampant in America right now — raging racism that is tearing the nation apart.

In this writer's mind, unconscious bias has become the gatekeeper of racism. This part of the eBook covers effective ways to combat it and opens the gateway to getting rid of its insidious and destructive effects.

What Is Unconscious Bias?



First, let's start with what is bias? This will help to understand the concept of "unconscious bias."

Researchers and credible educational institutes that have studied bias, like the [University of California San Francisco](#) state:

"Bias is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair. Biases may be held by an individual, group, or institute and can have negative or positive consequences."

There are two types of biases. (1) Conscious bias (also known as explicit bias) and (2) Unconscious bias (also known as implicit bias)

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs

about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing.

According to a report by the [American Bar Association](#), and a reference therein to The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, **implicit bias** or **unconscious bias** is defined as:

“The attitude or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated in involuntary and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection.”

Biases, conscious, or unconscious are an equal opportunity occurrence. They exist in every race and culture. They exist and are exhibited across the spectrum of human existence including, race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, weight, gender identity physical disabilities, disabled persons, variations of skin tone and color, and many other characteristics.

Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and usually does not match with one's conscious values. Indulge with me for a moment and follow this scenario. Just go with the flow of the description and pretend a day in your life goes as follows:

You have made plans to attend a very important conference in another city that can change the rest of your career. You are running late to the airport to catch a plane to take you there. As you rush to the curbside, a uniformed airport porter rushes to assist you and quickly helps you check your baggage. You tip him and rush to the line to get to the plane.

Just minutes before they close the door you arrive to get on the plane and with a sigh of relief you let out a breath of air. Then, the pilot steps out of the cockpit and as you are going to your seat the pilot greets you with a big smile and says “hello, welcome aboard.”

You arrive in your city of destination and that evening you go out and have a scrumptious meal. At the next table, you observe a couple happily celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary.

The next morning you walk into the conference to hear one of the top-rated speakers in your industry with several years of experience and accomplishments and you eagerly await to hear the message that might change the rest of your life.

Now that you've read the scene, honestly think about and recall what images appeared to you about the persons described in the scenario.

What color or race was the uniformed airport porter? Did you picture him as Black? When you got on the plane, in the nick of time, and the pilot greeted you was the pilot White? Was the couple celebrating their anniversary two men?

When the renowned speaker took the stage in your mind's eye was it a female?

There is no right or wrong answer to the above. It is just an exercise to show you how "unconscious bias" sneaks into our everyday lives and causes us to react and make decisions without even thinking about it.

This is precisely the problem with unconscious bias. It permeates our decisions based upon what we are used to experiencing and what the order of our existence has been like.

If a person has grown up and only experienced things from a White perspective without a lot of exposure to Black culture, Hispanics, or culture different from them then the decisions made about them will be influenced by the values of where they've come from whether they are right or wrong.

The same applies to a Black, Hispanic, or other person looking at a White person. This is difficult to combat and easy to fall prey to and therein lies the problem.

Unconscious bias makes choices for persons that are based on racist, sexist, and other negative choices while consciously they may feel they are a good person and would never intentionally make such a choice.

This is what I call the “gatekeeper effect” of unconscious bias. It keeps the doors closed to fairness, equality, diversity, and inclusion and is difficult to root out because the persons perpetrating it either don’t realize it or if they do they aren’t motivated to consciously do anything about it.

It is any wonder then that America is on the brink of destroying itself because it has a serious and continuous race problem that is sustained in large part because of unconscious bias?

What Are the Effects of Unconscious Bias?

Unconscious bias is rampant in every corner of society. It’s like the wind. It blows and nobody knows its origin, it can’t be seen, it has a force of its own and its velocity can destroy.

Unconscious bias in the workplace

Employers lose some 64 billion dollars annually because of [workplace unconscious bias](#). This is based on the cost of losing and replacing more than 2 million American workers due to unfairness and discrimination. This is just in the replacement of employees on an annual basis.

Where employees stay and continue to work, yet not fully engage in productivity because of unconscious bias, the loss to companies is 450 billion to 550 billion per year. Based on a [Gallop study](#), employees who perceive bias are nearly three times as likely to be disengaged at work.

Unconscious bias leads to conscious bias decisions

The recent horror stories of how Blacks have been treated in retail establishments highlight the effect of how unconscious bias colors rational thought processes and rolls into racial bias and escalates into racist treatment that perpetuates hatred and discrimination.

Retail store incidents point out the devastating effects that unconscious bias can lead to. [Starbucks](#) closed all of its stores for one day to train its employees on how to deal with unconscious bias when Black patrons showed up as customers and ended up being arrested simply because they were Black.

The one-day shutdown is estimated to have costed the coffee chain 10 million dollars. [Nordstrom](#) had a similar incident. Bias whether unconscious or not is expensive.

Our nation is in a downward spiral because of racial hatred based upon nonsensical perceptions that Whites are better than Blacks. Rational and clear thinking Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, Asians, and other cultural groups know better. However, the status quo will continue unless they stand together for change.

Police Brutality and Violence Against Black People Is Part of Unconscious Bias.



The George Floyd incident did not just happen. That was a culmination of years of conditioning and bias bred into a system and into the police officer that killed him. Many (certainly not all) police are raised in backgrounds and environments that foster bias toward Black people.

I know this from a personal standpoint. As a Black man, I have lived and had to survive it. I will never forget the opportunity I had once to sit on a panel to interview prospective police officers for a large city in California. I made it a point to ask the prospects about what they would do in circumstances of patrolling parts of the city where the population was predominately Black or other than White.

Many of them answered quite candidly, they would rather not be in those neighborhoods and would not like to patrol them because they didn't have a good perception of Black people. I did my best to make sure that they never became police officers. Unfortunately, I know that some of them did.

This scene has been repeated over and over again all across America. Police are interviewed and hired harboring hatred and biases against people of color and releasing it when the opportunity presents itself.

The results, unfortunately, brought about George Floyd's untimely demise and erupted the volcanic and pent up passion of Blacks long-held in suppression, depression, and despair. The proverbial chickens have come home to roost. America is paying the consequences.

This is the effect of unconscious bias.

Can Unconscious Bias Be Fixed?



The short answer is no. However, it can be regulated just like any habit.

You can take unconscious bias tests, but they won't fix the problem. They just let you know that the problem exists, especially along racial, gender, or cultural lines.

A recent article in [Fast Company Magazine](#) opines that unconscious bias cannot be fixed because training does not stick with a person who has been indoctrinated in bias for years and then is expected to make a change.

The one thing that does work is a process that requires a person to examine his or her behavior. You see, the problem with unconscious bias is it will continue unless the unexamined behavior is called out.

