Veterans Matter
The Value of Inclusion

Tech Trends

Turning Content Channels Into Cash

Social Media Workplace Risks

Connecting Innovative Women and Diverse Companies to Corporate America and the Government Through Supplier Diversity MAGAZINE

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Opportunities in The

Supplier Opportunities in The Energy Industry

Energy Independence

Business Opportunities

Taming the Wild West

Equals Exciting New

Supplier and Small

Energy Production

of Renewable

Energy Industry

Thinking Beyond
Utilities to Find

A New Era of

Sustainability Reporting

Transparency & Accountability are Basic Tenets of Sustainability Reporting

Still Evolving: Meeting the Challenges of Non-Financial Disclosure

Generating Value with Sustainability Reporting



Energy Management

Operational



Product Stewardship

Carbon



Sustainability Reporting



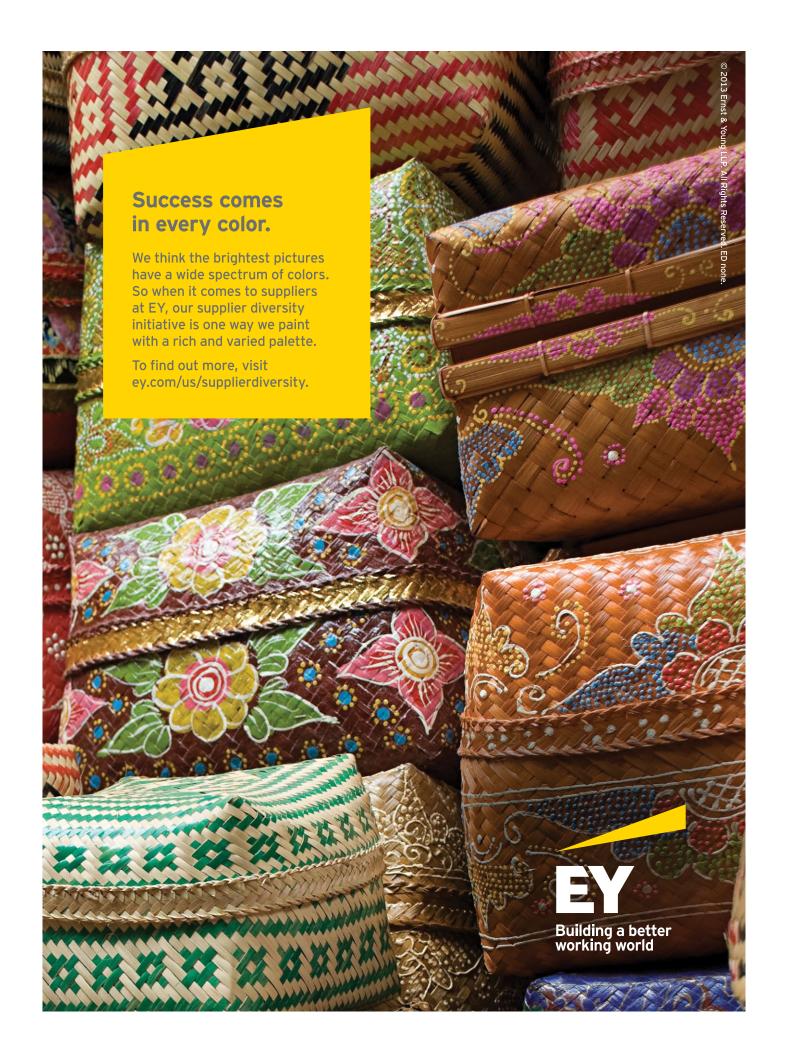
United Rentals

Supplier Diversity Program Customized to Canadian Needs

Striving for Perfection:

Nulogy

Delivers Perfect Order Solutions to Kellogg Co.



Contents



TRENDS & ISSUES - I

Transparency & Accountability are Basic Tenets of Sustainability Reporting



TRENDS & ISSUES - II

Generating Value with Sustainability Reporting



TRENDS & ISSUES - III

Still Evolving: Meeting the Challenges of Non-Financial Disclosure

DiversityPlus

7 **EDITORIAL**

Preserving the Gains of Minority Businesses through Grassroots Community Action

OP-ED 8

"Technology, the Consumer, and the New MBE"

10 **BRIEFS**

PSEG Spends Record Level in 2016 With Diverse Suppliers Pg-10

Equal Pay Would Cut the Poverty Rate for Children with a Working Mother by Half Pg-11

UChicago to Expand Diversity and Local Employment on Construction Projects Pg-12



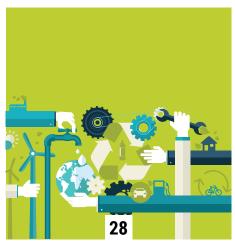
SPECIAL FEATURE

United Rentals Supplier Diversity Program Customized to Canadian Needs

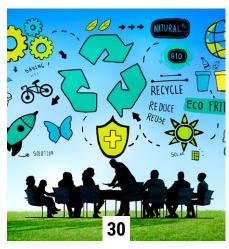
Jontents

VOL. 14 | NO. 2

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ENERGY INDUSTRY - I, II & III



Thinking Beyond Utilities to Find Supplier Opportunities in The **Energy Industry**



Energy Independence Equals Exciting New Supplier and Small Business Opportunities



Taming the Wild West of Renewable Energy Production

26 **MINORITY SPOTLIGHT**

Striving for Perfection: Nulogy Delivers Perfect Order Solutions to Kellogg Co.

34 **DISABILITY WORKS**

Cultivating Inclusion of People with Disabilities Around the World

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT 36

Moving Away From Performance Reviews to Performance Management

VETERANS MATTER 38

Communicating the Value of Inclusion of Veterans with Disabilities

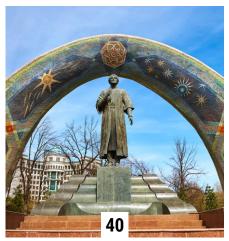
40 **GLOBAL INVEST**

Tajikistan Has an Economy on the Move









DiversityPlus







42 **COACHING**

Executive Coaching Evolves: Now More Personal, Focused and Future-Oriented Than Ever

44 **TECH TRENDS**

Turning Content Channels Into Cash: How Minority Suppliers Can Use Dedicated Content Channels to Raise Awareness, Grow Their Reputations and Boost Sales

46 **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Getting Ahead of the Social Media Risks in the Workplace

48 **ECO-TRAVEL**

A Worldly Escape to the Principality of Liechtenstein

50 **DELICIOUS DIVERSITY**

Tiny Nation of Comoros Serves Up World's Best Food

52 DIVERSITY NEWS

New Report Highlights Job Opportunities in Green Infrastructure - Pg 52

Small Business Confidence in the Economy Jumps 21 Percent in Six Months, According to Bank of America Survey of Small Business Owners - Pg 53

54 **PEOPLE & PLACES**

57 **GOLF & STRATEGY**

What Corporations Can Learn About Longevity From Pro Golfers







Read the magazine that Global Supplier Diversity Executives, MWBEs, Supply Chain and Procurement Professionals go to for innovative ideas.









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DiversityPlus Magazine's primary mission is to bring cutting edge information to thoughtful corporate supplier diversity executives and diverse businesses to help create an environment for more contract opportunities. Equally important, is for corporations to understand the importance of helping their most innovative minority suppliers build scale and become sustainable over the long term.

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Preserving the Gains of Minority Businesses through Grassroots Community Action

resident Trump's proposed budget slashes funding for a number of agencies, and one of them is the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). He campaigned on a platform that included reducing the size of the federal government, and cutting spending is one tactic. The MBDA is slated for a \$32 million spending reduction. The justification for the cut is that other federal agencies like the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers similar services through its small business development centers.

However, the SBA is also budgeted for a 5 percent reduction which would cascade into millions of dollars in reductions in community focused grants for small business services like education and business development. Since two-thirds of new jobs are created by small businesses, it seems paradoxical that the MBDA and SBA face such large cuts since President Trump is focused on increasing the rate of economic growth. It is also paradoxical because minority owned businesses - specifically those owned by African-Americans - are one of the fastest growing business segments.

The MBDA and SBA are doing all they can to get the message across to Congress that reduced spending will slow down economic growth and harm communities. There are thousands of entrepreneurs and small businesses that need the support services the MBDA and SBA provide. Fortunately, the 'power of the purse'

belongs to Congress, so President Trump cannot act unilaterally. However, it will take more than these two organizations to make a convincing argument for restoring or increasing the MBDA and SBA budgets as a way to accelerate economic growth. It is our belief that grassroots communities can join together to create a powerful voice that Congress can hear and pay attention to.

Community organizing is a process in which constituencies join together to identify a problem and develop concrete solutions. One approach is for community MWBE entrepreneurs to join together locally, followed by outreaching to other such groups across the nation. The local groups can then work through their district senators and representatives to present solutions. It is important to have specific metrics that address the community impacts of the budget reductions. In many communities there are also local grassroots organizations offering community services to local minority populations like housing and workforce training, and they are directly impacted by MBDA and SBA spending cuts. If they banded together with local business organizations to become one voice, instead of separate ones, a louder message can be sent to local government representatives.

Another approach is for minority entrepreneurs to enlist the aid of corporations who rely on MWBEs for innovation and diversity in their supply chains. The MWBEs enable corporations to meet federal bid re-

guirements for diversity spend and to meet goals once contracts are signed. Slowing the growth of MWBEs hurts the large corporations, as well as small businesses. That message can easily be overlooked unless local community organizations, backed by corporations operating in their areas, deliver an accounting of the impacts of cuts.

There are other ways to fight budget cuts. They include petitions, sending community activists to Washington D.C. to meet with offices that are touchpoints for grassroots organizations, and getting community members to contact their representatives. One of the challenges of taking on the federal government is its sheer size and complexity. The Congress people who work on the budget need to clearly understand the full impact of their cuts. The SBA may assist minority entrepreneurs now, but do they understand how many entrepreneurs are not being served under the existing budget? Do they understand the direct community impacts in their districts in terms of things like lost employment opportunities and lack of services in minority communities? That is the final paradox. Congress often talks about uplifting diverse communities and neighborhoods, and the ideal way to do that is to encourage growth in the number of MWBEs.

There is a lot of work to do, and the first step is developing a grassroots strategy to create a loud voice. United people have much more power than individuals to bring change. There is still time to fight the budget cuts, meaning it is time to get busy.

"Technology, the Consumer, and the New MBE"

hen I awake every morning, I ask Alexa for a weather report, a report on the Yankee game the night before, and a news summary from National Public Radio. No, Alexa is not my wife, and I am not a polygamist with a wife and a super informed personal assistant. Alexa is one of the many new home electronic devices that respond to voice commands, it (she) can answer an assortment of questions, turn off the lights, give a summary of my calendar, entertain me with music of my choice, and place an order for some dog treats. My wife should be concerned!

If someone told me this was going to be a reality 20 years ago, I would not have believed them. Technology is changing rapidly and with these changes come challenges and opportunities, for all firms, particularly minority firms. If things have changed this much over the last 20 years, imagine what the next twenty years will look like. Because of the rapidity and consistency of these technological changes, firms have develop strategies to leverage today's technology so that they will not be left behind tomorrow.



Dr. Fred McKinney, Ph.D. Managing Director, MBE Programs, Tuck School of Business - Dartmouth College

Technology is changing every aspect of business. In general, it is breaking down all of the old assumptions about what is needed to be successful. However, despite these changes, there are some constants that remain even though technology exacerbates and amplifies these conditions. An example of this is the role that price plays in consumer decision making. Economists look at the competitiveness of a market based on the cost of price and quality information and the "ease of entry" by suppliers. When consumers have "perfect" knowledge (and it's free) about market conditions, and it is easy for entrepreneurs to enter a market, prices, in general will be as low as they can be to sustain the firms in the industry. Industries that were once opaque when it came to knowing the prices of alternatives are now crystal clear to any consumer with internet access. This is great for consumers, but makes it difficult for suppliers that are one of many choices consumers have.

But technological change in the hands of creative well financed entrepreneurs can generate outsized profits, at least in the short-term. Entrepreneurs and companies are reactive as well as creative. Firms do learn, through reverse engineering, or by hook or crook. When they do, what was once a technological advantage and source of short-term monopoly profits, becomes commoditized. Being copied however is no reason to stand pat and do nothing.

Minority entrepreneurs, more than any time in history, can use their creative genius and technology to create new products and services, new markets, and new ways of producing goods and services. But minority entrepreneurs need to take the time to embrace technology as a consumer, and as a supplier. I know with a fair degree of certainty that technology can and will be used to solve significant problems facing low-income minority communities. Problems like the "achievement gap"

in public education between minority and non-minority students has a technological solution. Homelessness and near homelessness has a technological solution in a world of hundreds of millions of square feet of empty commercial space and unused shipping containers. The food deserts that plague low-income communities has a technological solution. Residents in these neighborhoods are only a click away from fresh and inexpensive fruits and vegetables. The lack of capital for minority entrepreneurs has a technological solution that brings together sources of scarce capital with minority entrepreneurs. The lower health status found in low-income communities has a technological solution. (A recent study in two contiguous Boston neighborhoods found that life expectancy differs by over 15 years.)

All of these technological solutions are also business opportunities for MBEs.

In 2015, Tuck introduced the Digital Excellence Program for Minority Entrepreneurs. The program collaborates with Google to bring the latest business technologies to diverse entrepreneurs. But we have learned, and we teach that technology is not just bells and whistles. Successful companies need to have a technology strategy. This strategy looks at the hardware, the software and importantly, the market the firm is trying to serve with that technology. Having a "bangin" website and being a master of social media is a great first step, but this is more of a necessary condition as opposed to a sufficient condition for success. Our program works with diverse entrepreneurs to understand the necessary conditions, and we stress the importance of strategy which separates the great firms from everyone else.

When it comes to technology, age is not an excuse. You are never too old to learn. I recommend all diverse entrepreneurs get the help they need to get to the "bleeding" edge of technology in their industry as fast as possible. If you don't get there, you might find yourself a relic of the past. The "new" MBE will solve the personal, social and business problems we face, and everyone benefits using cutting edge technology. Now, if only I could get Alexa to cook dinner.

When it comes to supplier diversity, CVS Health continues to excel.



Leadership Commitment

"Our ability to deliver innovative, high quality health and pharmacy services to our customers and communities is closely tied to our partnerships with diverse suppliers and diverse-owned pharmacies. Reflecting the diversity of our colleagues, customers and communities in our supplier base is the responsibility of every colleague at CVS Health with purchasing authority." — Larry J. Merlo, CEO CVS Health



Educational Assistance

CVS Health in partnership with Roger Williams University launch the Executive Learning Series for a 2nd year with 15 participants.



Business - Building Events

10+ events, 300+ meetings between decision makers and suppliers, total of 900+ participants.



2,000 Small Business Diverse Suppliers

Find more information about how the CVS Health Supplier Diversity Program is shaping the future of health care at www.cvshealthsupplierdiversity.com.



PSEG Spends Record Level in 2016 With Diverse Suppliers

NEWARK, N.J.

Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) recently hosted its 11th annual Supplier Diversity Procurement Fair at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark, connecting New Jersey's diverse business community with the state's largest utilities. The event provides attendees the opportunity to network with prospective clients looking for specific products and services.

PSEG's Supplier Diversity Program achieved record results in 2016 with \$472 million or 17 percent of PSEG's total supplier spend directed at minority-, women- and veteran-owned businesses, according to Derek DiRisio, president of PSEG Services Corporation. The company also helped the New Jersey economy in 2016 by spending nearly \$2 billion with other New Jersey-based firms.

"Our spending with diverse suppliers in 2016 was almost \$200 million more than we spent just two years earlier," DiRisio said. "Our partnerships with diverse suppliers are critical to our company's competitiveness, our quality and, ultimately, our success. Supplier diversity has been a part of the PSEG culture for more than 25 years, and we're proud that we've been able to do more with this business community than ever before – and that is reflected in our numbers."



Dream Big Eads Event to Inspire Rural Colorado Youth into STEM Careers

DENVER

he Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) will host over 250 students from 12 southeastern Colorado school districts for the second annual Dream Big Event at Eads High School in Eads. Colo.

The event will connect rural students with industry leaders and professors from Colorado's top technology companies and universities in order to increase students' exposure and interest in pursuing careers in STEM-related fields through hands-on demonstrations and interactive activities.

"The Dream Big Event is designed to introduce students to industries like aerospace or cybersecurity that they might not know of or understand," said Colorado's aerospace and defense industry champion Jay Lindell. "We want to inspire the students to dream big about the infinite opportunities they



have to improve our world through STEM careers."

During the event, students will be divided into groups and rotate through five inspiring technology learning areas that will include engaging presentations, hands-on demonstrations and interactive activities. Students will also have the opportunity to take a virtual trip to Mars courtesy of the Challenger Learning Center, fly assisted in a Cessna 182 aircraft courtesy of Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, and experience the Internet of Things in the NXP Smarter World Tour Mobile Station with 180 technology demos.

AT&T Enhances Efforts to Attract, Retain More Military Veterans



DALLAS

T&T is enhancing its efforts to help veterans moving from a military to civilian career. AT&T has hired more than 13,000 veterans since 2013, and it is bolstering military recruiting and retention plans with a goal to hire a total of 20,000 veterans by

2020. About 65 percent of AT&T veteran new hires go into technician roles.

"Veterans have a unique combination of self-discipline, teamwork and skills they developed through military service," said Rick Wilson, director-diversity & inclusion, AT&T. "These allow for a successful transition to a career with AT&T, where many of those values are part of our culture. We've made great strides in veteran recruiting. Now we're growing efforts to retain the veterans hired."

