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ANNIVERSARY

COLOR[®]

EDITION

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in a city rich in shades, here i

MAGAZINE

June - July 2017

MARJORIE LIU

THE HEROINE OF SUPERHEROES

LISA COLEMAN

Bringing
Diversity to
Academia

Cynthia Izzo

Mentoring
Across the
Board

Carole Copeland

Thomas
Titan of Color

**Best Places to Work
for People of Color**

**Chief Diversity
Officer Summit**



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Agenda

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM
Registration

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM
Keynote Speaker and Opening Remarks
Marjorie Liu
Executive Panel Discussion
Lisa Coleman, Ph.D.
Jackie Glenn
Cynthia Izzo
Celeste Warren

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Lunch

12:30 PM - 3:15 PM
Executive Sessions
Alpa Inamdar
Dharma E. Cortés, Ph.D.
Donna Bonaparte, Ph.D.
Meena Kothandaraman

3:15 PM - 3:35 PM
Break

3:35 PM - 4:30 PM
Millennial Mindset Discussion
Heather C. White
Bouchra Ezzahraoui
Sampriti Bhattacharyya

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM
Titans of Color Closing Keynote and Closing Remarks
Carole Copeland Thomas, MBA, CDMP, CITM

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM
Reception

Emcee



Amaka Ubaka
News Reporter
7News

Executive Panel Moderator



Lisa Coleman, Ph.D.
Chief Diversity Officer and Special Assistant to the President
Harvard University

Executive Panelists



Jackie Glenn
Vice President of Global Diversity and Inclusion
Dell



Cynthia Izzo
Principal/Advisory Office Leader
KPMG



Celeste Warren
Vice President of Human Resources and Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of Excellence
Merck

Executive Speakers



Donna Bonaparte, Ph.D.
Vice President of Human Resources/Chief Human Resources Officer
Babson College



Dharma Cortes, Ph.D.
Senior Research Associate
Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy
University of Massachusetts Boston



Alpa Inamdar
Head of Americas for Business Change Group
BNY Mellon



Meena Kothandaraman
Experience Strategist
Twig + Fish

Millennial Mindset Executive Speakers



Heather C. White
Founder
Trillfit, Inc.



Bouchra Ezzahraoui
Founder
AUrate



Sampriti Bhattacharyya
Founder
Hydroswarm



Carole Copeland Thomas, MBA, CDMP, CITM
President & CEO
C. Thomas & Associates

Titan of Color Closing Keynote Speaker

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Dear Friends and Partners,

This February, Color Magazine joined the BridgeTower Media Family, an affiliate of GateHouse Media. Merging with BridgeTower and GateHouse brings our stories, articles, and events nationally. Our mission of highlighting professionals of color is intact and expanded.

As such, we have introduced two new events: The Chief Diversity Officer Summit and The Health and Life Sciences Conference. In addition, we have also partnered with our sister company The Best Companies Group to introduce the Best Places to Work for People of Color Survey.

The 2017 Women of Color Leadership and Empowerment Conference is representative of our dedication to growth with the introduction of the Millennial Mindset Panel Discussion, Titan of Color Keynote Speaker, and concurrent sessions from Executive Leaders in both the Business and STEM industries.

Color Magazine is able to provide a high-quality, all-inclusive publication with exceptional content and high-level professional events because you, our partners, share our mission of diversity and inclusion.

Let's continue to do great things together.

Thank you for your continued support.

Josefina
President,
Color Magazine
Chief Diversity Officer,
BridgeTower Media



In a city rich in shades here is a color that includes all...

Color Magazine is the premier all-inclusive magazine that highlights and promotes professionals of color.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN TO BE ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERS



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Amaka UBAKA

News Reporter
7News

Amaka Ubaka joined 7News in May 2016 as a reporter/fill-in anchor.

Before working at 7News, Amaka worked as a reporter at WKMG-News 6 in Orlando, Florida.

While in Orlando, she covered many stories that received national attention, including a mother of three who was accused of driving her kids into the Atlantic, the beheading of former UCF student/journalist Steven Sotloff by ISIS, and a man swallowed up by a sinkhole while sleeping in his home.

Amaka has also worked as a reporter at WOWT NBC 6 in Omaha, Nebraska where she got to cover the 2012 Olympic swim trials and KRCR ABC 7 in Redding, California, where she covered multiple wildfires.

Amaka received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Miami. A native Floridian, she looks forward to exploring new places in New England and getting involved within the community. So far, she has partnered with Project Hope, a Boston organization that provides low-income women access to services to move them up and out of poverty. She enjoys fitness, dancing, and reading nonfiction books.

Books Written by WOC Speakers

By Alana Gilmer

"Monstress" is an original comic book series created and written by Marjorie Liu. The series tells the empowering story of a young woman emerging as a warrior after the war. It takes place in 1920s Asia in a matriarchal society.

