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DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Authentic relationships build a diverse culture

In IBJ's Thought Leadership roundtable, leaders at Central Indiana Community Foundation, Cummins Inc., Kheprw Institute, and Women's Fund of Central Indiana discuss the deep commitment necessary to move the needle on workforce and societal change.

Q: What can organizations gain from committing to a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture and business model?

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: The business case for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion has never been more compelling. DEI contributes to stronger economies and thriving communities. At Cummins, we

realize diversity and inclusion are opportunities for advantage. It allows us to attract and retain a global workforce and be successful in our business. The research supports the business model as well. As McKinsey & Co. noted in its May 2020 report, Diversity Wins, "companies in the top quartile of gender and ethnic and cultural diversity on executive teams were 25



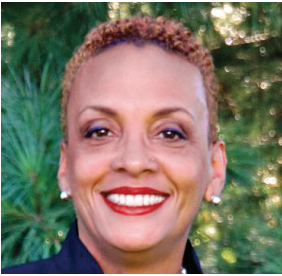
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percent and 36 percent, respectively, more likely to experience above-average profitability than peer companies in the fourth quartile."

With a globally integrated DEI vision and global DEI strategy, we are best positioned to fully leverage a diverse workforce reflective of the communities where companies like ours operate. This facilitates our ability to solve problems and innovate for our customers.

TAVONNA HARRIS ASKEW: We at Women's Fund know that when a woman is successful, her community is strengthened. This applies in all communities—especially communities of color where disparities exist at alarming rates. There is so much untapped strength and knowledge among communities of color and other marginalized people. When organizations create environments where ALL can contribute their gifts without barriers, the sky is the limit to what we can achieve together.

"The business case for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion has never been more compelling."

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE

PAM ROSS: In the simplest terms, organizations that embrace DEI will experience relevant growth and meaningful transformation. But DEI has to be more than just a buzzword and checking the box. Both data and morality have shown us that committing to a diverse, equitable and inclusive culture and business model is imperative for our organization

and our community. From a business perspective, committing to a focus on DEI enhances thought leadership and increases perspective, therefore helping to improve our work in effectively supporting the community. From a cultural perspective, DEI efforts create space to truly do the work necessary. Organizations move at the speed of their culture. There is no movement in this work without authentic relationships that honor the different viewpoints and gifts we all bring to the table.

Q: What are your organization's primary goals regarding DEI, and how do you know you are reaching them?

TAVONNA HARRIS ASKEW: Our goals are to ensure women and girls in our community have options and opportunities to reach their full potential. To best guarantee that our strategies are centered in equity. Our advisory board and committees are all made up of at least 50% women of

color and co-chaired by at least one woman of color. We understand that diverse representation cannot consist of just one or two voices at the table.

PAM ROSS: Our primary goals are really to change systems and empower people. Racist systems perpetuated inequities and disparities that continued to impact our community for too long. At the



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same time, we are working alongside the community to help ensure that resident power, gifts and talents are no longer overlooked and dismissed. Our strategic plan was created to help guide us while we learn how to support the grassroots anti-racist movement and interrupt and replace systems that have unfairly held people back. Our hope is to make this the most inclusive community in the United States.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: Again, we believe a globally integrated DEI vision and enhanced global DEI strategy are necessary to attracting, retaining and fully leveraging a diverse workforce reflective of the communities in which we operate and facilitating our ability to innovate, to win in the global marketplace and create sustainable success. We are committed to fostering an environment that embraces differences, where every employee believes they can reach their full potential because they experience a truly diverse, accessible, equitable and inclusive environment.

We have seven focus areas: Leadership Accountability; Recruitment, Retention, Development and Advancement (Employee Life Cycle); Benefits, Work Arrangements and Compensation (Compensation & Benefits); Learning and Education Community; Government and Social Responsibility (Civic Engagement); Assessment, Measurement and Research (Measurement); and Communications.

Q: What is the biggest challenge your organization has faced regarding DEI and what did you learn from it?

