



Law Firm Partners, Talent Experts And Law Students To Tackle Gender Parity Through Inaugural Women In Law Hackathon

Diversity Lab, in partnership with Stanford Law School and Bloomberg Law, launch the Women in Law Hackathon

DENVER, COLORADO, UNITED STATES, April 27, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fifty-four of the world's top law firms have signed up to participate in the Women in Law Hackathon, a new Shark Tank-style pitch competition aimed at generating innovative ideas to close the gender gap in law firms. Nearly two-thirds of the participants in the Hackathon are managing partners, practice group chairs, or other high-level leaders in their respective firms. They are working together virtually in teams from January to June 2016 to devise initiatives that will help retain and advance experienced women in law firms. Each team is comprised of six partners, two talent/diversity thought leaders, and a Stanford law student.

"The Hackathon could help participating firms, and our industry as a whole, make significant strides toward breaking barriers to equal opportunity and inclusion," said Anna White Erickson, Managing Partner at Morrison & Foerster. "This is the first time we have ever come together in a structured way as a community of law firms and leaders to devise a plan for closing the gender gap in law firms."

On June 24, 2016, the teams will pitch their ideas to a group of high-profile judges at Stanford Law School. The top three teams selected by the judges will grant their prize money, a total of \$22,500 donated by Bloomberg Law, to nonprofit organizations that are helping to advance women in the legal profession and beyond. [Diversity Lab](#) is contributing an additional \$5,000 for a Crowd Favorite award voted on by the audience, which also will be donated to a non-profit.

The Women in Law Hackathon is the brainchild of [Caren Ulrich Stacy](#), Chief Executive Officer of Diversity Lab, whose pioneering work has included creating the [OnRamp Fellowship](#), the first re-entry program launched in the legal field for women returning to the workforce after an extended hiatus.

"Law firm leaders have been working internally for decades to solve the gender parity challenge, but very little progress has been made; currently women represent only 18 percent of the partnership in large law firms," remarked Ulrich Stacy. "Now, these law firms are trying something different."

In conjunction with the Hackathon, Stanford Law School (SLS) developed a policy course to research why the gender gap persists in the legal profession and propose possible solutions. Students enrolled in the course, supported by three faculty advisers, will author a white paper on the issue, which will be available to Hackathon participants prior to the June event.

"There has never been such a large collaborative effort where rival law firms join together to solve the gender parity issue," said Ulrich Stacy. "Nor has a major law school previously created a class to examine and help solve the problem. There is an unprecedented concentration of brain power being applied to this issue through the Hackathon. And, thanks to Bloomberg Law, we have the necessary funds to support and implement the Hackathon ideas going forward."

“We couldn’t be more excited to act as the lead sponsor for the inaugural Women in Law Hackathon,” said Melanie Heller, Vice President and General Manager of Bloomberg Law. “It’s no secret that more needs to be done to drive the advancement of women in the legal profession, and we’re proud to partner with top-tier law firms around the country to tackle this issue.”

Due to the overwhelming interest from other organizations inquiring about the endeavor, Diversity Lab is launching a second Hackathon in late 2016 that will include cross-industry teams working together to close the gender gap. “The legal, energy, financial services, and consulting industries have the same challenge – too few women at the top,” Ulrich Stacy said. “The next Hackathon will span multiple industries to benefit from the collective wisdom of the leaders’ various perspectives and experiences.”

About Diversity Lab

Diversity Lab creates and experiments with new ways to close the gender gap and boost diversity in organizations. Data, science, and design-thinking are at the core of everything that the Lab does.

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