California Minority Counsel Program:
Title of Activity: “Allyship is a Necessity, But It's Not Easy: Here’s Why and How – Learn how to establish and grow the relationships we call allyship: strategies, lessons learned and navigating needed but uncomfortable conversations”

MCLE Written Materials
Date of Activity: Wednesday, September 23, 2020
Time of Activity: 1:30pm - 2:30pm

Moderator: Mohammed Elayan

Panelists:
- Kori Carew - Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer, Seyfarth Shaw LLP
- John M. Iino – Director, Reed Smith LLP
- Patti Perez – Founder & CEO, Persuasion Point

Learning Objectives:
By the end of this program, participants will
- Understand what effective allyship means in the legal profession
- Have the confidence to reach out and recruit allies
- Understand the role we play in cultivating relationships with allies
- Understand that mere words, e.g., identifying oneself as an ally, is not enough for effective allyship

I. Defining Allyship
   a. There is no singular definition, but representative definitions include:
      i. “An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole.” Sheree Aitcheson, Forbes contributor and Award-winning Diversity & Inclusion Leader
      ii. “Allyship is an active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in the position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group.” from the Anti-Oppression Network

b. The conception of allyship has changed over time
   i. Initially a term used in the LGBTQ community
   ii. Also now viewed as more of a “verb” (action oriented)

c. What constitutes effective allyship?
   i. Recognition of privilege
   ii. Empathy toward marginalized groups
   iii. Re-thinking one’s beliefs/biases
   iv. Activism
   v. Mentorships
   vi. Relationships

d. What constitutes ineffective allyship?
i. Mere words (e.g., saying “I support the advancement of black attorneys” without ever hiring/mentoring/sponsoring a black attorney)

ii. Lack of empathy

iii. Holding onto biases

iv. Lack of relationships

v. Holding diverse attorneys to higher standards than non-diverse peers

e. Truths about allyship

i. It requires conscious effort.

ii. It requires recognizing privileges and eliminating biases.

iii. It requires consistent effort over time.

iv. It requires advocating for the advancement of a marginalized group.

v. Relationships with diverse attorneys are important.

vi. Being non-diverse is not a requirement.

II. Recruiting Allies – Strategically and Authentically

a. There biases running in both directions impacting how allies are recruited.

i. Non-diverse attorneys may not view diverse attorneys as having similar backgrounds or interests.

ii. Diverse attorneys may feel

b. Be mindful that a potential ally fears they may “say the wrong thing”.

i. Authentic relationship building is key

b. Be mindful that a potential ally fears they may “say the wrong thing”.

i. Authentic relationship building is key

ii. Implicit assumptions/biases may lead to missed opportunities

i. confirmation bias among partners when it comes to which lawyers have potential to succeed.

ii. people might have an “us vs. them” mentality

III. Attorneys’ Roles in Cultivating Allies, Including Sharing Basic Expectations

a. Be transparent about expectations

b. Openly discuss feedback, appreciation, and opportunities for improvement with the ally

IV. Effective Allyship

a. How can allies can utilize their political capital to elevate attorneys of color within the firm/company

i. Giving visible praise/credit in front of people with political capital within the firm

ii. Interrupting bias – speaking up when someone is not in the room or in a position to advocate for himself/herself

Resources:

2. https://www.americanbar.org/groups/young_lawyers/publications/tyl/topics/professional-development/closing-gap/