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The Chief Diversity Officer and Why You Need One

By John Nimesheim, Managing Director, Slayton Search Partners

The C-Suite is getting bigger. Recently, the Wall Street Journal published the article *Firms Hail New Chiefs (of Diversity)*. As it’s fittingly articulated in the WSJ piece, sixty percent of the Fortune 500 has a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) or diversity leadership position. As recently as ten years ago, the thought of a dedicated diversity leadership role did not exist. We continue to see a growing trend in companies turning to diversity to improve the workforce (recruiting & retention), the workplace (company culture & employee morale) and the company’s reputation in the marketplace. And as it turns out, this is a good thing for business and the bottom line.

According to Rick Slayton, CEO of Slayton Search Partners, “While some companies undertake diversity initiatives to drive increased employee involvement or better their ability to attract talent, there is almost certainly a profitability motive as well. Major corporations recognize that their customer base is rapidly changing, especially with the major population increase of the Spanish-speaking community. The companies must be able to understand and address their customer’s needs.”

Companies have finally realized that their core customers are changing and diversity initiatives can serve to:

1. **Lower Employee Turnover** Turnover is a drag on business. When there is a poor perception of opportunity (i.e. the glass ceiling), minorities and women will leave the company to pursue careers where they can flourish. They may even be drawn to the other company’s own diversity leadership or diversity initiatives. Furthermore, distributing the job functions of the exiting employee puts strain on the shoulders of other employees within the company, which results in more employees leaving.

2. **Boost Employee Morale & Stimulate Engagement** CDOs play a key leadership role in recruiting, mentoring, and maintaining this diversity and inclusion within the company. By having an effective diversity and inclusion program, companies will see morale boosted by an enhanced culture and less turnover. And vice versa, improved morale leads to less turnover and strain on employees.

3. **Improve the Company’s Brand and Ultimately the Bottom Line** Minority employees are taking on increased leadership positions and playing a critical role in teaching and training new employees—a very valuable aspect to the overall sustainability of any company. All companies invest large sums of time and money to train their employees. As employees gain more experience, they are given more responsibilities and rise up the ranks to middle management. If minority and women employees are leaving because they perceive this road to be a dead end, the cost to recruit and train a suitable replacement can be substantial.

4. **The Consequence of NOT Having Diversity Leadership** What happens when a company is not fully embracing the benefits of a diverse workforce? Companies will likely experience higher turnover rates (in comparison to companies with Chiefs of Diversity) in women and minority employees who leave their respective company when they see no opportunity for advancement. Unfortunately, many companies hire diverse candidates for the wrong reasons. Typically, the human resources team is tasked with hiring people from diverse backgrounds, but they aren’t responsible or accountable to lead diversity and embed it into the culture of the organization.

Finding the right CDO

As is the case with any C-Level search, finding the right CDO is likely to be the difference between a successful diversity program and a poorly designed one. Start by looking at your current employee talent pool and the makeup of your customer base. What business or strategic goals will be impacted by hiring the right CDO?

By hiring a Chief Diversity Officer, you are creating a position and an environment where diversity is recognized as a key driver in the long-term success of the business like any other business-critical decision. Simply having a diverse workforce is not enough; companies need to embrace and embed diversity that starts with finding the best diversity leader.
Why the Whole Self Is Best
Several years ago, I was lucky to have a business trip that took place at a resort in Puerto Rico. Poor me, right? Nope. It was definitely not rough.

While I did enjoy the work and my trip, one of the most valuable things I learned during that experience was from a coworker. When introducing himself to our client, he gave his work credentials and mentioned the accolades he’d received. And then went on to talk about his areas of passion, which include cooking, art, and traveling with his wife. He explained that only by bringing our entire selves to everything we do can we be our most authentic and successful selves, both individually and in partnership with others. This was mind-blowing for me.

In my previous positions at other companies, personal and work did not only not collide, mixing the two was discouraged. At work, we were to speak about ourselves based on our skills and accomplishments to engender trust and confidence in our coworkers and clients. And while I did have friends in my previous workplaces, I didn’t know the “whole selves” of the people I worked with every day, nor did I ever become fast friends with clients like I do now.

