



BETTER THAN BEFORE

# INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

# 2020

WI SHRM STATE CONFERENCE

HRs Bright Vision

## SAVE THE DATE

**34th Annual WI SHRM State Conference**

October 14-16, 2020 ★ Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

This annual event welcomes over 1,700 attendees and guests and 150 exhibitors to the largest human resources professional development event in Wisconsin, presenting over 60 educational sessions over three days.

For event and registration information, visit us at: [wishrm.org/2020-state-conference](http://wishrm.org/2020-state-conference)

INSURANCE | CONSULTING | TECHNOLOGY

 **Forsite**  
benefits & wellness

Benefits *done differently*

Delivering a *better* benefits experience for you and your employees.



Our promise to you: We care. We own. We deliver. Visit us at [www.forsitebenefits.com](http://www.forsitebenefits.com) to learn more.





BETTER THAN BEFORE

# INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

IN NORTHEAST WISCONSIN

## LETTER FROM EDITORS

In 2018, Fox Valley Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) re-wrote its mission statement: *“Inspire and Engage professionals across the Fox Valley to think strategically about managing, engaging, and retaining human capital.”* About the same time, the organization began evaluating its strategic priorities. As it becomes increasingly harder to recruit and retain talent in the current market, we realized how important it was for Fox Valley SHRM to help our companies become more inclusive and diverse. So this became a top strategic priority.

Last fall, Fox Valley SHRM reached out to the New North, a regional marketing and economic development organization in Northeast Wisconsin. New North recognizes that diversity is crucial to economic development. It helps to promote strategies that leverage every person’s assets and foster an environment where everyone achieves his or her full potential.

Together, we are presenting this publication. Our intent is to highlight the amazing things companies right here in Northeast Wisconsin are doing to make inclusion and diversity a priority, and not a mere corporate buzz word. This serves to not only applaud their work, but also show talent why our region is worth another look. We also intend for this publication to serve as a resource for companies that understand the importance of inclusion and diversity, but aren’t as far as long in their journey.

Working together across Northeast Wisconsin, we can ensure our companies are poised for growth, our talent feels appreciated and included, and we all become Better than Before.

According to the 2018 McKinsey report, Delivering through diversity, companies in the top quarter for racial/ethnic diversity on their executive teams are 33% more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. Similarly, companies with more gender diversity on the executive team are 21% more likely to outperform the least gender-diverse companies.



*Nycki Milhaupt*  
Fox Valley SHRM Board President



*Barb LaMue*  
New North Executive Director



A PERSONAL STORY

# Why Diversity and Inclusion are Important

**Diversity and Inclusion has become a cultural phenomenon that has taken off and sparked much meaningful action and change in the workplace climates.** However, being an African American woman, resident, and city council candidate in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin I have grown accustomed to knowing what it feels like to not have a sense of belonging in my community or the organization where I have dedicated my time and talent. I worked in financial institutions for over fourteen years that never embraced my culture.

I watched as they would throw mock Cinco De Mayo celebrations and Chinese New Year's parties, but when black history month and MLK Day would roll around, there wasn't even a mention or a conversation. I have been embarrassed at work parties when my supervisor would address me as her "little brownie." My manager at the time described her choice of expression as a term of endearment, but for me it was hurtful and embarrassing while in the company of my colleagues. This type of ignorance caused me to shrink back within myself and merely exist in the workplace, rather than thrive or be productive. Eventually the best thing for me to do was to leave and pursue a new journey to discover my purpose outside of these organizations.

Claiming to be a welcoming community or workplace and not provide a climate that is conducive to embracing all cultures can be catastrophic for minority groups. The emphasis and value placed on diversity and inclusion initiatives today has not come easily, but as an individual I feel mandated to practice, honor and uphold these standards as they are being set.

## CREATE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Creating a diverse and inclusive work environment can increase personal successes for employees as well as for the organization overall; it becomes a win-win. Diversity and Inclusion should be emphasized and embraced as a future initiative in every organization because this directly impacts the employees. Whether diversity comes from a person's gender, ethnicity, LGBTQ status, or age in comparison to the majority of the workforce at an organization, everyone just wants a sense of belonging. Employees spend on average 1/3 or more of their day in the workplace, so it would be beneficial to create a space that causes employee engagement, company confidence, and attracts talent from prospective employees. Who wouldn't want to work for an organization that strives to provide a supportive, comfortable and inspiring atmosphere for their employees to thrive in? And that's true regardless of how you identify yourself.



