

# African-American CAREER WORLD™

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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

THE DIVERSITY  
EMPLOYMENT  
& BUSINESS  
MAGAZINE

Winter/Spring 2021



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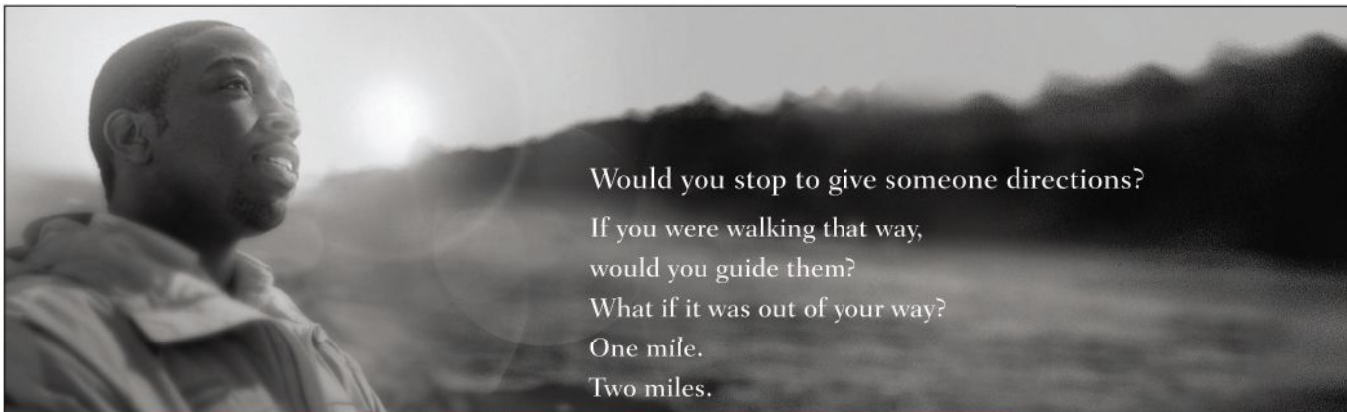
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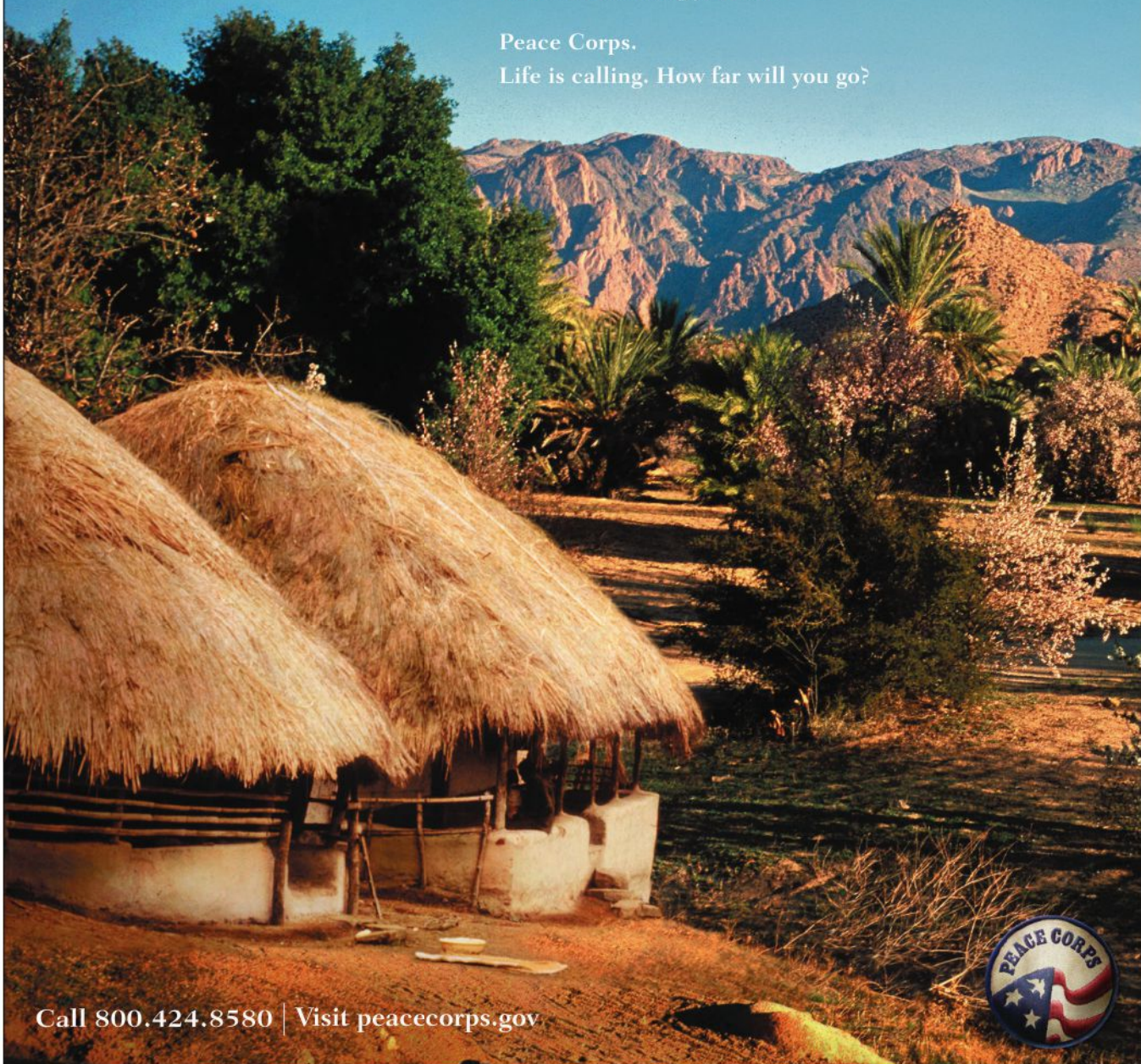
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## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

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## ADVANCING EQUITY

Leaders in HR and diversity share how they're moving the tenets of diversity, inclusion and equity forward as they look to bring authentic talent with unique points of view into the fold.

*By Kelly Bryant*

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## BEDROCK FOR RECOVERY

The telecommunications and networking industry is playing a key role in the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic recovery, according to Deloitte's recent 2021 telecom outlook, which notes that it's providing the bedrock for other industries to recover and thrive in 2021. Here several pros share insight into their companies and advice about achieving career success.

*By Amanda N. Wegner*

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## PREMIUM POSSIBILITIES

Here four company leaders make the claim for why Millennials and Gen Zers should ensure their futures by reevaluating their opinion of the insurance industry and investigating the premium possibilities that lie within it. They explain how modern insurance corporations welcome greater diversity in skills, backgrounds, and personal experiences, and why that leads to challenging and fulfilling career choices.

*By Anne Baye Erickson*

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## On the Cover:

Turn to page 16 to find out how Warren (Mickey) Blanks, Beckman Coulter's senior vice president of human resources and internal communications, is advancing diversity, inclusion and equity (DEI), learn about what drives him and what advice he has for young professionals, and discover how he's helping the company deliver on its DEI mission.



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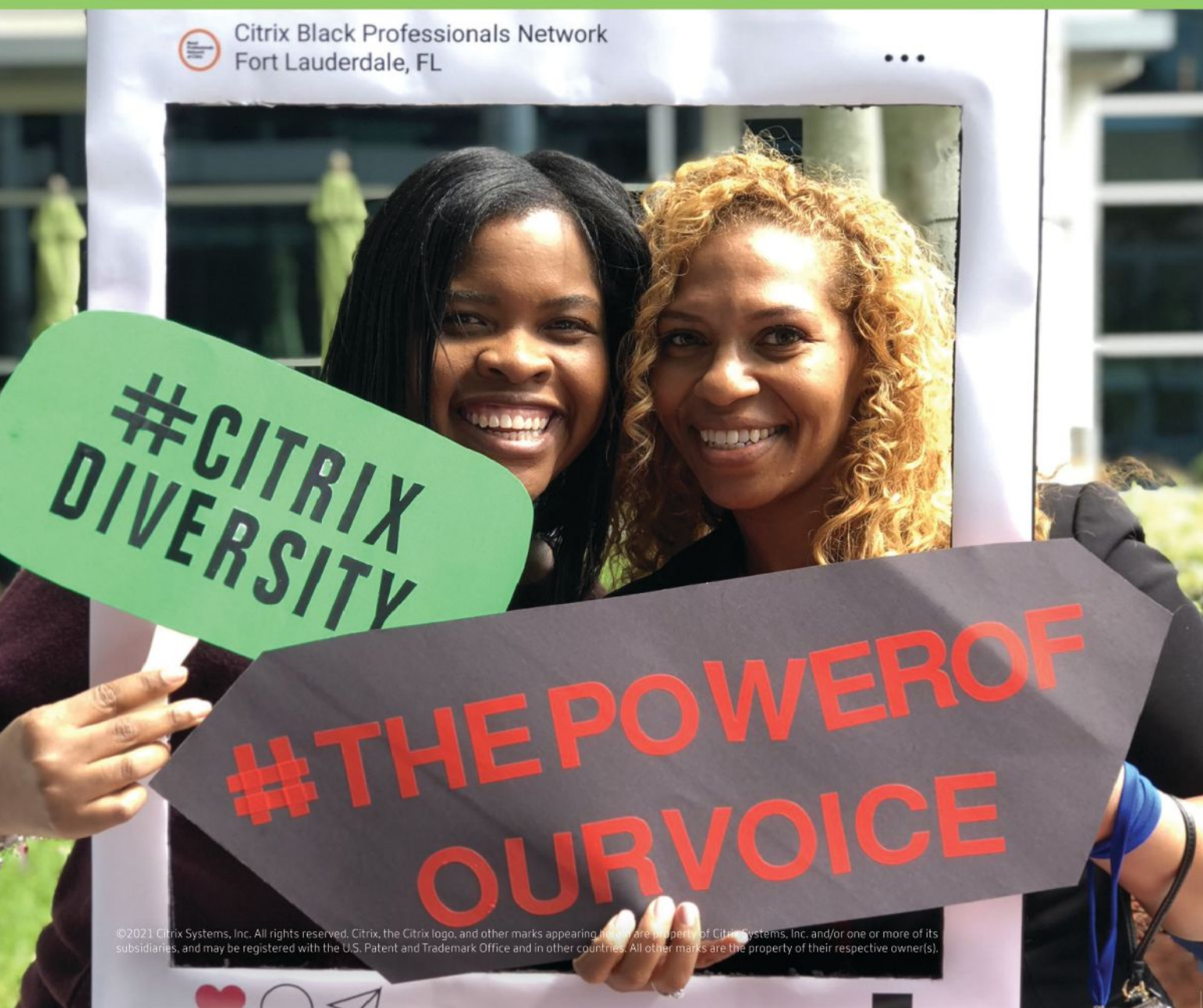
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## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

For 40 years each U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as National African-American/Black History Month. And this year is no different, as we celebrate and recognize the achievements by African Americans throughout U.S. history.

The origins of this month's observance dates back to 1915 when Carter G. Woodson, Ph.D., founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH).

Woodson and the association later initiated the first "Negro History Week" in February 1926. Thanks in part to the Civil Rights Movement, this event evolved by the late 1960s into Black History Month on many college campuses. In 1976 President Gerald R. Ford made it a national observance.

Today the ASALH stays true to its original mission of researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and other peoples of African descent. *African-American Career World*, now celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, shares that mission of telling stories of achievement.

To that end, this issue of *African-American Career World* honors Black history as it highlights top leaders in human resources and diversity. Among them is Warren (Mickey) Blanks, who also graces the cover of this special anniversary issue. He's Beckman Coulter's senior vice president of human resources and internal communications, and he's "significantly invested in helping every associate realize their full potential."

Blanks discusses what the company is doing to identify, attract, and recruit diverse talent to meet current and future business needs across the organization. Learn more about what drives Blanks and the other execs featured on page 16.

Indeed, these featured African-American leaders in HR and diversity are in stellar company as those who came before them are commemorated every day, but especially during National African-American/Black History Month, with amazing stories of leaders and ordinary citizens in the African-American community who made their mark on this nation and helped drive progress forward.

In this issue we feature several professionals in several industries who are at the helm of all of the progress within them.

For example, on page 24, read about how you can make faster connections within the telecommunications and networking industry from those on the cutting edge that's driving it forward at lightning speed.

Another industry that's rife with solid opportunities in a changing job market is the insurance industry. On page 32 learn how you can ensure your future with an insurance career and meet several motivated insurance pros that have a passion for making others feel secure.

And on page 40 discover how these featured healthcare management/hospital administration professionals are navigating the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and moving patient care forward as they keep people healthy.

Also register for free at [eop.com/expo](http://eop.com/expo) for CAREERS & the disABLED's upcoming Career Expos and at [eop.com/stemexpo](http://eop.com/stemexpo) for EOP's upcoming STEM Diversity Career Expos in 2021.

And thank you, our readers, for your steadfast support these past 20 years. We also thank the many major corporations and federal government agencies through the years for their continuing commitment to our mission to make a meaningful and lasting difference for African-American professionals via the tenets of D&I. We couldn't do this without all of you.