The AT&T Veterans employee resource group (ERG) this spring is launching a pilot program to support the transition of new hires into AT&T. The program aims to familiarize vets with AT&T culture – and its similarities and differences from the military culture. Pilot topics will range from chain-of-command to awards and recognition.

Pennsylvania Small Business Wins SBA's 2017 Exporter of the Year Award

WASHINGTON, D.C.

bram's Bed LLC, doing business as The Safety Sleeper™, has been named Small Business Exporter of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Pittsburgh-based company will be officially recognized during National Small Business Week, an annual event honoring the accomplishments and contributions of the best small businesses in the nation.

The award will be presented by SBA Administrator Linda McMahon on May 1, during a luncheon held at the U.S. Insti-



tute of Peace, in Washington, D.C. Rose Morris, Abram's Bed LLC's president and inventor of The Safety Sleeper™, will receive the award on behalf of her company.

A mother of three, Morris struggled

BMW GROUP Plant Spartanburg with finding solutions to protect her middle son Abram, who is on the autism spectrum, as he faced nights of fitful and erratic sleep. Her determination to help her then toddler-aged son lead a healthy life was the inspiration to invent The Safety SleeperTM, a lightweight tentlike structure that is placed on top of the bed, and includes padding and an air mattress.

Morris established Abram's Bed LLC in 2009. The business grew, thanks to counseling from the local SCORE and the Small Business Development Center at Duquesne University. The Safety Sleeper™ underwent design modifications done by engineering students at the University of Pittsburgh and now offers additional features such as an extra safety zipper system, an enclosed mattress to protect against entrapment, fire retardant material, stabilizing straps to prevent tipping, and frame pads.

TD Names Kelley Cornish Head of U.S. Diversity and Inclusion

CHERRY HILL, N.J.

o further its deep commitment to sustaining a diverse and inclusive culture, TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank®, has named Kelley Cornish head of U.S. diversity and inclusion.

Cornish will leverage her expertise as a senior talent executive, speaker and author to provide insight, advice and intelligence to support the integration of diversity and inclusion across the bank. Working with senior-level executives as part of the Bank's Diversity Leadership team (DLT), she will support the DLT, its subcommittees and councils, along with key partners inside and outside the bank to drive strategic efforts that enhance TD Bank's commitment to sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce and customer experience.

"TD Bank is deeply committed to integrating diversity and inclusion into everything we do – from fostering an inclusive environment for our customers to hiring top talent that reflects our diverse communities," said Beth Webster, EVP, human resources, TD Bank. "Kelley will enable us to strengthen our leadership in this area and to bring social purpose to life."



UChicago to Expand Diversity and Local Employment on Construction **Projects**

CHICAGO, IL

he University of Chicago and the University of Chicago Medical Center are expanding their efforts to increase the participation of minorities, women and local residents in construction projects, creating more ambitious workforce diversity goals and developing a new mentor-protégé program.

The University is increasing its goal for the participation of certified minority-owned contracting firms from 25 percent to 35 percent, in line with the Medical Center's goal. The University and the Medical Center are increasing the goal for certified women-owned firms from 5 percent to 6 percent and raising the Chicago residency goal for on-site construction workers to 40 percent. The changes will increase construction workforce diversity and align the University and Medical Center with the same goals.

The University and the Medical Center also will work together to develop a mentor-protégé program to help smaller minority- and women-owned contracting firms gain technical and administrative expertise that will enable them to successfully compete for construction projects at UChicago and elsewhere. The new goals will apply to projects bid after March 15, 2017. The mentor-protégé program is expected to begin in the coming months.



IBM Study: Empowering Women's Success in Technology Requires Inclusion

ARMONK, N.Y.

ccording to a new study by IBM (NYSE: IBM) and the Boston College Center of Work & Family, opportunities for women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are driven by inclusion across career environments, empowerment to think freely, and the ability for women to bring their "whole selves" to

The case study, "Empowering Women's Success in Technology, IBM's Commitment to Inclusion," outlines how IBM brings women in STEM together for development opportunities, provides them resources to advance their careers and share best practices across the industry.

IBM has a long history of supporting women in the workplace, which started in 1899 when the company hired its first female employee. The study shows how IBM links its culture to growing and



supporting an inclusive work environment to create a culture where women in technology can thrive and succeed.

"IBM has relentlessly focused on building and fostering an inclusive career environment," said Lindsay-Rae McIntyre, Chief Diversity Officer, IBM. "We remain committed to creating a supportive career environment that offers IBMers the resources to progress in their careers and fulfill the company's purpose."

UN Calls For Recognizing The Rights Of People With Autism To Make **Their Own Decisions**

NEW YORK, USA

he United Nations called for recognizing the rights of people with the spectrum neurological condition, which is believed to affect 70 million people around the world.

"Let us ensure that we make available the necessary accommodations and support to persons with autism, Secretary-General António Guterres said in his message for the Day."

"With access to the support they need and choose, they will be empowered to face the key milestones in every person's life," he added, making decisions such as where and with whom to live, what type of work to pursue and

how to manage their personal financ-

One in 160 children has an autism spectrum disorder, according to estimates by the UN World Health Organization (WHO), Around the world, one per cent of the entire population - possibly two per cent – is on the spectrum.

In a special event in New York ahead of the Day, marked annually on 2 April, the UN and the international community gathered to renew their commitment to raising awareness about autism and the need for people with the disorder to have equal opportunity and full participation in society on equal basis with other citizens.

The Best and Brightest Have Many Faces — You'll See These Faces in Our Business Network

Outreach to the multicultural business community is how we get the best. It's also how we earned the right to be called the "Top Agency for Multicultural Business Opportunities." Our business partners, like us, strive for economic growth, prosperity, and sustainability. To gain access to business opportunities, visit us at www.usps.com or write business@usps.gov.

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UNITED RENTALS SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM CUSTOMIZED TO CANADIAN NEEDS

United Rentals has taken the lead in developing a Supplier Diversity Program in Canada. Its remarkable success is attributed to excellent communication with suppliers, an amazing leadership team, and a strong belief that diversity is key to sustaining a competitive position.



BY JILL MOTLEY

nited Rentals is a leader in supplier diversity and has taken the program to 49 U.S. states and 10 Canadian provinces. There is one supplier diversity program headed by Jamie Crump, director of strategic sourcing and supplier diversity. The goal is the same in both countries: Engaging the best diverse suppliers who can bring innovation and value to United Rentals, increasing competitiveness and responsiveness to customers. Yet, there are cultural differences between the U.S. and Canada, so Crump was challenged with tailoring solutions that meet the specific needs of Canadian businesses and customers. She developed a mix of strategies that include partnering with diversity organizations, giving businesses in different regions room to develop unique solutions, and focusing on the Return on Investment (ROI) of suppliers.

Just for Canada

"The U.S. gave us a template for expanding supplier diversity into other areas," says Crump, "but the key to success in Canada is tailoring solutions that fit Canada's culture and different geographic and business needs." United Rentals (UR) is the largest equipment rental company in the world, and a critical factor for organizational success is the development of a supply chain consisting of suppliers who are viewed as partners. Crump looks for suppliers who work well within



Jamie Crump, Director, Strategic Sourcing & Supplier Diversity at United Rentals



THE U.S. GAVE
US A TEMPLATE
FOR EXPANDING
SUPPLIER
DIVERSITY INTO
OTHER AREAS.

the organizational and geographic culture, are flexible and willing to bring new ideas and innovation, and can adhere to a strategic plan once it is put in place. She has built close working relationships with organizations like CAMSC, WBE Canada, WE, and CGLCC to get access to new suppliers. Crump is a frequent trainer and presenter at events hosted by companies like the Royal Bank of Canada. One of the most impressive characteristics of diverse-owned Canadian businesses and diversity organizations is their exceptional willingness to work together and to attend each other's events, creating a strong foundation for supplier diversity that Crump can leverage to benefit United Rentals. This is particularly critical in Canada because the government has not issued a directive on supplier diversity like the U.S. government has for federal contracts.

To achieve success in Canada, Crump had to develop key best practices that she knew would increase the chances for success. Topping the list is effective communication which is enhanced through the partnering with sourcing and diversity organizations. "You can't manage a supplier program across Canada out of Toronto. You must participate in events in different cities like Calgary, Halifax, and Moncton, which we have, and have other areas targeted. This approach has become a great source of suppliers, and on a suppliers-per-event basis, we do better in Canada than we do in the U.S.,"



says Crump. To specifically locate diverse suppliers, Crump's team regularly communicates current and future needs and follows up when connections are made through networking with potential suppliers who seem to be a good fit, even if UR is not bidding a contract out at the time. The potential supplier connection is maintained for years until a need arises. "We need

bench strength in the supply chain to stay competitive," she adds.

Prepared to Meet a Future Need

The effort has paid off many times over. A few years ago, Crump's team conducted a staffing initiative, and already had a number of suppliers waiting for an opportunity. After the RFP was issued, more than 130 suppliers responded, and the team was able to get it down to 38 who participated in the RFP. Of the 13 that received awards two were diverse suppliers based in Canada. Spirit Staffing in Calgary and Trillium in Toronto were selected, and both have been suppliers for four years and contract renewals are in progress.

Developing suppliers before there are RFPs available is a strategy that has helped UR expand its supplier diversity program into difficult areas for diverse suppliers, like legal. Crump met with the legal staff to discuss the situation and came away with the understanding that trying to find a legal company when there is a current need is not effective. In response, Crump started an annual Legal Day in 2015 during which a whole day of 15-minute supplier interviews are held with United Rentals' Deputy General Counsel. Connections are made and maintained, and in 2016 a case was awarded to Walker Law.

Opportunities to Share Innovation

The ability to maintain innovation in products and services is a major success factor for United Rentals, and suppliers play a critical role. Crump is clear that get-

ting innovation from all sizes of suppliers depends on clearly communicating UR's need for innovation and giving suppliers opportunities to share their ideas, changes in the marketplace, and ways UR can leverage those changes. Jamie explains, "Smaller suppliers may be intimidated at the thought of approaching a company as large as UR with new ideas. They have to know they are considered a partner as much as the large supplier. If the only time you talk to suppliers is when there is a problem, it's not a strategic partnership," Crump explains. UR does have a scorecard process in place for measuring supplier performance. Sections are applicable to all suppliers, and continuous improvement and innovation is one of them. In addition, sections are specifically tailored to the supplier.

UR has helped some suppliers build capacity and some to become more ef-

ficient in the supply chain. In some cases, suppliers have grown by first serving a UR region and then eventually adding one or more other regions. UR also does a lot of mergers and acquisitions as its growth strategy, and suppliers have opportunities to grow with the organization. Crump also believes other activities can lead to capacity building, such as mentoring of suppliers and in-

creasing public awareness of suppliers. Helping suppliers become more efficient is also a process. "I hold regular conversations with our organizations about the quality of their deliverables and developing their own supplier diversity programs," Crump says. "I expect them to be on top of what is going on in their markets and to be able to explain to me how UR is benefitting from efficiencies and innovations. What value does the supplier bring to United Rentals?"

An Amazing Team

Keeping a finger on the pulse of local communities and markets is important to United Rentals as a company. It does so through its suppliers, but also through expression of community service. UR supports Valor Place in Edmonton and has a number of groups within its organization that are involved in the education and empowerment of community members. For example, the Women United group trains and educates young girls in construction and various industry positions. Branches in the regions are encouraged to get active in their local communities, participating in activities of their choice such as support organizations for homeless or children in need. A good example is when the fires ravaged Fort McMurray, and people were running out of gas while trying to get out of the danger area. The UR branch people in the Fort McMurray area contacted Calgary and Edmonton associates, and together they made fuel trucks available to fill gas tanks on the side of the road.

"I have an amazing team," says



United Rentals participated in a supplier matchmaker event at a recent conference in Toronto.

Crump. They are talented, focused, and committed to finding the best suppliers for UR and expanding the supplier diversity program. Crump has carefully built her team by hiring people who bring diversity of skills. She believes in hiring people that ensures the company is getting a broad brush of talent so that team members complement each other. The people she hires must be the right fit for the United Rentals culture which means they must have an innate curiosity to maintain progress. If Crump is unable to temporarily work, which happened recently due to an accident, she knows her team will do an excellent job of carrying on her work, which they did with enormous success.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY ARE BASIC TENETS OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

Standardization still eludes sustainability reporting, but the foundation of every report should be transparency and accountability.

BY **GERALD DONALD**





Energy Management



Operational Risk Management



Product Stewardship









ransparency and accountability are two critical tenets of sustainability reporting that are still evolving, just like the sustainability report itself. A lack of report standardization in the past has led to non-standard report forms and content, but there are underlying principles that every reporting process should incorporate. Transparency includes everything from required to voluntary disclosures in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) outcomes. Accountability refers to the organized and consistent reporting of ESG metrics and information of importance to stakeholders. The transparency and accountability built into sustainability reporting are critical to producing meaningful disclosures of interest to stakeholders.

Early sustainability reporting offered insights in environmental sustainability activities, but over the last five years, the reporting has become more sophisticated in terms of offering insightful metrics to stakeholders. It is stakeholders who have largely driven the transformation as they demand more corporate transparency and accountability around environmental, social, and governance outcomes.

The tech industry is a good example of a set of companies that attempted to avoid transparent reporting of information like workforce diversity. When Jesse Jackson, president and founder of Rainbow PUSH Coalition, pushed for public disclosure of employee demographic information, some companies tried to hold out. They knew the public would not like what their information contained – proof there is a lack of workforce diversity in Silicon Valley.

Most of the largest tech companies now publish employee demographics, but surprisingly some continue to resist. Lack of transparency today indicates there is something to hide, and that harms the company reputation. A better strategy is to publish the metrics, whether favorable and unfavorable, and include information on strategies implemented to improve and progress made to date.

The principle of transparency means the information of importance to stakeholders is published. Accountability is the application of consistent reporting methodologies to produce information linked to the company's core mission and strategies. The companies issuing sustainability reports are the first to say the initial report is the most difficult because the material sustainability and related data must be collected and analyzed, the relevant metrics identified, and the linkages established to the satisfaction of stakeholders. Adding to the challenge is the fact new risks regularly appear, legal requirements change, and issues of importance to stakeholders will change.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency in sustainability reporting refers to openness and communication,

Accountability is the application of consistent reporting methodologies to produce information linked to the company's core mission and strategies. and easily available information concerning ESG impacts. Stakeholders use the information to assess how well a company is fulfilling its responsibilities to society. It includes reporting on areas where the company has successfully met its responsibilities and on areas where economic activities resulted in a lower quality of life in some manner. This is difficult for corporations to do because they spend millions on marketing a positive brand, so admitting weakness or failure in any ESG area is challenging.

This is where corporate core values and mission are linked to transparent reporting. Consumers, investors, stockholders, and employees expect a company to be social engineers and stewards in areas like mitigating climate change, increasing the economic status of employees and communities, and hiring diverse people. Publishing failures as well as successes in meeting sustainability goals offers guidance to other companies also pursuing sustainability initiatives. The company needs transparency in sustainability reporting to satisfy stakeholder needs and to identify and manage risks.

A good example of transparency is United Rentals willingness to publish safety data on a year-over-year basis, making it easy to see if progress is being made. From 2014 to 2015, near-miss reports increased from 12,098 to 17,597.





However, the footnote explains that the increase is due to the company's stronger emphasis on increasing employee awareness of unsafe situations or conditions, encouraging the filing of reports. United Rentals did not have to include this metric, but in the interest of transparency includes these figures and is applauded for doing so. The report is filled with successes concerning ESG impacts, such as a 5.8 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions despite footprint growth of 2 percent.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Sustainability reporting accountability is a concept in which a company acknowledges responsibility, within the ESG context, for strategies, decisions, products, policies, and actions. Accountability is an element of transparency.

For example, consumers are interested in knowing products have a green lifecycle, and investors expect the company to not be wasteful when using resources for the manufacturing process. Communities of operation expect the company to make positive contributions to local well-being. The metrics are different for

these areas of accountability. Accountability requires developing robust procedures to produce accurate and meaningful data for ESG concerns and results. Implementing the appropriate processes and controls to ensure access to meaningful data is critical.

Companies have traditionally focused on financial performance, but there is a clear shift to adding metrics that measure ESG impacts in a meaningful way. However, unlike financial accounting, sustainability reporting includes quantitative and qualitative information.

Coca-Cola's 2014-2015 sustainability report offers good examples. Under water stewardship, the company reports it replenished approximately 153.6 billion liters of water to 209 communities in 61 countries. In the same impact area, Coca-Cola also reports it launched the "New World: Inclusive Sustainable Human Development Initiatives" in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program "Every Drop Matters."

Companies have traditionally focused on financial performance, but there is a clear shift to adding metrics that measure ESG impacts in a meaningful way.

The information and metrics reported need to be appropriately focused for the company. Once the areas of focus are identified, the Sustainable Performance Indicators (SPIs) are developed for each of the ESG areas. One suggestion for zeroing in on relevant KPIs is to use the SMART criteria, but the metrics need to be reasonably attainable. Only very large companies can afford to purchase and install new data collection and analyzation systems dedicated to sustainability reporting.