The unfavorable bias (behavior) must be examined. There must be a mindset of transforming equality established and then it must be measured by the following:

- Do your work. You have to make a conscious effort to check yourself before deciding on someone, especially when it involves race, gender, sexual orientation, or even a person or persons with physical disabilities.
- Make connections with people that don't look like you or think like you. This provides the experience of seeing things from other points of view.
- If you have privilege use it to create equity. Justice isn't achieved by sitting on the sideline.

There is an old African proverb that says:

"I am who I am because of who we all are. We are who we are because of who I am."

Make a Commitment to Examine Your Unconscious Bias and Make Better Choices



To change a thought process it takes a concerted mindset. We are battling a vicious cancer that is consuming our country. It's the cancer of racism. It has infected our vital organs and is in stage four status. It's critical. We must cut it out now before it metastasizes and shuts down the heartbeat of America.

The Bible weighs in on how to deal with unconscious bias. Wisdom dictates that we should take heed:

*"Romans 12:2: And be not conformed to this world: but be **ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."*

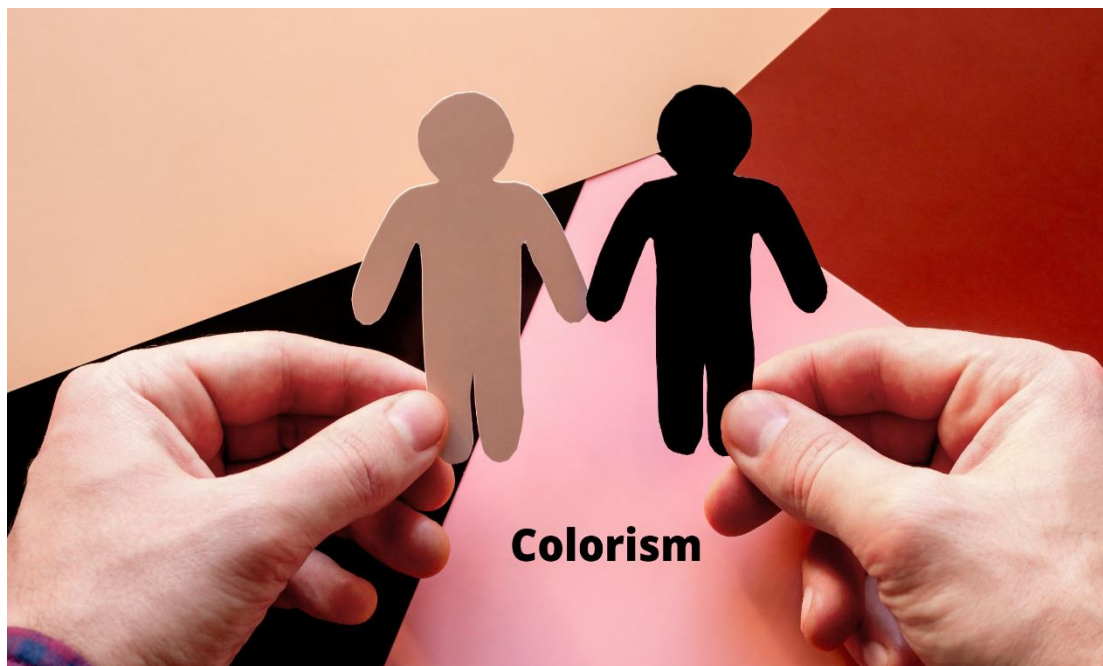
Christ's teaching was and is that one should bring every thought that is detrimental to doing right into captivity and that a person's thoughts are the total sum of what he or she truly is:

"For as he thinketh in his heart so is he..." Proverbs 23:7

Commit to advance and support, diversity, equity, and inclusion. Examine your thoughts before making decisions about people who don't look like, act like, or think like you. Take a pledge — a call to action and make this commitment:

"I pledge to check my bias, speak up for others, and show up for all."

Colorism – The Stain That Must Not Be Ignored



There is a racism problem in America created by Black people against Black people that is just as insidious, hurtful, and wrong as what White people practice.

There is no question that systemic racism exists against Blacks in the U.S. and largely it is a system of oppression, disrespect, exclusion, and denial of human and civil rights based on the irrational mindset that White people are superior and better than Blacks and other people of color.

Black people and kindred people of color are rightfully justified to be frustrated, angry, and impatient given the current state of affairs that exist between the so-called “Haves and Have Not’s” with Whites being the former and Blacks the latter. However, there is an undertow of racism that goes unnoticed and often not talked about as part of the national conversation to eradicate racism and its scourge of stripping away esteem, dignity, and perpetuating denial of equality.

The undertow of racism has a name. It’s called colorism. The sad fact about this term is that it defines how Black people discriminate against their own. It is an ugly but real debased treatment based upon the actions of lighter-skinned Black people who discriminate against darker-skinned Black people.

There are no organized protests and marching regarding this issue. Yet, it exists and needs to be addressed as part of the overall push to ultimately rid America of racism and its vestiges.

Colorism is the 800-pound gorilla in the room that doesn’t get talked about but it’s still there and it’s not going away anytime soon unless it is dealt with. It is just as harmful as racism perpetrated by Whites on Blacks.

What is Colorism?

Colorism is discrimination based on skin color and is a form of prejudice in which people who are usually members of the same race are treated differently based on the social implications which come with the cultural meanings attached to skin color.

People often make the mistake of branding racism as only being committed against someone different and outside the race of another. On the other hand, colorism’s distinguishing identity occurs between the same races but members therein are disdained, looked down, and treated differently because of skin tone.

Colorism's premise is steeped in the belief that someone with any degree of lighter complexion is considered more beautiful or valuable than someone with dark skin. As ridiculous as this concept is it has existed and persists to a great extent within the Black culture.

According to empirical data, discrimination based on skin color has a profound effect on how people are treated in criminal justice, business, the economy, housing, health care, media, and politics in the United States.

Author Alice Walker, in her book, *In Search of our Mothers' Gardens*, popularized colorism as a term and rekindled discussions about it globally. The book points out how light-skin preference historically has been a common practice in the Black community for generation, but is appropriately marked as an evil that must be stopped for African Americans to progress as a people.

Colorism's Ultimate Goal Is to Pass

The ultimate goal of colorism is "passing." That is to say, the closer a Black person looks and acts like White people and becomes assimilated and accepted in society as White folks the better. Therefore, the goal is to be as white as possible in all that you are despite being Black.

Passing creates motivation to remove as much trace of Black in

one's looks as possible. If you're dark you should try and lighten your skin by any means necessary.

Stay out of the sun, indulge in lightening your skin with caustic chemicals, and do whatever it takes to get as close to being white as possible. Passing is the goal and those are damned that get in the way.

