

# MBNUSA

MINORITY & MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS NEWS

Volume 3, 2023

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## USHCC's Ramiro Cavazos, Nelson Reyneri discuss the state of Hispanic-owned businesses

Special section:  
Hispanic business  
enterprises in the  
supply chain

Billion Dollar  
Roundtable  
inducts seven  
new members



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**Post pandemic,  
health and pharma fields  
revamp with innovations  
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**Lucious Williams**  
(left), chairman,  
Dikita Enterprises  
Inc., and daughter  
**Eve Williams**,  
the company's  
president and CEO

**Successful succession  
planning brings  
three generations  
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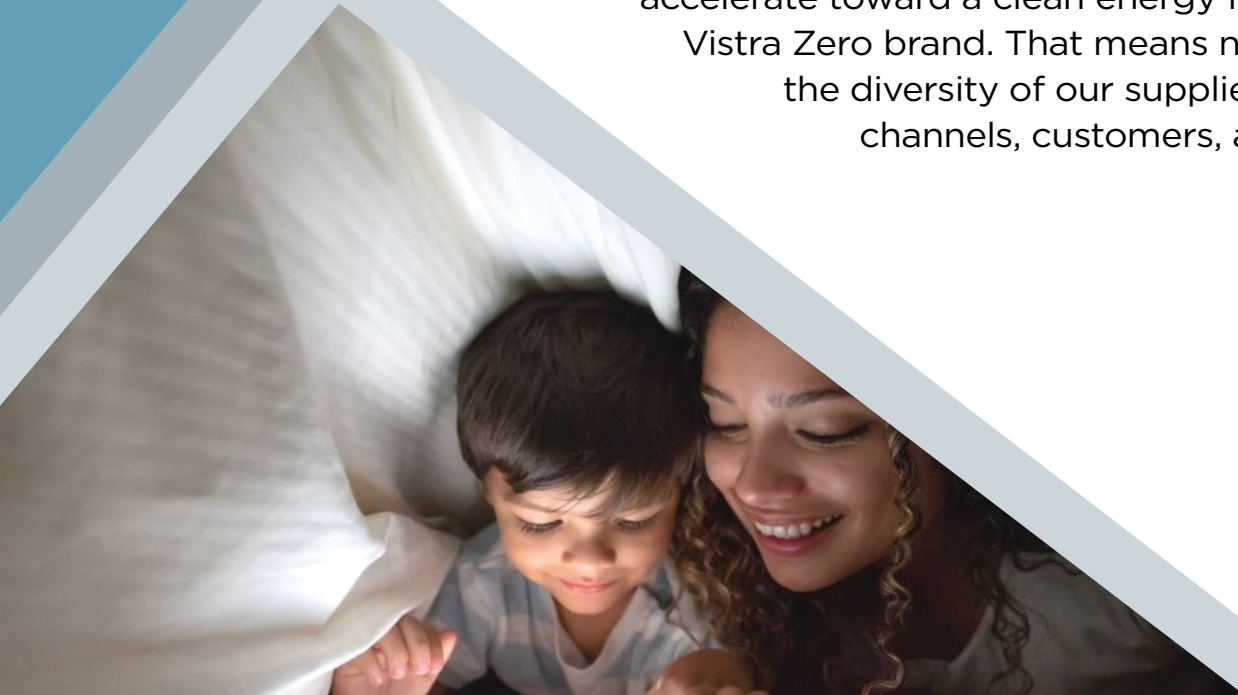






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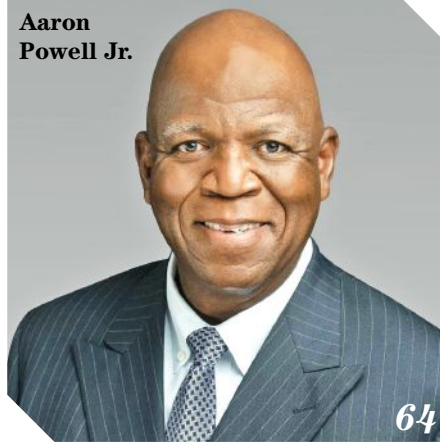


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# A thriving BUSINESS community

*Hispanic-owned enterprises overcome challenges to grow, expand their economic reach*

BY TONYA MCMURRAY



Hispanic businesses are flourishing despite challenges such as a tough business climate and lack of access to capital, said officials with the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (USHCC).

“Hispanic businesses are thriving all across America,” said Ramiro Cavazos, president and CEO of USHCC. “Latinos launch businesses six times faster than other non-Latino-owned businesses in the U.S. and have a higher per capita rate of business ownership compared to the general population.”

According to USHCC, Hispanic businesses generate \$2.85 trillion toward the U.S. gross domestic product or GDP each year. There are nearly 500 million Hispanic-owned businesses in the U.S. that generate approximately \$800 billion in annual revenue, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Ramiro said Hispanic businesses are growing across a variety of sectors — including those related to infrastructure — putting the Hispanic business community in a prime position to benefit from the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill passed in November 2021.

“We’re expecting more public contracts from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act] to inject much needed capital into this sector, helping America’s Hispanic businesses scale even faster,” he said.

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Like most other businesses, Hispanic businesses continue to confront the challenges of the continued recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and its related supply-chain shortages, as well as the impact of inflation.

“The increase in costs to run and operate a business have impacted consumer prices, affecting the chances of businesses retaining customers,” said Nelson Reyneri Jr., chair of the USHCC board and a principal at Point B LLC. “Hispanic business owners rely on family and community networks for the growth and stability of their revenue and workforce. As operational costs go up, the

*We’re expecting more public contracts from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act] to inject much needed capital into this sector, helping America’s Hispanic businesses scale even faster.*

– Ramiro Cavazos, president and CEO,  
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce



risk of isolating their customers through inflation's forced increase in the price of goods and transportation could be detrimental to their bottom lines."

Like many other minority businesses, Hispanic-owned businesses often find it difficult to access the capital they need to weather difficult business climates or expand their businesses. He said that historically, financial institutions deny loans to Latinos at a higher rate than non-Latinos — despite better credit scores.

"The potential for economic growth is exponential," Reyneri said. "Our community is eager to find opportunities to access more capital to scale their businesses. An additional \$2.3 trillion in total revenue would be generated to the U.S. economy if Latino businesses were provided greater access to capital. Simply put, we are leaving money on the table."

One of the USHCC's goals is to bring added resources to the table to help Hispanic businesses continue to grow and overcome challenges — especially access to capital. The chamber helps Hispanic businesses access funding opportunities, public-private partnerships, technical assistance programs and federal multi-agency initiatives.

"Ultimately, the uncertainty facing Hispanic-owned businesses is exactly what we want to shift," Cavazos said. "We are the bridge between Hispanic businesses and the available resources from the private and public sectors. Through these public and private funding opportunities, we're promoting more pro-business, bipartisan solutions that support Hispanic entrepreneurs' economic growth and development."

Reyneri said the USHCC remains focused on access to capital, capacity-building and connections through contracts. A March 2023 Legislative Summit and an April 2023 Energy Summit were key to increasing connections and helping Latino entrepreneurs gain the contacts and resources they need to continue to grow.

### CREATING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The 2023 USHCC National Conference — taking place Sept. 24-26 — will bring together corporate, nonprofit and government partners to discuss opportunities for economic development for Latinos within the larger U.S. economy. USHCC is anticipating more than 5,000 attendees at the conference, which will be held at the Loews Sapphire Falls Resort in Orlando.

"Orlando is becoming one of the country's major hubs for Hispanic commerce in the U.S. and Latin America, setting a great backdrop for the conference," Reyneri said. "For the past few years, our conference has been on the West Coast, so bringing thousands of attendees to Florida — a key state and important market for our community — gives Hispanic entrepreneurs from across the country the opportunity to spend their dollars supporting Hispanic-owned businesses. Latinos buying Latino."

The conference will offer Hispanic entrepreneurs the opportunity to engage in policy-driven discussions with business and governmental leaders, as well as find new opportunities in both the public and private sectors through the conference's match-making sessions. ■



*For the past few years, our conference has been on the West Coast, so bringing thousands of attendees to Florida – a key state and important market for our community – gives Hispanic entrepreneurs from across the country the opportunity to spend their dollars supporting Hispanic-owned businesses. Latinos buying Latino.*

– Nelson Reyneri Jr., chair, United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT USHCC, VISIT [USHCC.COM](https://www.usbcc.com).

# Robert Hernandez

*Vice President of Sales*

**Solo Printing LLC**

**Q:** *Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?*

**A:** Solo Printing, a minority-owned and family-operated business, was established in the heart of Miami, Florida. Our journey began in 1985, driven by a passion for quality printing and a commitment to serving the local business community. Our founders, brothers Manny and Jorge Hernandez, recognized the need for a printing partner that not only delivered exceptional results but also understood the unique challenges and aspirations of businesses in the area.

Both Hernandez brothers wanted to focus on a stronger commitment to technology, quality and simply “doing things the right way.” This led to the inception of Solo Printing. Today, we currently operate out of a 180,000-square-foot facility, with over 165 highly trained and dedicated employees, and with some of the most well-recognized brands in retail, travel and other industries.

**Q:** *What sets your company apart from your competition?*

**A:** What truly distinguishes Solo Printing is our unwavering dedication to authenticity, customer service and quality excellence. “You need to make customer service No. 1 to be successful in any industry,” says co-founder Jorge Hernandez. As a minority-owned and family-operated enterprise, we work closely to ensure a deep sense of connection and integrity in every project we produce. Our clients aren’t just customers – they’re valued partners. Our state-of-the-art technology, paired with our employee expertise, allows us to create print materials that not only look stunning but also resonate with

the diverse audience of Miami and the nation beyond it. We truly believe that a blend of genuine care for the success of our clients’ brands, top-tier expertise and innovative machinery truly sets us apart.

**Q:** *What is your biggest challenge as a Hispanic business enterprise (HBE), and how do you combat that?*

**A:** As an HBE, one of our ongoing challenges is ensuring that we have equal access to opportunities in a competitive market. However, we view challenges as opportunities for growth. We combat this by proactively networking within the local business community, participating in supplier diversity programs and showcasing the value we bring as a minority-owned enterprise. By consistently delivering exceptional results, we demonstrate that diversity and quality go hand in hand.

**Q:** *What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?*

**A:** Our biggest opportunity lies in the growing demand for authentic, locally-rooted businesses that understand the cultural nuances and preferences of the Miami market. We are capitalizing on this by deepening our community engagement and forming strategic partnerships with other local businesses. Moreover, we’re leveraging digital platforms to reach a wider audience while still maintaining our personalized approach. By staying true to our roots and adapting to evolving trends, we position ourselves to become the go-to choice for businesses seeking meaningful connections and exceptional printing solutions. ■

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SOLO PRINTING, VISIT [SOLOPRINTING.COM](http://SOLOPRINTING.COM).



Robert Hernandez

Our biggest opportunity lies in the growing demand for authentic, locally-rooted businesses that understand the cultural nuances and preferences of the Miami market. We are capitalizing on this by deepening our community engagement and forming strategic partnerships with other local businesses.

— Robert Hernandez





# Supplier Inclusion

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For more information, visit [Corporate.Walmart.com/Suppliers](https://Corporate.Walmart.com/Suppliers),  
or email us at [SupplierInclusion@walmart.com](mailto:SupplierInclusion@walmart.com)

## Gregg Ontiveros

Principal Owner

Group O Inc.

**Q:** Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?

**A:** As with many start-ups, Group O began with humble origins. The company was founded as Bi-State Packaging on Oct. 1, 1974, when Bob Ontiveros quit his job to start his own business selling packaging supplies out of his family station wagon. As one of 10 children born to second-generation Mexican immigrants in the working-class Florencia neighborhood of Moline, Illinois, Ontiveros knew that he wanted something more – and that he could create his own opportunities.

Nearly 50 years later, Group O has grown into a \$900 million-plus multifaceted business process outsourcing provider, specializing not only in packaging solutions but supply chain, mobile device testing and incentive marketing solutions.

**Q:** What sets your company apart from your competition?

**A:** Flexibility, continuous improvement, passion. Group O's growth can be credited to leveraging innovative thinking, entrepreneurial spirit and a can-do approach to addressing our client's unique challenges. What sets us apart from our competition is our willingness and ability to evolve alongside our clients to deliver end-to-end solutions with a single point of contact.

**Q:** What is your biggest challenge as an HBE, and how do you combat that?

**A:** Group O faces similar challenges to non-HBEs. In a post-pandemic world, combined with today's economic environment, we continue to navigate and manage through material shortages, longer lead times and staffing challenges.

In today's tight labor market, job seekers across the country have many options. What sets Group O apart from other organizations is our strong employer brand built on our values and culture. Being a Hispanic, family-owned company is an integral part of that culture.



**Q:** What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?

**A:** Sustainability is a key focus for most companies. Group O has increased our focus on solutions to help our customers achieve their sustainability goals through waste reduction efforts, efficiency programs, automation and technology. Whether it is through our custom-engineered, sustainable packaging solutions, process automation or optimization services, we are not only reducing costs for our clients but reducing negative impacts on the environment.

Another area of focus is the energy and utilities industry. Both in Illinois and across the U.S., state utility commissions and other governing bodies have expressed the need for supplier diversity and the use of minority-owned businesses in delivering services to critical consumer programs such as energy optimization, energy efficiency outreach and others. Over the past 12 months, Group O has established partnerships with several energy companies and energy consulting businesses that enables us to bring our world-class services to their marketplaces and customers. These services range from management and execution of incentive and rebate programs to customer care and kitting and fulfillment activities. ■

State utility commissions and other governing bodies have expressed the need for supplier diversity and the use of minority-owned businesses in delivering services to critical consumer programs such as energy optimization, energy efficiency outreach and others. Over the past 12 months, Group O has established partnerships with several energy companies and energy consulting businesses that enables us to bring our world-class services to their marketplaces and customers.

— Gregg Ontiveros

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GROUP O, VISIT [GROUPO.COM](https://www.groupo.com).



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diverse suppliers in  
our global business  
travel community.

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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

# Belisario Rosas

Founder and President

Worldcom Exchange Inc. (WEI)

**Q:** Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?

**A:** WEI was started because I recognized a need that was not being met by the regional IT [information technology] community at that time. In 1989, when I started WEI, organizations were forced into bending their business model to the technology that was available out of the box — usually from one manufacturer.

I knew that the proper solution for those organizations was a custom technology solution stack, comprised of best-in-breed equipment from several manufacturers — all backed by engineers that had subject matter expertise in integrating those products. It was a unique concept at the time but was received very favorably by businesses that saw solutions that were immediately able to help them overcome their business challenges. We have not abandoned that business-focused customized approach, and many of those early customers are still with us to this day.

**Q:** What sets your company apart from your competition?

**A:** For us, it is the people and the process. The products we sell are available to our customers from anywhere, but it is the combination of the extraordinary team we have built and the intensely customer-focused processes we build with our customers, that make all the difference.

Collaboration with stakeholders and fanatical commitment to their success are the driving blueprint of the “WEI way.” We simply won’t let customers down, and we measure our success by their success. Customers have rewarded that commitment with their continued loyalty, and we are proud to say we’ve helped grow some of the finest organizations in America.

Another differentiator for us is our commitment to our team and our community. For us, we call it “family” and we take that very seriously. We hire the most engaged, committed and talented people we can — and we hire for life. The level of energy from the WEI family, all sharing one mission, is the most common feedback we get from our customers: extraordinary people doing extraordinary work. We leverage the entire community to build that family, including minority groups that are often underrepresented in the IT sector. Our inclusion and multicultural approach to running a business are often cited by our team members, and prospective candidates, as one of the reasons they joined us. It is also the best way to find, recruit and keep the most gifted, creative and talented folks available.

**Q:** What is your biggest challenge as a Hispanic business enterprise (HBE), and how do you combat that?

**A:** Our biggest challenge as an HBE is also our biggest success: how to be wildly successful by traditional standards but also stay true to our principles, our roots and our commitment to the community. We pay close attention to making sure we keep that top of mind. We stay focused on the groups that we owe our success to: our team, customers, partners and community.

Speaking specifically of our success in the Hispanic community, about 25% of our workforce is Hispanic, and that is in a state [New Hampshire] that is only 4.6% Hispanic. Continuing that active approach of offering opportunity to underrepresented groups is a challenge that we accept every year. We expect to have continued success in that arena as we begin a minority-based training and mentoring program in 2023 and 2024 that will be not just for WEI but will also be available as a program for our customers. We have high



Belisario Rosas

hopes that the program will bring opportunities to the local Hispanic community that have not previously been available.