Transparency and accountability are the foundation of impactful sustainability reporting. Companies needing guidance in getting started with the sustainability report can utilize the frameworks and reporting guidelines already developed by organizations like the Global Reporting Initiative, the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board, and even competitor reports.

One of the common features of sustainability reports is that they get better each year. The first one does not need to be perfect. It just needs to have honest transparency and accountability.



GENERATING VALUE WITH SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

Each year, more companies join the sustainability reporting trend because they understand it is a value proposition. The reporting contributes to more effective decision-making, identifies risks and opportunities, and adds to a positive brand reputation.

BY VALERIE GOMEZ

ost global corporations now issue an annual sustainability report which reports on the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors of Corporate Responsibility (CR), and it is expected that more companies of all sizes will join the trend each year.

Once the purview of green companies, business leaders are recognizing that sustainability reporting delivers a host of benefits flowing from the identification of KPIs to the actual report itself. There is a value proposition that includes greater transparency, identification of ESG factors impacting business operating results, enhanced identification of risks and opportunities, improved natural resources stewardship, enhanced stakeholder trust building, and competitive differentiation, to name a few.

Sustainability reporting brings Corporate Responsibility under "one roof," so to speak, making it easier to determine business value.

REPORT WITH REAL MEANING

Business stakeholders expect corporate transparency on issues of importance. Issuing a sustainability report is not enough. It needs to contain information that has real meaning to consumers, investors, NGOS, communities, and any other stakeholders. Getting it "right" means the report should be timely and reflect sustainability issues of material interest to the marketplace to have the most value.

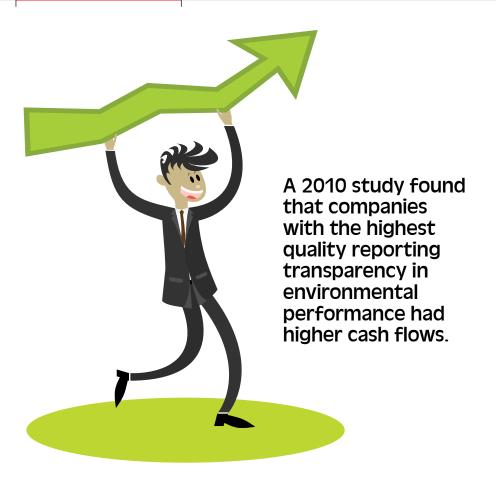
Researchers at North Carolina State University conducted a study to determine the issues of most importance to consumers buying from 15 companies in a variety of industries. The research found



that the Global Reporting Initiative standards the companies were using were not necessarily important to consumers. These standards measured things like product responsibility (product-related accidents) and reducing trade barriers. Instead, consumers wanted to know about environmental stewardship, reducing risk and maximizing compliance, investments in community revitalization, employment opportunities, social justice, and employee education.

The true usefulness of transparent sustainability reporting serious about ESG impacts and informing stakeholders is that the information it contains identifies how the business should operate or is operating in order to provide the greatest value to the business and its stakeholders.

As a result of sustainability activities and reporting, companies can enjoy benefits like an enhanced reputation, stronger customer and employee loyalty, increased operational efficiency, reduced waste, and improved community relations. All of these benefits contribute to a stronger competitive advantage. Better risk management is another benefit as companies collect and assess data it has not measured before. Sustainability reporting can also better satisfy analysts concerning things like continued acces-



sibility of critical resources and customer loyalty, making it easier to attract capital investors.

RECOGNIZING GLOBAL RISKS

Telling the world about sustainability efforts can generate goodwill among stakeholders, but it is also important to have quality information. A 2010 study found that companies with the highest quality reporting transparency in environmental performance had higher cash flows. Later studies continued to affirm the positive correlation between sustainability practices and reporting to improved financial performance.

In 2015, Deutsche Asset & Wealth Management and the University of Hamburg combined the information of 2,200 studies and found that the majority of the studies report a positive relation between ESG and financial performance. However, it was noted that companies experience the greatest improvement in financial performance when they focus on specific environmental, social, and

governance areas rather than assuming a general approach.

The issues businesses should be concerned with will fluctuate as global challenges change, which is why it is so important to know stakeholder concerns and potential global risks.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2016 features information gleaned from 750 experts on the likelihood and possible impacts of 29 global risks over the next decade. The risks likely to have the greatest impact globally are climate change, weapons of mass destruction, and the water crisis. Other risks of concern are largescale involuntary migration, extreme weather events, economic risks, cyber-attacks, and social instability.

The Global Risks Report 2016 advises businesses to develop operating models that take these risks into account. Customers and investors want to know what companies are doing in areas like child labor, the environment, how production and distribution operations are set up, community initiatives, and operation of the supply chain.

INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY AND OPERATIONS EFFORTS

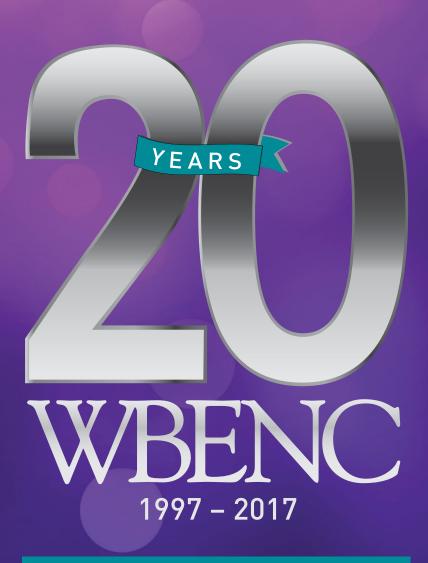
The importance of sustainability is without question, and it is the success with which companies incorporate ESG into operations to get the desired results that really matters. Sustainability efforts are not independent of business operations. They are integrated.

Sustainability reporting offers value and should be managed with great care. It can lead to new sources of capital, generate innovation as a result of looking at sustainability challenges with new perspectives and new data collection methodologies, and uncover new opportunities in markets.

The new market opportunities may become apparent as a result of discussions with local communities or new perspectives applied to risk identification. Social media reactions to sustainability reports are excellent sources of information leading to innovation. Knowing the risks can guide supply chain development and management to achieve business sustainability in the future. For example, what are the risks of critical resources becoming scarce in the next five to 10 years, and how does that impact the supply chain?

Transparent sustainability reporting can bring value in so many ways, from improving a brand's reputation to producing innovation. It can improve operations and contribute to long-term success. It also comes with risks. The corporations that produce information that stakeholders believe demonstrates poor performance are at risk of seeing capital directed to competitors and consumers using social media to trumpet a company's issues.

The report issued should be truthful but also provide enough information for readers to understand sincere company efforts to improve. Stakeholders have rising expectations about corporate transparency around sustainability challenges and responses, and those companies that meet those expectations are much more likely to maintain competitiveness well into the future.



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STILL EVOLVING: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF NON-FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE

Standardization still eludes sustainability reporting, but the foundation of every report should be transparency and accountability.

BY SHARON ROSS

on-financial reporting has been evolving for over two decades now, growing well beyond addressing environmental issues to include social and governance aspects of doing business. It has been an evolutionary process, which began with informing investors of environmental issues and is now trending toward integrated reporting in which financial and non-financial reporting is combined. There are good reasons, too.

Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors, or sustainability factors, have a direct impact on financial performance. It is also true that the networked world in which businesses operate has led to myriad stakeholders exerting pressure on them to inform investors, consumers, NGOs, regulators and communities about corporate responsibility efforts.

Still evolving, the biggest challenge now is establishing and adapting to standards for comparison purposes and accessing the information needed to determine if ESG factors are maximizing value.

INSEPARABLE IMPACTS

Corporate environmental responsibility reporting was the earliest focus of non-financial disclosure. It began as voluntary reporting as a means of conveying a brand image that is concerned with more than strict regulatory compliance.

Prompting some of the reporting was the emergence of the concept of corporate responsibility coupled with a plethora of court cases arising out of events like catastrophic oil spills, destruction of natural resources (i.e. deforestation), and environmental damage causing hardships in communities. People began holding businesses accountable for their practices, wanting to know what they were doing to prevent these catastrophes and to help the people harmed by the actions. Investors, of course, were looking at risks to long-term viability.

The Corporate Social and Responsibility (CSR) concept reflects the fact that environmental sustainability issues – like efficient use of resources, disposal of hazardous waste, protection of biodiversity, use of green products, pollution and sourcing of materials – are intricately mixed with social issues – human rights, health and safety of communities, cor-



ruption, and employment.

Governance issues include factors like the composition of the governance structure, executive compensation, and effectiveness of communication with all stakeholders.

The three components of ESG are inseparable, leading to sustainability reporting rather than environmental reporting only. The sustainability reporting trend in the increasing use of non-financial disclosure is also attributed to legislation requiring disclosure of certain items, like the conflict minerals disclosure requirements of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. More stock exchanges around the world are also recommending listed companies report on ESG aspects.

MOVING TOWARD STANDARDIZATION

Over the years, companies have established performance measures, but businesses reported what they wanted and in the form they wanted. Lack of standardized methods for measuring and reporting the data, and separation of the reporting for financial and non-financial information, has made it difficult to interpret the information presented and to compare companies. Sustainability reporting provides the information stakeholders want, but it also improves decision-making by identifying risks and opportunities, strengthening a positive brand reputation and producing increased market share.

The evolution of non-financial disclosure has moved along a spectrum of environmental sustainability reported to mollify business critics to ESG reporting as a critical management process as important as financial reporting.

The one major difference between financial reporting and non-financial disclosure is there are standards in place for financial reporting, like the International Financial Reporting Standards and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. One of the biggest challenges companies face in non-financial disclosure is determining the data to collect, the information to report, and how to report it.

Organizations should identify what is material to their success. For example, Coca-Cola will report on water stewardship, while Ford Motor Co. will include



investments in electrified vehicles. There is growing interest in establishing standards, and organizations have been developing and improving sustainability reporting for many years.

The Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) is one such organization. The independent nonprofit develops accounting standards for various industries through evidence-based research and consultation with a variety of stakeholders. Implementing standards requires reliable data.

SASB interviewed Sara Neff, senior vice president of sustainability at Kilroy Realty Corp., about the challenges of implementing SASB standards for the first time in its 10-K filing with the SEC. The first issue was the lack of externally assured sustainability data. The second issue was the fact service providers (thirdparty sustainability data verification and external counsel providers) were unfamiliar with SASB guidance terms. The company decided to have a legal team clarify the terms and to use year-old externally assured data that was collected by the accounting team and external auditors. The end result: financial reporting and the sustainability reporting have different reporting years.

IDENTIFYING RELATIONSHIP OF OPERATIONS AND ESG

Integrated reporting is the newest trend in non-financial disclosure. It is more than just publishing a single report. Integrated reporting considers the relationships between operations and ESG impacts.

The International Integrated Reporting Council helps organizations commu-

nicate a "...clear, concise, integrated story that explains how all of their resources are creating value." Quantitative and qualitative data measures the transformation of six capital inputs into outputs through the functioning of the business model. The inputs are financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social and relationship, and natural. The goal is to better understand the impact of inputs by translating ESG data into financial data so they are more understandable. Each company determines the relative capital inputs.

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) developed the first global standards for sustainability reporting, and thousands of companies around the world are voluntarily participating.

Also developing standards are AccountAbility and Principles for Responsible Investment. The fact there is a number of organizations developing and promoting non-financial reporting agencies is good from the perspective that it accelerates momentum for the adoption of non-financial disclosure.

It also creates another challenge: Which set of standards should a corporation adopt? In the U.S., SASB has emerged as the leader, but global organizations should consider GRI reporting methodologies.

Whatever standards are selected, the company needs to manage the non-financial disclosure so that it is defensible, transparent, connected to the company's values and goals, and coordinated with the supply chain. The information needs to have real-world meaning to the business and its stakeholders.



STRIVING FOR PERFECTION: NULOGY DELIVERS PERFECT ORDER SOLUTIONS TO KELLOGG CO.

The Kellogg Co. is focused on protecting brand quality from production to retail. Nulogy, a Kellogg Co. supplier, has been instrumental in helping the global giant meet its goal by providing technology-based solutions that offer data-driven visibility into the supply chain.

- BY **ROBIN BYRD**

nce an employee of the Kellogg Co., Jason Tham is the co-founder and CEO of the Nulogy Corp., now a supplier for the global brand where he once worked. Started in a family room 10 years ago, the Canadian technology company is a pioneer in contract packaging software that utilizes cloud technology.

What makes the products so remarkable is that the software solves the problem of accessing consistent and reliable information across a global network of suppliers to reduce costs, increase quality, and guarantee outcomes in processes. The unique PackManager platform, run in the cloud, connects a brand's suppliers, delivers data for better decision-making, enhances brand compliance with government regulations, and builds a collaborative supply chain.

This is a story of a customer-supplier relationship that improves competitiveness and sustainability for both the brand and the supplier.

STRIVING FOR PERFECT ORDER

For greater understanding, many brands, like the Kellogg Co., utilize co-packers and co-manufacturers for efficiency reasons and cost savings. The brand does not necessarily have a "bricks and mortar" process in place for every product it brings to market.

When customers want something new, the company wants to be able to respond with agility. Sometimes the fastest way to respond is to partner with another supplier who already has expertise in that area and the infrastructure in place. In Kellogg Co.'s case, the co-manufacturers utilize Kellogg Co.'s branded recipes to quickly get the products to market, while co-packagers package products under Kellogg Co.'s brand.

By using Nulogy's software products PackManager and QCloud, Kellogg Co. gets a high level of visibility into its orders being processed around the world. PackManager runs in the cloud and is an innovative product that creates a "perfect order network" of a brand's co-packers and co-manufacturers.

As Tham explains, "A perfect order network gives brands and suppliers the ability to collaborate on a global basis to provide a high assurance of quality with speed to market."

Kellogg Co. was one of the first brands to recognize that Nulogy's products could give the company data-based visibility into the planning, scheduling and inventory control needed to ensure it was meeting quality standards.

Kellogg Co. is able to track inventory and cost savings efficiency through the packaging and manufacturing processes to entry into the retail supply chain.

"PackManager allows Kellogg Co. to deliver more customized products to consumer supply chains because it connects suppliers and gives them real-time information. One of the many advantages of our software is that it gives the brand the ability to verify process standardization during the product's life cycle," says Tham.

Tracking and tracing inventory through the third party (retailer) helps Kellogg Co. ensure it is optimizing its supply chain while also meeting FDA requirements. Kellogg wants a perfect order in its regional networks which is the right quality, cost, location, time and inventory level.

BUILDING EFFECTIVE SUPPLY CHAIN RELATIONSHIPS

Debra Quade, supplier diversity manager for Kellogg Co., believes building a quality relationship with key suppliers like Nulogy is important to the brand's long-term success.

"We are obviously a food company and not an IT company," she says. "So when we look at a problem, we understand the challenges we face. We rely on Nulogy to send in a team and provide us with proposed solutions, often with additional insights. These kinds of suppliers are helping us build a bridge to the future, continually innovate, and go to market better and faster."

Effective supply chain relationships are built on a shared vision, trust and ongoing dialogue, which makes strategic planning much easier.

The packaging industry has experienced three key trends. One trend is the customization of products.

"Customization by region drives the need for Nulogy's products to deliver product customization through a standard, easy-to-use solution. When there is a standard process, there is a reduction of risks, reduction of costs, and reduction of variability," Tham explains.

There is variability of products but assurance of process standardization. The second trend is automation, which promotes or improves efficiently moving products through the supply chain while collecting information to measure perfect order attainment. The third key trend is using Big Data to get better results.

Building and maintaining a complex global supply chain comes with risks, which is one reason Kellogg Co. has high requirements for data. The company wants to ensure their suppliers are modernized and making best use of technology to provide them the right information and right processes.

Nulogy helps reduce supplier risk by equipping Kellogg's strategic suppliers with the right tools to enable processes that guarantee outcomes, enabling productivity, assuredness of process quality, and supplier connectivity to the brand for standardization. Since Kellogg Co. sells food products, quality standards include having an efficient recall process to meet government requirements.

"Standardizing the recall process has enabled Nulogy to reduce a four- to five-



FOOD COMPANY AND NOT AN IT COMPANY, SO WHEN WE LOOK AT A PROBLEM WE UNDERSTAND THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. WE **RELY ON NULOGY TO SEND** IN A TEAM AND PROVIDE **US WITH PROPOSED** SOLUTIONS, OFTEN WITH ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS. THESE KINDS OF SUPPLIERS ARE HELPING US BUILD A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE, CONTINUALLY INNOVATE. AND GO TO MARKET BETTER AND FASTER." - DEBRA QUADE

hour process to under a minute," says Tham.

LOOKING TO AN INNOVATIVE FUTURE

Nulogy is always working to give customers additional functionality to help them achieve the perfect order through the Nulogy perfect order network. One is the recoup process, which is the ability to track and trace products in the third-party supply chain in a way that permits the brand to identify whether products are up to standard to go through the standard consumer retail chain, enabling Kellogg to identify damaged products and recoup undamaged products for sale. Waste reduction is critical to sustainability.

"Kellogg Co. has seen significant improvements in waste reduction by increasing the agility of co-packers to meet changes in demand and ensuring they have the right product at the right time," Tham says.