## GETTING STARTED

A great starting place for minimizing the transitional changes related to launching a diversity and inclusion program in the workplace is to start with unconscious bias training for both employees and upper management, as well as all HR professionals. Change takes place from the top down; involve senior leadership in your planning in the earliest stage possible. We must be willing to stretch ourselves and be a bit uncomfortable. Everyone (yes everyone!) is programmed to think in ways they don't realize and most times this is a choice to be as comfortable as possible. There is a level of awareness that must take place in order to create a more inclusive environment for all. For instance, if your duties include recruiting or even interviewing others, are you unconsciously searching for talent that looks like you?

Diversity and Inclusion programs and initiatives are hard to get right, but working together we can get a better understanding of the complexities of creating a workplace where everyone can feel at home.



Remember, diversity is not the end goal but the beginning to creating a more inclusive, effective, and just workplace.

---

*To learn more about Arletta Allen, check out [authenticallyarletta.com](http://authenticallyarletta.com).  
If you'd like to contact Arletta about speaking opportunities, email [booking.arlettaallen@gmail.com](mailto:booking.arlettaallen@gmail.com).*



## FOSTER AND SUPPORT YOUR CULTURE AND STRATEGIC GOALS, INCLUDING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVES

REALITY *meets* COMPLIANCE *meets* CULTURE

### YOUR PARTNER AT EVERY STAGE OF THE EMPLOYMENT CYCLE

- Creating a Dynamic Work Environment**
- Engaging the Right People for the Organization**
- Maximizing the Workplace Potential**
- Managing Organizational & Employee Transitions**

At Lake Effect HR & Law, we take our commitment to clients seriously, being responsive to and anticipating client needs, with a standard of care, communication and respect that is rarely found in the age of technology.

Our clients benefit from our care and attention, as it allows them to maximize their organization's workplace potential and fulfill their mission, vision and values.

Lake Effect HR & Law, LLC  
[info@le-hrlaw.com](mailto:info@le-hrlaw.com) · 833-333-LAKE (5253)



# Partnering with the Community to Drive Inclusion and Diversity

For nearly 150 years, Kimberly-Clark has made a positive difference in the lives of the people who choose our products every day. It's because of the experiences, ideas, and passions of a diverse, talented workforce that the company is able to deliver innovative products and solutions to meet the evolving needs of consumers around the world.

Nearly ten years ago, the Kimberly-Clark team recognized the importance of inclusion and diversity in nurturing an environment where employees—and the broad perspectives they bring to work—enable the company to make better business decisions and enhance the experiences of its consumers. At that time, the company became one of the first in the consumer-packaged goods industry to launch a business strategy aimed at ensuring its workforce reflected the people who used and had yet to use its products.

For the last decade, Kimberly-Clark's focus has been on creating an environment where differences are valued, and where all employees are included and inspired to do their best, both at the office and in their communities. As a result, the company has more than doubled the number of women in senior management positions.

The Kimberly-Clark North America team has made the Fox Valley it's home since 1872 and has been able to shine a light on inclusion and diversity through unique employee experiences within its Neenah offices and the surrounding community.

One of these experiences included the opportunity to participate in the Check Your Blind Spots Unconscious Bias Bus tour, an initiative led by the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion™.

This opportunity allowed employees to learn about and explore ways to mitigate unconscious bias in their everyday lives through a series of immersive and interactive elements. These activities enabled participants to reflect on and address their own personal biases with the hope of driving inclusive behaviors and lasting change.

Kimberly-Clark also offers its employees access to Employee Resource Groups (ERGs); the company operates 60 chapters worldwide—10 in Neenah—that are open to all employees to join. These groups not only enhance members' personal and professional development, they promote awareness and bridge cultural gaps, building an inclusive and diverse culture throughout the company. Each group holds events throughout the year for those employees focused on education around the ERG mission. They also represent Kimberly-Clark within the community through engagement with nonprofits and volunteer activities.

Kimberly-Clark recognizes the need to be a community leader on the topic of inclusion and diversity and has been an active participant in leading the conversation through supported programs and events. The company is a leading supporter of the Imagine Fox Cities initiative, which gives light to







gaps in the community and provides support to those working to build a better, more inclusive Fox Cities. In 2019, Kimberly-Clark also worked with Civic Dinners to bring The Lovable City initiative to the Fox Valley. This initiative aims to start community conversations about the topic of belonging and connection, and Kimberly-Clark and Imagine Fox Cities are partnering to continue these conversations in 2020 and beyond.