"Can You Say My Name?" by Meena Kothandaraman, is about a little girl named Ashwini, frantic on her first day of school with the thought of her friends pronouncing her name wrong. The charming aspect of this story is that it goes beyond the pronunciation of a name; it also explores the different cultures and traditions that make us unique.

Carole Copeland Thomas shares her years of experience and wisdom with us through her popular guide, "21 Ways to Bring Multiculturalism to Your Job Your Home and

Your Community." In this book, she focuses on the importance of diversity and being culturally sound, being a strong leader for diversity, and how these things can create knowledge and opportunities in your life.





As the Chief Diversity Officer and Special Assistant to the President at Harvard University, Lisa M. Coleman, Ph.D. oversees the Office of the Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity and Equity. Dr. Coleman ensures that the university selects and promotes faculty, staff, and students without discrimination.

"We are all diverse and we need to be inclusive of one another," says Dr. Coleman.

Before she assumed her role at Harvard and before she directed the Africana program at Tufts University, Dr. Coleman was interested in science. She even considered a career in the subject. However, along her journey, she realized that she had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge that went beyond science.

"I was interested in learning and dabbling in different things," says Dr. Coleman. "I'm a learner."

She went on to earn not one, but three masters' degrees—African and African American Studies; Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and Communications Studies—from the Ohio State University. Later on, she received her doctorate from New York University in Social and Cultural Analysis, American Studies to round out her understanding of gender and race.

"I hadn't planned to do a Ph.D., so the choice of school was difficult," she says. "I chose NYU because it was in one of the most diverse areas."

What drew Dr. Coleman into her current position at Harvard University was the fact that she would be able to implement something that was completely new to the school. According to Dr. Coleman, in order to have diversity, you need to have inclusion, and vice versa. It's about realizing that people are different and valuing those differences.

"Leaders need to help guide people together," says Dr. Coleman. "When we combine our differences, we become a collective."

This fall, Lisa M. Coleman, Ph.D. will be returning to New York City as NYU's Inaugural Senior Vice President for Global Inclusion, Diversity, and Strategic Innovation.



Jackie GLENN

Vice President of Global Diversity and Inclusion
Dell

Jackie Glenn is one of the most sought after leaders in diversity and inclusion for her work in reshaping companies' organizational policies. Today, Glenn is the Vice President of Global Diversity and Inclusion at Dell. Prior to Dell, she oversaw the diversity and inclusion initiatives at EMC, where she was implementing practices for 70,000 employees. Once EMC merged with Dell, that number more than doubled.

While on the job, you can find Glenn leading discussions on why women in tech are important, on a call with one of her fellow executives, and working on diversity strategies.

"I really like seeing the company culture change," says Glenn. "Differences are important in driving innovation."

Her work doesn't end there though. After learning that employees were interested in the surgery that is associated with transgender reassignment, Glenn created a program that supported the surgery and included benefits.

Glenn has also provided oversight in developing a pipeline that connected students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to internship opportunities to ensure that there were more employees of color in the workforce.

In addition, Glenn has initiated a movement to engage more women in corporate roles. Her diversity and inclusion efforts could be described as nothing less than innovative.

"It's a privilege and honor to do this job," says Glenn. "Diversity and inclusion is about allowing everyone to not only have a seat at the table, but also a voice that is heard."

For Glenn, success is achieved when she is living fully and authentically in both her professional and personal life. She is able to do this by embracing who she truly is.

Some of Jackie Glenn's honors include Champion of Diversity by The New York Urban League, Black History Leadership by Whittier Street Health Center, and Top 10 Influential Women in Diversity by Diversity Global Magazine.



During her 18-plus years in advisory management and business, Cynthia Izzo has broken barriers. Not only is she KPMG LLP’s first female Advisory Office Leader for Upstate New York and New England, she is also the first female partner/principal in Advisory’s Cyber Security practice.

As advisory leader, Izzo is responsible for the oversight, business strategy, and governance of the local advisory practice; as a partner in cyber security, she leads the Strategy & Governance Services and has over 200 U.S. practice members in her pillar, providing excellent client service in this critical business function.

“I also consider my employees my most important client,” says Izzo. “[I want to] make sure everyone under my leadership thinks KPMG is a great place to work and build your career.”

Izzo especially enjoys having the opportunity to mentor junior colleagues and provide career

advice. Her natural empathy and strong communication skills have made her a leader in diversity recruitment efforts as well.

“Diversity and inclusion—it means that employees feel comfortable to bring their whole selves to work,” says Izzo. “They feel valued and that their opinions are respected.”

For Izzo, an effective leader is passionate about work and empathic towards people. A leader also seeks to empower employees not only to do well, but to take those measured risks that can lead to the next level. Her leadership advice is simple—make sure your life is balanced

and remember to always set goals for where you want to be.

“Stop and smell the roses,” advises Izzo. “Enjoy the moment you’re in, in the here and now.”

