At American, inclusion and diversity is part of our DNA — from the team we hire to the customers we serve. Every day, our team members work to create a community where people from all backgrounds feel welcome and valued. We have a renewed commitment to providing a positive, safe travel experience for everyone who chooses to fly with us.

As THE LARGEST airline in the world, we often hear about what we get right and where we can make improvements. Last year, we heard from the NAACP and other community leaders that some of our customers were not satisfied with how we served them. We are proud of our longstanding commitment to equality and diversity — from the team members we hire to the communities we serve. Still, discrimination and implicit bias sometimes create painful outcomes, and we not only accepted the reality that we could do better, but we also embraced the opportunity to become leaders.

American’s business is fundamentally about connecting people. It’s about bringing people closer, crossing borders and bridging divides, not creating them. Every day hundreds of thousands of people around the world board our planes and entrust our team members to connect them with family and friends, work, or adventure. We do not take this responsibility lightly.

Diversity Starts at the Top: Leadership at the Board Level
The NAACP made its concerns public while our Board of Directors was meeting last fall. Our team was discussing how to respond when one of our Board members, who is African American, said clearly: “This is really an opportunity. We know we don’t always get it right, and we shouldn’t pretend that we do. Why not view this situation as an opportunity to become a leader and think of this as a gift?”

That statement from this Board member crystallized the opportunity for me. Once we started thinking of what most would view as an incident to defend as instead a gift, it changed our approach. I’d like to think we would have gotten there on our own, but I’m not certain we would have. I know we got there more quickly because we have a diverse Board with different experiences and perspectives. That inclusive mix of leaders on our Board helped us embrace the NAACP advisory as an opportunity to reflect, listen and become a better organization.
We set out to immediately begin a dialogue with the NAACP, other civil rights leaders and our team members. Key to this dialogue, however, was our willingness to simply listen without defensiveness. As we let our guard down and began to see, hear and feel the perspectives of diverse members of our team, leaders and our community, we began to chart a path forward. We are not finished with this work by any stretch, and indeed my view is we will never be finished as the path to creating a more inclusive world involves continually learning, assessing and listening. Today we are energized by the progress we are making and are implementing the actions we laid out last fall.

**Look Inward: Conduct a Diversity and Inclusion Gap Analysis**

Earlier this year, we began an independent assessment to more clearly determine where our diversity and inclusion work lies and where gaps may exist. We engaged Ibis, a minority-owned firm with extensive experience in this area, to conduct a top-to-bottom assessment of American’s inclusion and diversity practices and their impact on team members and customers. We want to understand the effectiveness of our current policies and programs, hear and understand the perspectives and experiences of our team members and customers in our hubs and in our support departments, and learn more about what other leading companies do that we might consider.

**Continue to Learn: Embrace Company-Wide Implicit Bias Training**

Our team built on existing anti-discrimination programs and — working with Cook Ross, who are experts in the field — developed implicit bias training for our entire 130,000 team members. Implicit bias training began with leaders of the company — including me — in January. Computer-based training has begun to roll out, and classroom training will begin in 2019. The in-person training will provide team members with tools to recognize and mitigate unconscious bias and will include workplace-specific scenarios that enable participants to more readily understand how implicit bias may manifest.

**Continue to Improve: Overhaul Customer Discrimination Claims Process**

We have improved the way we hear and respond to customer discrimination claims. We now have a dedicated team centralized at our corporate headquarters who listen and investigate all reported discrimination incidents and claims. When a customer lets us know that he or she feels unfairly treated unfairly due to a real or perceived discrimination claim, our team reaches out directly to understand and discuss the customer’s experience. Our Customer Relations team has made other enhancements to our processes, engagement and reporting so that we provide more consistent responses to our customers and their concerns.

**Understand All Team Members Matter: Sharpen Our Focus on Team Member Concerns**

At American, we are focused on making culture a competitive advantage. We know we won't be successful in this quest unless we create an environment where all members of our team have the ability for their voices to be heard and their differing
experiences and perspectives valued. We are doubling down on increasing awareness of work environment policies and amplified the process for team members to report any issues of concern.

For all of us at American Airlines, inclusion and diversity is a core part of our DNA — from the team members we employ to the customers we serve. Every day, our team members strive to create a community where people from all backgrounds feel welcome and valued. We have a renewed commitment to provide a positive and safe travel experience for everyone who chooses to fly with us, and we look forward to creating a more connected world where we all learn from each other, respect one another and celebrate the communities in which we live.

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