Other community-focused initiatives include working with programs that recruit and train around capabilities ensuring people of all abilities have the opportunity to secure work and contribute and sponsoring the annual Juneteenth celebration that brings cultural education and awareness to the area.

As it embarks on a new decade, the Kimberly-Clark team is looking to continue its momentum and accelerate its inclusion and diversity progress both within the Fox Valley and around the world.



To learn more, visit [www.kimberly-clark.com/en/responsibility/diversity-and-inclusion](http://www.kimberly-clark.com/en/responsibility/diversity-and-inclusion)



# Goodwill NCW promotes diversity and inclusion through its mission

*Elevating People by Eliminating Barriers to Employment – that’s the mission of Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin (NCW). Goodwill NCW brings that mission to life by providing work and social skills training to individuals, including those with mental and physical disabilities, veterans, youth and older workers, to help build a strong foundation for long-term success in the workplace.*

## **JOB COACH OVERCOMES FEAR WITH INSPIRATION FROM THOSE SHE SERVES**

Beth Kirsch’s experience is an inspiring example of the impact Goodwill’s programs have on individuals. Beth has served as a job coach for the Employment and Training Program, which supports people with disabilities in finding and maintaining employment.

As someone who has her own challenges and fears, the Neenah woman knows firsthand what it is like to work with a disability.

“I’ve always been interested in the medical field,” Beth said. “Out of high school I was pre-med and went to Marquette. Then I developed a mental illness. It was really bad.

“Goodwill gave me a chance when everything in my life was going downhill. Forever I will be thankful for giving me a chance — a chance that helped change around my life forever.”

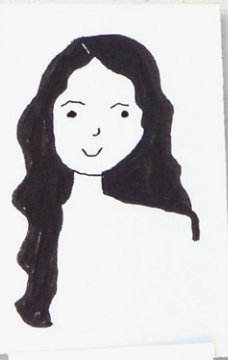
Beth continues to find strength in her first two consumers, whom she has worked with for her entire 14 years as a job coach.

One, who greets Beth with a hug every time, used to live at home with her father but now lives independently, thanks in part to Beth’s encouragement and guidance. The other “melts her heart” every time he says, “Beth, you’re cute.” He struggles to talk and to understand but always does what Beth asks of him.

“Not so long ago, people with disabilities weren’t allowed to work. And because of me and because of (job coaches), they are working, and they are making a difference in this world, too,” Beth said, addressing the digital skills gap.







Despite the advancements in technology, there's a digital skills gap in the United States. With the increase of artificial intelligence and machine learning, the digital skills gap only will continue to grow. Seeing the growing need and opportunity, Google.org is funding a grant to help regional Goodwills, like Goodwill NCW, across the country provide digital skills training to more than one million people. According to a September 2017 report by Burning Glass Technologies, 82% of middle-skill jobs — those jobs that require some postsecondary training but not a four-year degree — require some digital skills. Because of the digital skills gap, many job seekers will miss out on these well-paying jobs.

That is where Goodwill NCW and digital skills training come in.

“Through our Employment and Training Program, we advance our mission by helping individuals overcome barriers through digital skills training,” vocational coordinator David Foertsch said. “It is imperative that job seekers have a strong foundation of both digital and social skills to set them up to be successful for the jobs of today and tomorrow.”

Skills training can include everything from such basic computer skills as setting up a professional email address, using the Internet to apply for a job and knowing how to complete a timesheet to preparing for an interview and learning how to successfully interact with others on the job.

Many of us take these digital and social skills for granted, but a significant gap exists. However, resources are available to help set individuals up to be successful in today's workplace.

---

*The Employment and Training Program is a program of Goodwill NCW. For information on Goodwill NCW's digital and social skills training, contact David Foertsch at 920-213-0547. For more on job coaches, contact Kayla Courtney at 920-968-6881.*





# Creating A Place Where Everyone Belongs

As we enter our 75th year in business, it's fun to reflect back on how far Schreiber Foods has come since our humble beginnings as a small process cheese company in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Today, our team is more than 8,000 strong with operations in 11 different countries – all working toward our vision to be the best customer-brand food company in the world. We know that can't happen without providing safe food and doing business in a way that's good for our people, our communities and our earth. That makes our focus on diversity and inclusion is more important than ever.

## BEING MORE INTENTIONAL

In January 2016, we dedicated a position at our company to oversee our diversity and inclusion efforts and strategy. As part of this new position, it was important to create the business case and lay out a formal strategy to advance our diversity and inclusion efforts. We created three strategic priorities that closely link to our business strategy: Cultural and Gender Fluency, Attract and Develop Great People, and Measurement and Accountability.