Aside from her roles at KPMG, Izzo is a frequent and sought-after speaker at professional seminars and diversity forums on the topics of women in leadership, career building, and mentoring.

She is a member of the advisory board of the Association of Latino Professionals of America, and The Foundation to be Named Later. She is also on the board of Junior Achievement of Northern New England and the Latino Legacy Foundation.

Celeste WARREN

Vice President of Human Resources and
Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of
Excellence

Merck



From being named one of the National Diversity Council’s “Most Powerful and Influential Women of Pennsylvania,” to being honored with awards such as the Black Achievers in Industry Award, Celeste Warren has enough accolades to fill her own trophy case.

As the Vice President of Human Resources and Global Diversity and Inclusion Center of Excellence at Merck, Warren oversees a global diversity and inclusion strategy that covers the people, processes, and policies at Merck regarding diversity and inclusion, so the first thing Warren does each day is check her all-too-full calendar to make sure the company is on track with that plan.

“It’s not just a matter of making sure that the company is in line with current regulations regarding diversity and inclusion,” Warren says. “We don’t want to just follow the letter of the law, we want to embrace the spirit of the

law and be one of the leaders in the area of diversity and inclusion.”

Along with making sure the home base is on the right path, Warren is also responsible for working with Merck’s global leaders to integrate diversity & inclusion with business performance to create a competitive advantage.

She would like to help to move Merck to a transformative state where diversity and inclusion is global in nature and is transforming the environment, culture and business landscape.

“Diversity and inclusion needs to be a part of all that a company

does if it wants to be truly successful,” says Warren.

For example, Warren explained that Merck works to embed diversity from the drug discovery process all the way through to the commercialization of the product by leveraging its diverse workforce.

“It’s not just a question of language, but of cultural and socio-economic sensitivity, too,” says Warren. “Having a diverse workforce helps you better understand the needs of the diverse patients in the communities you serve.”

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Deadline:

FRIDAY
July 28, 2017

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THURSDAY
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10:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Location:
New York



FRIDAY
October 13, 2017

10:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Location:
One Lincoln Street
Boston, MA 02111

Hosted by:



STATE STREET



THURSDAY
November 2, 2017

Location:
Boston



THURSDAY
December 7, 2017

Location:
Boston

INCREASING *Gender Diversity* ON CORPORATE BOARDS

When Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, multi-time Silicon Valley CEO, first heard stories about companies wanting more women on corporate boards, but not being able to find any, she became frustrated—it just wasn't the truth. She decided to create a solution and in 2015, Cassidy founded theBoardlist.

“We’re an organization dedicated to increasing the number of women on corporate boards,” says Lesley Grossblatt, COO and VP of Product at theBoardlist. “We identify qualified women and make them visible and accessible to companies.”

This organization works as a tech platform in which men and women can nominate women for positions on corporate boards. The nomination process is what truly sets theBoardlist apart from other organizations. There are three different kinds of ways to become part of theBoardlist community—as an endorser, a candidate, or a searcher.

Endorsers are the ones who nominate the great female talent. Some are invited by theBoardlist to be endorsers and others apply. To join theBoardlist community, endorsers must have board experience, and either a C-suite executive title or be a Venture Capital investor.

“Once they are accepted into theBoardlist, they can nominate board-ready women,” says Grossblatt. “[The endorsers] tell us who she is and what stage company board she would be best suited for. Endorsing members are contributing their knowledge to the rest of the[Boardlist] community.”

Candidates are often the founders, CEOs, and other C-suite executives of their respective companies. The searchers are the people who are searching for qualified women to diversify their boardrooms.

theBoardlist community is well connected and engaged—often giving each other the inside scoop on women who would make excellent board members.

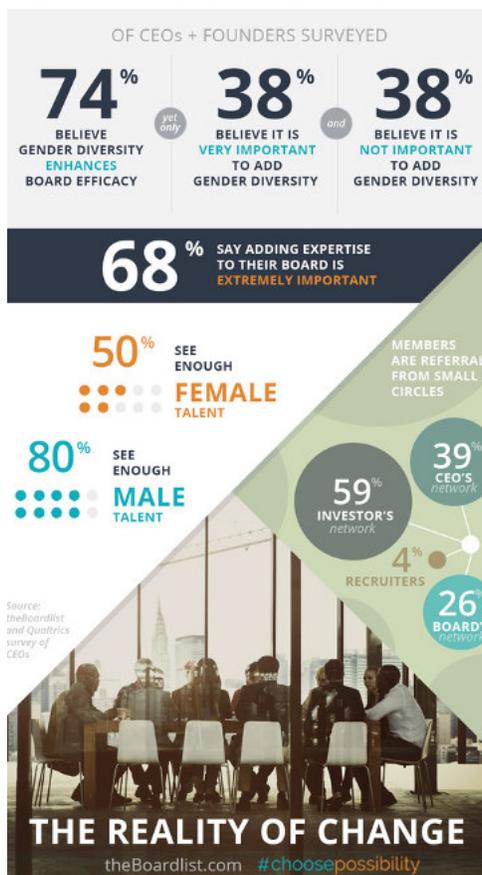
Grossblatt quoted Apple’s Tim Cook when she explained that being the CEO of a company is a lonely job. However, theBoardlist’s community allows members to connect and share their experiences with other CEOs—it creates a network of true peers.