Where Does Colorism Come From?

In the US, [colorism was born out of slavery](#), where lighter-skinned enslaved black women and their children — often the result of rape by slave masters — were given preferential treatment. This lingered through centuries and, to this day, lighter skin is associated with wealth and power, giving privileges to those who have it.

Colorism has been perpetuated in America since its inception. One of the most widely held theories of how colorism was instituted and promoted, although disputed as a myth and untrue, is the story of [William \(Willie\) Lynch](#), who is credited with developing and preaching across America a doctrine that would keep Blacks from becoming a major threat to white people through means of creating a cultural environment of differences between them that played on the psychic.

Lynch, according to the story, came to America in 1712 from the British West Indies after being summoned by slave owners of the Virginia Colony to advise them on problems they were experiencing in managing their slaves.

He was purportedly a slave owner himself who had devised a system to control Blacks simply by getting them to fight among themselves and keep each other from advancing or growing in strength by fomenting hatred and discord between them based on color.

The lighter-skinned should be encouraged to think more highly of themselves and privileged than the darker-skinned.

Indeed they would be given preference. They would be allowed to work for the master inside the home, be treated better, and even given more freedom.

This would create resentment from the darker-skinned blacks who had to toil in the fields and suffer greater punishment.

Myth or reality, the concept took root within colonial and slavery times and it persists. Sadly, Blacks treat each other differently within their race based on color.

Colorism is also steeped in America's fiber, based upon the concept of what the standard of beauty is. [Eurocentric standards of beauty](#) have for centuries dominated what beauty and acceptance should look like.

The message of "White is right" has been subtly and boldly proclaimed through media, products, body physics, and an educational system.

Eurocentric standards of beauty of white women as the model of perfection, grace, and acceptance has been and still is a global disease of sorts. Unless colorism is addressed

and dealt with appropriately global standards of acceptance, beauty, and tolerance will remain the same and that gets us nowhere.

Is Colorism Different Than Racism?

There is a subtle difference between colorism and racism. Colorism is the practice where people with lighter skin are given preference over people with dark skins. This practice is a sub-category of racism.

By its' practice, colorism validates that seeking to meet standards of acceptance set by white people in every category that makes a difference in the quality of life of an individual is a good thing. It permeates every institution including employment, entertainment, health care, food, families, sports, etc.

Racism is a form of different and distinct treatment and discrimination based upon the race of a person no matter whether they are light or dark. It's the fact that they belong to or are regarded as part of a different race or ethnic group that sets them apart for disparate treatment.

Racism is a systemic problem that is baked into American society through its institutions and gives privileges and higher status to Whites regardless of their abilities and qualifications than Blacks, Latino, Asians, and Native Americans.

The institution of racism was created in America within its Constitution wherein Native Americans were not included as part of the U.S. at the time and Blacks were not even regarded as human. They were property and given a status of only being three-fifths of a person.

This was the beginning of institutionalizing racism. It hasn't changed much since then despite changes in the law. This is a testament to the saying that you cannot legislate morality. Treating people right and providing equality and inclusiveness has to come from a place of the heart.

America has suffered from the heart disease of racism for centuries and now it has hardening of its arteries that has led to a heart attack of racial unrest and a pandemic of discord, violence, and further division within our nation.

The Consequences of Colorism

History is replete with the consequences of colorism. Even in current times, Blacks still cling to the harmful and ignorant notion that the hue of their skin makes a difference. It is so embedded in the Black culture that it appears to have been passed down from generation to generation as if it's become a genetic gnome.

That is a scary thought but it has some degree of legitimacy. Decades and generations of cliques and sayings still exist and proliferate within the Black culture:

“If you're White, you are alright; If you're yellow you are mellow; if you are brown stick around, but if you're Black get back.” The clear message is one that is often bantered as a joke, but pointedly making the argument that people with Black skin should be excluded. This is offensive, disrespectful, and nonsensical.

Black women's attractiveness is still referred to with a tone that the lighter they are the more beautiful and acceptable they are and even preferred for sexual preference or perhaps even marriage.

Terms like “High Yellow”, Redbone, and Caramel are used to describe the desirability of Black women with lighter skin. Among Black men these expressions have been used when they talk among themselves about preferences of becoming involved with a Black woman.

It is as if the lighter skin magically provides them with more status and envy to be seen with a Black woman that more closely resembles a White woman.

Often and ignorantly, in this writer's opinion, Black men get caught up in the notion that White women are a better choice simply because of their white skin. Nothing could be further from the truth. Women are women and should be treated as God's gift to men in a loving, acceptable, and respectful way no matter what color their skin.

Similarly, Black women who also fall into the trap of having a preference for lighter-skinned men should beware of colorism. Black men as well as all men are God's gift to women to be loved, accepted, and respected no matter what color their skin.

I recall growing up as a dark-skinned Black boy and not being as accepted as my lighter-skinned counterparts. It did not matter that I was smarter, more studious than most, and

was taught and practiced the utmost respect for Black females by the raising of a single Black mother.

I can still remember the sting of the saying. “The blacker the berry the sweeter the juice, but you’re so black there ain’t no use.” Thank God, I didn’t internalize it to make me bitter or discouraged. Rather it fueled me to excel.

The Paper Bag Test for Acceptance

Colorism has played real tricks on the Black psychic. So much so that within the culture, tests were devised to determine if one would be acceptable within certain groups of Blacks.

One such test was known as the “[paper bag test](#).” The test was allegedly used as a way to determine whether or not an individual could have certain privileges; only those with a skin color that matched or was lighter than a brown paper bag were allowed admission or membership privileges.

This ritual is reported to have been used by Black sororities, fraternities, and even churches.

The currency of colorism

Colorism has an impact on how much earnings can be made depending on the lighter or darker skin of a Black person.

According to a recent article from the [Journal of Economics](#) light-skinned Black men earn more than dark-skinned Black men.

The Doll Test: A Colorism Demonstration That Changed the Nation



Studies show that children born with a dark skin that later learns that dark skin is not valued the same as white skin are more likely to develop shame of their color and internalize the erroneous concept that being dark-skinned is a bad thing.

Children are extremely vulnerable and their minds can be shaped very earlier and those mindsets last. This was demonstrated by studies of [Kenneth and Mamie Clark](#), African-American psychologists who proved that colorism is real and how devastating it is on the young mind of a Black child exposed to it.

They demonstrated through careful study that Black children exposed to colorism overwhelmingly chose a white doll vs a black doll when asked questions about which doll was a good doll vs a bad doll, which doll was more beautiful, and which doll they preferred.

Many of the children when asked which doll looked like them were visibly reluctant to identify with the black doll.

