

Black History Month Leadership Series



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FUN FACT

I'm a somewhat reluctant part-time soccer mom. With all three of my boys involved in travel soccer, much of my free time is dedicated to cheering them on!

1. What does Black History Month mean to you?

Black History Month is a great moment to reflect, celebrate, and honor the monumental contributions of Black African descendants and Africans in the diaspora. For me, it's a time to salute the resilience, innovation, and leadership exemplified by individuals whose legacies continue to shape our world. Taking the time to commemorate Black achievements always leaves me more inspired to lead with purpose, advocating for equality, justice, and opportunity for all.

2. How do you help support DEI initiatives at your organization?

At my organization, I play an active role in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives on multiple fronts. As a steering committee member of the Women's ERG, I contribute to crafting strategies and initiatives that empower and advance women within our organization. Additionally, I enthusiastically volunteer on a committee for our Multicultural Alliance ERG, where I collaborate on events and networking programs aimed at skill development, enhancing employee experiences, and retaining diverse talent.

I am also deeply engaged in recruitment and mentoring efforts across several of our diversity recruitment platforms. This hands-on involvement allows me to actively contribute to building a more diverse workforce while simultaneously expanding my network and connections within the firm. It's a gratifying volunteering effort that not only enriches my professional experience but also reinforces my commitment to creating an inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive.

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3. This year's theme for Black History Month is "African Americans and the arts." In what ways do you believe the arts can serve as a powerful platform for promoting diversity, inclusion, and social change, and how have you used this in your leadership?

I love this year's theme for Black History Month! "African Americans and the Arts," beautifully underscores the profound impact of artistic expression in promoting diversity, inclusion, and social change. For me, the arts serve as a powerful platform for amplifying marginalized voices, celebrating cultural heritage, and sparking dialogue on pressing social issues.

Personally, I draw inspiration from many artists but would like to spotlight Bisa Butler, whose innovative use of quilting to tell the stories of Black African Americans resonates deeply with me. Butler's work not only showcases the resilience and strength of the Black community but also highlights our rich cultural heritage. By incorporating fabrics from West Africa (my birthplace), which are imbued with symbols and weaves that narrate stories, Butler's art bridges the past and present, offering a familiar yet cutting-edge perspective.

In my own leadership journey, I've embraced the lessons from artists like Bisa Butler, recognizing the importance of leaning into my unique identity, path, and story. Just as Butler fearlessly infuses her art with vibrant narratives, I strive to infuse my leadership style with authenticity, creativity, and inclusivity. Whether it's through fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment, championing underrepresented voices, or leveraging artistic mediums to drive social change, I firmly believe in the transformative power of the arts to inspire, unite, and catalyze meaningful progress toward a more equitable workplace and society at large.

4. How are you planning to celebrate Black History Month and how can your colleagues do the same?

I'm actively involved in organizing and attending Black History Month ERG events to foster discussions and honor Black heritage. I'm also excited to fully embrace the theme and explore museums showcasing Black artists' works, read books by Black authors with my kids, and support Black-owned restaurants.

More importantly, I view every Black History Month as a renewed opportunity to kickstart ongoing efforts throughout the year, rather than confining the celebration to just this one month. Therefore, as I plan to continue these activities through 2024, I encourage my colleagues to join me in these endeavors, as together, we can make a lasting impact in honoring and uplifting the Black community.

This interview has been edited for clarity.