A key part of our strategy was to launch business resource groups (BRGs), which are voluntary, partner-led groups that create a more engaged workforce and increase company value. We currently have seven BRGs: NOWBL (Network of Women Business Leaders), PRIDE (LGBTQ+), AADP (African American Dairy Professionals), MOSAIC (multi-cultural), genS (intergenerational), VETS (military, veterans, and their families), and ENABLED (individuals with disabilities and their caregivers). Our BRGs are inclusive to everyone; anyone can join. Ally-ship is an important aspect of our BRGs, as participation by those who do not identify as one of the group is critical to support learning and understanding in areas where they are underrepresented. You don't need to be one of to stand with.





## CELEBRATING PROGRESS

As part of our strategic priority “Measurement and Accountability,” we began quarterly Diversity and Inclusion dashboards, which are shared with our executives. At our corporate office, we have achieved gender balance (40/60% men/women ratio) at every level of the organization, except the executive level. The director level has seen a 44% improvement in gender balance over the last 6 years. We celebrate Heritage months, and our BRGs are involved in providing programming during those months. We also celebrate an annual Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Day, where we bring in a keynote speaker and invite community members to share in the conversation.

## ADVANCING D&I IN OUR COMMUNITY

Schreiber is committed to advancing diversity and inclusion efforts in our community, as well. We contribute both financial and people resources to many community organizations and programs.

Schreiber had a key role in helping to plan the 2020 Toward One Wisconsin Inclusivity Conference, and is also a corporate sponsor. We realize that creating inclusive communities is just as important as creating an inclusive workplace.

Schreiber was a proud recipient of the 2019 Wisconsin SHRM Diversity, Inclusion, and Workflex Advocate Award, and in 2018 we were honored to earn a designation as an Inclusion Index Company from Diversity Best Practices.

While we celebrate the achievements we have made, we also humbly recognize the journey we are on and are fully committed to continuing to advance our efforts within our company and our communities.

*Stephanie Vander Zanden, Diversity and Inclusion Director, Schreiber Foods*



Unequaled Creativity,  
Absolute Partnership:  
Game-Changing Advantages.

At von Briesen, we've transformed the traditional law firm into a modern platform for legal innovation.

Combining our industry leading expertise with innovative technology, we take a collaborative and creative approach to problem-solving the most complex matters.

The result? Game-changing advantages for our clients.



**von Briesen**

von Briesen & Roper, s.c. | Attorneys at Law

[vonbriesen.com](http://vonbriesen.com)

To learn more about our law firm, contact:

Susan E. Lovern, President & CEO, at [slovern@vonbriesen.com](mailto:slovern@vonbriesen.com).

For more information on the services and areas of expertise that we offer, visit [vonbriesen.com](http://vonbriesen.com)



# Committed to the People, Businesses and Communities it Serves

As the largest bank headquartered in Wisconsin with a nearly 160-year history, Associated Bank has built its legacy by supporting the individuals, families and businesses right here in the Midwest. We believe our success begins and ends with people. The establishment and nurturing of a culture where colleagues feel valued, respected and open to sharing ideas and perspectives is at the core of Associated Bank. An investment in the future of our colleagues is an investment in the future of our company.

## OUR COLLEAGUES

At Associated, we are fortunate to have diverse, committed teams of colleagues who are capable, determined and empowered to drive our company forward. We view the act of building and advancing an inclusive culture as a business imperative, critical to our success. Our results show in the words of our colleagues who have described our culture as diverse, inclusive and transparent in our past three annual workplace surveys.

Our talent brand captures why colleagues come to Associated and why they stay: strong connections, clear direction and real opportunities. These words capture the colleague experience at Associated and make it a desirable organization offering a distinctive workplace experience.

## OUR SUCCESS

Early on in our D&I journey we defined specific goals and measures of success to monitor our ongoing progress around workforce diversity, colleague engagement, supplier diversity, community outreach and more.

