

Diversity Within Diversity: Identity, Intersectionality, and Belonging in the Workplace

California Minority Counsel Program
Virtual Business Conference 2020
September 24, 2020
1:00-2:00 PM (PDT)

Moderator: Pamela Onyekaba, Legal Counsel, Intuit Inc.

Panelists:

- **Tonik Matthews**, Director and Senior Corporate Counsel, Autodesk, Inc.
- **Erin N. Reid**, Senior Counsel, Internet Services & Marketing, Apple Inc.
- **Yusuf Z. Zakir**, Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Holland & Knight LLP

Objectives:

- Provide a definition of intersectionality as a baseline
- Discuss intersectionality from the perspective of the individual
- Understanding what organizations can do to support intersectionality
- Providing a forum for small-group discussion around these topics

Session Outline with Resources:

Part I: Defining Diversity and Intersectionality

While most people share a similar understanding of what diversity means, the theory of intersectionality, by contrast, is less widely understood. The term “intersectionality” was first coined by legal scholar and civil rights activist Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw over 30 years ago. Intersectionality provides a framework to describe how an individual’s or group’s various identities (for example, race, gender, class) create unique “overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.” (Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 2020)

Resources:

- The Origin of the Term “intersectionality”:
https://www.cjr.org/language_corner/intersectionality.php
- Gender and Racial Bias in the Legal Profession:
<https://www.advocatemagazine.com/article/2019-february/gender-and-racial-bias-in-the-legal-profession>
- Intersectionality, Work, and Well-Being: The Effects of Gender and Disability
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0891243218800636>

Part II: Intersectionality and Individuals

Many law firms and companies have publicly stated their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and we know that diverse and inclusive organizations perform better. Yet, many underrepresented and marginalized groups still feel uncomfortable bringing their whole selves to work.

- A. What does it mean to bring your authentic and whole self to work?
- B. What are the consequences to employees and organizations when employees cannot bring their whole self to work?
- C. If a person feels that they cannot be their whole self in their workplace, what can they do on an individual basis?

Resources:

- 5 ways intersectionality affects diversity and inclusion at work:
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/07/diversity-inclusion-equality-intersectionality/>
- Privileges and penalties in the legal profession: an intersectional analysis of career progression: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1468-4446.12375>
- Intersectionality and the Careers of Black Women Lawyers:
<https://thepractice.law.harvard.edu/article/intersectionality-and-the-careers-of-black-women-lawyers/>

Part III: Intersectionality and Organizations

Organizational diversity efforts tend to compartmentalize diversity – gender, gender identity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, etc. – and often prioritize one “category” over diversity over another. Embracing intersectionality requires organizations to pivot their DE&I efforts.

- A. What can organizations do to learn about and support intersectionality?

Resources:

- The Business of Inclusion: Raising the Bar on LGBT Diversity
<http://lgbtbar.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/LGBT-Bar-Corporate-Counsel-Diversity-Toolkit.pdf>
- Increasing Law Firm Diversity:
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/tort_trial_insurance_practice/publications/committee-newsletters/increasing-law-firm-diversity/
- Building and Encouraging Law Firm Diversity:
<https://ogletree.com/app/uploads/insights/diversity-inclusion/micro-inequities-intersectionality-covering-diversity-and-talent-management.pdf>

- Moving Beyond the Illusion of Inclusion: Appreciating the Importance and Value of Inclusion in Creating a Diverse Profession:
https://www.americanbar.org/groups/diversity/DiversityCommission/vol5-issue1/Illusion_of_Inclusion/

Part IV: Breakout Discussion Topics

- A. What is one of your identities that may not be readily apparent (and that you're willing to share)?
- B. Do you feel like you are able to bring your whole self to work?
- C. How can individuals help their organizations be more welcoming and inclusive?

Part V: Takeaways and Closing

- A. What are the common challenges you find in bringing your whole self to work?
- B. What can individuals do to help organizations support people's ability to bring their whole self to work?

Additional Resources:

- What if the road to inclusion were really an intersection?
<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/multidimensional-diversity.html>
- Seyfarth Shaw LLP, The Belonging Project: <https://www.seyfarth.com/the-belonging-project.html>
- Diversity in the Legal Profession: Perspectives from Managing Partners and General Counsel: <https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Diversity-in-the-Legal-Profession-Perspectives-from-Managing-Par.pdf>
- The State of Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession:
(http://theilp.com/resources/Documents/IILP_2019_FINAL_web.pdf)