“Organizations perform so much better when there are different experiences,” says Grossblatt, about the importance of gender diversity in boardrooms. “If you’re not representing the fifty percent, you’re missing out on something.”

In addition to the tech platform, theBoardlist holds several events throughout the year with the support of their corporate sponsors. They have different events for different audiences that focus on the theme of boards. Some events focus on the importance of having diverse corporate boards and

others discuss what actions can be taken to build stronger ones. They also have events that gather young women who are interested in joining a board sometime in the future.

HOW CEOs VIEW BOARD DIVERSITY



theBoardlist



MARJORIE LIU

THE HEROINE OF SUPERHEROES

By Jailene Adorno



It's not every day that you find a novelist/comic book writer who is also an attorney. But then there's Marjorie Liu, who went to school to become a lawyer but soon realized that it wasn't her true calling. Today, Liu is a New York Times Bestselling Author who, in addition to her own novels, has written for Marvel Comics and has created her own comic series titled Monstress.

Liu was always a big reader, and when she was in high school and college, she started developing her writing skills. After taking the bar examination, she thought she might be a lawyer for an arts foundation because art has always been something that she has been very passionate about. However, the more she thought about it, the more she realized that she didn't want to be a lawyer. That was when she started writing her first book.

"IT'S A SCARY THING TO GIVE UP SOMETHING SO PRACTICAL," SAYS LIU ABOUT SWITCHING CAREER PATHS. "I KNOW, FOR A FACT, THAT I'M MUCH HAPPIER NOW. I'M SO GLAD I WASN'T PRACTICAL."

She told herself that if she wrote 3000 words a day, she could have a novel in a month. Once she accomplished this goal, she sent the novel in and before she knew it, she had a four-book contract and an agent. From there, Liu started writing full-time—three to four books a year, across the span of eight years.



In 2013, Liu was a nominee for the GLAAD Media Award for Outstanding Comic Book (Astonishing X-Men) for its storyline that connected with the LGBT community. This issue of Astonishing X-Men featured the first gay wedding to ever be included in a comic book.

"IT REALLY MEANT A LOT TO ME, IT WAS A TREMENDOUS HONOR," SAYS LIU. "FOR ME, GAY MARRIAGE IS A CIVIL RIGHT."

Liu went on to explain how her parents are a mixed-race couple that married in the 70s and that a decade prior, they wouldn't have been able to do so, as mixed race marriages were not allowed. Therefore, writing that X-Men story struck home for her as she thought of marriage equality as an issue that people have been fighting over for decades.

After seeing very male-dominated television shows and movies, she decided to create a comic book of her own with a more matriarchal focus that also included people of color—Monstress. A lot of the inspiration for Monstress came from the World War II stories that Liu's grandmother used to tell her as a kid. Despite all that her grandmother had seen and gone through, she always told the stories with a smile on her face. Liu was amazed by how her grandmother could go through so much trauma and still manage to bounce back, to put herself back together. Monstress takes that female representation and tells a strong story about perseverance.



*“READ, READ, READ,”
LIU ADVISES WRITERS
WITH A LAUGH.
“GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION
TO WRITE A TERRIBLE
FIRST DRAFT.”*

Collaborating with other artists is one of Liu’s favorite parts about writing comic books. A lot of the artists’ illustrations have influenced her writing—she often takes the artist’s strengths and likes into consideration.

While Liu loves writing comic books, she recognizes that it’s much harder to do than writing novels. With novels, you can always go back and edit, but with comic books, it’s a much smaller frame—one issue of a comic is only about twenty pages.

“[IT] REQUIRES A LOT OF THOUGHT AND YOU CAN’T HIDE YOUR MISTAKES. IF YOU’RE BORING IN A COMIC, IT REALLY STANDS OUT—I HAVE TO BE ON MY TOES,” SAYS LIU. “WRITING COMICS HAS MADE ME A BETTER WRITER.”

In addition to being a writer, Liu also teaches comic book writing at MIT. She teaches her students about the structure of script writing, storytelling, and character/worldbuilding.

Talking to Donna Bonaparte, you can almost feel her energy. The Chief Human Resources Officer at Babson College is understandably proud of the achievements the College has made—Babson has been voted number one in the world for Entrepreneurial Education for more than twenty consecutive years by U.S. News & World Report—and wants the world to know about it.