Today, I thoughtfully consider how all my experiences and passions apply to what I do at work, not just my professional experience. It’s refreshing to be encouraged to bring our whole selves to everything we do. This was mind-blowing for me.

Diversity and Inclusion Includes Embracing Your Employees’ Authentic Selves
What does this have to do with diversity and inclusion in the workplace? When our colleagues don’t feel safe, or fear retribution, or don’t feel heard, or don’t feel valued, they can’t bring their whole and authentic selves to work. It can even be a struggle to bring their “work” selves, let alone their “personal” selves; and we all lose.

When people don’t share all of themselves, they can’t be wholly embraced, their colleagues and teammates aren’t getting the full value they can bring to the work they do, and organizations aren’t achieving full value for compensation. Is that the employee’s fault? Absolutely not. Much can be said about the systems in place that have resulted in outcomes such as this, but much can also be done to change and fix them.

How Does Your Organization Embrace Your Employees’ Whole Selves?
Wouldn’t it be amazing if all employees felt safe, included, valued, and embraced? If all employees worked together to achieve amazing outcomes? If all employees could bring their whole and authentic selves to their job every day?

If your organization isn’t achieving its full potential in regards to diversity and inclusion, you’re not committed to staying stuck forever. There are several things your leaders can do to help ensure people feel comfortable in showcasing their true selves within your hallways. Here are a few ways to emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion today:

1. Conduct Implicit Bias and Thoughtful Inclusion Education. The saying goes—Know Better, Do Better. Some people just haven’t been in a situation to learn what biases they have or how they impact those around them. And then other employees do know and don’t care. If a company focuses on this education, employees can see that the company is invested in making an inclusive workplace and believe in helping employees be better versions of themselves. For the employees who don’t care, this education may provide that inflection point to realize it might be time to move on. Tackling implicit bias and inclusion is a journey, but one that must start sometime.

2. Review Hiring Programs. Consider how you advertise your positions and the graphics used to solicit candidates. Are your descriptions skewed to one employee group over another? Do you highlight your Implicit Bias and Thoughtful Inclusion programs? Do you talk about a culture of family and comradery? o you include employee stories that encourage authenticity from new hires?

3. Formally Create Sponsorship. Many companies onboard new employees with at least manager touchpoints. Some companies add in a peer coach, and still others also consider a “sponsor.” The sponsor role might be someone who has similar personal history, or characteristics that facilitate an employee’s ability to have true conversations. The sponsor has the “employee’s back” and in working together, the employee’s success can be amplified. A manager is not always that person; nor is a coach. Making sure the employee has full support for ultimate success is incredibly important and a sponsor can make that happen.

4. Initiate Employee Resource Groups. Employees tend to group based on similar experiences, similarities in backgrounds, similar interests, etc. Why not formalize employee resource groups to show company support and to demonstrate that these groups are being heard? Employee resource groups could be focused on the Black experience or LGBTQ+ issues in the workplace, for example. These groups allow safe places for the primary group and their allies to rally and support each other, and for the company to listen and advocate for their employees.

The time is now to make diversity and inclusion in the workplace a priority. If you can help your people feel confident in sharing their whole selves at work, your business is sure to reap the benefits as teams support each other in new ways, new ideas and innovations are surfaced, and your organization as a whole begins to hum with a new sense of community and engagement. Let’s work together to be our whole selves every day.
Want to Have a Diverse and Inclusive Leadership Team? Try These Three Steps

By Nicholas Cianciola, Partner, Shields Meneley Partners, and Elizabeth Olson, Principal, Shields Meneley Partners

When it comes to diversity and inclusion in the C-Suite it is a national embarrassment where the lack of representation has reached epidemic proportions. According to the latest data for Fortune 500 companies there are only 31 female chief executive officers and of this group only two are women of color. What’s more, there is not a single African-American woman CEO. Right now, there are only four African-American men in the top leadership spot and by the end of this year that number will most likely fall to only three when Ken Chenaultretires from American Express. As of January 2016, there were only nine Hispanic CEOs.

There are a number of moral and ethical reasons to have a more diverse leadership team, of course, but there are also true, long-term business drivers that positively impact earnings. As a recent Harvard Business Review study tells us, when corporate leadership, including the CEO, board and other C-Suite positions, increases to only a 30 percent female share, there is a one percent rise in net margin, which translates into a whopping 15 percent increase in profitability.