And, on a personal note, I, along with the entire staff of EOP and *African-American Career World*, am proud to be part of this on-going legacy that celebrates the past and pushes forward. Now, carpe diem! And happy job hunting!

*Barbara Capella Loehr*

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# Wells Fargo Invests in Six Black-Owned Banks

San Francisco, CA-headquartered Wells Fargo & Company has recently invested in six African-American Minority Depository Institutions (MDIs) as part of its March 10, 2020 pledge to invest up to \$50 million in Black-owned banks. As part of the capital equity investment, the banks will have access to a dedicated Wells Fargo relationship team that will provide financial, technological, and product development expertise to help each institution grow and benefit their local community.

resources, and Wells Fargo is committed to building lasting, strategic relationships with these institutions in support of their goals.”

*This recent announcement includes investments in the following institutions:*

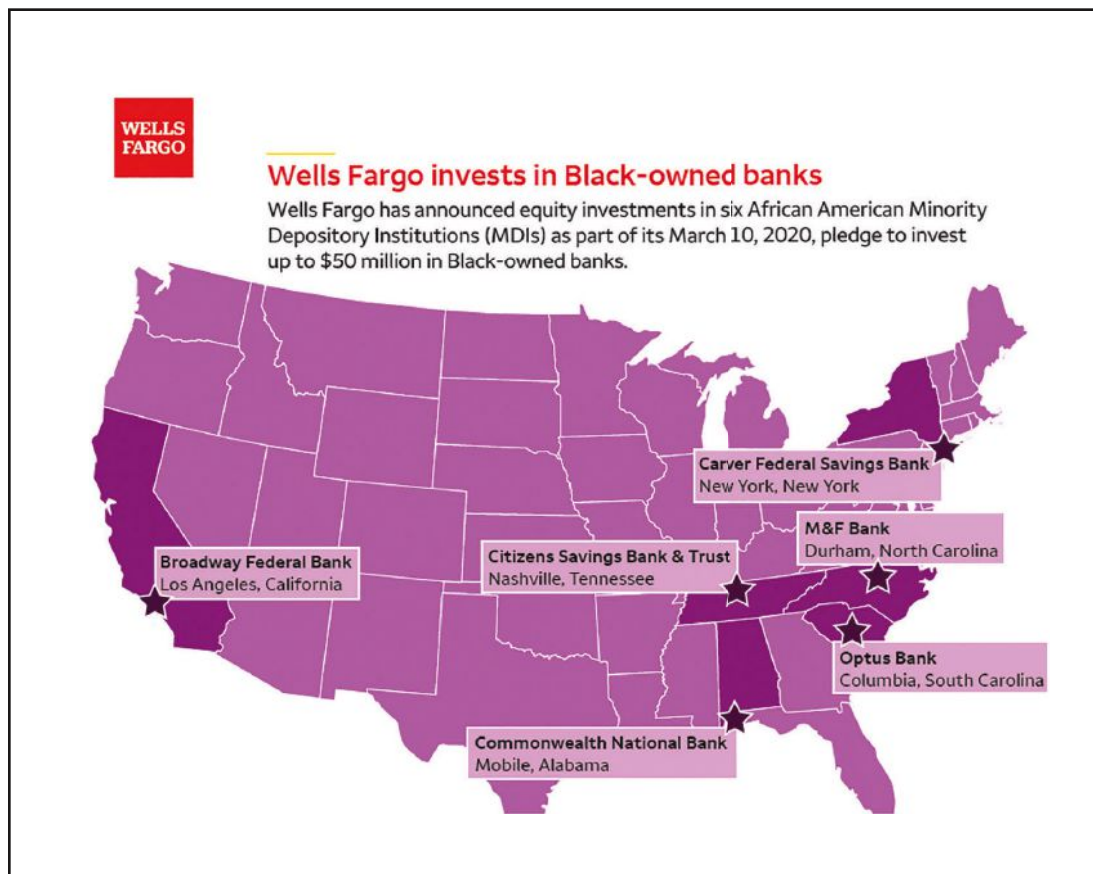
- Broadway Federal Bank in Los Angeles, CA.\*
- Carver Federal Savings Bank in New York, NY.
- Citizens Savings Bank & Trust in Nashville, TN.
- Commonwealth National Bank in Mobile, AL.
- M&F Bank in Durham, NC.
- Optus Bank in Columbia, SC.

*\*Broadway is expected to merge with City First Bank in early 2021 and will become the largest African-American MDI. Wells Fargo's investment will close upon completion of the merger.*

“February is Black History Month, and we’re proud to announce these investments at this time because they reflect our ded-

ication to helping African-American communities, many of which continue to fight the destructive economic impact of the pandemic. Wells Fargo wants to help drive stabilization and recovery by using our financial resources and our ability to act as a partner in order to generate better outcomes,” says Kleber Santos, head of diverse segments, representation and inclusion at Wells Fargo.

Wells Fargo’s financial commitments are in the form of critical equity capital, which is foundational to the MDIs’ ability to expand lending and deposit-taking capacity in their communities. The investments, primarily non-voting positions, are designed to enable the banks to maintain their MDI status.



In the on-going global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, communities of color have been disproportionately impacted, and this investment is part of Wells Fargo’s effort to generate a more inclusive recovery across the country.

“These investments are designed to help the banks become stronger and more impactful to the minority communities they serve, which leads to economic revitalization and job opportunities,” says Bill Daley, vice chairman of public affairs at Wells Fargo.

“So many communities have suffered during the past year. MDIs need capital, but they can also benefit from access to other

Wells Fargo is also supporting each MDI’s development via a banking relationship in the form of a single touchpoint coverage model that will help them access Wells Fargo’s expertise and pursue strategic priorities like entering new markets, expanding locations, designing new products, and hiring staff to support loan growth.

“The investment and support from Wells Fargo will allow us to substantially increase our impact on closing the racial wealth gap. We’re grateful and committed to ensuring this capital helps drive transformational wealth building opportunities for our communities and customers,” says Dominik Mjartan, president and CEO of Optus Bank.



External partners that assisted Wells Fargo include the National Bankers Association (NBA) and Sullivan & Cromwell. External advisory committee members are Kim D. Saunders, president and CEO of NBA, Aron Betru, managing director of the Center for Financial Markets at Milken Institute, and John W. Rogers, Jr., chairman, co-CEO, and CIO of Ariel Investments.

Wells Fargo's financial commitment complements additional initiatives that aim to serve all of its customers and communities:

Wells Fargo was one of the first banks to sign the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency's Project REACH MDI Pledge, which encourages banks to develop meaningful partnerships with MDIs to help them remain a vibrant part of the economic landscape and better promote fair, equal, and full access to financial products and services in their communities.

The company's Open for Business Fund invests all gross processing fees it received from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) in 2020 - approximately \$400 million - to non-profit organizations helping small businesses navigate the pandemic, with an emphasis on Black, African-American, and other minority-owned small businesses, as businesses with non-white owners are closing at a rate faster than industry peers.

The Wells Fargo Diverse Community Capital program is a \$175 million program with Community Development Financial In-

stitutions (CDFIs) to provide capital and technical assistance for diverse small business owners in the U.S. Approximately 75% of awardees are led by leaders from underrepresented communities. The DCC program has enabled CDFIs to lend nearly \$350 million to Black and African-American small business owners across the country since the program launched in 2015, according to Opportunity Finance Network.

In the 10 years spanning 2009 to 2018, Wells Fargo was the number one financier of home loans to African Americans and originated more mortgages to help Black buyers purchase homes than the four other largest bank lenders combined.

In 2017 the company pledged to create 250,000 Black homeowners by 2027 through lending \$60 billion for home purchases, increasing the diversity of the sales team, and supporting homebuyer education and counseling. In the first three years of the commitment, 60,527 African-American homeowners have been created with \$15.2 billion in financing.

Wells Fargo is donating \$5.4 million in grants to 15 legal assistance organizations across the U.S. that work to keep people and families housed via services and advocacy efforts. This first-of-its-kind effort seeks to enable these non-profit organizations to provide free or low-cost legal representation to people at risk of eviction. These organizations have track records of serving, on average, more than 60% people of color.



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# Study Finds Most Work Just As Hard at Home

People across the country seem to have gotten the hang of working from their homes - and they want to stay there.

In a new *Back-to-Normal Barometer*, big majorities of all age groups said they've been as effective from home as they were when offices closed in mid-March as the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic slammed into the nation.

In addition, according to the survey, more workers want to either stay at home to work once the virus office bans are lifted or at least work from home a couple of days a week. The numbers were highest for middle-aged and older workers.

"A big mistake employers should avoid is assuming that just because they personally are eager to return to pre-pandemic operations, all of their employees are, as well," warns Rich Thau, president of Engagious, one of the three firms, along with the Sports and Leisure Research Group and ROKK Solutions, that conducted the survey.

The three have been sharing their data to demonstrate how workers and firms are approaching returning to the office. In a recent survey some workers indicated they would sue employers if they caught the virus in the office.

The new *Barometer* found many employees remain resistant to returning to work. In many urban areas offices remain closed or at half the staff levels.

"When asked to rate the statement, 'I'm ready to return to my place of work full-time,' 26% of respondents 45 to 64 years old strongly disagreed while another 16% somewhat disagreed. That 42% combined disagreement was much higher than for younger-aged cohorts. In fact, only 33% of those 25 to 34 years old, and 22% of those 35 to 44 years old, similarly disagreed," the survey analysis reads.

"Our findings suggest some potential foundational changes to what constitutes the workplace," points out Jon Last, president of the Sports and Leisure Research Group.

The three firms are providing their *Barometer* to firms as they ready for reopening.

"Our research takes an unprecedented review of consumer attitudes of the past compared to today's environment so a vast variety of industries can make strategic business decisions to navigate the difficult terrain ahead to get back to normal," notes Ron Bonjean of ROKK Solutions.



Photo credit: depositphotos

African-American Career World

Sources: Back-to-Normal Barometer survey by Engagious, Sports and Leisure Research Group, and ROKK Solutions, and Washington Secrets



## Top 10 Skills U.S. Office Workers Want To Learn

A recent survey has found that 78% of U.S. office workers say they'd be more productive at their jobs if they could learn new skills.

## Employers Hiring More Thought Leaders Than Ever Before

A recent survey from ThoughtLDR of 125 U.S. and U.K. recruiters uncovers the difference thought leadership and personal branding can make in the executive search process.

In fact, the report finds 82% of recruiters surveyed believe a job candidate's thought leadership is more important to employers than before the pandemic, and 56% of recruiters surveyed feel thought leaders can command a salary premium compared to non-thought leaders.

In addition, the survey further finds LinkedIn

posts and authentic profile are now more important to prospective employers than PR mentions and podcasts.

According to ThoughtLDR, while there's an abundance of research about how thought leadership (having a "personal brand" and being a vocal expert in a given industry or sector) impacts company purchasing decisions, there's been little research into how thought leadership influences the executive search process and the way employers value job applicants.

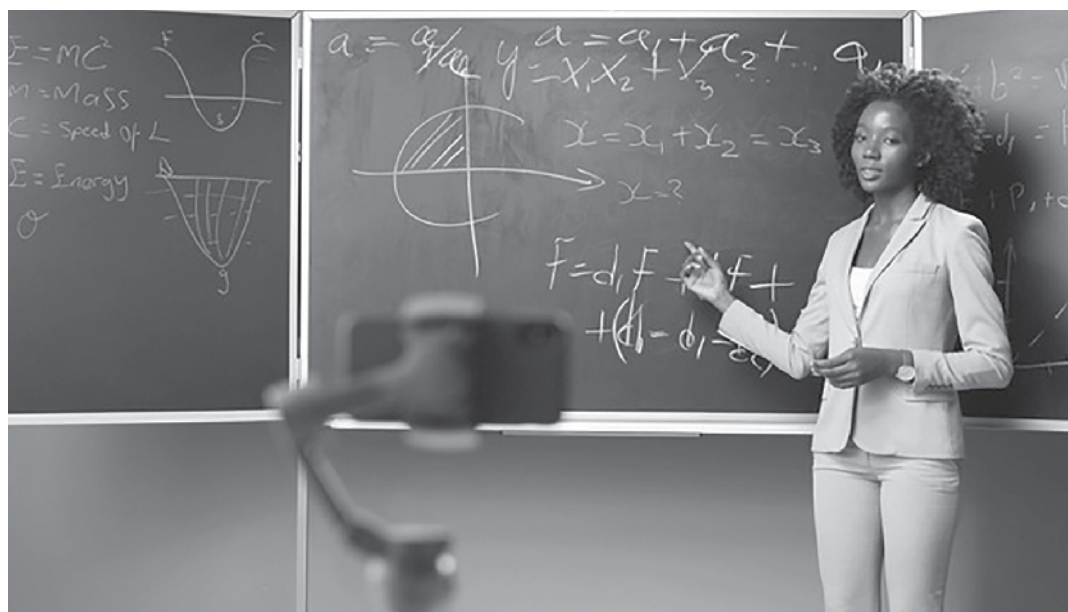
It begs the following questions: can thought leaders command a higher salary? Do thought leaders have the edge in today's executive search process? And has remote working changed the way employers value a candidate's thought leadership?