According to Eric Blanchard, distribution services manager for Kellogg Company Canada, the company is currently averaging between 50 percent to 60 percent salvage of damaged products since inception of its project with Nulogy. Prior to using Nulogy's products, the figure was around 5 percent to 10 percent.

As an innovator, Nulogy is always working on new solutions. The company recently launched Nulogy GO, which is a unified platform providing even greater supply chain visibility by connecting with enterprise resource planning (ERP), warehouse management systems (WMS), and supplier systems to provide visibility into real-time capacity, order tracking, and performance tracking.

Goals for an innovative future include moving towards Artificial Intelligence and expanding the compliance function in response to significant increases in requirements placed on brands by governing bodies.

Nulogy has experienced remarkable success, and Tham attributes it to talented and passionate staff, and to its relationships with customers. The company is service oriented and works closely with its customers to provide them the solutions required for success. Solutions are offered on five continents and in six languages with business being 60 percent in food and beverage; 30 percent personal care, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals; and 10 percent high tech, and electronics.

The company has an eye on the future, always striving to develop innovative technology products that support the supply chains of global brands.

"Kellogg Co. has been great in promoting us. We started with one key supplier, connected that supplier to other strategic suppliers, and then to Kellogg Co. Since then, the company has allowed us to work with other processes, giving us the ability to ensure supplier processes are standardized," Tham said.

Whatever the future holds for the packaging industry, Nulogy is sure to be a leader in innovation.

THINKING BEYOND UTILITIES TO FIND SUPPLIER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ENERGY INDUSTRY

Say "energy industry" and it's natural to first think of energy sources like gas and solar. Yet, there are supplier opportunities beyond supplying resources, and they include almost anything a supplier can think of from fencing to post-disaster emergency

services.

Identify to post disaster effective ed in the facilities. Hope Cripar

he size of the energy market is enormous, especially when everything is taken into account. Fossil fuels and alternative energy sources are powering homes and businesses, and news reports and market analyses closely track the shift from the former to the latter. It is only natural to think of the energy industry from the perspective of supplying oil, gas, and coal or alternative energy sources that produce energy which is resold to consumers as carbon credits. However, energy companies need a lot more than just sources of energy, so they usually have a long list of procurement opportunities for equipment, supplies, and services. At the same time, the industry continues to undergo a transformation on many levels from increasing accountability to consumers to continuing a transition to fully utilizing technology. For many suppliers looking for new sources of bids or sales, the energy industry remains an untapped source.

CLARION CALL FOR DIVERSE SUPPLIERS

Many diverse suppliers are small businesses, so supplying energy companies with fuels or alternative energy is not possible due to lack of capacity or adequate funding. That kind of thinking, along with assuming energy companies offer few supplier oppor-

BY DONNA BENJAMIN

tunities other than for fuels or alternative energy sources, stops qualified small suppliers from pursuing bid or contract opportunities. However, energy companies need a lot more than fossils fuel or other energy sources to operate, and are interested in fostering local, small diverse-owned businesses.

The proof that energy companies need suppliers for a vast range of goods and services is found in the procurement lists posted online. PSE&G is a diversified energy company with headquarters in New Jersey and has a fleet of power plants located in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions and solar energy facilities around the U.S. The company operates the Salem and Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Stations in New Jersey and has

part ownership of the Peach Bottom Nuclear generation station in Pennsylvania.

Using this company as one example, the PSE&G

commodity and services procurement list includes the expected opportunities for things like disposal of radiation waste and bulk gases. Some of the items needed are so specialized that a limited number of suppliers can qualify. Looking closer at

the list, there is a great variety of items needed to

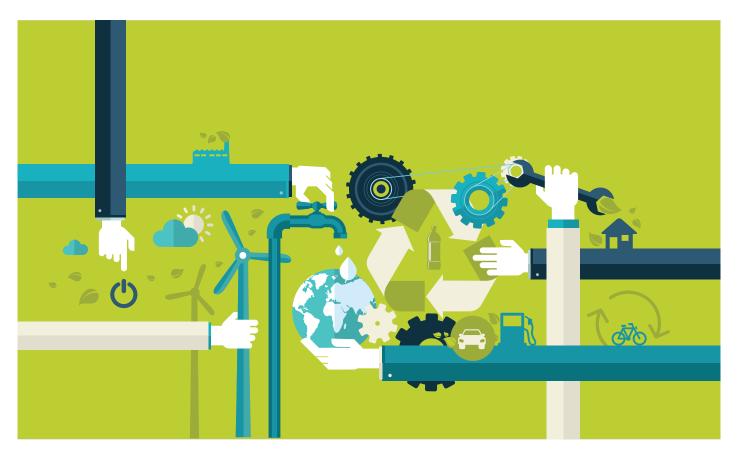
operate its nuclear and fossil fuel plants and administrative offices. They include services like welding and fabrication, construction, elevator services, testing services, building maintenance and landscaping, food services, Human Resources consulting, customer care services, and engineering services. PSE&G also requires rotating equipment, IT hardware, and traffic control equipment. Supplies and materials include steel plate and piping, electrical parts, cables, welding supplies, lighting, industrial clothing, valves and fittings, appliance parts, telecom, copiers, switch gear, and fasteners. Solar is

At CPS Energy, bid opportunities include physical security services, fencing and gate services, mobile office trailer rental, bottled gases, and sodium hypochlorite. The Southern Company needs products like abrasives, hardware, labels, gauges, and cleaning supplies. Another important source of business for suppliers are outdoor services. The Southern Company, like many other energy companies, needs right of way clearing, landscaping, site preparation, and erosion control services. After natural disasters, power companies also need suppliers who can quickly get to work clearing debris and vegetation.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

on the list also.

The energy industry began a digital transformation process a decade ago, and there is no end in sight. That is partly due to the fact the full potential of cloud computing and mobile has not



been reached. Data and analytics are also changing the way energy companies operate and interact with customers. The power companies have not maximized their utilization of digital technologies yet because it is such a major transformation impacting everything from the meters installed at customer locations to monitoring assets in the field to managing efficiency and the threats of cyber-attacks.

Data collection and analyzation are two areas of enormous potential for suppliers. The Internet of Things enables energy and power companies to collect data from devices like smart meters, vehicles, and customer mobile devices. Predictive analytics help companies allocate resources and better assist customers with the management of utilities. Mobile and social communication with customers has enhanced the communication between energy providers and their clients, creating another source of data.

For example, Entergy gave customers the ability to text the power company to report outages. Digital technology is enabling new products and services, like smart homes, but the onus is on the energy company to develop the capabilities needed to develop, market, and support them. Another area of need in the technology arena is the linking of the various legacy and new systems in order to take full advantage of the technologies and the transparency they can deliver.

SEARCHING FOR OPPORTUNITIES

Energy companies are still in the process of increasing their diverse spend. There are several ways to uncover new business. One is to attend some of the many trade shows held across the U.S. each year. For example, the Power-Gen event has over 1,400 exhibitors, giving suppliers plenty of opportunity to speak di-



ONE IS TO ATTEND SOME OF THE MANY TRADE SHOWS HELD ACROSS THE U.S. EACH YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE, THE POWER-GEN EVENT HAS OVER 1,400 EXHIBITORS, GIVING SUPPLIERS PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY WITH ENERGY COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES.

rectly with energy company representatives. There are dozens of smaller events too, like the Business Diversity Conference sponsored by the Edison Electric Institute and Entergy. To find local opportunities, register as a certified diverse supplier with nearby energy companies. Many companies like PSE&G post procurement plans for the year online, and they also post requests for bids. Another approach is to connect with the prime suppliers to get information about working with a particular energy company or to potentially land a contract with the prime.

Diverse suppliers looking for new corporate customers should think of the energy industry in terms of the broad array of goods and services they need. There is recognition that diversity in the supply chain is important to the transformation process because diverse suppliers bring innovation and new perspectives. Say the word energy, and it is likely terms like oil and gas come to mind first when it should be goods and services.

ENERGY

INDEPENDENCE EQUALS EXCITING NEW SUPPLIER AND SMALL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The energy industry's transformation is creating new communities and reviving struggling ones. Innovative suppliers and small businesses are finding new ways to make the transformation more inclusive and successful.

BY WILFRED SMITH

he projections are in: The U.S. will likely be energy independent by 2020. Oil imports from the OPEC nations have declined by more than 40 percent as the U.S. produces more domestic oil and natural gas, energy conservation strategies reduce energy usage, and other sources of energy, including renewable energy sources, are expanded. The Trump administration has committed to continuing the trend, creating new supplier opportunities in a variety of ways. They include the traditional ones, like supplying the energy companies with goods and services and starting new businesses in areas growing up around resource exploration areas. However, innovative suppliers are looking at the energy industry with new eyes, looking for opportunities to help people impacted by the shifting energy landscape develop new skills and find employment.

TRANSFORMING INDUSTRY CREATING NEW GROUP OF HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS

As President Donald Trump dives into fulfilling his campaign promises, the "America First Energy Plan" is getting a lot of attention. He is rolling back regulations so that energy exploration companies can accelerate their activities, or in the case of coal mining, reopen their operations. Per the White House website, his administration believes there is an "estimated \$50 trillion in untapped shale, oil, and natural gas reserves." Two new pipelines were approved also. President Trump is also "committed to clean coal technology, and to reviving America's coal industry."

The opportunities for suppliers and small businesses are growing. Already, oil and gas exploration have fueled economic and population growth in communities in Texas, North Dakota, West Virginia, Montana, Pennsylvania, and others. I.H.S. proj-

ects an increase of 3.5 million American jobs by the year 2035 due to growing efforts to access oil and natural gas reserves. Rapid growth is creating some challenges in terms of housing and infrastructure, and suppliers and businesses offering solutions are needed.

The typical supplies and services are needed, of course, but there are other needs that may not be as obvious. For example, energy exploration growth requires experts able to efficiently research tax records to identify land owners, easements, existing power lines, and liens. Energy producers need secure, environmentally controlled facilities for equipment storage and affordable housing options that can accommodate workers and their families. The growing communities need a host of services, including restaurants and retail shops. Brick-and-mortar retail shops contribute to the local economy, but online retailers can target market the communities growing faster than the startups can handle. Infrastructure development in communities where the population is growing creates a whole different set of needs, from broadband to concrete.

CHECK THE STATE AND LOCAL PROCUREMENT POLICIES FIRST

Small, diverse suppliers can take advantage of these opportunities in a number of ways. A good start is review the state and local procurement policies which apply to government contracts but also offer direction on what the state's residents consider important. For example, environmental and social sustainability are two areas of focus in many states.

There is a particular need for an improved transmission infrastructure, consisting of steel poles and wires. In March 2017, a coalition of groups in manufacturing, energy and environmental, and construction industries sent a letter to congressional majority and minority leaders to urge Congress to promote grid investments. It is particularly interesting to note the coalition includes the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA), the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), WIRES, and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA). Joining groups keeps suppliers, from technology to retail to construction, in the information loop.

TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

The future of energy independence holds more than jobs in the energy industry, as the company Teleworks USA is proving. Coal towns have been particularly hit hard as the country moves to cleaner, cheaper energy sources like natural gas and electricity, and alternative energy sources like solar and wind. Since the 1980s, America has lost two-thirds of its coal mining jobs. President Trump is easing environmental regulations that led to coal mine closures as part of his "America First Energy Plan," but there is general agreement that the coal industry will never return to the level it was at before President Barrack Obama took office.

So many people in so many coal towns need jobs, and that has created opportunities that innovative companies are addressing. The company Teleworks USA connects people who are interested in working from home with employers. The company has partnered with employers to train employees to handle customer service calls from home, creating 80 jobs by using tech-

nology to connect with the job market. These jobs pay approximately \$9 per hour, but Kentucky's minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour. The employees gain experience in customer service and using technology, both of which are marketable skills and can lead to higher paying jobs in the future.

This approach creates a skilled work-from-home labor force to fill a variety of customer service and technology jobs. Opportunities also exist in the education and training industries because people in small towns and rural areas - the people Teleworks USA mostly serves - can be reached via the internet. The U.S. has struggled to adapt to a changing workforce that is more flexible. The traditional business model of driving to work and working in an office or other employer location is deeply ingrained. However, small town residents have access to a global marketplace through the productive utilization of technology. If employers would invest in training, they can fill some of their labor gap while enabling people to remain in their communities.

THINK INNOVATIVELY TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES

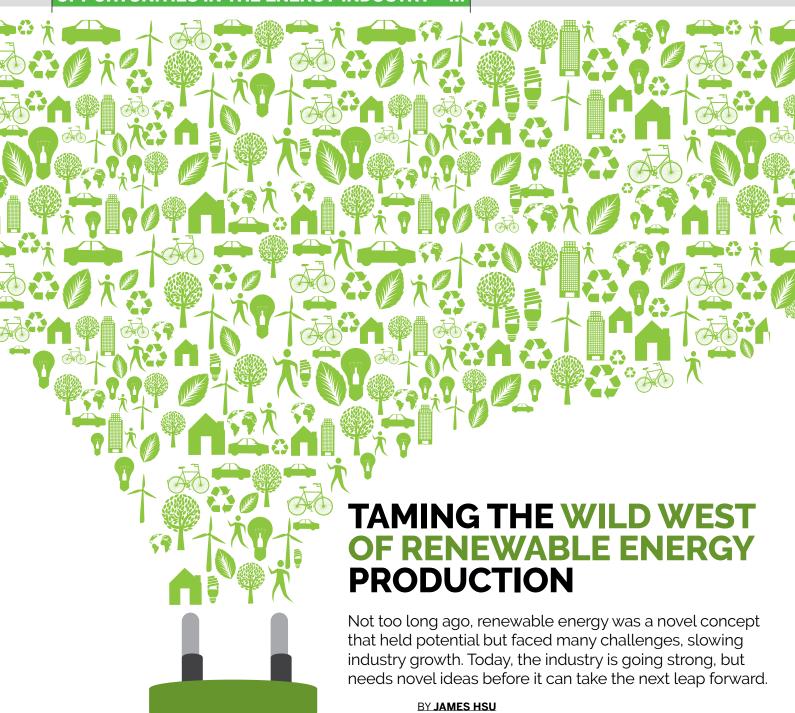
The opportunities exist, and there are many unmet needs in the energy industry and the industries that support their communi-



IT IS IMPORTANT TO THINK IN TERMS OF INNOVATION **AND NEW APPROACHES** TO MEETING THE NEEDS **BECAUSE THE ENERGY** INDUSTRY IS TRANSFORMING **AND THE COMMUNITIES WILL** TRANSFORM WITH IT.

ties of operation. It is important to think in terms of innovation and new approaches to meeting the needs because the energy industry is transforming and the communities will transform with it. Helping the growing communities and the people who lost their jobs due to the transformation to clean energy gives suppliers and small businesses the ideal set of circumstances for success.





he renewable energy industry is well-established in some states. Renewable energy production accounts for 80-100 percent of all energy production in states like Maine, Iowa, South Dakota, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Nevada. In a host of other states, the figures are 60-80 percent. Unfortunately, there are more states where renewable energy accounts for less than 20 percent, proving there is plenty of room for industry growth. Despite all the good things people have to say about alternative energy sources, the renewable energy industry remains the Wild West of the total energy industry because much remains to be done to correct the challenges it faces, from noisy wind farms to the cost of solar system ma-



YES, IT IS A BIT OF THE WILD WEST STILL IN THE RENEWABLE ENERGY INDUSTRY BECAUSE SO MUCH STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE, EXPAND, AND PROTECT THE SYSTEMS.

terials. The industry needs suppliers who can bring innovation to the industry, removing the hurdles to growth in wind, solar, hydro, geo, and biomass.

"CATCH THE WIND, SEE US SPIN..."

The iconic Led Zeppelin rock band was not singing about wind farms, but catching the wind in spinning blades is an excellent source of renewable energy. The interesting fact about wind farms is that they are still not a major source of renewable energy in some of the windiest states like Kansas and North Dakota. The same is true for solar. Arizona is one of the sunniest states, yet the solar energy industry has faced resistance from utility companies and regulators, slowing progress.

The hurdles to renewable energy industry growth vary. Neighborhoods complain the wind turbines are too noisy and are causing ailments like dizziness and headaches. Wind is unpredictable and not plentiful in many areas, and the blades have been known to kill wildlife. Little known except to environmentalists is the fact that President Barack Obama's administration instituted a regulation that allows the wind-energy companies to kill a certain number of bald eagles without incurring a penalty. President Donald Trump is likely to overturn the regulation to put the wind energy industry on the same environmental protection path as oil and gas producers, making the wind-energy companies unhappy.

Solar needs the sun to produce power, but there are other challenges. Solar panels are still relatively expensive because of the semiconductor material required to produce energy. In addition, solar cells achieve only about 40-43 percent efficiency, leaving plenty of room for improvement. Biomass energy requires a lot of water and can produce polluting air emissions. Hydropower is criticized because it interferes with the natural environment. Geothermal energy systems can release harmful gases and remain expensive to install.

CATCH THE OPPORTUNITIES

The renewable energy industry is growing, but it could be growing much faster with an injection of innovation. That is what the trends in the energy industry are all about – innovation – and they offer innovative suppliers plenty of opportunities to tame the Wild West of renewable energy. Siemens took on the challenge of addressing the noise of its onshore wind turbine blades. The interesting new biomimicry design is called DinoTail, an aerodynamic blade add-on that was inspired by the trailing edge fringe of an owl's wing. The blade add-on is serrated and combed and creates fine vortices at the point where air above and below the blades meet.