We recommend three impactful and effective steps leadership teams should take to foster a healthy diverse and inclusive culture.

1. Successful Succession

There is no quick fix when it comes to ensuring a truly robust, diverse, and inclusive team built to lead in the future. CEOs need to commit themselves and their management teams to a long-term plan that includes bringing in new hires from outside the company who are identified as real leaders and groomed as such. No “token hires” here.

Another important part of this is for an executive assessment program to be instituted at the time of hire with continual implementation because this will help to match candidates with company cultural fit. One of the most impactful payoffs to executing this strategy is that employees are far more likely to stay with their employers rather than move to another company because they know they are valued. They sense they are being groomed for future leadership positions because current management sees their potential. As a result, these talented employees will more likely stay onboard.

2. Search Firm Collaboration

When CEOs and CHROs collaborate with executive search firms to build a pipeline of talented, diverse candidates, great results arise. That’s because these third parties become truly part of the solution. A successful candidate search starts at the spec level, so CEOs and CHROs need to partner with their vendors at the very nascent stages of the search process to set accurate qualifications that expand the potential applicants and outline expectations that a certain number of diverse candidates will be included in the talent pool. This does not mean a diverse hire will be made for every opening, but at the very least it ensures there will be a nice variety of candidates from which to choose. To be sure, of the entire group of potential hires, it is the best candidate who will earn the job offer.

3. Create a Coaching Plan

When it comes to hiring, succession planning and mentoring, there are a lot of hidden biases that majority leaders, both male and female usually just do not see. The good news is coaching can help to combat these covert tendencies if deemed a developmental need for the organization. Coaching benefits current executives as well as new hires into an organization because it facilities a level of introspection and an opportunity to take cognitive and very real steps toward a more egalitarian culture. Leadership assessment tools are also effective in vetting potential employees, evaluating management competencies, and selecting likely leaders for development.

Statistically, we know the situation at the C-Suite and the surrounding levels is moving too slowly, but the good news is that leadership today has the opportunity to seek out and leverage the power of a very talented group diverse, high-performing employees which, as outlined, is a true win-win for all. •
One of Allstate’s core values is that of inclusive diversity. Cultivating a diverse workforce and fostering an inclusive environment is table stakes in our ability to be a leader in business and for the communities we serve. The ability to attract, train and retain top talent, rich in diverse perspectives and committed to the company’s shared purpose and values is critical to our success now and in the future.

Allstate’s Enterprise Diversity Leadership Council (EDLC) is one example of how Allstate is leading in this space. The EDLC is chaired by our CEO, Thomas Wilson and led by a group of officers and directors from across the company charged with being a catalyst for inclusive diversity at Allstate. In 2015, the EDLC and the Inclusive Diversity team were challenged by Wilson to help Allstate find even greater ways to live into our core value of inclusive diversity. When confronted with this challenge, the group analyzed many potential options and concluded there was a need to improve the visible leadership commitment to inclusive diversity throughout the organization. This effort translated into having every business area establish specific inclusive diversity commitments (IDC). These commitments were based on unique business needs and designed to increase accountability for improving the diverse pipeline of talent and to build more inclusive leaders. The EDLC, HR Business Partners and the Inclusive Diversity team consulted with every business unit to develop specific commitments. Using data pinpointed to each area, the business units set custom goals and action items, including hiring to fill diversity gaps and offering development opportunities like mentoring programs.

Harriet Harty, CHRO, shared, “It was critical that our business units were equipped to take ownership for their IDCs, but also that we fostered a collaborative environment for them to engage. It’s exciting to see the creativity and engagement that’s taken flight since.”

The program, now in its third year, continues to expand and senior leadership continues to raise the bar each year. Harty continued, “The inclusive diversity commitments have become woven into the fabric of how we do business at Allstate.” To ensure transparency and accountability, the IDCs are evaluated quarterly and in 2017 the commitments were integrated into the CEO Talent Review process. In addition, the EDLC continues to be a champion for awareness, integration and accountability.