Thus, to find the answers to these questions, ThoughtLDR conducted this survey between August 1, 2020 and November 30, 2020 to offer insight to job candidates so they can give themselves the best chance of securing their next role in this fiercely competitive job market.

What ThoughtLDR found was that during the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, thought leadership matters even more to employers.

There's little doubt that the pandemic may have a lasting impact on many aspects of business. The increasing shift to remote ways of working means the online profiles of candidates are even more significant - and highly scrutinized - than ever before.

And, as such, employers are willing to pay a premium to recruit



*Here are the new skills respondents said they wanted to learn the most:*

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>Data Analytics</b>                          | 42% |
| <b>Multimedia Design or Editing</b>            | 37% |
| <b>Microsoft Office</b>                        | 37% |
| <b>Coding</b>                                  | 36% |
| <b>Leadership Development/Manager Training</b> | 30% |
| <b>Robotic Process Automation</b>              | 30% |
| <b>New Language</b>                            | 27% |
| <b>Presentation Skills</b>                     | 27% |
| <b>Conflict Resolution</b>                     | 25% |
| <b>Negotiation</b>                             | 21% |

thought leaders. More than half (56%) of those surveyed indicate candidates who are recognized as thought leaders can command a premium compared to their peers. More than one third (34%) of recruiters say thought leadership increases the salary and benefits package employers are willing to offer by up to 10%. And 16% believe thought leadership increases potential salary by 10% to 25%, plus a few (4%) feel thought leadership increases potential salary by more than 25%.

In a crowded field, thought leadership can give candidates the edge, as well. Almost two thirds (64%) of recruiters surveyed say candidates who is recognized in their industries as thought leaders are more likely to get the role than candidates with the same qualifications and experience, but no track record of thought leadership.

The more senior the candidate, the more important thought leadership is, too. Nine out of ten recruiters surveyed (93%) agree thought leadership matters to employers. Almost half (48%) report thought leadership was most important for candidates seeking senior leadership roles while just more than one third (36%) feel it's important throughout a candidate's career.

Furthermore, respondents state that by far the most sought-after activities are an authentic, personable LinkedIn profile (83%) and regular LinkedIn posts about industry hot topics (81%).

Interestingly, the traditional PR tactic of regular appearances in the media (49%) - while seen by almost half of respondents as still valued by employers - is deemed less important to a candidate's prospects than having a large, engaged following on LinkedIn (57%).

Personal blogs (24%), podcast appearances (20%) and video blogging (16%) were rated the least important candidate activities to employers.

For more insights, visit [dropbox.com/s/ennjn59jc1uedgw/Thought%20Leadership%20report%202021.pdf](https://dropbox.com/s/ennjn59jc1uedgw/Thought%20Leadership%20report%202021.pdf).

## Getting Noticed While Working Remotely

The novelty of working from home, with 8:53 a.m. alarm calls and midday MasterClass breaks, has long worn off. Now you miss the sub-zero temps of your cubicle and the days of not having to supervise your kid's virtual theater class.

Plus, "the anonymity of working from home is really taking a toll on people and many are feeling a bit forgotten," says Dr. Marianna Strongin, a psychologist in a private practice in New York, NY.

It can feel difficult to get the attention you deserve, with employees finding it increasingly hard to get their work noticed.

"In the office it's easy to drop by a colleague's desk or pop into your boss's office to give them an update or share a win," says Julia McKenna, CEO of Managerine. "At home there's a much bigger risk of finding yourself in a silo where your work is getting done, but no one takes notice."

The good news is that since most managers aren't used to this

dynamic either, you can shift and enhance your work style to prove your value, and even get ahead. Career experts weigh in about how to wow the head honchos and really make an impression from afa

### Celebrate Your Achievements

The key here is developing new outlets to promote yourself without going overboard.

"Keep your manager aware of accomplishments with a concise, yet informative, weekly recap. You'll win brownie points for keeping them informed of progress, decisions and risks while highlighting [your successes]," notes Nicole Hudson, a strategic transformation consultant.

"If you have a regular team meeting, allocate time for a round-robin of each person's biggest accomplishment."



In addition, more than ever, you'll also want to quantify things such as cost and time savings, percentage increase in revenue, and number of support desk tickets managed as much as possible. Include as many measurements like these as you can when updating your boss.

As you find new ways to share your triumphs in place of your former channels, you might want to refine and tweak accordingly. That weekly performance recap could become twice weekly, or that sales spreadsheet you used to keep for your own files may get tidied up into something more formal you share on Google Docs so your boss can see your progress in real time.





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### Don't Be Camera Shy

We hate to be the bearers of bad news, but that tiny picture of the Dude from *The Big Lebowski* serving as your Zoom avatar isn't making a convincing case for your promotion. It's tempting to leave your camera off, but the gesture of turning it on shows your commitment to your team and that you're fully present.

Strongin reports many of her clients are keeping their cameras off during work meetings for a slew of reasons, which is not advisable. "Remember, out of sight, out of mind," she reminds.

### Volunteer for Special Projects

If your company isn't big on Zoom meetings or forgoes them completely, this is an excellent way to show you're performing without being annoying. Likely, most of your coworkers won't bother to take on extra work.

"For them, working off site may feel like they can avoid having to work harder," says career coach Roy Cohen, author of *The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide*.

After taking on additional responsibility, tell your boss you'd like to schedule a brief, weekly phone call to touch base on the undertaking.

"This is time you can use to bond with your boss and build a stronger relationship. When bosses feel like we'll go above and beyond for them, they're more likely to do the same for us," says Cohen.

### Forward Glowing Reviews

This is another best practice McKenna recommends. Before the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, whenever a positive review or praise from your colleague trickled into your inbox, you might have neglected to forward it to your boss. Now it's a great reminder of what an indispensable team member you are.

"This practice ensures your manager is in the loop about the great work you're doing without you needing a phone call or long email to convey the news," says McKenna.

By making this process as convenient as possible for your boss, you're positioning yourself smartly for a salary bump or promotion. It can also help your case when annual appraisals come around.

"As a manager, this makes it easy for me to document my employee's great work," indicates McKenna. "I just print the email and throw it in their file for when I need to write their review at the end of the year."

### Network within Your Organization

Every month challenge yourself to schedule two or three virtual coffee dates with people with whom you haven't yet connected.

Don't be shy about sending blind emails to execs and peers on different teams. It may be a cold call now, but you could very well be forging a long-term strategic ally for down the line.

"Focus on building the relationship, staying present and finding ways to help so you're top of mind for recognition and promotion," advises Hudson. "Differentiate from other Zoom meetings by creating a different atmosphere."

Hudson suggests you move away from your desk to another area in your home or even outside, as doing so will underscore the personal connection you're hoping to foster and make the other party feel more relaxed.

## What Recruiters Really Care About Now

A new study reveals U.S. hiring professionals are focused on different key factors when considering job seekers amid the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Between August 26 and September 4, 2020, TopResume asked 334 recruiters, HR professionals, and hiring managers from across the country to share their opinions on previous deal-breakers. In summary, recruiters admitted caring less about employment gaps, and more about cover letters and thank-you notes than before the pandemic.

When provided with the statement, "I'm now more likely to read cover letters than before the pandemic," nearly half agreed (48%) and one third were neutral (34%), whereas only a minority (18%) disagreed. Historically, career experts have urged job seekers to write cover letters, even though they also acknowledged only a 50% chance of them being read.

However, TopResume's new data demonstrates a growing importance of writing a thoughtful cover letter that's tailored to the job description and requirements.

"Undeniably, COVID-19 has thrown a wrench into the hiring process for both job seekers and recruiters, alike, which our data confirms by uncovering what's newly important in one's candidacy," says Amanda Augustine, TopResume's career expert, a certified professional career coach (CPCC) and certified professional resume writer (CPRW).

"Our findings reveal that job seekers may be taking themselves out of the running even before - or right after - the virtual interview because they're ignoring the key factors to which recruiters are suddenly paying attention."

Furthermore, when presented with the statement, "A candidate's thank-you email/note (or lack thereof) takes on greater importance when evaluating a candidate," an overwhelming majority (68%) agree that the interview thank you has become more significant, one fifth (20%) are neutral on the topic, and a only a meager percentage (12%) disagree.

*In addition, when hiring professionals were asked to identify which skills, if any, have taken on greater importance since the pandemic, the following surfaced as the top five (in descending order):*

- Adaptability and Flexibility
- Communication
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
- Collaboration and Teamwork
- Time Management

Perhaps the most encouraging data from TopResume's survey is that employment gaps no longer signify the shameful alarm as in previous times. When asked, "Do you now view candidates being unemployed and/or having an employment gap lasting more than three months as a red flag?" an astounding 87% were unfazed by an inconsistent work history and only 13% said there's still a stigma attached to unemployment or a lengthy employment gap.



In the next issue of  
***AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
CAREER WORLD***

Summer/Fall 2021

- SPOTLIGHT  
ON VETERANS
- BANKING &  
FINANCE
- SUPPLIER/  
BUSINESS  
DIVERSITY
- PHARMACEUTICAL/  
BIOMEDICAL
- EDUCATION  
ADVANCEMENT
- IT OPPORTUNITIES  
& COMPUTER  
SYSTEMS



# Advancing Equity

*From the financial world to the beauty industry, companies are working toward greater diversity and advancing equity.*

## Blanks Helps Beckman Coulter Deliver on Its Diversity Mission

Doing work “for the greater good” is what attracted Warren (Mickey) Blanks to Brea, CA-headquartered Beckman Coulter. Blanks is the company’s senior vice president of human resources and internal communications.

In this role he’s responsible for leading HR for a workforce of more than 10,000 associates worldwide. Blanks leads the company’s people strategy, associate engagement, change management, internal communications, and diversity and inclusion (D&I).

Beckman Coulter’s response to the global coronavirus (COVID-19) earlier this year puts Blanks’ role into perspective.

“We brought together a powerhouse, cross-functional core team to create a comprehensive emergency response to the pandemic, including crisis communications,” explains Blanks.

“Our team answered difficult questions with solutions that always kept one thing in mind: the safety and well-being of our associates. Together we quickly mobilized our associates to work remotely, set up new benefits in terms of childcare, dependent, eldercare services and time off, and communicated clear standards

The role of a diversity and inclusion (D&I) executive is multifaceted, tasked with evolving a company’s policies and procedures to ensure an equitable distribution of opportunity for people from marginalized backgrounds.

Often this position goes hand in hand with talent acquisition, which means establishing relationships with colleges, universities, and communities to find a truly diverse pool of job applicants. And then, of course, there’s education: teaching, sharing, and opening up discussions to create a greater sense of community and understanding among coworkers.

According to McKinsey & Company, companies have committed \$66 billion toward advancing racial equity, with 78% of those commitments specifically targeted for affordable housing and small and medium enterprise (SME) development.

D&I execs from several leading large corporations share the values and goals of their companies while offering promotion strategies and the best way for young professionals to get their foot in the door.

*BY KELLY BRYANT*

greater depth about company culture and working styles during the interviewing process.

for site cleaning, social distancing and use of face coverings for team members who perform essential work in our plants or in the office. Our team did a stellar job developing a plan within 30 days that proved to endure the ups and downs of 2020 for our 10,000-plus associates around the world.”


The Beckman Coulter team also reimaged manufacturing operations during the pandemic. “Of course, we still produced the medical equipment that hospitals and laboratories desperately need,” notes Blanks.

“Our manufacturing operations are so much different now...I’m impressed with the extensive work my HR team contributed to this massive effort.”

The HR leader for Beckman Coulter Diagnostics further explains how the hiring process has changed, too. “We’re conducting all interviews virtually via Microsoft Teams meetings. We know it isn’t easy to replace in-person conversations, but we’re glad to say we have been able to continue to make many successful hires during this time,” Blanks explains.

To make up for an in-person visit to the office, the company’s hiring managers and interviewers take extra time to speak with candidates in



A professional portrait of Warren (Mickey) Blanks, a Black man with long dreadlocks and a goatee, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark blue pinstriped suit jacket over a light blue button-down shirt. A blue pocket square is visible in his jacket. He is standing in front of a blurred background of a modern building with large windows. His hands are clasped in front of him.

Warren (Mickey) Blanks is Beckman Coulter's senior vice president of human resources and internal communications.

The company continues to focus on identifying, attracting, and recruiting diverse talent to meet current and future business needs across the organization. To that end, notes Blanks, it partners with the National Black MBA Association (NBMAA), the Society of Women Engineers (SWE), National Sales Network, Reaching Out MBA, National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), and The Consortium, among others, to support its university internship and leadership development programs in operations, STEM, general management, and human resources.

With the company for three years, Blanks was attracted to Beckman Coulter for its shared purpose that resonates with his own. “‘Helping realize life’s potential.’ I share that purpose with our organization. The work we’re doing is for the greater good and that really attracted me,” he relates, adding that in his HR leadership role he’s “significantly invested in helping every associate realize their full potential.”

