



SPEAKERS SERIES

Finding Voices, Lending Voices. The Professional Journeys of Black and Hispanic Women and how we can be better partners for success

August 24, 2020

PANELISTS:

- **Teresa Bryce Bazemore:** CEO at Bazemore Consulting, LLC; Director of T Rowe Price Mutual Funds; Director of Chimera Investment Corp
- **Donna Gambrell:** President and CEO of Appalachian Community Capital and former Director of the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, US Department of Treasury
- **Lisa J. Haynes:** Chief Financial Officer & Chief Diversity and Inclusion Office, Mortgage Bankers Association
- **Marietta Rodriguez:** President and CEO of NeighborWorks America
- **Jonice Gray Tucker:** Partner, Buckley LLP
- **Michael W. Briggs (Moderator):** General Counsel, Mortgage Bankers Association.

SUMMARY:

Panelists engaged in a robust and interactive discussion about their workplace challenges, resiliency, finding opportunities, having uncomfortable conversations, firm culture and the need for action – “Make this moment a movement”:

- Need for robust talent management throughout lifecycle of employees
 - Women are often reviewed based on performance, whereas men are reviewed based on their potential; women and men should be evaluated on both
 - Hiring and promotion criteria should be consistently applied
 - Be deliberative about what criteria are important and what should not be part of talent management
 - The right questions may be asked in an interview but post-interview discussions among interviewers can be inappropriate and reflect unconscious bias
 - Slightings in the workplace make it easy for talented employees to leave

- Need to have senior level women and people of color at the table to help set the parameters for talent management; those at the table must be aware of need for diversity and how to achieve it
- Talent management is a living process and there's an ongoing need to provide opportunities for women of color
- Senior level women of color demonstrate to younger employees and potential hires that there are people like them at the top of the organization
- Seek opportunities
 - Raise your hand to get noticed, volunteer for tough projects and opportunities to get more exposure
- Difference between power and influence
 - Can have influence based on your knowledge even without the power of position in an organization
- Resiliency
 - Don't underestimate the importance of self-care
- Being a leader means giving others opportunities
 - Leaders need to view elevating others as a part of their jobs
 - Find opportunities for women of color, get them greater exposure in an organization
 - Need for both sponsors (those who advocate for you when you're not in the room) and mentors (those who help you grow)
 - Pay it forward – bring someone else along, help them get ahead
- Culture can be a double-edge sword
 - Organizations need to be self-reflective – will they truly be open to diversity
 - Comments in a workplace directed at women of color, such as being told her confidence is off-putting, are not consistent with an organization that embraces diversity
 - Need to be careful about talk of a “cultural fit” because it tends to perpetuate people like those already in power and is anti-diversity
 - Okay to see color; indicates you see person and recognize their culture
- Awareness, need to speak up
 - Need for people to speak up when they hear something that is not right, that is hurtful and is antithetical to achieving diversity – that is being an ally
 - There may not even be awareness of biases; limited unconscious bias training is not enough – need for ongoing dialogue to keep issues top of mind
 - People may not even be aware of what they're saying (microaggressions) or its impact – the recipient of the comment needs to respond immediately, but the commenter needs to learn
 - Such as someone expressing surprise that a Black woman is so articulate – may be well-intentioned but it is disrespectful
 - Those who make offending comments have a responsibility to heighten their own awareness

- Slights are hurtful and have a lasting impact and leaders need to be aware of what's going on in their organizations
 - Meet micro-aggressions with a micro-approach by addressing one person at a time – heighten their awareness
 - People have said that we've moved beyond racism but the shootings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery show we haven't. The pandemic has magnified the impact of these shootings as we've all been home watching. It's an opportunity to say, "Do you see racism now?"
 - But need to move beyond conversations to action
 - Will fatigue set in and people move on to other priorities and forget?
- Fatigue at being on the receiving end of bias and also expectation of educating colleagues about racism
 - Shouldn't have to be a leader on issues of racism just because a person is Black or Brown. It takes a rainbow of individuals to address racism.
 - Sometimes you need to push back and say we are all in this together; we need to find a collective way forward
 - Sharing story of self with others allows for finding common ground
 - Majority has to educate themselves about differences, everyone has their own stories, time to learn about the culture of minorities who have had to learn about the culture of the majority
 - Can't be colorblind – it's insulting, instead learn about differences and don't make assumptions
- Seize this moment
 - We've had defining moments -- George Floyd, Breanna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and leaders missed an opportunity if they didn't use the moment to have meaningful and uncomfortable conversations. Amy Cooperman incident also very impactful.
 - "Make this moment a movement"