As the IDCs mature, we’ve seen more purposeful efforts around the development of our diverse workforce, including execution on rigorous development plans and providing a variety of new opportunities for growth. We’ve also seen best practices emerge that include stronger integration and communication of IDCs along-side other business priorities; assigning officer sponsors to each individual commitment (most parts of the business have 3 IDCs) and engaging Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) around recruitment, retention and advancement. The IDCs have also inspired other programs such as the “Power of 5” sponsorship program which pairs women with leaders throughout the organization to help enhance their skills and careers.

“Allstate embraces inclusive diversity and has made it central to our culture and the way we do business,” said Christy Harris, vice president, Benefits, Inclusive Diversity and Talent Acquisition. “At year-end 2017, 56 percent of employees and 45 percent of managers at Allstate were women. We are committed to creating an environment where people from different backgrounds are provided every opportunity to succeed in our workplace, all the while contributing their voices and soaring to new heights at every stage of their career.”
One Company’s Path to Diversity

By Lilla Turner, Manager, Center for Diversity & Inclusion, Health Care Service Corporation

Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC) truly believes in the importance of showing respect toward one another, embracing our differences and valuing our unique backgrounds. Our journey of diversity and inclusion (D&I) progresses everyday as we strive to build trust and challenge each other to move outside our comfort zones. Creating and maintaining an environment where our employees are confident and bring their true authentic selves into the workplace each day is engrained in our culture.

We believe that when there are different perspectives around the table, you increase the opportunity for innovative ideas, and that can lead to better business results; this is why we know we must attract the best and brightest talent from all backgrounds and cultures. HCSC’s Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and Talent Acquisition team work together to create recruitment strategies for target demographics that include people of color, people with disabilities and veterans. CDI and Talent Acquisition aim to increase awareness of HCSC employment opportunities within these communities. To do this, they partner with non-profit organizations, student organizations and other community partners to maximize outreach.

HCSC fosters strong learning and development programs internally, to assist our employees in understanding the value of a diverse and inclusive culture. This year, CDI established an ongoing program entitled CDI Unleashed. This quarterly program offers an opportunity for employees to engage in dialogue that takes a deeper dive into many of the traditional and non-traditional topics of D&I. Our first program of 2018 featured speakers who provided a guided conversation around the impact that racial and social justice issues have on a company’s talent base, customers, clients and vendors and why those issues are relevant.

Every year, all HCSC employees are required to undergo mandatory diversity and inclusion education. In these specially designed courses, we take the opportunity to build on previous learnings and address topics that help develop cultural competence and cultural agility. One such offering is the Executive Cohort that is assigned to all leaders at the vice president and above levels. A recent cohort explored the impact of unconscious bias on a high performing culture. Participants were assigned pre-work that served as a basis for discussion during the session, where they learned characteristics of unconscious bias and its effect on their roles as leaders in the organization. Attendees left the cohort with a greater understanding of and practical steps for addressing hidden biases.

The CDI also developed a set of Meetings in a Box for employees to use to help address challenges such as unconscious bias, generational differences in the workplace and other common diversity and inclusion topics. The Meetings in a Box modules feature pre-packaged content with slides, videos and a facilitator guide. They empower leaders to guide their teams through thought-provoking conversations around D&I to gain a deeper understanding of the topic at hand and hear the different perspectives of their colleagues.

The aforementioned strategic activities, along with many others, help us ensure a sustainable future where we better understand our members and serve our communities. As a diverse and united front, we can connect to our customers, learn and grow as individuals and positively impact our business objectives.
Everybody is talking about diversity and inclusion these days, it seems. This is a wonderful thing. Finally, the business community and society have realized that building inclusive, vibrant, and welcoming businesses means building successful businesses. More and more companies are genuinely excited to explore ways to foster more diversity and inclusion.

Here’s the issue: too many companies don’t know how to put this into practice. There’s energy, positive emotion and desire to make progress, but there’s not a plan. There is no infrastructure in place.

You can’t wave a wand and have a diverse and inclusive business. You have to thoughtfully build the infrastructure to support this type of endeavor. It’s like a foundation for a house. You can’t just start throwing up walls and expect it to stand.

Don’t despair, though, because what we are finding is that there are techniques to build an infrastructure for these programs, methodologies and activities in your business. You can borrow best practices from other businesses, other fields, and adapt them for your business. I call them “building blocks,” because they are transferable and fundamental.