The Audubon Society estimates that 140,000 to 328,000 birds are killed each year in North America by wind turbine blades. Researchers are developing technologies that use radar and GPS that turn the turbines off when a flock of birds is detected; UV lighting to deter bats and birds; vertical axis turbines that look more like trees; and smart blades that can recognize particular types of endangered birds. New designs and technologies are still on drawing boards or in the experimental stage, so there is no proof they will work. The wind-energy industry and environmentalists are anxious for new ideas.

TRENDING OPPORTUNITIES

New solar panels utilizing cheaper and more efficient semiconductor materials, photovoltaic cells achieving higher energy efficiency ratings, and wind farm technologies that protect wildlife are just a few of the renewable energy industry opportunities for innovation. The still largely untapped industry has a number of trends that are looking for innovators, new perspectives, and unique approaches. GE's Transform keeps track of what is going on in the industry, giving suppliers critical insights into what comes next.

One trend is an increase in distributed generation in which homes and businesses install their own power generation systems and sell excess power to the grid. The power companies are grappling with the management of non-dispatchable renewable electricity and distributed generation. Another trend is the increasing role of digital technologies in power generation, transmission, and distribution sectors. Digital technologies are not anywhere near being fully utilized to benefit the industry and its customers, and are likely to play a major role in the expansion of the industry. Of particular importance is the need for improved cybersecurity for interconnected grids and renewable energy production systems.

Yes, it is a bit of the Wild West still in the renewable energy industry because so much still needs to be done to improve, expand, and protect the systems. At the same time, the industry and its suppliers must contend with ever-changing government regulations. The Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory believes renewable energy could generate up to 80 percent of U.S. electricity by the year 2050. The power generation includes a combination of wind turbines, solar photovoltaics, geothermal, biopower, and hydropower. This is an industry with unlimited opportunities because it remains underdeveloped. Now that governments and the power companies are getting on board at a faster rate, it is time to start making some real progress. Calling all innovative suppliers.

CULTIVATING INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AROUND THE WORLD

Companies have a major role in building a world where people with disabilities are respected and included. The work begins at home to establish the foundation, but the message will resound across the globe through applied talent management processes.

BY KAREN WHITE

eople with disabilities continue to struggle to be fully and equitably included in workplaces. Stereotyping and negative biases, coupled with a lack of knowledge of the ADAAA interactive process, continue to haunt talent management practices, creating barriers. The interactive process is a requirement of the American Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), which sensibly says that employers must honestly engage with a disabled person at any point of the talent management process when determining if a job candidate or an employee has a disability and whether reasonable accommodation can be implemented.

The interactive process requires a real dialogue, meaning emailing back and forth is not applicable. The interactive process includes fostering the inclusion of people with disabilities, once hired, in the workplace. For global companies, successful interactive processes applied to operations around the world enhance inclusion on a global basis.

TALKING ABOUT OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYEE SUCCESS

Many people with disabilities are still hiding their disabilities for a lot of reasons. They continue to fear not getting hired or not being socially accepted in the workplace.

Before the ADAA was passed, employers could interact with job recruits or employees requesting accommodations by sending emails back and forth, a limiting mode of communication that



does not count as real dialogue. In the past, employers also failed to adequately document their decisions concerning the recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes and the options considered for accommodation.

Under the ADAAA, the employer is required to go through a flexible process for identifying the limitations of the person's disability and possible accommodations that can overcome the limitations. At the same time, the job candidate or employee must be honest about a disability and the type of accommodations that are useful. It is the potential or current employee who decides whether or not to self-identify.

Dialogues take place between the candidate or employee and the Human Resources representative, interviewers, ADA coordinators, and/or supervisors. More than one person needs to be involved in discussions and decision-making to limit the expression of personal biases.

This kind of dialogue can make employer representatives very uncomfortable, and that goes back to the stigma and myths still attached to people with disabilities. The predominant stigma says a disabled person cannot be fully productive, and the myth is that the cost of accommodations are exorbitant. Neither are true. In the U.S., people are horrified by global societies that shun the disabled from mainstream life, yet a form of the shunning continues to take place in U.S. workplaces.

Developing and using etiquette strategies are important to successfully maneuvering the interactive process. Etiquette strategies address the whole gamut of the Human Resources and talent management process, including recruitment, hiring, onboarding, development, and career planning.

DUTY TO ENGAGE

Etiquette simply refers to the way people are engaged. Employers developing etiquette strategies ask critical questions of their recruitment and employment process, and the level of knowledge the IT department has concerning accessibility technology.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the US Business Leadership Network developed a Workplace Disability Inclusion Assessment Tool that every employer should utilize. The checklist offers guidance when initiating or enhancing corporate policies on the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Under recruitment are questions like, "Are job applicants with disabilities actively recruited?" This is a step in the interactive process because "active" recruitment means recruiters real involvement in the process through the identification and attraction of the most exceptional disabled talent for the position.

Another question is, "Are recruiters trained on interviewing job candidates with disabilities?" If not, there is likely to be very little dialogue taking place. Under employment, etiquette strategies include

In the U.S., people are horrified by global societies that shun the disabled from mainstream life, yet a form of the shunning continues to take place in U.S. workplaces.

establishing a reasonable accommodation policy and a formal accommodation process. Is disability included in all diversity and inclusion training? Do employees with disabilities get opportunities for leadership training?

The checklist identifies areas where the company is weak in the process of engaging employees with disabilities. The duty to engage includes analyzing job functions to identify essential and non-essential job tasks, and identifying the true barriers to job performance by having a dialogue with the employee to learn the person's limitations. In that way, the precise types of accommodations that would be most effective are identified.

A two-way dialogue gives the candidate or employee and the employer the opportunity to explore different accommodations, request additional information, and hopefully negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. The employer may not be able to accommodate the disabled worker because it would create undue hardship in the workplace, but it is critical to document the entire dialogue process. Employers must demonstrate a good faith effort to accommodate in order to fulfill the goals of the interactive process.

MAKING A GOOD FAITH EFFORT

Documentation is of the utmost importance. There should be a written record of the meetings and dialogue. Only the facts are documented.

Employers navigating the ADAAA should not ask the disabled person about their diagnosis, symptoms, or prognosis, even if the employee voluntarily disclosed the disability. Employers cannot ask about disability before making a job offer, but they can ask a job candidate if they can perform essential job tasks with or without accommodation. Essential job tasks are the tasks that are a major part of the job and cannot be diminished. However, employers can consider changing the way things are done in order to accommodate a person with a disability.

Documentation establishes intent and good faith effort, and the employer's knowledge of the law.

The interactive process is a good faith effort. It expects employers to make a sincere effort to hire the most qualified people, including the disabled. American employers must overcome their reluctance to discuss disabilities for the interactive process to be effective.

There are millions of highly qualified people with disabilities looking for satisfying employment in jobs that fit their knowledge and skills. For employers, it is another group of diverse employees who can help reduce the labor shortage.

Organizations that implement fair, good faith policies and procedures throughout global operations demonstrate through example the true and full meaning of D&I to the world.

MOVING AWAY FROM PERFORMANCE REVIEWS TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Annual performance reviews may one day become a thing of the past because they fail to engage and motivate employees. The new trend is ongoing performance management which is better suited for today's diverse and dispersed workforce.

BY DAVE DESOUZA

s companies expand into new markets in the far corners of the world and the way people work changes due to technology, the traditional annual performance appraisal system is proving to be woefully inadequate. The annual reviews were designed to point out performance flaws and support compensation decisions but did very little to provide critical feedback and certainly were not engagement tools. Neither employees nor employers liked the process.

As work changes, employees become more dispersed and employee engagement becomes critical to organizational success, corporations are moving away from annual or semi-annual performance appraisals to a performance management system in which employees are given regular feedback as a strategy for ongoing development and to strengthen engagement.

This performance management system is more in tune with the needs of a global, diverse workforce that wants to understand how the work contributes to success and to improve performance through ongoing learning.

ONCE A YEAR IS NOT ENOUGH

The list of companies eliminating the traditional annual performance review system is growing. It contains prestigious corporate names like Accenture, Microsoft and Proctor & Gamble (P&G). These large companies with a globally dispersed workforce realized that maintaining high-quality standards, productivity, and innovation will depend on developing an engaged workforce and a learning and development culture.

Assessing an employee once a year against objectives and meaningless ratings does not meet the needs of the modern corporation and its workforce. They are certainly not engaging or motivating. The annual performance review is disliked by managers and employees, frequently discourages employees, and looks mostly to the past 12 months.

However, the world does not operate on an annual cycle any more, and employees are more in control of their work lives than ever before. At the same time, corporations need to develop a culture of learning in order to develop high potentials, motivate employees to continuously improve, and fully engage employees.

Abandoning the annual performance rating system for a performance management system brings significant changes to the talent management system. A performance management system uses a continuous system of frequent feedback that turns the review process into a coaching system. Employees are able to access managers on a regular basis. Compensation is no longer tied to a single annual review. Netflix now ties compensation changes to the market value of the position, removing the internal competition between employees that performance rating appraisals create.

ALL IN THE DETAILS

The design details of the performance management system vary from company to company.

Mozilla, for example, abandoned the annual review process and moved to a system of one-on-one feedback sessions. Employees and managers meet at least six times a year but often more frequently. The company believes that employees need to be able to ask questions about performance and areas for improvement on a regular basis when working in a culture of learning and development. The continuous feedback system better meets the expectations of the millennials and younger next-generation employees already entering the workforce. The generations younger than Baby Boomers grew up in an interactive, networked world of instant feedback.

An effective performance management system does not focus on the past. It looks to the future and how an employee can improve in order to be most productive, pursue a chosen career path, or achieve other goals. The emphasis is on the positive paths for self-improvement. This is far removed from a rating system that discourages employees from discussing work challenges and needs throughout the year. In truth, there is something a bit humiliating about the scoring system which encourages raters



to find faults committed in the past.

Accenture has moved to the performance management system. The company eliminated annual performance reviews and its ranking system which compares employees based on performance. Its performance achievement system allows managers to provide informal employee reviews which can be held at any time. This enables the manager to give feedback when it is most needed and most current, like after a project is completed or an innovative idea is suggested.

Google, keeping with its forward thinking culture, does use quarterly reviews but also developed the "Objectives and Key Results" system. Employees set their own measurable goals and post them on an internal network along with their coworkers. Employees can see each other's goals. This promotes transparency, information sharing, productivity, and even teamwork and innovation when others are able to read goals that spark new ideas, perspectives, approaches and solutions.

Proctor & Gamble has one of the most sophisticated performance management systems. The company uses the "Work

Proctor & Gamble has one of the most sophisticated performance management systems. The company uses the "Work and Development Plan" (W&DP) across all functions and on a global basis.

and Development Plan" (W&DP) across all functions and on a global basis. This system encourages supervisors to continuously provide feedback to employees and to train and develop employees.

P&G's plan has four components:
1) compare the previous year's plan to results; 2) identify areas for employee growth and development; 3) identify short- and long-term career interests; and 4) create a development and training plan for the coming year. The W&DP is reviewed at least quarterly and updated regularly, and managers provide ongoing coaching. The employee and the manager agree on the W&DP content.

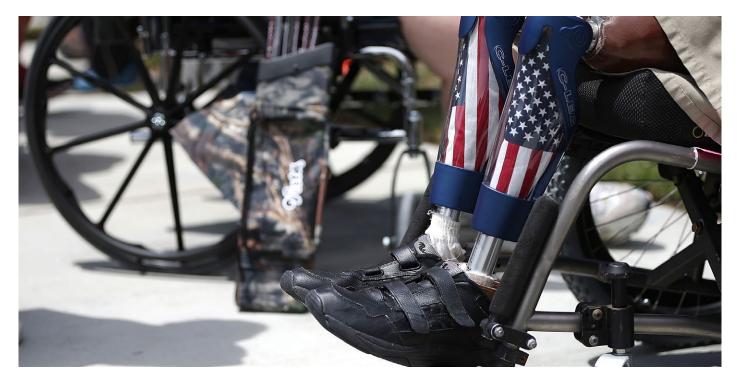
Feedback is collected using the 360-degree feedback method. P&G's system includes continuous development of technical and interpersonal skills, formal training, mentoring, and formal education opportunities.

FULL INVOLVEMENT OF EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS

The leadership advisory firm CEB did research to find out how many Fortune 1000 firms had eliminated the annual performance review. In 2015, the number was 12 percent.

With so few companies taking the leap into a performance management system so far, it is impossible to say if the new system will eventually overtake the conventional one. The likelihood is that it will because it is more suited to today's workforce and the business environment. One of the keys to getting the desired results from the new system is making sure that managers hold the regular conversations even when scoring is not involved.

Performance management systems require the full involvement of employees and their managers. Anything could easily derail the system.



COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF INCLUSION OF VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

Defining and selling the value proposition for including veterans with disabilities in the workforce is necessary in order to gain leadership support. It is an organizational myth-busting, core value-building process.

BY ROYSTON ARCH

illions of veterans with service-related disabilities need jobs that pay a living wage. Many disabled veterans have children, disabilities that employers can easily accommodate, and a desire to work. The challenge is convincing business leaders that disabled veterans can contribute to organizational success as much as the non-disabled employees.

Too often, the value proposition for hiring disabled veterans has not been adequately conveyed, so senior leaders and the managers reporting to them continue to buy into the myth that hiring people with disabilities will drive up labor costs without getting full productivity or benefits.

Selling the value proposition to business leaders is a critical first step in making Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) programs more inclusive of disabled veterans.

BY THE NUMBERS

Disability claims are rising in the U.S., revealing a group of people who have dealt with their disabilities with little or no financial help from the government. Today there is better recognition that veterans have a variety of physical and emotional disabilities, but unfortunately there is still a stigma attached to all people with disabilities.

It is a catch-22 situation because a veteran may have a 30 percent disability due to something like hearing loss and be able to get disability payments, but once in the disabled category, employers are more reluctant to hire them. It is easy to get deceived by statistics, when in reality disabled veterans are still not fully included in the workforce.

As of August 2016, there are almost 21 million veterans in the U.S., and 4.6 million have a ser-

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Communicating the benefits of employing disabled veterans on an organization-wide basis strengthens the core value of D&I.

vice-connected disability. Of those, 37 percent had a rating of 60 percent or higher. It is true that some of the veterans are over the traditional retirement age of 65, but there are millions

who are younger, have children, are getting significantly less than full disability, and need a job that enables them to support their families. The labor force participation rate for veterans with a service-connected disability is 46.4 percent, meaning over half are not employed or not looking for work. The unemployment rate for disabled veterans is 4.8 percent.

It is important to understand the labor force participation rate is a better indicator of the status of veterans with service-connected disabilities than the unemployment rate because it gives an idea of the percentage of people who are not employed, not looking for work, or have given up searching for employment, which these numbers show is 53.6 percent.

BUILDING THE VALUE PROPOSITION

Building the value proposition for hiring veterans with disabilities is actually a process of dispelling myths with facts communicated to top leaders to gain their support and then effectively communicating the advantages disabled veterans offer to the organization.

Myths are obstacles to employment. Some people believe the disabled veterans are too dangerous to hire and present a risk to workplace safety. Another myth is that PTSD prevents veterans from being able to manage workplace stress. Other myths include believing veterans do not have skills that can be transferred to the workplace and that hiring any people with disabilities will cost more than the benefits received. Like any myth, they are not true.

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) regularly gathers statistics on the value proposition of employers engaging people with disabilities, including veterans. An ongoing survey has found that the customers of organizations that are inclusive of people with disabilities accrue significant direct and indirect benefits. They include a 72 percent increase in employee productivity, 60 percent reduction in workforce training costs for new employees, 38 percent reduction in workers' compensation or other insurance costs, and 45 percent increase in workplace safety. Also of enormous importance is a reported 28 percent increase in profitability and

a 17 percent increase in the customer base.

These are the kinds of numbers that top leaders need to know. Veterans with disabilities bring even more benefits that are specific to their past experience in the military. These must be communicated to top leadership to get them on board as advocates. Top-down leadership is critical to the success of any D&I program.

Veterans with disabilities are team players. No one probably understands the importance of effective teams than someone who has put his or her life on the line to support team members. Disabled veterans have also proven they can work under pressure so they are able to manage high levels of stress in the workplace.

Just the fact a disabled veteran wants employment demonstrates remarkable endurance and perseverance. These are desirable qualities for any employee. It has also been proven through numerous studies that diverse workforces are more innovative because people with a variety of perspectives and experiences are contributing. Veterans with disabilities bring new perspectives concerning product and services development, underserved markets, and potential customers.

STRENGTHENING THE CORE VALUE

Northrup Grumman is a standard bearer for making a commitment to the employment of disabled veterans. The Operation IMPACT program is designed for veterans who have a physical disability rating of 30 percent or greater. The program assists severely wounded service members with their transition from the military to a career in the private sector. If the veteran is not employable, the program offers the same support to the person in the immediate family who will be the primary wage earner.

The company employs thousands of veterans because they bring a unique set of skills to the company, have a firsthand appreciation for the products and services, and have valuable training and leadership development that was obtained during military service. Northrup Grumman also developed resources like a military skills translator tool that matches job openings to common military skills.