## SOME OF OUR SUCCESSES

- Supporting six colleague resource groups (CRGs) to create greater organizational awareness of and take specific actions to address the unique needs of diverse populations within our company and our markets.
- More than 43% of colleagues participated in one or more of the 21 regional chapters of the six CRG groups.
- Hosting the CEO Action Check Your Blind Spots Unconscious Bias Tour, created by the CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion™, for colleagues and over 30 community partners.
- Educating all colleagues on unconscious bias and 240+ leaders on D&I.
- Completing an all-colleague self-identification survey that illustrates the strength of diversity in our workforce to better understand needs for relevant communications strategies, training and management support.
- Establishing and achieving several workforce goals meant to attract and retain a more diverse and inclusive colleague population and bring more women and minorities into leadership roles to mirror the diversity of the communities we serve.





## 2019

- 60% of management-level hires were women or minorities
- 2.5% of hires were veterans
- 6.7% of our colleagues identified as an individual with a disability
- 32% of senior vice president positions were held by women
- 20% of board seats were held by women

## OUR COMMUNITY

One of the most important things we do to keep our company healthy and vibrant is to proactively support economic development within our communities. Our colleagues work in tandem with community leaders, nonprofit organizations, governmental entities and other community representatives to extend our reach into underserved markets and to ensure our coordinated efforts support the most important economic development issues in the markets we serve.

This work is extended by our colleagues who volunteer their time and expertise in the communities we serve. In 2019, more than 67,000 hours of volunteer time, worth \$1.7 million, were provided.

## OUR COMMITMENT

Associated offers a wide array of benefits focused on the unique needs of colleagues at all stages of life including adoption and fertility assistance, military duty and deployment trip benefits, an employee stock purchase plan, purchased paid time off, paid volunteer time off, backup child and adult care, medical second opinion and long-term care insurance.

We offer several well-being programs and incentives to engage colleagues and encourage physical and mental health. We believe that offering individual health coaching, biometric screening, quarterly incentives through an online platform, regular well-being presentations and annual fitness-related reimbursements not only helps our colleagues live better, it improves colleague satisfaction and retention.



# Putting People First: Diversity & Inclusion at Oshkosh Corporation

In the Oshkosh family, people are everything. The Company focuses on core values of being better together, putting people first, preserving and doing the right thing. No surprise, the Company's culture is focused on putting people first and its humble beginnings are based on people who dared to do things differently. Founded in 1917, Oshkosh has been innovating and manufacturing equipment for more than a century that help build, serve and protect communities around the world. Headquartered in Oshkosh, Wis., the Company grew to 15,000 team members around the world all with a focus on making a difference in the lives of others.

As a Fortune 500 company with a strong global presence, diversity and inclusion is more than just text on a website; it's how the Company does business. Like everything else at Oshkosh, creating a diverse and inclusive workplace and environment starts with people - engaging them and giving them a voice. This was heard loud and clear in team member surveys, focus groups and more. A voice to make a difference, to grow the business and to focus on the future. In short, the Company focuses on engaging, developing and connecting team members.