In this article, I’ll share three techniques that you can put in play today at your business. I call them “building blocks,” because they are transferable and fundamental. You can borrow best practices from other businesses, other fields, and adapt them for your business.

Stacking the Deck
One building block is called “Stacking the Deck,” which means setting yourself up to be dealt a favorable hand. In cards, a “stacked” deck gives one player an advantage. In this example, you are building the advantage for yourself by doing some extra work on the front end to create a situation that lends itself to more diversity and inclusion. A good example is in the hiring process.

In a normal situation, the hiring manager is dying for the day when they don’t have a job; now to create a better environment. I always say that everyone who works in this space is dying for the day when they don’t have a job; until then, let’s get back to work.

Don’t despair, though, because what we are finding is that there are techniques to build an infrastructure for these programs, methodologies and activities in your business. You can borrow best practices from other businesses, other fields, and adapt them for your business. I call them “building blocks,” because they are transferable and fundamental.

Policies Not Promises
Organizations are well intentioned these days, but when it comes time to put money where mouths are, too many organizations are reluctant to draw a line. A former attorney I worked with would say, “The problem with policies is that you have to stick to them.”

This is not a problem, this is the opportunity. Creating some specific policies, being public about them, and then forcing yourself and your company to stick to them will provide great value. It is a profound statement about where you are, and it will give your employees cover as they pursue their work.

Some examples of policies might be using inclusion riders in all contracts, thereby forcing your partners to achieve a certain level of diversity, or banning meetings or (especially) panel discussions that are not reflective of the populations you serve (we called this “no manels” at 1871). Another option is to offer a discount to customers who meet certain standards, such as 10 percent off if your company’s employee pool is inclusive.

Pictures are More Important than Ever
Pictures are a really valuable tool these days. They are ubiquitous, a statement of values, and they are sitting there waiting to be employed more proactively. A three-part process can help you leverage pictures quickly and efficiently.

First, do an audit of the pictures that are on display at your company, on your website, on your social media pages, etc. Do these pictures reflect your customers? Do these photographs tell the story you want to tell about your company?

Second, be intentional about creating additional opportunities to get photographs into your business stream. Company photos, photos of different individuals in your company performing work and photos of customers are all very powerful tools. Too many companies completely neglect, say, the opportunity to capture the awesomeness of their employees pursuing their business. Why?

Finally, be aspirational. Your pictures can actually be more diverse and inclusive than your company is. This will set a standard—and you can continue to work to achieve the level of inclusiveness that your images represent. In the process, you’ll be surrounded by the vision of the environment you are building, which becomes a virtuous circle.

These are a few techniques that you can try now to create a better environment. I always say that everyone who works in this space is dying for the day when they don’t have a job; until then, let’s get back to work.
Hyatt’s Evidence-Based Practice Journey Sets the Stage for Workforce 2025

By Tyronne Stoudemire, Vice President of Global Inclusion & Diversity, & Audrey Williams-Lee, Vice President, Corporate Human Resources & Global Philanthropy
In 2016, we set out to ensure diversity efforts more clearly aligned with our purpose as a company, which is to care for people so they can be their best. One of the first steps focused on identifying ways we bring our purpose to life across the organization and incorporating diversity touchpoints into communications and programming. To ensure we were supporting inclusive mindsets and experiences for our workforce, we developed specific diversity priorities and implemented them into our overall strategic priorities for the organization. This process brought us to the idea of Workforce 2025, which is the guiding principle for how we are developing our future workforce. With Workforce 2025 as the foundation, global teams are able to evaluate current talent flows and gain a line of sight into requirements for our future workforce. The creation of Workforce 2025 also invited the opportunity to conduct research on building an inclusive and diverse workforce, which we completed through Evidence-Based Practice.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE & FINDINGS

As the first step in the journey to Workforce 2025, we leveraged Evidence-Based Practice (EBP). Although not a new concept, EBP, in terms of workforce development, is an approach we took to increase the diversity of our workforce and foster an inclusive environment where colleagues feel valued, respected and supported each day.

EBP involves three basic components: (1) credible and relevant research/evidence of best practice workforce processes, approach and strategy; (2) subject matter expertise to assess an organization against research to identify opportunities and barriers to future workforce development; and (3) participant choice in terms of their talents, aptitudes, career goals and need for self-sufficiency.