Once the business case is built and top leaders are on board, it is important to develop managers down the line. Communicating the benefits of employing disabled veterans on an organization-wide basis strengthens the core value of D&I. Northrup Grumman, Starbucks, AT&T and other companies are already appreciative of the skills, knowledge and perspectives disabled veterans offer. Hopefully, many more companies will follow their lead.

TAJIKISTAN HAS AN ECONOMY ON THE MOVE

Tajikistan wants to attract foreign investments by making it easier to do business. The effort is paying off as the country's ranking improved by two spots on the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" report.

he Republic of Tajikistan is looking for foreign investors as the country continues to advance its economy after a long period of unrest. Businesses interested in investing in Asia would do well to give this landlocked country in Central Asia consideration because it is an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a growing economy while also being socially responsible on a global basis.

Bordered by Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, China, and Afghanistan, Tajikistan is focusing on making it easier to do business in the country and on creating jobs, and early signs of success are found in its improved position on the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business" report. Opportunities exist in a variety of industries, including power generation, food processing, construction and agribusiness equipment and machinery, and tourism.

POSITIVE INVESTMENT DRIVERS LURE BUSINESS INVESTORS

It is only fair to say that Tajikistan continues to struggle to improve its economy, and it still has a burdensome bureaucracy that it is in the process of streamlining. The country endured a five-year civil war but has found relative peace under President Emomali Rahmon.

Tajikistan was once part of the Soviet Union, and remains heavily dependent on Russia even as an independent country. However, for some investors, this adds to the business potential in Tajikistan because of the connection. It is true that Tajikistan faces a number of challenges in growing its economy, but it has a long list of positive investment drivers that foreign investors should take note of.



BY WILLIAM BELL

For starters, the Tajikistan industries are not as developed as the markets in some of the neighboring countries, giving investors plenty of room to start and expand businesses in Tajikistan and to export to other countries in the region.

Opportunities exist in power generation and distribution, machinery and equipment, aviation, construction, and food processing and packaging. In the agro processing industry, approximately 20 percent of agricultural produce is lost because there is not enough storage and processing capacity. There is also a need for investment in cotton processing because only 15 percent of total production is processed.





Tajikistan is rich in natural resources including precious gems, marble, silver, gold, iron, lead, zinc, and a host of others. There is a need for investors interested in developing new deposits and new processing technologies.

Tourism is another industry with plenty of room for growth. This is a country with a rich cultural heritage and a beautiful mountainous landscape. Eco-tourism has enormous potential because there are pristine lakes, off-the-beaten-path hiking paths, and friendly rural villagers ready to host visitors. The culture of Tajikistan is thousands of years old and multi-ethnic. It is a country filled with ancient history and a variety of well-preserved sites. There are palaces, museums, and religious complexes that mix plain Soviet-era and elaborate Persian-style decors in an interesting and unique combination. Tourism is a nascent industry, but it is sure to grow rapidly as the world discovers the treasures that Tajikistan holds.

GETTING EASIER TO DO BUSINESS

The World Bank Group is working with Tajikistan to improve its tax system and institute business reforms. Currently, the country ranks as no. 128 in the World Bank "Ease of Doing Business" report, which represents a two-point improvement from the year before.

This improvement is the result of the World Bank Group supporting Tajikistan's tax administration through the Administration Reform Project and the Central Asia Tax Project. As the government works through improving the tax structure and administration, the goal is to ensure the taxation is fair and does not discourage new businesses or business growth. In fact, the "Paying Taxes" rank rose 33 points from 2016 to 2017. Other categories showing an increase in rank were enforcing contracts, registering property and getting electricity. It takes approximately 13 days to complete the business registration process, from payment of the registration fee to VAT registration.

There are good reasons for U.S. companies to

consider exporting to Tajikistan. As the country upgrades its infrastructure, it is interested in purchasing the high-quality equipment and components manufactured in the U.S. Since Tajikistan is heavily dependent on imports, the U.S. exporters will find very little competition from local products. Tajikistan also offers a major opportunity to grow energy generation.

ALL INVESTORS ARE WELCOMED

Tajikistan has signed bilateral agreements on trade and investment with a number of countries that include the United States, Afghanistan, United Arab Emirates, India, China, Vietnam, Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, Kuwait, Korea, Iran, the Czech Republic, and Turkey.

The country is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Eurasian Economic Community. It also is a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Partnership for Peace.

The U.S. has an embassy in the largest city, Dushanbe. Tajikistan's embassy is in Washington, D.C. (202-223-6090), and is a good place to begin exploring business opportunities.

The United States Trade Representative's (USTR) Office of South and Central Asian Affairs oversees the development and implementation of U.S. trade policy and negotiation strategies for South Asia, and Tajikistan is included as one of the countries. The U.S. is pursuing a goal of further integrating the economies of South Asia, and the USTR and the embassies are interested in working with U.S. businesses looking for emerging markets for investments as foreign investment or starting a business.

Tajikistan continues to work toward developing its economy and fostering free trade, and each year sees new advances.



As the country

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EXECUTIVE COACHING EVOLVES: NOW MORE PERSONAL, FOCUSED AND FUTURE-ORIENTED THAN EVER

Coaching at the executive level is shifting to meet current market demands by placing more emphasis on individual development, readiness for future needs, and using the latest technologies to make change happen.

BY INGRID JOHNSON

xecutive coaching is evolving.

It's not that the best practices of yesterday are being thrown out en masse, but there's been a need for change to ensure tomorrow's leaders can handle a world of shifting boundaries, non-stop connectivity, and increasingly complex challenges.

Investment in executive coaching increases - some 77 percent of organizations have upped its spend in this area in the last year, according to Forbes - and here's how the latest evolutions are playing out.

MAKING LEADERS FUTURE-READY

At times, executive coaching has been viewed as a strictly remedial measure for executives who weren't measuring up on the job. Now, it's taking a turn toward being more proactive. Rather than guiding executives to perform in today's markets, many executive coaching programs are aimed at getting leaders ready to function in future market situations.

This forward focus is particularly important as the current group of Baby Boomer era executives retires. Midlevel staff and emerging leaders are being treated to higher-touch coaching programs designed to help them be ready to take control of their division or manage expanded global responsibilities. And,

rather than using a one-size-fits-all set of programming, many organizations are opting for customized sessions tailored to their unique needs.

CUTTING-EDGE PRACTICES BECOMING WIDESPREAD

Along with a preference for future-focused coaching, organizations are increasingly opting for coaching delivered using the latest technologies and cutting-edge best practices. In many cases, this means that in-person retreats and face-to-face sessions are being supplemented (or replaced) by online coaching systems and virtual coaching, with Artificial Intelligence (AI) even playing a role, according to the latest research from the Conference Board.

One benefit of using these leadingedge technologies on a broader scale is that companies can give more personalized experiences to staff. This helps accelerate individual development without making employees feel "singled out" for certain types of coaching. It also grants employees added flexibility to participate in online coaching sessions or complete virtual coaching activities by reducing the need for travel and making coaching available from remote locations outside of traditional working hours.

Another benefit to incorporating new technologies in the executive coaching space is cost. While investments in



executive coaching can have dramatic ROI for organizations – a study by the International Coach Federation showed a median ROI of 344 percent for individuals and 5,000 percent for organizations – organizations still need to find the up-front dollars in their budgets for quality coaching. Increased cost efficiency means it is easier than ever to get new coaching initiatives in place and allows coaching opportunities to be offered to executives further down in the organization.

SCALING COACHING CULTURE: IT'S POSSIBLE AND HAPPENING NOW

One additional twist in the ongoing evolution of executive coaching has been scalability. In the past, where executive coaching might have been viewed as an individualized remediation program, there were few opportunities to scale coaching between individuals or even across teams. Developing a





With the potential to alter group performance in a meaningful way, it may be useful to reconsider how executive coaching is being distributed across key talent populations.

coaching culture in this environment was challenging. However, now that executive coaching is shifting toward a more proactive, future-focused approach and using the latest technologies, scaling coaching and coaching culture throughout the organization isn't just a possibility – it's something that's actively happening right now.

A top example of this is the rising popularity of team coaching at the executive level, a trend identified by Forbes, the American Management Association and others. Executive coaching has often been considered a strictly one-to-one experience. But, that doesn't match up to the realities of expectations at the executive level,

where leaders are expected to deliver results with their team as well as being a strong individual performer.

To improve functionality of the whole executive unit, the entire group participates in a coaching program together, either at the same time in the same place (live coaching) or online but within a designated timeframe. Along with getting all members of the team to focus on the same issues at the same time – for example, communication flow, feedback systems or vendor management – executive team coaching also allows organizations to provide a safe space to improve team dynamics.

By uniting the executive leadership in a coaching system rather than limiting

it to a few individuals, companies can see faster results in spreading the coaching culture throughout the entire organization. And, where particular divisions may be struggling to meet emerging challenges, executive team coaching is a targeted way to change team culture and shift everyone in the unit toward the desired cultural, organizational, or task performance standards.

TOP BEST PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION

In considering all of these evolutions, what can you take to your own organization? There are a few top best practices to consider implementing now, including how coaching is delivered, who is being coached, and what outcomes are being sought.

First, carefully consider what outcomes any executive coaching program currently in place is seeking. Is the program reactive and remedial, fixing yesterday's problems, or is it designed to address tomorrow's challenges and prepare talent for future executive demands? Reframing the goals of executive coaching could dramatically shift how it is perceived and how it impacts bottom-line results.

Next, look at who is being coached. Are individuals receiving coaching in isolation, or are team programs in place? With the potential to alter group performance in a meaningful way, it may be useful to reconsider how executive coaching is being distributed across key talent populations.

Finally, evaluate the format of the coaching. Are face-to-face sessions requiring time away from operational tasks, or is travel to an offsite location the only option for executives? What online systems or virtual delivery frameworks could lower the cost, boost the efficiency, and spread the impact of your coaching initiatives?

By considering these evolution points, your organization could create a more substantial impact from its coaching practices. And, as executive coaching continues to evolve, being aware of the latest changes ensures your firm can be well-positioned to use them to its advantage.

TURNING CONTENT CHANNELS INTO CASH: HOW MINORITY SUPPLIERS CAN USE DEDICATED CONTENT CHANNELS TO RAISE AWARENESS, GROW THEIR REPUTATIONS AND BOOST SALES

For smart suppliers in 2017, content channel marketing has the potential to unlock new opportunities to connect with existing customers and convert fresh prospects to buyers.

BY DAVE DESOUZA



or minority suppliers, maintaining strong relationships with both current customers and fresh prospects is a challenge. Continual outreach – cold calling, mail drops, or ad campaigns – is expensive and time consuming, with results that can be disappointing and hard to measure. Luckily, there is another option available.

What's this magic option? Content marketing on a dedicated channel.

If that sounds unusual, it shouldn't. It's merely a new twist in an old tradition. Content marketing has always meant providing useful information to buyers and prospects as a means of winning their trust (and future business). And, with YouTube's dedicated content channels available for free to businesses of all sizes, there's a new opportunity available. By understanding these channels – and the options for monetization around them – smart suppliers can enjoy more brand awareness, a better corporate reputation, and more sales.

ONE IMPORTANT 'TO-DO' ITEM BEFORE LAUNCHING MARKETING EFFORT

Content marketing works best when there's a clear understanding of the target audience in place. Suppliers who haven't yet built a robust customer avatar should take that step first.

A complete customer avatar will include both demographic information (ideal size of company, desired annual spend, geography, etc.) and psychographic information (key client concerns, industry-specific beliefs or operating principles, core values, etc.).

By having this avatar fully built out in advance, minority suppliers can ensure their content is on-point for their current customers and their desired new clients.

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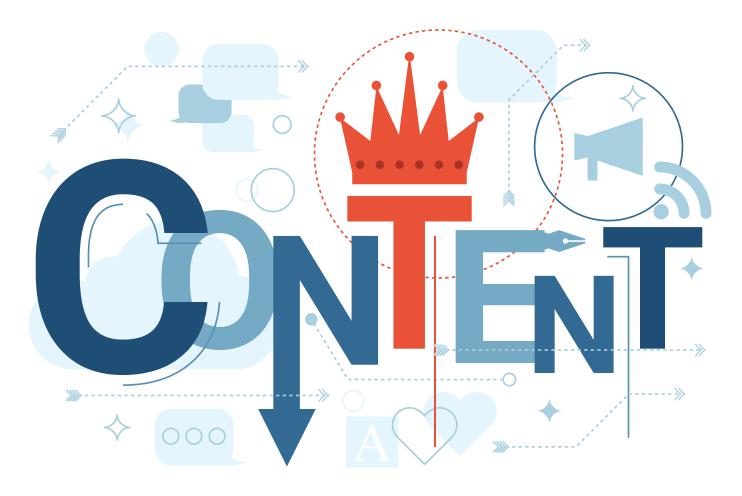


USING CONTENT CHANNELS TO RAISE AWARENESS

Creating a dedicated content channel can be an excellent way for minority suppliers to raise awareness of their products and services. But, this is no field of dreams situation where "If you build it, they will come." Suppliers need to integrate the channel with their other social media and marketing efforts, do initial ad buys to drive traffic, and take advantage of every opportunity to customize the channel with targeted keywords and company-specific graphics.

On the channel, suppliers can do much more education than is possible in a pure advertisement. Content channels work best when there's interesting, audience-relevant material to share. By creating custom content for the channel, suppliers motivate audience members to spread the word. Videos need not be long – studies summarized by Buffer Social indicate just under the three-minute mark is ideal for viewing and sharing – and snippets tightly focused on one topic perform better than complex presentations.

For examples of this in action, consider Guitar Center's channel. The company has to juggle multiple audiences - parents of young musicians, grown hobbyists, and industry professionals, among others - and still keep everyone interested. They accomplish this with a blend of entertainment (sponsored songs), education (product demos and explainer videos), and promotional announcements for sales and in-store events. Clear calls to action and links to relevant areas of the store's site allow buyers to take immediate action while continuing to nurture prospects and browsers toward a future sale.



USING CONTENT CHANNELS TO GROW REPUTATION

Content channels are also a good way for minority suppliers to grow their reputation as a trusted partner with a specific expertise. The channel provides a way to "show" rather than simply "tell" a story to get on the radar with prospective customers. Additionally, the style of the presentation can communicate a great deal about the values and attitude around specific products and services, which can also be an important competitive edge with prospective corporate partners.

Take the example of Old Spice. When Old Spice needed to connect with a younger male audience to preserve and grow market share, it used its channel as a platform for shareable funny videos. This helped "modernize" their reputation as a company and transform the deodorant maker into a hip brand. With this new reputation, the company was able to connect with trending athletes and entertainment figures that wouldn't have made themselves

available to the brand otherwise.

Of course, minority suppliers don't need to assume that a "shocker" video is required, or even that their channel needs to be a funny one. Instead, regularly providing useful and relevant content will help grow a reputation as a company that "gets" the market and has the right products and services to help.

USING CONTENT CHANNELS TO BOOST SALES

Awareness and reputation are just a part of the story, however. At the end of the day, minority suppliers – like any other company – want to see their content channels leading to sales or other additional revenue. Monetizing the channel in a smart way can do this.

First and foremost, every video should clearly show the main company website in the video itself or as a part of the description. Where possible in the video script or as a button with the video, suppliers will also want to include a clear call to action. The combination of useful content with a clear next step (visit our

site, call us today, etc.) and an obvious path to follow (prominent link or phone number) can mean instant sales from new content, as up to 75 percent of viewers will visit a marketer's site after watching a video, according to Digital Sherpa.

Next, suppliers can organize their own campaigns for sales and promotions. Each product and service offered can have its own advertising on the channel, helping segment between buyer and prospect groups. Of course, all promotion won't do for a content channel; maintaining a minimum of at least one information piece for each sales piece can keep things balanced.

Finally, minority suppliers can use the content channel to extend the power of their product or service catalog. This boosts sales by allowing for detailed showcases of specific items far beyond what a brochure fold-out might be able to provide, giving both existing fans and browsers the chance to feel they are truly connecting with the service provider or product line on offer.



ocial media has grown and expanded, and crossed the dividing line of being a means for communicating with friends versus serving as a workplace collaboration tool. Once it crossed that line, employers found that there are many advantages to using social technologies, including improving communication between stakeholders, improving customer services, enhancing collaboration among coworkers and between employees and supervisors, increasing employee engagement, and supporting employee recognition and reward systems.

With so many advantages, it is easy to lose sight of the employer challenges and risks, until the customer complaints get the company on the front page of a newspaper or a manager sends a racist tweet which goes viral. Though reputational risk is high on the list of risks, there are others just as serious, like cyber-attacks, data breaches, and theft of employees' personal data. Employers must be proactive in identifying and mitigating the risks or suffer potentially severe consequences to the brand and/or operations.

RISKS IN EVERY DIRECTION

Auditors around the world were asked in the 2013 Protiviti Internal Audit Capabilities and Needs Survey what they consider the highest risks of social media. Auditors named brand and reputational damage, data security, data leakage, regulatory and compliance violations, viruses and malware, employee defamation, loss of employee productivity, loss of intellectual property, financial loss, and interrupted business continuity. The name "social media" sounds innocuous but presents serious risks to companies.

Governance of social media is an ongoing issue because employers must find a balance between protecting the company's reputation

and data with leveraging social media to get the most benefits. One of the first steps the employer should take to get ahead of risks is a complete review of the social media system, from who has access to what it is used for to security systems. If the review reveals any deficiencies in technologies, or policies and procedures, they need to be corrected.