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**“[‘There is no off season.’] What that means is that when you’re in school, take every opportunity for internships. Use your summers as an opportunity to get real-world experience, solidify what you’ve learned and apply those skills.**

**This offers great opportunity, great experience and great insights that you can actually apply when you go into permanent career.”**

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What makes Beckman Coulter a great place to work, he notes, is the ability of every associate to “show up and be their true authentic selves.”

In addition, several initiatives also make Beckman Coulter Diagnostics a great place to work. For example, he refers to how the company’s leaders actively shape its D&I culture “by committing to development objectives and actions that drive more significant equity and belonging,” he says.

“We host Conversation Matters Global D&I Forums,” he continues. “These forums encourage real and raw discussion about important topics such as race and social justice, stereotypes, managing bias, etc.”

The company further encourages participation in associate resource groups (ARGs), according to Blanks. “We currently have five ARGs, including Women, African descent, LGBTQ, LatinX and Asian. And we are continually expanding the ARGs around the world. We just launched a chapter of the Women’s ARG in Europe and a women’s leadership forum in Dubai.”

The company also sponsors a robust Global Mentorship Program for women and people of color to enable access to senior leaders and support to guide the associate’s career development.

“Our annual survey results tell the story: we’re honored to achieve a score of 90% on the Diversity & Inclusion index in our annual survey - the highest score of all survey dimensions,” he proudly cites.

For those preparing to enter the professional workforce, Blanks reminds young professionals that the medical device industry needs talent across the board.

“We need engineering, science and tech, but we also need HR, marketing, [quality control], manufacturing and production leaders,” he underscores. “We need various roles and offer many careers to make life-saving medical devices.”

To find career success, Blanks offers a quote from former NFL running back Emmitt Smith: there is no off season.

“What that means is that when you’re in school, take every opportunity for internships. Use your summers as an opportunity to get real-world experience, solidify what you’ve learned and apply those skills. This offers great opportunity, great experience and great insights that you can actually apply when you go into permanent career.”

He also offers this advice: “Own your career. Learn what your true north is, and be sure you get the experiences that help you to get there. Your course can always change, but others will define your future for you without a plan and relentless execution.”

*Find career opportunities with Beckman Coulter at [beckmancoulter.com/careers](http://beckmancoulter.com/careers). Connect on LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook.*

—Amanda N. Wegner

### Shareef of Reddit Encourages Job Applicants to Be Curious

When Christina Shareef stepped into the role of Reddit, Inc.’s head of diversity, inclusion and belonging, the company behind the social platform was already moving steadfastly toward establishing its own diversity and inclusion (D&I) road map.

Under her guidance, the company has organized a number of foundational opportunities including allyship workshops, inclusive hiring training, and inclusive leadership training to increase knowledge, understanding, and awareness in the diversity and belonging space.

With the understanding that knowledge is power, San Francisco, CA-headquartered Reddit has conducted proactive pay parity exercises, created a more inclusive university recruiting strategy to increase the representation of underrepresented employees, and increased support to their employee resource groups by helping identify areas where they can leverage their representation within the company.

Christina Shareef is  
Reddit, Inc.’s head of  
diversity, inclusion and  
belonging.





**“All growth doesn’t happen vertically, so it’s important to recognize that horizontal growth opportunities increase our ability to see problems from several angles and create solutions that cannot be seen through a single perspective.”**

“The evolution of our efforts currently lies in combining our programs with the overall support and goals of the business so that we’re building inclusive strategies as a baseline that will ultimately lead to diversity, inclusion, and belonging becoming a core part of our cultural DNA,” says Shareef.

Reddit works closely with minority-led student groups within the majority schools, and has developed relationships with HBCUs to reach a diverse talent pool. But, to Shareef, it’s more than just an opportunity to find top-notch applicants. It’s a chance for the company to answer student questions and really take the time to offer sound advice for laying the groundwork for a successful career.

“Although we’re only able to hire a finite number of folks, we can still have an impact on everyone that we cross paths with,” indicates Shareef.

“For our full-time employees, we ensure we have diverse candidate slates through internal sourcing efforts and intentional partnerships with external groups that focus on underrepresented minorities. Again, these relationships aren’t transactional, so while we post our positions with these organizations and we have the ability to tap into our relationships for candidates, we also pull our weight by making ourselves available to support our partners.”

Shareef means it when she says Reddit isn’t only seeking to reap the benefits of exceptional talent, but is also eager in terms of helping young professionals grow and excel in their careers. Her strategic advice for promotion seekers is incredibly smart. While they’re always looking to grab that next rung on the career ladder, she stresses to also or instead look at horizontal growth and how it can be incredibly helpful toward taking that next step up.

“All growth doesn’t happen vertically, so it’s important to recognize that horizontal growth opportunities increase our ability to see problems from several angles and create solutions that cannot be seen through a single perspective,” she explains, adding this advice: “Also, speak up! Make sure you’re verbalizing your intention for your career and ask for help getting there.”



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This could mean asking for feedback from your peers and immediate manager, or really getting an understanding of what's needed to hit the next tier of your career path. Shareef encourages professionals to create a plan of action and find a trustworthy person in a role that's aspirational to you to serve as a mentor.

Although confidence is key, and executives like Shareef are incredible cheerleaders of your professional goals, she advises everyone to not "drink your own Kool-Aid." By that, she means don't let ego cloud your judgment, no matter how talented and skilled you are.

"Remember your grounding reason as to why you do the work," she says.

*Learn more about Reddit's professional opportunities at [redditinc.com/careers](https://redditinc.com/careers). Keep up with the company on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook.*

### Fripp of Yum! Brands Encourages Promotion Seekers to Take Career Advancement Slow & Steady

Yum! Brands, a restaurant giant whose family of brands includes KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, and The Habit Burger Grill, is rife with opportunity, and not only those within the four walls of its 50,000 eateries worldwide. James Fripp, chief equity and inclusion officer for the corporation, encourages job seekers to think outside of the box (or the restaurant), and consider the many needs of Louisville, KY-headquartered Yum! Brands.

"A lot of students may think about our brands, but not think about the types of careers that are available in our organization," he says.

"In our corporate environment we have the same roles as any other corporation, and so I'd ask recent graduates or job seekers to think about the career they're looking for, then research us to see if we have that career path."

Finance, marketing, human resources and IT, just to name a few, all have homes within Yum! Brands to support the household names they represent. Fripp, himself, is the person responsible for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies and practices across the company, including the corporate workplace and the franchise system.

"One of our key values is a belief in all people," he notes. "We've talked very openly and honestly about what that looks like. We've got some very tangible things to help develop our underrepresented minority talent, as well as recruit talent to the organization or different organizations. Yum! Brands has signed on for a number of dif-



James Fripp is chief equity and inclusion officer for Yum! Brands.

ferent organizations that support diversity, including CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion, The Consortium, and We Are All Human's The Hispanic Promise."

Internships are always a great way for a potential job seeker to get to know a company, and vice versa. However, Fripp strongly recommends contacting an employee for a job shadowing session. He offers the example of a young woman attending a university local to Yum! Brands' office in Plano, TX who was seeking a position in human resources. She spent the day with Fripp, attending meetings and getting a clear picture of what his job entails.

"The reality of it is, at the same time, I'm evaluating her to see how she engages with our team of people," explains Fripp.

"I asked her ideas and thoughts to learn more about her perspective. It's a different way to get connected to the organization, and it gave some really, really good insight into who we are and what we do. But it also gave me great insight into how she would engage and react in our company culture."

Once you've landed a plum gig at a great company, Fripp has plenty of advice for advancing your career, but warns not to move too quickly.

**"[In terms of showing you're ready to lead and ready for promotion], come to the table and be prepared to talk about not only your strengths, but also about what you need to work on and what you're doing to address that."**

"Don't try to go too fast in your career," he counsels. "A lot of times our junior folks know how to do the job itself, but they haven't learned how to lead. The job in the leadership role is to lead, not to do, and what they were really good at was doing. That can negatively impact their ability to get promoted and do other things."

Instead, Fripp suggests exploring the different types of assessments available online (he likes those produced by a company called Hogan). Many of them focus on emotional intelligence and are excellent at identifying your gaps, as well as your best areas of opportunity. Then, when you're ready for that next step, speak with a manager or human resources about potential job growth.

"Come to the table and be prepared to talk about not only your strengths, but also about what you need to work on and what you're doing to address that," he advises.

"And that, from a promotion strategy perspective, helps the leader or those senior folks who are examining others for promotion, as well as yourself. It says you're able to self-assess and pay attention to your skill set."

*Get to know Yum! Brands at [yum.com/careers](https://yum.com/careers), where you can also find job openings. Keep in touch with the company on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook.*



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### Bowman's D&I Strategy for Bank of America Calls for Action in the Company & the Community

Since joining the Bank of America team in 2007, Cynthia H. Bowman has worn many hats throughout the company's global human resources division. These varying roles have made her well-equipped to serve as the Charlotte, NC-headquartered company's chief diversity and inclusion and talent acquisition officer.

"As a company, Bank of America has always made diversity and inclusion core priorities, and core to how we grow responsibly," says Bowman.

"We know that diversity and inclusion makes us stronger. The value we deliver as a company is really strengthened when we bring broad perspectives together to meet the needs of our diverse stakeholders."

With that in mind, she leads BofA's Global Diversity & Inclusion Council, which consists of senior leaders from every group within the company. They work together with the primary goal of promoting diversity and inclusion (D&I) goal-setting. The council has been in place for more than 20 years and is chaired by BofA's CEO Brian Moynihan who, Bowman says, never misses a meeting.

"When you talk about diversity and inclusion being driven from the top, we have that here with our board, certainly with our CEO's commitment, as well as our management team members and the leadership throughout," she reports.

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**"Don't be afraid to promote yourself or your accomplishments. Demonstrate leadership, not just academic performance. Extracurricular activities, job leadership positions, community involvement, and outside interests are also important. Many corporations look for things like this when considering an individual to bring into their organization."**

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"One of the things we do is focus on building robust analytics and data to really drive progress. We have processes in place at all levels of the company to drive accountability and progress."

Bowman makes note of the fact that the company puts a

continued focus on committing to areas that matter to it and the communities it serves. For example, it made a \$1 billion commitment over the course of four years to create opportunities for people in communities of color that have been greatly impacted by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The initiative focuses on things like health and healthcare, jobs, affordable housing, reskilling, and support for small businesses.



Cynthia H. Bowman is the chief diversity and inclusion and talent acquisition officer at Bank of America.

"We've started to double down our efforts around job reskilling," indicates Bowman. "In November 2020 we announced a \$25 million jobs initiative which provides a \$1 million grant to each of 21 higher education institutions. Each partner institution will develop or enhance existing programs to meet specific skill gaps in their communities to create higher-paying, family-sustaining jobs that are in demand. Focused on Black and Hispanic Latino individuals. The initiative includes 11 community colleges and 10 public Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)."

For the talent acquisition part of her position, Bowman is heavily involved in the work BofA does with colleges and universities to attract talent to the bank, as well as support them as they grow their careers. To

that end, Bowman offers some of her best advice when trying to get your foot in the door at BofA.

"It's important to have a solid resume in place," she points out. "It's certainly critical when applying for a position at Bank of America, or any other company for that matter. I coach a lot of youth when they send me resumes for consideration."

She strongly recommends keeping your resume to one page, even if that means excluding older or less relevant experience. Companies often receive a large number of resumes, so it's best to keep yours brief to ensure your best qualities and accomplishments stand out in the crowd.

"That's the one document most corporations will see before they have a chance to talk to you personally," states Bowman.

"Don't be afraid to promote yourself or your accomplishments. Demonstrate leadership, not just academic performance. Extracurricular activities, job leadership positions, community involvement, and outside interests are also important. Many corporations look for things like this when considering an individual to bring into their organization."

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# Bedrock for Recovery

*The telecommunications and networking industry is playing a key role in the pandemic recovery.*

## Givan Tells Comcast's Story in Washington, DC

As a senior manager of government communications, Alexandra Givan supports Comcast's brand reputation efforts and corporate communications activities in Washington, DC. This includes "planning and executing events, initiatives and campaigns that tell our company story to a variety of key DC stakeholders and audiences," she details.

She also manages initiatives and communications strategies designed to support and promote Comcast's position on legislative and regulatory issues.

With Comcast for five years, including one year as an intern, Givan was initially attracted to the size and scope of the company: "I was fascinated by Comcast's leadership and innovation in the cable, technology and media industries, as well as by the phenomenal projects and storytelling produced by NBCUniversal and the brands under their umbrella."

What makes Philadelphia, PA-headquartered Comcast a great place to work is its dynamic projects and incredible leaders, she adds.

With much of the world now working and connecting remotely, the telecommunications and networking industry has become even more essential to our lives and the economy. And according to Deloitte's recent 2021 telecommunications outlook, this industry "will continue to provide the bedrock for other industries to recover and thrive in 2021."

As a key to recovery in the on-going global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the job prospects in this industry remain top-notch. Here several professionals across a range of positions share insight into their companies and advice about achieving career success.

BY AMANDA N. WEGNER

"I love the fact that I'm working on a new issue or project every single day. The media and technology industries are rapidly evolving. It's incredible that, as a company and a team, we evolve and adapt to the current environment in real time."