In 2016, we began working with Mercer’s data-based consulting practice on an EBP journey that aimed to create a workforce necessary for future business success. This included analysis of our organization’s culture and values, colleague surveys, leadership interviews and a variety of focus groups. Along with the detailed analysis from Mercer’s proprietary Internal Labor Market (ILM) Analysis®, we looked...
at colleague perspectives on interests, values and needs. We also sought out industry-wide best practices. Once all of the findings from these inputs were combined, we were able to identify new opportunities within workforce talent areas for engaging, selecting and retaining top performers.

Rooted in learnings from our EBP journey and colleague input, we identified a number of opportunities to drive greater impact for our Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) efforts across the organization. We have established a number of priorities based on those areas of opportunity to build on I&D efforts, including:

- Evaluating all aspects of the flow of talent into and out of the organization to attract and retain top performers that help to create a culture of inclusion
- Ensuring colleagues globally are receiving I&D communications and understanding how these tactics contribute to positive impacts across the organization
- Increasing talent pipeline development and ensuring diverse groups are represented in our workforce across corporate offices and worldwide hotels

HYATT’S ACTIONS SPEAK TO ADVANCEMENT IN HR PRACTICES

Armed with learnings from the Mercer analysis, our senior leadership team, along with the Inclusion & Diversity team, is actively working to integrate I&D practices, build awareness and commitment to inclusive practices, and take consistent action to improve the quality, diversity and depth of our future leaders.

The increasing amount of research focused on the value of diversity and belonging in organizations is encouraging corporate leaders to raise the level of commitment of their staff. At Hyatt, we believe our leadership’s inclusive mindset enables us to focus on the well-being of colleagues and develop new ways of attracting, hiring, and promoting candidates in order to create positive impact.

After identifying our strategic priorities of attracting and retaining top performers, ensuring I&D communications reach our global audience, and increasing and developing the talent pipeline for diverse groups, we mapped out a variety of programs to extend these priorities to our colleagues’ day-to-day. The following actions, programs and partnerships in 2017 and 2018 help to create a culture of inclusion.

- **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
  To bring our inclusive mindset to communities where we live and work, we established community non-profit partnerships to address the gaps in education and bring more opportunity to youth. As part of these partnerships, which include colleague participation through volunteer time, community youth receive training and support to help them prepare for future employment.

- **DIVERSITY BUSINESS RESOURCE GROUPS (DBRG)**
  These groups promote diversity and inclusion efforts to colleagues, and provide professional development opportunities, mentoring and networking. Each DBRG is sponsored by an Executive Business Sponsor, who provides access to, and insight of, our leadership team.

- **INTEGRATING I&D INTO HR PRACTICES**
  Conducting talent reviews with a lens of diversity and leveraging diverse talent slates in our recruiting processes to increase our need for innovative mindsets and diversity of thought leaders.

- **LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT & SUPPORT**
  Created a Global Inclusion Council to ensure that Hyatt’s purpose and strategic priorities are thoroughly embedded in I&D tactics and increase the visibility of I&D. Comprised of senior executives, colleagues representing all organizational functions, the CEO and global vice president of Inclusion & Diversity, this group is responsible for encouraging the actions and behaviors required to improve the culture of inclusion.

- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**
  A number of colleagues have attended Women ON Point, an executive leadership summit for professional development and networking designed and delivered exclusively for and by top-performing women. We also launched an Emerging Leader program to accelerate the development of high potential talent. The program focuses on multiple aspects of diversity—gender, racial, generational.

We know that learning trends have evolved beyond the idea of passing a test, and more toward the reflection and application of knowledge gained. With that line of thinking, we view education initiatives and formal programs as having two components spanning short-term retention of knowledge as well as long-term ability to apply that knowledge.

At the end of each year, we aim to measure our initiatives in three ways: (1) various assessments that gauge the movement over year to year of cross-cultural competence; (2) social ownership, meaning the way colleagues are talking the talk, walking the walk, and sharing information with others; and (3) continuing to collect data using the EBP data measure and assessing growth according to our goals.