**Q:** What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?

**A:** Our biggest opportunity is change. There are disruptive changes in the IT world right now, as consumption models are evolving rapidly. Cloud and managed services are providing organizations with choices that require less up-front capital, a quicker time to market and a shorter learning curve for their stakeholders.

These changes leave some IT resellers behind, but WEI has always emphasized speed, flexibility and agility, and our team is ahead of the game. Another major change is the need for mobility on the edge of the network. The data driven to and from mobile devices is now more than the rest of the fixed internet combined. Application-driven solutions, marked by intuitive solutions — marked by intuitive easy-to-use AI [artificial intelligence]-driven technologies — is what all organizations should be focused on now. Adapting to those changes is a strong suit of WEI, and helping our customers on that journey is what drives us every day. ■

Our biggest challenge as an HBE is also our biggest success: how to be wildly successful by traditional standards, but also stay true to our principles, our roots and our commitment to the community. We pay close attention to making sure we keep that top of mind.

— Belisario Rosas

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WEI, VISIT [WEI.COM](http://WEI.COM).



# BNSF Railway

*Driving Diversity  
Delivering Value*



BNSF Railway is one of the leading transportation companies in North America. We connect American consumers and communities with the global marketplace. We seek safe and reliable goods and services from diverse-owned businesses that are innovative, collaborative and strategic supply partners.

To learn more about becoming a BNSF supplier, visit [www.bnsf.com/suppliers/diverse-business-enterprise](http://www.bnsf.com/suppliers/diverse-business-enterprise)

# Silvana Rosero

*President and CEO*

**Laguna Media Group**

**Q:** *Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?*

**A:** Laguna Media Group is located in Grand Prairie, Texas, with a diverse multinational remote team. It started as Small Pond Video Productions in 2002. In 2004, I came to the business as a partner to add project management and communications expertise. In 2008, the company became a certified minority and woman-owned enterprise, and I began leading the business. At this time, we realized that there was a niche to also offer high-quality creative production services to big corporations and to the public sector with the efficiency and agility of a small business.

As a result, the company started to diversify its client portfolio with projects done for companies such as Oncor, University of Texas at Arlington, Ericsson, Ana G. Mendez University System, Accenture, DART [Dallas Area Rapid Transportation], DFW [Dallas/Fort Worth International] Airport, Vistra and Teltech Group, among many others. With communications technology evolution, we decided to expand the scope of services and added solutions that would complement our video and audio-visual areas and to offer digital support to its clients. Subsequently, the company went through a rebranding in 2018, renaming the business as Laguna Media Group. Today, in addition to the original video and event production services, the company offers expertise including web development, digital and social media strategy, social media management and SEO [search engine optimization]. Learn more at [www.lagunamg.com](http://www.lagunamg.com).

**Q:** *What sets your company apart from your competition?*

**A:** There are several aspects that makes us different in the industry. At Laguna Media Group, we believe our client's agenda is our agenda. Our clients are the subject matter experts, and our job is to enhance how these ideas can be communicated more effectively to affect change — whether it's learning, culture or behavior response. We do this by using the best,

talented professionals and latest technology. While our diverse team approaches creative through different cultural lenses, technology provides a platform to enhance processes, speed performance and measure results. In the end, as a minority and woman-owned business, we have a unique combination with the flexibility and the structure of a small business to tackle clients' challenges and meet their needs.

**Q:** *What is your biggest challenge as a Hispanic business enterprise (HBE), and how do you combat that?*

**A:** Whether it is boards of directors, C-suite positions, management or procurement, we need more Latinos at the decision-making table! Our diverse point of view is needed at all levels to shape and execute strategy. However, our current representation in these areas is still lacking. We need an “ecosystem” where Latinos can be more supportive of each other in multiple areas and levels.

My way to combat this is by putting myself out for leadership positions and boards, mentoring young professionals that will be filling the leadership pipeline, and building personal relationships in all of the aforementioned areas. Leading by example and following through whenever I commit to support someone is a great way to personally affect change in creating a sense of an inclusive business community.

**Q:** *What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?*

**A:** Being a business owner has opened the door to do what we love while making a meaningful difference. A current challenge for HBEs is the protection of their digital assets and their brands. We have a huge opportunity to offer our years of experience to assist HBEs in identifying at-risk areas where best digital communications practices need to be implemented. Once risks have been addressed, the next step is data collection and interpretation to leverage insights to inform marketing and communications strategy decisions. ■

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LAGUNA MEDIA GROUP, VISIT [LAGUNAMG.COM](http://LAGUNAMG.COM).



Silvana Rosero

Whether it is boards of directors, C-suite positions, management or procurement, we need more Latinos at the decision-making table! Our diverse point of view is needed at all levels to shape and execute strategy. However, our current representation in these areas is still lacking. We need an “ecosystem” where Latinos can be more supportive of each other in multiple areas and levels.

— Silvana Rosero





# WE ARE COLGATE,

a caring, innovative growth company that is reimagining a healthier future for people, their pets, and our planet.

Colgate-Palmolive is determined to make the world better for everyone. We earn the trust of millions of people each day by being a part of our communities, by living our values and by maximizing our individual talents and knowledge.

We are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and have been recognized for 13 years in a row as a Top 50 Company for Diversity by DiversityInc.

For over 20 years, Supplier Diversity has been embedded in our U.S.-based organization with clear strategic goals to drive growth. We continue to create and expand our business opportunities for underrepresented business owners to advance economic and social equity and strengthen communities. We hold our teams accountable for meeting our Supplier Diversity objectives and growing our diverse partnerships.

Learn more and join us at: <https://www.colgatepalmolive.com/en-us/suppliers/supplier-diversity>.



# Debbie Trevino

Founder and CEO

Treco Services Inc.

**Q:** Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?

**A:** In 1983, Treco Services Inc. began as a mom-and-pop company to provide for my young family. I began the company with my husband at the time, providing cleaning services for two facilities. We started the business without having any experience in marketing, business, how to put contracts together, how to manage accounting, hiring people – basically everything that it takes to run a business. Treco Services grew based on recommendations and referrals, thanks to my positive attitude and willingness to learn. My attitude at the time was to work hard and give it my all. My goal was to build a great reputation for the company based on quality and meeting the needs of our clients. I was driven – and I remain driven – by the idea that I was building a future for myself and my family.

Like all companies, my company has had its ups and downs, but it is perseverance that keeps me moving forward.

Because of the success of Treco, I have had the opportunity to be a past board member of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber, which was a great learning opportunity. As business owners, we need to continuously look for opportunities to grow. It is from these experiences that I went on to get my certifications as a Hispanic, minority and woman-owned business. I look for other ways of growing Treco, like graduating as an 8-A certified business.

**Q:** What sets your company apart from your competition?

**A:** When I started Treco Services, I knew that customer service was going to drive me to have a very successful service company. I always made it a requirement to listen and understand the needs of the

client. I learned their work culture and became agile and flexible to provide the services that were requested, diving in and delivering excellent service. Our clients need to feel confident in knowing that we are becoming an asset to them by building a strong relationship and trusting Treco Services; this is how we have grown over the last 40 years. We are the competition!

**Q:** What is the biggest challenge as in HBE, and how do you combat it?

**A:** Part of my business strategy is to become a top vendor for corporate entities. As an HBE, I find that the biggest challenge is that when procurement teams for corporate entities see an HBE, they assume that we are a company that would not be able to handle the size of work they are offering and get overlooked to even participate in the bidding.

Yes, many HBEs are small businesses, but many of those HBEs have the experience and talent to take on the larger work opportunities corporate America has to offer and should not be overlooked. When I have experienced these situations, I not only keep knocking on the door of the minority business supplier for that company, but I also work with these individuals to get meetings with their procurement team. Being persistent in trying to speak with the buying decision-maker is important so that you can tell your company's story, so they get to know the business better in the hopes that they won't overlook your company again with the next opportunity.

**Q:** What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?

**A:** The biggest opportunities that we have are being involved and having certifica-



Debbie Trevino

tions. This has brought opportunities with corporate accounts to provide janitorial facility maintenance and vegetation to these corporations. Making the investment and being with the different associations and councils allows us to go to conferences and participate in the classes that they provide for business owners. This allows us to meet one-on-one with corporate members, which we would never have had the opportunity to do if we were doing it on our own. We are able to participate in matchmaking, roundtables and meet-and-greets. This helps us build our strategic plan for growing our business and increasing our revenue by meeting new corporate clients and even other small business owners who have needs for service or that we are able to team up with and go after RFPs [request for proposals] together. I stay very active in all councils and trade associations. Staying involved and sitting on committees and boards helps build relationships and trust. I am very committed to not just being the president of Treco Services but also providing business development. ■

➔ TO READ THE FULL TRECO SERVICES ARTICLE, VISIT [MBNUSA.BIZ](https://mbnusa.biz).

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRECO SERVICES, VISIT [TRECOSERVICES.COM](https://trecoservices.com).

Our clients need to feel confident in knowing that we are becoming an asset to them by building a strong relationship and trusting Treco Services; this is how we have grown over the last 40 years. We are the competition!

— Debbie Trevino



# WE GET DIVERSITY MATTERS.

**CDW is committed to supporting  
hispanic-owned businesses.**

Ours is a commitment that reaches well beyond our coworkers, the customers we serve and the communities we live in. Partnering strategically with qualified businesses enables us to keep providing the industry's best experience, while contributing to economic growth in diverse communities nationwide.

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**Learn more about our commitment to diversity  
at [CDW.com/SupplierDiversity](https://www.cdw.com/SupplierDiversity)**



# Nina Vaca

Chairman and CEO

Pinnacle Group

**Q:** Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?

**A:** Pinnacle Group was founded by our Chairman and CEO Nina Vaca in 1996 from her apartment's living room. As a child of immigrants who left their home country to rebuild in America, her entrepreneurial spirit is deep-rooted in constant pursuit of what's possible. Vaca founded Pinnacle Group to provide companies with the IT [information technology]/professional talent they needed. Since then, Pinnacle has grown into a full-service contingent workforce solutions company serving customers globally.

Over the last 27 years, the company has used that spirit as fuel to guide us toward our purpose — connecting people with opportunity — and as both an MBE [minority business enterprise] and WBE [woman-owned business enterprise], being able to serve as a platform and advocate for other diverse and woman-owned businesses.

Pinnacle Group has since grown from its humble beginnings to be the largest Hispanic-owned provider of IT/professional contingent labor and MSP [managed service provider] services in North America, serving a range of Fortune 500 clientele across multiple industry verticals globally.

**Q:** What sets your company apart from your competition?

**A:** Our singular focus is on client impact — both in business and in the communities in which we live and work. We help our customers solve their most complex talent needs at scale. Our goal is not to be the largest provider in our space, but to be the most innovative and transformative. This has resulted in decades-long partnerships with our customers that are constantly and

proactively reinvented and reinvested in to ensure the solutions we provide keep pace with their business needs.

Our investments in people and technology reflect our priorities. Pinnacle Group's innovative and agile culture is built on a foundation of flawless execution and a constant drive toward excellence supported by an enterprise-grade technology stack. This ensures that we consistently meet and exceed client expectations, making us a trusted partner.

**Q:** What is your biggest challenge as an HBE, and how do you combat that?

**A:** Perception. Despite our collective accomplishments and expertise, there can often be a perception — sometimes even unconscious — that diverse and/or woman-owned businesses are somehow 'less than' or not as capable as their non-diverse counterparts. This perception can often be a roadblock in our fight for a seat at the table, particularly for more strategically impactful and/or scalable opportunities.

We've been actively combatting these challenges for the past 27 years, so they're not new. Central to our strategy is a continual focus on a culture of excellence and scalability, with our people, processes and technology functioning as the cornerstones of that approach. Additionally, by sharing the impact of our numerous client programs (we are proud to serve over 20% of the Fortune 100), we are changing perceptions and opening the door for more HBEs.

Our success story underscores the monumental impact that working with diverse and woman-owned businesses can have not only on our clients and on communities at large.

**Q:** What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?



Nina Vaca

**A:** Pinnacle Group's biggest opportunity is always and everywhere to create meaningful, strategic and highly impactful partnerships with our customers that transform their contingent workforce programs, improve their supplier and worker diversity, and create exceptional business outcomes. This is the entire reason for our existence and success over nearly three decades. We have had significant success in this area, including being featured by customers in both media coverage and their internal publications. The key to our success in this area is partnering with customers who see diversity as central to their long-term vision and mission, not simply a set of performance metrics. Our greatest success is serving companies willing to not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk. ■

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PINNACLE GROUP, VISIT [PINNACLE1.COM](https://Pinnacle1.com).

Our goal is not to be the largest provider in our space, but to be the most innovative and transformative. This has resulted in decades-long partnerships with our customers that are constantly and proactively reinvented and reinvested in to ensure the solutions we provide keep pace with their business needs.

— Nina Vaca





# Fairness. Respect. Inclusion.

With multicultural roots, Nissan is committed to providing an inclusive space that encourages innovative ideas from our diverse workforce and supply base. We not only respect, but eagerly welcome, the varied perspectives of these talented men and women. Nissan believes our commitment to our core principles of diversity - fairness, respect and inclusion - is essential to creating quality and innovative products.



## EMBRACING DIVERSITY

# Lili Gil Valletta

Co-founder and CEO

**CIEN+**

**Q:** Tell us a bit about your company. When and why was it started?

**A:** By the year 2040, we will be a majority-minority nation which has critical business implications for companies and brands that want to stay relevant and drive growth in a fast-changing and diverse marketplace. That is why, back in 2010 while both of us founders – Lili Gil Valletta and Enrique Arbelaez – were in our executive corporate jobs at Johnson & Johnson, we had the foresight to create the company we couldn't find to hire.

The vision was to bring together the discipline and sophistication of data analytics and consulting firms combined with the creativity and innovation of advertising agencies all under one roof with Cultural Intelligence® at the core, and CIEN+ was born.

After over a decade of helping some of the world's most iconic brands like Google, PepsiCo, Kellogg's, Prudential, Kroger, GlaxoSmithKline, United Healthcare Group and Walmart, among many others, we recognized the need to expand our offering as a one-of-its-kind independent family of Cultural Intelligence® companies under the banner of Culture+ Group.

The group offers an integrated portfolio of business and marketing solutions designed to understand and unlock the power of culture in business. Established in 2023, the conglomerate includes CIEN+, CIEN+ Health, The Choice+, Human Dot Plus, and a diverse network of media and community partners. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, with satellite offices across the U.S., Latin America and Europe, the group is proudly 100% minority-owned and operates as a pure holding entity under the leadership of its co-founders and an executive leadership team that includes award-winning industry veterans and for-

mer corporate executives.

**Q:** What sets your company apart from your competition?

**A:** We believe in the power of culture and inclusion as a driver for business growth, and that has been our inspiration from inception. While many firms and corporations today are adding capabilities to better respond to market shifts, DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] and ESG [environmental, social and governance] and pressures, to us Cultural Intelligence® and inclusion is not a recent "bolt-on" capability but the expertise that brought us into existence. This has been our "it-factor" for over a decade driving our proprietary technologies, methodologies and creative approach to solving business and marketing challenges in a changing world.

Here are four things that uniquely set us apart from traditional agencies or researchers in the multicultural space.

1. Founded by former clients: unique perspective into the organizational dynamics, change management, and overall factors and financial KPIs that drive marketing and business success.
2. Driven by data and powered by AI: proprietary methodology using a tech stack of leading A.I., text analytics and natural language processing to disrupt the way we mine insights and understand people.
3. Beyond the traditional agency: creativity inspired by data and tie into measurable results
4. Purposeful thought-leadership: work widely published and recognized by industry leaders globally

**Q:** What is your biggest opportunity, and how are you capitalizing on that?



Lili Gil Valletta

**A:** To us, the market trends and demographic shifts are our most significant tailwind and path to compounded impact and growth.

The 2020 Census confirmed that 100% of population growth is diverse and that in two decades America will be majority-minority, while eight of the 10 largest cities in America already have reached this tipping point. Those shifts call for a business mind shift that inclusion is everyone's job. The last decade has prepared us for the next decade ahead and beyond to keep anticipating shifts and innovating around the ways we can elevate and offer better, more agile, and tech-enabled marketing solutions for our clients.

The bottom line is simple, and the numbers tell a clear story, making it mathematically impossible for companies to achieve their full potential in society and business without Cultural Intelligence® embedded into all they do. And this will future proof our business and that of our clients, too. ■

The 2020 Census confirmed that 100% of population growth is diverse and that in two decades America will be majority-minority, while eight of the 10 largest cities in America already have reached this tipping point. Those shifts call for a business mind shift that inclusion is everyone's job.