In regard to leadership, she notes that working with and for leaders you trust - and who trust you - is critical to employee engagement and investment. "As a junior employee, our leaders make me feel valued, empowered and respected," she shares.

When it comes to advice, Givan offers a mantra that was introduced to her by her supervisor: "You don't ask, you don't get."

According to Givan, "it doubles as the best career advice I've ever received, and has shaped the way I approach my short- and long-term career goals."

She also provides a lesson she's learned in her career journey to date: be yourself.

"Throughout the years, I've found bringing my authentic self - my ideas and my

passions - has certainly worked to my advantage. I've been able to explore new opportunities and stretch myself beyond what I could've imagined by simply trusting my gut, being myself, and cel-





Alexandra Givan is a senior manager of government communications at Comcast.

**"You don't ask, you don't get. It doubles as the best career advice I've ever received, and has shaped the way I approach my short- and long-term career goals."**

celebrating my identity through my work. Being vulnerable and authentic has led to a lot of professional growth, and is one of the main reasons I enjoy what I do so much!" she enthuses.

*Find career opportunities with Comcast at [jobs.comcast.com](https://jobs.comcast.com). Connect on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, YouTube and Instagram.*

### Briggs Brings AT&T to Life on Social

Brandi Briggs sets the tone for AT&T's social media. As the company's social media director, Briggs oversees social media engagement and listening across several platforms. She also leads content strategy and execution for @ATTNews on Twitter, the company's source for media communications. Both her teams handle crisis communication and all brand reputational engagement across 25 social media handles.

"I love my job and the people I work with!" enthuses Briggs. "Leadership can count on my team to be the eyes and ears of the company as we provide reporting insights to help influence the overall strategy."

Briggs' "proudest project" of 2020 was a cross-platform campaign called Amplifying Black Voices, a direct response to racism and inequity.

"One of our corporate values is 'Stand for Equality,'" explains Briggs. "After the death of George Floyd, we took a social pause and then turned our social media platforms over to our Black employees. They were able to share personal videos and messages to our 16 million fans and followers."

Briggs joined AT&T 17 years ago, right out of college. "I was a new mother and desperately needed a summer job. AT&T came to my church recruiting for sales positions," she recalls.

"While I didn't have experience in sales, I loved that they saw my potential and were willing to train me. I started on the frontline of the company in Charlotte, NC, and now I sit in headquarters in Dallas, TX."

What makes AT&T a great place to work is three-fold, according to Briggs: its people, who are the heartbeat of the company, its leadership programs and its values.

Briggs expands on AT&T's values: "As a Black female, to know that my company created a campaign called #dreaminblack to inspire, affirm and support the Black Community in achievements, was a wow moment for me. AT&T's values make me feel valued as an employee. I truly feel they're invested in my community and in our overall success."

To achieve career success, Briggs advises determining what problem leadership is trying to solve but can't. Then make it your mission to be the answer.



Brandi Briggs is AT&T's social media director.

**"Help them solve the problem [leadership is trying to solve but can't]. If you do that, then you won't have to worry about the next promotion or opportunity. Trust they'll come looking for you."**

"Help them solve the problem. If you do that, then you won't have to worry about the next promotion or opportunity," she further counsels. "Trust they'll come looking for you."

She also advocates for continued education and constant learning: "Never settle on yesterday's knowledge. The world is always changing, and the best way to keep up with it is keep learning, researching and developing yourself."

*Find career opportunities with AT&T at [att.jobs](https://att.jobs). Connect on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Glassdoor.*



### Satterthwaite Oversees HPE's Compute Business

Krista Satterthwaite helps ensure San Jose, CA-headquartered Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) is developing the innovative technology customers need to run their businesses.

As vice president and general manager, Mainstream Compute, Satterthwaite is responsible for defining and implementing the product strategy, product management, quality and go-to-market execution for the company's \$10-billion-plus Compute business, which includes industry-leading HPE servers.

"My team talks with customers to deeply understand their needs," says Satterthwaite. "Then we partner with engineering to develop solutions that meet those needs, managing the entire life cycle of our products."

With the company for 23 years, Satterthwaite wanted to work for a large com-



Krista Satterthwaite is vice president and general manager, Mainstream Compute for Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE).

pany because she felt there would be more opportunity for growth. In addition, "Hewlett-Packard was an industry icon with a strong culture and a great reputation in technology. That was very attractive, too."

And that strong culture, notes Satterthwaite, is one aspect of what makes HPE a great place to work.

"At HPE we talk about 'demonstrating we before I,' and it's true. That belief is essential for getting anything done within a company, especially one this size," she elaborates.

For career success, Satterthwaite advises that young professionals set high expectations.

"You get what you expect out of life, so set your expectations high," she says. "I like to

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**"Things like a can-do attitude, great enthusiasm, being visible, taking ownership, being responsive, finding and fixing issues, and being a good communicator. Those are important no matter what role or industry you're in."**

think of it like a thermostat - set it high and eventually you'll get there."

This is advice Satterthwaite follows herself. As a sophomore in college, she told her older brother she wanted to get an MBA. He was thrilled and proceeded to tell her how much money she would make in her first job.

"For four years, he set my thermostat on that number. When I received my first job offer, it was a little below that number, so I negotiated up and accepted the job - all because my brother helped set my expectations high."

To best prepare for the field, Satterthwaite offers two suggestions.

First, find ways to experience "a day in the life" of any career you're interested in. "That way," she explains, "you'll have a better and more realistic understanding of what the roles entail."

Secondly, while skills and knowledge about your chosen field are important, it's equally as important to understand what really counts in business and how people really get ahead.

"Things like a can-do attitude, great enthusiasm, being visible, taking ownership, being responsive, finding and fixing issues, and being a good communicator," she states. "Those are important no matter what role or industry you're in."

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### Johnson Defines F5's Customer Experience

Francine Johnson is responsible for F5's end- to-end customer experience. "My job is to not only understand, but to also anticipate our customer's needs and wants," says Johnson, senior director of customer experience.

"As the customer experience leader, I develop key metrics," she continues. "And use data and insights to prioritize customer needs, build strategic partnerships, and offer an experience that is both relevant and meaningful."

Johnson recently launched F5's Net Promoter Score (NPS) program. NPS is the key metric F5 uses "to measure how well we're driving a customer-obsessed culture and building brand loyalty," she explains.

Johnson refers to herself as a "boomeranger" when talking about her time with the company. She worked for F5 for 10 years in global services, leaving the company as vice president of global service sales. In her time away, she earned her MBA, then took a "four-year vacation" to discover why customer success and customer experience are so important to the overall customer journey. She was rehired in early 2020 to build and lead the company's corporate customer experience.

As someone who went back to work for the Seattle, WA-headquartered company, Johnson points out that there are many reasons

why F5 is a great place to work. One is the company's BeF5 tenets, of which Johnson's favorite is human first.

"We don't just say human first, but we also put it to work throughout the organization on a daily basis!" she enthuses. "At F5 we demonstrate human-first behaviors through programs such as Global Good and also our employee inclusion groups."

Another reason, she cites, is F5's love for its customers. "Many companies say it, but do they actually show up as customer-obsessed every day? At F5 we do, and our employees are not only empowered, but they also want to make the best decision on behalf of the customer."

And finally, notes Johnson, F5 has an excellent diversity and inclusion (D&I) program. "We value diversity, and it's not just lip service," she points out. "Diversity and inclusion are a part of our corporate DNA."



Francine Johnson is senior director of customer experience for F5.

**"If you want a career in high-tech, then my advice is to find a company whose values align with yours and seek a mentor. There are so many different ways to get started in the tech field; the key is figuring out what drives you, what motivates you, and how you can put your unique skill set to work when there may not be an obvious fit."**

More than 16 years ago, Johnson started at F5 as an executive assistant with no background in tech and worked her way up to be an organization leader.

"If you want a career in high-tech, then my advice is to find a company whose values align with yours and seek a mentor," she advises.

"There are so many different ways to get started in the tech field; the key is figuring out what drives you, what motivates you, and how you can put your unique skill set to work when there may not be an obvious fit."

*Find career opportunities with F5 at [f5.com/company/careers](http://f5.com/company/careers).*

*Connect on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and YouTube.*



### Morris Serves a Liaison Between Citrix & Its Investors

As senior manager of investor relations, Dawn Morris is an important bridge between Citrix and its investors.

"I essentially act as a liaison between our executive leadership team and the investment community. In doing this I work closely with our financial planning and analysis, accounting, operations, legal, sustainability, product, sales, and communications teams to better understand the state of the business, and create key messaging for our investors," she explains.

What Morris likes most about investor relations is that it provides a comprehensive view of the entire business. "I frequently meet with colleagues in multiple departments and levels within Citrix to discuss business trends," she says.

"You learn a lot about different roles and functions within the organization and how they contribute to achieving our goals, providing an opportunity to both explore new interests and gain additional skills."

While Morris works on several projects throughout the year, as the head of Citrix's Black Professionals Network employee resource group, she was delighted to collaborate with the company's diversity, inclusion and belonging team to create and implement a company-wide Daring Dialogue series in 2020, a series in which executives and employees tack-

led topics such as racism and privilege.

With Fort Lauderdale, FL-headquartered Citrix for 10 years, Morris was attracted to the company for its rapid innovation and growth. What keeps her with the company is its people and culture.

"It's great to work with people who share common values; it creates a dynamic environment where we all inspire and support each other while carrying out company initiatives. Citrix embraces individuality and allows us all to express our ideas freely," points out Morris, who also appreciates the flexibility Citrix provides employees.

She offers some advice to others: take chances when looking into careers or a new job.



Dawn Morris is senior manager of investor relations at Citrix.

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**"Whatever career path you choose, it's important to ensure you're continuously learning and strengthening your skill sets."**

"It may be easier to do something you're already experienced in, but, in order to grow, you have to get out of your comfort zone and try new things. This could be something as simple as creating new efficient processes or volunteering to work on a new project. Whatever career path you choose, it's important to ensure you're continuously learning and strengthening your skill sets."

*Find career opportunities with Citrix at [jobs.citrix.com](http://jobs.citrix.com). Connect on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.*

### Fatty Makes Sure New Devices & Software Work as Expected on Oracle Cloud

Momodou Fatty's work helps ensure Oracle Cloud Infrastructure works as expected. As a network development engineer on the network qualification team for Oracle Cloud, Fatty does "deep-dive testing" of networking software and hardware, including routers, switches and the software that run in them, from different vendors, to make sure they work for the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI).

"Every time OCI decides to purchase a new networking device or update its networking software, I or someone from my team would take on that project to make sure the hardware/ software works as expected for the services OCI offers," he details.

Fatty recently completed the qualification of an updated software on a platform that will protect OCI from malicious attacks. An Oracle engineer for three and a half years, Fatty was attracted to Austin, TX-headquartered Oracle for its reputation as a technology powerhouse. And what makes it a great place to work is its "great work-life balance, great opportunities for growth and smart engineers to learn from," he notes.

To best prepare yourself for the field, Fatty recommends stepping up your game by taking on additional projects, however small they may be.

"What you learn in school will help, but you'll realize very quickly after graduation that work in the real world is much more complex," notes Fatty.

"For this reason get ahead of the competition by doing little projects here and there in the field you're interested in while in school or



Momodou Fatty is a network development engineer on the network qualification team for Oracle Cloud.

immediately post-graduation. For computer science students, write some code that solves real-world problems. This would put you ahead of a lot of graduates in job-hunting," he further recommends.

*Find career opportunities with Oracle at [oracle.com/corporate/careers](http://oracle.com/corporate/careers). Connect on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube.*

### Ford Helps Others Achieve Sales Success at Equinix

Rosalyn Ford plays an important role in helping Redwood City, CA-headquartered Equinix sales professionals succeed.

As the senior sales onboarding manager, Ford has two roles: to coach and assist new sales executives to help them reach their quotas quickly, and to provide program development, design, and support for the North American field sales organization.

Recently she played a role in developing the company's All Hands Sales meetings, which is watched by more than 500 people.

With the company for 17 years, Ford spent the first 14 years as an account director, selling to Fortune 500 enterprises around the world. Her success helped her achieve nine Presidents Club awards.

**"I think it's important to really highlight your accomplishments, and it doesn't always have to be work-related - if you lead your community board, that's a leadership skill set that you're developing. Be creative when you think about accomplishments."**

What makes Equinix a great place to work, she indicates, is its culture and people. "Equinix really is a place where you can truly say I feel safe, I belong, and I matter," elaborates Ford. "Everyone pitches in and works as a team, even in this Zoom environment."

That commitment to people was furthered in May 2020 when the company stood up an entire diversity, inclusion and belonging organization to support employee resource groups (ERG). Ford is a founding member of BlackConnect, an ERG for Black employees in the company. Equinix also launched GenteConnect, VetConnect and InterAsianConnect, and there are more to come.

When searching for a job, Ford offers two pieces of advice: showcase your accomplishments and be open to opportunities.

"I think it's important to really highlight your accomplishments, and it doesn't always have to be work-related - if you lead your community board, that's a leadership skill set that you're developing. Be creative when you think about accomplishments," she recommends.

In regard to being open to opportunities, Ford was marketing major who wanted to become a marketing researcher. Then a chance to work for Apple changed her career trajectory. "Suddenly," she says, "I was in the technology industry and loved it."