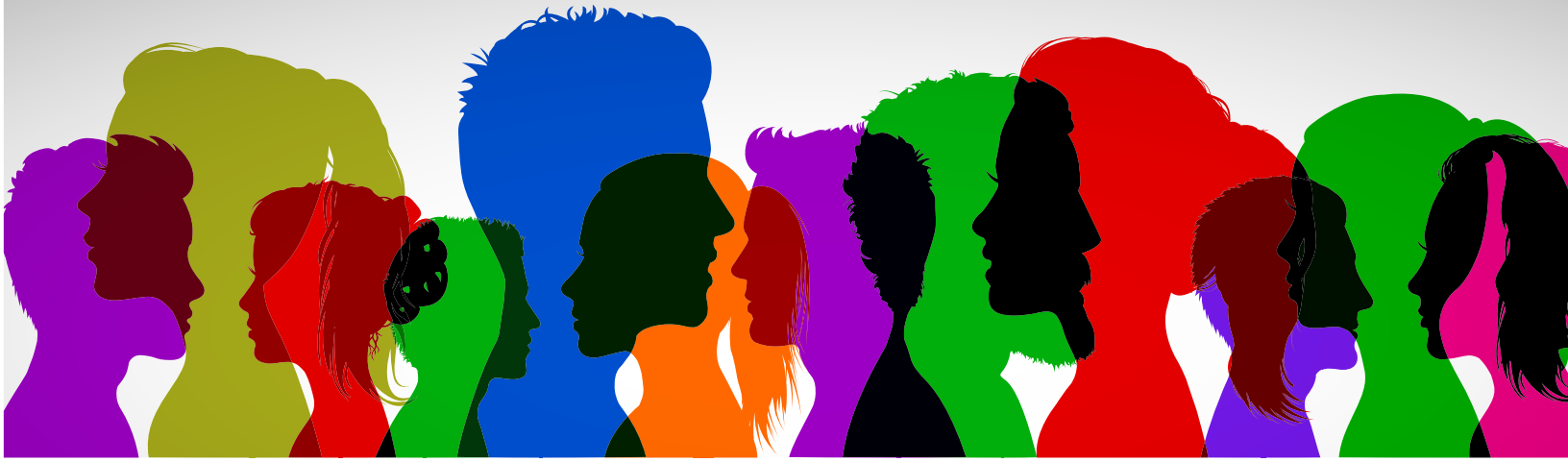
## ENGAGE

In 2014, the Company launched its first employee business resource group (EBRG), the Oshkosh women's network. Focused on giving women an avenue to strengthen personal and professional development and connect with other women, the group quickly grew in size and eventually expanded to other areas of the Company. Building off that foundation, Oshkosh launched a military network to support and connect veterans as well as those team members still serving. Like the women's network, the military network quickly grew and began outreach at other locations within the Company. More recently, a young professionals network was formed to help empower and connect young professionals within the organization.

Employee business resources groups play a critical role in supporting broadening diversity and inclusion at the Company. The groups offer team members the opportunity to work closely with leaders to expand professional networks, strengthen leadership development, and engage in community activities. The impact and results from these groups has been so overwhelming that the Company recently formed an abilities network, intergenerational, and will soon be establishing an intercultural network.







## DEVELOP

As Oshkosh prepares for the future and continues to build a diverse and inclusive workforce, Oshkosh has continued to get creative with attracting and retaining talented team members. As an example, the Company developed strong partnerships with community and school organizations at all levels to truly understand the needs of the community and work collaboratively to develop solutions to support those needs.

At the Company's Commercial business headquarters in Dodge Center, Minn., the Company has attracted and upskilled more than 100 team members who came from very different backgrounds than manufacturing, such as culinary arts. In fact, the Company is even training high school students through classrooms in manufacturing facilities where students can get high school credit, as well as apprenticeships, co-ops and post high school opportunities. These diverse backgrounds ensure the Company will be well-positioned for the future.

Additionally, the Company has a robust training program to ensure team members have opportunities to be more aware of themselves, those they interact with and how they can be part of creating an inclusive environment where everyone benefits. The Company has also created experiences where team members can understand the diversity and bias in themselves, their communities and use that information to make themselves stronger leaders and citizens.

## CONNECT

Connecting team members to the communities where we work and live has been another important aspect of Oshkosh's diversity and inclusion strategy. The Company promotes team members to take part in community nonprofits whether volunteering or serving on their boards as way to strengthen communities and give back. Additionally, Oshkosh is always looking for ways to build relationships to create a more inclusive workplace.

As an example, Oshkosh has partnered with the U.S. Chamber Fellowship program to transition service members into purposeful civilian jobs. Additionally, with the high demand for engineers, Oshkosh and the young professional network collaborated to develop an experience day to bring female engineers who participated in the Society of Women Engineers Annual Conference to some of the Company's locations to better understand what it would be like to work and live in the area. Oshkosh plans to continue to develop more of these relationships to create a more diverse and inclusive culture.

Looking to the future, Oshkosh will continue to engage, develop and connect team members to help create a more diverse and inclusive workforce. With more than 15,000 team members all focused on making a difference on the lives of others, diversity and inclusion will continue to support the Company's goals and strategic initiatives.

---

For more about our People First culture, visit [www.oshkoshcorp.com/story/diversity](http://www.oshkoshcorp.com/story/diversity).



# U.S. Venture: Committed to Finding a Better Way for People to Power our Purpose

U.S. Venture, Inc., headquartered in Appleton, is Wisconsin's 5th largest privately held company, and is a leading provider of transportation products and insight driving the world forward. Through our six divisions, U.S. Oil, U.S. AutoForce, U.S. Gain, U.S. Lubricants, Breakthrough, and IGEN, U.S. Venture delivers innovative solutions that give our customers a competitive edge. We recognize that our success is due to an energetic and engaging culture shaped by our differentiating values: Caring Relationships, Entrepreneurial Spirit, Strategic Foresight, and High Performance. These values are not just conceptual ideals, they are foundational principles we live by which fuel our purpose of "Finding a Better Way". In everything we do, we put people first, and we are deeply committed to building a more inclusive workplace by finding new ways to champion acceptance and equality for all team members. We work to identify new ways to overcome biases, appreciate different cultures, encourage diverse points of view, and remove barriers team members may experience.