— Lili Gil Valletta

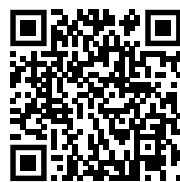
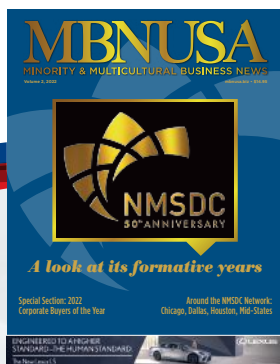
➔ TO READ THE FULL CIEN+ ARTICLE, VISIT [MBNUSA.BIZ](https://mbnusa.biz).

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CIEN+, VISIT [CIEN.PLUS](https://cien.plus).



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# **MBNUSA**

MINORITY & MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS NEWS

# Technological transformation

## *Post pandemic, health and pharma fields revamp with innovations in products, services and delivery*

BY SUZANNE BECKHAM SQUYRES

**T**he U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ended the COVID-19 public health emergency May 11, but the virus' impact has led to a vast expansion of technological ingenuity that is setting a transformative path for the always-evolving health care and pharmaceutical fields.

### LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE OR AI

Few elements of modern existence have proven as pervasive and life-changing as artificial intelligence. AI is working its way into many industries, including health and pharma — reshaping entire procedures and occupations. For instance, in June, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration cleared an AI-tested, cancer-fighting drug — known for now as LP-184 — for use in human trials. A lengthy and expensive process typically, AI reduced the pre-clinical studies by at least two years and saved millions of dollars.

Many technology and health care experts view AI as having the potential to im-

prove and even save lives, ease access to care in all communities, reduce medical errors, cut back on paperwork and lower costs. Many companies are incorporating these technologies into their operations.

Vizient Inc., an Irving, Texas-based company that provides performance-improvement services to acute-care providers, academic medical centers and ambulatory care providers, partnered with Mpirik, a cloud-based software company focused on cardiac care which was acquired by Tempus Labs Inc. in March 2023. Under the partnership, Vizient members have access to automatic identification of at-risk cardiac patients, automated alerts that decrease the time between echocardiogram and intervention and real-time reporting to improve health equity and market development opportunities.

“We have seen this platform help member health systems improve patient monitoring and reduce undertreatment that may come from disparities tied to gender or race,” said Bryan Grossman, Vizient's senior vice president, strategic supplier

performance and category management. “Improving outcomes provides a win for patients and providers.”

Merck & Co. Inc. launched its Merck Digital Sciences Studio last year to enable the research of technologies focused on the discovery and development of drugs. MDSS supports early-stage biomedical startups with direct investment, access to cloud computing and opportunities to pilot their technologies in collaboration with scientists at Merck.

“The MDSS provides a collaborative and entrepreneurial setting where scientists can fuel important innovations that advance drug development,” said Merck Chairman and CEO Rob Davis. “Our industry is built on innovation and has driven scientific successes that have saved or improved millions of lives.”

Cardinal Health Inc., a distributor of pharmaceuticals and manufacturer of medical and laboratory products, is collaborating with Palantir Technologies Inc. — which builds operating systems for health care companies — to deploy AI and ma-



**Bryan Grossman, senior vice president, strategic supplier performance and category management, Vizient Inc.**



**Rob Davis, chairman and CEO, Merck & Co. Inc.**



**Peter J. Siavelis, senior vice president and general manager of health system and provider distribution and services, Cardinal Health Inc.**





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chine learning to combine diagnosis and clinical data with real-time customer purchasing and consumption data. Future iterations of the tool are expected to help inform predictive purchasing decisions for therapeutic use, reimbursement insights and predictive drug inventory needs.

“We are taking a proactive role in pharmaceutical decision support to provide help to our customers — as they continue to manage rising drug expenses, supply-chain volatility and continued drug shortages,” said Peter J. Siavelis, senior vice president and general manager of health system & provider distribution & services at Cardinal Health. “By utilizing Palantir’s platform, we are working to reshape the pharmaceutical supply chain with innovative processes, products and solutions to improve access to critical medications and streamline pharmacy inventory management.”

Providing next-generation products is the goal of Johnson & Johnson’s San Francisco Bay campus. Opened last year, the research and development facility focuses on bridging scientific and technological capabilities that address gene and ribonucleic acid or RNA therapies, as well as innovative approaches and treatments for retinal and infectious diseases. The site also expands the company’s network of academic institutions and entrepreneurs.

“On this campus, our talented teams use their diverse experience and expertise to tackle society’s greatest health challenges

to create a better future for patients,” said Joaquin Duato, chairman of the board and CEO of the Brunswick, New Jersey-based Johnson & Johnson, a diversified health care products company. The new facility “affirms our commitment to combining science and technology to deliver transformative health care solutions.”

### BRIDGING HEALTH CARE GAPS

Technology is not only reimagining medications and equipment, but also changing the way patients receive services. The number of trips to the doctor’s office waned as COVID-19 grew and patients opted for telehealth visits over the phone or computer. However, not everyone has access to reliable internet connectivity or even phones and computers.

Further complicating the delivery of care is the loss of care venues. More than 150 rural hospitals have shuttered across the country in the last decade, and many rural and urban communities are experiencing critical shortages of primary care physicians. In these medical deserts, many patients must drive long distances to see doctors and some ration their medicines because pharmacies are too far away.

In response, traditional pharmaceutical retailers are changing their operations, creating new venues and methods of delivering products and health services. In addition to adding clinical offices and expanding pharmacy operations in their brick-and-mortar stores, Walgreens Boots

Alliance Inc. and CVS Health Corp. are pushing traditional methods of care into new realms.

In July, Walgreens extended its reach into small towns when it acquired 122 in-store pharmacies in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas from Brookshire Grocery Co., a grocery store chain that specializes in serving rural areas. And in March, the drugstore titan completed the acquisition of CareCentrix Inc., a technology-enabled, home-centered platform that coordinates health services across a range of settings — including primary care, specialty pharmacy care, post-acute care and home care.

With a similar goal of extending services to patients without adequate access to care, CVS Health Corp. finalized its purchase of Signify Health Inc. — a Dallas, Texas-based company — in March. Signify focuses on provider enablement and bringing clinicians into patients’ homes to identify chronic conditions and close gaps in care. The partnership provides a network of clinicians and physicians who make house calls, while offering CVS the ability to interact with patients in their homes.

“This transaction advances our value-based care strategy by enhancing our presence in the home,” said CVS Health President and CEO Karen S. Lynch. “Our expanded capabilities will bring us closer to the consumer as we continue to redefine how people access and experience care that is more affordable, convenient and connected.” ■



**Joaquin Duato, chairman of the board and CEO, Johnson & Johnson**



**Karen S. Lynch, president and CEO, CVS Health Corp.**



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In April, Whitney Warren (far left) joined the family business – Dikita Enterprises Inc. — marking the third generation on board to help guide the company’s growth. Next to Warren is her mother, Eve Williams, the company’s president and CEO, and her grandfather, Lucious Williams, chairman.



# Building a legacy

## *Successful succession planning brings three generations to Dikita Enterprises*

BY TONYA MCMURRAY

**W**hitney Warren never planned to join the family business.

“It might have been my mom and my grandpa’s plan, but it wasn’t my plan,” she said. “Going into the family business seemed too simple to me. It’s what everybody thought I was supposed to do. I wanted to explore and learn other things.”

Warren’s grandfather, Lucious Williams, founded Dikita Enterprises Inc., an award-winning engineering and consulting firm, in Wisconsin in 1979. He moved the company to Dallas in 1983 and his daughter, Eve Williams, joined him the next year.

As a high school student, Warren worked at Dikita and then returned briefly in 2017 after graduating from the Univer-

sity of North Texas with a degree in fashion merchandising. In 2018, she joined Neiman Marcus as an assistant buyer, believing that she would pursue a career outside of Dikita.

She found, however, that her job did not align with her values or offer the kind of opportunity she wanted.

“I didn’t see people who looked like me in the roles I wanted to be in or in those higher positions that could implement change,” she said. “There was no lane for inclusion, diversity and belonging. My ideas were heard and acknowledged, but they weren’t shown throughout the company.”

In April, she returned to Dikita as its marketing specialist, ready to become

the third generation of her family to help guide the company’s growth.

“I’m the marketing specialist, but since I own a stake in the company, I’m working on the business as well,” she said. “I can look at other ventures we can take on.”

### BRINGING ON THE SECOND GENERATION

Like Warren, Eve Williams didn’t plan to join Dikita. She earned a bachelor’s degree in information systems and a master’s degree in accounting with a goal of designing accounting systems for small businesses. She had a job offer from Arthur Andersen, but her father had just

*(continued on page 40)*





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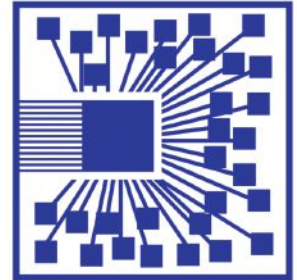


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# Preparing for contingencies

## *Robert Half's seven steps to follow when you are succession planning*

*(Editor's note: By Robert Half. This article first appeared on the Robert Half blog).*

**Y**ou can't run a business, regardless of its size, without talented people ready to move into key positions when the current occupants leave. Even the most successful employers can run off a cliff if they don't have a solid succession plan in place.

### **What is succession planning?**

Succession planning is a strategy for identifying and developing future leaders at your company — not just at the top but for major roles at all levels. It helps your business prepare for all contingencies by preparing high-potential workers for advancement.

Here are seven tips for kick-starting the succession planning process at your company.

#### **1. Be proactive with a plan**

Sometimes, you'll know well in advance

if a hard-to-replace team member is going to leave the company — a planned retirement is a good example. But other times, you'll be caught off-guard by a sudden and potentially disorienting employee departure. That's why you need a plan — now.

First, consider all the key roles on your team and answer these two questions:

- What's the day-to-day impact of X position on our company or department?
- If the person currently in X position left, how would that affect our operations?

#### **2. Pinpoint succession candidates**

Once you have a handle on the ripple effect that the departure of certain employees might cause, choose team members who could potentially step into those positions.

Ask yourself:

- If we were to hire for X position internally, which employees would be the strongest candidates for stepping into this role?
- Would those candidates need training?

And, if so, what type?

While the obvious successor to a role may be the person who is immediately next in line in the organizational chart, don't discount other promising employees. Look for people who display the skills necessary to thrive in higher positions, regardless of their current title.

But don't just assume you know how people on your team view their career goals. You may have certain team members in mind for senior management roles, but who's to say they'll even be interested in the idea once it's presented to them? If you haven't already, talk to these employees about how they view their professional future before making your succession choices.

### **REQUEST TALENT**

#### **3. Let them know**

In private meetings, explain to each protegee that they're being singled out for



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positions of increasing importance. Establish an understanding that there are no guarantees, and the situation can change due to circumstances encountered by either the company or the succession candidates themselves.

#### 4. Step up professional development efforts

Ideally, you have already been investing in the career development of those you select as your succession choices. Now that preparation needs to be ramped up. Job rotation is a good way to help your candidates gain additional knowledge and experience. And connecting them with mentors can boost their abilities in the critical area of soft skills: The best leaders have strong communication skills, as well as polished interpersonal abilities, such as empathy and diplomacy.

#### 5. Do a trial run of your succession plan

Don't wait until there's a crisis to test whether an employee has the right stuff to assume a more advanced role. Have a potential successor assume some responsibilities of a manager who's taking a vacation. The employee will gain valuable experience and appreciate the opportunity to shine. And you can assess where that per-

son might need some additional training and development.

#### 6. Integrate your succession plan into your hiring strategy

Once you've identified employees as successors for critical roles in your organization, take note of any talent gaps they would leave behind if tapped. That can help you identify where to focus your future recruiting efforts.

#### 7. Think about your own successor

When making a succession plan for your organization, keep in mind that your own role will someday require backfilling. Maybe you'll decide to take advantage of a new opportunity, or you'll put in your time and retire from the workforce. So, it's important to ask yourself, which employee could step into your shoes one day? And what can you do, starting now, to help that person prepare for the transition?

The members of your workforce aren't fixed assets — and changes in your team's lineup are inevitable. You may not always be able to predict a valued employee's departure from the firm. But through effective succession planning, you can pave the way for the continuity so critical to your business's future. ■

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### Building a legacy

*(continued from page 36)*

moved Dikita to Dallas, Texas, and she knew he needed help.

"I told him I would do two years and help him with the accounting system," she said. "And then, time ticked on, and he drew me in and gave me more responsibility. Over time, this just became what I was going to do, and I liked it."

Lucious jokes, "And I paid off her student loans."

Just as she has given Warren freedom to explore ways to expand the company business to incorporate Warren's interest, Lucious offered Eve the chance to expand the business with a new division, Dikita Management Systems, focused on data collection and management.

Eve became the company's CEO and president in 2010. While that may not have been her initial plan, it was part of the plan Lucious had for the company.

management transitions and to begin grooming potential successors early.

"Look at the family first in terms of expanding the management of the firm," he said. "Get family involved in the business early on so they know what it is involved. Then talk that up. I told Eve 'Arthur Andersen will be a company that you work for. Dikita will be the company that you will own.'"

But Lucious believes it's also important to prepare family members for the role they will take on, so they have the skills and experience needed. Before he turned the reins of the company over to Eve, he gave her a list of requirements to prepare her for eventual leadership of Dikita. He asked her to join a community organization and assume a leadership role in that organization, to become a leader in her church and to engage in continuing education activities.

Eve said while it's important to give potential successors exposure to the business, it can also be valuable to allow them other experiences outside the family business as well.

"Even at a young age, kids can help by

collating or stapling papers," she said. "That can make a big difference as to whether our kids feel comfortable coming into the business. But having the benefit of working somewhere else can be good, too. I wanted Whitney to go out and see what others do and to see how things really work. And I think that gave her an appreciation of what we do."

Warren jokes that she now understands how her mother and grandfather drew her into the business, but agrees she is more ready to take on the role.

"I now have a better understanding of what legacy means," she said. "Legacy is ownership. Legacy means creating equal opportunities for African Americans to succeed in spaces where we're qualified but have been historically overlooked and underrepresented. It's about not only paving the way for ourselves, but also keeping the door open for other Black and Brown people and businesses to join us." ■

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# Billion Dollar Roundtable inducts seven new members

***Abbott, Amazon, Bristol Myers Squibb, Caterpillar, Citi, Duke Energy, ExxonMobil recognized for commitment to supplier diversity***

**T**he Billion Dollar Roundtable Inc. (BDR), a corporate advocacy organization that promotes excellence in supply chain diversity, inducted seven new companies into its membership at its annual best practices summit in August.

The 2023 inductees are Abbott, Amazon, Bristol Myers Squibb, Caterpillar, Citi, Duke Energy and ExxonMobil.

The new members represent the greatest number of inductees into BDR membership in a single year since the organization was founded in 2001. Membership now stands at 39, the most in BDR history, including a total of 11 member companies joining since 2022.

"The Billion Dollar Roundtable enthusiastically welcomes these seven corporations into our membership for 2023. These new members demonstrate their commitment to corporate supplier diversity each and every day through their robust programs and initiatives," said BDR chairman Shelley Stewart Jr. "Each offers a unique market presence that will infuse the BDR with new ideas, en-

ergy and approaches to the practice of corporate supplier diversity."

BDR member companies commit to documented supply chain spend of \$1 billion or more annually on a first-tier basis with diverse suppliers as a condition of membership. The induction ceremony was a part of the BDR's annual best practices summit, held in Chicago and hosted by BDR member company CDW Corp. The summit, titled "Game On: Moving Global Supplier Diversity Beyond Spend," focused on the global economic impact of supplier diversity spend.

The achievements of the new BDR members were celebrated during the annual meeting. "These new members will be instrumental in helping to fulfill the BDR's mission of providing thought leadership around supplier diversity and driving greater participation of diverse companies into corporate supply chains," said Sharon Patterson, BDR's co-founder and president.

A deeper look at the 2023 BDR inductees and their supplier diversity efforts will be featured in WE USA Volume 4.

BDR member companies review and discuss issues, challenges and strategies related to supplier diversity as a means to advance supply chain opportunities for both corporations and diverse suppliers. The BDR is publisher of "Supplier Diversity Best Practices: Building Excellence to Improve the Supply Chain Matrix."