“People have the wrong idea about entrepreneurs, that entrepreneurs include only people out to start a business,” Bonaparte explained. “We work from a different mindset. Yes, we want to help people realize their dreams of entrepreneurship, but we also teach them about using their talents to help make social changes in their community and in the world, too.”

As the Chief Human Resources Officer, Bonaparte’s role is making sure the faculty and staff have the support they need to do their job to the best of their ability. She also lectures in the school’s Human Resources classes to teach the entrepreneurs of the future how to perform such tasks when they complete their education.

“We aren’t looking for people to simply agree with the status quo; no company wants that,” she said. “The best way for an organization to be successful and for a school to teach their business students is to teach them to challenge the way things



Donna BONAPARTE PH.D.

Vice President of Human Resources/Chief
Human Resources Officer
Babson College

are done to see if there is a better way. That is the entrepreneurial approach, a mindset, or a way to addressing problems. Don’t just accept something because ‘it’s always been done that way,’ ask why it is done that way.”

Of course, not all the ideas an employee or student may have are going to work, which is why Bonaparte passes along a few simple words of wisdom for anybody trying a new idea, whether it’s a new business or just a new way of thinking about an existing operation. “Whenever I hear an idea has failed, I always tell the person whose idea didn’t work that FAIL stands for First

Attempt In Learning,” she said. “Don’t be afraid of making a mistake. Learn from it.”

As for measuring the success of an employee or student, they can learn from their mistakes, but Bonaparte says it should not be measured in dollars and cents. Success to her doesn’t mean getting to a point in your career and staying there; it means constantly striving to improve while at the same time making sure you give back to the community as much as you can.

“That’s the mindset of a successful entrepreneur,” she said.



Dharma E. CORTÉS, PH.D.

Senior Research Associate
Mauricio Gastón Institute
for Latino Community Development
and Public Policy
University of Massachusetts Boston

There's only one way to describe how you feel after speaking with Dharma E. Cortés, Ph.D.: empowered.

"When you go to the doctor or the dentist and they give you a consent form to sign, do you actually read it before you sign?" Dr. Cortés gives as an example of the work she does as a Senior Research Associate at the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston. "You probably don't, but you should read it and ask questions before you sign it. You need to understand what you are signing, which is a huge problem if English isn't your first language."

Empowerment. Dr. Cortés isn't giving you permission to read the form before you sign; she's telling you that you must. It's a theme she promotes in much of her work, whether it be explaining complex health care plans and issues to people who may not understand the language or the legal ramifications or coaching people

to make wiser decisions when it comes to diet and nutrition.

"It's not always a problem with language," Dr. Cortés explained. "Sometimes there are barriers that people need to recognize and learn to work with, and that means both the patient and the health care provider."

For more than twenty years, Dr. Cortés has been conducting community-based research with Latinos in the U.S., focusing on acculturation, health, mental health, obesity prevention, and access to healthcare, including health insurance coverage. She also has been a principal investigator, co-investigator, and consultant to numerous studies on the delivery of health care services funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Robert Wood-Johnson Foundation, and many others.

Dr. Cortés works diligently to investigate health issues—locally, nationally, and globally—to find ways to ensure the people she works with get the help they need. Sometimes her job involves meeting face-to-face with people to explain some basic health care rights, like the consent form issue, and some involve finding ways to use technology to bring better health to people's lives.