Many employers have still not implemented a formal social media governance program because the very nature of social media is that it allows free communication and information sharing. Employees need to understand that social media for work purposes is different than social media for personal purposes.

One of the challenges of managing social media is that most business functions now use it, and early adopters have likely developed their own procedures. Marketing is communicating with different stakeholders than sales or human resources, for example. Organizational policies should cover what is important to the business as a whole, and procedures need adaptation to adhere to policies.

One approach companies have taken is creating a social media working group, and every function using social media has a representative on the group. Otherwise, it is too easy for something to slip through the cracks.

ASSIGNING ADEQUATE RESOURCES

Getting ahead of the risks requires diligence in the review process. Right permissions, approvals and access to social media need clear definition.

The corporate network needs adequate security to minimize unauthorized intrusion but also to prevent confidential information from inadvertently being leaked. Committing the right level of resources to security is critical. Appropriate security assets can stop social media users from accidentally introducing viruses and malware into the system and can prevent criminal activity.

Providing employee training on corporate policy and procedures is essential to social media management. The policies and procedures need to stay current though because new technologies present new risks. For example, live streaming on social media sites is gaining ground. While it may be nice for organizational members to see streaming of an employee recognition event or the CEO giving a motivational talk, it is not nice to see a scandal taking place in real time.

KNOW THE LAW AND THE LAY OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA LAND

The risks mentioned by the auditors include the potential reduction in productivity. Supervisors cannot look over every employee shoulder. It is possible to invest in software that produces data and statistics that inform managers of employee online activity.

Monitoring software can also find all mentions of the organization online, and that has already led to employees being terminated. Knowing the laws impacting social media is of the utmost importance. What employees say during their off-hours on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites can have a direct bearing on the organization.

It is a fine line at times. The National Labor Relations Act protects employees who discuss working conditions with another employee. It does not protect

offensive remarks or racial slurs made against other people. However, there are states that have passed laws protecting the rights of employees posting on their own time, as long as the posts are legal. Hate speech is never protected.

There is no way to eliminate all risks associated with social media. Social media is here to stay, and

savvy organizations are ensuring it is treated like other asset investments.

The ROI needs measuring. For example, if social media is used for attracting potential hires, the ROI is an increase in the number of diverse hires with the right skills, knowledge and experience. The appropriate ROI calculation depends on the way social media is used in the organization. It can increase productivity, increase sales through marketing, reduce the time it takes to respond to customers, increase employee collaborative activity, increase engagement of clients, and promote diversity and inclusion. The measurement process itself can play a role in controlling risks because of the data collected and analyzed.

HERE TO STAY

The fact that social media challenges found internally and externally has made the education of employees on policies and procedures, and the investment in high-quality security and monitoring systems, the primary risk mitigation strategies. The Society for Human Resource Management advises organizations to develop a comprehensive and well-defined social media policy.

It might be tempting for some employers to ban social media in the workplace, but that is not realistic if interested in attracting millennials and Generation Z talent. As always, the business culture plays a big role in encouraging employees to maintain integrity and honesty in their work-related behaviors, whether using social media in the workplace or on personal time.



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A WORLDLY ESCAPE TO THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

Tiny and wealthy, the Principality of Liechtenstein is filled with soaring mountains and an abundance of wildlife that turn the country into an ecotraveler's haven.

BY PAMELA GRANT



he Principality of Liechtenstein is one of Europe's smallest countries, yet it is renowned around the world for its success and natural beauty that can make even the most experienced ecotravelers gaze in silent wonder. Austria is on the eastern border, and Switzerland is on the southern and western border. World travelers don't dare call a Liechtensteiner (man) or a Liechtensteinerin (woman) a Swiss or Austrian because the residents of this tiny mountainous country are intensely proud of the country's independence and their heritage, which includes membership in the Holy Roman Empire at one time. Two-thirds of the country is filled with the foothills of the Rhätikon Mountains which are part of the Alps. The other one-third is a Rhine River floodplain. There are forests filled with hard-woods, a rich variety of wildlife, hiking paths, mountain biking opportunities, and beautiful ski slopes. When it's time to unwind, most people head for the capital city of Vaduz which presents its own host of activities from museums to restaurants serving world class foods and traditional dishes.

GET THE FEEL OF THE COUNTRY

Tiny truly describes Liechtenstein, the fourth smallest European state. From top to bottom, it is a mere 15 miles long. The Rhine forms the border between Liechtenstein and Switzerland. It's small, but don't assume there is not much to do. Visitors find plenty of activities in the capital city of Vaduz or in the mountains where villagers in small towns are always happy to share

legends, local culture, and hospitality. Perhaps a good place to start is by visiting Vaduz, including the Städtle" ("small town") or the heart of Vaduz. With its wonderful pedestrian path where no cars allowed, it is designed for people who enjoy strolling through shops and boutiques and stopping for a bite to eat or to sip a local glass of wine or beer at one of the outdoor cafés or restaurants.

Vaduz, located on the Rhine, is a delightful mixture of new and old and welcomes visitors with open arms. The new is apparent in the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein (Museum of Fine Arts) which looks like a black cube. Inside is a treasure trove of modern and contemporary art, sculptures, and artistic exhibitions. The Liechtenstein National Museum is the old with the building dating back to 1438. It's









been a tavern, a customs house, and a government building. It is just one of many well-preserved ancient buildings still in use.

GOURMET TO HEARTY FOODS

There is even a mix of restaurants that serve modern gourmet dishes to traditional hearty dishes. Liechtenstein has three gourmet restaurants listed in the prestigious Gault et Millau restaurant guide. The Park Hotel Sonnenhof is located on a plateau that overlooks Vaduz and you can dine inside in a luxury setting or outside with a spectacular mountain view in the background. The other two gourmet restaurants ae located in the Herawingert Princely Vineyard to the north and Balzers to the south.

Traditional hearty dishes include

Käsknöpfle, a pasta dish with melted cheese, and a cornmeal polenta type of dish called Ribel, an essential filling food for households back in the days when there was a large, poor Liechtenstein population. There are restaurants in Vaduz serving traditional foods, but heading for the mountains gives ecotourists a chance to enjoy the natural wonders and find home-cooked style meals served in hut restaurants like the Pfälzerhütte.

HEAD FOR THE MOUNTAINS

Pfälzerhütte is an ecotourist's dream restaurant. It is high in the mountains, a great starting point for hiking the trails, offers rustic rooms, and serves food from mid-June to mid-October. There are two more mountain huts giving visitors several opportunities to enjoy Liechtenstein's natural setting. It is possible to hike from Pfälzerhütte to the Gafadurahütte hut above the Rhine Valley and to the Berggasthaus Sücka next to Alp Siicka.

Hiking in the summer is a popular activity, and it's not surprising given the 400 km (248 miles) the mountains offer. The hiking trails are filled with incredible views of green valleys, stark mountains, and opportunities to see a variety of wildlife in their natural habitats. Some of the trails are themed like the Wals Fable Trail. Liechtenstein is a land of fables and legends, and hikers can immerse themselves in the saga of the Walser community. Along the way there are figures like the "Doggi" and the "Feuerroten Geissbock." The Doggi is a mythical creature who enjoys making mischief during the nighttime hours, and the Feuerroten Geissbock is the Fire Red Billy Goat. The trail is reached by starting at Vaduz Castle where the royal family lives and walking through the Princely Forest to begin the Grüschaweg Trail.

The wildlife sightings are frequent despite the small size of the country. Ecotravelers who visit Liechtenstein respect nature and are careful to avoid disturbing the habitat. The elevation of the hiking trail determines the types of wildlife visitors will spot. In the Alpine area there are deer, ibex, chamois, golden eagles, snow hares, and rock ptarmigans. In the transition area leading to the valley floor are badgers, foxes, deer, and a host of beautiful and rare birds like the whitebacked woodpecker. The wetlands are home to 30 species of native birds, including the globally endangered corncrake. It is a wildlife photographer's dream, and that is not an exaggeration.

COME AND STAY AWHILE

It's difficult to convey the beauty of Liechtenstein in words. It offers something for everyone - bicyclers, hikers, gourmands, snow skiers, photographers, and even beer drinkers. There are two breweries—Liechtensteiner Brauhaus and the PrinzenBräu. The latter is a microbrewery that brews according to ancient traditions based on the German Beer Purity Law (Reinheitsgebot) of 1516. Wine lovers are not left out. They can walk the vineyards of the Prince of Liechtenstein Winery and enjoy samples of the world class wine produced. Yes, there is something for everyone which is why the tiny country regularly attracts Europeans from surrounding countries. Liechtenstein joined the Schengen area in 2011, meaning people can roam passport-free across 26 free European countries. That gives ecotravelers one more breathtaking place to visit worry free - the Alpine area where Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Austria meet.









Off the beaten path, Comoros offers a food lifestyle that is healthy, interesting, and delicious. The skilled use of spices turns ordinary meals into palate-entertaining feasts.

he location description of the volcanic archipelago of Comoros sounds exotic, a bit romantic, and quite remote. It is situated in the Indian Ocean off the coast of Africa in the northern end of the Mozambique Channel, with Mozambique to the west and Madagascar to the east. It has four main islands; picture perfect beaches; mountains; a still active volcano; and a vibrant culture that reflects a mix of mostly French, Arabic, and African cultures, though other influences are present, too, like Portuguese and Indonesia. That same mix is found in the favorite dishes, and recipes often include seafood mixed with meat or chicken and a delicious blend of locally grown vegetables and tropical fruits, like sweet pineapple and coconut. The pièce de résistance is always the skillful use of spices. The Comorian diet is a good reminder that healthy certainly does not mean uninspired.

SEAFOOD IS AT THE HEART OF THE CUISINE

The best way to describe Comorian cuisine is similar to descriptions of the worldclass dishes served as haute cuisine. The traditional foods are a fusion of Arab and French influences with some Middle Eastern and African touches added. Seafood is present at most meals in one form or another. One of the favorite specialties, and the national food, is Langouste a la Vanille, which is lobster boiled in a vanilla sauce. Vanilla beans are a major crop and export item, so they are generously used. Besides lobster, the everyday diet is filled with crab, shrimp, and a variety of other fish. Fish is steamed and fried. Chicken and meat are regularly consumed, too, and often both are cooked with fish, but it seems true that seafood captured the hearts and taste buds of Comorians.

Riz des Iles is a good example of the skillful way Comorians utilize spices and fish. Fish steaks are fried in oil. Added to the skillet are garlic, shallots, and mashed potatoes—all cooked to stew consistency—and a wonderful mix of spices that include curry powder, paprika, pepper, and cloves. Cooked rice, sweetcorn, and coriander are added when the stew is almost done. Ntrovi ya nazi is fried or steamed fish that includes cooking bananas and coconut stew. Roti ya ya Houma Pampa is cod cooked with tomatoes and onions.

CALLING ALL SPICES

Comorians use of a variety of spices, including cinnamon, saffron, cloves, cardamom, coriander, nutmeg, and vanilla. One of the simpler traditional recipes is Le Me Tsolola, a traditional stew made with green bananas, fish and meat cut into pieces, onions, tomatoes, coconut milk, and black pepper and cayenne pepper. Coconut—based curries are as popular as the spices and are served with grilled fish and meats. Poulet au Coco is another authentic island recipe. It is chicken spiced







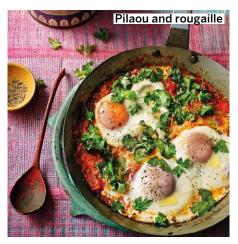
with turmeric, cumin, and salt and pepper. Cubed chicken breasts are browned and onion, garlic and tomato are added, followed by coconut cream. The cooked chicken in coconut sauce is sprinkled with fresh coriander leaves. Such a delicious healthy meal that is simple to make.

Poulet a L'Indienne is another chicken dish that is very popular and makes generous use of spices. Fried chicken pieces are cooked with onions, garlic cloves, ginger, tomatoes, chilies, cardamom pods, cloves, cumin, saffron, and natural yogurt. The mixture is served over rice and garnished with slivered almonds.

When it is time for some beef, it is likely to be Pilaou. It has chunks of beef cooked with saffron, nutmeg, cinnamon, ground cloves, garlic, and cardamom. Also added are chopped onions, garam masala, maggi, and rice. It can be served with a bowl of rougaille (similar to gazpacho) made with tomatoes, chili powder, chives, lemon juice, and shallot which are pureed. Goat meat is commonly used instead of beef in many dishes because of availability. Barbecued goat meat in kabab form is one of the simplest meals.







Mkatra Foutra bread makes an excellent food companion to Pilaou and rougaille. The yeast bread is made with flour, coconut milk, eggs and sesame seeds. Flattened dough is cooked in butter in a skillet until golden brown. A lightly pickled vegetable salad called Achard Aux Legumes can accompany any meal.

COLORFUL FRESH FRUIT AT EVERY MEAL

Some of the foods are just an interesting mix of food items that are not usually paired together in American recipes. For example, a popular food today is a sandwich made with a fresh-baked baguette. cucumber slices and sliced hard-boiled egg. Of course, every culture has favorite desserts. Comorians enjoy Mkatra Siniya, a rice and coconut cake. The cake is particularly popular during holidays and on special events, though it is surprisingly simple to make. It is a baked cake made with Suriname rice, coconuts, cardamom seeds, coconut milk, powdered sugar and a vanilla pod. The cooked mixture is shaped into laddus or bricks and allowed to cool. Ladu is another dessert made with rice, powdered sugar, ghee and powdered cardamom. The end result are balls of spiced and sweetened

Comorians favor fresh fruit over desserts though because it is abundant on the islands. Fresh fruits include bananas, pawpaws, avocadoes, pineapple, mangoes, passion fruits, and sand jackfruit. Dried fruits are used to garnish a porridge made from cassava or cinnamon is sprinkled on fresh fruit as a dessert. There is also a variety of vegetables available that include, in addition to the ones already mentioned, sweet potatoes and plantains.

The islands of Comoros are still stabilizing politically, so tourism is not a big industry yet. It could be one day though, and that is when visitors will discover gorgeous beaches, and small cozy restaurants and cafés serving the seafood, meat kebabs, stews, and fruits that Comorians have turned into delectable dishes. The food is healthful and delicious, and the people are friendly. In the meantime, check out the recipes, and find new ways to eat healthy without giving up any flavor.

NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

BOSTON

obs linked to the growth of green infrastructure are expected to expand in coming years and will provide valuable opportunities for urban residents seeking entry-level work with advancement potential, according to a recently released report. Industry-led efforts to develop the first national green infrastructure certification program can professionalize the field and accelerate job growth.

The report, "Exploring the Green Infrastructure Workforce," found that the projected employment growth represents a chance for low-income, low-skilled workers currently underrepresented in the workforce to earn competitive wages. Jobs range from park maintenance to stormwater management and installation of environmentally friendly products like pervious pavement. The brief includes profiles of seven cities that highlight the different approaches municipalities are taking to the expansion of green infrastructure and its impact on workforce development. A video about the project and report findings has also been released.

Cities studied include Ann Arbor,

Mich.; Austin, Texas; Charlotte, N.C.; Denver, Colo.; Detroit, Mich.; Lincoln, Neb.; and Portland, Ore.

The report was authored by the non-profit Jobs for the Future as part of Nature-WORKS, a national initiative to understand the jobs, careers, skills, credentials, and potential of the U.S. green workforce. The initiative was funded by The Kresge Foundation and the U.S. Forest Service's National Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program as recommended by the National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council.

"The results of the report tell us that there is an opportunity for entry-level jobs with the possibility for advancement, as well as the chance to develop the certificates that will allow people to have marketable credentials," said Mary V.L. Wright, senior director of Jobs for the Future. "It is a win-win for cities to invest in sustainability and achieve both a healthier, greener community and a job development program."

Studies on green infrastructure initiatives have documented their ecological, economic and public health benefits. But there has been little examination of the workforce needed to install and maintain green infrastructure systems. There is particular interest in understanding the potential to provide employment opportunities for low-income residents and other underserved populations. These opportunities can cut across both urban and rural communities.

The findings highlight opportunities for low-income workers in urban areas where green infrastructure is becoming more common as a cost-effective strategy to control storm water, filter pollutants and enhance livability.

"Communities across the nation are benefiting from clean, efficient, and cost-effective natural solutions to highheat, flooding, and pollution – problems that will become more persistent with a warming planet," said Jalonne White-Newsome, senior program officer with The Kresge Foundation's Environment Program. "It only stands to reason that the people in those communities should benefit from the jobs and economic activity taking place in their neighborhoods."

Jobs in the green infrastructure workforce are typically comprised of a small portion of broader, more traditional occupations such as construction, landscaping and water quality protection. Researchers broke down the portion of jobs in 30 occupations that were devoted to green infrastructure activities such as maintaining wetlands and bioswales in a public park, or disconnecting downspouts from combined sewer systems. The equivalent of roughly 239,000 full-time workers nationwide are employed in green infrastructure, the report concluded.

As the number and scope of jobs in this field increases, there are opportunities to develop distinct, specialized green infrastructure jobs. Some contractors have already begun this specialization, such as installing pervious pavement or living green roofs.

Existing green infrastructure jobs typically require high school completion. Wages are in line with other entry-level positions, with a median wage of \$15.78 per hour. There also are opportunities for career growth within the industries that employ workers in these fields, particularly in management and business ownership.