Abbott, Amazon, Bristol Myers Squibb, Caterpillar, Citi, Duke Energy and ExxonMobil join these major U.S.-based corporations as member companies of the BDR: Adient, Apple, AT&T, Avis Budget Group, Bank of America, Boeing, CDW, Comcast NBCUniversal, Cummins, CVS Health, Dell, Entergy, Exelon, Ford, General Motors, Google, Honda North America, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, JPMorgan Chase, Kaiser-Permanente, Kroger, Merck, Meta Platforms, Microsoft, Pacific Gas and Electric, Procter & Gamble, Stellantis, The Home Depot, Toyota Motor North America, Verizon and Walmart. ■

➔ FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BDR, VISIT [BILLIONDOLLARROUNDTABLE.ORG](http://BILLIONDOLLARROUNDTABLE.ORG).



Billion Dollar Roundtable Inc. board members and guests attend the 2023 Annual Summit in Chicago, Illinois.



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**Abbott**

Melissa D. Brotz (center), vice president, global marketing and external affairs and chief marketing and communications officer, Abbott, is recognized at the 2023 BDR induction ceremony by (from left) BDR co-founder and Chairman Emeritus Don McKneely, BDR President and CEO Sharon Patterson and BDR Chairman Shelley Stewart Jr.



Jeff Ball (second from right), vice president, global corporate procurement, Amazon.com Inc., is recognized at 2023 BDR induction ceremony.



Rondu Vincent, executive director, supplier diversity and sustainability, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co., is recognized at the 2023 BDR induction ceremony.



Denise Johnson (far right, next to Stewart Jr.), group president of resource industries, Caterpillar Inc., is recognized at the 2023 BDR induction ceremony.





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Javette Hines (far right), head of supply chain development, inclusion and sustainability, Citigroup Inc., is recognized at the 2023 BDR induction ceremony.



Dwight Jacobs (center), senior vice president, supply chain, and chief procurement officer, Duke Energy Corp., is recognized at the 2023 BDR induction ceremony.



Pamela Skaufel (far right, next to Stewart Jr.), vice president, procurement, Exxon Mobil Corp. is recognized at the 2023 BDR induction ceremony.



Kristin Malek (fourth from right), director, global business diversity, CDW Corp., and her team hosted the 2023 BDR Annual Summit in Chicago.





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# Accelerating MBE growth

*NMSDC, MBDA to hold flagship 2023 conferences together*

**A**s part of their efforts to accelerate minority business growth and advance economic equity, the National Minority Supplier Development Council Inc. (NMSDC) and the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) are collaborating to hold flagship annual conferences together this year.

The NMSDC Annual Conference & Exchange and MBDA National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week will take place in Baltimore Oct. 22- 25. The conferences will be held in the same space to maximize attendance opportunities and will include MBDA-contributed federal government programming focused on creating greater opportunity for the minority business community.

MBDA, a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce, celebrates the 40th anniversary of MED Week this year.

This collaboration reflects the important role nonprofits, corporations and the federal government play in promoting business diversity. It will enable NMSDC and MBDA to convene high-level federal partners to engage in important policy discussions focused on accelerating growth for minority businesses. It will also provide a more effective platform to educate companies and minority business enterprises (MBEs) on business development and contracting opportunities in emerging industries and federal programs/services that support business growth.

“This coordination embodies NMSDC’s and MBDA’s shared goal of promoting mi-

nority business growth to create a more equitable economy that works for all. By fostering access to contracts, capital, and more diverse networks, we hope to close the equity gap and unlock infinite opportunities for NMSDC-certified MBEs to soar past our goal of \$1 trillion in annual revenue and build long-lasting generational wealth for communities of color,” said NMSDC CEO and President Ying McGuire.

“The Minority Business Development Agency is excited to work with NMSDC to commemorate the 40th Annual National Minority Enterprise Development Week, a historic milestone for the minority business community,” said Donald R. Cravins Jr., under secretary of commerce for minority business development. “MBDA and NMSDC share a mission to create an equitable business ecosystem in order to unlock our nation’s economic potential. With historic investments across sectors and industries, the opportunity is here. MBDA and NMSDC have the tools and the reach to make this moment count by expanding access to capital, contracts, networks and opportunities that every American entrepreneur deserves.”

This year marks MED Week’s 40th Anniversary and this collaboration recognizes the desire to work more closely together as it embarks upon the next 40 years of minority business development. ■

➔ TO REGISTER FOR THE 2023 NMSDC ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXCHANGE AND MBDA MED WEEK, VISIT [NMSDCCONFERENCE.ORG](https://NMSDCCONFERENCE.ORG).



**Ying McGuire, CEO and president, National Minority Supplier Development Council**



**Donald R. Cravins Jr., under secretary of commerce for minority business development, Minority Business Development Agency**

By fostering access to contracts, capital, and more diverse networks, we hope to close the equity gap and unlock infinite opportunities for NMSDC-certified MBEs to soar past our goal of \$1 trillion in annual revenue and build long-lasting generational wealth for communities of color.

— Ying McGuire, CEO and president,  
National Minority Supplier Development Council





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# A tribute to President Jimmy Carter

BY JIM LOWRY, senior advisor, The Boston Consulting Group Inc., and president and CEO, James H. Lowry & Associates

I was saddened to hear that former President Jimmy Carter has entered hospice care at his home in Georgia. He served four years as the 39th president of the United States. He had a substantial number of achievements during his time as president.

- He dealt with the energy shortage by establishing a national energy policy.
- He expanded the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act protecting more than 103 million acres in Alaska. Expanding this act created 13 national parks, 16 wildlife refuges, two national forests, two national monuments, two conservation areas, and 26 wild and scenic rivers.
- He facilitated the Camp David Agreement of 1978, helping to reduce tension between Israel and Egypt. This agreement led to a peace treaty between the two countries the following year.
- To increase human and social services he created the U.S. Department of Education, bolstered the Social Security System, and appointed a record number of women, Blacks and Hispanics to the government.

Unfortunately, for many, Jimmy Carter will always be remembered for the terrorists holding 52 Americans as hostages for 14 months. However, for me I will always remember President Carter as the most effective and inspired president for advancing the cause of minority business enterprise development (MBED). I give President Richard Nixon credit for institutionalizing MBED in the federal government in the early seventies, but it was President Jimmy Carter working with Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, Rev. Jesse Jackson and Congressman Parren Mitchell who passed legislation and established policies that changed the mindset of the nation. In particular, five laws moved the needle:

1. The amendment to a \$4 billion public bill, an alteration that required both state, county and municipal government seeking federal grants on public works projects to set aside 10% of contracts for minority-owned businesses.
2. Public Law 95-89 that increased loan authorization and surety bond to guarantee authority to minority business.
3. Community Reinvestment Act which encouraged financial institutions to help meet the credit needs of communities in which they operate.
4. Public Law 95-507 which mandated that bidding for federal contracts more than \$500,000 for goods and services and \$1,000,000 for construction must be submitted before contract awards with a plan with a percentage of goals for utilization of minority business.
5. Executive Order 12138 which required all federal agencies to take affirmative action in support of businesses owned by women.

These laws and regulations and the leadership of our civil rights leaders inspired more minority students to take more business classes and attend more graduate schools of business. Jimmy Carter changed the mindset of highly educated minority professionals to seek careers in business as executives or entrepreneurs. He lit the fires in the late seventies; the fires are burning hotter in 2023.

In 2002 Jimmy Carter was awarded The Nobel Peace Prize “for his decades of untiring effort to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.”

I end by saying thank you President Jimmy Carter for all you have done for minority business enterprise development and our nation. ■



James H. Lowry



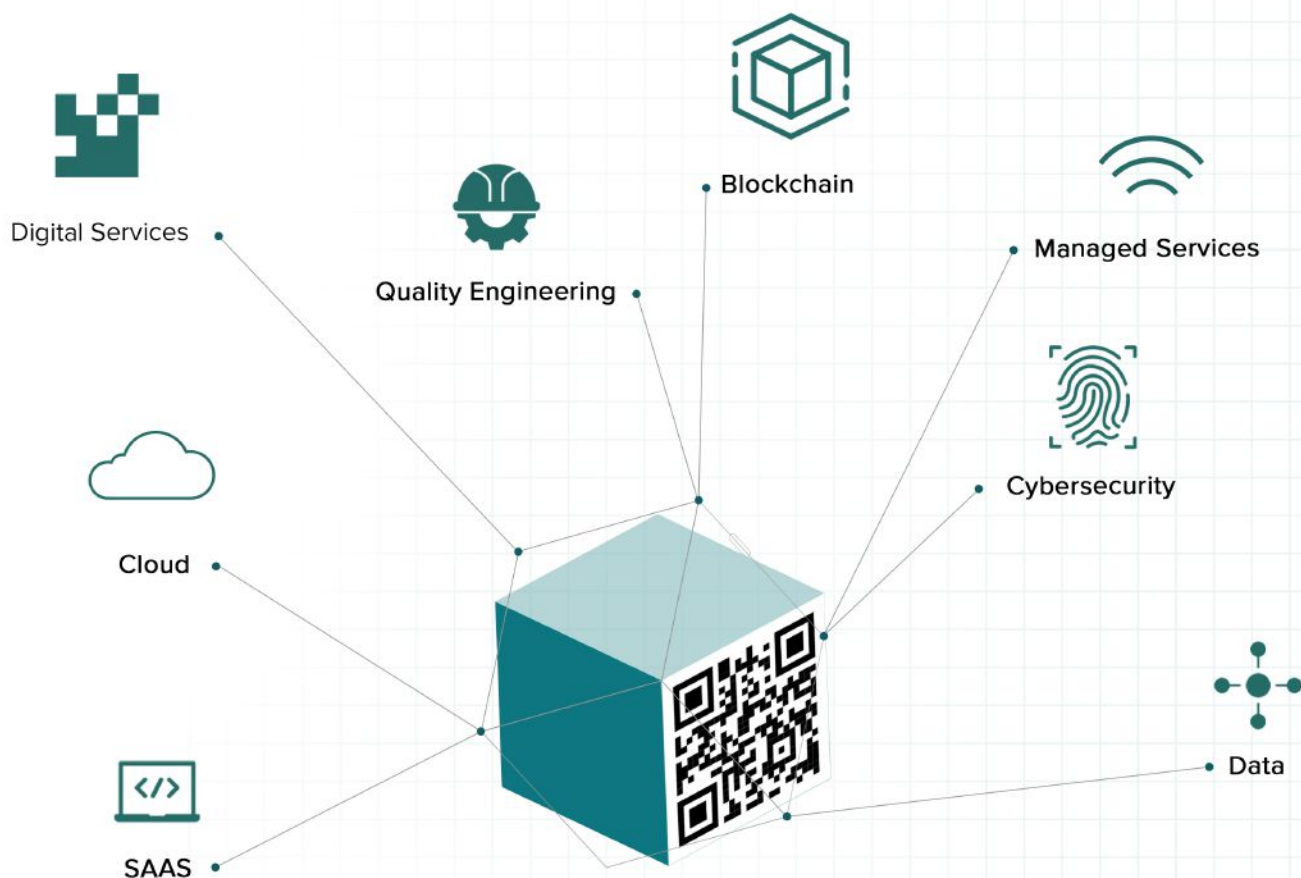
Former President Jimmy Carter





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# Remember. Reconnect. Represent.

## *A strategic response to hostile challenges to supplier diversity*

BY REGGIE K. LAYTON AND RALPH G. MOORE



Reggie K. Layton



Ralph G. Moore

**O**n July 5, 2023, Mary Ellen Daneels, director of the Illinois Civic Hub, was the keynote speaker for the Fourth of July celebration at the Chicago History Museum. During her powerful speech, she challenged the audience to embrace “**The Three Rs: Remember, Reconnect and Represent**” in defense of the challenges to America’s constitution. With full attribution to Daneels, we are utilizing her brilliant perspective as the framework for our response to the current challenges to supplier diversity.

The recent legal overreach by the attorneys general from 13 states that sent letters to the top Fortune 100 corporations challenging the legality of their “diversity initiatives,” including supplier diversity, has ignited a firestorm of uncertainty and questions in the boardrooms of corporations, academic institutions, major nonprofits and government agencies. This assault on supplier diversity reflects a recent trend of elected officials leveraging misinformation, false equivalencies and illogical conclusions to turn back the clock on America’s pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

Although baseless, this challenge is a wake-up call on the urgent need to engage Daneels’ “**Three Rs: Remember, Reconnect, and Represent.**”

### REMEMBER

When discussing the challenge to supplier diversity, we must also REMEMBER what created the need in the first place. The need for supplier diversity is fueled by the 150 years of disparate, violent and un-American treatment of millions of existing and aspiring minority entrepreneurs orchestrated by the federal and local agencies that were supposed to assist them. A few examples are:

- The millions of stolen acres from Black farmers. There is documentation outlining how the [U.S.] Department of Agriculture representatives facilitated

many of these illegal land grabs.

- The terror in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921. The local police department deputized the terrorists.
- The 1.2 million Black World War II veterans who were denied full access to mortgage and educational benefits promised in the GI Bill [of Rights] by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- The U.S. Small Business Administration denied minority businesses fair access to loans and assistance from 1953 to 1969.

Although this painful history is well documented. We have compiled a summary of supplier diversity’s evolution from a component of the government’s affirmative action programs to a critical contributor to institutional strategy.

### 1965-1968: The advent of corporate minority purchasing programs

The American dream of leveraging the experience, relationships and savings from a corporate career to become an entrepreneur was reserved for white males until the mid-1960s. Most corporations denied such opportunities to minority and women college graduates — the effects of such policy stymied participation by minorities and women in the corporate manager-to-corporate supplier pipeline.

We must also REMEMBER the leaders who challenged the lack of diversity in corporate supply chains. In the summer of 1968, one such leader, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, led the Operation Breadbasket picketing of the Chicago A&P Stores to protest discriminatory hiring and contracting practices. After a summer of declining revenues, A&P entered a covenant with Operation Breadbasket to hire Black managers and contract with Black contractors. Ralph Moore was a proud young participant in the picketing.

Also in 1968, another impactful leader, Garland Guice, president of the Chicago Economic Development Corporation (CED-





The recent legal overreach by the attorneys general from 13 states that sent letters to the top Fortune 100 corporations challenging the legality of their “diversity initiatives,” including supplier diversity, has ignited a firestorm of uncertainty and questions in the boardrooms of corporations, academic institutions, major nonprofits and government agencies.

CO), hosted the first minority purchasing trade show in the U.S. at the Hawthorne Works plant of Western Electric (AT&T) in Cicero, Illinois. At that time, IBM Corp. and General Motors Co. were among a handful of corporations that joined AT&T in initiating minority purchasing programs in 1968.

**1969: President Richard Nixon’s “Black Capitalism” Executive Order 11458**

The Nixon “Black Capitalism” Executive Order 11458 established a framework of policies that changed the trajectory of supplier diversity. For the first time in history, the federal government established policies and procedures to incentivize major corporations to embrace minority business development, focusing on capacity-building, funding and contracting. Nixon’s Executive Order invited enlightened corporate and government leaders to embrace minority purchasing programs as one of many “*affirmative actions*” designed to offset the decades of disparate treatment of Black American-, Hispanic American-, Asian American- and Native American-owned businesses. The following are some of the significant outcomes produced by Executive Order 11458:

- Created the Office of Minority Business Enterprise (OMBE), which is now the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA)
- Provided minority businesses access to the U.S. Small Business Administration’s resources, including the guaranteed loan program
- Established the SBA 8(a) Program, which has a 50-year track record of business development for minority businesses
- Established Minority Enterprise Small Business Investment Companies (MES-

BICs), which created the first government-funded investment companies dedicated to minority businesses. This initiative evolved into the National Association of Investment Companies (NAIC)

- Provided the initial funding for the National Minority Supplier Development Council Inc. (NMSDC)

Other supplier diversity milestones include: **1978: Public Law 95-507 enacted by Congress** – Congressman Parren Mitchell (MD) spearheaded the passing of this legislation that created the SBA Subcontracting requirements that jump-started the development of supplier diversity programs for government contractors

**1972: NMSDC established** – Advocating for inclusive sourcing, certifying minority ownership, developing stakeholder capacity and connecting [minority business enterprises] MBEs to corporate America, NMSDC empowers MBEs to succeed in the local, national and global marketplace.

**1986: Hedy Ratner and Carol McDougal established the Women’s Business Development Center (WBDC)** – Chicago was home to the most successful regional women’s business development advocacy organization in U.S. history. Eleven years later, WBDC became the anchor organization for the founding of the Women’s Business

Enterprise National Council (WBENC).