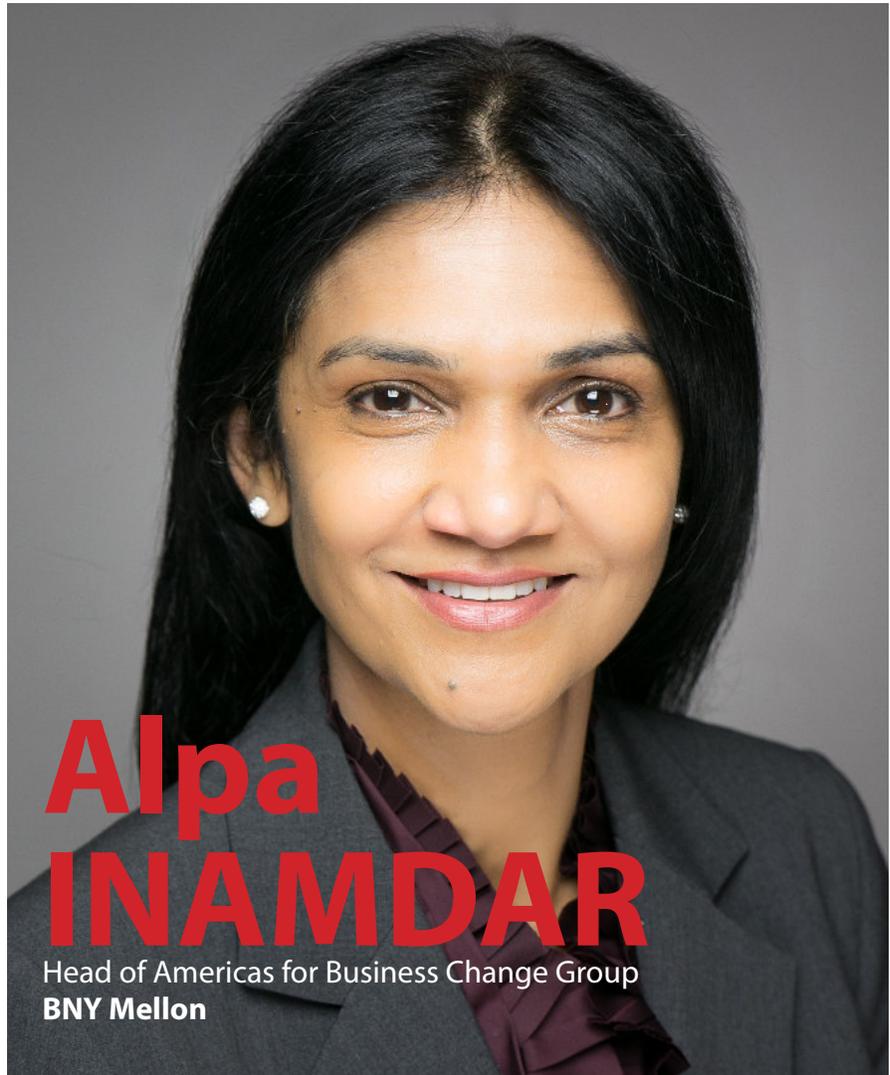
"We're developing a mobile app that helps people make better health decisions when they go grocery shopping," she gave as an example. "There is so much misinformation bombarding you when you go to the grocery store, particularly when it comes to advertising, that people need a way to see past all that to really understand if the food they are buying is healthy or not."

Alpa Inamdar is the Head of the Americas Business Change Group within Asset Servicing at BNY Mellon, which is part of Investment Services. She is responsible for the overall program management and oversight of client implementations for Asset Servicing. What she enjoys most about her role is that she gets to work on client solutions that support their complex business requirements. The majority of Inamdar's day is spent on identifying problems and developing solutions.

"Before working at BNY Mellon, I was at Goldman Sachs, who provided me an opportunity to come back to the workforce after six years of hiatus. Goldman Sachs provided me with a valuable experience with its fast-paced, challenging, and stimulating professional environment."

Inamdar is very passionate about providing an opportunity to people to come back to the workforce.

"These are experienced professionals who may have left their jobs, through no fault of their own, and they deserve a chance," she explained, praising her current employer for being progressive.



She is currently working on a program called "Take 2" with the support of senior leaders to tap into this talent pool that could make a valuable contribution to their organization.

"I am really fortunate to have mentors, sponsors, and role models who guide and challenge me constantly. Karen Peetz, ranked as No. 1 among the 'Most Powerful Women in Banking' according to American Banker, emphasized the importance of detailed client knowledge to build sustainable client relationships while mentoring me at BNY Mellon."

In her role at BNY Mellon, Inamdar oversees the development of cross-functional transition plans for new business opportunities and high profile, complex initiatives for existing clients. This, in addition to her passion for the rehiring rights of employees facing personal crises, keeps Inamdar extremely busy. She was quick to mention, though that she does have some extracurricular activities.

"I'm a California girl," she said. "So I love to go to the beach and surf."



Meena KOTHANDARAMAN

Experience Strategist

Twig + Fish

With over twenty-five years of consulting experience, Meena Kothandaraman has an extensive understanding of human behavior as it fits into an experience. Whether it's for a product, service, interface, or space, Kothandaraman conducts qualitative research to determine what consumers require in the products they use on a regular basis. Her company twig + fish research practice is focused on elevating human-centered needs within the customer experience.

"I look to learn as much as possible from human stories and anecdotes," says Kothandaraman. "To understand their world from their perspective. How do they define value? What are their natural behaviors? How do these [everyday] things fit into their lives?"

The research that Kothandaraman has done has allowed her to further discuss human-centered strategies that are core to organizational processes. She founded twig + fish with Zarla Ludin when both women realized that they were interested in promoting credible ways for companies to keep people central to product design. Together, as a team, Kothandaraman and Ludin provide custom study designs to further understand what we, as humans, require to make our everyday actions easier.

"I'm like a kid in Candyland when I think about the projects I've worked on," she says with a laugh. "There's so much fun in trying to unpack how people think and behave."

Kothandaraman explained that it can often be a little challenging to study people who are constantly on the move—people change so much over the course of ten to twenty years. She must be ahead of trends to fully understand and anticipate what people want.

"As a researcher, I have to be able to help [clients] open up, to observe deeper aspects of the people they serve," she says.

In addition to her role as a qualitative researcher and experience strategist, Kothandaraman also teaches at Bentley University's Human Factors and Information Design graduate program. Teaching at Bentley has strengthened her ability to learn about people.