The report found that existing certifications and credentials in the field have not been broadly adopted and are typically not tightly focused on the skills necessary for specialization. Advocates are optimistic that a national certification program under development will enhance job training and education, help professionalize the workforce, increase green infrastructure development, and expand the number of jobs available.



SMALL BUSINESS CONFIDENCE IN THE ECONOMY JUMPS 21 PERCENT IN SIX MONTHS, ACCORDING TO BANK OF AMERICA SURVEY OF SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

CHARLOTTE

U.S. small business owners' confidence in the economy has increased significantly from just six months ago, according to the spring 2017 Bank of America Small Business Owner Report, which found that economic confidence ranks among the highest levels recorded in the last five years.

The report, based on a semi-annual survey of 1,000 small business owners across the country, reveals that a majority of entrepreneurs (52 percent) are confident the national economy will improve over the next 12 months – up a staggering 21 percentage points from just six months ago. Similarly, small business owners' confidence in their local economy improving jumped to 50 percent from 37 percent in fall 2016.

This increase in optimism, however, has yet to translate into positive movement on revenue expectations or five-year growth plans, which remain flat since the fall. This spring:

• 48 percent expect their revenue to increase over the next 12 months (compared to 52 percent in fall 2016).

• 56 percent plan to grow their business over the next five years (compared to 55 percent in fall 2016).

In addition, plans to hire have dipped to their lowest point in five years with 18 percent of small business owners surveyed planning to hire in the year ahead, down 7 percentage points from fall 2016. Instead, those surveyed this spring say they are focused on retaining existing employees. Additionally, plans to apply for a loan in 2017 are tracking similarly to fall 2016, with 9 percent of small business owners surveyed planning to apply in the year ahead. The top reported plans for using loan funds include marketing the business (42 percent), investing in new equipment (34 percent) and expanding operations (28 percent).

"What our survey shows is a significant shift in the mindset of small business owners from just six months ago," said Sharon Miller, head of small business, Bank of America. "Although some uncertainty remains with respect to hiring and revenue, the increase in general optimism is certainly a promising indicator of potential growth for small businesses in 2017."

Economic Concerns Drop, Though Health Care Continues to Weigh Heavy

The survey also found that concerns over most economic factors have decreased significantly from six months earlier, with the most significant declines from fall 2016 showing in:

- Strength of the U.S. dollar (36 percent, down 16 percentage points).
- Stock market (34 percent, down 16 percentage points).
- Health care costs (64 percent, down 11 percentage points).

However, while concerns have declined, health care costs continue to be a chief worry for small business owners, driven by both the business cost and individual cost for employees. Forty-two percent report concern over the health care costs their employees must bear.

Of small business owners surveyed who provide health insurance for employees, half felt cost increases have worsened in the last five years, compared to just 21 percent who believe this has improved, and 29 percent reporting no change. On the issues of health care quality and availability, small business owners were split, with the greatest number believing there's been no change (46 percent and 48 percent, respectively).

Pennsylvania Small Business Wins SBA's 2017 Exporter of the Year Award

WASHINGTON, D.C.

bram's Bed LLC, doing business as The Safety Sleeper™, has been named Small Business Exporter of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The Pittsburgh-based company will be officially recognized during National Small Business Week, an annual event honoring the accom-

plishments and contributions of the best small businesses in the nation.

The award will be presented by SBA Administrator Linda McMahon on May 1, during a luncheon held at the U.S. Institute of Peace, in Washington, D.C. Rose Morris, Abram's Bed LLC's president and inventor of The Safety Sleeper™, will receive the award on behalf of her company.

A mother of three, Morris struggled with finding solutions to protect her middle son Abram, who is on the autism spectrum, as he faced nights of fitful and erratic sleep. Her determination to help her then toddler-aged son lead a healthy life was the inspiration to invent The Safe-

ty Sleeper™, a lightweight tent-like structure that is placed on top of the bed, and includes padding and an air mattress.

Morris established Abram's Bed LLC in 2009. The business grew, thanks to counseling from the local SCORE and the Small Business Development Center at Duquesne University. The Safety Sleeper™ underwent design modifications done by engineering students at the University of Pittsburgh and now offers additional features such as an extra safety zipper system, an enclosed mattress to protect against entrapment, fire retardant material, stabilizing straps to prevent tipping, and frame pads.

INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY TAKE CENTER STAGE AT CAMSC's 13th ANNUAL DIVERSITY PROCUREMENT FAIR

CAMSC members, procurement experts, corporate partners and all three levels of government gather to talk strategy and trends in diversity procurement.

TORONTO

ver two days (April 11-12), nearly 400 attendees consisting of Aboriginal and minority-owned supplier businesses, along with corporate procurement executives and government supplier diversity experts convened at the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council's (CAMSC) 13th annual Diversity Procurement Fair in Toronto.

The Fair offers suppliers opportunities for one-on-one meetings with some of the leading corporations in North America, along with workshops, panels and networking events. Agata Gorzelak, Head & Director, Strategy & Integration Procurement for BMO, hosted the BMO-sponsored networking reception on the first day.

Innovation, growth, technology and sustainability were key topics of the two-day event. Professionals from industries including technology, finance, insurance, automotive, and healthcare, and all three levels of government led panels and workshops on issues of cyber security, marketing, and sustainable supply chain management.

Highlights of the Fair included the second day's network-

ing breakfast called "A Passionate View of Supplier Diversity." Attendees at this TED Talks-style session heard the challenges faced and successes achieved from suppliers from a variety of industries, including Chip Dauber, Ongweoweh (pellets and packaging); Delores Lawrence, NHI Healthcare; Aneela Zaib, emergiTEL (recruitment); and James Wong, Triplewell (auto parts manufacturing).

"The Diversity Procurement Fair is an annual highlight for CAMSC's supplier and corporate members. We work hard to create a program that will address top trends in innovation that will help us grow supplier diversity in Canada and beyond," said Cassandra Dorrington, president and CEO, CAMSC.

"This year, General Motors and Ongweoweh sponsored CAMSC's day two luncheon panel, 'The View from the Top: C-Level Supplier Diversity,' with top procurement executives from RBC and GSK,"

Dorrington continued. "They were able to clearly articulate for the audience how supplier diversity functions as a driver for economic growth."

The popular C-level luncheon panel brought the executive perspective of the supplier diversity challenge to the forefront. Marcelo Loureiro, head of procurement (the Americas), GSK, and Peter Conrod, global head of procurement, RBC, spoke about the value of incorporating a supplier diversity strategy and the real business benefits such a strategy has brought their organizations.

All levels of Canadian government participated in this year's fair. The panel "Through the Looking Glass: Working with the Governments" provided valuable information to suppliers who wish to understand the ins and outs of doing business at the government level.

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti, who spoke at the event and presented Dorrington with a certificate of recognition on behalf of the City of Markham. He praised CAMSC for its "efforts in organizing this event that provides an opportunity for businesses to pursue inclusive and diverse supply chain through the inclusion of minority and Aboriginal suppliers and creating jobs in our community."

CAMSC is grateful to its many sponsors for supporting procurement diversity and this valuable event. Approximately half a billion dollars' worth of business is contracted annually by CAM-SC's members and the Diversity Procurement Fair is where it all begins.



Kellogg's Breakfast SD Talks speakers (left to right): Aneela Zaib, CEO & founder, emergiTEL; Cassandra Dorrington, president & CEO, CAMSC; Delores Lawrence, president & CEO, NHI Healthcare; James Wong, vice president, Triplewell; and Chip Dauber, Business development & vendor relations, Ongweoweh.

DIVERSE SUPPLIERS HONORED AT DELTA'S 18TH ANNUAL STAR AWARDS

ATLANTA

elta celebrated its top diverse suppliers and supplier diversity advocates at the company's 18th annual Star Awards recognition event on March 22 at the Delta Flight Museum in Atlanta.

For 18 years, the Star Awards program has honored the contributions of Delta's top small-business, minority-owned and women-owned suppliers, as well as internal Delta team members who champion supplier diversity.

Ed Bastian, Delta's CEO, provided the keynote address, highlighting Delta and its partners' advocacy of diversity and inclusion.

"As a global airline, our strength lies in the diversity of our employees, our customers and our business partners," said Bastian. "This is not only a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the success we've had together, but also at the same time to reaffirm our commitment to improve. The diverse backgrounds and

ideas that Delta people and our partners share are driving the spirit of innovation as we transform our business."

Star Awards honorees are nominated and selected by a review committee based on several categories including quality, value creation, innovation, customer service, cost savings and community involvement.

This year's winners include:

- Small Business of the Year Aviation Repair
 - Technologies, LLC
- Minority-owned Business of the Year - Aerothrust Holdings, LLC
- Woman-owned Business of the Year
 MESH Experience
- Corporate Real Estate Business of the Year - Green Heart Enterprises
- Delta Team of the Year Corporate Real Estate
- TJP (Tiffany Jackson-Pugh)
 Advocate of the Year LaShawn
 Douglas
- TJP (Tiffany Jackson-Pugh) Advocate of the Year Margarita Paz
- Trailblazer of the Year Bruce McMillian, African Ascension

"This acknowledgment is fantastic for us all and we're incredibly grateful," said Fiona Blades, CEO of MESH Experience. "It's really encouraging to see Delta supporting women-owned initiatives, equality and diversity."

The Star Awards program and the company's partnerships



Ed Bastian, Delta's CEO



are built on Delta's core values of honesty, integrity and respect.

"We are very grateful for the many suppliers that work so hard to assist us in delivering excellence in every area of our business," said Karmetria Burton, General Manager –Supplier Diversity. "Our strategy is based on our collaboration, partnership and shared values. Working together, we are able to achieve mutual success."

The Star Awards event has chronicled the growth and enhancement of Delta's Supplier Diversity program, and is a reflection of Delta's commitment to an inclusive culture.

WELLS FARGO LAUNCHES 2017 VETERAN SCHOLARSHIP AND EMERGENCY GRANT PROGRAMS

SAN FRANCISCO

ells Fargo & Company (NYSE: WFC) and Scholarship America are now accepting applications for the 2017 Wells Fargo Veterans Scholarship and Wells Fargo Veterans Emergency Grant Programs. Wells Fargo has committed \$2 million over a four year period to fund the programs and help veterans and their families to successfully integrate back into civilian life. Since both programs launched in 2016, Wells Fargo and Scholarship America have awarded 22 scholarships and 25 emergency grants to support education and vocational

training for veterans and the spouses of disabled veterans.

Veteran Amare Lovely was one of the 22 scholarship recipients in 2016. He served nearly five years as a Navy Corpsman, receiving 13 Command Certifications of Excellence. He organized community diversity inclusion programs and mentored underprivileged children. Amare deployed to Afghanistan where he sustained injuries from the blast of an improvised explosive device (IED) for which he was awarded the Purple Heart in 2013.

"Being a veteran who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and a full—time student juggling raising a family, my life can be pretty stressful and overwhelming at times," said Lovely. "The Wells Fargo Veteran Scholarship enabled me to focus on my schooling and family and not on the pressures of tuition, books, and fees. I am on pace to graduate next fall and I owe a lot of thanks to Wells Fargo for their support."

Scholarship America, one of the nation's largest providers of postsecondary educational assistance programs, and Wells Fargo have worked together since 1991, starting with the Children of Employee Scholarship Program. Both collaborated on the application and selection

process for the scholarship and emergency grants, using best practices of the highest quality postsecondary educational aid programs.

"American veterans are important to the strength of our country and our company, and we want to make sure they feel prepared for the transition back to civilian life," said Jerry Quinn, Wells Fargo Military & Veteran Program Manager. "Our investment in Scholarship America will help fill some of the financial gaps by providing scholarships and emergency aid to our veterans and their families to set them on a course to success."

"Wells Fargo's generous commitment of scholarships and emergency aid for veterans is a powerful combination that will help many veterans and families by making the path to civilian life more attainable and affordable," said Bob Ballard, president & CEO, Scholarship America. "Wells Fargo is modeling the way."

The Wells Fargo Veterans Scholarship Program

Applications for the scholarship program are being accepted today through February 28, 2016. Awards will be made to honorably discharged veterans or spouses of disabled veterans who are high school or GED graduates. Renewable scholarships for up to \$7,000 per year will be granted, determined by financial need and consideration of academic performance, work experience, leadership and community service, and challenges to completing a postsecondary program. Each award renewal will increase by \$1,000 over the previous year to encourage program completion for each recipient. Visit www. scholarsapply.org/wellsfargoveterans for more information and to apply.

The Wells Fargo Veterans Emergency Grant Program

Emergency grants are available on an ongoing basis for eligible veterans who are enrolled in postsecondary education and experience unexpected financial difficulties that might cause them to drop out of school. Grants will be available for a one-time distribution up to \$1,000 based on the cost of the emergency need, such as rent, utilities, daycare and medical expenses. Visit www.scholarsapply.org/wellsfargoveteransemergency for more information and to apply.



WHAT CORPORATIONS CAN LEARN ABOUT LONGEVITY FROM PRO GOLFERS

BY VINCENT PANE



he Wall Street Journal recently published an article by Brian Costa titled "Are Pro Golfers Losing Their Longevity?" The gist of the article is that professional golfers are experiencing physical problems at a relatively early age which is cutting their golfing careers short. In a game where players have easily competed in championships well into their 50s, some golfers like Tiger Woods are having tremendous difficulty competing in

their 40s because of sports injuries. One of the reasons for the change is the increased athleticism of the game due to powerhouse swings that produce longer drives and higher finishes, but require sharper body twists and greater strength which wears down the body. Longevity is of interest in sports and business because ultimate value generation is dependent on how long the pro golfer can compete and how long a business is in operation. What can business leaders learn from

the pro golfers about staying in business and creative disruption?

SHORTER, MORE RESTRICTIVE, AND MORE EXPLOSIVE

Pro golfers Woods, Jason Day and Rory McIlroy developed a new swing that other golfers are emulating. The swing is shorter and requires more restrictive movement of the lower body. To make a good swing, the golfer must make a more intense turn to begin the downswing. It is not a Pro golfers are discovering that modern golf swings are taking a toll on their health, shortening careers due to injuries. Corporations can learn about long-term value generation by considering the factors shortening the playing life of the golfer.

rhythmic swing, but it is explosive and strenuous. That is likely how Woods injured his back, an injury that has forced him to drop out of many competitions. Day has also experienced a back injury, among other injuries, that has forced him to withdraw from golf games. McIlroy just recently suffered a rib stress fracture, keeping him from making an attempt to regain golf's no. 1 ranking.

Modern golf is taking a toll on knees, hips, necks, backs and now ribs. How does a golfer get a rib stress fracture? Hitting the ball too hard, according to Henrik Stenson. "Keep on hitting the ball as hard as you are and you will risk injury," he said in the Wall Street Journal article. McIlroy had also spent many hours testing new equipment while making the aggressive swing. It is a physically strenuous swing that ages the golfer much faster. Also contributing to physical injuries is globalization of golf tournaments. Players who used to rest during off-seasons are playing year round in various countries, giving the body little time to recover.

MESSY AND CREATIVE

Longevity in business has a lot of similarities to longevity in golf. A business can create value for decades, have a burst of success that quickly disappears, or slowly die out over five to 10 years. McKinsey & Co.'s former managing director Ian Davis was asked about long-lived companies versus companies that fizzle out after making a big splash in the marketplace with productive creativity. He begins by talking about Joseph Schumpeter's term "creative destruction" which refers to delivering innovation in a messy but effective way. A company's products and services may become obsolete in the face of innovation, but the broader population is better off. Davis then points out that not all destruction is creative and not all creativity is destructive.

Sometimes, companies going out of business due to competitive market innovations do not leave the general population or the economy better off because it leads to the breakup of critical assets like experienced R&D and established networks of relationships. It is like the golfers trying new explosive swings that changed the game but disrupted the flow of the game. Golfers are questioning whether the new swing is too disruptive

to the game and the longevity of the players. If champions get their success cut short, they cannot learn to adapt or develop new skills, and the game suffers.

QUITTING BECAUSE OF PAIN

The same is true of companies. Adapting to meet market demands is important, but endurance by itself is not enough. Woods endures but ends up quitting the game because of pain. Strategic planning is not enough to ensure longevity because there is no assurance the body will endure, and even if it does, the modern swing can bring the game down. The swing and the body moves are not compatible for longevity as a professional golfer. Ian Davis believes that companies get in trouble when natural cycles and stakeholders get out of sync. Strategic managers must decide on the planning

Businesses must ask how their strategies and priorities fit the mission and profitability goal. cycles and how to get from one cycle to the next. The questions golfers must ask is how the new swing fits the end goal. Businesses must ask how their strategies and priorities fit the mission and profitability goal.

Day said he is making a swing change to save his back and will hopefully be able to play into his 40s. The new swing may cost him a few yards, but he is likely to generate value for a much longer period of time. It is all about being smarter about fitness and movements. The same is true for companies that want to achieve longevity in a globalized, technology-based business environment.

In today's business environment, people are getting a little inured to the idea of 'here today, gone tomorrow." However, longevity does still matter to stakeholders. Golfers quit early because they make swings that wear down the body and make future playing difficulty. Businesses quit because of changes in market demand or competition. Longevity in golf or business is about making good decisions in the present for the long-term. What is done now has a direct impact on the end game. Making good decisions in the present is not always easy, but it sure improves the game.



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