**1988: The Harriet Michel era at NMSDC (1988-2010)** – As president and CEO of NMSDC, Michel orchestrated the following breakthroughs for advancing supplier diversity:

- **The Program Managers Seminar** (24 years) to allow corporate supplier diversity practitioners to learn and share best practices
- **The Corporate Plus Program** to showcase large MBEs with the capacity to execute national contracts across various industries and geographies
- **The South African Mission**, which established the framework for corporate engagement and ownership certification of companies led by historically underutilized population groups. This framework was adopted in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and China.
- **The Advanced Management Executive Program (AMEP)** at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Business is designed to provide certified, established, growth-oriented minority-owned business owners with the tools and skills needed to achieve and sustain accelerated growth in the constantly changing business environment.
- **The Growth Initiative**, which allows NMSDC-certified MBEs with the potential for substantial growth to access equity capital from institutional investors while retaining their minority status through management and control of their business enterprises

**2001: The Billion Dollar Roundtable [Inc.]** founded - a group of corporations that promote supplier diversity best practices and spend more than \$1 billion each year with certified diverse suppliers

**RECONNECT**

During her speech, Daneels advised the audience to “reconnect with its civic pow-



This assault on supplier diversity reflects a recent trend of elected officials leveraging misinformation, false equivalencies and illogical conclusions to turn back the clock on America’s pursuit of liberty and justice for all.



The need for supplier diversity is fueled by the 150 years of disparate, violent and un-American treatment of millions of existing and aspiring minority entrepreneurs orchestrated by the federal and local agencies that were supposed to assist them.

er” as we act on “our charge to form a more perfect union.” Similarly, supplier diversity practitioners must reconnect with key internal and external stakeholders to ensure alignment of supplier diversity best practices with the institutional mission and values. Reconnecting with external stakeholders with transparency regarding best practices ensures their adoption and enhances community engagement.

With internal and external stakeholder sessions, supplier diversity practitioners should take the lead in scheduling the meetings and setting agendas. A wait-and-see approach conveys the impression that the practitioner is unaware of the importance or unprepared to discuss these critical topics.

#### Internal stakeholder engagement

Having advised over 100 corporations, 25 major nonprofits and numerous government agencies, RGMA [Ralph G. Moore Associates] advises all supplier diversity practitioners to embrace the role and responsibilities of supplier diversity subject matter experts. Regardless of your budget level or number of staff members, supplier diversity practitioners must manage the organization’s supplier diversity strategy with a bold tenacity for change and the ability to quantify your strategy’s contribution to shareholder value.

As affirmative action requires subject matter experts to update institutional leaders on how the debate will impact their institution, supplier diversity practitioners must use this opportunity to frame their presentations within the context of the supplier diversity value proposition. Beyond the mandatory meetings with procurement and legal teams to update all policy and contracting documents to ensure avoidance of any “quota” or “preference” references, incorporate benchmarking against the RGMA Ten Components of

a World-Class Supplier Diversity Strategy ([www.rgma.com](http://www.rgma.com)), supplier diversity’s ESG [environmental, social and governance] contributions and supplier diversity ROI into leadership presentations.

The internal stakeholder engagement also presents an opportunity to lobby for increased resources, such as supplier diversity program tools and supplier assessments for the next budget cycle.

If your organization has a supplier diversity advisory board or steering committee, include a brief overview of how your organization manages the affirmative action issue in the pre-read materials and allow ample time on the agenda for discussion.

Practitioners should also consider the following internal stakeholder strategies:

- **Leverage data to validate the value proposition** – Use supplier scorecards to determine the contribution of diverse and nondiverse suppliers to operational excellence. Companies use supplier scorecards to evaluate the performance of their suppliers. Supplier scorecards provide an objective and standardized way of measuring supplier performance based on key performance indicators (KPIs) such as quality, delivery, cost and responsiveness. You should use supplier scorecards to track supplier performance over time, identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions about supplier relationships. Scorecards help companies ensure that

their suppliers meet their requirements and expectations, ultimately delivering value to the company and its customers.

- **Communicate diverse supplier success stories in business terms** – Procurement professionals and business unit decision owners have used a standard set of excuses for not contracting with diverse suppliers for the past 50 years: “They’re too small ...;” “They lack industry experience ...;” “Their prices are not competitive...;” “They can’t service our entire footprint ....” To add insult to injury, when a diverse firm overcomes this creative resistance and wins a contract, the haters quickly dismiss the contract award as “an affirmative action play.” To shut down these false narratives and eradicate the lingering myths about diverse suppliers, supplier diversity practitioners must expand their success metrics beyond spend totals and percentages to include reporting diverse supplier performance in terms of contributions to operational excellence, customer satisfaction and return on investment.
- **Leverage benchmarking and best practices to ignite senior leaders’ support** – So many supplier diversity practitioners only focus on the numbers – things like diverse spending and the number of diverse suppliers. This approach is ill-advised when working with senior executive teams or striving for outstanding performance. Instead, it would be best to focus on measuring and reporting leading indicators – such as supplier diversity best practices implementation – instead of lagging indicators – such as diverse spending and number of diverse suppliers. Realize that what gets reported gets measured; what gets measured gets managed, and what gets managed gets embedded in executives’ mindsets.



Now is the time for corporate, institutional, government leaders, supplier diversity practitioners, real supplier diversity consultants, diverse businesses and anyone who embraces the supplier diversity value proposition to REPRESENT on behalf of supplier diversity.



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In addition, best-practice reporting breeds best-practice thinking. With this in mind, the RGMA Digital Assessment and Strategy Tool benchmarks your current process against the RGMA Ten Components of supplier diversity best practices. It ascertains your program's ranking on the trademarked RGMA 5-Levels Maturity Model™ and develops recommendations, resources and priorities tailored to your organization's RGMA ranking. The tool automates your best practice analysis while accelerating its implementation. You'll be able to add the accountability, resources and expertise you need to move your supplier diversity program to the next level.

### External stakeholder engagement

Formal and informal discussions with parts of the supplier diversity ecosystem are critical. It would be best to discuss supplier performance expectations with national and regional diverse supplier councils' staff and council members. It would help if you discussed the business case for supplier diversity with industry associations and nondiverse prime suppliers. Evaluating consultants based on their supplier diversity track record, not name recognition, would be best. In addition, you should encourage diverse suppliers to launch their own supplier diversity initiatives. These conversations are crucial for maintaining your presence in the commu-

nities where you work, live and play, which is critical as you manage the messaging to community stakeholders.

### Supplier diversity expertise requires more than a fancy website

Consultants are playing essential roles as corporations and institutions manage the most significant challenge to supplier diversity since Richard Nixon's 1969 "Black Capitalism" Executive Order. RGMA recommends corporate, academic, nonprofit and government leaders avoid the newly minted "supplier diversity experts," AKA imposters, who have limited supplier diversity expertise and lack supplier diversity programs within their organizations. Retaining seasoned supplier diversity consultants will provide the expertise necessary for avoiding the pitfalls that could impede the trajectory and impact of your institution's supplier diversity program.

### REPRESENT

Daneels shared the Urban Dictionary's definition of REPRESENT: To represent is to *"lend physical presence or voice on behalf of a constituency defined by geography or purpose."*

Now is the time for corporate, institutional, government leaders, supplier diversity practitioners, real supplier diversity

consultants, diverse businesses and anyone who embraces the supplier diversity value proposition to REPRESENT on behalf of supplier diversity.

However, unlike 1969, today, America enjoys a growing coalition of corporate, academic, nonprofit and government leaders that are "lending their voice and physical presence" to embracing supplier diversity as an essential strategy contributing to operational excellence, institutional mission and community economic vitality.

Also, let's do the math! Only 13 of 50, or 26%, of America's attorney generals signed the infamous letter. Where in America can a vote of 26% of any elected body or judicial panel change standing rules, regulations or laws?

In closing, those who believe in the American dream must all activate the three "Rs" to expand the understanding and support for supplier diversity.

- **REMEMBER:** Impart knowledge of the supplier diversity evolution to the next generation of leaders. Don't forget from whence we came!
- **RECONNECT:** Communicate the supplier diversity value proposition to your peers and associates. You are not alone!
- **REPRESENT:** Lend your voice to advancing supplier diversity. Be strong and of good courage!  
Let's get to work! ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### REGINALD K. LAYTON

Reginald K. Layton is the only supplier diversity practitioner in history to have guided a corporation to winning the NMSDC Corporation of the Year twice during his 25-year career at JCI [Johnson Controls Inc.]. In addition, he was named the NMSDC's Minority Supplier Development Leader of the Year in 2013 and 2008 and Minority Business Enterprise Advocate of the Year in 2003. In 2010, he designed and launched the NMSDC Centers of Excellence program with \$250,000 in funding from the JCI Foundation. Layton was the architect of four minority joint ventures, including the Bridgewater Interiors transaction that created the world's largest minority-owned automotive interior manufacturing company. He also created the Layton Compass®, a tool for determining supplier diversity strategy and measuring performance. Layton also served on the NMSDC Executive Committee for more than 10 years and managed JCI's membership with 17 NMSDC Regional Councils, including his role as chairman of the Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council for more than eight years.

### RALPH G. MOORE

Ralph G. Moore founded RGMA in 1979. RGMA was the lead training resource for NMSDC for 24 years, enabling Ralph Moore to train two generations of supplier diversity practitioners. He leveraged the lessons learned from Arthur Andersen on the importance of effective processes to create the RGMA 5-Levels of Supplier Diversity™ maturity model in 1994. Moore also created the RGMA 10-Components of a World-Class Supplier Diversity Program, the model for developing the NMSDC Eight Best Practices. He has been awarded the coveted NMSDC Leadership Award, the Harriet R. Michel Chairman's Award. He also served on the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council board for 20 years and was co-chair of the 25th Chicago Business Opportunity Fair in 1988. He also was a crucial participant in NMSDC's 1995/96 missions that introduced supplier diversity to the Republic of South Africa.





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# An urgent call to action

NMSDC affiliate presidents ask CEOs to champion DEI

BY NMSDC REGIONAL AFFILIATE PRESIDENTS

**A**s leaders of the regional affiliates of the National Minority Supplier Development Council Inc. (NMSDC), we reach out to you [CEOs] with an unwavering commitment to championing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives within corporate America. The recent Supreme Court decision on race-conscious admissions has magnified the critical need for fostering inclusive cultures and driving meaningful change across organizations, emphasizing the pivotal aspect of supplier diversity.

DEI and supplier diversity go beyond mere buzzwords; they embody the very essence of progress and prosperity. By embracing these profound initiatives, corporations can play a vital role in reducing the alarming racial wealth gap, leading to expanded market share through increased access to goods and services for people of color.

Employees and customers alike deeply care about these pivotal issues, their significance resonating beyond the confines of corporate walls. Embracing DEI and supplier diversity exerts a profound influence on talent acquisition and retention, enabling your organization to attract the most exceptional minds. Furthermore, it decisively influences customers' choices when selecting corporate partnerships, as a steadfast commitment to these causes serves as a testament to your corporate responsibility.

As the leaders of the most powerful network influencing supplier diversity and purchasing in corporate America, our expertise lies in confronting challenges head-on and driving impactful change. The assault on affirmative action, systematic lawsuits

across the nation and decisions from the Supreme Court and district courts threaten to widen the wealth gap, impacting jobs, local and federal tax revenues, and infrastructure. This demographic shift, where minorities are becoming the majority, highlights the common interest we share in shaping America's future.

The remarkable achievements of Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) underscore their substantial economic impact, generating over \$400 billion in output and creating 2.2 million jobs. Moreover, they contribute \$49 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal tax authorities, bolstering the very fabric of our society.

We have a proven track record of advocating for these issues through grassroots efforts with public policy, on the local, state, and federal levels, where we educate legislators and advocate for change. Additionally, our strategic national partnerships demonstrate our belief in the power of collective action.

As the leading organization in this endeavor, armed with compelling statistics showcasing our achievements and dedication, we call upon you to stand with us as we fight to protect the future of this country's economy and its diverse communities. Let us seize this opportunity to create a more inclusive, prosperous, and equitable nation — one where supplier diversity is not merely a goal but a shared commitment that enriches us all. ■

→ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NMSDC, VISIT [NMSDC.ORG](https://nmsdc.org).

→ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NMSDC'S AFFILIATE COUNCILS, VISIT [NMSDC.ORG/NMSDC-REGIONAL-AFFILIATES-LIST](https://nmsdc.org/nmsdc-regional-affiliates-list).

## A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

NMSDC is supported by 23 regional affiliates nationwide. They are the backbone of the organization's gold-standard certification program, working in the field locally to ensure 15,000+ certified MBEs reach their full potential with its 1,700+ corporate members.

According to NMSDC's 2022 Economic Impact Study:

- NMSDC's minority business enterprises (MBEs) generate over **\$400 billion** in output.
- MBEs create **2.2 million** jobs.
- MBEs contribute **\$49 billion** in revenue to local, state and federal tax authorities, bolstering the very fabric of the United States.

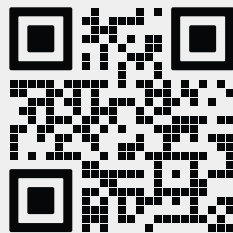
To learn more about NMSDC's recent 2022 Economic Impact Study, visit [nmsdc.org/nmsdc-releases-its-yearly-minority-businesses-economic-impact-report](https://nmsdc.org/nmsdc-releases-its-yearly-minority-businesses-economic-impact-report).





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# Striving for excellence

HMSDC names 2023 Emerging-10 Award honorees

**T**he Houston Minority Supplier Development Council (HMSDC) recently named its 2023 Emerging 10 (E-10) Awards recipients. The honorees are selected based on their company's growth, ability to overcome business challenges and their community involvement.

The E-10 winners also communicate successful business strategies that encourage other companies to strive for excellence in their industry.

"HMSDC is proud to be celebrating its 25th anniversary of the Emerging 10 Awards. For a quarter of a century, we have highlighted a diverse group of minority-owned businesses that are excelling in growing their companies and spotlighting their efforts to give back to the greater Houston community. The E-10 Awards are designed to showcase the impact of how minority-owned businesses enrich the lives of their employees and the communities in which they work and live," said Ingrid Robinson, president and CEO, Houston Minority Supplier Development Council.

HMSDC's 2023 E-10 Awards recipients were:

- **Tamala Austin**, founder, J.I.V.E. Juice Company Inc., a health and wellness firm; [jivejuicecompany.com](http://jivejuicecompany.com)
- **Lyndsey Brantley**, founder, Camellia Alise Inc., a day spa that also offers specialized beauty education classes and skincare training; [camellialise.com](http://camellialise.com)
- **Devon Dunn**, co-founder, Dunn's Logistics Inc.; [blackeagle-transportation.com](http://blackeagle-transportation.com)
- **Stacy Dunn**, co-founder, Dunn's Logistics Inc.; [blackeagle-transportation.com](http://blackeagle-transportation.com)
- **Danya Hall**, co-founder, Just Poppin Popcorn, a gourmet popcorn business; [justpoppinpopcorn.com](http://justpoppinpopcorn.com)
- **Phylicia Hill**, founding partner and CEO, H5 Strategic Alliances LLC, an information technology consulting and professional services firm; [h5sa.com](http://h5sa.com)
- **Argentina James**, president and CEO, HillDay Public Relations Inc., an award-winning public relations and full-service communications company; [hilldaypr.com](http://hilldaypr.com)
- **Sheryl Jimerson**, founder, Jimerson Tax and Accounting LLC; [jimersoncpa.com](http://jimersoncpa.com) (not pictured)
- **Juan Osorio**, co-founder, Alpha Company Marketing and Media LLC, an analytically driven, full-service digital marketing agency; [alphacomarketing.com](http://alphacomarketing.com)
- **Gregory L. Phillips**, co-founding partner; Phillips Kaiser PLLC, corporate attorneys; [phillipskaiser.com](http://phillipskaiser.com)
- **Alyscia Raines**, founder, ADR Consulting Group LLC, a diversity, equity and inclusion consulting firm; [adrconsultinggroup.com](http://adrconsultinggroup.com) ■



PHOTO BY TWICE MEDIA PRODUCTIONS LLC

Ingrid Robinson, president and CEO, Houston Minority Supplier Development Council



SEE  
AWARDEES'  
PHOTOS ON  
PAGE 64.