Their studies ranged from 1947–2006 and were, in large part, the turning point in the argument that caused the U.S. Supreme Court to rule in the 1954 case of Brown vs. Board of Education that the concept of separate but equal school facilities for Blacks and Whites was not only illegal but detrimental to the mental and educational wellbeing of Black children.

Colorism creates and leaves a stain on the fabric of America and around the globe. It is a stain that Black people have to admit they have helped to create and must own up to the responsibility of removing that stain as part of the quest to rid the U.S. of racism and all of its insidious tentacles of destruction.

What's the Answer to Colorism?

Let's start with the foundation of just about everything that a society is built on, the family. [I've written in other articles](#) that the family is the basic unit of society. It is the family unit upon which all institutions have their foundation.

The "Doll Test" in this article is a prime example of how colorism gets into the bloodstream of America's veins and pumps the venom throughout its body. One answer to colorism is to start at home.

Black and White families must train up a child in the way that he/she should go and when they are old they will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6 NKJV

America will never get rid of colorism or its parent, racism until it finds its moral compass. It must come full circle and walk what it talks. The inscription on its money says "In God we trust." That statement has for years shown the hypocrisy of the nation.

God is love and in His Word, He has clearly stated that we are all of one blood. In God's eyes, there is no distinction between Black, White, Brown, Yellow, or Red people. We are mandated through His Word in the Bible that "There is no difference between the

Jew (the nation he chose to be an example), nor Greek (all gentiles and races of the world). Galatians 3:28 KJV

All are one blood and are to be loved and cared for if we are to live in harmony and peace as a society of order. Acts 17:26 KJV. What colorism will you practice in the future? Will it make a difference for better or create more stain on the wall of humanity?

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What colorism will you practice in the future? Will it make a difference for the better or create more stain on the wall of humanity?

The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?



Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable—to itself, its stakeholders, and the public. By practicing corporate social responsibility, companies can be conscious of the kind of impact they are having on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental.

To engage in CSR means that, in the ordinary course of business, a company is operating in ways that enhance society and the environment, instead of contributing negatively to them.

In today's socially conscious environment, [employees and customers place](#) a premium on working for and spending their money with businesses that prioritize corporate social responsibility

Progress and equality in diversity will never fully be obtained without a concerted effort by corporate America. No amount of legislation or government intervention can cause the full integration of equality for jobs and business opportunities.

Although legal rules and regulations have gone a long way to close the gap of lack of inclusion, legislation cannot regulate habit and unconscious bias. It is impossible to do that consistently. Only men and women of goodwill and good faith can make diversity and inclusiveness happen.

Game-changing goodwill and good faith must come through corporate organizations and their social responsibility commitments working with local, state, and national government as well as local communities where they operate.

“A well-designed [[diversity and inclusion](#)] training program can elevate employee morale, boost customer satisfaction, and drive bottom-line business success.”

The Reality Gap Between Diversity and Inclusion for Diverse Suppliers.

No matter how well-meaning corporate responsibility initiatives have been and are, there are gaps between the goal of supplier diversity and obtaining it in an optimum quantity as desired.

The inclusion of diverse persons and businesses, from a corporate standpoint, has often been all talk and no action. Let me hasten to say this is not the case with all corporations at all. Most corporations are well-meaning with their efforts toward creating an inclusive environment and implementation of their diversity programs.

Nevertheless, there is still a gap to be closed to reach the ultimate equality. One gap is the fact that having a diverse employee population, or a diverse database of diverse suppliers does not equate to inclusiveness. The two are not the same. However, they

each must be addressed appropriately to achieve the goal of equality within the workplace and the supply chain.

If diverse employees or suppliers are present and shown in numbers, the question is how are they being engaged? Are they made to feel they belong? Is there a concerted effort to create an environment where they feel comfortable that they have worth and can contribute to the mission of the corporation?

Are diverse suppliers within the corporate database actively sought out and informed of supplier opportunities through nontraditional, yet very relevant sources, like community churches, social organizations, and specialty organizations like African American chambers, Hispanic Chambers, etc.

These are inclusive steps among many others that can send a clear inclusive message to the diverse target market that they matter and are important to corporate progress and profitability.

The one thing that is certain. Equality and inclusiveness will never be accomplished by itself. It must be accomplished through people. People who have the mindset, the will, and heart to do the right thing and have the courage to get out of their comfort zone.

How Supplier Diversity and Corporate Social Responsibility Can Be a Winning Combination

Diversity and inclusion of ethnic minorities, women, disabled persons, and those with diverse sexual preferences have made great progress. However, there are still mountains of barriers that must be overcome before any parity of equality will exist within society, the workplace, and business opportunity for most persons identified as diverse.

This is especially true for diverse business owners and professional service providers.

This article covers the history, the struggle, the reality, and current status of the subject of diversity and inclusion and how it relates to supplier diversity and the gains, failures, and challenges to making it work as intended.

Also covered is the concept of corporate social responsibility and how it is vital to accomplishing inclusion from a diversity standpoint.

Without a serious and dedicated corporate management mindset to accomplish true diversity and inclusion as a combination concept, supplier diversity will never measure up to the conceptual ideology of diverse businesses getting a fair share of quality contracts to provide goods and services to corporations and the masses of the consuming public.

The two concepts, supplier diversity and corporate social responsibility must be merged as one to truly make diversity a reality. When that happens the nation and the world, in general, will be a better place and the global economy will be more prosperous.

Here's how supplier diversity and corporation social responsibility, together, can bring about real diversification that makes a huge difference in the quality of life and increase corporate profitability.

What Do Diversity and Inclusion Have To Do With Supplier Diversity?

According to Wikipedia, supplier diversity is a proactive business program that encourages the use of minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, LGBT owned, service-disabled veteran-owned, historically underutilized business, and Small Business Administration (SBA)-defined small business concerns.

These are diverse populations and the goal of supplier diversity is to include as many as them as possible into the mainstream of opportunity to compete for and successfully obtain corporate and government contracts for the sale of their goods and services.

The intent is to ensure that all the identified categorized groups referred to above get a fair and equal opportunity to obtain jobs and contracts without regard to their race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

History shows that persons and companies in these identified groups have for a variety of reasons been excluded from the mainstream opportunity to participate in economic progress on the same footing as historically favored white males.

Conceptually, supplier diversity efforts are designed to change this fact and increase inclusion for those from diverse backgrounds.

How corporate social responsibility can have an immediate impact on the healing of America's wounds.

The [Harvard Business Review](#) outlines 10 commitments corporations can make and keep to advance racial justice and help heal our land.

A part of those commitments requires transparency. Corporate leadership gives a lot of lip service to social and racial justice and how they are committed to it. However, the record shows they often fail to “walk what they talk.” Action must be taken by giving serious orders from the top down and making sure that the whole organization gets it and that there are dire consequences if goals are not met.