PAM ROSS: Sharing one's truth and allowing vulnerability to be a constant is a challenge. Most of us do not like being uncomfortable in any circumstance. The discussion of race and racism at work is a challenge without a blueprint. Therefore, risks are taken for the sake of authenticity and true change. We learned to navigate the challenges with respect and honoring lived experiences.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: We aspire to an equitable and accessible workforce at every level that is representative of the communities in which we operate around the world. We know we have significant work to do to achieve our aspirational goals for women globally, Black and Latinx in the U.S., and higher representation of veterans and people with disabilities.

We recognize the essential role leadership has in delivering sustainable success. So, leadership

accountability is now at the helm of our strategic framework. Leaders are responsible for advancing the vision, setting goals, achieving results, coaching, developing and being role models. Our Cummins Leadership Culture and Behaviors are fundamental to enabling an inclusive environment. We reward inclusive behavior formally and informally and our progress is now measured and reported internally and externally.

Q: How can organizations that don't have dedicated DEI staff or initiatives start their own DEI movement?

TAVONNA HARRIS ASKEW: The organization's leadership, from the executive team to the board, needs to own the commitment and begin the work. It starts with learning and truly listening to diverse voices. If you want to better serve Black women, you need to hear directly from Black women what it is they need. The same is true for the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, people of color, or anyone else. Know that one voice does not represent an entire community, identity, or race.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: Every organization can do what Cummins has done, which includes conducting extensive research and benchmarking to develop a clear vision, strategy and focus areas that are actionable and measurable. Organizations like ours are willing to share and collaborate to help other companies, community organizations and schools put in place goals, strategies and tactics to improve their DEI efforts and outcomes. If there is a desire to improve DEI, there are ample opportunities to begin making progress.

PAM ROSS: One of the first steps you can take is to look at your staff. If you truly believe in equity and inclusion but you only see white faces surrounding you, you need to change that. Listen to the voices and experiences of people on your staff that represent diversity and make decisions based on what you hear. Make a commitment to do the work in perpetuity and not for a moment in time. Be prepared to change how you operate. It can't just be lip service.

Q: What pitfalls should they avoid?

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: Organizations should go beyond perfunctory statements regarding DEI. They must take tangible steps to develop a clear vision, strategy, and tactics that are actionable and measurable. Having a clear strategy, measurable goals, and committed leadership best positions

organizations to make systemic sustainable progress in DEI.

PAM ROSS: I think one challenge of organizations is we think we know what's needed in the community without actually speaking to the community. We need to stop doing that. One of the most important things an organization can do to start a DEI movement is to create the time and space for authentic relationships. Relationships are not transactions. Take the time to build trust through ongoing interactions and engagement. If you are one of the many institutions of power in this community that can make a real change for all but have no pathway to authentically listen to resident voices, you need to change that.

"This moment provides us a unique opportunity to step into a global reset where the idea of equity, inclusion, diversity—or should I say a more humane and fairer world—may be possible."

IMHOTEP ADISA

TAVONNA HARRIS ASKEW: It has to be a priority from the top down. Leadership must own and fully support the organization's commitment. A commitment to equity and diversity cannot just be an extra project that is happening independently from the

organization's core work. We've seen that time and time again. It never works and ends up doing more harm than good. Equity needs to be infused into every decision.

Q: What is something your organization is doing very well that could be replicated elsewhere?

IMHOTEP ADISA: Kheprw Institute places relationships front and center in all of our work. Put simply, it's people first. The most important capital in one's community is not fiscal capital, but social capital. By creating institutional cultures that support authentic conversations around transparency

and conflict resolution, transformational systems change is possible. Without relationships at the center, organizational culture is almost impossible to change. No cultural change, no organizational change. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are only buzzwords on one's website.

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How do you replicate a culture that puts relationships front and center? It's not easy. It requires few material resources, but a leadership committed to organizational culture change. This commitment requires learning new skills, like deep listening, seeking first to understand and then be understood—an inquiry approach to knowing. The challenge of our racial-hierarchy-based society adds another barrier to change. Two book recommendations to use as starting points include “Caste,” by Isabel Wilkerson, and “Reinventing Organizations,” by Frederic Laloux.