"I love, love teaching there," she says excitedly. "I learn more from them than I can teach them. [Teaching at Bentley] has helped me vocalize how I communicate research value to organizations."

For Kothandaraman, success is being truly happy in what you're doing. She urges others not to conform to the traditional ideas of success, but rather to define your own version of it.

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**Sampriti
BHATTACHARYYA**

Founder
Hydroswarm

Sampriti Bhattacharyya is a roboticist, who is also the founder of an underwater drone startup, Hydroswarm. She is a Ph.D. Candidate in Mechanical Engineering at MIT, with an M.S. in Aerospace Engineering and a B.S. in Electrical Engineering. Hydroswarm has applications ranging from defense and security to consumers that have gained both national and international attention, being featured by leading outlets like Forbes, The Guardian, Smithsonian, Techcrunch, and many others. Sampriti has been named as one of Forbes 30 under 30, Class of 2016; Robohub's 25 Women in Robotics, 2014; and Connected World's 2016 Women of M2M. She is an active advocate for women in STEM fields.

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Bouchra EZZAHRAOUI

Founder
AUrate

As a young professional working in the finance industry, Bouchra Ezzahraoui often found herself searching for high-quality jewelry that was both accessible and contemporary. In 2014, she decided to team up with fellow Princeton University graduate, Sophie Kahn. Together, the two founded AUrate, a fine jewelry brand that offers products that are made of high-quality (durable) materials and manufactured in New York City.

In addition to Ezzahraoui and Kahn's mission of providing consumers with stylish and affordable pieces of jewelry, they are educating and empowering others to learn more about what their jewelry is made out of; making gold more democratic. The founders of AUrate have also taken on a social responsibility—with each piece of jewelry that is sold, AUrate will provide a school book to a child in need.

"We believe that every single business out there should give back to our society," says Ezzahraoui. "Education is a big pillar of AUrate."

Before starting AUrate, Ezzahraoui worked for Goldman Sachs as a derivatives trader. Because of AUrate's great success, Ezzahraoui was able to leave Goldman Sachs and focus on AUrate full-time earlier this year.

"I went into finance because I enjoyed the challenging path I was going to pursue for a few years, I learned a lot and made great friends and mentors," she says. "But what excites me most is when I build something, when I learn something new."

When Ezzahraoui first started AUrate with her business partner Kahn, they were challenged by the jewelry business itself—a very traditional market with high barriers to entry. Finding the right manufacturers to work with and learning more about the finance side of gold were big projects they took on. However, they were able to step into that entrepreneurial mindset and build a reputation not only for themselves, but for the company brand as well.

For millennial entrepreneurs looking to make it big, Ezzahraoui advises, "Anyone who has an idea worth going for should just go for it, just do it and don't spend too much time staring at your business plan," she says. "Take calculated risks."

Heather C. White

Founder
Trillfit, Inc.

It's the basic blueprint for any fledgling entrepreneur: identify a need, find a solution, and create a way to meet the needs of future customers by fulfilling that need.

It's a blueprint that Heather White followed as she launched TRILLFIT, Inc., an award-winning lifestyle fitness brand aimed at bringing diversity and inclusion to the boutique fitness industry.

The idea came to White about a year and a half ago. She was taking a fitness class and realized that there was a complete lack of diversity in the class. Nothing about the class reflected who she was as a woman of color—not the people, not the music, and not even the fashion. “I suddenly felt out of place,” she said. The lack of diversity, White added, showed her that there was an opportunity to create a safe space for people like her.

The idea was to develop a fitness brand that embraced what she—and she believed other young women and millennials like herself—were looking for. She started taking more classes at other facilities shopping, as it were, for the things she liked and the things she didn't like in each exercise program. Slowly, the list of what she wanted her new company, TRILLFIT, Inc., to offer clients grew to the point where she decided to take the leap and open for business. White wanted to ensure that everything from the music to the instructors is reflective of hip hop culture.

“I've never run a business before; my background is in marketing,” she said, “but I had a lot of faith in the idea and was getting a lot of positive feedback from the people I consulted with, so I knew I had to take the chance.”

TRILLFIT Boston now shares space with Studio 52 at 52 Province St., but White said she is looking for a unique space for her business to grow. And while her influence is certainly growing among the fitness and hip-hop community in Boston, she regularly travels to New York, L.A., and beyond to conduct popup TRILLFIT classes and help spread the word of what's to come.

Titan of Color

Carole Copeland Thomas is a worldwide phenomenon.

As a speaker, trainer, global thought leader, and business owner since 1987, she has her business fingers on the pulse of the issues affecting working professionals and consults with industry leaders on a regular basis. And she does some of her best work without ever leaving her computer.

"I've always been something of a geek," Thomas said, proving it by adding that she had been a Mac user since 1985. "I'm very comfortable in the virtual world, which a lot of business leaders are not; their company may have a website, but somebody else runs it. I like to be more hands on to not only make sure the product we offer meets the needs of our clients, but to stay ahead of the curve regarding what they will need in the future."