*Find career opportunities with Equinix at [equinix.com/company/careers](http://equinix.com/company/careers). Connect on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.*

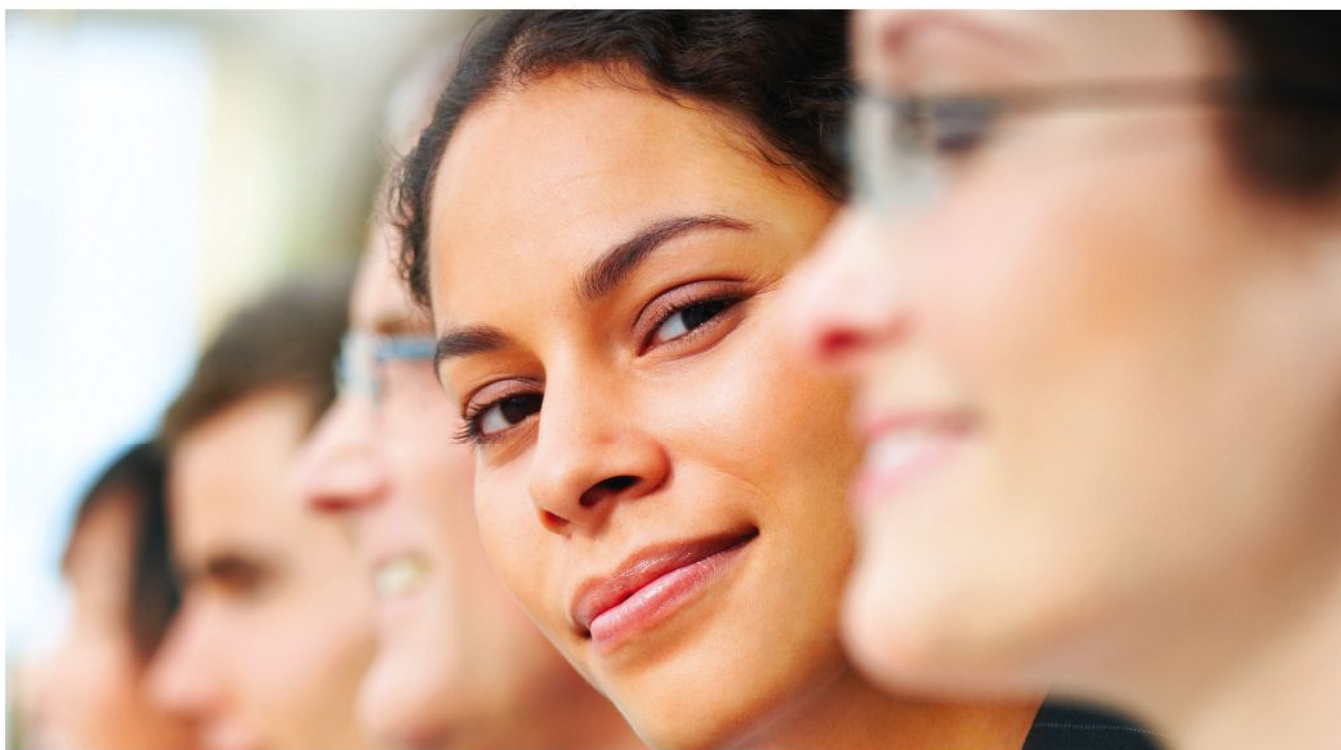


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# Premium Possibilities

*Insurance leaders upgrade business - and talent - strategies while ensuring the future of the industry and ensuring premium possibilities for all types of talent.*

Insurers face a “synthesis challenge,” according to the Deloitte Insights 2020 insurance outlook. Analysts describe a legacy industry steeped in corporate histories reaching back generations being confronted by a time-crunched, tech-savvy customer base demanding innovation. It’s a classic clash, but one from which, analysts say, innovation must emerge the victor. They conclude future success will be derived by integrating innovative tech with updated business models. While the industry will continue to rely on core competencies of actuary science, claims handling, sales, and finance, innovation will come from professionals skilled in artificial intelligence (AI), digitalization, and product development.

Perhaps the most revolutionary change impacting the industry right now, however, is a dramatic shake-up in its workforce.

In 2018 Baby Boomers accounted for a quarter of the insurance professionals. In and of itself that may not seem so significant except that only 4% of Millennials expressed an interest in insurance careers. According to Deloitte Insights, without greater incentives to recruit younger professionals, corporations could be left with thousands of unfilled jobs as older employees retire and take their institutional knowledge with them.

Here four company leaders make the claim for why Millennials and Gen Zers should ensure their futures by reevaluating their opinion of the industry and investigating the premium possibilities that lie within in it. They explain how modern insurance corporations welcome greater diversity in skills, backgrounds, and personal experiences, and why that leads to challenging and fulfilling career choices.

BY ANNE BAYE ERICKSEN

## Johnson Champions People & Partnerships at Gallagher

According to Rodney R. Johnson, “very few diversity and inclusion leads would say their organization is ‘diverse enough. There is - and will always be - more work to do on the diversity, equity and inclusion front. However, we’ve made a lot of progress in recent years in terms of diverse hires, promotions, partnerships, and internal awareness.”

Prior to becoming divisional vice president, culture and inclusion for Gallagher, Johnson accumulated 20 years of experience in underwriting, sales and marketing, and product innovation. While that may sound like a predictable career progression within the insurance in-

dustry, he insists each step was an exploration into an area of personal interest, like construction, non-profits and higher education.

“Because the industry is so vast, it allowed me to pave my own path - bringing with it increased learning, exposure, and personal and professional growth compared to industries that have more ‘linear’ career paths,” he explains.

Now Johnson aims to aid others in their growth while he also advances the company’s strategic goals.

“The most gratifying part of my work is seeing the tangible results of our efforts - increased numbers of diverse hires, diverse employee promotions, and

improved organizational engagement,” he shares.

“When we can report that type of progress, people across the or-



ganization (both diverse employees and non-diverse employees) can see that our success is interconnected; that is, when diversity wins, we all win.”

**“The most gratifying part of my work is seeing the tangible results of our efforts - increased numbers of diverse hires, diverse employee promotions, and improved organizational engagement.”**



Rodney R. Johnson is the divisional vice president, culture and inclusion for Gallagher.

Headquartered in Rolling Meadows, IL, Gallagher’s product and services portfolio also includes human resources and compensation consulting, voluntary benefits, and cyber liability insurance, among others.

In recent years Johnson has been able to report numerous successful initiatives, including its flagship partnership, Gallagher Connect Partners for the global brokerage division.

“Gallagher Connect Partners is an inclusive network of minority-owned, woman-owned, veteran-owned, and other [types of] diverse, certified insurance firms that were strategically selected based on their unique specializations, shared values, and proven ability to best serve our clients’ risk management, insurance, and supplier diversity needs,” he notes.

“As minority- and women-owned businesses grow, all companies must pay attention to the changing business landscape,” adds Johnson.

Obviously workforce diversity remains of utmost importance, too, especially given the staffing crisis within the industry.

“In the war for talent, having a non-diverse organization will be a losing proposition,” points out Johnson. “Right now, Baby Boomers are retiring at a rate of 10,000 per day. Couple that with the data on Gen Z expectations around workplace diversity and inclusion, and companies have a real challenge ahead of them.”

Here, too, he’s formed strategic partnerships with organizations that advocate for various minority and underrepresented groups, such as LGBTQ Chamber of Commerce, National African-American Insurance Association, and Women’s Business Enterprise National Conference.

Of course, when the goal of such relationships is to attract talent, Johnson is always keen to send the message that the insurance industry

is neither stale nor generic in terms of professional possibilities. A thought about which he reminds himself, too. Indeed, Johnson remains open to new opportunities for his own development. But whatever steps he may take in the future, for Johnson, diversity and inclusion (D&I) will always be very personal.

“Diversity and inclusion is a lived experience for me - I’m carrying and processing my own personal trauma with racism and social injustice. I can’t ‘turn off’ being a Black man after work hours, and trying to find emotional and physical balance can occasionally be exhausting,” he states.

“In those instances, I’m grateful to have the support of Gallagher leaders - true allies of mine, and advocates and champions of our diversity and inclusion efforts.”

*For premium career opportunities at Gallagher, go to [jobs.ajg.com](http://jobs.ajg.com). Stay current with company happenings on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Snapchat and Twitter.*

### Jones & WPS Health Solutions Envision Growth

Although the duties changed with each job Keenan D. Jones has held, he’s always been guided by a mission or vision. Even as a marketing and business student, he knew he wanted more. Midway through his degree, Jones switched missions and enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he supported Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. He also served as a military intelligence analyst and Korean linguist.

Transitioning into the civilian workforce necessitated a new vision. Initially, Jones accepted a retail sales job, but he never stopped looking for more rewarding possibilities. When he was offered a customer service consultant position with WPS Health Solutions, Jones readily accepted.



A veteran of the U.S. Army, Keenan D. Jones is the director of sales for the Medicare market for WPS Health Solutions.

**“I quickly realized sales can be very similar to training or teaching. If you can educate your clients, then you can gain their trust, and they’ll buy your products.”**

“My introduction to the insurance industry began because of our WPS Health Solutions-administered TRICARE benefits. Since I recently left the service, I was familiar with this military health benefit, and I chose to come here because of that familiarity,” he recalls.

In addition to TRICARE, the Madison, WI-based corporation offers PPO and HMO health insurance along with non-medical group benefits.

Although a basic knowledge of the policy prompted his decision, Jones' assessment of career potential with the insurance carrier proved prophetic. He soon moved up to the training department before transferring to sales 15 years ago.

"My sales career began mostly by accident. My real passion was teaching, but a chance encounter during a training session I was conducting with an agency trainer opened my eyes to the opportunities in sales," recalls the director of sales for the Medicare market.

"I quickly realized sales can be very similar to training or teaching. If you can educate your clients, then you can gain their trust, and they'll buy your products."

In recent years, Jones has turned his attention toward the industry's future, and how it would benefit from a more representative cadre of professionals.

"The key issue in our industry is the lack of diversity. On the surface, we may present diverse pictures in our marketing materials or commercials, but it's rarely permeated the insurance culture, and, in particular, our leadership roles," he states.

"The decision-makers and those interacting with their communities don't look the same or hold the same values as those consumers wishing to do business with them. It's a big blind spot in our industry."

In fact, Jones admits that within WPS Health Solutions diversity lessens the closer one gets to the C-suite. However, that hasn't dulled his vision about his own goals and potential, or the way he leads by example within the organization.

"I've been able to be successful, despite this, for two main reasons: first, I've had many years of assimilating to corporate culture and navigating the pitfalls of being my true self. I've adapted very well. The second is that I was very lucky to have a very open-minded mentor who believed in me and allowed me to be comfortable being myself and unleashing my full potential," Jones says.

"The good news is our leadership team has seen this gap and is committed to making a meaningful change," he adds.

Jones envisions future change being driven by the newest entrants to the industry.

"If you're willing to help make those changes, the insurance industry offers many opportunities in many different fields," he says. "There are very few skills that aren't embedded within insurance."

***For premium career opportunities at WPS Health Solutions, go to [wpshealthsolutions.com/careers](http://wpshealthsolutions.com/careers). Stay current with company happenings on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.***

### Johnson's Relationship with Erie Insurance Matures

Eighteen years ago, Fred Johnson arrived at Erie Insurance as an eager 17-year-old high school intern. At first he viewed the role as little more than a job and introduction to the office environment. As he fed ink and paper to copying machines and took out the trash, he had little intent on a career in insurance.

Now, as vice president and branch manager in charge of 100 claims employees and numerous sales team members, at the same branch where he interned no less, Johnson revels at the many opportunities he's come across within the corporation. Erie Insurance,

with headquarters in Erie, PA, has covered people's autos, homes, businesses and livelihoods for nearly 100 years.

"I wanted to get into sports or entertainment marketing," he confesses.

"But as I continued to pursue my degree while working for Erie, it was made clear to me I could find a satisfying position inside Erie Insurance that involved marketing and sales. It was the perfect blend of my career passion and the company I had fallen in love with."

Upon becoming a full-time employee, he was promoted quickly, four times within his first three years. He's worked both in claims and sales, and managed a network of independent agents.

"[Now] my sales team manages over 130 agents across the northern half of the state of Ohio," he notes.

This span of experiences has allowed him to form a comprehensive overview of industry developments. He's seen how tech has altered policyholders' expectations. More people today want to initiate communication, for example, via mobile apps and text messages, as well as emails and hard-copy notifications. Still, he realizes there's an intrinsic value individuals bring to the customer experience, a characteristic that's transcended tech advancements.

"When we maximize our ability to build mutually beneficial relationships based on trust and progress, we develop a winning culture," he points out. "Building relationships in this business is fun and rewarding."

The person-to-person interactions are precisely why he emphasizes the need for the industry to aggressively address its staffing concerns.

"I believe the number one issue facing the insurance industry right now is talent and knowledge transfer. We must see a massive influx of young and diverse talent to continue the charge in the insurance industry. And we need to get these individuals engaged soon so the current insurance professionals have the time to transfer their knowl-



Fred Jonson is vice president and branch manager in charge of 100 claims employees and numerous sales team members for Erie Insurance.