PAM ROSS: While dismantling systemic racism is embedded in our mission, we knew from the very beginning, we could not do this work alone. Something that we have done well is created partnerships with other folks—from large entities to grassroots organizations—to go on this bold and courageous journey with us. Whether it was involvement with the Central Indiana Racial Equity Fund or our community ambassadors, these partnerships have allowed us to truly connect with underappreciated communities. Start talking and, most importantly, start listening. It's going to take all of us.

TAVONNA HARRIS ASKEW:

We prioritize representation on our advisory board. Women's Fund understands the benefit of having diversity at the table. This has become a priority when we look at which organizations are going to receive support through our grantmaking. Previously, we committed to only working with not-for-profits whose board leadership is, at a minimum, 50% people who identify as women. We will now begin looking at racial diversity as well.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: We have a documented global strategy with clear focus areas and actionable items, and our leaders provide direction, communicate expectations, measure results, and reward and celebrate successes. Our approach can be replicated in organizations anywhere irrespective of size.

Q: How did the pandemic influence your organization's work and commitment to DEI?

TAVONNA HARRIS ASKEW:

Woman's Fund made significant adjustments to our grantmaking to meet the changing needs of organizations serving women and girls as they responded to

COVID-19. We temporarily replaced our existing grants process with an emergency grants process that allowed us to make 45 different grants totaling more than \$300,000. This adjustment introduced us to grassroots organizations and other not-for-profits that had not previously applied for support.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: We began refreshing and enhancing our global strategy in 2019, and the 2020 “twindemic” (pandemic and protests) further informed our DEI strategy to ensure our health and wellness tactics addressed the unique needs of under-represented populations to ensure equitable access to resources and flexible work arrangements. We also leveraged our Employee Resource Groups in unique ways to promote inclusion. ERG's deployed virtual programming to help employees connect. They created virtual development opportunities, speaker forums, and mindful meditation sessions to promote wellbeing. They created virtual safe spaces where groups could process challenges they were experiencing with trained employee assistance providers. All of this led to a sense of belonging and created opportunities for employees to be seen and heard.

“My hope is that companies will stay the course regardless of the difficulties, and focus on policy change, not simply adding more programs.”

PAMELA ROSS

PAM ROSS: As an organization, we were already aware of how systemic racism creates and maintains disparities around health and income security. The pandemic simply exacerbated those disparities and made it more visible for everyone to see. There was no doubt the crisis already existed. Because of the work we had already started, we were able to be very intentional in our efforts. In mid-March of 2020, we created the Neighbor Relief Fund, dedicated to COVID-19 relief and empowering the community to advise us on how to direct resources.

Q: How did the murder of George Floyd and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement influence the work your company is doing around DEI?

PAM ROSS: The Black Lives Matter movement and the murder of George Floyd ignited a racial reckoning in this country that was already burning. Sadly, this trauma and injustice wasn't new, it was just simply ignored by so many for so long. This past year, the silenced voices demanded to be heard and many individuals and organizations were forced to confront their

perpetuations of racist systems. We engaged in a lot of conversations with community leaders asking how they can grow and better support racial equity. Out of the tragedy, we're building a network of partnerships to approach real change for this community.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: The tragic murder of George Floyd reminded us that, in the U.S., there is deep-rooted racial and structural inequality. Our CEO reiterated an unwavering resolve to enhance our internal DEI efforts. We also deployed resources to encourage employees to engage in inclusive conversations about race and provided training to enhance managers' confidence in leading conversations. Our Cummins Black Network ERG was influential in raising awareness globally and offering input to enhance our strategies.

Additionally, we launched Cummins Advocating for Racial Equity initiative to speak up and speak

out against discrimination and injustice. This includes partnering with criminal justice and law enforcement agencies, supporting Black-led community groups, civil

liberties organizations, non-profit groups, and minority-owned businesses. We have mobilized the collective engagement of the Cummins workforce as champions of accountability for advancing DEI as a business imperative and working to address behavioral and structural elements impacting our employees and communities.

IMHOTEP ADISA: Let's be clear. The murder of George Floyd was not a unique incident. State violence against people of color is ongoing, past, present, and at least into the near future. When I think of the impact of George Floyd, I think of the impact that Emmet Till's funeral published in JET magazine had on a national and international awareness. This heightened awareness has a lot more folks wanting to engage and bring about real and authentic change.

