

Inclusion 2020 Symposium in San Jose Calls for Realistic Solutions to Diversity in Tech

"Outside-In" Approach to Diversity Flips Inclusion Upside Down

SAN JOSE, CA, USA, July 8, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Society for Diversity](#) will host an Inclusion 2020 Symposium on November 14, 2017 at the Dolce Hayes Mansion in San Jose, CA. The purpose of the one-day Symposium is to engage Bay-area firms in straight talk and plenary strategy sessions around best practices, research, industry trends, and opportunities for global leadership in workplace equity. The Symposium is a call to meaningful action, as participating organizations will set specific goals with accountability measures for achieving inclusion, welcoming ideas from different sources, as well as demonstrating a culture of excellence. The Society for Diversity currently seeks sponsors and partners for the event.



Derwin Smiley, CEO of the Society for Diversity, moderating a discussion on "Pioneering a Path Forward"

Diversity and Inclusion can be a slow and arduous process-- filled with pitfalls and stalled interventions (e.g., diversity councils, supplier diversity, board diversity, recruiting, and multi-cultural marketing efforts that have failed to deliver or were improperly implemented). By all accounts, even the most innovative and forward thinking industry in the world has failed to find realistic alternatives to a problem that has plagued start-ups and mature enterprises alike. Since Google first disclosed its lack of racial and gender diversity three years ago, other employers and venture capital firms have come forward to acknowledge their own internal struggles with diversity and inclusion. Most recently, Silicon Valley has been rocked by harassment and mistreatment claims from female employees and founders. These allegations come at a time when Tech Companies have carefully sought to reverse the troubling pattern of discrimination and exclusion of different groups in the workplace.

The Inclusion 2020 Symposium will seek to explore, and present viable solutions to, perplexing workplace issues such as sexual harassment, disability, LGBTQ inclusion, colorism, ageism, and culture change. Instead of assuming that diverse people will come and fit into the current culture ("outside-in"), this Symposium will seek to set proactive and realistic goals based on an "inside-out" approach. Derwin Smiley, CEO of the Society for Diversity says, "Traditionally, companies hire a person of color or a woman and expect that person to lead the way in showing how diverse and inclusive the organization is. There's an aversion to support, accountability or even, dialog because senior management is often preoccupied with what the other employees will think. What happens is the "diverse" person struggles because they have to prove themselves on a daily basis-- simply because of a unique characteristic that has nothing to do with the job. This approach is upside down.

If someone is hired to be a developer, let them be the best developer they can be-- not an ambassador for diversity."

Smiley adds, "Senior leaders are ultimately responsible for facilitating an inclusive environment with their current employees first. Part of this 'inclusion' journey means that senior leaders have to be bold and transparent about their intentions, as well as self-aware about their own mistakes and the impact that those missteps have had on the organizational culture."

In 2013, Forbes published an article by Sylvia Vorhauser-Smith, entitled [How the Best Places to Work are Nailing Employee Engagement](#). Vorhauser-Smith asserts that "employees engaged in their work are likely to be motivated, to remain committed to their employer and to stay focused on achieving business goals and driving the organization's future." In other words, when current employees engage in the inclusion solution, the outcomes are better.

Smiley cautions, "To be realistic, the Chief Diversity Officer alone is not going to get it done. The CEO must understand what's going on and drive 110% of the culture change. Executives also must be knowledgeable about the breadth of differences that already exist in their firms, and must become more aware of the organizational culture dynamics that prevent genuine inclusion. The assumption is that an industry full of White males is monolithic, and that is simply not true."

Research has shown that continuous discourse in inclusive leadership and consistent exposure to these types of conversations is a best practice, and it results in more meaningful actions. The symposium will empower small work groups to participate in ongoing discussions about "formal" policies, accountability, the pipeline, succession planning, development, turnover, and internal/external support mechanisms for diverse workers and founders. Participants at this symposium will strive to develop multiple solutions for pervasive problems, and then set a timeframe for evaluating effectiveness and progress.

The Society for Diversity has helped thousands of companies with their diversity and inclusion strategies, and has held tech and corporate diversity education events around the country for the last 8 years. In 2016, the Society for Diversity held a [Diversity in Tech Symposium](#), themed "Changing the Status Quo" at Purdue University's Indianapolis campus. The purpose of the Symposium was to explore the explosive growth of tech companies in the Midwest, dubbed "Silicon Prairie", and engage in a discussion about actionable strategies for improving diverse representation. In June 2017, the Society for Diversity held its Diversity 3.0 conference in Chicago that explored next generation "Innovations, Strategies and Skills for Intentional Outcomes" in the workplace and marketplace.

Smiley noted, "For far too long, workplace Diversity and Inclusion efforts have assumed a reactive stance. Something happens, then folks work to fix it. However, the Symposium opens a world of possibility to assume global leadership and seize opportunities to achieve new business goals through inclusion."

To sponsor the event or for more information about the symposium, call 1-800-764-3336 or visit www.societyfordiversity.org.

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