With our purpose to care for people so they can be their best, it’s no wonder the path toward inclusion has ignited with a focus on our colleagues. We maintain the understanding that diverse colleagues operating at their best have the ability to outperform the competition and enhance customer service experiences. It has become a cultural mindset that every colleague brings their best self to work each day so that they perform at their best, provide better care for others and help move the needle on goals for Workforce 2025.
One of the most valued member benefits are the free interest group programs offered to all HRMAC members. Interest groups are in-person learning programs that represent the key functional areas of HR; two geographic groups; a group geared for young professionals; and a group for colleagues in transition or seeking career development. These programs deliver the latest thought leadership on all aspects of HR, and many programs offer accreditation. Below are recaps of a few of the most popular interest group meetings that took place this past quarter.

International Interest Group Meeting, 01.18.18
Cyber Security & Data Privacy

HRMAC’s International Interest Group hosted a lively panel discussion on Cyber Security & Data Privacy on January 18. The panelists spanned several Chief Security Officers, a Chief Technology and Innovation Officer as well as a Global Mobility Consultant of Global Risks who shared a wealth of knowledge, insight and personal experiences.

The discussion began with the question—What exactly is at risk and why there is a need for data security today. The answer is—protecting the pillars of a business, its people, process and technology. Security needs to be addressed on each level. Cyber Security is crucial in maintaining data during its lifecycle from creation to storage, use and eventually when/how it’s destroyed.

In conclusion this topic has critical impact on Human Resources being one of the departments within each organization that holds the key to a large amount of sensitive data. Because of this it’s of the utmost importance to raise the level of mindfulness when working with sensitive data as well as be aware of emerging privacy laws and be prepared by having a crisis management plan in place.

Submitted by Sue Bornhorst, Orion Mobility

Young HR Leaders Interest Group, 02.13.18
Influencing with Limited Authority Building Influence Early in your Career

Building influence with limited authority can be difficult early in a career without the proper guidance and resources. The importance of developing an influential position cannot be understated, but maintaining that influence while in a junior position can be very difficult. At the most recent HRMAC Young HR Leaders Interest Group, a pair of senior and junior panelists from US Cellular and American Colleague of Surgeons shared their stories of building influence and left some words of wisdom for young HR professionals.

Ruby Acevedo—Lead Organizational Effectiveness Program Specialist at US Cellular—stated the importance of gaining trust and finding common purpose in building influence and reputation as a young professional. Especially as a young professional new to the HR field, Acevedo reinforced the importance in acknowledging mistakes and treating every opportunity as a learning experience. Michelle McGovern—Director of HR and Operations at American Colleague of Surgeons—explained that juniors need to understand their emotional intelligence and utilize their youthful, positive psychology to influence others.

The senior panelists explained that just as juniors must work to build influence in the workplace, successful leaders must also provide the guidance to ensure that juniors mature to be strong successors. “A great leader works with their team to acknowledge and release the blind spots to help self-correct,” said Deirdre Drake, CHRO at US Cellular.

“Being a leader is not achievable overnight but a craft that takes years to develop,” said Drake. Young HR leaders can continue to strengthen their influence through the following tips from McGovern:

1. **Establish a vision.** Be willing to look beyond for the team and ensure a successful future lies ahead. Be proactive to situations by seeing ahead, forecasting possible obstacles your team may face, and learning what makes the company work.

2. **Give time.** To develop the relationships and connections, you must give the time to team members individually. Offer time to show that you are willing to sacrifice your own time to benefit someone else’s.

3. **Create connections.** Not only is it important to develop and maintain your connections, but be willing to give the team connections. Connections will provide answers and resources to allow someone to learn more than the answer they were looking for.

4. **Give and receive trust.** Trust is a common theme throughout the panel. To be influential, you must initially gain the trust from team members and leaders.

5. **Create successors.** To be a great leader, you must nourish members to be the next successors for the team. Therefore if the leader were to leave, the team would still be successful.

Submitted by Serena Lim—HR Technology Technical Support Specialist, Health Care Service Corporation
Many organizations solicit data from employees through surveys, meetings, and informal discussions. How does your organization capitalize on the information it gathers?

How have you tied HR metrics to the organization’s strategic goals?

Have you transformed employee feedback into concrete actions from your C-Suite? Tell us how!

John Acardo
Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
North Central College

How is D&I represented on your organization’s strategic roadmap? Is it included in your vision, mission or values? If so, how?