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**"When we maximize our ability to build mutually beneficial relationships based on trust and progress, we develop a winning culture. Building relationships in this business is fun and rewarding."**

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# Running in Circles Looking for a Great Computer Job or Hire?



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edge from years of experience and growth in the industry," he states.

However, he insists recruiting young people with various backgrounds, education, and cultural experiences must be a top priority. "The industry is in dire need of young diverse talent, and will be looking for those individuals en masse moving forward."

To attract qualified individuals to an industry deemed "uninteresting" and in a competitive talent market, companies will have to offer enticements beyond just salaries and benefits. It's been documented that Millennials and Gen Zers rank an inclusive culture very high in terms of must-have employer characteristics.

Since his days as an intern, he's appreciated Erie's efforts to welcome a representative workforce. As a company leader - Johnson is the founder and president of the company's African-American Affinity Network - he's embraced the responsibility to support the diversity of his own team.

"Diversity is a mission that must be on-going and ever-changing as the world around us changes. Managing individuals who may have different experiences and philosophies about how to win in this business can sometimes be challenging - but also a great learning opportunity," he concludes.

**For premium career opportunities at Erie Insurance, go to [erieinsurance.com/careers](http://erieinsurance.com/careers). Stay current with company happenings on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.**

## Francis Travels Full Circle at CNA

Before Greg Francis first joined CNA in 1989, he was introduced to underwriting by a family friend who explained the basics of it and how underwriting serves a vital role in creating any insurance policy.

"I found it very compelling hearing him talk about how to analyze risks, and how no two risks were identical," he explains.

"The thought of analyzing these risks and delivering smart decisions intrigued me as I saw the vastness of opportunity that a career in insurance offered, and it paired nicely with my desire to learn."

Based in Chicago, IL, CNA sells a range of specialized property and casualty insurance products for businesses and professionals. Starting as a casualty underwriter trainee at the company, Francis looked to more experienced professionals to mentor him in the nuances of the specialty. He honed his skills for a few years before venturing off to other players within the insurance industry. However, he felt compelled to return to CNA in 2012.

Francis describes the business as having a "vast breadth of scope, which means there are a lot of opportunities across so many disciplines and areas of the organization. A company committed to positive and meaningful change in diversity and inclusion, and in corporate social responsibility."

Still in underwriting, Francis has worked his way into various leadership and management positions, landing most recently as CNA's vice president, underwriting center manager.



Greg Francis is CNA's vice president, underwriting center manager.

As he gathered expertise in risk analysis, Francis also gained experience in analyzing the human element of the insurance business. To his pleasant surprise, guiding others toward their professional development goals brought him a broader sense of professional satisfaction.

**"Ask us why we love it. I think it'll open you up to a world of possibilities and opportunities that you may not have known existed."**

"While in management and leadership roles, what I've found most rewarding is doing my part to create a positive environment and helping people learn and grow," he notes.

This was especially relevant when Francis collaborated on a cross-functional team to design, build, and start the new CNA underwriting center (UWC), which went live last winter. He's since assumed leadership of the UWC West based in Dallas, TX.

"Our vision is to continue to expand our capabilities across the commercial organization to best support our branch network, as well as our agency and broker partners," notes Francis.

He's also lending his voice to the company's efforts to grow diversity and elevate inclusion via a seat on the CNA Diversity and Inclusion Council.

"As further progress in diversity is accomplished, creating an inclusive environment where people across all the dimensions of diversity can be their most authentic selves while working together [is critical]. There's diversity in my workplace, especially when I consider the many dimensions of diversity. That said, as a company and across our industry, we must do more to increase the representation of specific groups, most notably Black and Latinx talent," he says.

Sometimes the most convincing messages of inclusion are personal examples, and Francis enjoys sharing his story of how a curiosity pursued turned into a career of a variety of experiences, opportunities, and relationships. And he encourages other people of color to tell their tales of success.

"Ask us why we love it. I think it'll open you up to a world of possibilities and opportunities that you may not have known existed," he concludes.

**For premium career opportunities at CNA, go to [cna.com/web/guest/cna/about/careers](http://cna.com/web/guest/cna/about/careers). Stay current with company happenings on LinkedIn and Twitter.**





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## Lockheed Martin Launches Additional Scholarships

As part of Lockheed Martin's continued commitment to STEM education growth and creating opportunities for students who want to share their talents and change the world, the Bethesda, MD-headquartered company is launching the next round of Lockheed Martin STEM and vocational scholarships.

Lockheed Martin has established the STEM Scholarship program to provide opportunities to students studying engineering or computer science that demonstrate need and come from underrepresented or underserved communities. In 2021, up to 200 renewable scholarships of \$10,000 each are offered for full-time study at an accredited four-year institution of the student's choice. Application deadline for the STEM Scholarship is April 1, 2021.

Lockheed Martin has established the Vocational Scholarship program to provide opportunities to students pursuing a degree or vocational-technical certificate at a vocational-technical school, trade school, two-year community college or state college. In 2021, up to 100 awards of \$6,600 each are offered for full-time study at an accredited institution of the student's choice. Application deadline for the Vocational Scholarship is March 11, 2021.

The program is administered by Scholarship America, the nation's largest designer and manager of scholarship, tuition assistance, and other education support programs for corporations, foundations, associations, and individuals.

Links with more information regarding the scholarships, including access to the scholarship applications through Lockheed Martin's partner Scholarship America, Inc., can be found below here:

- STEM Scholarship:  
[lockheedmartin.com/scholarship](https://lockheedmartin.com/scholarship).
- Vocational Scholarship:  
[lockheedmartin.com/vocational](https://lockheedmartin.com/vocational).

## Scholars Programs Offered at Historically Black & Tribal Land-Grant Colleges & Universities

Twenty-first century agriculture involves cutting-edge science, technology, business management - and you. To that end, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announces scholarships to help you build a career path in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and many more agriculture-related subjects.

The USDA/1890 National Scholars Program was established in 1992 in partnership between USDA and 19 Historically Black Universities that were established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890. The program provides full tuition, fees, books, room and board, and a summer internship to students pursuing degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. When the student has completed the academic and summer work requirements of the scholarship, USDA may convert the student to a permanent employee without further competition.

The USDA 1994 Tribal Scholars Program was established in 2008 in partnership between USDA and 1994 institutions, tribally controlled colleges and universities with land-grant status. The program provides full tuition, fees, books, and a summer internship to students pursuing degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines. When the student has completed the academic and summer work requirements of the scholarship, USDA may convert the student to a permanent employee without further competition.

USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement collaborates with 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, 1994 Tribal Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions to promote equitable participation in USDA programs, services, and resources for rural, tribal, and historically underserved students and the communities they serve. These partnerships also support education and career opportunities for students and faculty, and help develop a strong pipeline of talent for USDA.

For more information about these scholars programs, visit [usda.gov/partnerships/higher-education-initiatives](https://usda.gov/partnerships/higher-education-initiatives).





# Graduate Student Groups from 15 States Awarded Microgrants

Research!America and the Rita Allen Foundation have recently named the recipients of the 2021 Civic Engagement Microgrant Initiative. Now in its third year, the microgrant program provides funding to graduate student and post-doc-led science policy groups from across the U.S. to develop and lead outreach activities in their local communities.

The 2021 Civic Engagement Microgrant Initiative is providing funding for 19 groups whose projects include podcasts, roundtable discussions, data visualization projects and policy-orientated science fairs. Four grants will be used to start up new groups. All activities will be conducted virtually due to the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Nearly 50 applications were received, a 50% increase from last year. The program is supported by a grant from the Rita Allen Foundation.

"Surveys commissioned by Research!America consistently show that the public strongly believes scientists should inform them about their research and its impact on society," says Mary Woolley, president and CEO of Research!America.

"Supporting our nation's early-career scientists to engage with their local communities is a crucial and exciting step forward. We're grateful for the support from the Rita Allen Foundation and thank the many student groups who shared their innovative ideas."

"Over the years of our partnership with Research!America and the microgrants program, we've been deeply encouraged to see new civic science connections led by early-career scientists," says Eliza-

beth Good Christopherson, president and CEO of the Rita Allen Foundation.

"In a year that, more than ever, our country is urgently addressing complex problems rooted in science, technology and societal dynamics, these new problem-solving teams are developing much-needed partnerships with the diverse communities where they have their roots."

Research!America microgrants were awarded to graduate student groups affiliated with the following academic institutions and organizations: American Physician Scientists Association; Baylor College of Medicine; Boston University; the Medical University of South Carolina; Morgan State University; Stanford University; The Ohio State University College of Medicine; The Rockefeller University; Weill Cornell Medicine Center; and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; University of California, Irvine; University of California, San Diego; University of Georgia; University of Massachusetts, Amherst; University of Michigan; University of Missouri; University of Nebraska Medical Center; University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine; University of South Florida College of Public Health; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; and Yale University School of Medicine.

Examples of projects include the following: Baylor College of Medicine students utilizing data visualization techniques to present scientific information of interest to the community in a compelling way; a new group at Morgan State University addressing topics of importance to underrepresented minorities locally and also engage with high school science clubs; and students at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine planning to work in local neighborhoods to promote the importance of vaccinations, aptly calling themselves the "The Influenzers."

Information about all 19 grantee groups can be found at [researchamerica.org/advocacy-action/how-be-advocate/2021-microgrant-recipients](https://researchamerica.org/advocacy-action/how-be-advocate/2021-microgrant-recipients). For more information about the initiative, visit the Microgrant Project on the Research!America website microgrant program at [researchamerica.org/civic-engagement-2021-microgrant-initiative](https://researchamerica.org/civic-engagement-2021-microgrant-initiative).



# Keeping People Healthy

*The healthcare management/hospital administration sector has never been so crucial as it works to keep people healthy and adds increasingly more jobs to accomplish that.*

In the past 13 years, people employed in the health services sector of the economy has exceeded 11%, adding 559,000 jobs since 2007, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). It goes on to predict the healthcare industry is projected to add more jobs - more than 4 million, in fact - than any other industry by 2022.

## Leonard Leads Financial Planning & Analysis at Cardinal Health

Travis Leonard, MBA is Cardinal Health's senior vice president of global finance. "I've always been attracted to industries with a 'noble' purpose," he explains.

He found that noble purpose at Dublin, OH-based Cardinal Health. "I get really excited about working in a company that consistently delivers innovation that will improve patient outcomes and people's lives, something Cardinal Health does every day."

He came to the healthcare services company with experience in various financial leadership roles across multiple industries, including senior finance roles at Kraft Foods and Cargill, Inc.

"I was introduced to Cardinal Health by an executive search firm," he notes. But it was the company's values, such as integrity, inclusion and innovation that resonated with him.

"Additionally, I believed I could leverage my diverse experiences to drive sustainable growth for Cardinal Health."

Leonard joined in April 2018 as corporate treasurer, a role in which he oversaw treasury, global risk management, and credit and collections.

The current global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic shows how important the need for healthcare is, no matter where it's given. The five professionals featured here provide a variety of services in the facilities where they work. They discuss their careers and the healthcare management/hospital administration sector and how they're keeping people healthy, as well as how you can join them.

BY SANDRA H. SHICHTMAN

Once on board, he was welcomed and helped to understand how Cardinal Health delivers products and solutions to its customers. And since then he's built mentoring relationships with several executive committee members. "I'm currently participating in an extended executive development program hosted by a management consulting firm," adds Leonard, who has a bachelor's degree in finance and an MBA.

As now the senior vice president of global finance, he leads all financial planning and analysis (FP&A) at the company. "I lead the transformation of Cardinal Health's FP&A operations and oversee global risk management," he explains, adding, "I drive innovation, insight generation, and continuous improvement strategy for Cardinal Health finance and provide direct support to the chief financial officer and to the corporate strategy team across enterprise-wide initiatives."

He shares how the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has forced him to work effectively virtually, something that

would be a challenge even under normal circumstances, since he considers himself an extrovert and gets his energy from working directly with people. "The pandemic has increased my workload and has challenged me to focus on maintaining balance to ensure I bring my 'best self' to work every single day," he points out.



**"A successful healthcare manager should have a passion for improving patient outcomes by driving solutions across the continuum of healthcare."**

Proud of Cardinal Health's commitment to fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion (D&I), Leonard is a member of the Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee. He's also a member of one of its employee resource groups (ERG), the African American Network.

For anyone considering a career in healthcare management, Leonard has this advice:

"A successful healthcare manager should have a passion for improving patient outcomes by driving solutions across the continuum of healthcare. They should have a healthy dissatisfaction with the 'status quo,' a continuous improvement mindset and a desire to drive the pace of change in the healthcare industry."

*Find more information about Cardinal Health careers at [cardinalhealth.com/en/careers.html](http://cardinalhealth.com/en/careers.html). Connect on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn.*

## A Pivot from Physician to Hospital Administrator Leads Tucker to Her Management Role at Cleveland Clinic

Initially intending to follow in the footsteps of her aunt and become a physician, Sherelle L. Tucker, MBA earned her undergraduate degree in biology. But marriage and family caused a shift in her plans, although she still wanted a career in healthcare.