Leadership — Good leaders serve as good models. Leaders can lead by example and provide a safe workplace where all employees feel respected and included.

As it pertains to the current environment, leaders can be open about their lack of knowledge and share their growth and experiences with their workforce. Openness and showing the vulnerable parts of leadership is not a weakness. It is a strength.

When employees, the community, and society see corporate empathy coupled with action a positive change will rush in like the mighty roar of the ocean.

Don't tolerate discrimination within the workplace. Period.

Corporations should review their policies regarding equal employment opportunity and workplace discrimination. Though most employers articulate such policies as a matter of course, it is important to reinforce these policies and remind employees of what is expected of them and to reassure employees who may be feeling vulnerable that equity and inclusion are at top of mind.

Create a culture of tolerance, empathy, and interaction within the workplace

Corporations must educate their employees about prejudice and racism in its various forms. They must also be vigilant to monitor the day to day interactions between employees from different cultures and racial backgrounds.

It's evitable that employees will have confrontations within the workplace with some supporting Black Lives Matter and others who feel that statement itself is racist and will counter with slogans and code words like "Make America Great Again. (MAGA). These potential hotbeds must be cooled as soon as they occur while at the same time fostering a working environment of tolerance, empathy, and equitable interaction.

Community Involvement

Community involvement by corporations is paramount in helping to eradicate racism and to uplift the economic status of black lives and black businesses. Remember the definition and mission of "corporate social responsibility".

Corporations can publicly support communities in the form of donations or activism. Doing so can create a sense of pride among the workforce, and it can also help in attracting future hires that share the principles of the corporate workplace.

Churches should be a target for corporate social relationships within the black community. Churches have always been the foundation and fabric for connecting with the black community and with their businesses.

Often within the black church is where the best leaders have been groomed to enter into society and make a difference for the better. This bastion of potential is a lost cause for most corporations. They don't have a clue.

If they are really serious about community outreach and making a difference to black people, churches should not be overlooked.

Supplier Diversity

Through the corporate supply chain, a huge difference can be made by utilizing black and other minority businesses that are qualified to provide raw materials, equipment, supplies, and support to large corporations.

Moving corporate social responsibility from concept and lip service to action and measuring results will help America's ship sail in the right direction and reach a peaceful shore.

Through the measures outlined in this article, along with the hundreds of thousands of individual Americans and people around the globe that have awakened and are heeding the call to justice, equality, and inclusion racism, discrimination, and separatism will be banished. People of goodwill will not have it any **other way**.

The question is how long will it take? How will it be accomplished?

To each of these questions, my response is it's up to you and me. You see, its individuals that support the corporations.

Its individuals that buy their goods and services. Without individuals, corporations cannot be sustained.

Individually and collectively, we can make a difference. Do your part to send the message.

Don't shop where racism is supported or tolerated as if it doesn't exist. Don't buy where Blacks, Hispanics, Women, and other disenfranchised persons are slighted or ignored.

Collectively, your efforts and mine can make a difference even in the corporate board room. The next step is up to you.

The Church's Role in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Organized Corporate Church Must Come Out of Hiding and Speak The Truth That It Professes to Proclaim



Churches are corporations. They are creations of the state in which they exist just like any secular corporation. The argument that church and state are separate is specious when it comes to corporate social responsibility.

Indeed, Christian churches, based on their tenets, have more responsibility to root out racism and injustice than secular corporations.

Amid all the chaos and carnage being created in the quest for justice, fairness, and equality, the church has largely been absent in the dialogue and activity to help quell the unrest. Yet, it is one of the linchpins of society that can influence global change.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. famously lamented 11:00 a.m. on Sunday morning “as the most segregated hour in Christian America.”

Unfortunately, that statement still rings with the truth when church congregations across America gather. Black churches and White churches have a gulf between them just like there is a secular divide between the two races.

Great strides have and are being made by magnificent church leaders to bridge the racial gap.

However, the church as a corporate presence has failed to meet the standards set by God Himself to recognize that we all are joined together as one blood as recorded in the Book of Acts.

*“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth...”
Acts 17:26 KJV.*

*There should not be any division among us because of race, creed, or national origin.
“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28 NIV*

These proclamations and standards should be part of the organized church’s corporate social responsibility. Working with the secular corporate section such a partnership will quench the fire of hatred and division like an abundance of water abolishes a forest aflame.

This is the clarion call to the church that this writer hopes will be heeded and implemented in massive movements in the future.

What You and I Can Do to Keep Corporate Social Responsibility Engaged and Sustained.

You and I can make a difference in the use and power of corporate social responsibility. We constitute customers of companies that sell us the goods and services we consume.

Collectively, we control whether corporations make a profit or suffer a loss. Those corporations that support the communities they operate within, that treat their employees with respect and dignity, and provide an opportunity for advancement should be rewarded with our patronage and purchases. Those that don't should not.

Corporations recognize and heed the message sent by the purchasing power of society. Although they are extremely powerful, together we can shape how that power is utilized.

Let's join hands and make a permanent change for the better. America is counting on us.

A Balm to Heal a Nation's Wounds

How to Bridge the Diversity and Inclusive Gap

International Standardization of Diversity Programs Should Be Established

Bridging the gap of diversity and ensuring inclusiveness within corporate supply chains can be greatly enhanced by adopting standards across the board that apply to the qualifications, certifications, and the equities needed along with meeting the expectations of the stakeholders within the corporate ecosystem.

Standardization is common to corporations through the [International Organization for Standards \(ISO\)](#).

The ISO was established in 1947, in Switzerland and is comprised of 163 countries, including the U.S. and Canada.

The purpose is to establish intellectual, scientific, technological, and economic cooperation between member countries (Bureau of Business Practice). It makes sets of guidelines that bring together and standardize world industries.

The standards established by the ISO are recognized by the participating countries and implemented to create and maintain consistency across the board for quality, safety, environment, technological, economic, and best practice in some 19,000 identified standards. Certifications within these categories is also a part of the ISO.

[ISO/Dis 30415](#) is the standard set by this organization for diversity and inclusion (D&I). It is the starting place in which all corporation diversity programs should start. This would establish homogeneity across the board for (D&I).

Of course, each company may add different tactics and techniques that ultimately implement their diversity programs, but the standardization concept is the point made here. It would and should create basic guidelines for every such program so there is a way to have a consistent foundational measurement for D&I.

This would go a long way toward bridging the supply chain gap regarding inclusion.