Central to U.S. Venture's work to create a culture of inclusion is education. In the past year, over 60% of USV team members have gone through introductory diversity and inclusion training to begin to establish a common language surrounding D&I,

to learn more about our differences, and to recognize that we all have biases. Additionally, "fostering an inclusive work environment" has become a central and essential component of our internal frontline manager training program. Participants are educated on multiple and intersecting identities, bias, and how to proactively build inclusive spaces. This education includes an individual assessment component; one of which evaluates how managers handle a team member making a biased comment. Mental health awareness education has also been a key initiative at U.S. Venture. Managers across the organization have received training on mental health conditions, discussed stigma surrounding mental health issues, how to recognize signs of a mental health crisis, and how to refer a team member in crisis to resources available through our employee assistance program (EAP).

Last year, U.S. Venture launched a podcast designed to provide an opportunity for team members to hear business updates, learn about important topics and happenings, and to foster connections across our business divisions and locations. Since its launch, two of the monthly episodes have focused on diversity and inclusion. The first included a discussion with USV board member, Janet Zelenka, about female leadership in male dominated industries,



gender norms, thinking strategically about growing a diverse workforce, and the importance of making sure all voices are heard. The second featured the U.S. Venture Open's 2018 guest of honor, Michael Phelps, as well as several U.S. Venture team members candidly sharing their experiences living with mental health issues. The episode was designed to break down stigmas and open a dialogue among team members about challenges, and most importantly, surviving mental illness. Highlighting team member stories was also an output of our recent "Stand Up and Be Counted Campaign". Individuals openly shared their stories on our intranet site and within other internal communications about their experiences living with disabilities, experiences with biases surrounding sexual orientation, and other related experiences, thus bringing discussion surrounding D&I topics into the spotlight in a tangible way among team members.

U.S. Venture recruitment strategies are also specifically designed to maximize the potential of attracting diverse candidates. We partner closely with a nationwide network of over 15,000 local community organizations to promote our open positions to diverse talent pools including women, minorities, older workers, individuals with disabilities, veterans,

and members of the LGBTQ community. This past fall, we also expanded our college campus recruitment strategy to specifically connect with students with diverse backgrounds, and we attend local and regional diverse hiring events sponsored by local organizations.

While we are proud of the work that has been done to support diversity and inclusion at U.S. Venture, we recognize that there is always more progress to be made. As we continue to grow as an organization, we challenge ourselves to look for new ways to build our culture of inclusion, and to lead in the development of clear strategies to continue to expand the diversity of our workforce. We believe that our best foundation for success lies in cultivation of a work environment where we can all be true to who we are, and where it is recognized that our differences bring valuable perspectives to the table which collectively strengthen us. Our hard-earned success is rooted in a deep commitment to our people first culture, and as we look to the future, our will to stand by the values and beliefs that make U.S. Venture uniquely US will remain unstoppable.

---

[www.usventure.com](http://www.usventure.com)





# The House That Diversity Built

## Imagine if I wanted to build a new house for you?

I would invite people from my network or likely referrals from my colleagues: construction companies, builders, electricians, plumbers, and the like to the table.

These experts would likely look like me because my network, not unlike yours, is a mirror of myself.

My team and I intend to do a great thing, to help our fellow man, to create a safe space for you.

So, we go to work. We begin to design your new home.

These well-meaning co-conspirators and I lend our expertise to the process, and we forge ahead, knowing that we have the right team of thought leaders in place to ensure that we employ the best practices during the construction process.

A year and a half later, the house we imagined is complete, and we gather at the site to show you the results of our hard work.

You are appreciative of our efforts and move into the house, but after a short time, you move out. You quickly realize that those specifications of the house, the location, or the community stifle your ability to be your authentic self.

My team and I are upset. After all, we have done our best work. We label you unappreciative and difficult. We vow never to gift a house to anyone like you because our efforts were in vain.

This analogy depicts how many institutions approach diversity initiatives.

In most institutions, diversity programs are primarily created by and led by White people in leadership within the organization who come together to create a strategy to attract and retain People of Color (POC).

Frequently, not only do these attempts fail to retain the POC that we say we want on our teams, but it hinders our ability to attract them in the first place. Why? Because POC are not the designers.

There is a great quote that reads, “Nothing for us without us is about us.”

Keep this in mind. It is the best way to create a successfully culturally-sensitive diversity initiative.