The best way to understand just how influential Thomas' footprint on the virtual business world can be, is to go to her website, tellcarole.com, and spend some time exploring. Just looking through the items listed in drop bar under the Topics and Programs category will keep you busy for a few hours. You can also watch a video, listen to her radio program, check out some of the articles and books she has written, read her blog and



even, if you scroll to the bottom of the page, book a guided trip with Thomas to Cuba or India.

Take some time to check out her new online private coaching program, the Coaching Academy, where you can have a private (virtually speaking) session with Thomas on designated business topics. Sign up and all you will need a laptop, smartphone, desktop computer, or landline phone.

"The Internet is such powerful business tool, especially when it comes to conducting business

on a global scale," Thomas said. "I recently participated in a virtual discussion with a colleague in Europe. The next day I was part of a U.S.-based mastermind group, with participants across the country. The third day I used the Zoom platform to have discussions with colleagues in India. Those three experiences would have been less impactful if we had connected on a conference call line over the telephone. Because we could all be in a video conference room and see each other as we talked, it turned into an amazing experience."

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Employee-driven Social Programs Mean Stronger Businesses

By Yarice Hidalgo-Calderón

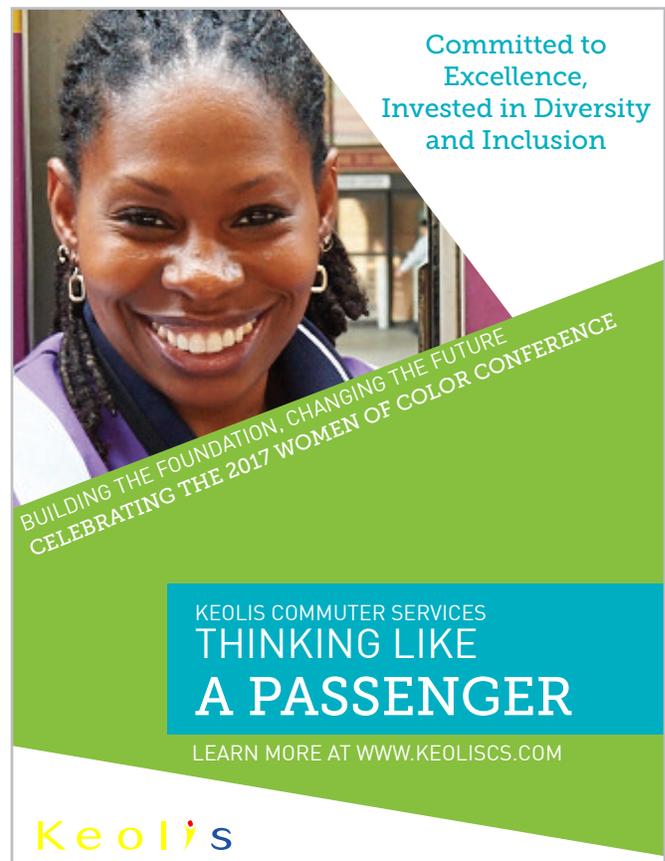
Companies that have Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) departments maximize the multicultural fiber of their employees. The study Diversity Matters published in 2015 by the global consulting company McKinsey & Company revealed that companies who embrace ethnic diversity, register 35% higher profits and companies that promote gender diversity, have accounted for a 15% increase in revenues. Furthermore, this report makes a compelling argument on how diverse teams help the private sector improve their customer and employee satisfaction while fostering innovation.

One strategy of D&I is the implementation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). These groups help companies recognize and support affinity groups, celebrate their culture, address concerns regarding the workplace, help their members identify opportunities to advance their careers, and recognize their contribution to the company. Moreover, companies have unveiled the powerful dynamics that occur when ERGs are interconnected. This methodology promotes an overall understanding and awareness among the employees regarding diversity and the different work styles. However, how can companies engage employees to make them part of a successful business model?

Employee Resource Groups that actively participate in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs could help the company build a stronger relationship with their employees and the communities they represent. This practice could increase brand loyalty, get direct customer feedback, and strengthen diversity recruitment and retaining efforts. When a company considers their employees' suggestions during the grant-making process, or takes into account some of the organizations that their employees support, it recognizes and acknowledges their employees' contributions. When this becomes the way of

doing business, resource groups gain a new meaning within the core of the business. At this point, ERGs start to be referred to as Business Resource Groups and their role becomes more relevant in the business strategy. This approach increases the value of resource groups within the company. Studying and learning the results from this best practice is smart business.

The article Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter published by The Harvard Business Review last November reported that diverse teams tend to challenge each other ideas and help gain greater insight and breakthroughs for the businesses. Also, these teams tend to stick to facts and foster arguments based on evidence. This report demonstrates the great added value of diversity.



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