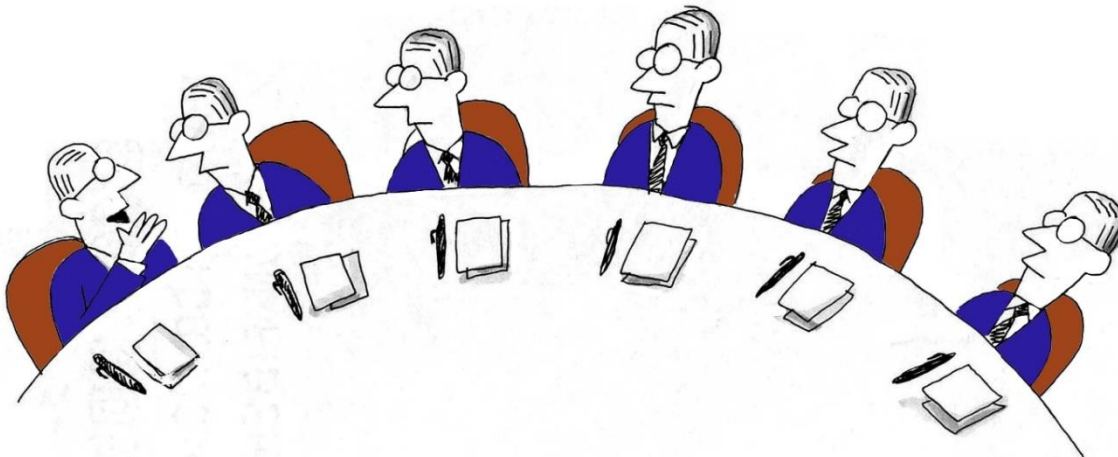
Make Diversity and its implementation a C-level Corporation Position

Another important step toward narrowing the diversity gap is the establishment of and empowerment of corporate personnel in charge of such a program. Companies that are all in about inclusion should establish the position of accomplishing the goals of diversity at the C-level, such as the Chief Officer of Diversity (COD). This would send a strong message. The C-level authority carries with it the concept and perception that the title is top-level and very serious, and expectations are assigned accordingly.

The person appointed to the C-level position should be held accountable for the results tied to performance evaluations. The company must provide full support for that position.

Establish Training and Support to Eliminate Ethnic and Gender Unconscious Bias

The “elephant within the room” within many corporate boardrooms, executive suites,



“Diversity is good. Pass it down.”

and management towers is the fact that the inclusion of different ethnic groups and women often fall prey to “unconscious or unintentional bias.”

The reality is that most boards of directors, top-level executives, and top-level managers

within corporations are still white males. Almost none of them come from the same or similar background as ethnic minorities. Decisions made by them often are made with an unconscious bias that has adverse effects on diverse employees and suppliers.

Also, many have been raised in a cultural environment that unfortunately still fosters unconscious and hidden thought patterns in their minds that women don't measure up to men when it comes to running businesses and being as smart.

Of course, this is not the truth. Nevertheless, it still exists. [Unconscious bias](#) hinders a corporation's ability to achieve goals of inclusion. It must be dealt with and approached with an attitude of empathy but eradicated wherever found.

In the real-world people like to deal with, support, and benefit people who look like them, act

like them, and see the world around them the same as they do. They like to help and assist people they know like and trust and have an affinity for.

This is natural and tribal and perhaps understandable to a degree. Nevertheless, it cannot be tolerated. It fosters and perpetuates bias and the excuse that it may not be intentional is unavailing.

When someone from a different background, culture, or opinion comes within the midst of those in dominant cultures or environments and used to having it their way, the dominant thought process often makes decisions based unconsciously from the viewpoint of their background and culture and the lenses they've looked at life through all their lives.

When this happens, people from other cultures, genders, etc. may be ignored. They may not be taken seriously and are made to feel that what they may have to contribute is not important or not taken seriously.

Sending such a message within the workplace, unintentional or not, prevents the effectiveness of inclusion, and achieving diversity is made more difficult. This is an example of unconscious or unintentional bias.

It must be guarded against and eliminated within the workplace and within the decisional making process of deciding purchases within the supply chain of the corporation involved.

In some cases, the concept of [legacy preference](#) like the practice of special preference for college admission for whites over any other race or culture exists within corporate ivory towers.

This type of bias is based on the concept that one is entitled to a position with or without merit and actions are taken to prevent anyone else who is different from obtaining equality.

Where this exists corporations must be swift to correct it and make sure that never exists again within that organization.

Have Human Resources Department Be a Proactive Participant In Inclusion

According to the [Society for Human Resource Management](#), (HR) employers often recognize the theoretical value of diversity and inclusion programs but lack a practical guideline for determining whether their diversity programs will be effective in their organizational culture, or how to measure the return on investment for their initiatives. This is where HR standards for diversity and inclusion should be applied.

According to Deb Cohen, Ph.D., and former SPHR Chief Knowledge Officer “There are many areas within HR that we could have targeted first to begin creating standards, but it is our belief that Diversity and Inclusion is one of the key areas, to begin with, because of the criticality of this issue to the success of organizations today.

Competition for talent is keen as it is clear that there is a skills shortage – regardless of the current unemployment rate – and this points to the need to understand the diversity of your workforce and be inclusive in hiring and developing talent.”

Human resource data also shows that effective inclusion tactics [affect a company's bottom line. It is profitable](#). It is just good business to include different cultures, races, and females in every aspect of a company's business.

Make Sure the Proper Metrics Are Being Used To Quantify Diversity Efforts

If it's not properly measured even the best efforts employed in establishing an inclusive diversity program will not be as useful as it could be. If it's not measured, it can't be managed.

Installing the [proper metrics](#) should be one of the top priorities in managing diversity.

Community Outreach and Involvement

Corporate social responsibility and the goal of inclusiveness can be enhanced in a multitude of ways through a company's community involvement.

Community involvement allows a company to engage employees on a variety of different levels. This ultimately increases engagement in the company and enhances favorable perceptions from community stakeholders.

Developing a relationship with a community is just good business. Businesses that make a point of engaging communities through sponsorships, philanthropic gestures in crisis events, educational programs, creation of jobs, and positive environmental impact initiatives reap tremendous rewards.

In short, consumers recognize and appreciate when a company gives back to the community. Such activity is perceived as valuable and promotes the perception and reality that the company “really cares.”

Communities reward companies in return by consuming that company’s goods and services on a continued loyalty basis and directs others to become buyers as well.

The community can also become a huge factor in helping the company reach its goals for inclusion and achieving diversity goals.

One avenue that can be extremely effective is to create a community advisory board that consists of identified community leaders that meet periodically to advise a company of the best way to reach community residents for feedback, market research, job creation, and supplier chain suppliers that may not otherwise become known to the corporation.