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of the Year • D CEO, 2023



CFO of the Year  
Dallas Business Journal, 2022



Leaders in Diversity  
Dallas Business Journal, 2023

## Around the Network: Houston Minority Supplier Development Council

PHOTOS BY TWICE MEDIA PRODUCTIONS LLC



**Tamala Austin**  
J.I.V.E. Juice Company Inc.



**Lyndsey Brantley**  
Camellia Alise Inc.



**Devon Dunn**  
Dunn's Logistics Inc.



**Stacy Dunn**  
Dunn's Logistics Inc.



**Danya Hall**  
Just Poppin Popcorn



**Phylicia Hill**  
H5 Strategic Alliances LLC



**Argentina James**  
HillDay Public Relations Inc.



**Juan Osorio**  
Alpha Company Marketing  
and Media LLC



**Gregory L. Phillips**  
Phillips Kaiser PLLC



**Alyscia Raines**  
ADR Consulting Group LLC



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SEE EVENT  
PHOTOS ON  
PAGES 68.



# Getting into formation

Ohio MSDC launches a 'university' for MBEs at its Business Opportunity Expo

BY DEANN DALEY HOLCOMB

**W**ho knew that attending the Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council's recent Business Opportunity Expo meant school was back in session. During the event, the council launched a new program to help take minority business enterprises or MBEs to the next level: OMSDC University.

"OMSDC University is a free development course for certified MBEs focused on business acumen, operational excellence and financial management," said Aaron Powell Jr., OMSDC director of marketing and public relations. "OMSDC University enables MBEs to grow and meet or exceed corporate procurement requirements."

LaTasha Simms, CEO and founder, 3 Equitable Education Solutions Consulting & Services LLC, led the overview of the program designed to integrate all aspects of MBE development and provide a road map for profitable growth.

Leyden A. Mendez, OMSDC's program and events manager said another major highlight of the Business Expo was keynote speaker Yvette R. Simpson. A political contributor with ABC News and an NPR panelist, her presentation focused on "Let's Get in Formation: Bending the Arc Toward Equity."

Powell said, "Yvette Simpson was remarkable and her speech motivated engagement for the rest of the expo."

The Procter & Gamble Co. was the event's title sponsor.

"We were honored to have the partnership of Procter & Gamble involved in making this event a tremendous success," OMSDC President and CEO George R Simms said. "Not

only was P&G our title sponsor, but it was also gracious and opened its headquarters to host the second day of our event."

Behind the scenes, he said, P&G team members were on the expo's planning committee. And more than a dozen served as volunteers, staffed registration and provided logistics support. P&G was also one of the corporate members that participated in Deal-Maker — a new model of OMSDC's Match-Maker program — seeking to bring buyers and MBEs together in a more intentional way to promote successful partnerships.

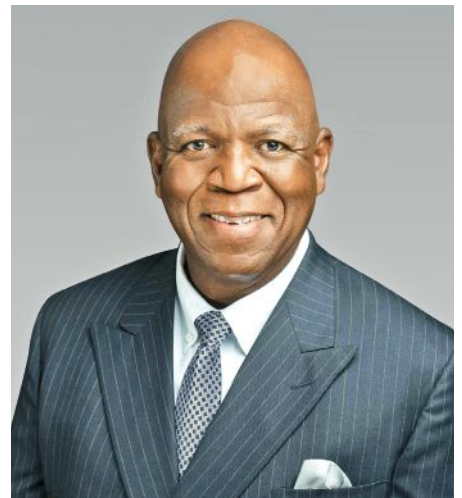
"With this fresh focus, we've heard great feedback from our corporate members and MBEs, and are tracking progress as these relationships move forward," Simms said.

Marchoe Northern, senior vice president and general manager of P&G's North America home care division was a corporate panelist during the C-suite panel. Simms said P&G's participation in the event helped cement its partnership with the consumer goods giant.

He said the pitch competition was also an important part of the expo.

"The pitch competition empowered MBEs — both those participating and those in the audience — to be more successful in how they present to corporations for opportunities and to be more confident in how they market themselves," Simms said.

"One of our MBEs found success as a service provider to a larger MBE, and within two weeks of meeting at BOE, they are signing a contract. We're steadily focused on connecting our MBEs with our corporate members, as well as looking for ways



Aaron Powell Jr., Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council, director, marketing and public relations

to connect MBEs with each other."

Simms and Powell deemed the event a success.

"We are confident that after the Ohio Business Opportunity Expo, the MBEs and corporate supplier professionals that attended were in a better position to make an impact," Powell said. "Through our training and development, BOE participants learned how to navigate obstacles and set themselves up for success, gained access to an outstanding development program with OMSDC University and learned how to improve their supplier diversity programs." ■



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OMSDC,  
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# Around the Network: Ohio Minority Supplier Development Council

## SCENES FROM THE OHIO MSDC BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY EXPO





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# Staffing industry advances the merits of diversity

**DEI initiatives remain strong as they propel gains in productivity, innovation and profits**

BY SUZANNE BECKHAM SQUYRES



Diversity, equity and inclusion have become more important than ever in the staffing industry as companies have recognized that a diverse workforce can lead to increased performance and ingenuity. The initiative has also become more politicized — even though recent studies have found that companies with diverse employees are at least 35% more likely to draw higher financial returns than their nondiverse peers.

## BEYOND THE BOTTOM LINE

While profits are critical to the success of any business, the intrinsic value of DEI is that it brings together varied backgrounds, talents, experiences and ideas that can result in new opportunities, processes, business relationships and profits.

“Some may see DEI in the workplace as the latest set of buzzwords,” said Lou Rosas, director of supplier inclusion at Robert Half Inc., an international human resources consulting firm. “Others see DEI simply as ‘the right thing to do.’ But the savviest employers see it for what it really is — a great opportunity to cultivate belonging for everyone.”



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**Lou Rosas, director of supplier inclusion, Robert Half Inc.**



**Nina Vaca, CEO and chairman, The Pinnacle Group**



**Jonas Prising, chairman/CEO, ManpowerGroup Inc.**

Access to a wide range of viewpoints and cultures also opens the door to innovation, according to Nina Vaca, CEO and chairman of woman- and minority-owned The Pinnacle Group, a global workforce solutions company. “Simply put, a diverse workforce is good for business. Numerous studies support this fact,” she said. “Diverse workforces are typically more creative, more innovative and more profitable. According to McKinsey [ & Co. ], gender-diverse companies are 15% more likely to outperform their nondiverse peers and ethnically diverse companies are 35% more likely to do so.”

If a company’s workforce is not diverse, it is likely to give up a competitive advantage, she added, “especially when it comes to talent. It will be less able to identify, attract and retain top talent — both diverse and nondiverse individuals. Companies with greater diversity often have improved hiring results and lower turnover rates, to name just a few benefits.”

Jonas Prising, chairman/CEO of staffing company ManpowerGroup Inc., views DEI

as a way to heal inequities and polarization that could be holding the marketplace back. “When our society is broken for some, it is eventually broken for all of us,” he said. “ManpowerGroup is actively driving its social mission where it can have the most impact by addressing the growing structural skills shortage by calling on the global community to work together to accelerate impact in the areas of skills development; employability; diversity, equity and inclusion; and belonging. This [goal] will help workers prepare for a future of work that is more digital, global and fast-paced than ever.”

**GETTING THERE**

DEI is not a one-size-fits-all initiative. Some companies experience resistance to such ambitions while others may not have the resources or knowledge to instill DEI as foundational to their corporate cultures. Those staffing companies that are prepared to help clients develop and meet their DEI goals use several strategies — including helping them understand best practices,

evaluating questions used to interview candidates and adopting technology that combats unconscious bias in hiring.

The Pinnacle Group’s Vaca said her company helps clients identify areas of opportunity for increasing diversity and introduces proven strategies to maximize those opportunities. “Most of our strategies are around leveling the playing field,” she said. “A major way we increase diversity is by leveraging data and analytics to drive visibility. Visibility provides awareness and with it, choice and better outcomes.”

DEI is a strategy that she understands well. “As a woman- and minority-owned company, Pinnacle has always embraced and exemplified a culture of diversity, and it permeates everything we do — from the networks we form, to the people we hire, to the candidates we submit to our clients, to how we grow other diverse suppliers,” Vaca said.

Helping clients reach for DEI is a cornerstone principle at Robert Half, according to Rosas.

“These values are championed across the

**Staffing trends by the numbers**

**14.5 million**

Average number of temporary and contract employees hired annually through staffing companies in the United States.

SOURCE: AMERICAN STAFFING ASSOCIATION

**77%**

Segment of business leaders who believe that hiring and retaining talent is the most crucial factor in achieving growth.

SOURCE: PWC

**\$218.9 billion**

Projected revenue for U.S. staffing firms in 2023.

SOURCE: STAFFING INDUSTRY ANALYSTS

**80%**

Portion of staffing professionals who view DEI as the industry’s most important trend in 2023.

SOURCE: FORBES

**10.8 million vs 5.1 million**

As of February 2023, the number of job openings vs. the number of job seekers.

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

**Health care/IT/ Hospitality**

Top three industries for staffing growth, thanks to an aging population/expansion of high-tech infrastructure and processes/the growing desire for travel and recreation.

SOURCE: MANATAL





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organization and embedded in our own corporate culture,” he explained. “They help guide us in our journey to promote socially responsible and sustainable business practices, as we strive to win the trust of our shareholders, clients, candidates, suppliers and valued employees around the globe.”

Rosas added that his firm is well-equipped to help achieve DEI in the industries it serves by incorporating inclusive recruiting and hiring practices, global onboarding and sponsorship experience, DEI learning plans available to all employees and external strategic alliances.

ManpowerGroup’s Prising said the time to act is now. “When you’re dealing with people and talent, you’re intimately involved in one of the most important decisions in someone’s lifetime — the choice of a job, career and income,” he said. “We know that global economics, current geopolitics and other accelerating trends are exacerbating the divide among knowledge workers, skilled workers and unskilled workers. Unless we act now, we will see a further bifurcation of opportunity and wealth creation by gender, race, education and skillset, which is not good for economic growth and societal well-being.”

### CANDIDATE PREFERENCES

One of the most compelling reasons to integrate DEI objectives into corporate cul-

ture is they are often pivotal for job candidates considering job offers.

“Studies consistently show that a large majority of workers — particularly younger workers — prefer to work at companies with strong diversity and inclusion cultures and practices,” Vaca said. “It is a symbiotic relationship in the proverbial war for talent. The top talent itself is diverse and most workers seek a diverse and inclusive environment. So, the two reinforce one another in a virtuous cycle.”

A recent Robert Half survey of workers in the United States found that 80% of respondents said DEI is an important requirement when deciding to accept a role at a company which makes attracting and retaining diverse talent paramount. “Professionals today seek to work for businesses that have values aligning with their own,” Rosas said.

Even when candidates and employers agree on integrated corporate culture, it is not always easy to recruit diverse jobseekers. He offered the following methods for companies that want to hire a diverse group of employees.

Leverage networks. The better your DEI program, the more willing current employees and members of your alumni network will be to recommend your company to candidates from the groups you’re trying to reach.

Explore new talent pools. In a tight la-

bor market, find the talent you need and increase your diversity by considering candidate pools your competitors may ignore.

Don’t sweat nice-to-have skills. When crafting job descriptions, consider only including skills that are absolutely necessary for the role.

Advertise diversity efforts. A DEI program is a powerful recruiting tool. These days, it is something that many potential employees look for, so add the company’s diversity statement to its website and job postings.

Use diverse hiring panels. Diverse hiring panels benefit both applicants and interviewers. Candidates will be energized when they see your company practices what it preaches.

According to Vaca, one of the biggest challenges of recruiting diverse talent is “simply the speed of business and the goal of most managers and leaders to save time and minimize risk. These constraints often lead to doing things the same way they’ve always been done, which can be a significant disadvantage in sourcing talent in today’s market,” she said. “Because the most talented candidates continue to have plenty of options, clients need to be clearer on what they are looking for, streamline the recruiting process and be prepared to act swiftly and decisively when they see a candidate they want. If they wait too long, the candidate will be gone.” ■

## Coming in the next issue of MBN USA



- ◆ NMSDC National Conference Edition
- ◆ National MED Week Special Section
- ◆ Billion Dollar Roundtable Saluting 2023 Honored Companies
- ◆ Corporate Buyers of the Year Recognition
- ◆ Banking Industry Special Section
- ◆ Energy Industry Special Section
- ◆ Business Diversity Supplier Month October 2023





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# Part of the DNA

## Tech leader Meta helps create economic opportunity for diverse suppliers, communities

BY TONYA MCMURRAY

**F**or technology giant Meta Platforms Inc., supplier diversity is much more than a program; it is central to the company's way of business.

"We never want to think about our work as a supplier diversity program because programs come and go," said Jason Trimiew, director global supplier diversity for Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp along with a variety of products and services. "We have always said we want to build supplier diversity into the DNA of the way Meta does business. That might sound like semantics, but for us, it's motivated us to think systemically with every decision we make."

Meta launched its supplier diversity initiative in 2016 to fulfill a public commitment made the previous year at a White House meeting of tech companies. In 2020, the company expanded its supplier diversity focus globally.

Along with the move to a global focus, Meta announced a public commitment to spend at least \$1 billion with diverse suppliers. The company reached that goal in 2021, spending \$1.26 billion with diverse suppliers, including \$306 million with U.S. Black-owned businesses, nearly doubling what it spent the previous year and earning Meta a membership the Billion Dollar Roundtable (BDR) Inc. In 2022, Meta significantly increased its diverse spend to \$5.15 billion.

Trimiew credits both Meta's supplier network and a total company commitment to diversity initiatives with helping the company achieve BDR status. BDR has 39 member companies that pledge to spend at least \$1 billion annually with Tier I diverse suppliers.

"We have an amazing diverse supplier community that competes every day for the business they earn," he said. "Our diverse suppliers have grown as the company has evolved because they're exceptional. We

didn't have to spend a lot of time convincing Meta employees that we will get better results when we work with a diverse set of suppliers that represent our diverse global community. That's part of our culture because we know this from a product perspective. We've been supported by our leadership and across the company to bring that to our supply chain."

Meta focuses its supplier diversity efforts on the needs of diverse suppliers. Not only does Meta buy goods and services from its diverse suppliers, but it also offers products and services that many of those suppliers also use in their own businesses.

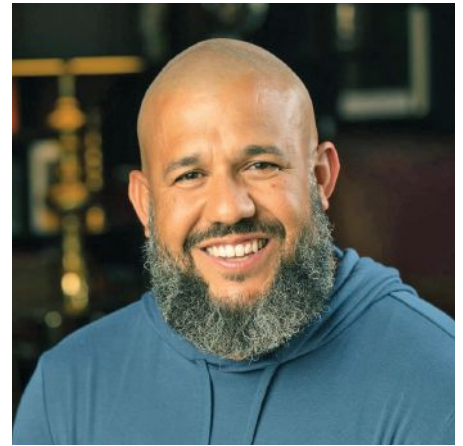
"We want to engage them around what they could potentially supply to Meta, but we also want to make sure we are supporting them in the use of the products and services we build and making sure those are useful to them in growing their companies," Trimiew said.

### DATA-DRIVEN FOCUS

Meta's expertise in data management is an asset in helping the technology company manage and enhance its supplier diversity efforts. Many of the products used to manage and track procurement functions are built internally so Meta can finetune them to make sure diverse suppliers are being included and treated equitably within Meta's supply chain.

"We continue to be really interested in how technology and data can play a role in improving supplier diversity outcomes," Trimiew said. "There are many companies that have great products that connect small and medium businesses to each other and to tools and resources to grow. We'd like to see and support more of that. We think a lot about how our own products and services at Meta can be used this way."

Meta is committed to enhancing supplier diversity efforts across industries and



Jason Trimiew, director global supplier diversity, Meta Platforms Inc.

throughout the world. Trimiew serves as one of the leaders of tech: SCALE, a technology industry group for supplier diversity. The company is also working with the European Supplier Development Project to expand supplier diversity into six European countries without a strong history of diversity.

Joining the BDR provides another opportunity for collaboration across industries.

"We are not in this work for Meta alone," Trimiew said. "One of the things that is so important to this work is to build a true community that's focused on increasing economic opportunity for diverse entrepreneurs and communities. This has to be about more than our individual companies. It has to be about finding ways to collaborate so we can accelerate the pace of impact and ultimately make it foundational to how procurement is done at every company, whether you're large, small, diverse or non-diverse." ■

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# Corporations go deep to keep packaging out of landfills

*More consumers demanding containers do no environmental harm*

BY SUZANNE BECKHAM SQUYRES

Consumers are increasingly calling for earth-friendly products in sustainable packaging. According to a recent poll conducted by Capgemini America Inc. on sustainability and transforming consumer behavior, 79% of consumers are altering their purchase patterns primarily based on social responsibility, inclusion and environmental effect. In addition, 53% of consumers and 57% of those between the ages of 18 and 24 have switched to lesser-known brands because they are more environmentally friendly.