Then, while studying for her MBA, she had the chance to intern at Cleveland, OH-based Cleveland Clinic, which includes hospitals and health centers, working on special finance projects.

"My internship eventually turned into full-time employment [in 2001] at Fairview Hospital, which is part of Cleveland Clinic's health system, where I was able to continue leading the project I'd began as an intern."

Tucker's first full-time position at Cleveland Clinic was as senior operations project coordinator, a role in which she managed a direct cost-reduction project. A promotion to administrator for the regional



Travis Leonard, MBA is Cardinal Health's senior vice president of global finance.

anesthesia practice came in 2004. She jointly supervised the professionals who provided anesthesia services at 10 Cleveland Clinic Health System hospitals and surgical centers.

She chaired the company's African-American employee resource group when it was first implemented in 2007. "I wanted to use my involvement as a way to create a more inclusive workplace and to find ways to support career advancement, mobility and retention," she explains.

Within the next few years, Tucker took on two additional administrative roles in the Department of Pharmacy and the Bariatric Metabolic Institute, roles in which she was responsible for overall department operations, personnel management, finances, routine and capital budget development, program expansion, business development, process improvement, and employee engagement.

Following those, she served as director of outreach programs within the Digestive Disease & Surgery Institute, where she was responsible for overseeing the formation of consulting and affiliation relationships with outside healthcare organizations, helping them to create new service lines/departments and/or improving operational performance, and clinical and surgical outcomes of existing ones.

In 2017 Tucker joined Cleveland Clinic's government and community relations as department administrator. In this role she assisted with the overall management of departmental operations to include routine and capital budget development, personnel management, strategic planning, and employee engagement.

Even as an intern, Tucker indicates she had access to Cleveland Clinic leaders in various roles. "Once hired, I used those connections and took it upon myself to reach out and develop relationships with those who I felt I could learn from, those who had obtained the level of success that I aspired to, as well," she elaborates.

She participated in formal one-on-one mentoring, leadership development training courses, and mentoring circles through Cleveland Clinic's offices of human resources and diversity and inclusion.

In her current role as director, community and economic develop-



Sherelle L. Tucker, MBA is director, community and economic development within the community health and partnerships part of Cleveland Clinic Community Care.

ment within the community health and partnerships part of Cleveland Clinic Community Care, Tucker's work involves community development, economic development, and community investing.

She says about it: "Our organization has a commitment to using our vast resources and influence to address the inequities that have prevailed for many as of result of structural racism and disinvestment in the neighborhoods surrounding our main campus."

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**"An eye for continuous improvement and strong interpersonal skills like relationship building are key to getting much of what you need done."**

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Working from home during the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which she's been doing since March 2020, has been a new experience for Tucker and took some getting used to, especially since it required her to develop a routine, put parameters in place to prevent burnout, and to keep from working 24-7.

She says that a person interested in becoming a hospital administrator must have a concern for the welfare of others, be multifaceted with strong critical thinking skills, have attention to detail, and possess business and financial acumen.

"An eye for continuous improvement and strong interpersonal skills like relationship building are key to getting much of what you need done," she concludes.

*Additional information about Cleveland Clinic careers is available at [jobs.clevelandclinic.org](https://jobs.clevelandclinic.org). Connect on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Pinterest.*

### Walker 'Operationalizes' DE&I at Brigham and Women's Hospital

Today Normella Walker is executive director, diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) at Brigham and Women's Hospital, which has its headquarters in Boston, MA.

"My background in health insurance opened the door for me to move into hospital administration, which has really supported me in understanding how to operationalize diversity, equity and inclusion," says Walker, who also has a bachelor's degree in organization leadership and performance and a master's degree in psychology with a specialization in diversity management.

Because Brigham and Women's is known for its innovative medical advancements, Walker says that she "found that appealing and was excited about bringing that same level of excellence to the diversity, equity and inclusion space."

She was recruited by a human resources vice president, had several phone, online, and in-person interviews, and was hired into the company.

Walker attributes her deep knowledge of the healthcare industry and her DE&I expertise as having made her a strong candidate for the position, her first with Brigham and Women's. She's respon-

sible for supporting the organizational DE&I mission, creating strategic priorities, and generating system-wide learning and development. She reports to a vice president who, she indicates, has been her mentor and coach.

Walker derives satisfaction in her current role from "leading change and watching people make new discoveries about themselves and the environment."

She further feels that someone who has an equal appreciation for the operational and technical aspects of running a healthcare institution along with a love and deep connection to humanity is someone who would make a successful hospital administrator.

Walker admits that her days have gotten much longer since the start of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. "In addition to the responsibilities of my role," she notes, "there's been an increased demand for diversity education along with the need to ensure people at all levels in the hospital are being equitably supported."

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**"There's been an increased demand for diversity education along with the need to ensure people at all levels in the hospital are being equitably supported."**

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*More information about Brigham and Women's Hospital careers can be found at [brighamandwomens.org/about-bwh/careers](https://brighamandwomens.org/about-bwh/careers). Connect on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram.*

### Brewster Ensures Safety & Cleanliness at Massachusetts General Hospital

In her current position as director of environmental services at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Latoya Brewster, MBA leads a department of 500 employees who, she says, "are the cleaning and disinfecting subject matter experts. We ensure the hospital is a safe and welcoming environment."

Brewster has been a part of the MGH community for more than 12 years. Her career at the Boston, MA-based hospital began in 2008 with the department of nutrition and food services.



Normella Walker is executive director, diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) at Brigham and Women's Hospital.



"I've always had a desire to help people, and the hospitality industry was a natural fit," she shares.

In addition to 12 years of food service experience prior to joining MGH, Brewster also holds a bachelor's degree in hotel, restaurant and travel administration.

When she decided it was time to move on from corporate food service, she posted her resume on both CareerBuilder and Monster. "A few weeks later," she remembers, "I received a call from a recruiter at MGH wanting to set up an interview for their vacant retail manager position."

Her prior experience proved impressive, and she was hired into the hospital. From that initial position as retail food service manager in the nutrition and food services department, Brewster was promoted several times before becoming the retail operations and revenue manager. In this latter role she oversaw all of the administrative and personnel matters for the three nutrition and food services eateries at the main campus of MGH.

"I knew I wanted to spend my career at MGH, and I was looking for ways to expand my role and have a greater impact," she remembers. So, she earned an MBA in healthcare administration to expand her knowledge of healthcare operations. Brewster soon became assistant director of environmental services and was responsible



Latoya Brewster, MBA leads a department of 500 employees as director of environmental services at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH).

for recruiting, hiring, training, and developing all levels of personnel from frontline employees to experienced managers.

"I was tasked with coordinating our services throughout the organization to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for our visitors, staff, and patients," notes Brewster, who, most recently, was promoted to her current director role.

Over the course of her career at MGH, Brewster considers herself fortunate to have had on-the-job training, as well as supervisors and mentors who have helped her learn and develop her skills.

"I also volunteer to be on committees and projects because I want to learn more about the organization and the work being done



### Job hunting?

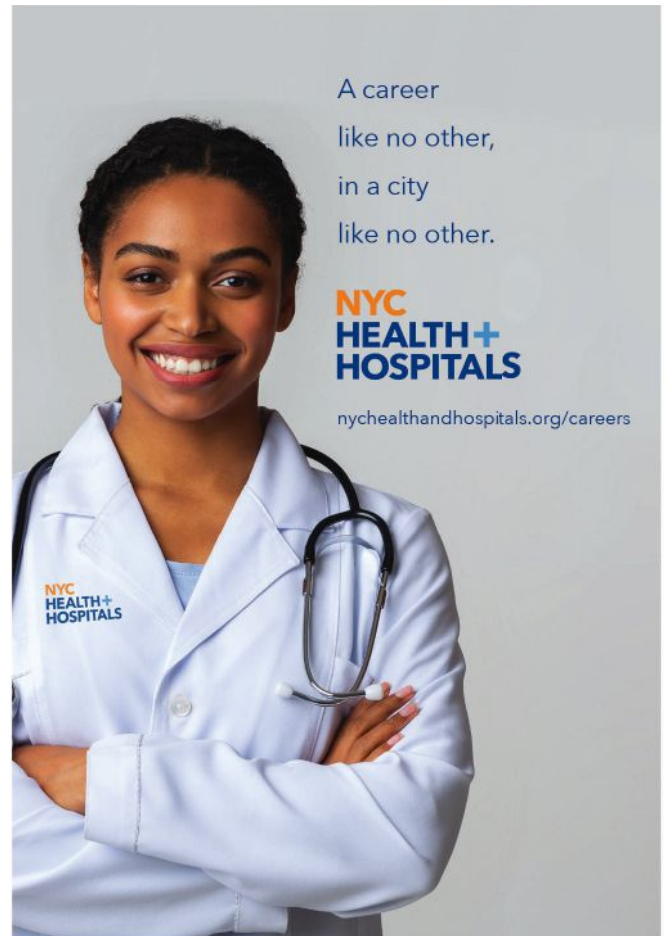
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here. Volunteering to work on committees also allows me to collaborate with people across the organization that I wouldn't get the chance to interact with in my normal day to day," notes Brewster, who further believes a successful hospital administrator is a great communicator who's able to build relationships across all levels of the organization, someone who's trusted by their colleagues and direct reports, and who understands the value of their team.

In addition to her day to day responsibilities, Brewster is the vice chair of the Association of Multicultural Members of Partners (AMMP), which is committed to the recruitment, retention, development, and advancement of multicultural professionals. Outside of MGH, she's also a member of the Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE), a resource for environmental services professionals that she joined to utilize the industry-specific training it offers, and to learn and share best practice regarding industry trends.

She shares that the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted all areas of the environmental services department, further increasing demand on both her and her team's support to the hospital.

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**"Volunteering to work on committees also allows me to collaborate with people across the organization that I wouldn't get the chance to interact with in my normal day to day."**

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"My department is responsible for supplying hand sanitizer, soap and disinfectant to the organization. During the pandemic we've spent a lot of time ensuring we have adequate supplies to meet organizational needs, which requires constant communication with our vendors and the supply chain management team. We've also worked very closely with our infection control and clinical teams to increase cleaning frequencies and to adjust cleaning practices across the organization," she points out.

*More information about MGH careers is available at at [massgeneral.org/careers](https://massgeneral.org/careers). Connect on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.*

## Peters Ensures Quality & Safety at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue

Marcia Peters, who's the chief quality officer at NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue, is a part of the executive senior management team that ensures the efficient and effective operation of the hospital.

"I get the most satisfaction from implementing and enhancing processes that improve the quality and safety of care that we provide to our patients and the community that we serve," she says.

While raising her daughter, Peters earned a bachelor's degree in business administration/finance and went to work at a financial firm. A few years later, she earned a law degree. "Law school exposed me to the broad utilization of a law degree, well beyond the practice of law," she shares.

In addition, her sister, who was herself a hospital administrator, spoke to Peters about how a legal background adds accretive value to

risk management, regulatory and governmental affairs at a hospital.

"I wanted to work in a public interest setting," Peters indicates. So when she was offered a position as the associate executive director for regulatory and risk at NYC Health + Hospitals/Harlem Hospital, "I jumped at it," she adds.

Currently, Peters is the chief quality officer at New York, NY-based Bellevue Hospital, the oldest public hospital in the country and the flagship hospital of the NYC Health + Hospitals system.

"Getting an opportunity to be part of the leadership team was a career highlight," she points out, adding, "My team and I are responsible for ensuring regulatory compliance with federal, state, city and professional organization requirements."

She leads Bellevue's efforts in executing quality and safety programs to ensure patient, staff, and visitor risks are well-mitigated and managed. Her responsibilities have expanded to include risk management, safety, accreditation and performance improvement.

She reminds us that New York City was an epicenter of the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in early 2020. "As a result, the healthcare industry was materially impacted. I, and so many of my colleagues, worked on site continuously during the pandemic. I had staff who had to be on site and were unable to work remotely, so it was important for me to be here, and it was important for the organization to have leadership presence."

Peters continues to educate herself in the latest developments in the healthcare, quality, and legal fields. In addition, "I have a broad group of senior leaders at Bellevue and throughout the system who I seek advice from," she notes.

"I strongly believe that having a group of mentors and sponsors is integral to success in any field."

She explains that there are three necessary attributes for success as a hospital administrator: having integrity in managing your area and in interacting with others, being accountable for choices you make and their subsequent outcomes, and being resilient.

"In a hospital setting things happen at a rapid pace, so young leaders must be able to pivot and adjust to change or negative outcomes, and use every problem as an opportunity for growth," she states.

There's a system-wide approach to addressing equity, diversity and inclusion at Bellevue, including a committee to assure the integration of diversity and inclusion activities throughout the health system. Peters further indicates she participates in and supports those activities.

*Go to [nychealthandhospitals.org/bellevue/careers](https://nychealthandhospitals.org/bellevue/careers) to see more information about Bellevue Hospital careers. Connect on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.*



Marcia Peters is the chief quality officer at Bellevue Hospital, the oldest public hospital in the country and the flagship hospital of the NYC Health + Hospitals system.



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