This can be significant regarding supplying the company with essential goods and services to help it become more profitable as well as meet diversity goals.

Create A Tier 1 and Beyond Responsibility and Accountability Plan For Accomplishing Diversity and Inclusion Goals.

A very efficient and effective way for corporations to fulfill corporate social responsibility and diversity objectives and to narrow the gap in getting there is to create a program or process whereby the company’s Tier 1 suppliers are encouraged to educate, support, and assist Tier 2 and Tier 3 vendors that the Tier 1 suppliers use and depend on to perform their services and deliver their goods directly to the corporation.

Creating more incentives for Tier 1 suppliers to train and support lower-tier suppliers would generate more brand presence and corporate inclusiveness.

It would also help Tier 1 suppliers become better able to reduce their cost of delivering goods and services to the corporation, which increases the profitability of the corporation and all the suppliers within the various tiers.

Efficient use of Organizations That Can Enhance Diversity Platforms

Attaining the ultimate goal of any company’s diversity program can be enhanced through establishing strategic relationships with organizations that can act as feed lines of information and communication between diverse suppliers seeking opportunities with

corporations and corporations seeking to enhance its database of qualified suppliers who can become certified to do business with them.

Several organizations exist that can assist in this regard. Some have been in existence for a long time but perhaps underutilized such as:

Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC)

[WBENC's](#) mission is to certify women-owned businesses, (WBE's) along with connecting them with corporate members that support the organization and provide real-time business opportunities and resources for women-owned business success.

National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC)

The [NMSDC](#), headquartered in New York City, is comprised of 23 affiliate regional councils across America, all of whom provide minority business certification and business development opportunities.

Its goal has been to provide a direct link between corporate America and minority-owned businesses.

Council for Supplier Diversity

The Council for Supplier Diversity is headquartered in San Diego, California, and is a national organization with its mission to be a gateway for diverse suppliers to expand and increase their bottom line.

The organization accomplishes this goal by creating market share growth for minority, women, veteran disabled businesses, and LGBT businesses through interaction with corporate members of the Council.

United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC)

The [USHCC](#) is the largest networking venue for Hispanic businesses in America. For over a generation, the USHCC has served as the nation's leading Hispanic Business Organization, working to bring more than 4.37 million Hispanic owned businesses to the forefront of the national economic agenda.

U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.

The [U.S. Black Chambers, Inc.](#) (USBC) provides committed visionary leadership and advocacy in the realization of economic empowerment. Through the creation of resources and initiatives, they support African American Chambers of Commerce and business organizations in their work of developing and growing Black enterprises.

National Black Chamber of Commerce

The [National Black Chamber of Commerce](#) is dedicated to economically empowering and sustaining African American communities through entrepreneurship and capitalistic activity within the United States and via interaction with the Black Diaspora.

National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)

The [NGLCC](#) is the exclusive certifying body of LGBT owned businesses. They have local affiliates across the U.S.A.

National Veteran-Owned Business Association (NAVOBA)

[NAVOBA](#) connects corporate American to Certified Veteran Business Enterprises. It provides a direct link for contracting between corporations and VBEs (Veteran Business Enterprises) and Service-Disabled Veteran's Business Enterprises (SDVBE).

U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce (USPAAC)

[USPAACC](#) has a mission to be the gateway to corporate and government contracts for Asian Americans (includes, East, South, and Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander suppliers).

Adopt a B- Corporation Mission Mindset Where Appropriate

An innovative way for corporations to bridge the gap of inclusion for diverse suppliers as well as establishing a fully engaged diverse employee population is to consider and implement some attributes of B-Corporation philosophy and business practice.

In America, a [benefit corporation](#) is a type of for-profit corporate entity, authorized in approximately 35 states and the District of Columbia whose charter includes a positive impact on society, workers, the community, and the environment.

The mindset of this type of corporate entity is not to have profit only as its motive and operation. Rather, the philosophy is to combine all the attributes of doing well for humankind and earning a profit as well.

[B Corporations](#) are changing the face of corporate social responsibility and solving some of the most challenging problems faced by society. Regular corporations could do well incorporating some of the attributes of B Corporations and not only be more effective at reaching goals of diversity but also increasing their bottom lines.

Examples of Progress with Diversity and Inclusion through Corporation Social Responsibility

It would be remissive for this article to fail to show the tremendous strides and progress that several corporations have made in developing and implementing platforms and programs that have helped thousands of minority, women, disabled veterans, and LGBT businesses enter into the mainstream of corporate America.

To those corporations, thanks and appreciation are extended. However, there is still more work to be done and improvements that can be made.

Work within the vineyard of diversity, inclusion, and supplier diversity continues.

[Click on this link](#) to see a listing of the top 50 corporations engaged in inclusion efforts for 2019. The list also includes several others that have honorable mention and are equally deserving of appreciation.

How corporate social responsibility can have an immediate impact on the healing of America's wounds.

The [Harvard Business Review](#) outlines 10 commitments corporations can make and keep to advance racial justice and help heal our land.

A part of those commitments requires transparency. Corporate leadership gives a lot of lip service to social and racial justice and how they are committed to it. However, the record shows they often fail to “walk what they talk.” Action must be taken by giving serious orders from the top down and making sure that the whole organization gets it and that there are dire consequences if goals are not met.

Leadership — Good leaders serve as good models. Leaders can lead by example and provide a safe workplace where all employees feel respected and included.

As it pertains to the current environment, leaders can be open about their lack of knowledge and share their growth and experiences with their workforce. Openness and showing the vulnerable parts of leadership is not a weakness. It is a strength.

When employees, the community, and society see corporate empathy coupled with action a positive change will rush in like the mighty roar of the ocean.

Don't tolerate discrimination within the workplace. Period.

Corporations should review their policies regarding equal employment opportunity and workplace discrimination. Though most employers articulate such policies as a matter of course, it is important to reinforce these policies and remind employees of what is expected of them and to reassure employees who may be feeling vulnerable that equity and inclusion are at top of mind.

Create a culture of tolerance, empathy, and interaction within the workplace

Corporations must educate their employees about prejudice and racism in its various forms. They must also be vigilant to monitor the day to day interactions between employees from different cultures and racial backgrounds.

It's evitable that employees will have confrontations within the workplace with some supporting Black Lives Matter and others who feel that statement itself is racist and will counter with slogans and code words like "Make America Great Again. (MAGA). These potential hotbeds must be cooled as soon as they occur while at the same time fostering a working environment of tolerance, empathy, and equitable interaction.

Community Involvement

Community involvement by corporations is paramount in helping to eradicate racism and to uplift the economic status of black lives and black businesses. Remember the definition and mission of "corporate social responsibility".