Consumer goods companies are taking note, turning to flexible packaging containers made of flexible or easily yielding materials that — when filled or closed — can be readily changed in shape to accommodate varying products and sizes. Flexible packages often are made of paper, plastic film or foil. They usually take the shape of a big liner, overwrap, pouch or sleeve and have an ongoing life cycle, minimizing the need to ever toss them in the trash. Such packages have been used since the 1950s but gathered pivotal steam in the 2000s.

According to Grand View Research Inc., the global market for flexible packaging was valued at \$68.5 billion in 2021 and is expected to reach \$373.34 billion by 2030, thanks to an increase in demand for snack and convenience foods. Food and beverage applications dominate the market and account for 55% of all packaging revenue. Pharmaceutical and cosmetic packaging round out the top three segments, but every industry is leaning toward environmental responsibility, using lighter-weight materials to

improve fuel efficiency — bio-based materials made from renewables, including paper made from wood fibers; and certain types of plastics made from sugar cane, starch or limestone.

While sustainable packaging comes in many varieties — with new concepts to come, it is not without its challenges, according to Kimberly Reilly, co-founder of women-owned Everybody Water which is sold in earth-friendly cartons.

“Industry is being pushed to innovate at an accelerated rate by corporate leaders who want to meet ESG [environmental, social and business governance] goals and the demands of their customers, employees and investors,” she said. “Yet, there are practical challenges for packaged goods — including the need to be shelf-stable, efficient for transport and a tolerable cost level — that make this [innovation] a difficult task.”

Reilly added that evolving technologies and solutions will resolve some of the challenges. For instance, “in addition to the recycling of cartons by traditional processes, there is new domestic innovation for recycling whole cartons into mold-resistant building materials like wallboard,” she said.

## CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

The pressure to reduce corporate carbon footprints means that company executives are aware of the call for sustainable packaging and the need to provide it. The Environmental Defense Fund reported that nine in 10 business executives said consumers hold



Kimberly Reilly and Megan Hayes, co-founders, Everybody Water



Elaine Bowers Coventry, chief customer and commercial officer, The Coca-Cola Co.



Ann Tracy, chief sustainability officer, Colgate-Palmolive



them accountable for their company's environmental impact.

At The Coca-Cola Co., the goal is to use only 100% recyclable packaging by 2025 and to use at least 50% recycled materials in its packaging by 2030. In 2021, 61% of the bottles and cans the company introduced into the market were collected and refilled or recycled.

"We continue to put consumers at the center of all we do," said Elaine Bowers Coventry, chief customer and commercial officer, The Coca-Cola Co. "One way to do that is by offering sustainable packaging types. Accelerating use of reusable packages provides added value for consumers and customers, while supporting our World Without Waste goal to collect a bottle or can for each one we sell by 2030."

In addition, Coca-Cola has teamed up with two of its competitors — Keurig Dr Pepper Inc. and PepsiCo Inc. — not only to keep new plastic from being introduced into the environment, but also to ensure that plastic bottles are recovered and made into new bottles.

Colgate-Palmolive Co. has a goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions across its value chain by 2040 and 100% renewable electricity for global operations by 2030. The company's Colgate® toothpaste brands now come in recyclable tubes marked with a "Recycle Me" graphic and require no rinsing or cleaning before going into the recycling bin.

"At Colgate, we firmly believe that sustainability and social impact go hand in hand. I am proud that our strategy prioritizes both sustainability and social-impact initiatives, so that we can empower communities across the globe to have brighter, healthier futures," said Ann Tracy, chief sustainability officer, Colgate-Palmolive. "By striving to make progress across our three key ambitions — driving social impact, helping millions of homes and preserving our environment — we can make a positive impact on all people, their pets and our planet."

David S. Taylor, former executive chairman of the board, The Procter & Gamble Co., is also dedicated to planet-friendly innovations and the challenges that come with them. "We are fully committed to using P&G's innovation and ingenuity to unlock new solutions to address climate change," he said. "The task ahead of us is urgent, difficult and much bigger than any single company or country. P&G is tackling these challenges head-on by reducing our footprint and leveraging our scale to foster unprecedented

collaboration across our value chain."

P&G sustainability goals include ensuring that 100% of all packaging is recyclable or reusable by 2030, as well as normalizing lower temperatures for laundry and household cleaning by an average of 5 degrees in 2025. The company's Cascade Complete dishwasher pods and Lenor In-Wash Scent Boosters are now packaged in fully recyclable cardboard boxes and contain 100% recycled pulp.

Earlier this year, Frito-Lay North America Inc. and The Quaker Oats Co. — food divisions of PepsiCo Inc. — opened the Greenhouse Learning Center to field-test, measure and analyze compostable packaging with the goal of speeding up the rate of innovation. This facility represents a key milestone to achieve the company's PepsiCo positive packaging goal to design 100% of packaging to be recyclable, compostable, biodegradable or reusable by 2025.

"Our sustainable packaging vision is to build a world where packaging need never become waste," said Denise Lefebvre, senior vice president of snacks and research and development at PepsiCo. "We're actively changing our own compostable snack packaging technologies. By sharing these technologies, we're inviting the industry to make these changes as well. We are prioritizing, investing in and expediting projects to build a more circular, inclusive economy."

While these and other companies are creating initiatives to lengthen and improve the life cycle of packaging, it will take a village to turn around negative environmental impacts, according to Kathleen McLaughlin, Walmart Inc. executive vice president and chief sustainability officer. One of the world's largest sellers of consumer goods, Walmart Inc. created Project Gigaton™ in 2017 to engage suppliers and other stakeholders in climate action with the goal of avoiding 1 billion metrics tons — a gigaton — of greenhouse gases by reducing energy use, waste, packaging and transportation.

"We must all take urgent, sustained action to reverse nature loss and emissions before we reach a tipping point from which we will not recover," she said. "People have pushed past the earth's natural limits. Our vision is to help transform food and product supply chains to be regenerative, working in harmony with nature to protect, restore and sustainably use our natural resources. Healthy societies, resilient economies and thriving businesses rely on nature." ■



**David S. Taylor**, former executive chairman of the board, The Procter & Gamble Co.



**Denise Lefebvre**, senior vice president of snacks and research and development, PepsiCo.



**Kathleen McLaughlin**, executive vice president and chief sustainability officer, Walmart Inc.



# The world's greatest collaboration

## *Global events and a drive for sustainable solutions fuel changes in the oil, gas and energy industry*

BY SUZANNE BECKHAM SQUYRES

**W**orld events continue to rock the oil, gas and energy sector. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to a period of extraordinary turbulence in energy markets — especially natural gas — according to a recent report from the International Energy Agency.

“Recent events have reminded us how globally connected energy markets are,” said Darren Woods, Exxon Mobil Corp. chairman and CEO. “They’ve also underscored the importance of our role in creating sustainable solutions that improve quality of life, while supporting a lower-emissions future.”

However, regional conflicts are not the only challenge to the industry, however. The push for oil, gas and energy companies to incorporate earth-friendly initiatives into their frameworks is growing louder. And, in some areas of the world, energy use is expe-

riencing explosive growth.

According to the International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook 2022, global primary energy demand is expected to grow 13% by 2030 and 29% by 2050. In North America and Europe, primary energy consumption has plateaued, while consumption is predicted to rise alongside population growth in the rest of the world.

The IEA's report further indicated:

- Wind, solar and other renewables are expected to experience solid growth.
- Coal will continue to decrease toward lower-emission energy sources in response to global shifts.
- Oil and natural gas will remain a vital source for the world's energy needs.

### **CROSSING OVER**

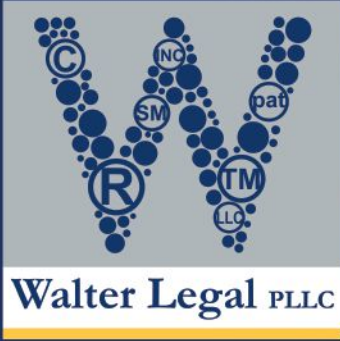
Some companies are expanding their

core businesses to include services they have not previously offered. Electricity accounts for about 20% of the world's total consumption of energy but is expected to grow as the number of electric vehicles in use continues to rise. One of every 10 passenger cars currently sold is electric. Oil and gas companies are expanding their core businesses to include electricity services.

As BP PLC reinvents itself as an integrated energy company, its BP Ventures Inc. has invested \$6 million in all-electric, ride-hailing business Freebee, a Miami, Florida-based company that provides free, on-demand transportation to local communities.

BP Ventures principal Shaun Healey indicated the company's first investment in Miami's thriving tech sector is because “it aligns with BP's ambition to be net-zero by 2050 or sooner. The team at Freebee has





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come up with a brilliant business idea that incentivizes travel by electric vehicles without any cost to the user.”

In addition, the company’s BP Pulse division has announced plans to establish its Gigahub network, a series of large, electric-vehicle, fast-charging hubs designed to serve ride-hail and taxi fleets near U.S. airports and high-demand locations across the nation. The first planned location will be built near Los Angeles International Airport in collaboration with The Hertz Corp., and it is partially funded by a grant from the California Energy Commission.

Similarly, Shell USA Inc. launched its energy brand into the U.S. residential power market earlier this year. For now, MP2 Energy Texas LLC dba Shell Energy Solutions is offering 100% renewable electricity plans to some customers in Texas. It also offers a plan for free car-charging during off-peak hours to electric vehicle drivers and a solar buyback plan that gives customers credit for excess solar power they export to the grid from solar panels.

Vistra Corp. has announced the launch of a technology-enabled retail electricity product. Through its flagship brand, TXU Energy, the company is offering a first-of-its-kind plan that uses electric-vehicle data to allow free home charging — from 7 p.m. through 1 p.m. the next day — and provides power backed by 100% renewable sources for all home energy needs.

“We’re excited to continue Vistra’s leadership in the EV space and accelerate the

adoption of these clean vehicles – a critical element of our country’s energy transition,” said Scott Hudson, president, retail, Vistra. The company has joined with others in setting a net-zero emissions goal of 2050.

### ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

“Achieving net-zero by 2050 is going to be the world’s greatest collaboration,” said Gretchen Watkins, president, Shell USA Inc. “No company can change the planet by itself.”

That collaboration includes suppliers. As the sector shifts, patience and innovation are key to accessing contracting opportunities, explained Grace Hastings, supplier diversity manager at Dallas, Texas-based Oncor Electric Delivery Co. LLC.

“The electric utility industry is changing quickly with new technologies and rapid growth. Suppliers need to come to the table with solutions that will add value,” she said, adding that new opportunities do not happen overnight.

“Sometimes, it takes a while for the right situation and opportunity to arrive, and they must be ready when the call goes out to engage in a sourcing event. If there is an opportunity to begin with a smaller opportunity, they should be willing to take it,” Hastings added. “In many cases, it will lead to other work of a more significant scope. Also, remember ‘no’ doesn’t always mean never; it may mean ‘not now’. Patience and perseverance are a part of establishing a relationship that can lead to future opportunities.” ■



**Darren Woods, chairman and CEO, Exxon Mobil Corp.**



**Shaun Healey, ventures principal, BP**



**Scott Hudson, president, retail, Vistra Corp.**



**Gretchen Watkins, president, Shell USA Inc.**



**Grace Hastings, supplier diversity manager, Oncor Electric Delivery Co. LLC**





# DTE

## STRONG CHAINS HAVE DIVERSE LINKS

We believe supply chains should be as diverse as the customers they serve. That's why we have a DTE Supplier Diversity team that seeks out local and diverse suppliers. We believe in helping our state and our customers by choosing businesses that support their communities. In 2022, DTE spent \$894 million with diverse suppliers which went toward creating jobs in local and diverse communities. Because a supply chain shouldn't just support its customers; it should also represent and connect them.

# Sustainable purchasing

## How top corporations prioritize Tier II suppliers

BY MELISSA LOWERY

Supplier diversity and sustainability have become increasingly entwined, to the point that diverse-supplier inclusion is now considered a best practice for sustainable purchasing. According to the Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC), “Leadership in sustainable purchasing means both finding ways to increase the use of diverse suppliers and improving environmental, social and economic performance in a holistic fashion.”

Undertaking this best practice requires a strategic approach. Most diverse suppliers do not yet have the capacity to fulfill a contract for a major corporation on their own; however, they can contribute goods and services as a subcontractor to a prime supplier. Increasingly, large companies are working with Tier I or prime suppliers to utilize diverse suppliers through indirect or Tier II contracts, strategically building a sustainable purchasing program.

“Suppliers are an essential part of our business and, therefore, must be part of our approach to sustainability and DEI [diversity, equity and inclusion] efforts. Our Prime Supplier Program is an extension of our commitment to engage diverse suppliers,” said Alexis Dennard, AT&T assistant vice president, supplier diversity & sustainability. “It presents an important opportunity to encourage our prime suppliers to support the same values and standards we hold ourselves to — including working with diverse businesses and suppliers.”

### HOW CORPORATIONS CAN ENCOURAGE PRIME SUPPLIERS TO INCORPORATE SUPPLIER DIVERSITY

For large companies with mature supplier diversity programs, Tier II is a natural expansion to achieve corporate sustainability goals. A successful Tier II program requires engagement and participation from prime suppliers, and often that involves encouragement and support from the client.

As with any initiative, setting goals is a crucial component of an effective Tier

II program. Goal-setting provides guidance and breeds solutions, moving the needle forward.

At CVS Health Corp., the supplier diversity team set a goal to spend \$5 billion in Tier I spend and \$3 billion in Tier II spend with small and diverse suppliers by 2027. To meet that Tier II spend goal, CVS launched a portal through which prime suppliers can easily report diverse spend each quarter.

When New York-based airline JetBlue Airways Corp. formalized its supplier diversity program in 2022, the company decided to focus on growing its diverse supplier base. With a goal of increasing the number of diverse suppliers in its supply chain by 5% year over year, the company requires at least one diverse supplier be included in every request for proposals (RFP) — including those issued by Tier I suppliers.

“Inclusive sourcing begins with the RFP, which is why including at least one diverse supplier is a requirement for every RFP” said Spiros Kallinikos, a former senior analyst at JetBlue.

AT&T leverages its Prime Supplier Program to support an inclusive, sustainable supply chain. Dennard noted that the program is “a clear advantage” for the company’s commitment to supplier diversity.

“Historical results indicate how instrumental our prime suppliers have been in assisting in successful diverse businesses throughout AT&T’s supply chain,” she said. “For those businesses that may not currently have the size and scale to perform on direct contract opportunities, being subcontractors at the Tier II or even Tier III level presents the opportunities to gain valuable experience and achieve revenue for their bottom lines.”

For those primes with established supplier diversity programs, AT&T provides collaboration and support to set and meet customized goals.

“Our supplier diversity managers collaborate with prime suppliers to create detailed

*(continued on page 84)*



Alexis Dennard, AT&T assistant vice president, supplier diversity & sustainability



Suppliers are an essential part of our business and, therefore, must be part of our approach to sustainability and DEI efforts.

— Alexis Dennard





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# Playing a role

## *Serial entrepreneur Tommy Hodinh finds success in joint ventures*

BY DEANN DALEY HOLCOMB

One of National Minority Supplier Development Council Inc.'s ambitious goals for minority business enterprises as a group is to have \$1 trillion in revenues by 2025. Serial entrepreneur and global technology innovator Tommy Hodinh expects to play a role in helping the organization reach that target.

"How are we going to do it? We see our key to success in joint ventures," said Hodinh, president and co-founder, MagRabbit-SystemSoft-AU LLC, and president, chief operating officer and co-founder, MTech Partners LLC.

His portfolio of companies also includes MagRabbit Global Software Services LLC, MagRabbit Dedicated Fleet LLC, Mag-Rabbit Vietnam Co. Ltd., MagRabbit-American Unit LLC, MagRabbit AIW LLC and OESMagRabbit LLC. The companies have a global presence with their software development, information-technology consulting and sup-

ply-chain management offerings.

Hodinh and his family arrived in the United States in 1972 as a Vietnam refugees. After working his way through the University of Texas, he spent 15 years at IBM Corp. In 1990, he started MagRabbit Inc. in Austin, Texas. The company slogan has always been "More than a hare better and much faster than our competitors." His clients include AT&T, Dell, IBM, Verizon Communications and Walmart.

Since 2005, Hodinh said MagRabbit has created three successful joint ventures and partners with several companies to gain big contracts with Fortune 500 companies.

"In the last few years, we have created joint ventures with an African American entrepreneur to form Mtech Partners and a Latino-disabled veteran-owned minority business enterprise [MBE] to form OESMagRabbit," he said. "This year, we have MBE-to-MBE strategists and exclusive partners at the few-bil-



**Tommy Hodinh, president and chief operating officer, MagRabbit Inc.**

lion-dollars revenue level."