Diversity, Inclusion, and a focus on developing a curious, purposeful and engaged global community is the heart of North Central’s mission. Included in our mission, vision, values, and in our strategic plan—fostering diversity, inclusion, and global engagement is how we develop the intellectual, physical, and spiritual human being.

North Central College engages our faculty and staff to develop programs which support diversity, inclusion, and promote an environment free from discrimination. We challenge our faculty and staff to model civil dialogue on social issues which fosters a collegial exchange of ideas. These elements are displayed in the classroom and programs we present to our students, including a robust study abroad program throughout the year.

As part of our roadmap, training and dialogue is an essential component of enhancing diversity and inclusion at the College. North Central:

- Has developed training so that our hiring teams to understand unconscious bias and the impact of culture on a candidate when interviewing.
- Is developing ongoing faculty and staff development programs and speaker series where local and national presenters will focus on topics which will address fostering diversity, inclusion and global engagement.
- Implementing new recognition opportunities to celebrate those whose work contributes to supporting and advancing diversity on campus.
- Including in our engagement surveys a component that measures key components of our diversity and inclusion efforts and their effectiveness.

What are the main accountabilities and impact of having a CDO to the organization?

Between Human Resources and our Title IX and EEO offices, leadership is recommending that within five years, the College develop a Chief Diversity Office whose responsibilities include:

- Measuring the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion efforts. This includes continuously evaluating the metrics we use to monitor our progress and achievements at enhancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- Increase an emphasis on diversity and inclusion programming for students, faculty and staff which promote improved engagement and foster an inclusive work environment.
- Assist leadership’s efforts in developing high functioning, cross functional teams of faculty and staff which foster greater inclusion, social connections, agility, and demonstrate behaviors which express openness.

What are problems, frustrations, and lessons learned have you encountered in implementing your D&I initiatives?

As we develop more programs and initiatives focused on enhancing diversity and inclusion, one element which any person charged with these programs must take into account is that diversity means something different to everyone. Developing programs which focus on positive exchanges of ideas and dialogue have been critical to early successes at North Central College.
Recognize an Innovative Team with the New HRMAC Award

HRMAC, in conjunction with the Awards and Recognition Committee, is proud to announce the brand-new Extraordinary Team Award to recognize a team that has taken ordinary initiatives and turned them into the extraordinary!

The Extraordinary Team Award acknowledges that there is more than one person who contributes to a successful HR initiative, and the efforts of everyone involved make a significant impact on the business of the organization. While the previous HRMAC Awards of Excellence, Leader of the Year and Volunteer of the Year, recognized the strength of individuals, this award acknowledges the strength that can come out of a group working together.

Nominations for the Extraordinary Team Award are now open. Criteria for the nominated team are as follows:

- The nominated team must be from a HRMAC member organization.
- The nominated team must consist of at least two individuals, one of which is an HR practitioner (cross functional projects are highly encouraged).
- The nominated team demonstrates successful HR strategy to drive superior business performance in their organization.
- The nominated team displays the highest of standards in professional ethics.
- The nominated team must have a generally recognized body of work, not limited to a single year.

The Extraordinary Team Award winner will be announced at SUMMIT 2018. The deadline to submit a nomination is June 30. Learn more by visiting the HRMAC website.
In the Future...

As the new HRMAC Board of Directors takes office in July, they are focused on three priorities and a number of initiatives to grow the impact of HR leadership in the Chicagoland area: expanding the community of HR professionals in HRMAC by growing the membership; evolving HRMAC products and programs through innovative formats to enhance the delivery of emerging HR topics; and strengthening the community of sponsors who support efforts to build a stronger HR profession. The launch of a new logo is just one of several initiatives to refresh HRMAC. This fall, a redesigned website and digital HR Leader content hub will be launched in addition to a new SUMMIT 2018 mobile app. These initiatives will improve the member digital experience and pave the way for other initiatives to leverage technology to connect the HRMAC community.

If you have questions about any of these ongoing efforts, please reach out to hrmac@hrmac.org.

The new board's three priorities:

- growing membership
- evolving products and programs
- strengthening and expanding the community

In the past year, under the leadership of the Board, HRMAC has accomplished a number of goals guided by a strategic plan that sets the course for the future. Thank you for your continued loyalty.

The future is bright!