Corporations can publicly support communities in the form of donations or activism. Doing so can create a sense of pride among the workforce, and it can also help in attracting future hires that share the principles of the corporate workplace.

Churches should be a target for corporate social relationships within the black community. Churches have always been the foundation and fabric for connecting with the black community and with their businesses.

Often within the black church is where the best leaders have been groomed to enter into society and make a difference for the better. This bastion of potential is a lost cause for most corporations. They don't have a clue.

If they are really serious about community outreach and making a difference to black people, churches should not be overlooked.

Supplier Diversity

Through the corporate supply chain, a huge difference can be made by utilizing black and other minority businesses that are qualified to provide raw materials, equipment, supplies, and support to large corporations.

Moving corporate social responsibility from concept and lip service to action and measuring results will help America's ship sail in the right direction and reach a peaceful shore.

Here's The Message That Should Be Sent



Through the measures outlined in this book, along with the hundreds of thousands of individual Americans and people around the globe that have awakened and are heeding the call to justice, equality, and inclusion racism, discrimination, and separatism will be banished. People of goodwill will not have it any other way.

The question is how long will it take? How will it be accomplished?

To each of these questions, my response is it's up to you and me. You see, its individuals that support the corporations.

Its individuals that buy their goods and services. Without individuals, corporations cannot be sustained.

Individually and collectively, we can make a difference. Do your part to send the message.

Don't shop where racism is supported or tolerated as if it doesn't exist. Don't buy where Blacks, Hispanics, Women, and other disenfranchised persons are slighted or ignored.

Collectively, your efforts and mine can make a difference even in the corporate board room. The next step is up to you. The struggle for equality and opportunity to share in the mainstream of corporate American and to compete on equal footing continues for diverse suppliers.

Often the difference between participation within the abundance of opportunities available within the supply chain of goods and services delivered to corporate America and not is simply the lack of knowledge and information of what is available.

How to qualify for the opportunity and how to gain an introduction to a company or organization that is seeking the goods and services offered by diverse suppliers is still a mystery to thousands of diverse suppliers. This should not be the case.

Our firm solves that problem by bridging the gap between diverse suppliers and the companies seeking to do business with them.

We can assist with introductions, certifications, qualification preparedness, and contract acquisitions, including [federal government contracts](#)

[Contact us](#) and arrange a Free Consultation. We will arrange to speak directly with you and answer your questions to help you be in the best position to be a success in your quest for corporate contract acquisitions.

We can also be contacted at info@landerslaw.com or call us at 508-687-2058

Your comments and questions are welcomed. Please let us know if the information in this article is helpful to you.

Diversity and Inclusion Checklist Using The C.A.M.P. System

I have always been a big believer in systems and processes. They simplify things and make concepts, processes, and results subject to repeating and getting the same results. However, a system is only as good as the information, material, thought process, and intentional efforts that are used to develop the system from the outset.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are no different. If a system is developed for an organization, company, business, or group that is aligned with its mission, vision, and ultimate objectives it should be replicated and not deviated from unless there a better and more effective system or part thereof is demonstrated.

The foundation for any DEI program can be based upon what I've created through what is termed the CAMP system. CAMP is an acronym (C.A.M.P.). Spelled out it stands for Commitment, Action, Measurement, and Proceeding.

Diversity and inclusion are often mentioned in the same sentence because an inclusive organization can't exist without a diverse workforce. And an organization must be inclusive to retain its diverse staff.

It takes a comprehensive effort and continued investment overtime to attract, hire, develop, and retain a diverse workforce while building an inclusive culture.

Here's a brief checklist of the C.A.M.P. system that can be used to create or enhance an existing DEI program. It covers the fundamentals and is not intended to be a comprehensive DEI system.

A particular DEI system for a particular organization or company takes time, study, implementation, and consistent measurement to address the myriad differences that a particular DEI program will go through depending on the type of business, the size, the culture, the industry the business is in, the location, and a host of other things.

However, any DEI program that is viable will have each of these components in some operational level.

Commitment

Get leadership buy-in.

The CEO and other company leaders are the most visible spokespeople for diversity. Leadership support is needed to ensure diversity and inclusion efforts receive the appropriate attention, funding, and monitoring. Leaders also provide daily examples for employees by exhibiting inclusive behaviors, managing their own bias, and supporting employees' best work.

Define diversity and inclusion at your company.

The best diversity programs are tied to a company's business strategy, are aligned with company values, and have achievable goals. It will take some planning and teamwork to analyze the current situation, set a vision for the company's diversity and inclusion (D&I) program, and then break it down into action steps.

Action

Create diversity and inclusion benchmarks.

The initial diversity analysis should include gathering data on your current employee population and comparing it to benchmarks. Look at the diversity among your overall employee population first, then analyze by all the steps in the employee lifecycle, including the candidate pool, hiring, employee performance reviews, promotions, compensation, and turnover.

Examining diversity measures by department and management level will help pinpoint necessary areas for training or help decide where to set more aggressive recruiting goals.

Enlist a diversity advocate.

Most large organizations have a head of diversity or another alternate individual who is accountable for the diversity and inclusion program.

This individual may or may not be from a minority group; the best person for the job has the experience and a deep interest in improving the organization's success through fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce.

A successful diversity advocate will be skilled at building relationships throughout the organization and ensuring accountability on diversity goals.

Measurement

Be transparent about where you are with diversity.

Share your company's data and goals internally. Because the data may need to be gathered from various systems, and it can be difficult to keep track of current diversity benchmarks (since the population is changing faster than 10-year U.S. Census increments).

Consider enlisting expert help; firms like PeopleFluent offer diversity products and consulting which will help ease the burden of data management and analysis. Leaders

are driven by metrics, so having reliable diversity metrics in place and updated regularly in a dashboard will go a long way toward ensuring the success of your D&I program.

Expand your hiring pool.

To ease the stigma of “Affirmative Action hiring,” focus on creating a more diverse hiring pool, and then objectively evaluating candidates from this expanded pool. Post in diversity-oriented job groups, partner with diversity organizations, and connect with diversity-oriented groups at universities.

Also, consider expanding your college recruiting to more diverse schools. Enlist feedback from community groups, employees, churches, etc.

Proceeding

Commit to a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Diversity is a journey, not a place. Improving the representation of diverse groups within a company can take years. Leaders, managers, and staff should be patient and persistent as they seek to create a more diverse and inclusive organization.

Like all good things worth achieving, it’s worth the wait. Commit to the journey, and be inspired by the examples of companies who have reaped the rewards of making diversity and inclusion part of their DNA.

For more on how to recruit for diversity, build an inclusive culture, and manage bias [contact us](#). We can help develop a C.A.M.P. diversity, equity and inclusion program for your company or organization.



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