Through that lens we have a lot more people wanting to engage us in conversation about the challenge of race and how we can potentially bring about change. The heightened interest in our work has provided us an opportunity for us to build more relationships we previously did not have access to.



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION CONTINUE TO BE CORE COMPANY VALUES

At Cummins we are winning with the power of difference. Our employees come from different backgrounds and experiences, and it's these differences that make our workplaces and communities stronger and more vibrant. Our company and employees are active here in Indiana and around the world to create more diverse, inclusive and equitable places to live and work.

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Q: Looking ahead, what is your vision for how companies and communities will approach DEI 10 years from now?

IMHOTEP ADISA: This particular historical moment comes with the confluence of some unique events, including drastic increases in wealth disparities, the resurgence of authoritarianism, caste hierarchies and last but definitely not least, climate disaster. How we as human beings handle this moment will determine whether civilization as we know it will survive. While this may seem dark, it also provides us a unique opportunity to step into a global reset where the idea of equity, inclusion, diversity—or should I say a more humane and fairer world—may be possible.

How do you do it? Again, put simply, you must build authentic relationships. Study how others have brought about change in their

communities. Get involved and get engaged. Change the culture of your institutions. That will provide the sustainability required for systems change.

PAM ROSS: My hope is that companies will stay the course regardless of the difficulties, and focus on policy change, not simply adding more programs.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: Ten years from now, I hope we see DEI ingrained in how companies and communities operate. I envision a world and workplace where systemic injustices are eradicated, and ecosystems are designed to ensure equitable and accessible workplaces and communities where every human is empowered to personally prosper.

Q: Can you share a personal story related to your work in equity that makes you hopeful?

IMHOTEP ADISA: The work we do at Kheprw everyday focused on youth leadership development through an intergenerational approach provides me hope. Every day I get to engage and work with a community of passionate and committed world changers who are more concerned about bringing about change than they are about titles, paychecks, and trinket collection.

Three years ago, I would not have imagined our personal relationships and work with CICF's crew. The personal relationships built with various members of CICF's team have demonstrated the potential for how personal change can lead to institutional change, which then leads to the potential for systems change.

CAROLYN BUTLER-LEE: I regularly engage with young people, students, interns, and employees just beginning their careers, and they expect organizations to have values-centered approaches to driving

results. They are unambiguously clear about the value of inclusive cultures, communities, and work environments. The next generation of 21st Century Leaders understand that DEI is a business imperative, and I expect DEI will be a matter of standard operating practices embedded in every aspect of the way they lead and live. They'll align

their daily work with a personal sense of purpose honoring their core gifts and talents and unleash incredible innovation. They are courageous and committed. I am beyond hopeful; I am

inspired and confident they will leverage the power of difference to inspire innovation in the world and workplace.

PAM ROSS: I have built trusting relationships with people internally and externally who I know are committed to true transformation and building a community where everyone has an opportunity regardless of their race, place, or identity. ●



KHEPRW

Imhotep Adisa is a co-founder of the Kheprw Institute, a non-profit intergenerational leadership development organization. Since 2003, KI has used the platform of social enterprise to address community challenges and leadership development. Current Community Wealth Building initiatives include Alkhemy (Accelerator/Incubator), Kheprw Integrated Fund, and Democratizing Our Data.



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Tavonna Harris Askew is vice chair of the advisory board of Women's Fund of Central Indiana, a fund of CICF. Women's Fund creates transformative and sustainable change for women and girls through grantmaking, philanthropy education, and leading within the community. She is chief of staff and general counsel for Health & Hospital Corp. of Marion County.



Cummins

Carolyn Butler-Lee is vice president of diversity & inclusion at Cummins Inc. She leads the Global Diversity Strategy Team and targeted initiatives as defined in the Global Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy to improve the attraction, retention, development and advancement of underrepresented groups globally and in the U.S. She was previously executive director of Corporate Human Resources for Cummins, which she joined in 1995.



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Pamela Ross is Central Indiana Community Foundation's first vice president of opportunity, equity and inclusion. She leads CICF's internal process of ensuring that equitable policies and practices are centered in all the foundation's work. She's also responsible for leading CICF's initiatives supporting equity, inclusive economic growth, and empowerment of underappreciated communities.

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