MTech Partners helps its clients succeed by providing products and services that bring competitive advantage through innovation, performance, quality and cost efficiency.

"Last year, we created an Asian global MBE — MagRabbit-System Soft-AU LLC. It has \$250 million in revenues and has 17 locations in the U.S. plus Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Australia, Europe and nearshores," Hodinh said. ■

### Sustainable purchasing

*(continued from page 82)*

plans for utilizing diverse suppliers, set meaningful goals for the utilization of diverse suppliers as subcontractors and encourage the development of innovative solutions for improving and tracking diversity results," Dennard said.

If a prime supplier does not have an established supplier diversity program to track and report their diverse business spend, AT&T supplier diversity managers collaborate with that company to develop one.

"We work with the company [employees] to explain the program, provide guidance on how to establish a program and provide periodic training on strategic outreach to identify diverse suppliers. Our dedicated manager for the Prime Supplier Program assists in walking them through how to calculate direct and indirect spend reporting," Dennard explained.

### EXPANDING THE DIVERSE SUPPLIER BASE

Identifying qualified suppliers is another key component for building a sustainable purchasing program. Unfortunately, it is also a pain point for many supplier diversity professionals. In supplier.io's 2022 State of Supplier Diversity Report, 73% of respondents said that finding qualified diverse suppliers was somewhat to extremely challenging.

Companies can help prime suppliers by acting as a matchmaker. Some host their own events, such as Toyota's annual Opportunity

Exchange where certified, diverse-owned businesses are invited to learn more about working with Toyota and present their goods and services to prime suppliers.

Diverse business councils and chambers of commerce are a valuable resource for companies seeking to expand their diverse supplier base. These organizations host multiple opportunities to meet with diverse suppliers and build relationships, which corporate members can leverage.

AT&T's Dennard said her team invites prime suppliers to be their guests at outreach events where they can meet diverse suppliers. Facilitating connections is not limited to these events, however. "We also go the extra mile and refer diverse suppliers to our primes," she said.

Other tools include supplier registration portals that allow supplier diversity teams to capture relevant information and vet diverse firms before referring them to a prime supplier.

As companies increasingly embrace the value of supplier diversity as part of corporate sustainability goals, creating opportunities for diverse firms at the Tier II level is a proven solution to achieve those goals. Dedicating resources to collaborating with prime suppliers to integrate diverse companies into their own supply chains strengthens the business ecosystem for everyone. ■

➔ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AT&T, VISIT [ATT.COM](http://ATT.COM).





# Give your company the recognition it deserves

To help diverse businesses gain visibility, MBN USA is offering all certified diverse businesses a **complimentary listing in the 2024 Diverse Supplier Directory**.

This digital directory will be published in early 2024 in partnership with Women's Enterprise USA (WE USA) and Affinity Inc. It will feature listings for all diverse suppliers, creating an incredible resource for all.

This directory will be **reaching over 10,000 corporate leaders and diverse suppliers**. The listing will provide the visibility needed to advance diverse businesses and open doors of opportunity.

Sign-up is currently open at [links.mbnusa.biz/2024DSDSignUp](https://links.mbnusa.biz/2024DSDSignUp)



# Buckle up

## Why MWBEs should lean into generative AI

BY LESHANE GREENHILL, founder, SalesCocktail

**A**rtificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing the way businesses operate. From customer service to marketing to product development, AI is being used to improve efficiency, productivity and customer experience. Buckle up — because change at a rapid pace is coming.

Companies that lean into generative AI will have a definitive advantage. In my next few articles, I will dive deep into what generative AI is and the many platforms that are being developed in this new frontier.

AI can help minority and women's business enterprises (MWBEs) compete with larger, more established businesses by providing them with access to new technologies, resources and markets.

Here are some of the benefits of AI for MWBEs:

- **Improved efficiency:** Automates tasks, streamlines processes and provides real-time data and insights.
- **Increased productivity:** Makes it easier to collaborate with customers, suppliers and employees.
- **Enhanced customer service:** Provides a more convenient and personalized experience for customers.
- **Expanded market reach:** Makes it easier to reach new customers and partners around the world.

- **Improved competitive advantage:** Gives access to new markets, technologies and resources.

There are several different ways that MWBEs can adopt AI technology. Some of the most popular options include:

- **Using AI-powered tools:** These tools can be used for tasks such as customer service, marketing and product development.
- **Partnering with AI companies:** Get access to AI technology and expertise without having to invest in AI infrastructure.
- **Training employees on AI:** Helps employees understand how AI can be used to improve businesses.

Adopting AI technology can be a daunting task, but it is worth the effort. By adopting AI, MWBEs can improve their efficiency, productivity, customer service and competitive advantage, helping them grow their businesses and create jobs.

The use of AI is still in its early stages, but it is growing rapidly. If you are an MWBE, I encourage you to learn more about AI and how it can be used to improve your business. ■

➔ FOR MORE INFORMATION, FOLLOW THE SALESCOCKTAIL AI JOURNEY ON LINKEDIN, INSTAGRAM, FACEBOOK, AND TIKTOK. ALL SOCIAL MEDIA ADDRESSES ARE @SALESCOCKTAIL.



Leshane C. Greenhill



AI can help minority and women's business enterprises [MWBEs] compete with larger, more established businesses by providing them with access to new technologies, resources and markets.

— LeShane Greenhill

## Minority Business News USA

invites you to connect with minority-owned businesses and corporations. Get up to date industry information, insights and supplier diversity news online now.

[mbnusa.biz](http://mbnusa.biz)







CHAIRMAN'S SCHOLARSHIP



Gala

OCTOBER 3, 2023

SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE

PRESENTED BY



# PHOENIX RISING: EMBRACING THE PHOENIX WITHIN

MMSDC invites you to join us on October 3, 2023, as we honor those trailblazers who have established a firm foundation for Supplier Diversity and celebrate the Ambassadors Championing Excellence (ACE) in the progression of Minority Business Enterprises.

## JETHRO JOSEPH ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Jacinto Blanco - Yanfeng
- Bruno Alejandro Olvera Diaz - Stellantis
- Matt Greene - Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
- Gregory Hawkins - Stellantis
- Tamara Hicks - General Motors
- Teresa LeFevre - Comerica Bank
- Marcia Hunter - Stellantis
- Anand Kumar - AAA
- Kenneth Mathies - AAA
- Brian Moore - Flex
- Lisa Ross - Magna International
- Travis Spencer - Ford Motor Company

## BUYER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Bryson Batiato - Yanfeng
- Evan Crahen - National Fuel Gas
- Jordan Evers - Adient
- Joanne Flemming - Yanfeng
- Fred Koshen - Comerica Bank
- Brian Llyod - Ford Motor Company
- Jason Oldani - Ford Motor Company
- Anu Sehgal - Ford Motor Company
- Maureen Schwartz - Stellantis
- Nerisha Wright - Toyota Motor North America, Inc.

## CORPORATION OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Barton Malow
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- Comerica Bank
- DTE Energy
- Ford Motor Company
- General Motors
- Kelly Services, Inc.
- Stellantis
- Toyota Motor North America, Inc.
- Walbridge
- Yanfeng

## EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- James Bos - Yanfeng
- Dante Crockett - Ford Motor Company
- Dawn Gontko - Ford Motor Company
- Tracy Joshua - Kellogg Company
- Kenneth Mathies - AAA
- Jeff Morrison - General Motors
- Gloria Oldani - Comerica Bank
- Jaspreet Singh - DTE Energy
- Valencia Stoudamire - Henry Ford Health
- Teresa Thiele - Stellantis
- Marlo Vitous - Stellantis
- Marvin Washington - Stellantis
- Robert Young - Toyota Motor North America, Inc.

## MBE LUMINARY OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- David Burnley - Devon Industrial Group
- Denise Everett - Global Technology Associates, LTD
- Sylvester Hester - LM Manufacturing
- Brenda Oldham - RAM Insurance & Financial Services
- Leon Richardson - The Chemico Group
- Jim Roberts - Jim Roberts Enterprises
- Varchasvi Shankar - V2Soft, Inc.
- Lisa Wilmore - The Wilmore Agency

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

- Therissa Allen - Nippon Seiki NA
- James Bos - Yanfeng
- Marissa DeCook - Stellantis
- Jennifer Good - American Axle & Manufacturing (AAM)
- Jacqueline K. Munson-Gaines - JMG Connect
- Jim Roberts - Jim Roberts Enterprises
- Travis Spencer - Ford Motor Company
- Karl Stephens - Call Center For Hire, LLC
- Taryn Sulkes - Eagle Specialties, LLC
- Christian Washington - Stellantis

## SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR - CLASS I NOMINEES

- Data Analytics Technology Advantage
- Eagle Specialties, LLC
- Jim Roberts Enterprises, LLC

## SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR - CLASS II NOMINEES

- CorrPak
- Digital Detroit Media (DDM)
- Duren Resources, Inc.
- Full View Productions
- IPS Technology Services
- PCE Monarch
- Saanvi Technologies, LLC
- VMX International

## SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR - CLASS III NOMINEES

- AMBE Engineering, LLC
- Arrow Strategies
- Computech Corporation
- Milagro Packaging, LLC
- Reliance One
- Roy Smith Company
- State Line Construction and Maintenance
- TGI Direct
- V2Soft, Inc.
- w3r Consulting (Webrunners)
- Walker Healthcare IT

## SUPPLIER OF THE YEAR - CLASS IV NOMINEES

- Acro Service Corporation
- The Chemico Group
- Choctaw-Kaul Distribution Company
- Detroit Automotive Technologies, LLC
- Devon Industrial Group
- Diversified Chemical Technology
- Ewie
- Hollingsworth
- Renaissance Global Logistics
- SEEL, LLC
- Systems Technology Group (STG)
- Systrand Manufacturing
- Zones, LLC



As the key driver of minority business development in Michigan for 46 years, MMSDC is the home of the Michigan Minority Business Hall of Fame. This prestigious award honors men and women who have made significant contributions to minority supplier development in the state of Michigan and beyond.



CARLA WALKER-MILLER



DAVID BURNLEY



GENE TABOR



LEON RICHARDSON

[HTTPS://ACE.MINORITYSUPPLIER.ORG](https://ace.minoritysupplier.org)

# Appointments Announcements



**Karin Hung** is president of the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation (USPAACC). Prior to her new role, she served as USPAACC's vice president, programs and corporate relations, in the national office in Washington, D.C. Sue Au Allen remains as the organization's chairman and CEO.



**Karla Malacon** is president and CEO of the Northwest Mountain Minority Supplier Development Council (NWMSDC). She has been with the Council since 2017, progressing through various leadership roles. In 2022, Malacon was named vice president of operations. In February 2023, she became interim president and CEO, replacing long-time President and CEO Fernando Martinez, who joined the National Minority Supplier Development Council Inc.'s national office as senior vice president of network success.



**Kathryn McLay** is president and CEO, Walmart Inc.'s international business. She replaces the retiring Judith McKenna – the retailing giant's highest-ranking woman executive – who is retiring Jan. 31, 2024. Previously, McLay was president and CEO of Walmart's Sam's Club U.S. She joined Walmart in 2015, and after roles in strategy and supply chain, led the retailer's Neighborhood Market business before her current position at Sam's Club in November 2019.



**Mayra Peña** has been promoted to the Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council's (SMSDC) executive team in the new role vice president of stakeholder engagement and success. She has been with Council for over 15 years, and most recently was director of corporate services and communications. In her new position, Peña will continue to build strength and abilities to better serve stakeholders.



**Carol Thomas** has been promoted to the Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council's (SMSDC) executive team in the new role of senior vice president of administration and operations. She has been with the Council for seven years and, previously, was chief of staff. Thomas reports to SMSDC's President and CEO Karen Box.



**Sean Tresvant** has been promoted to CEO of Yum! Brands Inc.'s Taco Bell Division, effective Jan. 1, 2024. Currently, he serves as global chief brand and strategy officer of Taco Bell. Tresvant joined Taco Bell in January 2022 as global chief brand officer. Before that, he spent more than 15 years in leadership roles at Nike Inc., including chief marketing officer of the Jordan Brand. Tresvant will succeed the retiring Mark King and will report to Yum! Brands CEO David Gibbs.



# CLOSE THE EQUITY GAP

NMSDC ANNUAL  
Conference  
& Exchange

MED  
Week 2023  
CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

BALTIMORE OCTOBER 22-25, 2023

## Act Now. Accelerate Growth. Achieve Equity.

After disrupting our own status quo at our 50th Anniversary Conference & Exchange, we must now gather and focus our attention on the equity gap that has persisted in this country for far too long and expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What will it take to close the equity gap? How will you contribute to the solution?

Join us in Baltimore for the 2023 NMSDC Annual Conference & Exchange.

## REGISTER TODAY!

[www.nmsdcconference.org](http://www.nmsdcconference.org)





## September

12-14

(event is sold out, to join waiting list contact DA4S)

### Diversity Alliance for Science

DA4S West Conference  
Laguna Cliffs Marriott  
Resort & Spa  
25135 Park Lantern  
Dana Point, CA 92629  
661-993-9390

[diversityallianceforscience.com/west-coast-conference](http://diversityallianceforscience.com/west-coast-conference)

21-22

### North Center Minority Supplier Development Council

Business Opportunity Exchange  
Potawatomi Hotel & Casino  
1721 W. Canal St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53233  
612-465-8881  
[northcentralmsdc.org/our-eventsnorthcentralminoritysupplierdevelopmentcouncil.growthzoneapp.com/ap/Events/Register/QraB9Qvp?mode=Exhibitor](http://northcentralmsdc.org/our-eventsnorthcentralminoritysupplierdevelopmentcouncil.growthzoneapp.com/ap/Events/Register/QraB9Qvp?mode=Exhibitor)

24-26

### United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

2023 USHCC National Conference  
Loews Sapphire Falls Resort at Universal Orlando  
6601 Adventure Way  
Orlando, FL 32819  
info@ushcc.com  
202-842-1212  
[ushccconference.com](http://ushccconference.com)

27-28

### Southwest Minority Supplier Development Council

Diversity at the Border Conference  
Sept. 27 Virtual 2-4:30 PM  
Sept. 28 In-Person 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM  
Hotel Paso Del Norte  
10 Henry Trost Court  
El Paso, TX 79901  
Mayra Peña  
mayra@smsdc.org  
915-433-0612  
[smsdc.org](http://smsdc.org)  
[fs24.formsite.com/smsdc/au13edximr/index](http://fs24.formsite.com/smsdc/au13edximr/index)

## October

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### Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council

2023 MMSDC ACE Awards and Chairman's Scholarship Gala  
Phoenix Rising: Embracing the Phoenix Within  
6:00 PM- 8:30 PM  
Suburban Collection Showplace  
46100 Grand River Ave.  
Novi, MI 48374  
info@minoritysupplier.org  
313-873-3200  
[minoritysupplier.org](http://minoritysupplier.org)  
[eventbrite.com/e/2023-mmsdc-ace-awards-and-chairmans-gala-tickets-680249112407](http://eventbrite.com/e/2023-mmsdc-ace-awards-and-chairmans-gala-tickets-680249112407)

11-12

### Houston Minority Supplier Development Council

EXPO 2023  
ExxonMobil Houston Campus – Energy Center  
22777 Springwoods Village Parkway  
Spring, TX 77389  
info@hmsdc.org  
713-271-7805  
[hmsdc.org/events/calendar-of-events](http://hmsdc.org/events/calendar-of-events)

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### Houston Minority Supplier Development Council

50th Anniversary Gala  
TBA  
info@hmsdc.org  
713-271-7805  
[hmsdc.org](http://hmsdc.org)

22-25

### National Minority Supplier Development Council

NMSDC Annual Conference & Exchange: Close the Equity Gap  
Baltimore Hilton- Inner Harbor  
1401 W. Pratt St.  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
events@nmsdc.org  
212-944-2430  
[nmsdcconference.org/2023](http://nmsdcconference.org/2023)





# Partner with us.

At Apple, we are committed to diversity in our supply chain. We partner with the most qualified suppliers, including businesses owned by women, minorities, veterans, people with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and others in historically underrepresented groups.

To partner with us, email  
[supplierdiversity@apple.com](mailto:supplierdiversity@apple.com).

# Respect for all.

Inclusion. Diversity. Equity. These are more than words at Honda. They're part of our fundamental belief in *Respect for the Individual*. Honda recognizes that our differences make us stronger and are committed to those who feel the same.



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