---

*Tracey Robertson is the Cofounder, and Executive Director of Fit Oshkosh, Inc. Fit Oshkosh is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in Oshkosh, WI that provides intercultural competence consulting, training, and support to organizations across the United States and Canada.*



At Fit Oshkosh,  
we encourage our  
clients to co-create  
their diversity  
initiatives.

Here are just four tips for  
co-creating an impactful  
diversity strategy:

**1** | Invite several representatives from the POC demographic that you are attempting to “include” to be at the table from the start. Too often, we wait until the idea has come to fruition before getting feedback from the POC we want to attract. Having these specialists inform the process is key to its success.

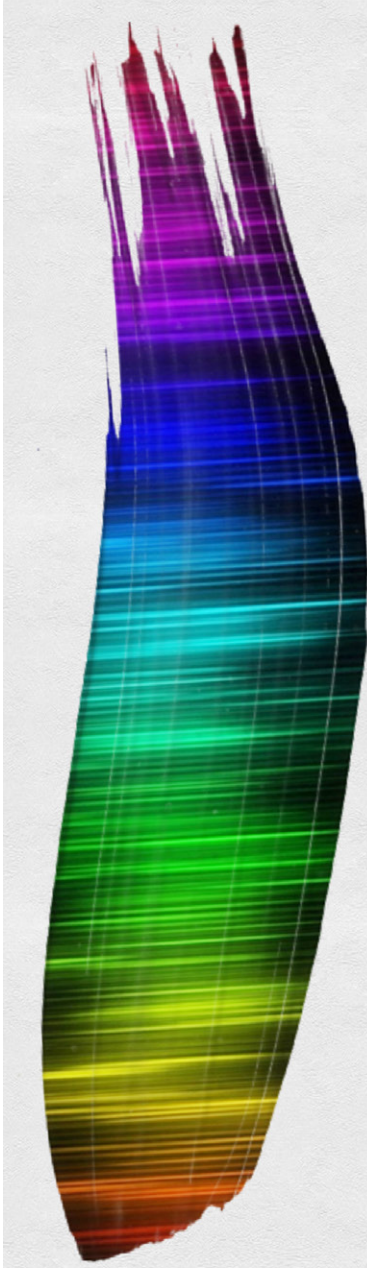
**2** | Compensate POC for their expertise. The White experts at the table are likely to be compensated. POC experts should be paid for their knowledge, as well.

**3** | Understand the team’s capacity to be part of the conversation in the first place. Examine your own biases before leading the work. Have your team complete an assessment, like the Intercultural Development Inventory™ that Fit Oshkosh offers, to understand your own intercultural gaps.

**4** | Listen and believe the experiences of others, especially POC. This is a crucial group agreement that Fit Oshkosh trainers use in our work. Having POC at the table is just the first step. Understanding that they are the experts of their experiences and deferring to them is the next.




INSPIRE AND ENGAGE  
PROFESSIONALS ACROSS  
THE FOX VALLEY TO THINK  
STRATEGICALLY ABOUT MANAGING,  
ENGAGING, AND RETAINING  
HUMAN CAPITAL.



A vertical graphic on the left side of the advertisement, featuring a rainbow spectrum of colors (red, orange, yellow, green, cyan, blue, purple) that transitions into a dark, textured shape resembling a feather or a stylized human figure.

A commitment  
to diversity and  
inclusion through  
impactful and  
empowering  
hiring practices.

 **Employment  
Resource  
GROUP, INC.**  
The Right Person. Right Now.

3100 N Ballard Rd. Appleton, WI. 54911  
ergsearch.com 920.996.9700

# Human Resource Management Consultants

Recruiting

HR Consulting

Talent Development

Assessments & Employee Surveys

Career Transition / Outplacement Services



## THE H.S. GROUP

A CAREER PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL FIRM

*We know people. We know business.*

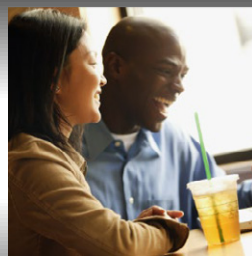
*We have solutions.*

thehsgroup.com

920.432.7444

# more YOU in NEW

NORTHEAST WISCONSIN



The New North recognizes that diversity is crucial to its economic development. We take pride in celebrating all members within our businesses and communities.

We promote strategies that leverage every person's assets and foster an environment where everyone achieves their full potential.



New North, Inc. | 600 N. Adams St., Green Bay, WI 54307 | Ph. 920-336-3860 | [www.thenewnorth.com](http://www.thenewnorth.com)

